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# Angola Monitor

Issue 3/11

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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 rumours of President dos Santos not running for re-election, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Angola, Angola-DRC oil sharing talks, Angola's proposal to increase diamond sales, an NGO report which classed Angola as "Not Free", the detention of a Cabinda civil rights leader in DRC, possibly re-housing of victims of forced eviction, a pledge to eradicate hunger, a report which identifies Angola as among the worst in Africa for helping children and development of a new "city" near Luanda.

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

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### President dos Santos may not stand for election

A recent article on Angola in South Africa's *Mail and Guardian* newspaper has claimed Eduardo dos Santos may not stand for election in 2012. Dos Santos has been President of Angola since 1979 (making him second only to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi as Africa's longest-serving leader), yet according to a number of sources in the country, his time in power may be coming to an end. Pedro Seabra, a researcher at the Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security in Lisbon, noted rumours of a successor to dos Santos have been circulating in recent months: "In Luanda and in political circles other names are being touted, which is a very strong indication that the issue is coming under serious contention". Seabra went on to say that things are changing fundamentally within the country: "Angola is not the same any more. Two years ago you wouldn't have had people going to the streets with posters calling for an end to the president, but now this is starting to happen". On 5 July *Reuters News* stated that "questions over the transparency of the government of Angola's entrenched President Jose Eduardo dos Santos are worrying investors in one of the continent's largest economies".

### Merkel says 'Germany ready to help' Angola

German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Angola for a two day visit on July 12-13. Merkel is one of the few EU leaders to visit Luanda in the past few years. Economic co-operation between the two countries dominated the visit and Merkel held talks with President dos Santos as well as attending a forum with German and Angolan businesspeople. Speaking at the latter, the Chancellor spoke of Germany's support for the country in its development efforts: "Angola still faces major development challenges, in education and professional training, as well as in reconstruction and development. Germany is ready to help". Over the course of the visit, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the two countries as well as a cultural memorandum. The German Chancellor received criticism in Berlin, however, over controversial plans to sell military equipment to Angola, namely 6-8 patrol boats. SPD Foreign Policy spokesperson Rolf Muetzenich told the German regional newspaper *Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger* that Angola's human rights record tainted any such sale: "Angola is not an exemplary democracy....Moreover the presidential clan is clearly very susceptible to corruption". Merkel also went on to visit Kenya and Nigeria as part of her African tour.

### **Former Brazilian President visits Angola**

Former President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva visited Angola in the final week of June to give a paper at the Angolan Centre for Strategic Studies. The event marked the Centre's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. According to state media, Lula praised the success of the Angolan Government in bettering social and housing standards, whilst also calling for a more equitable distribution of wealth to ensure all Angolans receive three meals a day. Bilateral ties between the two countries have strengthened in recent years, with President dos Santos visiting Brazil in 2010 and signing a series of strategic partnerships. Lula also spoke at an African Union summit in Equatorial Guinea.

### **Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (PCI) denies political intimidation occurring in Huambo**

A Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into alleged instances of political intimidation in Huambo has denied that there are problems for free political association in the province. The inquiry was prompted after claims by UNITA that its members and officials couldn't operate freely in the region. The inquiry Chairman, MPLA MP Higinio Carneiro, stated that he and his officials "did not witness any political intolerance". This is not the first time that Huambo province has proven controversial, with UNITA members complaining as far back as 2003 that they couldn't establish party bases and canvass membership in the province.

### **UNITA Youth movement to hold anniversary meeting**

The youth wing of main opposition party UNITA, JURA, will hold their 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary meeting on 18 July. Party Secretary General Abílio Kamalata Numa stated that since the youth wing's creation, it "had adopted a programme of striving for national unity, rights, democracy, cooperation and friendship with all national and foreign youth institutions". Discussions at the meeting will also cover the party's electoral legislative package, youth issues and citizenship.

### **Civil Opposition Parties (POC) ready for next election**

The group of five opposition parties 'Civil Opposition Parties' (POC) have stated that they are laying the groundwork for the next election and will be ready to participate. Manuel Fernandes, the group's leader, stated "We are doing everything to meet with legal requirements, even with the difficulties we are experiencing in terms of funding for our political exercise". The POC is comprised of five political parties (all currently without parliamentary representation): the Republican Party of Angola (PAR), Party for Solidarity and Awareness of Angola (PSCA), Majority Party Angolan Free Alliance (PALMA), Pacific Angolan Party (PPA) and National Party Salvation of Angola (PNSA).

## **Economic news**

### **Angola-DRC ready to start oil-sharing talks**

The Angolan Government and the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo could start a series of oil-sharing talks in the near future, according to Angola's Oil Minister. Jose Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos was speaking on 1 July in Luanda, less than a month after an agreement was signed between Angola and the Republic of Congo for joint-oil production. Vasconcelos stated talks over sharing of resources along Angola-DRCs maritime border could lead to results in the near future: "It's possible that by the end of 2013, early 2014, we will start having joint operations".

### **Angola proposes end to cut diamond ban**

The Angolan Government has proposed ending a ban on the local sale of cut diamonds in the country, in order to boost investment in the local diamond industry. The proposed legislation stated that "sales of high volumes" of cut diamonds will be carried out exclusively by polishing factories, while retailing of gems polished locally will be done through jewellery stores". Angola is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest producer of diamonds after Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Africa, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

### **Isabel dos Santos named Africa's 9<sup>th</sup> richest woman**

Isabel dos Santos, daughter of Angola's President, was named the 9<sup>th</sup> richest woman in Africa in a recent *Forbes* list of the most wealthy and powerful women on the continent. Dos Santos owns Kento Holding, a Maltese-registered firm which holds a 10% stake in Portuguese media conglomerate, Zon Multimedia. Mrs. dos Santos owns major stakes in Portuguese banks Banco Espírito Santo and Banco Português de Investimento, as well as energy generator and distributor Energias de Portugal and is rumoured to be worth in the region of \$50million.

### **Angola has potential to become Africa's top oil producer**

Angola may become Africa's largest oil producer by 2012 if projected oil output comes to pass. The country is set to overcome previous technical problems and boost output to 2million barrels per day (bpd) in 2012, meaning the country could overtake Nigeria as the continent's number one oil producer. Angola, which briefly occupied the top spot for a period in 2009, is currently second to Nigeria and the gap in production between the two nations currently stands at 460,000 bpd. Analysts, however, believe the current gap will be temporary as fresh stocks and supplies from Angola come online in the near future. "We expect next year for there to be upwards of 2.2 million bpd and Angola could overtake Nigeria. There might have been a bit of a decline but it's just temporary," said Martin Kelly, an analyst for sub-Saharan Africa at Wood Mackenzie. Much of Angola's oil comes offshore of the restive region of Cabinda however analysts do not believe this will hinder its production targets. "The Cabinda conflict remains contained and although one of the separatist groups recently threatened oil interests there is nothing to suggest offshore assets would be vulnerable," said Alex Vines, an analyst with UK-based think-tank Chatham House.

### **Moody's boosts Angola credit rating**

Credit rating agency Moody's revised Angola's rating to Ba3 in June. While this is an improvement for the country, Angola remains of 'questionable credit quality'. Moody's noted that while it "expects the balance sheet of the Angolan government to improve substantially to the extent that the country could become a net creditor within the next 12 months," problems with its economy still remain- namely an over-dependence on oil, high inflation, weak governance and a lack of qualified workers.

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## **Human rights news**

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### **NGO Report classifies Angola as 'not free'**

A report published in May by Washington based NGO Freedom House deemed Angola as 'not free': thus a country "where basic political rights are absent, and basic civil liberties are widely and systematically denied". Angola joins two other SADC nations on the 'not free' list: Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Only Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, amongst SADC's 15 member states, are deemed as 'free' countries ".

### **Ex-Cabinda civil rights activist detained in Congo-Kinshasa**

A former Cabindan civil rights activist, Agostinho Chicaia, was arrested in Kinshasa, DRC on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the request of the Angolan authorities. Chicaia is a former head of Cabinda's Mpalabanda group which campaigned for human and environmental rights in Angola's oil-rich Cabinda province before being banned by the government. Chicaia had been in Congo-Brazzaville as part of an environmental mission and civil society groups claim his arrest was politically motivated. Amnesty International criticised the arrest stating "Agostinho Chicaia has been arbitrarily detained for more than two weeks now without charge. The Congolese immigration police have told us that they will release him if instructed to do so by the Angolan authorities. The authorities in Angola must intervene immediately to ensure his release".

### **Angolan Government criticises 'selective' ICC**

The Government of Angola has criticised what it sees as the negative bias of the International Criminal Court (ICC) towards Africa. Although the ICC has pursued cases against non-African countries in the past, at present the ICC is pursuing six cases, all of which are situated in Africa: Libya, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the wake of the ICC indictment of Libyan leaders for crimes against humanity Foreign Minister Georges Chikoti suggested the court was 'selective' in its choosing of cases. The ICC's Chief Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, denied there was any bias. This is not the first time the ICC has been criticised for its choosing of cases, with the current ICC investigation into post-election violence in Kenya being a particularly controversial case.

### **Namibian Minister criticises Angolan refugees for not returning home**

Nkrumah Mushelenga, the Namibian Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration Commissioner for Refugees, criticised Angolan refugees in his country for failing to live up to 'reality'. Speaking to Namibia's *New Era* newspaper, Mushelenga stated: "It is not a question of not wanting to return home, it is a question of reality. The decision to implement the Cessation Clause on Angolan refugees did not emanate from Namibia but was based on an international convention". Mushelenga stated that Angolan refugees in the DRC and Namibia ostensibly left due to "the same problems" and given the leaders of UNITA returned to the country without problems, "What have they really done that they are afraid of?" According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees there are 5,904 Angolan refugees in Namibia, and a further 80,000 in DRC. .

### **Journalist beaten and arrested ahead of demonstration**

A journalist working for the radio station Despertar was beaten and arrested before a planned demonstration on 25 May in the Angolan capital of Luanda. The demonstration is one of a number organised in recent months against the Government. Journalist, Koqui Mokuta, was allegedly thrown against a police van and later taken into detention. Mokuta states his accreditation, as well as his notes and notebook were all confiscated from him. In addition to Mokuta, 20 protestors were also detained after the protest.

### **Controversial Cyber-crime legislation scrapped**

The Angolan Government appears to have bowed to pressure from civil society groups and human rights organisations and scrapped planned legislation for a cyber crime bill which would have made it illegal to share information electronically that could "destroy, alter or subvert state institutions" or "damage national integrity or independence". Human Rights Watch stated that the proposed bill would have given "security forces a blank check to search and confiscate data without due oversight and would create harsher penalties for crimes that are already defined in previous legislation if they are committed through electronic information technology". Suzana Mendes of the Angolense newspaper welcomed the apparent u-turn by the Government, saying "the fact that the bill has been cancelled is important, because if it had been approved, it would have endangered our fundamental rights to inform and be informed".

### **Government to rehouse victims of forced evictions**

According to Government sources, up to 450 victims of forced evictions will be rehoused from September. The evictees were forced to leave their homes in Luanda to make way for luxury apartments between 2004 and 2006. Amnesty International welcomed the news, with Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Africa, stating "While this announcement is a welcome step for victims of forced evictions, the Angolan authorities must end the forced evictions that are still taking place in the country. It is also crucial that people in other parts of the country, whose homes have been demolished, are also rehoused". In March of this year, Afrol news warned of a 'humanitarian crisis' as a result of a spate of new forced evictions planned for Luanda and Benguela.

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## Aid and development news

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### **Angolan Government pledges to eradicate hunger**

The 37<sup>th</sup> conference of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Fund (FAO) took place in Rome between June 25 and July 1, at which the Angolan Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries Alfonso Pedra Canga stated that the Government was committed to eradicating hunger and food insecurity as soon as possible. Canga, currently the chair of the Africa division of the FAO, stated that the Angolan Government were improving means of communication and encouraging rural trade and sustainable management of natural resources to aid in their efforts.

### **Angolan Government among worst in Africa for helping Children**

A recent report by the African Child Policy Forum on governments' commitment to nurturing children-based on health, education and other social spending as a proportion of overall budget- has cast Angola and other oil-rich African nations as among the worst at caring for its nation's children. Whilst Angola has seen some success in increasing immunisation coverage, Angola was one of the worst in budgeting for education, along with another oil-rich nation, Sudan. Furthermore, Angola's health expenditure as a % of total government expenditure lagged at 6.2%, well below the African median of 9.1%.

### **A new city rises**

A new 'city of Kilamba Kiayi' is being created 30 km south of the Angolan Capital, Luanda. The *Mail and Guardian* notes the new city being built by Chinese contractors is the "antithesis of overcrowded Luanda's traffic-choked streets" and that "broad boulevards and landscaped lawns lace the neatly arranged apartment buildings, painted in shades of yellow, blue and green according to their height". The project's first phase is due for completion in 2012. As the *Mail and Guardian* points out, housing is "one of the few issues that has sparked protests against [Dos Santos's] rule, demonstrations that have remained small but grown in number over the last three months". Luanda, originally intended to house 300,000 during Portuguese colonial rule, is now home to an estimated 5 million people.

*For a personal reflection on development in present-day Angola from a development worker based in the country, see <http://www.actsa.org/newsroom/2011/07/angola-observations-from-a-development-worker/>*

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