

LEBER JEWELER INC

ESTABLISHED IN 1921

303 West Erie Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654
TEL 312 944 2900
EMAIL Info@LeberJeweler.com
WEB www.LeberJeweler.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2015
Chicago, IL

Leber Jeweler Inc. continues to express our concerns over efforts by the nation of Angola to criminally prosecute human rights activist and investigative journalist Rafael Marques de Morais on charges of criminal libel against a number of Angolan generals. The state-sponsored trial is a direct result of his research that has linked these senior generals, who are also major shareholders in a diamond mining company, with torture, homicide, and land seizure.

Mr. Marques de Morais documented the alleged crimes and human rights abuses in his 2011 book, "Blood Diamonds: Torture and Corruption in Angola." His groundbreaking work has raised public awareness regarding the violent mistreatment of Angolan artisanal miners in the diamond-mining district of Cuango at the hands of Angola's military and a private security firm employed by diamond mining interests. The book documents 500 cases of torture and 100 killings that took place over an 18-month period in Angola's diamond mining area.

The case initially involved eight charges of libel but during yesterday's first day of trial, prosecution added an additional fifteen charges based on the fact he published the book. Rafael Marques de Morais faces nine years in prison and damages of \$1.2 million if found guilty.

If Angola is to be part of the global community and if Angola's diamonds are being sold by U.S. retailers to U.S. consumers, then Angola has a fundamental obligation to observe the rights of Rafael Marques de Morais to both freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In turn, US retailers have a moral obligation to deeply question their decision to continue to sell diamonds of Angolan origin in light of this politically motivated trial.

Leber Jeweler Inc. calls on the Angolan state prosecutors to drop all charges against Rafael Marques de Morais. In addition, we formally request Angola's President José Eduardo dos Santos order the formation of an independent commission that will fairly and objectively investigate the allegations of human rights abuses committed against artisanal diamond mining communities documented by Rafael Marques de Morais' thorough and rigorous reporting.

For inquires please contact:
Brian Leber
brianleber@leberjeweler.com