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# Angola Monitor

Issue 4/10

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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). It is also available in Portuguese.

This issue covers Angola's progress in measures of poverty and governance, forced evictions and housing demolitions, international cooperation and the latest economic developments.

We welcome readers' responses to the Angola Monitor. Please send your comments to [campaigns@actsa.org](mailto:campaigns@actsa.org). For more news and information on Angola and southern Africa visit the ACTSA website [www.actsa.org](http://www.actsa.org).

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## Political news

### Angola and Russia restate cooperation

There have been numerous moves in recent months to speed up the implementation of accords signed between Angola and Russia during the visit of Dmitry Medvedev, the Russian President, in June 2009. Russia's ambassador to Angola, Serguey Nenáchev, said that the two countries were working on strategies that will allow for a rapid implementation of the accords. Russia is currently involved in training the Armed Forces and National Police in Angola. However, in the next few years this will be extended to include investment, aviation, telecommunications, minerals and higher education. The Angolan and Russian parliaments will work together on issues like preparing laws, commissions and training staff.

### Angola rises in Ibrahim governance rankings

The 2010 edition of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance shows a continued improvement in Angola's governance. Angola's overall score in the rankings has risen from 31 to 39 over four years. Angola has improved in all four of the index's subsections; 'safety and the rule of law', 'participation and human rights', 'sustainable economic development' and 'human development'. The highest score was in 'Participation and Human Rights'. Big gains have also been made in the 'Human Development' section, especially in the last few years, however this is still Angola's lowest ranking in the index.

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## Economic news

### Growth forecast cut

In his first State of the Union speech, President Eduardo dos Santos announced that the government has cut its economic growth forecast to 4.5% for 2010. This is the third time in three months the government has cut its forecast. Analysts have linked the slowdown to the unpaid debts to Brazilian and Portuguese construction companies. The sudden way in which the government revealed the scale of the debts has worried investors about the openness of Angola's economy and to control the debt the government has had to restrict the pace of new construction. The government has started paying down the debt however, and plans to have paid it off by the first quarter of 2011, with the President saying he expects growth of around 8% during 2011.

### Government economics reshuffle

President dos Santos has appointed Jose de Lima Massano, former head of private sector bank BAI, as the new governor of the central bank and created a new Economy Ministry which has been stripped of some of the powers of its predecessor. The new Economy Ministry replaces the Economic Coordination Ministry and does not have the powers to set budget or monetary policy that the former body had. These responsibilities have been moved to the Ministry of Planning.

## **Angola provides financing to Guinea-Bissau**

Angola has strengthened its ties with Guinea-Bissau, giving the country \$12 million to eliminate its budget deficit and opening a line for \$25 million in credit, while forgiving previous debt. The aim is to encourage entrepreneurs from both countries to invest in Guinea-Bissau.

## **New deepwater drilling deal**

British oil-company BP has signed a \$340 million deal with Norwegian firm Odfjell Drilling to bring a deepwater drilling rig to the waters off Angola. The rig will be drilling in the Block 18 concession, which BP has the rights to, for two years. BP's offshore drilling operations have come under global scrutiny since a blow-out on one of its rigs in the Gulf of Mexico caused one of the biggest oil spills in history. The disaster prompted the US government to place a moratorium on deep sea drilling from July until October and there have been calls to implement a similar ban in the European Union, though the European Parliament rejected such a move. If there has been any talk of a deepwater drilling ban in emerging markets such as Angola it has not been made public.

# **Human rights news**

## **Economic renewal brings demolitions and evictions**

Angola's rapid economic development and reconstruction of infrastructure means upheaval for some. With the clearing of the Roque Santeiro market as part of Luanda's urban renewal plan and further evictions along the route of the Namibe railway in Huila province. Residents of Sambizanga, the neighbourhood served by Roque Santeiro, say the moving of the market 20 kilometres away has damaged their quality of life, with higher costs incurred by having to travel further to shop and an increase in crime caused by the loss of employment opportunities at the market. In Huila province demolitions and evictions have been taking place in Lubango since March, with further evictions taking place in Quipango and Matala.

In both cases the official explanations have been linked to the development of Angola's urban centres. Officials have pointed to Roque Santeiro as a breeding ground for disease and crime and the evictions in Huila province have been attributed to the building of the railway. In some places the evictions are said to be due to the risk posed by the proximity of the Mukufi River. Those affected and their supporters say that their living conditions have declined since the evictions as they have not been given proper alternatives. The families evicted in Lubango in March were moved to an area, Tchavola, without shelter or services and were provided with only a small number of tents. Recent attempts to improve their situation have been obstructed by police, with members of the housing NGO Action Constructing Communities and a Portuguese architect being taken to a police station after starting a participatory housing design programme.

Those evicted in the most recent demolitions in Lubango have been moved to the area of Tchimumkwa, even further from the centre of Lubango than Tchavola, and again with a lack of proper infrastructure. These latest demolitions and the uprooting of families come despite the apology from the Second Secretary of Huila Province, Virgílio Tyova, after the first wave of evictions in March. Given that demolitions have not only continued but spread to other parts of the province it is clear that government policy is more in tune with the sentiments of Isaac dos Anjos, Governor of Huila Province, who stated that adherence to the law on unauthorised construction is paramount, whether or not those evicted have somewhere to go.

## **Congolese deported**

Nearly 200 Congolese citizens have been deported from Angola with aid workers across the border claiming that the deportees have been subjected to terrible abuse. According to CISP, an Italian aid agency, all arrived in the DRC stripped to their underwear and several were injured. CISP also says that around 30 women had been brutally raped, with one dying of her injuries and two men had been killed.

Angola's ambassador to the DRC, Emilio Jose de Carvalho Guerra, said he could not confirm reports of deportations and claimed that previous allegations of abuse were unfounded. The Congolese Information Minister, Lambert Mende, said he was aware of expulsions from Angola but not of any rapes or deaths. A UN spokesman, Maurizio Giuliano, noted the reports of expulsions and warned that this could signal a new wave of mass expulsions such as those that happened in 2009. It is estimated that 160,000 Congolese were deported from Angola in 2009 and 51,000 Angolans from Congo.

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## Aid and development news

### Poverty rates fall

The United Nations in Angola has announced that poverty levels, measured in monetary income, have fallen from 63% in 2002 to 38% in 2009. The UN Resident Coordinator made the announcement at a joint press conference of the various UN bodies working in Angola. The official cited the consolidation of peace, economic growth and social development as contributing factors. Advances in maternal health, primary schooling and health infrastructure have all been positive developments over the last seven years but growing inequality was pointed out as a problem.

### New Polio immunisation campaign

The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a new effort to immunise 5.6 million Angolan children against Polio. The move comes after fears that the continent-wide eradication campaign is under threat from the persistence of Polio in Angola. Cases have spread from Angola across the border with the DRC and previously clear areas of Angola have been re-infected.

Starting in Uije Province, where around 200,000 children under five have been immunised, the campaign aims to stop the Polio outbreak by the end of the year. Previous attempts have missed around 30% of children.

The project, supported by UNICEF and Rotary International, will support thousands of volunteers, health workers and traditional leaders to ensure that all children under five receive a vaccination.

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## Other news

### Angolan dies during deportation from UK

Angolan national Jimmy Mubenga died on board a British Airways flight to Luanda on 12 October while being restrained by private security guards. He was being deported from the United Kingdom after his application for asylum failed and was escorted on the flight by three security guards from the private contractor G4S. The Home Office and G4S released a statements saying that Mubenga had been "taken ill" or had "become unwell" during the flight but a number of witnesses from the plane have contradicted this, saying that the three guards were holding Mubenga down and that he was complaining of being unable to breathe.

The three security guards have been interviewed by police and Members of Parliament have called for an independent enquiry. At the time of writing there has been no statement from the Angolan government. Jimmy Mubenga had been in the UK for 16 years. His wife and 5 children (four of whom were born in the UK) remain in the UK.

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