



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Carlos Manuel de São Vicente's defense strongly rejects the Angolan Constitutional Court's ruling confirming the illegal and unfounded conviction of the Angolan businessman.**

Geneva / Paris, 19 July 2023

The proceedings against Angolan businessman Carlos Manuel de São Vicente ended in an unacceptable ruling by the Angolan Constitutional Court on July 5, confirming his illegal and unfounded conviction.

The Court took no account of the blatant and systematic violations of the most elementary defense rights which have marred these unfair proceedings from the outset, in particular with respect to the presumption of innocence and the right to an independent and impartial judge.

The case is devoid of any incriminating evidence. The conviction of Mr. de São Vicente, who strongly claims his innocence, is based on nothing but a political decision. It is obvious that Mr. de São Vicente, whose proceedings were misleadingly depicted in Angolan media, is being used as a scapegoat to divert the Angolan people's attention from the catastrophic situation of the country.

In addition, the Constitutional Court ignored numerous significant irregularities of the proceedings, in particular the retroactive application of criminal laws, the impossibility to convict someone who is not a public officer for embezzlement, or the prohibition on Mr. de São Vicente's lawyer from assisting him during his trial.

François Zimeray, Jessica Finelle and all of Mr. de São Vicente's lawyers, who were able to witness at first hand the major irregularities in the proceedings, strongly condemn this decision: « We are deeply disappointed that the Angolan justice system has been unable to ensure a fair trial for a man who has invested so much in his country. We regret that the local authorities did not have the courage to note the illegality of the practices applied and to offer, not only to Mr. de São Vicente, but also to the entire Angolan people, a fair and respectable justice ».

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