
Angola Monitor

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The Angola Monitor covers the politics, economics, development, democracy and human rights of Angola. It is published quarterly by Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA).

This issue covers the debate on Angola's proposed constitutional reform and visits to the country by President Zuma and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. We also highlight the agreement between Angola and the DRC to end expulsions between their borders and look at internal evictions in Luanda. The Aid and Development section focuses on how landmines are affecting development in Angola's villages and other health news.

We welcome readers' responses to the Angola Monitor. Please send your comments to campaigns@actsa.org. For more news and information on Angola and southern Africa, visit the ACTSA website www.actsa.org.

Political and economic news

Governing MPLA to hold sixth Congress to set road for the future

The Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), following its parliamentary election landslide victory in 2008, will hold its sixth full Party Congress in Luanda this December. Provincial Congresses being held in the run up to the event have reflected on prospects for the future and the MPLA's progress on the issues on which it fought the parliamentary election, including new homes, jobs, and economic and social development.

The Provincial Congresses elect delegates to the national Congress as well as the powerful Provincial Part secretaries. They are often addressed by key ministers or party officials. The MPLA has been involved in a drive to recruit more members, whilst establishing new networks of action committees. Given the dominance of the MPLA in Angolan political life the internal debates on future policy that will take place at the Congress will be crucial for Angola's future direction.

Constitutional debate moves forward

On October 26, Bornito de Sousa, Chair of the Parliamentary Constitutional Commission announced the launch of a major constitutional debate. This process follows submissions from all political parties in the National Assembly to the Commission. There are currently three models up for debate, "A" (Presidential), "B" (Semi-Presidential), and "C" (Presidential-Parliamentary), the latter apparently the current MPLA preference. On Wednesday 4 November Parliament was due to receive drafts of each of these options, copies of which will be circulated for debate throughout the country. The options, totalling around 300 pages, are available in Portuguese on the parliamentary website at www.comissaoconstitucional.ao

It is not yet fully clear what implications this process will have on the timing and substance of presidential elections, which are on hold until a new constitution is adopted. However, the drafts are being consulted on and there is a fairly rapid timescale for decision-making.

President José Eduardo dos Santos marked 30 years as President of Angola this September, making him the second longest serving African leader. A presidential election has been long awaited and would be only the second since Angola's independence from Portugal 34 years ago, largely due to the 27 years of war.

President Zuma - first stop Angola

In August, Angola received South African President Jacob Zuma on a state visit. Zuma brought 11 ministers and a delegation of businessmen, the largest ever South African delegation to Angola. It was also his first bilateral state visit confirming Angola's importance in the region and continent.

Both leaders expressed their desire to strengthen "ties" in economic, social and political arenas. "Your presence offers us an ideal occasion to explore more creatively all the possibilities to increase the cooperation between the two countries in all areas," said President dos Santos.

Zuma signed an oil deal with Angola, during his visit, which will allow South Africa's Petro SA and Angola's Sonangol to co-operate in projects. He said, "This indeed is one of the historic visits and indeed out of this visit we believe that the people of Angola and South Africa will benefit greatly."

President Zuma also made a visit to a former anti-apartheid guerrilla camp. The MPLA was an ally of the African National Congress (ANC) during the struggle against apartheid, with some ANC members receiving shelter and training in Angola. Zuma laid wreaths on a memorial of Angola's first President Agostinho Neto and on the grave of a soldier who had died in Angola's liberation struggle against the Portuguese, saying. "This is to remind us where we come from and encourage us to work harder for the goals for which many lost their lives."

Zuma invited dos Santos, to take an official visit to South Africa to be determined at a later stage.

Clinton in Luanda

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton began an 11 day trip of Africa on the 4 August, which also took her to Kenya, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Liberia and Cape Verde.

Clinton's visit to Angola focused on agriculture, energy and also on the theme of corruption. She encouraged the country to lower its dependence on oil production and to diversify into agriculture. She said that the US would continue to invest in Angola's oil and gas sector while seeking a larger role in the once-prosperous farming sector. Angola, once a major food exporter, now imports over half of its food. Clinton witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between USAID, Chevron and the Cooperative League of the United States of America (an agriculture-related NGO) to help Angola's agricultural sector.

During her visit, she pressed the Angolan Government to do more to tackle corruption. Angola rivals Nigeria as Africa's biggest oil producer, yet two thirds of the Angolan population live on less than \$2 a day. "Corruption is a problem everywhere and where it exists, it undermines people's faith in democracy, it distorts governance," Clinton explained.

Clinton also touched upon human rights issues in Angola, and urged the government to investigate the cases "sooner rather than later". Prior to her visit, Human Rights Watch urged her to call on the Angolan Government to ensure that their armed forces abide by international human rights and humanitarian law, following reports of human rights abuses in Cabinda and Lunda Norte. The NGO asked Clinton to stress that Africa will be unable to realise its potential if the human rights of its people are denied.

Cuban President visits again

President Raúl Modesto Castro Rúz of Cuba arrived in Angola's capital Luanda in July on his second visit in five months. During the talks between the two delegations the Cuban president agreed to send more than 230 doctors to Angola to deal with the country's shortage of doctors and struggling hospitals. Some 200 Cuban doctors already work there. The WHO recommends one doctor for every 1,000 inhabitants; Angola currently has one doctor for every 10,000 inhabitants. The Angolan health minister stated that the two countries would work together to develop a vaccine for cholera, which is endemic in Angola.

The Secretary of State praised Angola on the improvements that have been made and was “encouraged” by the steps taken by the Government, such as the parliamentary elections last year, which she called “peaceful and credible”. She also praised it for publishing its oil revenues online and for working together with US officials to increase transparency. She argued that Angola can improve further by holding presidential elections, investigating human rights abuses and moving towards reform.

IMF loan to Angola proposed

Following an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to Angola this September, the country has been offered a 27 month stand-by arrangement, a type of loan, to help it through the economic downturn, which has hit Angola more than most in Africa. The arrangement aims to alleviate the pressures that the financial crisis has put on Angola by relieving liquidity pressures, boosting market confidence and restoring a sustainable macroeconomic position.

Although positive news for Angola, Global Witness has warned that the IMF risks “condoning corruption” by granting the loan. It argues that transparency is needed to ensure that the loan, which could be up to \$890 million, actually benefits those in the country living in poverty.

New Mining Code for 2010

A new Angolan Mining Code is under consultation, and may be implemented in 2010 according to the Minister of Geology and Mining, Mankenda Ambrose. Ambrose, who is chairing the consultation, explained that the code is in its final revision, soon to be sent to the National Assembly. The new code will provide clearer guidelines for the industry and outline more practical legal remedies.

Angola’s crystal clear diamond industry? The Kimberley Process reviews

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) which came into force in 2003 aims to control ‘rough’ diamond production, to put an end to ‘conflict diamonds’ and to ensure that diamond purchases are not funding violence. Four years since its first mission to Angola, a return visit was made in August this year. The inspectors visited to confirm the non-existence of conflict diamonds and to review Angola’s diamond registration and certification systems. They met with ministry representatives, authorities from private diamond companies and with representatives of the Angolan-run diamond company Endiama.

The mission also visited diamond mines along the north-east border of Angola. With recent reports of human rights abuses, the inspectors were particularly concerned with the treatment of artisan miners, many of whom have come illegally from the DRC.

“The KPCS is too important to fail”

Ian Smilie, chair of the Diamond Development Initiative in an address to the International Diamond Conference in September argued that the Kimberley Process emerged due to the human rights abuses that are linked to the diamond industry and that the KPCS needs to change its system to be able to solve these problems and provide a form of law enforcement.

He highlighted the human rights problems Angola is yet to tackle within its diamond industry: “Hundreds of thousands of illicit Congolese diamond diggers have been expelled over the past three or four years ... Miners are beaten, robbed, raped and force-marched hundreds of miles. The Kimberley Process has had nothing to say about this because, ‘it is not a human rights organisation.’”

He provided a list of recommendations that the Kimberley Process requires to achieve its aims, arguing that the KPCS needs to have “explicit reference to human rights in the management of diamond resources, a conflict of interest policy that recuses parties with commercial or political interests,

transparency, a voting system, instead of a vetoing system and an independent, proactive and efficient body that can analyse problems and act quickly to correct them.”

He concluded by saying that “The KPCS is too important to fail, and it is too important to too many countries, companies and people for make-believe”.

Calls for Angola-South Africa partnership in mining sector

The National Director for the Exchange Department of the Ministry of Geology and Mining, Luís António, called for Angolan and South African businesses to identify new opportunities and to set up partnerships in the mining domain beyond the diamond sector

He was speaking at the opening of the business forum between Angolan and South African entrepreneurs of the mining sector. António urged business people to explore the potential in natural resources from both countries, to turn the benefits of this action into policies to fight against poverty and the consequences of the world financial crisis.

Human rights news

End of expulsions, but start of humanitarian crisis?

Following a meeting in Kinshasa on 13 October, Angolan and DRC authorities have agreed to end the wave of expulsions which have taken place recently on the border between the two countries.

Thousands of Angolan and DRC citizens have been left homeless and in the past few months the expulsions have heightened to such an extent to cause real humanitarian concerns. In October, thousands of DRC citizens were deported from Angola. One told local DRC radio, Radio Okapi, how:

“All the Congolese who live there want to leave,” adding that ordinary Angolans, as well as security forces, had joined in the attacks, “...breaking into our homes, making off with our goods and beating us. Some people are seriously wounded; people have been killed by machete, with guns. As soon as they see you have a bundle on your head they hit you”.

In apparent retaliation the Government has deported 20,000 Angolans who had been living in the DRC. Both countries claim that they are only deporting those people that are living in the countries illegally and are doing so in line with international law. However, the expulsions have separated families and the conditions of those displaced now causes humanitarian concerns.

Nearly 16,000 expelled Angolans have gathered in the border town of Luvo, where Save the Children Angola head Doug Steinberg stated, "There are a lot of children and the conditions are bad. There is no accommodation, no food and the rainy season is starting now. They are staying in schools."

Reports of grave human rights abuses occurring during the deportation are not uncommon. Severine Flores, spokeswoman for the UN OCHA told how, “The deportees have nothing with them, everything was taken; there are cases of violence, rape and sexual abuse”.

The Angolan Government has adopted a new emergency plan to look after its citizens deported from the DRC, to provide medical assistance, food, transportation and clothes.

Angola and the DRC have now agreed to cease the expulsions with immediate effect and to provide protection and security for those expelled. They are in discussion on how to work together to end to illegal migration in both countries as well as human trafficking, drug trafficking and transnational crime in general. They will meet again in November in Luanda.

Internal evictions

Since late July, thousands of Angolan citizens have been forcibly evicted from their homes according to Angolan NGO, SOS Habitat. The 27 year civil war destroyed Angola's infrastructure and resulted in mass cramming in the capital. President dos Santos has pledged to build one million new homes by 2012 to deal with the crisis, and Luanda is being "cleaned up" to meet this target.

Many of the evictees claim that they were legally occupying the land and have documents signed by the municipal administrator proving their rights. One of the evictees, who built his home on the land for which he has the paperwork, was one day told that the land has a new owner. He said, "There is so much land in this country, the government does not need to take land from its own people".

The Government argues it only evicted those living illegally in the area and therefore will not provide compensation or alternative accommodation. Instead it has set up temporary camps. Luiz Araujo, Director of SOS Habitat, warned that these evictions are not just about people being left with nothing, but about the situation of the forced evictions themselves and of the ongoing human rights violations.

Forced evictions are a major human rights violation as defined by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Angola has ratified. Meanwhile conditions in the temporary government camps are a cause for concern, with no electricity, running water, rubbish collection or sewerage system.

Aid and development news

Landmines restrict developing villages

The village of Luanga, on the eastern province of Moxico, which has been rejuvenated since the end of war in 2002, is just one of many such villages in Angola that are being prevented from growing due to a lack of safe land on which to build, according to the Mining Advisory Group (MAG).

With the end of war, people began returning to Luanga and more than 45,000 sq metres of land was cleared by MAG in 2005, providing safe land for the returnees to build homes. However, as more and more people come back the cleared land is rapidly disappearing.

Belita Cahilo, the Chief of the village, explains how people have been expanding into land which has not been de-mined and building homes where they know it is not safe. Yet, safety competes with an urgent need to resettle thousands of families returning to Angola.

Cahilo explains how if there was more land she would divide it into areas for schools, hospitals, and housing development. She could then request the Government to bring the services the village needs. "But first, we need MAG to clear all the landmines so that we can have more land," she says.

Safer, deactivated land

Over 3,000 landmines in Angola were deactivated in 2008 according to the Executive Commission for De-Mining. Overall 316,000 square metres of land was cleared, with at least 3,218 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines destroyed countrywide. 262,445 explosive devices were destroyed and 867,666 diverse metals were seized.

“Water for All” in Angola

The “Water for All” scheme, also known as the Joint UN Programme on Water and Sanitation was launched in Luanda this July. The UN joined forces with the Angolan Government to achieve universal access to water to boost health and restrain poverty in Angola. Angola, a nation where cholera is endemic, has committed to providing water to 80 per cent of urban and 50 per cent of rural dwellers by 2012, and targets of 100 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively by 2020.

Clean piped water is prohibitively expensive for many Angolans, who only have access to unsafe water. The right to safe water and a clean environment is a right protected by the Convention of the Rights of the Child. This new scheme, funded by the Spanish Government, is set to directly benefit 120,000 and will have a positive impact on some 400,000 others.

Struggling Angolan hospitals

In July, Angola’s health minister admitted that the country’s health service was not functioning properly, following the death of a young man who was refused treatment at the Americo Boavida hospital. The mother of the 20 year old had taken him to hospital but he was turned away. He died outside the gates of the nearby TV station TPA where his death was filmed and televised, sparking public outrage and calls for the health staff involved to be held for criminal proceedings.

“Luanda has grown enormously, it is now a city of five million people, and the number of health services has not grown at the same rate,” said Jose Van-Dunem, Angola’s Vice Minister for Health, adding that “The health services we have at the moment do not match the demand from the people, but we are working to improve our capacity”.

Years of conflict in Angola destroyed hospitals, schools and roads, and the country is still in a period of reconstruction.

Promoting hand washing

Angola has launched an integrated school health campaign reaching over four million school children. The campaign promotes hand washing and provides de-worming to prevent the transmission of the H1N1 influenza virus and lower the number of gastro-intestinal diseases. The campaign stresses how hand washing with soap is a simple, low cost and essentially life saving practice. With the H1N1 virus spreading worldwide and with 13 confirmed cases of the virus in Angola, hand washing is more important than ever.

It is hoped that the campaign will provide broader benefits. “Healthy children are better learners, and the progress of our nation depends on this,” said Vice-Minister of Education Ana Paula Fernando.

Polio vaccinations for over 89,000 children

At least 89,395 children aged 0-5 years were due to be immunised against polio in October. The scheme, started in the Kwanza Norte province, was due to also vaccinate 73,736 women age 14-49 years against tetanus.

The articles in the Angola Monitor do not necessarily represent any agreed position of ACTSA itself.