

Blood Diamond Writer Rafael Marques de Morais Faces Jail Time

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Renowned Angolan Journalist and Author, [Rafael Marques de Morais](#), may be spending jail time for a book he wrote on the “blood diamond trade.” The book, “Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola” put Mr. de Morais in hot water for linking and defaming some military generals and rulers. He will go on trial Tuesday, charged with defamation.

De Morais returned from the UK on Friday, after attending the [Index on Censorship](#) awards, to face the charges brought against him by seven generals and their business associates, including the Minister of State and head of the intelligence bureau of the president, General Kopelipa, who he claimed, in the book, were connected to the illegal trade.

The book, released in 2011, made wide reports of allegations of murder, mistreatment of entire communities, and intimidation of those living in the diamond-mining areas of Angola’s Lundas region. The book made reference to the murder of 100 villagers and 500 cases of torture. Mr. de Morais first sued the generals for crimes against humanity, but the general’s counter-sued for £1.1m for defamation.

The generals, including three former joint-chiefs of staff of the armed forces, originally tried to file for charges in Portugal but the judge threw out the claim saying that the author “did not intend to offend, but to inform.”

Mr. de Morais, 43, made the book freely available to read or download in Angola, after it sold out almost immediately in Portugal, where critics claimed that they believed some of the involved parties might have purchased some of the many copies. He plans to distribute more copies during his trial this weekend.

“Whatever the generals decide to do to me this week they will only add more wood to the fire.”

This is not the first run in with Angolan law enforcement that Mr. de Morais has had. Mr. de Morais is a long time critic of the [Angolan President José Eduardo de Santos](#) and his family, and was jailed for 43 days, including several days in solitary confinement with no food or water in 1999 after publishing another controversial book on the ruling parties there and another controversial award-winning report on the President’s daughter, the richest woman in Africa, billionaire, Ms. Dos Santos.

When asked about the trial looming overhead, Mr. de Morais remained cheerful.

“Whatever the outcome, the generals and their associates are bound to lose,” he said.

“They have all the money, they have all the power. The truth is on my side and the government is not going to get away with it.”

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