



Angola – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 March 2011.

Information on whether the following languages Lingala and Bakongo/Kicongo are spoken in Angola.

A report by the *Home Office UK Border Agency* under the heading 'Geography' states:

"Angola is located in southern Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also has borders with the Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Zambia. The overall land area of the country is 1,246,700 sq km. The ethnic groups that make up the Angolan population are the Ovimbundu (37%), Kimbundu (25%), Bakongo (13%), mestico (mixed European and native African) (2%), European (1%), and other ethnic groups (22%)..."(United Kingdom Border Agency (1 September 2010) *Country of Origin Information Report – Angola pg. 6 par. 1.02*)

It also states:

"According to Travlang.com (accessed on 16 June 2010), the official language of Angola is Portuguese. Other languages spoken include Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kongo, Chokwe, Lwena and Lunda. As regards the languages spoken by the people of Cabinda, Ethnologue (accessed on 22 July 2010) lists Koongo (aka Kongo, Kikongo, Kikoongo, Congo, Cabinda) and Yombe (aka Kiyombe, Kiombi, Lombe and Bayombe) as the languages spoken in that province. According to a Global Security report about Cabinda, "Cabindês is the National Language of Cabinda. However, a large number of Cabinda Citizens speak French. The Cabindans at least, for the literate among them, are 90% French speaking and only 10% speak Portuguese." (ibid)

A report by the *United States Department of State* states:

"Ethnic groups: Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, mixed racial 2%, European 1%.
Languages: Portuguese (official), Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kikongo, and others." (United States Department of State (28 December 2010) *Background Note: Angola*)

In a section titled 'People' it states

"Estimates of Angola's population vary, as there has been no census since 1970, but it is generally estimated at 17 million. Angola has three main ethnic groups, each speaking a Bantu language: Umbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, and Kikongo 13%. Other groups include Chokwe, Lunda, Ganguela, Nhaneca-Humbe, Ambo, Herero, and Xindunga. In addition, mixed racial (European and African) people amount to about 2%, with a small (1%) population of whites, mainly ethnic Portuguese. Portuguese make up the largest non-Angolan population, with at least 30,000 (though many native-born Angolans can

claim Portuguese nationality under Portuguese law). Portuguese is both the official and predominant language.” (ibid)

Another report by the *United States Department of State* under the heading ‘Elections and Political Participation’ states:

“The country has three dominant ethnolinguistic groups: the Ovimbundu, Mbundu, and the Bakongo, which together constitute approximately 77 percent of the population. Other groups also were represented in government. There were six members of smaller ethnic groups in the parliament and one minority member in the cabinet who is Chokwe. The majority of political parties had limited national constituencies, but all parties were prohibited by law from limiting party membership based on ethnicity, race, or gender.” (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Angola*)

A report by *Ethnologue Languages of the World* states:

“Republic of Angola, República de Angola. 16,095,000. National or official languages: Portuguese, Kikongo, Kimbundu, Mbunda, Chokwe, Oshiwambo. Literacy rate: 30%. Information mainly from J. Bendor-Samuel and Hartell 1989; Redinha 1970. Blind population: 12,000. The number of individual languages listed for Angola is 42. Of those, 41 are living languages and 1 has no known speakers.” (Ethnologue Languages of the World (Undated) *Languages of Angola*)

A report by *Minority Rights Group International* states:

“...Angola's tiny Cabinda province, in the northwest, is separated from the rest of Angola by a sliver of the Democratic Republic of Congo that follows the Congo River's run to the sea. Cabinda is predominantly home to the Bakongo minority, and is also where the preponderance of the country's oil wealth lies...” (Minority Rights Group International (2007) *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Angola: Overview*)

In a section titled ‘Peoples’ it states:

“Main languages: umBundu, kiMbundu, kiKongo, uChokwe, Portuguese (official)

Ethnic groups include Ovimbundu 4.5 million (37%), Mbundu (25%), Bakongo 1.7 million (14%), Lunda-Chokwe (8%), Nyaneka-Nkumbi (3%), Ambo (2%), Mestiço (2%), Herero (up to 0.5%), San 3,600 and Kwisi (up to 0.5%). (data: Ovimbundu, Mbundu, Bakongo, Mestiço – CIA World Factbook 2006 edition; Lunda-Chokwe, Nyaneka-Nkumbi, Ambo, Herero (1998) – countrystudies.us/Angola)

The majority of today's Angolans are Bantu peoples, including the Ovimbundu, Mbundu, and Bakongo, while the San are descendents of the indigenous Khoisan people.” (ibid)

References:

Ethnologue Languages of the World (Undated) *Languages of Angola*
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=AO

(Accessed 11 March 2011)

United Kingdom Border Agency (1 September 2010) *Country of Origin Information Report – Angola*

<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/10/angola-010910.doc>

(Accessed 11 March 2011)

Minority Rights Group International (2007) *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Angola: Overview*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=4954ce2523>

(Accessed 11 March 2011)

United States Department of State (28 December 2010) *Background Note: Angola*

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6619.htm>

(Accessed 11 March 2011)

United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Angola*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135937.htm>

(Accessed 11 March 2011)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Electronic Immigration Network (EIN)

Ethnologue

European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI)

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Freedom House

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

United Kingdom Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

United States Department of State