

Dos Santos charged and associate in suspected suicide

Angola's billionaire former first daughter Isabel dos Santos was yesterday charged with money laundering and mismanagement during her stewardship of state-owned oil firm Sonangol. And in another major development, a Portuguese banker targeted in the investigation has been found dead in his Lisbon home after an apparent suicide. A report on the [EWN](#) site notes that leaked documents indicate the daughter of ex-President Jose Eduardo dos Santos plundered state coffers to build her fortune which is estimated at \$2.1bn. 'Isabel dos Santos is accused of mismanagement and embezzlement of funds during her tenure at Sonangol and is thus charged in the first instance with the **crimes of money laundering, influence peddling, harmful management ... forgery of documents, among other economic crimes**,' said prosecutor-general Helder Pitta Gros. The report notes that Gros said Dos Santos was among five suspects, all of whom were currently residing abroad. Investigations into her 18-month tenure as Sonangol head from June 2016 were opened after her successor Carlos Saturnino raised the alarm about 'irregular money transfers' and other shady procedures. Gros arrived in Lisbon yesterday to meet with his Portuguese counterpart.

Dos Santos yesterday rejected the claims. 'The allegations which have been made against me over the last few days are extremely misleading and untrue,' she said in a statement issued through a public relations firm in London. A second report on the [EWN](#) site notes that she said **'I am ready to fight through the international courts to defend my good name'**. Prosecutors want the billionaire and other suspects to return home for questioning. Most of the former President's family have moved abroad since he stepped down in 2017, and are believed to mostly spend time between London and Portugal.

The body of Nuno Ribeiro da Cunha was found in his Lisbon home on Wednesday night 'and all indications point to a suicide'. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that Da Cunha who was cited in the 'Luanda Leaks' documents worked for Eurobic bank in which Dos Santos is the main shareholder. **He was the head of private banking at Eurobic and Dos Santos' account manager.**

Shocked at graft allegations outlined in the scandal, some Angolans want Dos Santos to face justice in a country reeling from the cronyism and iron-fisted rule of her father. However, others suspect they are being subjected to 'a political smokescreen'. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that they believe the focus on the Dos Santos family means other elites who benefited under Jose Eduardo dos Santos 'can go untouched'. Dubbed 'The Princess' by many Angolans, she has been named Africa's richest woman by *Forbes* magazine, with estimated assets of around \$2.1bn. '(Dos Santos) and her father stole a lot,' said Tatiana dos Santos, a 32-year-old street vendor in Luanda. Djamila Bibiana, who sells second-hand clothes in the same city, said **'Dos Santos should come here to be arrested and return the money her father stole'**. However, David Mendes, a member of the main opposition party Unita, believes Angolans face bigger problems than the graft scandal. 'I think we are all being destroyed by Isabel,' he said. As previously reported in [Legalbrief Today](#), prosecutors last month froze bank accounts and assets owned by Dos Santos and her husband Sindika Dokolo as part of a probe into an alleged billion-dollar embezzlement.