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The attorney general's office is reportedly calling on former president José Eduardo dos Santos (1979-2017) to give evidence in two major corruption cases in Angola. The first case concerns Suninvest Investimentos e Participações SA (Suninvest), the business and commercial arm of dos Santos' personal charity, Fundação Eduardo dos Santos (FESA), and the allegedly illicit appropriation of land. The second case concerns the relationship between the China International Fund and state-owned oil company Sonangol, which the Angolan authorities consider has seriously damaged Sonangol's interests. The ministry of telecommunications technologies and media (MINTTICS) has withdrawn licences for three privately owned TV channels, Record TV Africa, Vida TV, and Zap Viva. The United States-based Committee to Protect Journalists has expressed concern about potential censorship in the run up to elections next year. However, MINTTICS is closing down channels owned by potentially corrupt or politically exposed persons. Angola has reintroduced stricter measures against COVID-19 under the Situation of Public Calamity following the discovery there of Indian and Brazilian variants and an entirely new strain, the Tanzanian variant. This new strain may be more infectious, vaccine and antibody resistant, and could pose a major threat if it spreads. Angola is in the midst of a vaccination programme that will deliver a first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to everyone over the age of 16.

José Eduardo dos Santos called to give evidence in two major corruption cases

The attorney general's office (PGR) is reportedly calling on former president **José Eduardo dos Santos** (1979-2017) to give evidence in two major corruption cases in **Angola** in which it claims he is implicated. Replying through his lawyers to the PGR, dos Santos is said to be “*indignant*” at the accusations and ready to clarify all the grey areas in cases in which his name appears at the epicentre.¹ Dos Santos can only be called to answer questions and give evidence at present; his immunity from prosecution expires in August next year.

The first case concerns **Suninvest Investimentos e participações SA (Suninvest)**,² the business and commercial arm of dos Santos' personal charity, **Fundação Eduardo dos Santos (FESA)**. Suninvest was headed by **António de Jesus Castelhana Maurício**, previously executive vice president of FESA.³ The president of FESA, **Ismael Diogo da Silva**, was briefly detained on 28 September 2018, allegedly for refusing to respond to several court notices related to an accusation of undue receipt of thousands of dollars from the **Conselho Nacional de Carregadores** (national council of carriers) in relation to Suninvest ventures. He has been indicted for fraudulent crimes, active corruption and money laundering (see *ARC Briefing Angola Sep 2019*).

The specific allegations that the PGR wants answered relate to another Suninvest venture, the allegedly illicit appropriation of land on the slopes of **Miramar**, a suburb of **Luanda**, and construction of the **Intercontinental Hotel** in the same area.⁴ Suninvest was the majority shareholder in the holding company for these properties, Angolan holding company **Miramar Empreendimentos, SA**.

In October 2020, 60% of the shareholdings in this company were nationalised, including 43% of the shares belonging to the Suninvest company and 17% of the shares belonging to **Sommis, SGPS**. The

¹ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

² Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

³ Suninvest corporate documents, 2007

⁴ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

remaining 40% already belonged to Sonangol. Sommis was formed in 2008 by **Manuel Vicente**, then president of state oil company **Sonangol**, vice president of FESA, and vice president of Angola.⁵ The asset recovery service of the attorney general's office has already confiscated three towers officially owned by Miramar.⁶

The second case in which the attorney general wants answers from the ex-president concerns the partnership established between Sonangol and **China**-based group **China International Fund (CIF)**, previously led by Sino-**British** businessman **Sam Pa**.⁷ Dos Santos' direct link to the case was established when he was forced to acknowledge his direct responsibility for the involvement of General **Leopoldino do Nascimento (Dino)** in the management of CIF's assets after Pa was arrested in **Beijing** (China) in 2015.⁸ At the time, Leopoldino do Nascimento was head of communications for the then president.⁹ A lawyer who is concerned in the case says of dos Santos:

*"He wants to appear before the court as a declarant to prove that the business done in Angola by CIF was entirely private and that it has nothing to do with public resources."*¹⁰

However, last year General **Hélder Vieira Dias Júnior Kopelipa**, minister of state and head of the military affairs office under José Eduardo dos Santos, and General Dino surrendered properties acknowledged to be bought by CIF with public funds. As representatives of the companies **China Internacional Fund Angola, Lda (CIF)** and **Cochan S.A**, they surrendered a vast portfolio of companies, commercial undertakings and residences to the attorney general's asset recovery department in October 2020.¹¹

The PGR wants to establish responsibility for some of the largest financial operations carried out by Sonangol with the CIF, and which the Angolan authorities consider to have seriously damaged Sonangol's interests.¹² Manuel Vicente has said that the former president is responsible:

*"The one who introduced me to Sam Pa was the former President, but I do not believe that in the context of our country, it was possible for someone in the past not to comply with his orders."*¹³

Dos Santos is expected to give his testimony by videoconference at the Angolan embassy in **Spain**, when he returns there later this month.¹⁴ Both cases involve the commercial activities of Manuel Vicente, who, like dos Santos, has immunity until August 2022. Both cases also lead directly to the former president. Testimony in these cases is likely to open up the deeply hidden lines of responsibility for major corruption in Angola in relation to the three men closest to the ex-president and two of the more notorious companies then operating in Angola.

Angola suspends three TV channels

The ministry of telecommunications technologies and media (**MINTTICS**) has ordered all three of the country's TV operators, **DSTV Angola**, **TV Cabo** and **ZAP TV**, to stop airing content from three privately owned TV channels, **Record TV Africa**, **Vida TV**, and **Zap Viva** from 21 April, according to a statement by the ministry.¹⁵ **United States**-based non-governmental organisation **Committee to Protect Journalists** has expressed concern that *"censoring media outlets owned by opponents or those critical of the government flies in the face of the president's purported commitment to a free press."*¹⁶ However, closer examination of the three TV channels shows that MINTTICS may be acting as a proxy

⁵ Jornal de Negocios, 29 Oct 2020

⁶ Jornal de Negocios, 29 Oct 2020

⁷ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

⁸ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

⁹ Angop, 15 Oct 2020

¹⁰ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

¹¹ Angop, 15 Oct 2020

¹² Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

¹³ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

¹⁴ Expresso, 8 Apr 2021

¹⁵ CPJ, 14 May 2021

¹⁶ CPJ, 14 May 2021

in closing down channels related to politically exposed owners, which have also been airing criticism of the government, or criminal charges.

MINTTICS said it suspended the companies because they were not properly registered. Zap Viva's owner, **FINSTAR**, a company controlled by **Isabel dos Santos**, elder daughter of José Eduardo dos Santos, noted it had delivered the documents requested by MINTTICS the day before the suspension.¹⁷ FINSTAR said it hoped that Zap Viva would continue to broadcast after that:

"We trust that the National Directorate for Information and Institutional Communication (DNICI) and MINTTICS, will make the appropriate assessment of the documentation and information provided."¹⁸

There is little clarity about the reasons for the closure of Vida TV. **Welwitschia dos Santos (Tchizé)**, younger daughter of José Eduardo dos Santos, holds a 25% stake in the channel, and there has been conflict between her and the other shareholders, who have invited her to withdraw from the project following "repeated public statements" by her that imply "damage and reputational risk" for the channel.¹⁹ The remaining shareholders say:

"Politically exposed people with personal interests unrelated to corporate positioning are harmful to any business and that is the position of the remaining partners that make up the majority of the capital."²⁰

However, these are not grounds for losing a broadcasting licence. Tchizé dos Santos has said she was under pressure to sell her shares in Angolan companies and subject to attempts to silence her.²¹

The third station to be closed is Record TV Africa, owned by **Universal do Reino de Deus (IURD)**, a **Brazil**-based evangelical church.²² MINTTICS said in its statement that the TV station had a foreign citizen as its executive director and was employing non-accredited foreign journalists, both violations of the press laws. The former director of Record TV Africa, **Fernando Henrique Teixeira**, is under investigation in Angola for money laundering and criminal association, which involves three other members of the Brazilian wing of the IURD. Angola's criminal investigation service says the investigation is the result of complaints signed by more than 300 members of the IURD, including bishops and pastors, received on 3 December 2019, which led to the opening of a criminal case and indictment now being brought against the four defendants.²³

The MINTTICS statement said the ministry also planned to revoke the operating licences of media outlets that had been inactive for two years or more.²⁴ The CPJ noted that this comprised 27 of the country's 144 registered radio stations, 209 of the 243 registered newspapers, and 442 of the 459 magazines. MINTTICS also said that only 10 websites were accurately registered to operate in the country, but did not offer any further details.²⁵

MINTTICS has closed three TV stations that appear to suffer from problems of ownership, which is not the normal remit of a media regulator, unless perhaps criminal activities are proved. The decision to close down so many other media outlets gives credence to the CPJ's view that,

"With next year's elections looming, Angolan President João Lourenço and his administration should promote a range of media perspectives and ensure that the state does not have a monopoly on information crucial for the public to make informed decisions."²⁶

¹⁷ Deutsche Welle, 20 Apr 2021

¹⁸ Deutsche Welle, 20 Apr 2021

¹⁹ Angonoticias, 24 Apr 2020

²⁰ Angonoticias, 24 Apr 2020

²¹ Angonoticias, 24 Apr 2020

²² Deutsche Welle, 20 Apr 2021

²³ Voice of America, 15 May 2021

²⁴ Deutsche Welle, 20 Apr 2021

²⁵ CPJ, 14 May 2021

²⁶ CPJ, 14 May 2021

Angola introduces stricter measures in face of Covid-19 variants

Angola has reintroduced stricter measures to prevent the spread of **Covid-19** under the Situation of Public Calamity, from 10 May,²⁷ following discovery there of new strains of the coronavirus. Angola suspended the entry of non-residents travelling from or via **India** and Brazil, but an entirely new strain was also confirmed in the country.²⁸ The little known variant was discovered to be carried by three passengers arriving on a flight from **Tanzania** to Angola, at **Luanda's 4 de Fevereiro International Airport**, and is now considered the world's most mutated coronavirus strain.²⁹ Scientist **William Haseltine**, writing in **Forbes Magazine** on 15 April, said the variant is "cause for concern" because of the relatively high number of mutations.³⁰

*"The observation of greatest concern is that the Tanzanian virus possesses [a] mutation found in many of the B.1 variants of concern. This mutation confers [possible] resistance to neutralizing antibodies of convalescent and vaccine plasma and raises the possibility of increased transmissibility."*³¹

The strain, identified by Angolan and **South African** scientists, does not derive from the virus that first made its appearance across the world in early 2020, but from an entirely different source derived from the **Wuhan** strain.³² Professor **Tulio de Oliveira**, one of the scientists who identified the new variant, said

*"It also [worried] us as it was found in three travellers from Tanzania in Angola. There is almost no data from Covid in Tanzania."*³³

Minister of state and head of the Civil House in the President's Office **Adão de Almeida** announced the strengthening of restrictions and extended the current state of calamity for a month, following an increase of 5,000 new cases of Covid-19 in the four weeks ending on 4 May.³⁴ Total diagnosed cases in Angola have now reached 30,637 in Angola's population of 30 million, with 659 deaths attributed to Covid-19.³⁵



Reported COVID-19 cases in Angola 2020-21³⁶

Most of the new measures relate to the capital, Luanda, which is the epicentre of Angola's outbreak. The ban on entering or leaving Luanda without authorisation remains in place, and restaurants and other facilities there will be closed at weekends. The non-essential workforce operating in both public

²⁷ Angop, 10 May 2021

²⁸ Angop, 6 May 2021

²⁹ Forbes, 15 Apr 2021

³⁰ Forbes, 15 Apr 2021

³¹ Forbes, 15 Apr 2021

³² Forbes, 15 Apr 2021

³³ Daily Mail, 21 Apr 2021

³⁴ Angop, 6 May 2021

³⁵ Johns Hopkins dashboard, accessed 17 May 2021

³⁶ Johns Hopkins dashboard, accessed 17 May 2021

and private sectors will be reduced to 50% at work, although the workforce in essential services such as education, health, defence and public order forces, energy and water, ports will remain at 100%.³⁷ The country remains under a cordon sanitaire. Adão de Almeida said the new measures are intended to halt the increase in positive cases in Angola, as the country reports the second variant of the disease.³⁸ Almeida noted that travellers must continue to carry out tests before boarding and after disembarking in Angolan territory, and comply with a mandatory quarantine of seven days.³⁹ The **Polícia Nacional** (national police) has been instructed to enforce the current guidelines.⁴⁰

Angola's vaccination programme will cover about 54% of the population; all those aged over 16, a total of 16.8 million people.⁴¹ To date it has reached 586,377 people since March, with 40,200 having received a second dose.⁴² The administration of the second dose of vaccine began in Luanda on 11 May.⁴³ National public health director **Helga Freitas** says Angola has now received 40,000 doses, of a total of 12 million, of the **Russian Sputnik** vaccine, at a cost of €94m (\$100m). The Angolan executive will also receive than four million doses of Covid-19 vaccine from US-based pharmaceutical company **Johnson & Johnson** and more than one million shots of the US **Pfizer** vaccine.⁴⁴ The **COVAX** initiative will supply a further 624,000 doses of vaccine from **British-Swedish** pharmaceutical company **AstraZeneca**, and the Chinese government has offered 200,000 doses of its **Sinopharm** vaccine.⁴⁵

The discovery of an entirely new variant of Covid-19 in travellers to Angola is only one factor that has led to the tightened restrictions; a rise in cases and the import of Brazilian and Indian variants is of major concern. There are no reports that the new Tanzanian variant has spread in Angola but an outbreak of this novel variant, which may be able to resist existing antibodies and vaccines, could be catastrophic. Angola has enough vaccine on order at present for about 18 million injections, enough for a first dose for the entire target population and about half a million second doses and is relying on vaccination as the way out of the pandemic, as well as isolating Luanda.

³⁷ Angop, 6 May 2021

³⁸ Angop, 6 May 2021

³⁹ Angop, 6 May 2021

⁴⁰ Angop, 11 May 2021

⁴¹ Angop, 3 May 2021

⁴² Our World in Data, accessed 17 May 2021

⁴³ Angop, 12 May 2021

⁴⁴ Angop, 3 May 2021

⁴⁵ Lusa, 13 May 2021

Planner

- 2019-2022 **(Angola) Programa de Privatizações (PROPRIV)** (privatisation programme) to manage government divestment of 195 companies;
- 2020-2025 **(Angola) World Bank** to provide funding to increase economic diversification for a five-year period;
- Jan 2020-Dec 2021 **Rome (Italy)** Angola serves on **World Food Program (WFP)** Executive Committee;
- May 2021 **Amsterdam (Netherlands)** Amsterdam court of appeal to hear **Angola's** case to seize **Exem Energy**, allegedly owned by **Sindika Dokolo**, late husband of **Isabel dos Santos**, and holder of an indirect \$500m stake in **Portuguese** oil company **Galp Energia**;
- 2021 **London (United Kingdom)** Hearing of **Melbourne Investments v SODIAM** takes place at **London Court of Arbitration**, despite death of shareholder and manager **Sindika Dokolo**;
- 2021 **London (United Kingdom)** Hearing of **UNITEL SA v Unitel International Holdings (UIH)** takes place at **London Court of Arbitration**, to resolve issues of UIH alleged debt of \$400m to **UNITEL**;
- Jun 2021 **(Angola)** Government hopes to conclude consultations on review of the Constitution;
- 9 Jun 2021 **(Angola)** Tenders close for oil blocks CON1, CON5 and CON6, of the **Terrestrial Basin of the Lower Congo**, and blocks KON5, KON6, KON8, KON9, KON17 and KON20, of the **Terrestrial Basin of Kwanza**;
- July 2021 **(Angola) Luanda/Soyo/Cabinda** ferry for passengers and cargo begins operations;
- 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** **Jose Filomeno dos Santos** and other defendants appeal sentences in the "*case of \$500 million*", to be heard in the **Supreme Court**;
- 2021 **(Angola)** First local and municipal elections are in the planning stages but implementation is delayed by **Covid-19** and an election date will be set, probably for 2022;
- Q1 2021 **Cabinda (Angola)** Lifua A oil platform scheduled for completion to support offshore **Takula-Bloc-0** field Cabinda; Lifua B and C phases will follow;
- 2021 **(Angola)** Six offshore oil blocks and free areas of oil blocks 31 and 32 will be offered for tenders;
- Dec 2021 **Talatona, Luanda (Angola) Huawei Technology Park** to be completed
- Q4 2021 **Luanda (Angola) Angolan Diamond Exchange** to open;
- 2022 **(Angola)** National elections;
- 2022 **(Angola)** Angola to host 10th **African, Caribbean and Pacific Group** summit;
- 2022 **(Angola)** End date for **Banco Poupança e Crédito's** recovery plan;
- 2022 **Luanda (Angola) Novo Aeroporto Internacional de Luanda (NAIL)** (new international airport) expected to open;
- 2025 **(Angola)** Three major refineries at **Lobito** with capacity to refine 200,000 barrels/day, **Soyo** (100,000 barrels/day) and **Cabinda** (60,000 barrels/day), are expected to give Angola crude oil refining capacity of 360,000 barrel per day this year, meeting domestic needs and ending fuel imports;
- 2027 **(Angola)** State-owned oil company **Sonangol's** Strategic Exploration and Production Plan 2020-2027 gives Sonangol 10% of national production by this date, producing 120,000 barrels per day.

Chronology

14 May 2021 **Namibe Province (Angola)** *Angop*. **Serviço de Investigação Criminal de Angola (SIC)** (criminal investigation service) arrests three men on suspicion of computer fraud, forgery, and money laundering from **Banco Poupança e Crédito** in 2019, valued at Kw 1.5 billion (\$2.3m);

13 May 2021 **Namibe Province (Angola)** *East African*. Desert locust swarms destroy crops in 547 farms across Namibe Province, southern Angola, after affecting cereal crops in **Benguela, Cunene** and **Cuando Cubango Provinces** and exacerbating drought and famine in the region;

12 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** delivers 10,000 boxes of child nutrition, biosafety products and medical equipment to the Angolan government;

12 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. The **United Nations Organisation (UNO)** has funding of \$56.3m for the current year to support the plan for a socio-economic response to **Covid-19** and cooperation for sustainable development with Angola, of which \$36.5m is already available and the remainder yet to be mobilised from partners, donors and other United Nations funds, and funding will be managed by the 12 UN agencies present in Angola;

11 May 2021 **Huambo (Angola)** *Angop*. The **Global Environment Fund** will provide \$7m to Angola for two sustainable land management projects over a four-year period, supported by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation**;

11 May 2021 **Malange (Angola)** *Angop*. The state acknowledges debts of 9 billion kwanzas (\$13.75m) to 285 companies in Malange, for goods and services delivered between 2013-2017, according to the finance ministry;

10 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. **OPEC's** reference basket of crude oil prices, including Angola's **Girassol**, stands at \$66.75 a barrel;

9 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. Sonangol announces signed agreements with **South Korea-based Hyundai Sambo Heavy Industry** for the delivery of two 158,000 tonne oil tankers to Angola in 2013;

8 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. Opposition party **Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA)** vice president **Raúl Danda** dies in a Luanda hospital aged 63;

8 May 2021 **Cacuso (Angola)** *Angop*. Angola's biofuel producer, **Companhia de Bio-combustíveis de Angola (Biocom)**, is producing 120,000 tons of white sugar, 18,000 cubic metres of neutral ethanol and 63,000 megawatts of renewable electrical power, from the current 2021 harvest;

6 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. **France-based Total Oil and Angolan National Oil, Gas and Biofuels Agency** announce start-up of the second phase of the short cycle **Zinia**, linked to **Paz Flor's** Floating Production, Storage and Unloading Unit (FPSO), with oil production capacity of more than 40,000 barrels of oil per day;

6 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. State-owned **Banco de Poupança e Crédito (BPC)** announces start of auction of 480 of its housing properties, with priority purchase rights given to those that have their salaries paid into in BPC;

5 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. **Manuel Fernandes**, president of **Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola-Coligação Eleitoral (CASA-CE)** (broad convergence for the salvation of Angola coalition) is appointed as member of the Council of the Republic, the body to which all political party leaders now belong;

5 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. State-owned loan recovery and asset management

company, **Recredit - Gestão de Activos S.A**, announces it has recovered only Kz 7.8 billion (\$13.7m) in the last 12 months, out of a total of Kz 182.7 billion, (\$279.2m) from bad debts owed to state-owned bank **Banco de Poupança e Crédito (BPC)** and expects to recover a total of Kz 19 billion (\$29m) from BPC loans;

5 May 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. The **Banco Nacional de Angola** is to create a mobile phone-based money transfer services this year to reduce crowds in commercial banks and make up for a shortage of ATMs across the country;

30 Apr 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. **Namibian** government spokesman announces that more than 10,000 Angolans have fled to Namibia to escape drought and malnutrition in southern Angola;

30 Apr 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. Justice and human rights minister **Francisco Queiróz** says the Cabinet Council has approved new draft laws for the justice system, which will improve the framework and functioning of the country's judicial institutions;

30 Apr 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. **Zambia** and Angola agree the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding for the feasibility study and possible construction of an oil pipeline between **Lobito** (Angola) and **Lusaka** (Zambia);

26 Apr 2021 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angop*. The Angolan parliament ratifies an agreement making **Spain** a strategic partner of Angola in security and crime fighting, including technical advice across a wide range of criminal actions.