

Journalists attacked while covering protest in Angola



Police and protesters in Luanda's Independence Square. (Alex Neto)

New York, September 6, 2011--Angolan security forces attacked journalists covering an [anti-government protest \(http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?t=Manifestacao-de-jovens-angolanos-contr-o-Governo-terminou-com-incidentes-em-Luanda.rtp&headline=20&visual=9&article=475494&tm=7\)](http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?t=Manifestacao-de-jovens-angolanos-contr-o-Governo-terminou-com-incidentes-em-Luanda.rtp&headline=20&visual=9&article=475494&tm=7) on Saturday in the capital, Luanda, [news reports \(http://noticias.pt.msn.com/politica/manifesta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agress%C3%A3o-a-jornalistas-1\)](http://noticias.pt.msn.com/politica/manifesta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agress%C3%A3o-a-jornalistas-1) said. At least [two dozen people \(http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475485&visual=3&layout=10;&tm=7&\)](http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475485&visual=3&layout=10;&tm=7&) were [arrested \(http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/Manifestantes-de-Luanda-tem-julgamento-sumario-marcado-para-terca-feira-129261668.html\)](http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/Manifestantes-de-Luanda-tem-julgamento-sumario-marcado-para-terca-feira-129261668.html) and several others injured as [police blamed \(http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/pt_pt/noticias/sociedade/2011/8/35/Policias-civis-feridos-Largo-Maio-sequencia-uma-manifestacao,18d9f4f7-19ba-4dfc-9d37-4130c98e8797.html\)](http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/pt_pt/noticias/sociedade/2011/8/35/Policias-civis-feridos-Largo-Maio-sequencia-uma-manifestacao,18d9f4f7-19ba-4dfc-9d37-4130c98e8797.html) the [violence \(http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/mundo/2011/09/03/manifestacao-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agressao-a-jornalistas-em-luanda\)](http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/mundo/2011/09/03/manifestacao-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agressao-a-jornalistas-em-luanda) on protesters.

Security forces attacked several journalists during the protest in Luanda's Independence Square. The journalists said to be attacked were identified as Alexandre Neto, a local correspondent for the U.S. government-funded broadcaster [Voice of America \(http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/angola/\)](http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/angola/); cameramen Hugo Ernesto and Nicolau Chimbila of Portugal's state broadcaster [RTP \(http://www.rtp.pt/\)](http://www.rtp.pt/); and reporters Coque Mukuta of Radio Despertar and Ana Margoso of *Novo Jornal*. Angolan state broadcaster [TPA \(http://www.tpa.ao/\)](http://www.tpa.ao/) also [reported \(http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/pt_pt/noticias/sociedade/2011/8/35/TPA-repudia-tentativa-agressao-seus-profissionais-por-manifestantes,80b17e45-32ff-4dc6-ad49-886fccd96be5.html\)](http://www.portalangop.co.ao/motix/pt_pt/noticias/sociedade/2011/8/35/TPA-repudia-tentativa-agressao-seus-profissionais-por-manifestantes,80b17e45-32ff-4dc6-ad49-886fccd96be5.html) that its news team had been attacked, allegedly by protesters, according to news reports.

Neto told CPJ that police and unidentified men in plain clothes knocked him down and seized his backpack with his cell phone, camera, passport, and driver's license. The items were not returned, local journalists said. RTP broadcast [footage \(http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?t=Manifestacao-de-jovens-angolanos-contr-o-Governo-terminou-com-incidentes-em-Luanda.rtp&headline=20&visual=9&article=475494&tm=7\)](http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?t=Manifestacao-de-jovens-angolanos-contr-o-Governo-terminou-com-incidentes-em-Luanda.rtp&headline=20&visual=9&article=475494&tm=7) showing unidentified men in plain clothes attacking one of its cameras and knocking down a member of its crew. RTP Luanda Bureau Chief Paulo Catarro [reported \(http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475453&headline=46&visual=9&tm=7&\)](http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475453&headline=46&visual=9&tm=7&) that one of the station's cameras had been broken.

Security agents also attacked Portuguese journalist [António Cascais \(http://www.antonioascais.de/\)](http://www.antonioascais.de/), who was conducting [journalism training \(http://antonioascais.nireblog.com/\)](http://antonioascais.nireblog.com/) in Angola, as he left his hotel to walk toward the demonstration, [news reports \(http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/Luanda_09_04_2011_voanews-129222758.html\)](http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/Luanda_09_04_2011_voanews-129222758.html) said. The agents threw Cascais on the ground, searched his pockets, and confiscated a digital camera and two phones, local journalists said.

"We condemn the security forces' use of violence and intimidation to prevent journalists from covering anti-government protests," said CPJ Africa Advocacy Coordinator Mohamed Keita. "The authorities must return all confiscated journalistic material and pay compensation for damaged equipment. They should also hold to account all

those responsible for the violence against the media."

The few hundred [protesters \(http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/09_02_11_Luanda_demo-129094228.html\)](http://www.voanews.com/portuguese/news/09_02_11_Luanda_demo-129094228.html) had gathered to call on President José Eduardo dos Santos to step down after 32 years of rule, [news reports \(http://noticias.pt.msn.com/politica/manifesta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agress%C3%A3o-a-jornalistas-1\)](http://noticias.pt.msn.com/politica/manifesta%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-jovens-resulta-em-feridos-detidos-e-agress%C3%A3o-a-jornalistas-1) said. Police and unidentified assailants began to attack the participants after a group of protesters attempted to march to the presidential palace to demand the release of Pandito Nerú, one of their leaders, who had been [abducted at gunpoint \(http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475523&visual=3&layout=10;&tm=7&\)](http://tv1.rtp.pt/noticias/?article=475523&visual=3&layout=10;&tm=7&) earlier that day by security forces.

Saturday's protest was at least the second time since March that Angolan authorities have sought to [obstruct journalists from covering public protests \(/2011/03/angolas-ruling-mpla-obstructing-independent-report.php\)](/2011/03/angolas-ruling-mpla-obstructing-independent-report.php) that call for democratic and economic reforms, CPJ research showed.

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