

NETH NAHARA, Angola

For Ana da Silva Miguel, a 32-year-old singer and mother with two young children, life in Angola was frustrating and hard. How could a country with so much potential, allow so many of its people to live in poverty?

Fed up with the lack of schools, employment and opportunity, Ana took to TikTok, becoming 'Neth Nahara' – social media influencer and commentator.

Neth shared stories of her life with her followers, good times and bad. She was bubbly, fun and unafraid to speak her truth. Neth encouraged women to seek out education and gain independence. She also bravely shared that she had HIV and gave advice on how to stay healthy.

On 12 August 2023 Neth went live on her TikTok channel, openly criticizing President João Lourenço. The very next day Neth was arrested at her home in Luanda, Angola's capital. She was summarily tried, convicted and sentenced to six months in prison. On 27 September 2023 the sentence was increased to two years.

The Angolan authorities are using a controversial law (criminal code 333) to silence critical voices like Neth. The law was passed during the Covid-19 pandemic – a time when the Angolan people took to the streets to express their discontent with the president's leadership – and makes "insulting" the president a crime.

For the first eight months Neth spent in arbitrary detention she was denied the daily medication needed to treat HIV. Only after repeated requests from her lawyers, was she finally given the necessary medications.

Neth Nahara and others like her are being detained and mistreated because they dare to speak out.

SEND YOUR LETTERS AND CARDS OF HOPE TO NETH

Help keep Neth's spirits up; let her know she is not alone.

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