

Angola

	2016	2017		
Internet Freedom Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Population:	28.8 million
Obstacles to Access (0-25)	14	14	Internet Penetration 2016 (ITU):	13 percent
Limits on Content (0-35)	7	7	Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked:	No
Violations of User Rights (0-40)	19	19	Political/Social Content Blocked:	No
TOTAL* (0-100)	40	40	Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested:	No
			Press Freedom 2017 Status:	Not Free

* 0=most free, 100=least free

Key Developments: June 2016 – May 2017

- New legislation enacted in January 2017 empowers the government with the ability to penalize online speech and ban online content (see **Legal Environment**).
- Prominent journalist Rafael Marques de Morais who runs the critical news blog Maka Angola was charged with “crimen injuria” (insult) for an October 2016 article published on the news site that accused Angola’s attorney general of illegal business practices in his purchase of state-owned land (see **Prosecutions and Arrests for Online Activities**).
- Long-time President José Eduardo dos Santos announced in February 2017 that he would step down from office, paving the way for his Minister of Defence, General João Lourenço, to succeed him. The August elections proceeded with little surprise and no reported restrictions on internet freedom (see **Introduction**).

Introduction

Internet freedom in Angola remained weak during the report's coverage period, as the authoritarian government under President José Eduardo dos Santos enacted legal measures to restrict online speech and targeted a prominent investigative blogger with defamation charges.

After numerous public statements calling for the regulation of social media in recent years, the president in January 2017 enacted a set of new media laws known as the Social Communication Legislative Package (Pacote Legislativo da Comunicação Social), which enable the government to control and censor critical information online. The new laws also created the Angolan Regulatory Body for Social Communication (ERCA, Entidade Reguladora da Comunicação Social Angolana) that has the power to regulate journalists' conduct and investigate online content producers without judicial oversight and suspend or ban websites that fail to abide by its standards of "good journalism." In March 2017, the main opposition party UNITA launched a legal challenge to the law at the Constitutional Court, though the law remains in effect.

Critics worried the law would be used to crackdown on independent voices and online dissent in the lead-up to the August 2017 presidential elections, which saw a new contender for the first time since dos Santos came into power nearly 38 years earlier. The president announced in February that he would step down from office and subsequently paved the way for the Minister of Defence of his MPLA party (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), General João Lourenço, to secede him. The August elections proceeded with little surprise and no reported restrictions on internet freedom, bringing Lourenço into the presidency to continue carrying out dos Santos' authoritarian policies. Despite the state's monopolistic controls on traditional media in the country, particularly in television and radio, the internet remained the main outlet for critics and opposition parties during the elections period.

Obstacles to Access

Internet and mobile phone penetration remained low, hindered largely by high costs and poor infrastructure that limit access primarily in urban areas. Senior government officials have direct and indirect shareholder participation in many Angolan ICT companies, providing the government with some level of control over the sector.

Availability and Ease of Access

Access to the internet in Angola is one of the lowest in the world with a penetration rate of 13 percent in 2016, according to the latest available data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).¹ Mobile phone penetration is also low and declined from 61 percent in 2015 to 55 percent in 2016 per ITU data and remains below the continent's average of 78 percent.²

High costs remain the main hindrance to increasing ICT access for the majority of Angolans. Unlimited internet subscriptions cost an average of US\$150 per month, while USB dongle devices

1 International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2016," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

2 International Telecommunication Union, "Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions, 2000-2016," and "Key 2005-2017 ICT data," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

that provide wireless access cost between US\$50 and \$60. In urban areas, slightly more affordable subscriptions start at US\$50 per month but can still cost as much as US\$100 per month for reliable connections. Consequently, few Angolan households have internet access at home. Mobile internet packages come at a monthly cost of about US\$45, while internet cafes charge approximately US\$1 for 30 minutes. Those who are able log online at their workplaces, especially in the capital, Luanda.

Key Access Indicators		
Internet penetration (ITU) ^a	2016	13.0%
	2015	12.4%
	2011	3.1%
Mobile penetration (ITU) ^b	2016	55%
	2015	61%
	2011	60%
Average connection speeds (Akamai) ^c	2017(Q1)	3.7 Mbps
	2016(Q1)	2.8 Mbps

^a International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2016," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

^b International Telecommunication Union, "Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions, 2000-2016," <http://bit.ly/1cbixxY>.

^c Akamai, "State of the Internet - Connectivity Report, Q1 2017," <https://goo.gl/TQH7L7>.

In rural areas, voice and data services can be twice as expensive and of much poorer quality, subject to frequent cuts and extremely slow connection speeds as a result of poor infrastructure. According to the latest data from Akamai's "State of the Internet" report, average broadband connection speed in Angola is 3.7 Mbps (compared to a global average of 7.0 Mbps).³ ICT access is further hindered by the country's fractured electricity system that has steadily declined in access for the country's population, serving only 32 percent of the population, mostly in urban areas, according to the latest World Bank data.⁴

Restrictions on Connectivity

There were no restrictions on connectivity to internet or mobile phone networks reported during the coverage period. Angola's domestic backbone is currently comprised of microwave, VSAT, and fibre-optic cables. Connection to the international internet goes through the West Africa Cable System (WACS) and South Atlantic 3 (SAT-3) cable, the latter of which is operated by the state-owned Angola Telecom, which may enable the government to partially control internet connectivity if desired.⁵ In 2014, Angola began construction on the South Atlantic Cable System (SACS), a submarine fibre-optic cable connecting Brazil and Angola that aims to reduce the bandwidth costs associated with the distance that internet traffic currently has to travel from Europe and the United

³ Akamai, "State of the Internet, Q1 2017 Report," <https://goo.gl/TQH7L7>, accessed October 1, 2017.

⁴ World Bank, "Access to electricity (% of population)," accessed October 31, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACS.ZS>.

⁵ "Sistema de Cabos da África Ocidental entra na fase final" [Cable sys em in Western Africa in final phase] *Portalangop*, October 27, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1Zdv7BZ>.

States.⁶ Construction of SACS neared completion in mid-2017 and is expected to be ready by mid-2018.⁷

ICT Market

The government has some level of control over the ICT sector through the direct and indirect shareholder participation of senior government officials in many Angolan companies, including ISPs and mobile phone providers. The state-owned oil company, Sonangol, holds three of the country's eighteen ISPs (MSTelcom, Nexus, and ACS), and is a major shareholder in two others, UNITEL and Angola Cables. UNITEL is the country's largest ISP.⁸ The national telecom company, Angola Telecom, is a major shareholder in Angola Cables with 51 percent, and provides its own internet services.⁹

Mobile phone services are provided by two private operators, UNITEL and Movitel, both of which have indirect ownership ties to the government. For example, 75 percent of UNITEL, the larger mobile phone operator with 80 percent of the market,¹⁰ is held by three entities: Sonangol; a business venture run by Leopoldino do Nascimento, the president's lieutenant general;¹¹ and the president's billionaire daughter, Isabel dos Santos, according to news reports. Both Leopoldino do Nascimento and Isabel dos Santos sit on the board of UNITEL.¹²

Meanwhile, 80 percent of Movitel is split between five ostensibly private Angolan companies—Portmill Investimentos e Telecomunicações with 40 percent, Modus Comunicare with 19 percent, Ipang-Indústria de Papel e Derivados with 10 percent, Lambda with 6 percent, and Novatel with 5 percent—though these companies have majority shareholders who are senior officials within the president's office. For example, the majority shareholders of the Angolan investment company Lambda include Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technologies José Carvalho da Rocha, his deputy, and members of both their families.¹³ Movitel's remaining capital is held by two state enterprises, Angola Telecom and Empresa Nacional de Correios e Telégrafos de Angola, with 18 percent and 2 percent, respectively.¹⁴

The 2011 Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services further enhances the government's ability to control the country's ICT sector.¹⁵ On paper, the law aims to ensure that ICTs in Angola are developed to play a fundamental role in ensuring citizens' universal access to information, transparency in the public sector, and participatory democracy. It also sets broader

6 NEC, "Angola cables to build the world's first submarine cable across the South Atlantic," press release, November 4, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1MfbXqw>.

7 Cision PR Newswire, "Angola Cables: Cable System connecting Africa and the Americas reaches a major milestones to create a new route for Internet traffic" April 20, 2017, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/angola-cables-cable-system-connecting-africa-and-the-americas-reaches-a-major-milestones-to-create-a-new-route-for-internet-traffic-300442701.htm>.

8 Sonangol's telecom subsidiary, MSTelcom, discloses its full ownership of Nexus and ACS in: *Sonangol Notícias*, "9º Aniversário da Mstelcom: Ligando o País e o Mundo," August 2008, nº 17, Sonangol.

9 "Telecommunications in Angola," *Moses Malone*, http://mosesmalone.ga/Telecommunications_in_Angola.

10 Instituto Angolana dos Comunicacoes, "Estatísticas," <http://bit.ly/1R0kxgq>.

11 The investment company: Portmill, Investimentos e Telecomunicações.

12 Kerry A. Dolan, "Isabel Dos Santos, Daughter of Angola's President, Is Africa's First Woman Billionaire," *Forbes*, January 23, 2013, <http://onforb.es/1s19TrQ>.

13 Rafael Marques de Morais, "The Angolan Presidency: The Epicentre of Corruption," *Maka Angola* (blog), accessed October 20, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1R0kDod>.

14 Rafael Marques de Morais, "The Angolan Presidency: The Epicentre of Corruption," *Maka Angola* (blog).

15 Assembleia Nacional, *Lei das Comunicações Electrónicas e dos Serviços da Sociedade da Informação* (Lei nº 23/11), art. 5.

goals of poverty alleviation, competitiveness, productivity, employment, and consumer rights.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the legislation includes several provisions that, if implemented with bad intentions, can threaten Angolans' online freedoms.¹⁷ In particular, the law enables the head of government to "intervene when internet service providers jeopardize their social functions or there are situations that gravely compromise the rights of subscribers or users."¹⁸ Because the law does not define "the social functions" or "situations" that could be compromised or the scope of intervention allowed, analysts believe that the law empowers the country's president to control the ICT sector at will.

Regulatory Bodies

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MCT) is responsible for oversight of the ICT sector, while the Angolan Institute for Communications (INACOM) established in 1999 serves as the sector's regulatory body. Reporting to the MCT, INACOM determines the sector's regulations and policies, sets prices for telecommunications services, and issues licenses. The regulatory body is, on paper, an independent public institution with both financial and administrative autonomy from the ministry. In practice, though, its autonomy is fair limited.¹⁹ According to reports by the ITU and World Bank, INACOM is not autonomous in its decision-making process,²⁰ in part due to the ministerial appointment of the director general who can be dismissed for any reason. In addition, the MCT has been known to influence staff appointments, while other ministries are often involved in sector policy, leading to politically influenced regulatory decisions.

Laws to establish a new Angolan Social Communications Regulatory Body with a remit to regulate online content were enacted in January 2017 (see Legal Environment).

Limits on Content

Online content remained uncensored and unrestricted during the coverage period, though new media laws enacted in January 2017 created a regulatory body with the powers to censor online content.

Blocking and Filtering

To date, there have been no known incidents of the government blocking or filtering online content in Angola, and there are no restrictions on the type of information that can be exchanged through digital media technologies. Social media and communications apps such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and international blog-hosting services are freely available.

Nevertheless, censorship of news and information in the traditional media sphere is common, and the authorities have regularly announced intentions to regulate online speech over the past few years. In January 2017, the government followed through with the implementation of new media

16 Ministério Das Telecomunicações e Tecnologias de Informação, "The commitment of Angola in Communications and IT sector according to the Recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society," (presentation, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2013), <http://bit.ly/1jemlbh>.

17 Miranda Law Firm, "Angola: Legal News," April-July 2011, <http://bit.ly/1GxSrn7>.

18 Assembleia Nacional, *Lei das Comunicações Eletrónicas e dos Serviços da Sociedade da Informação* (Lei nº 23/11), art. 26, 2.

19 Russell Southwood, "The Case for 'Open Access' Communications Infrastructure in Africa: The SAT-3/WASC cable – Angola case study," Association for Progressive Communications, accessed August 30, 2013, 5, <http://bit.ly/1N1sn8Q>.

20 International Telecommunication Union, "Angola Profile (last data available: 2013)."

laws that created regulatory body with powers to ban websites (see Legal Environment). To date, no websites have been blocked under the new law.

Content Removal

There were no reports of forced content removal during the coverage period, though informal government demands on users to remove content from the internet have been documented periodically. In the last documented case, a Facebook user arrested in April 2015 for a critical post about a military general was forced to remove the post and apologize in exchange for his release.²¹

Media, Diversity, and Content Manipulation

As a result of low rates of ICT access, radio, television, and print outlets—which are subject to high levels of government interference—remain the primary sources of information for the majority of Angolans. Members of the ruling People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) party own and tightly control a majority of the country’s media outlets, including those that are the most widely disseminated and accessed. Of the dozen or so privately owned newspapers, most are held by individuals connected to the government.

Independent news outlets critical of the government do exist, with *Folha8* being the most prominent, though its audience is reached primarily through its print publication. *Rede Angola*, an independent news blog based in Portugal, is one of the main sources of alternative and independent online news on Angola, alongside the news blogs *Club-K* and *Maka Angola*. Nonetheless, the online information landscape lacks diversity and is unable to represent a variety of groups and viewpoints throughout the country due to both the concentration of internet access in urban areas and the limited space for critical voices in Angola’s general media sphere.

In addition, independent outlets, both online and in print, are constrained economically by the lack of advertising revenue from both state and private sources since it is often denied to news outlets that publish critical stories about the government. According to an Angolan media observer, *Rede Angola* struggled to receive advertising revenue from both private and public sources in 2015 due to the critical cartoons it often published. The outlet has only managed to stay afloat through financing from its wealthy owner, a Brazilian political communications mogul.

Government efforts to manipulate online content are periodically reported. Some independent online news outlets report receiving regular calls from government officials directing them to tone down or refrain from reporting on certain issues.²²

Self-censorship is pervasive and commonly practiced by journalists in both state-run and private print outlets, though bloggers and social media users are less reluctant to express criticism of the president and ruling party. In the past few years, the internet and social media have become the last frontier for independent voices, with journalists, activists and opposition parties increasingly turning to digital platforms as a means to sidestep the country’s longstanding restrictions on traditional media. Nevertheless, there have been anecdotal reports of online self-censorship becoming more

²¹ Interview by Freedom House consultant in May 2015.

²² In 2015, editors at *Rede Angola*, reportedly received instructions from the authorities not to publish any news about an ongoing defamation case against journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais. (Source: Based on interviews with anonymous online journalists and editors.)

prevalent, reinforced by sporadic arrests of social media users and bloggers (see Prosecutions). Taboo topics related to corruption, abuse of power, land grabs, police brutality, and demolitions are often avoided.

Digital Activism

Social media is the leading platform for citizens to criticize the government and react to alleged wrongdoings. Youth groups in particular have increasingly flocked to Facebook to call out government corruption, reflecting a gradual weakening of the culture of fear within civil society.²³ Nonetheless, arrests of protesters and online activists in the past few years have led to a more muted use of digital media to organize and provide critical commentary in the past year (see Prosecutions and Arrests for Online Activities).

Violations of User Rights

New legislation enacted in January 2017 empowers the government with the ability to penalize online speech and ban online content. Prominent journalist Rafael Marques de Morais who runs the critical news blog Maka Angola was charged with "crimen injuria" (insult) for an October 2016 article published on the news site that accused Angola's attorney general of illegal business practices in his purchase of state-owned land.

Legal Environment

The Angolan constitution provides for freedom of expression and the press, and the 2011 Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services provides for citizens' rights to privacy and security online, among other provisions regulating telecommunications. Nevertheless, the law also includes problematic aspects that may infringe on internet access (see ICT Market).²⁴

Despite laws protecting user rights, stringent laws regarding state security and defamation run counter to constitutional guarantees, such as Article 26 of the 2010 state security law that penalizes individuals who insult the country or president in "public meetings or by disseminating words, images, writings, or sound" with prison sentences of up to three years.²⁵ The 2006 press law holds authors, editors, or directors of a publication criminally liable for libellous content.²⁶ If the author does not reside in the country or the text is not signed, the law establishes the circumstances in which the editor, director, or both may be held criminally responsible for grievous content.²⁷ Defamation is a crime punishable by imprisonment, while politicians enjoy immunity from all prosecution. Meanwhile, the judiciary is subject to considerable political influence, with Supreme Court justices appointed to life terms by the president and without legislative approval.

In January 2017, the president enacted a set of new media laws known as the Social Communication

²³ Central Angola 7311, website, <http://centralangola7311.net/>; Central Angola 7311, Facebook page, <http://on.fb.me/1VGCP7Y>.

²⁴ Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006, art. 26º, 2.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Angola: Revise New Security Law, Free Prisoners in Cabinda," December 9, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1RvD6tN>.

²⁶ Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=17955.

²⁷ Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006.

Legislative Package (Pacote Legislativo da Comunicação Social), which included a new Press Law, Television Law, Broadcast Law, Journalists Code of Conduct, and statutes to establish the Angolan Regulatory Body for Social Communication (ERCA, Entidade Reguladora da Comunicação Social Angolana). The latter body was created to regulate journalists' conduct and investigate producers of online content without judicial oversight, and has the power to suspend or ban websites that fail to abide by its standards of "good journalism."²⁸

Meanwhile, Article 10 of the new Press Law states that "all social communication media have the responsibility of assuring citizens' rights to inform and be informed in accordance with the public interest," which critics believe will enable the government to control and censor critical information posted on social media or elsewhere online.²⁹ Article 82 criminalizes publication of a text or image that is "offensive to individuals," which would be punished under the penal code as defamation and slander with fines and imprisonment of up to six months.³⁰ In March 2017, the main opposition party UNITA launched a legal challenge to the law at the Constitutional Court, though the law remains in effect.³¹

Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities

Angolan authorities regularly target high profile activists and journalists for their reporting and online speech. During this report's coverage period, the prominent journalist Rafael Marques de Morais who runs the critical news blog *Maka Angola* was charged with "crimen injuria" (insult) for an October 2016 article published on the news site that accused Angola's attorney general of illegal business practices in his purchase of state-owned land.³² The article also suggested that then-President Dos Santos had supported the attorney general's actions. Marques was summoned by police and interrogated for three hours over the charge. In May 2017, the government reissued the charges against Marques under Angola's Law on Crimes against State Security for the same October 2016 article and charged journalist, Mariano Bras Lourenco, for having republished the article in the weekly print newspaper, *O Crime*.³³ As of October 2017, the charges against the journalists remain outstanding, which critics believe is an attempt to "sow some confusion to prevent people from reposting and forwarding critical information."³⁴

Previous prosecutions for online activism include the high profile case of 17 student activists who were convicted of sedition in March 2016 and sentenced to between two and eight years in prison. The charges stemmed from their participation in a book club at which they were discussing a book about civil disobedience to authoritarian rule. As the sole piece of evidence of the group's alleged

28 D Quaresma Dos Santos, "Angola passes laws to crack down on press and social media," *The Guardian*, August 19, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/19/angola-passes-laws-to-crack-down-on-press-and-social-media>; <https://www.makaangola.org/2017/03/constitutional-challenge-to-angolas-new-media-laws/>; <https://www.makaangola.org/2017/02/the-death-knell-for-freedom-of-the-press-in-angola/>

29 D Quaresma Dos Santos, "Angola's latest ploy to silence critics: A regulatory body to censor social media," *Maka Angola* (blog), August 16, 2016, <http://www.makaangola.org/2016/08/angolas-latest-ploy-to-silence-critics-a-regulatory-body-to-censor-social-media/>

30 Human Rights Watch, "Angola: New Media Law Threatens Free Speech," November 30, 2016.

31 *Maka Angola*, "Constitutional Challenge to Angola's New Media Laws," March 03, 2016, <https://www.makaangola.org/2017/03/constitutional-challenge-to-angolas-new-media-laws/>

32 Committee to Protect Journalists, "In Angola, two journalists charged over report on corruption," December 29, 2016, <https://cpj.org/2016/12/in-angola-two-journalists-charged-over-report-on-c.php>

33 Christopher Torchia, "2 Angolan journalists charged with insulting the state," *Associated Press*, June 21, 2017, <https://www.apnews.com/5505e1ec86694e57aee1d1875ec0d2e8/2-Angolan-journalists-charged-with-insulting-the-state>

34 Christopher Torchia, "2 Angolan journalists charged with insulting the state," *Associated Press*, June 21, 2017.

plot to overthrow the government, the prosecution pointed to a Facebook post that proposed a hypothetical alternative government, with prominent activists named in key government positions.³⁵ On appeal, the Supreme Court granted the activists conditional release under house arrest in June 2016.³⁶

Meanwhile, charges against Domingos Magno, a reporter for the “Central Angola 7311” citizen news site and an administrator of the group’s Facebook page, are still pending as of mid-2017. Magno was arrested in October 2015 while en route to hear the State of the Nation address and charged with “false pretenses” for allegedly possessing a false press pass. He spent one month in prison, during which he was interrogated in relation to his online activities.³⁷ With the charges still looming in 2017, Magno has been reportedly prohibited from leaving the country and is required to present himself to the Attorney General’s office every 15 days.³⁸

Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity

The government’s ability to monitor and intercept the data and communications of Angolan citizens without adequate oversight is a major concern, particularly among human rights activists and journalists, though the full extent of the government’s surveillance capabilities and practices is unknown. Sophisticated spyware discovered logging activities on an investigative journalist’s laptop in 2013 suggests that, at a minimum, the government engages in the targeted surveillance of select individuals (see Technical Attacks).³⁹ Investigative reporting over the past few years has unearthed different government plans to implement electronic monitoring systems that could track email and other digital communications.⁴⁰ Recent investigations have revealed increased engagement with the Chinese government on surveillance methods.⁴¹

In June 2015, Wikileaks published leaked internal emails from the Italian surveillance equipment company Hacking Team, which revealed efforts by Angola’s intelligence agency, SINSE, to acquire Hacking Team’s notorious Remote Control System (RCS) in 2013.⁴² Sold to numerous repressive regimes around the world, RCS spyware has the ability to steal files and passwords and intercept Skype communications, among other features. The documents did not reveal whether the Angolan government eventually purchased or installed the spyware.

Meanwhile, SIM card registration requirements enacted in 2014 were enforced in 2016, threatening mobile phone users’ rights to communicate anonymously. Users were given until the end of February 2016 to register existing SIM cards or be disconnected. SIM cards must be registered directly with INACOM, the ICT regulator that operates under government oversight (see Regulatory

35 Zenaïda Machado, “Dispatches: Basic Rights Still a Pipe Dream in Angola,” Human Rights Watch, March 31, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/03/31/dispatches-basic-rights-still-pipe-dream-angola>

36 The Guardian, “Angola court orders conditional release of jailed activist book club,” June 29, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/29/angola-court-jailed-activist-book-club-conditional-release>

37 Rafael Marques de Morais, “President’s speech nabs another political prisoner,” Maka Angola (blog), October 20, 2015, <http://www.makaangola.org/2015/10/presidents-speech-nabs-another-political-prisoner/>

38 <http://www.dw.com/pt-002/angola-ativistas-querem-o-fim-de-medidas-de-ca%C3%A7%C3%A3o-a-domingos-magno/a-36754667>

39 Janet Gunter, “Digital Surveillance in Angola and Other “Less Important” African Countries,” *Global Voices Advocacy*, February 26, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1LjKxn4>.

40 See, *Freedom on the Net 2015*, “Angola” country report, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/angola>.

41 Freedom House consultant interviews, May 2016.

42 Daniel Finnan, “Kenyan government asked Hacking Team to attack dissident website,” *Radio France Internationale*, July 17, 2015, http://rfi.my/1jc5C_p.

Bodies). The process requires an identity card or driving license and tax card for national citizens, or a passport with a valid visa for visitors.⁴³

Strong state influence in the ownership structure of Angola's telecoms, particularly mobile phone operators, suggests that the authorities are likely able to wield their influence over service providers and require them to assist in the monitoring of communications, if desired.⁴⁴ Such interweaving of political and business interests through family connections is compounded by the lack of rule of law.

Intimidation and Violence

Violence and harassment against journalists in the traditional media sphere are common in Angola, and online activists are regularly targeted with threats. Two days before Domingos Magno was detained in October 2015 (see Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities), he received warnings through his Facebook page advising him to distance himself from his friends who were known political activists and opposition figures, or face serious consequences.

Technical Attacks

Independent and diaspora news websites have been taken down by technical attacks in the past, though there were no reported incidents during this report's coverage period. In the past, the critical news blog *Maka Angola* was a repeated target of DDoS attacks before receiving technical assistance from Jigsaw's Project Shield (Google), which protects websites from powerful technical attacks.⁴⁵ The investigative journalist Rafael Marques de Morais had also been a frequent target of technical violence via customized malware implanted on his personal laptop,⁴⁶ which international experts linked to a multinational with strong ties to Angolan military officials.⁴⁷ He has since received assistance from digital security non-profits to safeguard his online activities.

Meanwhile, the hacking collective Anonymous claimed responsibility for taking down more than 20 Angolan government websites in response to the convictions of 17 youth activists in March 2016.⁴⁸

43 See, INACOME's website, <http://www.inacom.gov.ao/registo/index.html>

44 For instance, the top adviser to the head of the Intelligence Bureau at the Presidency, General Leopoldino do Nascimento, is also the chairman and shareholder of Unitel. Meanwhile, the head of the Intelligence Bureau, General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias "Kopelipa," holds a majority share (about 59 percent) in Movitel. The deputy CEO and Chief Technology Officer of Unitel, Amílcar Safeca, is the brother of Aristides Safeca, the secretary of ICTs who in turn is a shareholder of Movitel.

45 Alfred Ng, "Google's Project Shield defends free speech from botnet scourge," CNET, September 29, 2016, <https://www.cnet.com/news/google-project-shield-botnet-distributed-denial-of-service-attack-ddos-brian-krebs/>

46 There is a detailed account of how the malware was discovered during an international conference. See: Michael Moynihan, "Hackers are Spying On You: Inside the World of Digital Espionage," *Newsweek*, May 29, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1s29LJY>.

47 Gunter, "Digital Surveillance in Angola and Other 'Less Important' African Countries."

48 "'Anonymous' hackers cyber-attack Angolan government," March 30, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35927474>