

**DUBLIN**

Front Line Defenders – Head Office  
First Floor, Avoca Court  
Temple Road, Blackrock  
Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland

info@frontlinedefenders.org  
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +353 1 212 3750  
fax +353 1 212 1001

**BRUSSELS**

Front Line Defenders – EU Office  
Square Marie-Louise 72  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org  
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +32 2 230 9383  
fax +32 2 230 0028

15 January 2024

### **Angola: Human Rights Lawyer Zola Ferreira Bambi unlawfully placed under “house arrest”**

On 05 January 2024, three agents from the national police and two plain clothes agents unlawfully placed human rights lawyer **Zola Ferreira Bambi** under house arrest. The agents chained the gate to his house with a padlock, detained him, and raided his residence without a court order. They then brought the human rights defender to the police station where he remained from 10:30AM to approximately 3:30PM.

[Zola Ferreira Bambi](#) is a well-known human rights lawyer based in Luanda, Angola. He works on issues involving human rights defenders as well as communities whose rights have been violated. He is the president of Angola's Observatory of Social Cohesion and Justice. Zola Ferreira Bambi has been documenting abuse and legal harassment against human rights defenders in Luanda since the early 2000s. He has provided legal counsel and defended human rights defenders who are under judicial harassment for their legitimate human rights work.

On 05 January 2024, three agents from the national police and two plain clothes agents, claiming to be from the investigating body of the national police attached to the Municipal Command of Luanda's third Division, unlawfully placed lawyer and human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi under house arrest. The human rights lawyer Monica Domingos and two legal assistants Manuel Calunga and Santos Domingo who are part of the Angola's Observatory of Social Cohesion and Justice's team went to his house on that morning and found that the agents had chained his gate with a padlock and retained Zola Ferreira Bambi inside his residence. The police agents raided Zola Ferreira Bambi's residence without a court order, and verbally abused him.

The human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi and the human rights lawyer Monica Domingos were taken against their will to the police station, and were accompanied by one of the legal assistants, Manuel Calunga. While at the station the three of them were kept in a room for hours. The human rights defender was taken to the police station located in Vila Alixe, Rangel Divisional Command Luanda, near the place known as Pau da Cobra where he remained from 10:30AM to approximately 3:30PM. Several journalists, civil society members and friends of the human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi reported that when seeking information on his whereabouts at the police station, all of them were wrongfully informed that he was not there.

On the same morning of 05 January 2024, the human rights lawyer and his colleagues were due to represent activist Laurinda Gouveia along with her husband, an activist who had been detained during a demonstration. The demonstration aimed to peacefully protest against the conviction for “disobedience and resisting orders” of four human rights defenders: Adolfo Campos, Gildon Da Silva Moreira, also known as Tanaice Neutro, Hermenegildo Andre also known as Gildo das Ruas and Abraão Pedro Santos, who advocate for good governance and transparency.

Later on 05 January 2024 the lawyer and human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi was freed only after the trial of activist Laurinda Gouveia had started, preventing him from acting as her legal representative. Laurinda Gouveia and her husband were acquitted by the Provincial Court of Luanda of the crimes of injury to the organs of sovereignty and disobedience to the dispersion order.

The incident on January 5th is not an isolated event, but followed a number of previous incidents of threats, harassment, physical assault, detention and surveillance of human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi.

On 19 September 2023 during a trial session where human rights lawyer Zola Ferreira Bambi was representing four unjustly imprisoned human rights defenders the judge ruling the case threatened Zola Ferreira Bambi with ordering his arrest, with no apparent reason. On a number of occasions, following prison visits to the detained human rights defenders he represented, and the trial itself, Zola Ferreira Bambi was subject to surveillance and followed by multiple cars.

Previously on 04 May 2018, the human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi was assaulted and threatened by the police when he peacefully intervened with another lawyer to assist an injured citizen who was being taken from his home by the police and who had reportedly been subjected to mistreatment.

On 23 November 2013, following the killing of an activist by the presidential guards and the arrest of hundreds of opposition activists in Luanda, the human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi suffered two assaults from the national police. The human rights defender was reportedly beaten by at least four police officers of the public order around the Santana Cemetery. He lodged a complaint at the police station. Around 2PM, Zola Ferreira Bambi returned to the demonstration site to pick up his phone which he had left with a colleague but was later seized by six agents from the Rapid Intervention Police (RIP), threatened, physically assaulted, and detained. The human rights defender was subsequently released.

Front Line Defenders condemns the continuous threats, harassment, and surveillance against human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi. Front Line Defenders is also gravely concerned by the house arrest and detention of Zola Ferreira Bambi as it believes this to be a form of intimidation carried out against him in reprisal for his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights.

**Front Line Defenders urges the relevant authorities in Angola to:**

1. Immediately cease persistent reprisals against the human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi for his legitimate peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against human rights defender Zola Ferreira Bambi with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Angola are able to carry out their peaceful and legitimate human rights work without any fear of reprisal.