

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

ANGOLA

25 MARCH 2008

Border and Immigration Agency
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE

Contents

	Page
PREFACE	3
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ANGOLA	5
Geography	5
Recent history	
Recent events and political developments	
Basic economic facts	
Human Rights	
INDEX TO KEY SOURCE DOCUMENTS	10
Key facts and geography	10
Maps	10
History	
Politics and recent developments	11
The Economy	11
Human Rights – general	
Human Rights – specific issues	12
Arrest and detention	
Children	12
Citizenship and nationality	12
Corruption	
Death penalty	12
Disability	
Employment rights	
Ethnic groups	
Foreign refugees	
Freedom of movement	
Freedom of religion	
Freedom of speech and media	
Human Rights institutions, organisations and activists	
Humanitarian Issues	
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	
Judiciary	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons	14
Medical issues	
Military service	
Political affiliation	
Prison conditions	
Security forces	15
Security situation	
Terrorism	
Trafficking	
Women	
	-
REFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL	17

Preface

This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on Angola has been produced by COI Service, Border and Immigration Agency (BIA), for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. It provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The COI Key Documents includes information available up to 11 March 2008.

- The COI Key Documents is an indexed list of key reports, papers and articles produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources. It does not contain any BIA opinion or policy.
- For BIA users, the COI Key Documents provides direct electronic access to each source referred to in the document, via a link on the source numbers in the index and list of sources. For the benefit of external users, the relevant web link has also been included, together with the date that the link was accessed.
- iv As noted above, the documents identified concentrate mainly on human rights issues. By way of introduction, brief background information on Angola is also provided. Please note, this background material is not intended to provide a summary of the material contained in the documents listed.
- v This COI Key Documents and the documents listed are publicly disclosable.
- vi Any comments regarding this COI Key Documents or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to COI Service as below.

Country of Origin Information Service Border and Immigration Agency Apollo House 36 Wellesley Road Croydon CR9 3RR United Kingdom

Email: cois@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html

ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

vii. The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) was established in 2003 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the BIA's country of origin information material. The APCI welcomes all feedback on the BIA's COI Reports, Key Documents and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk

- viii. In the course of its work, the APCI reviews the content of selected BIA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. The APCI may or may not have reviewed this particular document. At the following link is a list of the COI Reports and other documents which have, to date, been reviewed by the APCI: www.apci.org.uk/reviewed-documents.html
- ix. Please note: It is not the function of the APCI to endorse any BIA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

Advisory Panel on Country Information:

Email: apci@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.apci.org.uk

Background information on Angola

Full Country Name: The Republic of Angola [2c]

Area: Total area 1,246,700 sq. km [2c] **Population:** 15,500,000 (2005 est) [2c]

Capital City: Luanda [2c]

People: Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, mixed ethnicity 2%,

European 1%. [2c]

Languages: Portuguese (official). Ovimbundu, Kimbundu, Bakongo, and others. [2c] **Religions:** (2001 official estimate) Roman Catholic 68%, various Protestant 20%,

indigenous beliefs 12%. [2c]

Major Political Parties: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Social Renewal Party (PRS), National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), Party for Democratic Progress – Angola National Alliance (PDP-ANA), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), Party of the Alliance of Youth, Workers and Peasants (PAJOCA), Liberal Democratic Party (PLD), Democratic Alliance (AD), Angolan Democratic Forum (FDA), Social Democratic Party (PSD), Front for Democracy (FPD), and the Angolan National Democratic Party (PNDA). [2c1]

Government: Republic. [2c]

(The US State Dept Background Note on Angola - December 2007 version) [2c]

Head of State: President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos [4]

Currency: 1 Kwanza (Kz) = 100 centimos [4]

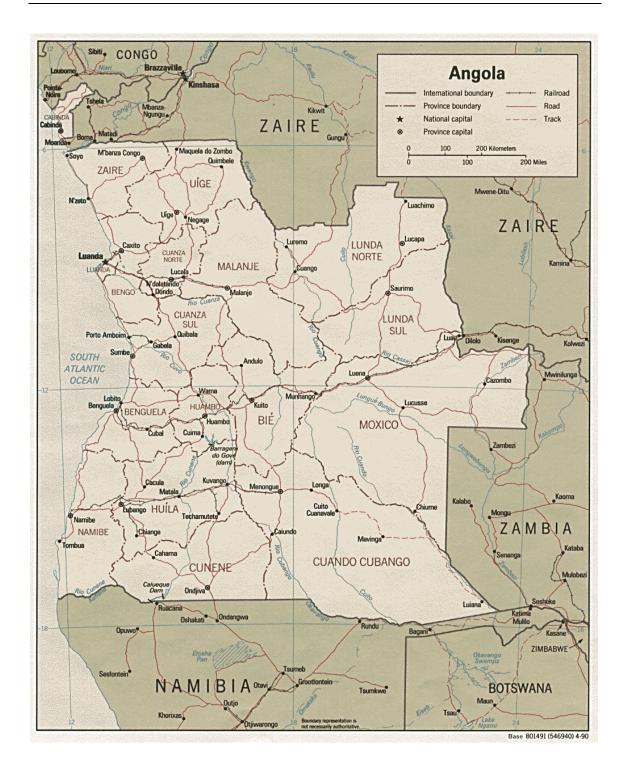
Membership of International Groupings/Organisations: United Nations, Southern African Development Community, African Union, Economic Community of Central African States, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, Organisation of Lusophone African countries. [4]

(The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile on Angola - December 2007 version) [4]

GEOGRAPHY

The US State Dept Background Note on Angola (December 2007 version) states that:

"Angola is located on the South Atlantic Coast of West Africa between Namibia and the Republic of the Congo. It is also bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north and east and Zambia to the east. The country is divided into an arid coastal strip stretching from Namibia to Luanda; a wet, interior highland; a dry savanna in the interior south and southeast; and rain forest in the north and in Cabinda. The upper reaches of the Zambezi River pass through Angola, and several tributaries of the Congo River have their sources in Angola." [2a]



RECENT HISTORY

Europa World Online states that:

"Formerly a Portuguese colony, Angola became an overseas province in 1951. African nationalist groups began to form in the 1950s and 1960s, including the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) in 1962 and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) in 1966. Severe repression followed an unsuccessful nationalist rebellion in 1961, but, after a new wave of fighting in 1966, nationalist guerrilla groups were able to establish military and political control in large parts of eastern Angola and to press westward. Following the April 1974 *coup d'état* in Portugal, Angola's right to independence was recognized."

"In January 1975 a transitional Government was established, comprising representatives of the MPLA, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), UNITA and the Portuguese Government. However, following violent clashes between the MPLA and the FNLA, by the second half of 1975 control of Angola was effectively divided between the three major nationalist groups, each aided by foreign powers. The MPLA (which held the capital) was supported by the USSR and Cuba, the FNLA by Zaire and Western powers (including the USA), while UNITA was backed by South African forces. The FNLA and UNITA formed a united front to fight the MPLA."

"The Portuguese Government proclaimed Angola independent from 11 November 1975, transferring sovereignty to the 'Angolan people' rather than to any of the liberation movements. The MPLA proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola in Luanda under the presidency of Dr Agostinho Neto. The FNLA and UNITA proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Angola, based in Nova Lisboa (renamed Huambo)." [1]

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (December 2007 version) Country Profile on Angola states that:

"On independence day [11 November 1975] the MPLA controlled the capital. They declared themselves the government and imposed a one-party constitution to be guided by Marxist-Leninism. The other movements retreated to their rural bases. The MPLA's victory was secured with military hardware from the Soviet Union and Cuban troops. The FNLA and UNITA had secured less help from their backers, the USA, apartheid South Africa and Mobutu's Zaire. Although the FNLA soon gave up the armed struggle, UNITA continued to fight a long guerilla war which was to last until 2002. Throughout this period, UNITA moved with impunity in the countryside while the MPLA controlled the towns."

"Two attempts at brokering a peace (the Bicesse Accords of May 1991 and the Lusaka Protocol of 1994) failed. Both were monitored by small UN peacekeeping forces, UNAVEM I and II. The UN Security Council also imposed a series of sanctions on UNITA from 1993. These also failed to stop the fighting. The MPLA therefore decided at its Party Congress in December 1998 to pursue a final military offensive against UNITA. It asked the UN to leave. After 3 years of fighting, government forces succeeded, firstly by killing UNITA's leaders in February 2002 and subsequently by coming to an agreement with UNITA commanders to end the war: the Luanda Memorandum of Understanding of April 2002. Isaias Samakuva was subsequently elected the new UNITA leader at the Party's 9th Congress in 2003. He was re-elected in July 2007." [4]

Angola 25 March 2008

RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (December 2007 version) Country Profile on Angola states that:

"Although peace has been achieved on the mainland, the problem of [the coastal province of] Cabinda remains to be resolved. A low level guerrilla war has been conducted for over 30 years by rebel groups fighting for the independence of the Province. The Angolan government has used alternately negotiations and military force to no avail. A ceasefire agreement was signed on 1 August 2006 but it did not attract the support of all the Cabindan factions."

"...following the passage of new Election Laws in April 2005, Angolans had anticipated that elections would follow no later than September 2006. However, voter registration only started in November 2006 and finished in September 2007. The government has since announced that Legislative elections will take place in 2008 and Presidential elections in 2009." [4]

BASIC ECONOMIC FACTS

GDP: (2006 estimate using purchasing power parity) US\$53.9 billion [2c] **GDP per head:** (2006 estimate using purchasing power parity) US\$3,399 [2c]

Annual real GDP growth rate: (2006 estimate) 15.3% [2c]

Average inflation rate: 12.3% [2c]

Industries: Petroleum drilling and refining, mining, cement, basic metal products, fish processing, food processing, brewing, tobacco products, sugar refining, textiles [2c] Major trading partners: United States, China, France, South Korea, Portugal, South Africa, Brazil [2c]

(The US State Dept Background Note on Angola - December 2007 version) [2c]

The US State Dept Background Note on Angola (December 2007 version) states that:

"Angola has a fast-growing economy largely due to a major oil boom, but it also ranks in the bottom 10% of most socioeconomic indicators. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects that Angola's real GDP will increase by 31.4% in 2007, although the Angolan Government in July reduced its own projection for 2007 real GDP growth to 19.8%. Aside from the oil sector and diamonds, Angola is recovering from 27 years of nearly continuous warfare, corruption, and economic mismanagement. Despite abundant natural resources, and rising per capita GDP, it was ranked 161 out of 177 countries on the 2006 UN Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index. Subsistence agriculture sustains one-third of the population." [2c]

"By contrast, the rapidly expanding petroleum industry – now producing approximately 1.7 million barrels per day (bpd), behind only Nigeria in Africa – accounts for 51.7% of GNP, 9% of exports, and 80% of government revenues." [2c]

HUMAN RIGHTS

The USSD 2007 Human Rights Report on Angola, published in March 2008, states that:

"The [Angolan] government's human rights record [in 2007] remained poor, and there were numerous serious problems. Human rights abuses included: the abridgement of citizens' right to elect officials at all levels; unlawful killings by [the] police, military, and private security forces; torture, beatings, and harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; corruption and impunity; arbitrary arrest and detention; an inefficient and overburdened judicial system; lengthy pretrial detention; lack of due process; restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, including self-censorship, and assembly; forced evictions without compensation; and discrimination and domestic violence and abuse against women and children." [2a]

The Human Rights Watch 2008 Report on Angola, published in January 2008, states that:

"Elections in Angola – the first since 1992 – were postponed yet again in 2007. Legislative elections are now scheduled to take place in 2008 and a presidential election 2009, but no specific dates have been announced." [5a]

"Since the end of the civil war in 2002, increasing oil revenues, trade, and foreign investment, along with a greater role in international and regional affairs, have helped insulate Angola from international criticism regarding good governance and human rights. Despite the nation's strong economic growth – forecast to be the world's highest in 2007 – the majority of Angolans continue to live in dire poverty. Since 2001 thousands of Angolans have been forcibly evicted from their homes by the government to make way for development projects. As of yet, most have not received compensation or alternative housing. The environment for civil society organizations and the media grew increasingly hostile in 2007, despite participation of civil society organizations in civic education and observation of voter registration." [5a]

"...several provisions of the press law, the electoral laws, the Law on Access to Administrative Documents, and the Criminal Code, are highly restrictive. Defamation is still criminalized and journalists can incur prison sentences of up to two years if found guilty. Many of the legal limitations on media freedom and access to information are vaguely formulated and can easily intimidate journalists and hamper their ability to criticize the government." [5a]

"Human Rights Watch and the Angolan organization SOS Habitat have documented the forced eviction of an estimated 30,000 people between 2002 and 2006. Throughout 2007 Human Rights Watch continued to receive reports of residents whose houses were demolished without notice or compensation in Luanda and other cities. In August [2007] [the] police evicted approximately 70 people, including street children, from an informal settlement in Lobito, Benguela province, without notice or stated reason or any provision for their relocation. The Public Prosecutor's Office initiated an investigation into allegations of police brutality connected to the eviction; the results of the investigation are still pending at this writing." [5a]

Angola 25 March 2008

Regarding the reasons why the government carried out forced evictions from 2002 to 2006, a Human Rights News report, dated 15 May 2007, published by Human Rights Watch, states:

"The [Angolan] government justifies the evictions on the grounds that it needs the land for public interest development projects or that it is removing alleged trespassers from state land. While the government claims that it is trying to improve living conditions in Luanda, it is, in fact, making such conditions worse for the economically vulnerable by evicting thousands of them and by depriving them of the necessary assistance to help the evictees reestablish elsewhere."" [5d]

The USSD 2007 International Religious Freedom Report on Angola states that:

"The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. There was no change in status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion."

"...Christianity is the religion of the vast majority of the population, with Roman Catholicism as the largest single religious group. The Catholic Church estimates that 55 percent of the population is Catholic, but this figure can not be verified. Data from the National Institute for Religious Affairs (INAR), under the Ministry of Culture, indicate the major Protestant traditions, including the Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists (United Church of Christ), and Assemblies of God, are present in the country but are declining in strength, with an estimated membership of 10 percent of the population. African Christian denominations are gaining membership and 25 percent of the population are believed to be followers. Five percent are believed to belong to the various Brazilian Evangelical churches. A small portion of the rural population practices animism or traditional indigenous religions. There is also a small Muslim community, estimated at 80-90,000 adherents, composed largely of migrants from West Africa and families of Lebanese extraction. There were few declared atheists in the country." [2b]

25 MARCH 2008 ANGOLA

Index to key source documents

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	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
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	[6b]	BBC News Online: Angola Timeline, 5 January 2008 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1839740.st m
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HUMAN RIGHTS - GENERAL:	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
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	[16]	

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(IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)		
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DEATH PENALTY	[8b]	Amnesty International, Abolitionist and Retentionist countries, (19 September 2007 version) http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/abolitionist-and-retentionist-countries

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ETHNIC GROUPS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
FREEDOM OF RELIGION	[1a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
	[16]	Angola section of the Freedom in the World 2007 Report http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7123
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HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
ACTIVISTS	[16]	Angola section of the Freedom in the World 2007 Report http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7123

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
	[24]	United Nations IRIN Angola Humanitarian Country Profile, March 2007 version http://irinnews.org/country.aspx?Country Code=AO&RegionCode=SAF
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
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Mu ITADY CEDVICE	[45]	
MILITARY SERVICE	[15]	War Resisters' International, Angola: Refusing to Bear Arms, 6 July 1998 http://www.wri-irg.org/co/rtba/angola.htm
Day man	FO-1	
POLITICAL AFFILIATION	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
	[16]	Angola section of the Freedom in the World 2007 Report http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7123
PRISON CONDITIONS	[2a]	United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Angola, 11 March 2008 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100465.htm
	[16]	Angola section of the Freedom in the World 2007 Report http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&ye
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