



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION KEY DOCUMENTS

ANGOLA

14 JANUARY 2010

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Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information Key Documents (COI Key Documents) on *Angola* has been produced by COI Service, UK Border Agency (UKBA), 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 1 December 2009. It was issued on 14 January 2010.
- ii 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 UKBA opinion or policy.
- iii For UK Border Agency 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 *[country]* 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.

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INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- vii The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Chief Inspector of the UK Border Agency to make recommendations to him about the content of the UKBA's country of origin information material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on UKBA's COI Reports, COI Key Documents and other country of origin information material. Information about the IAGCI's work can be found on the Chief Inspector's website at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk>

- viii In the course of its work, the IAGCI reviews the content of selected UKBA COI documents and makes recommendations specific to those documents and of a more general nature. A list of the COI Reports and other documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI or the Advisory Panel on Country Information (the independent organisation which monitored UKBA's COI material from September 2003 to October 2008) is available at <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- ix Please note: it is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any UKBA material or procedures. Some of the material examined by the Group relates to countries designated or proposed for designation to the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Group'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.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ANGOLA

Full Country Name: The Republic of Angola (US State Department Background Note on Angola – September 2009 version) [2c]

Area: Total area 1,246,700 sq. km (481,400 sq. mi.) [2c]

Population: 17,000,000 (2008 est) [2c]

Capital City: Luanda [2c]

People: Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, mixed racial 2%, European 1%. [2c]

Languages: Portuguese (official), Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kikongo, and others. [2c]

Religions: (2001 official estimate) Roman Catholic 68%, various Protestant 20%, indigenous beliefs 12%. [2c]

Political Parties: 78 with legal status; in 2008 5 won seats in the National Assembly.

Ruling Party: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). *Opposition:* National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Social Renewal Party (PRS), National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), and the coalition New Democracy (ND). [2c]

Government: Republic. [2c]

(The US State Dept Background Note on Angola - September 2009 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 (UN), Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), Organisation of Lusophone African countries (PALOP). [4]

(The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile on Angola, last reviewed 25 June 2009) [4]

GEOGRAPHY

The US State Dept Background Note on Angola (September 2009 version) stated that:

“Angola is located on the South Atlantic Coast of West Africa between Namibia on the south and, with the exception of the enclave of Cabinda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C) on the north; the D.R.C and Zambia form the eastern boundary. Cabinda is bounded by the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) on the north and east and by the D.R.C on the south. 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.” [2c]

United Nations Map of Angola - 2008



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RECENT HISTORY

Europa World Online, accessed 30 October 2009, stated 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 Country Profile on Angola (last reviewed 25 June 2009) 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]

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RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile on Angola (last reviewed 25 June 2009) stated 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 alternately tried 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.”

“...Parliamentary elections were held in September 2008. The MPLA won 82% of the vote. With the resulting two-thirds majority in Parliament they will be able to change the constitution. The main opposition party UNITA won 10%, with the remaining voters divided between other parties and coalitions. Presidential elections are expected to follow in 2009 or 2010.” [4]

An IRIN article of 20 October 2009, ‘Angola-DRC: Humanitarian crisis now unfolding’, observed that:

“Tit-for-tat expulsions since August 2009 by the governments of Angola and DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] have led to more than 32,000 Angolans being repatriated to Angola, and about 18,800 Congolese nationals being deported from Angola. Following talks on 13 October in the DRC capital, Kinshasa, both countries agreed to ‘immediately stop the expulsions of citizens of their respective states.’

“...During Angola’s almost three decades of civil war, which ended in 2002, the DRC hosted more than 100,000 Angolan refugees; since then, thousands of undocumented Congolese migrants-mostly thought to be illegal diamond diggers-have been working in Angola. The ebb and flow of people expelled from both sides of the border has become a common spat between the neighbours.” [24b]

BASIC ECONOMIC FACTS

GDP: (2008 est.) US\$84 billion (US State Department Background Note on Angola – September 2009 version) [2c]

GDP per head: (2007) \$4,941 [2c]

Annual real GDP growth rate: (2008 est.) 16.4% [2c]

Average inflation rate: (2008) 13.2% [2c]

Industries: Petroleum drilling and refining, mining, cement, fish processing, food processing, brewing, tobacco products, sugar, textiles, ship repair. [2c]

Major trading partners: United States, Portugal, South Korea, China, Brazil, South Africa, France. [2c]

(The US State Dept Background Note on Angola - September 2009 version) [2c]

The US State Dept Background Note on Angola (September 2009 version) noted that:

“Despite a fast-growing economy largely due to a major oil boom, Angola ranks in the bottom 10% of most socioeconomic indicators. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that Angola’s real GDP increased by 16% in 2008. Angola is still recovering

from 27 years of nearly continuous warfare, and it remains beset by corruption and economic mismanagement. Despite abundant natural resources and rising per capita GDP, it was ranked 157 out of 179 countries on the 2008 UN Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index. Subsistence agriculture sustains one-third of the population. Angola's crude oil production is now the second highest in Africa. Crude oil accounted for 83% of GDP, 95% of exports, and 83 % of government revenues in 2008. Angola also produces 40,000 bpd [barrels per day] of locally refined oil." [2c]

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HUMAN RIGHTS

OVERVIEW

The USSD 2008 Human Rights Report on Angola, published 25 February 2009, stated that:

“The government's human rights record 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 police, military, and private security forces; security force torture, beatings, and rape; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; official corruption and impunity; judicial inefficiency and lack of independence; lengthy pretrial detention; lack of due process; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association; forced evictions without compensation; and discrimination, violence, and abuse perpetrated against women and children..” [2a]

CABINDA

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) World Report, published 14 January 2009, recorded that:

“Since 1975 rebels in the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda have been fighting for independence. A 2006 peace agreement was meant to end the conflict. However, many local people reject it as they felt excluded from peace talks. Sporadic armed clashes continue in the interior. During the elections, international electoral observers remained near the provincial capital for security reasons. European Parliament observers publicly reported massive irregularities during the vote.

“Freedom of association and expression in Cabinda continues to be particularly restrictive. The police regularly and arbitrarily arrest members of catholic groups critical of the terms of the peace agreement and of the new bishop appointed in 2005. In 2008, at least 14 civilians were accused of ‘crimes against the security of the state,’ and some have reportedly been mistreated in military detention. On September 16, the Military Court in Cabinda sentenced former Voice of America reporter Fernando Lelo to 12 years in imprisonment for armed rebellion and ‘crimes against the security of the state.’ Though a civilian, he was arrested in November 2007 and tried before a Military Court in a hearing at which no evidence was produced to sustain the accusations against him. According to defense lawyers, the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) soldiers convicted with Lelo were tortured while in military detention. The arbitrary nature of these detentions, the alleged torture, and lack of a fair trial suggest the convictions were intended to intimidate people and discourage criticism of the peace agreement.” [5a]

The USSD 2008 Report on Human Rights Practices noted:

“The Memorandum of Understanding for Peace and Reconciliation for Cabinda Province, signed in 2006, largely brought an end to the insurgency in the province, although sporadic attacks by dissident factions of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) and counter-insurgency operations by the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) continued during the year [2008]. In 2007 there was one report of an unlawful killing in Cabinda that could be linked to FAA soldiers. The incident remained under investigation.”

The same USSD report observed that:

“...Abuses by the army continued. There were NGO and media reports of violence by security forces in Cabinda and Lunda Norte. In Cabinda FAA troops illegally detained, beat, or threatened citizens suspected of FLEC collaboration during anti-insurgency

operations, according to human rights NGOs... Cabinda residents continued to report that security forces detained persons suspected of FLEC activity or collaboration. NGOs reported that public security forces held civilians incommunicado in military and police prisons in Cabinda and Luanda, where the UNWGAD and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were denied permission to visit." [2a]

The Human Rights Watch Report of 22 June 2009, 'They Put Me in the Hole', Military Detention, Torture and Lack of Due Process in Cabinda' recorded:

"At least 38 people who have been arrested by Angolan military and intelligence officials in Cabinda, Angola's oil-rich enclave, from September 2007 to March 2009 have been subjected to torture and cruel or inhumane treatment in military custody and been denied basic due process rights as well as the right to a fair trial. The detainees are accused by the authorities of involvement in armed opposition in Cabinda in the context of a separatist insurgency." [5e]

Angolan government sources responded to the contents of the HRW report (referred to in the paragraph above) in an article of 4 July 2009 in Afrique En Ligne, 'Angola Denies Human Rights Violations in Cabinda', saying: "...[Antonio Bento] Bembe [Angolan minister without portfolio, responsible for human rights] visited prisons in Cabinda where officials and some magistrates had confirmed that there was no evidence of human rights violations in the region." [25]

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The USSD 2008 Report noted that "The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and of the press; however, government regulations and minimal independent media outside of Luanda limited these rights in practice. Human rights activists and journalists practiced self-censorship. For example, authorities cancelled live radio call-in shows in the weeks leading up to the September legislative elections." [2a]

The Amnesty International (AI) Report 2009, published 14 May 2009, stated that "Restrictions on freedom of expression of journalists continued. A number of journalists faced harassment in the form of defamation cases. In July the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Media jointly ordered the private radio station Rádio Despertar to suspend its broadcasts for 180 days, on the grounds that the station's broadcasting range exceeded that stipulated in its licence." [8a]

The HRW World Report observed:

"Since late 2007 the media environment has deteriorated in Angola. Legislation required to implement crucial parts of a press law enacted in May 2006, which would bring improvements to the legal protection of freedom of expression and access to information, was not passed. Private radio stations cannot broadcast nationwide and there is no independent scrutiny of the public media, which remains biased in favor of the ruling party. During 2008 several state media journalists were suspended because they had criticized the government in public debates.

"Defamation remains a criminal offence. Many of the legal provisions to protect media freedom and access to information are vaguely formulated, which can intimidate journalists and hamper their ability to criticize the government." [5a]

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The USSD 2008 Report stated:

“Violence against women was common and pervasive, particularly in urban areas. Domestic violence is not illegal; however, the government occasionally prosecuted it under rape, assault, and battery laws. A 2007 preliminary study on domestic violence in Luanda indicated that 78 percent of women had experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. While 27 percent of the total reported abuse in the 12 months preceding the study, 62 percent of women living in the poor outskirts of Luanda reported abuse during the preceding year. Common-law husbands or boyfriends perpetrated the majority of violence. The Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women (MINFAMU) operated a program with the Angolan Bar Association to give free legal assistance to abused women; the ministry also opened counseling centers to help families cope with domestic abuse. Statistics on prosecutions for violence against women under these laws during the year were not available.” [2a]

IPS News recorded in an article of 29 April 2009, ‘Angola: No law to stop domestic violence’:

“There are no official statistics on the level of domestic violence in the country, but a survey by the Angolan Women’s Organisation (OMA), the women’s wing of the country’s ruling party, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, in peri-urban Cazenga noted nearly 4,000 incidents in 2008 - about ten attacks a day... The day-to-day support of survivors of violence is left largely to OMA, which runs the country’s only safe house with space for four families at a time, leads community-based discussions on domestic violence and operates the bulk of advice centres that provide counselling to women, offer emergency credit and facilitate conciliation sessions.” [11]

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Index to key source documents

KEY FACTS AND	[1]	Europa World Online – Angola section (accessed on 15 July 2009)
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	<p>[5d] Human Rights News report “Angola: Thousands Forcibly Evicted in Postwar Boom”, May 2007 http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2007/05//11/angola15912_txt.htm</p> <p>[8a] Angola section of the Amnesty International Annual Human Rights report 2009, published 28 May 2009 http://report2009.amnesty.org/en/regions/africa/angola</p> <p>[16] Angola section of the Freedom in the World 2009 Report, 16 July 2009 http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7554</p>
<p>HUMAN RIGHTS – SPECIFIC ISSUES:</p> <p>(IN ADDITION TO GENERAL REPORTS ABOVE, INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IS PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW)</p>	
ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ARMED FORCES	<p>[2a] United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2008: Angola, 25 February 2009 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118985.htm</p>
ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS	<p>[2a] United States Department of State, Report on Human Rights Practices 2008: Angola, 25 February 2009 http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118985.htm</p>
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