

Angola

	2015	2016		
Internet Freedom Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Population:	25 million
Obstacles to Access (0-25)	14	14	Internet Penetration 2015 (ITU):	12 percent
Limits on Content (0-35)	8	7	Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked:	No
Violations of User Rights (0-40)	17	19	Political/Social Content Blocked:	No
TOTAL* (0-100)	39	40	Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested:	Yes
			Press Freedom 2016 Status:	Not Free

* 0=most free, 100=least free

Key Developments: June 2015 – May 2016

- The administrator of a critical Facebook news page was arrested in February 2016, while 17 youth activists were convicted in March on charges of sedition that were substantiated by a single Facebook post (see **Prosecutions and Arrests for Online Activities**).
- SIM card registration requirements were enforced in 2016, threatening mobile phone users' rights to communicate anonymously (see **Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity**).
- Leaked Hacking Team emails in July 2015 led to heightened concerns over unlawful surveillance of online and mobile communications (see **Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity**).

Introduction

Internet freedom in Angola grew more tenuous during the report's coverage period, as the authoritarian government under President José Eduardo dos Santos took a more aggressive stance towards the internet and its users.

While the government did not employ any technical censorship tactics to limit online content, the president publicly condemned social media during his New Year speech in January 2016, threatening to impose restrictions on platforms for allowing citizens to criticize the government. In August 2016, after this report's coverage period, the National Assembly approved a set of bills to create a new state-controlled regulator called the Angolan Social Communications Regulatory Body. Local analysts said the bills will enable the government to control and censor critical information posted on social media or elsewhere online.

Meanwhile, the government ramped up its crackdown on online activities. In October 2015, police arrested Domingos Magno, who administrates the Facebook page for the citizen news website *Central Angola 7311*. Two days prior to Magno's arrest, he received threats on Facebook, leading observers to believe that he was targeted for his online activism and writings, which have caught the attention of the authorities before. Separately, in March 2016, 17 youth activists were sentenced to between two and eight years in prison on charges of sedition. The prosecution's main piece of evidence was a Facebook post naming a hypothetical new cabinet, though it was not clear that any of the defendants wrote it.

Surveillance became a greater concern, as SIM card registration requirements were enforced, reducing user anonymity and increasing the threat of unchecked government surveillance of users' communications. Internal emails leaked from the surveillance company Hacking Team in July 2015 revealed efforts by Angola's intelligence agency to acquire Hacking Team's notorious Remote Control System (RCS) in 2013, further exacerbating surveillance concerns.

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 is low in Angola, with a penetration of 12.4 percent in 2015, according to the latest available data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).¹ Mobile phone penetration, while much higher at 61 percent, is below the continent's average of 76 percent.

High costs remain the main hindrance to increasing ICT access for the majority of Angolans whose median annual per capita income was US\$720.² Unlimited internet subscriptions cost an average of

1 International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2015," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

2 Glenn Phelps and Steve Crabtree, "Worldwide, Median Household Income About \$10,000," Gallup World, December 16, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1j9SsIK>.

US\$150 per month, while USB dongle devices 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 go online at their workplaces, especially in the capital, Luanda.

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 2.7 Mbps (compared to a global average of 6.2 Mbps).³ ICT access is further hindered by the country's fractured electricity system that serves less than 40 percent of the population, mostly in urban areas.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 fiber-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 fiber-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 States.⁶ Construction of SACS is expected to be completed by late 2016.

ICT Market

Senior government officials have direct and indirect shareholder participation in many Angolan companies, including ISPs and mobile phone providers, providing the government with some level of control over the ICT sector. The state oil company, Sonangol, owns three of the country's eighteen ISPs (MSTelcom, Nexus, and ACS) and is a major shareholder in two others, UNITEL and Angola Cables, the former of which is the largest ISP.⁷ The national telecom company, Angola Telecom, in addition to providing its own internet services, is also a major shareholder in Angola Cables, with 51 percent.⁸

3 Akamai, "State of the Internet, Q1 2016 Report," <https://goo.gl/TQH7L7>, accessed August 1, 2016.

4 World Bank, "Access to electricity (% of population)," accessed July 31, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS>.

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

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 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.

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

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,⁹ is held by three entities: Sonangol; a business venture run by Leopoldino do Nascimento, the president's lieutenant general;¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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—that 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.¹² 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.¹³

The 2011 Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services further enhances the government's ability to control the country's ICT sector.¹⁴ 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 goals of poverty alleviation, competitiveness, productivity, employment, and consumer rights.¹⁵

Nevertheless, this legislation includes several provisions that, if implemented with bad intentions, can threaten online freedom.¹⁶ In particular, the law's provision for universal access to information is dependent upon the state's "creation and promotion of conditions that enable all citizens to access ICT."¹⁷ Accordingly, 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 authoritarian 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

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

10 The investment company: Portmill, Investimentos e Telecomunicações.

11 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>.

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

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

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

15 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>.

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

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

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

sector's regulatory body. Reporting to the MCT, INACOM determines the sector's regulations and policies, sets prices for telecommunications services, and issues licenses. On paper, the regulatory body was set up as an independent public institution with both financial and administrative autonomy from the ministry,¹⁹ though in practice, its autonomy is fairly limited. 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 control online content were approved in August 2016 (see Legal Environment).

Limits on Content

Online content remained uncensored and unrestricted during the coverage period, though the government may be seeking assistance on censorship strategies from other authoritarian regimes. Legislation passed in August 2016 may give the government more censorship powers.

Blocking and Filtering

To date, there have been no known incidents of the government blocking or filtering ICT 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 president publicly stated intentions to regulate social media speech during his New Year speech in January 2016. The government subsequently followed through with the passage of bills in August that reportedly empower a new regulatory body with the ability to control online speech (see Legal Environment). In another concerning development, the independent online news outlet *Club-K* reported in July 2015 that the Angolan authorities had been seeking technical assistance from North Korea to restrict access to critical websites.²¹

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 one 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.²²

In May 2015, a court found journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais guilty of criminal defamation for his 2011 book implicating the Angolan military in alleged torture and corruption

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/1N1sn8O>.

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

21 "Regime ensaia sistema para banir sites críticos," *Club-K*, July 27, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1JUHfyf>.

22 Interview by Freedom House consultant in May 2015.

in the country's diamond industry. In addition to a six-month suspended prison sentence, the court ordered all online copies and references to de Morais's book to be removed.²³ Given the impossibility of the task, observers believe the court intended the demand to serve as a threat, leaving open the possibility of holding de Morais responsible if the content remained accessible. However, there were no reports of restrictions on the book's accessibility online since the May 2015 ruling, and it remains available outside Angola.

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. The president and 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,²⁴ alongside the news blogs *Club-K* and *Maka Angola*, which is run by journalist Rafael Marques de Morais. 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 publishes. It 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. For example, in 2015, editors at *Rede Angola*, reportedly received instructions from the authorities not to publish any news about the ongoing defamation case against journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais (see Content Removal).²⁵

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

23 Paul Gallagher, "Celebrities join signatories calling on Angolan president to drop prosecution of blood diamonds author Rafael Marques de Morais," *Independent*, June 2, 2015, <http://ind.pn/1hsfGbM>.

24 *Rede Angola* website: <http://www.redeangola.info/>.

25 Based on interviews with anonymous online journalists and editors.

prevalent, reinforced by the recent arrests of social media users and bloggers.²⁶ 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.²⁷

Digital activism was significant following the arrest of 17 youth activists in June 2015 and helped mobilize protests against their extended pre-trial detention and ill-treatment in prison. Nonetheless, subsequent arrests of protesters and the Facebook page administrator for the news website *Central Angola 7311* 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 passed in August 2016 empowers the government with the ability to control social media and penalize online speech. The administrator of a critical Facebook news page was arrested in February 2016, while 17 youth activists were convicted in March on charges of sedition based on a Facebook post. Leaked Hacking Team emails in July 2015 led to heightened concerns over unlawful surveillance of online and mobile communications.

Legal Environment

The Angolan constitution provides for freedom of expression and the press, though in practice, the authorities routinely flout these 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.²⁸ The 2006 press law holds authors, editors, or directors of a publication criminally liable for libelous content.²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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.

The Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services, enacted in August 2011, provides for citizens’ rights to privacy and security online, among other provisions regulating

26 Based on interviews with internet users and bloggers.

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

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

29 Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=179557.

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

telecommunications. Nevertheless, the law also includes problematic aspects that may infringe on internet access (see ICT Market).³¹

In August 2016, after this report's coverage period, the National Assembly approved a set of bills that creates a new state-controlled regulator called the Angolan Social Communications Regulatory Body.³² Local analysts said the bills will enable the government to control and censor critical information posted on social media or elsewhere online.³³ The legislation came after President dos Santos called for stricter regulation of social media in January 2016.³⁴

Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities

Arrests and prosecutions for online activities have become more frequent in the past few years. In October 2015, one of the main reporters for the "Central Angola 7311" citizen news site and an administrator of the group's Facebook page, Domingos Magno, was arrested en route to hear the State of the Nation address. Charged with "false pretenses" for allegedly possessing a false press pass, he spent one month in prison, during which time he was interrogated in relation to his online activities. He also received threats on Facebook prior to his arrest (see Intimidation and Violence).³⁵ The charges were still pending in mid-2016.

In a high profile case, 17 activists 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 plot to overthrow the government, the prosecution introduced a Facebook post that proposed a hypothetical alternative government, with prominent activists named in key government positions.³⁶ On appeal, the Supreme Court granted the activists conditional release under house arrest in June 2016.

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).³⁷ Investigative reporting over the past few years has unearthed

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

32 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>

33 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/>

34 Divya Kishore, "Media outlets in Angola face tighter restrictions after legal crackdown," *International Business Times*, August 20, 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/media-outlets-angola-face-tighter-restrictions-after-legal-crackdown-1576942>

35 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/>

36 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>

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

different government plans to implement electronic monitoring systems that could track email and other digital communications.³⁸ Recent investigations have revealed increased engagement with the Chinese government on surveillance methods.³⁹

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 2013.⁴⁰ 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 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.⁴¹

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.⁴² 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 is common in Angola, and online activists have been increasingly targeted. 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.

While covering a peaceful protest against the detention of the 17 youth activists in August 2015, Rafael Marques de Morais, who runs the *Maka Angola* blog, was repeatedly detained and released, and his camera equipment was repeatedly seized and returned. Marques was later held at the airport in September 2015 when returning from a trip to South Africa, supposedly due to a computer error involving outdated orders banning his movement out of the country.⁴³

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

39 Freedom House consultant interviews, May 2016.

40 Daniel Finnan, "Kenyan government asked Hacking Team to attack dissident website," *Radio France Internationale*, July 17, 2015, <http://rfi.my/1jc5CVp>.

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

42 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 Movicel. 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 Movicel.

43 Rafael Marques de Morais, "There is no place like home unless you are banned," *Maka Angola* (blog), September 10, 2015, <http://www.makaangola.org/2015/09/there-is-no-place-like-home-unless-you-are-banned/>.

Technical Attacks

Independent and diaspora news websites have been taken down by technical attacks in the past, though there were no reported incidents during the coverage period. In early 2015, the critical news blog *Maka Angola* was attacked and taken down for several days at a time in the lead-up to the criminal defamation case against the outlet's owner, Rafael Marques de Morais (see Content Removal). A frequent target of technical violence, de Morais was previously attacked with customized malware on his personal laptop,⁴⁴ which international experts linked to a multinational with strong ties to Angolan military officials.⁴⁵ Marques now receives technical assistance from Jigsaw's Project Shield, which protects websites from powerful technical attacks.⁴⁶

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 2016.⁴⁷

44 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>.

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

46 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/>

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