

**Open statement calling for charges to be dropped against journalist
Rafael Marques de Morais in Angola**

April 22, 2015

We, the undersigned companies, are concerned over reports of human rights abuses in the diamond sector in Angola, and over efforts by the Angolan Government to criminally prosecute the award-winning journalist and human rights activist Rafael Marques de Morais on charges of libel against a number of Angolan generals.

Mr. Marques currently faces charges of criminal defamation relating to his book, *Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola*. The book alleges hundreds of cases of torture and killings of Angolan villagers involving Angolan military officials and private security companies contracted by mining firms, in the course of diamond mining operations. Generals in the Angolan army are major shareholders of some diamond firms implicated in the book. Mr. Marques faces nine years in prison and damages equivalent to US\$1.2 million on criminal defamation charges relating to the book.

Over 30 human rights, press freedom, and anti-corruption [NGOs worldwide](#) including Amnesty International, Committee to Protect Journalists, Freedom House, and Transparency International have expressed grave concerns over irregularities in the proceedings against him to date, and that Mr. Marques will not receive a fair trial in Angola

As jewelry firms, we wish to work toward a global diamond supply chain free from human rights abuses.

We respectfully call on the Angolan Government to drop all charges against Rafael Marques.

Furthermore, we request the Presidency to 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 reported by Rafael Marques.

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