
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 focuses on the recent parliamentary elections including concerns raised by opposition parties about the process, the election outcome and President dos Santos's promise of social improvements following the polls, IMF warnings of economic vulnerabilities, the launch of a sovereign wealth fund, continued protests, government attempts to eradicate polio and the response to the drought.

This issue is also available in Portuguese.

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 news

MPLA retains majority

Angola went to the polls on 31 August for the country's third general election since independence in 1975. The election was for 220 seats in the country's National Assembly; 130 were elected by proportional representation from national party lists and 90 from 18 five-seat provincial constituencies. Election day was declared a public holiday and 10,349 polling stations were opened throughout the country for 12.5 hours. The turnout was 63.7 per cent, down from 87 per cent in 2008.

Nine parties contested the election; eighteen parties were barred from participating by the Constitutional Court. The Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), won almost 72 per cent of the poll, a fall of 10 per cent since 2008. União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) came second, with just under 19 per cent of the vote, an increase of nine per cent since 2008. Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola—Coligação Eleitoral (CASA-CE), which was launched in March, came third with six per cent of the vote. Partido de Renovação Social (PRS) received 1.7 per cent of the vote, Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) 1.13 per cent and Nova Democracia (ND) 0.23 per cent.

The official campaigning period began on 1 August, but in reality parties had been campaigning long before this. The MPLA campaigned under the slogan "Angola growing and distributing better", in an attempt to counteract the criticisms that the country's wealth has remained in the hands of a small elite. In a campaign said to cost over US\$75 million, the party promised continuity based on its record of three decades in government. The party issued a 2012-2017 governance programme, rather than a manifesto, suggesting their confidence of election victory. UNITA launched its campaign manifesto on 27 July, in which it pledged a higher minimum wages of \$500 per month and focussed on corruption, poverty and freedom of expression. CASA-CE called for more wealth creation, investment in services and higher public sector salaries. In its short existence the party managed to rapidly gain support, particularly from the youth movement. It also gained some high profile supporters including editor of Folha 8, William Tonet.

The African Union (AU) observed the election with a 30 member team led by Pedro Verona Pires, former president of the Republic of Cape Verde. There were also observer missions from SADC and the Community of Portuguese Speaking States. The AU described the poll as "free, fair, transparent and credible" and congratulated Angola's electoral commission, Comissão Nacional Eleitoral (CNE), political parties and voters for their political maturity. They did however raise concerns about problems for observers getting accreditation, and that opposition parties and candidates had not had equal access to

the media. Leonardo Simao, chief of the observing mission of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries said "We didn't witness one single case of coercion or intimidation. People voted freely throughout the country." The United States considered the ballot was well managed, but said there were "important concerns" raised by opposition parties.

Opposition political parties raised serious concerns about the election process ahead of the polls. UNITA called for poll to be postponed up until election day, but its requests to meet with President dos Santos were ignored. Amongst its concerns were the lack of transparency in the process, the delayed publication of the electoral register, a large number of people being allocated polling stations hundreds of kilometres from their homes, claims that the voter registration process was rigged, the delays or failure to accredit some party, civil society and diplomatic election observers and the staffing of polling stations by security personnel.

On polling day many of the opposition's concerns were realised. Opening at a number of polling stations was delayed for at least an hour. Thousands of people were uncertain about where to vote or could not find their names on official lists. A number of observers were denied access to polling stations and several were arrested in Luanda after they tried to enter the National Electoral Commission (CNE) building to demand credentials to observe the vote.

William Tonet, a candidate for CASA-CE said that police guarding the CNE fired shots to keep back dozens of young CASA-CE supporters who approached the building. About a dozen party members were taken away by police, but no one was hurt in the incident, according to Tonet. "We were going to the national elections commission to demand credentials for our members," Tonet said, adding that out of the 6,850 credentials requested by CASA-CE, the electoral commission had issued only 3,000.

Elias Isaac of the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa said "Thousands of people are unable to vote...The whole system was created to exclude people rather than including as many as possible."

Complaints made by UNITA, CASA-CE and PRS were submitted to the National Electoral Commission (CNE) but were rejected. Their appeals were heard by the Constitutional Court on 19 September. All three parties complained that the vote was not credible, due to election irregularities and discrepancies in vote counting. Angola's top court rejected the appeals by all three parties, exhausting their avenues to challenge the election results. Judge Rui Ferreira said "The Constitutional Court has finished its assessment of the appeals about the election and concluded they are unfounded...We declare that the election was free, transparent, universal and fair. Consequently, the election and the results are valid and so the president-elect, the vice-president-elect and elected lawmakers should be sworn in."

The results translate to 175 seats for the MPLA, down by 16 from 2008, retaining its control over legislature. UNITA saw an increase of 16 seats to 32. CASA-CE won eight seats, PRS lost five seats and now have three, FNLA lost one of their three seats and ND lost both its seats. 34 per cent of seats (75) are held by women.

Jose Eduardo dos Santos remains as president, as leader of the party with the most seats in parliament. His position was approved by parliament on 27 September, shortly before he was sworn in on 3 October. He has been President of Angola since 1979 and President of the MPLA since 1975. Manuel Vincente, former head of Sonangol, has become vice-president, as second on the list, and first in line to the presidency if President dos Santos steps down. A recent appointment to the senior ranks of the MPLA, his rapid promotion has been controversial to some in the party. The next legislative election is due to take place in late 2016, with municipal elections expected in 2013 or 2014.

MPLA hold Cabinda despite concern of tensions

Fears that Cabinda might become a flashpoint in the elections have not been realised. Many feared that tensions in the oil rich enclave would increase as opposition groups used the polls in an attempt to get independence on the government's agenda. In June the government owned newspaper, Jornal de Angola, published interviews with former Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC)

soldiers in which they denounced FLEC and its leaders and compared conditions in the organisation's camps in DRC and Congo to concentration camps. The media also targeted the banned civil society organisation Mpalabanda, which it accused of funding FLEC. As the election approached the government failed to respond to calls by FLEC's president, Nzita Tiago, to enter into dialogue. On 2 July, northern Cabinda's governor, Mawete João Baptista, was sacked by government in what has been seen as an attempt to hold onto MPLA votes in the enclave. He was succeeded by the deputy governor Aldina Matilde Barros Dalomba. The MPLA got 59.4 per cent of the vote in Cabinda.

President pledges social improvements

President dos Santos in his swearing in speech stated that the government would... "Dedicate more resources to improve social conditions for people, families, especially those that have little or almost nothing for survival." Whilst the MPLA claims that it has reduced poverty levels from 68 per cent of the population in 2003 to 39 per cent in 2009, its election campaign acknowledged it needs to do more particularly to address the lack of job opportunities for young people. Markus Weimer from Chatham House (a UK international affairs think tank) said "This will not only require good policies but also perseverance, staying power and follow through. Functioning and efficient government systems will be the key for sustainability and achieving results."

Economic news

IMF warn of economic vulnerability

Following the International Monetary Fund's Article IV consultations with Angola in July the Fund released the findings of its Financial Sector Assessment Programme (FSAP), a joint evaluation with the World Bank. It argues that supervision of the banking sector is weak and rules governing the sector are not properly enforced, dollarisation remains high, the size of the oil sector makes the financial sector vulnerable to changes in pricing and production, and the large presence of foreign banks (accounting for 40 per cent of transactions) has increased vulnerability to the euro crisis.

The IMF have urged the government to increase supervision of the banking sector, ensure that the banking sector make provision for loans that are in default, and build a stabilisation fund to protect the economy from volatile oil process.

The Article IV consultation forecast an increase in real GDP growth to seven per cent, despite the impact of drought on the agricultural sector and the recent decline in oil prices. It also highlighted the positive economic impact of proposed increased public spending on infrastructure, particularly in construction, energy and transport.

Government launch sovereign wealth fund

The government launched Fundo Soberano de Angola (FSDEA) in mid October to increase the country's reserves and invest in new development projects. The \$5 billion fund replaces Fundo Petrolifero, established in March 2011, which was intended to develop water and electricity projects, but no investments took place.

Whilst the new fund has pledged to stick to the working group of international sovereign wealth funds 'Santiago principles', questions have been raised about the appointment of president dos Santos' son José Filomeno de Sousa dos Santos to the board. The president's son who was previously employed by Glencore and is part owner of investment bank Banco Kwanza Invest said "For most of my professional life, I have been involved in business in the insurance sector and in the banking sector and really been doing very similar things to what we are doing in the fund, so I see this more as a progression than a consequence of being a son of a president."

The new fund will invest the equivalent to 100,000 barrels of oil a day into global financial markets to build the country's reserves. It will also invest in domestic projects to stimulate and diversify the country's economy away from oil, with a focus on infrastructure and hospitality, in an effort to create jobs. The fund is managed by Zurich-based Quantum Global Investment Management.

Chair of the fund's board, Armando Manuel, said "Angola is rich in natural resources, but we understand that these are finite and so it is imperative that the wealth they generate is used to support the social and economic development of the country."

UNITA have raised concerns over how the fund will work, spokesperson Alcides Sakala said "We need to know the details of how this will work and members of parliament should be part of a debate about such an important institution."

Sonangol increases investment in Portuguese bank Millennium

Sonangol the state run oil company has increased its investment in Portugal's largest bank Millennium bcp, to 15.08 per cent after buying 40 million more shares on 15 October. The purchase is the latest in a number of major investments by Angolan investors in Portuguese companies since that country's economic crisis began.

Human rights news

Protests continue

Protests continued to take place in Angola in the run up to the elections, but not on the scale that many predicted. At the beginning of August Human Rights Watch launched a report 'Angola: Stop stifling free speech' in which it calls on the government to improve human rights ahead of the elections. Leslie Lefkow, deputy Africa director said "The Angolan government needs to stop trying to stifle peaceful protests, gag the independent press, or use the state media for partisan purposes if these elections are to be meaningful." The body echoed its calls to SADC's annual heads of state summit in August, held in Maputo, to exert pressure on the Angolan government. Daniel Bekele, Africa director said "The human rights environment in Angola with elections fast approaching is not at all conducive to free, fair, and peaceful elections...The Angolan government has made sure the vote won't be a fair one."

There have been reports of some violent clashes between UNITA and MPLA in rural areas of Benguela and Huambo provinces, some of which have been fatal. On July 28 two people were killed and ten injured when a UNITA rally in the town of Kapupa in Benguela Province turned violent. UNITA allege that the violence happened when members of the MPLA who were armed tried and were refused permission to join the gathering. On 9 August the MPLA accused UNITA, CASA-CE and PRS of helping war veterans plan protests to object to the non payment of subsidies. MPLA spokesperson Rui Falcao said, "It's clear in their campaign broadcasts that they want to distort and manipulate and that's what they have done with the former soldiers."

Shortly before the poll UNITA held a rally of approximately 5,000 in Luanda calling for free and fair elections. Numbers were boosted by youth groups who failed to be satisfied by president dos Santos' recent announcement of measures to improve access to higher education and reduce unemployment. Mass protests expected on polling day by ex-soldiers failed to materialise.

International calls for release of abducted protestors

Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) have condemned the abduction of two war veterans who have been missing since the end of May. António Alves Kamuningue and Isaias Sebastião Cassule, both well known anti government protestors were abducted by a group of men in civilian clothes, whilst preparing to participate in demonstrations calling upon the government of Angola

to pay pensions and salaries owed to them. Amnesty International fear that the abductors may be agents acting for the state.

Both Amnesty International and the ICJ have called on the government to release both men, if they are in the custody of the authorities, unless they are charged with a recognisable criminal offence. Amnesty International launched a letter writing action, targeted at president dos Santos at the beginning of September.

Aid and development news

Polio eradication within reach

Efforts by government and NGOs to stop polio transmission have resulted in a reduction in cases, from 33 in 2010 to no registered cases since July 2011. On 10 August Angola celebrated a year without any new cases.

In recent years Angola has made a concerted effort to improve disease surveillance, expand immunisation and increase access to safe water and sanitation. The latest mass immunisation campaign at the end of June reached 95 per cent of those targeted, according to independent monitoring data. Thousands of health workers and volunteers were deployed at main streets, markets, water points and door to door to vaccinate children under the age of five.

Evelize Fresta, Deputy Minister of Health said "This achievement reflects the leadership and commitment of the Government, who contribute around 89 per cent of operational costs of the polio campaigns. It also signifies the impact of our investment in strengthening access to primary health care services." Angola eliminated cases of polio from 2001 to 2004, but since the disease re-emerged in May 2005 cases have spread to Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

Government and NGOs respond to nutrition crisis

More than half of Angola continues to be hit by the worst drought the country has seen for years, with an estimated 1.8 million people going hungry. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries the 2011-2012 rainfall season only produced 60 per cent of normal rain, resulting in an estimated decrease of 400,000 tonnes in agricultural production.

According to government projections 500,000 children under five could suffer from acute malnutrition in the ten provinces most affected by the drought, including Huambo, Bengo, Kwanza Sul, Benguela, Huila, Namibe, Cunene, Moxico, Bie and Zaire.

The government, with the support of local and international NGOs, is beginning to respond by scaling up the number of therapeutic feeding centres and rolling out a mass screening for malnutrition in the 10 provinces most affected. The government estimate that 2,000 community health activists will have been trained by early November to identify and advise on malnutrition.

Dr. Adelaide Carvalho, National Director of Public Health at the Ministry of Health said "We aim at ensuring an immediate and effective response in all the most vulnerable areas, but it is also vital to introduce mechanisms, tools and initiatives which set the ground for a longer-term resilience of families so as to protect children against malnutrition."

Government announce \$17 billion investment in electricity sector

President dos Santos opened the 60 megawatt Gove dam in the Huambo province on 22 August saying the \$279 million project was "a victory for Angolans". Construction on the dam originally began in 1969, but was halted by the war. It was partly destroyed in 1990 and rebuilding started in 2001.

Days before the election President dos Santos used the occasion to announce plans to invest more than \$17 billion in electricity generation and distribution by 2016, to help develop industry and create jobs. The money will come from the national budget and loans taken out by the state. In his announcement in Huambo he said "Increased supply of electricity is a factor of social justice which I consider of great importance, because it is the most needy in society, those who do not have resources to buy a generator, that are most harmed."

Electricity generation in Angola has remained unreliable since the end of the war, despite substantial investment. The 27 year conflict destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, including power plants and distribution. Only 30 per cent of the population have access to electricity and those who can afford to rely on generators because of long and regular outages. Poor energy distribution has held back plans to diversify the economy away from its heavy reliance on oil production. Access to energy has been a key election issue; in December 2011 President dos Santos fired the energy minister, blaming her for the sector's poor performance.

Merck donate drug testing kits

German pharmaceutical Merck donated ten mobile drugs testing kits to the Ministry of Health at the beginning of August to support government efforts to identify counterfeit medicines. Minister of Health, José Vieira Dias Van-Dúnem said "Counterfeit medicines are a serious threat to health care in many countries; here in Angola as well...Therefore, the Minilabs will make a valuable contribution to quality control of medicines." Use of the kits may also result in an increase in government purchases of pharmaceutical products, following promises of a renewed focus on service delivery.

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