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# Angola Monitor

Issue 2/13

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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 cover calls by the President to the MPLA to refresh its values, the 2013 budget and demands for an investigation into the Russian debt deal, under political news. In Economic news it covers the discovery of a major new diamond deposit in Lunda Norte, criticisms of Angolan investment in the Portuguese media and Sonangol's ranking as the second biggest company in Africa. In human rights news this issue covers the visit of UN Human Rights High Commissioner Navi Pillay to the country, the latest police clampdown on protestors and forced evictions in Maiombe. In development news it covers the country's consultation on the Millennium Development Goals and the new rehabilitation programme for Iona National Park.

This issue is also available in Portuguese.

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

### President tells MPLA to refresh values

President dos Santos told the MPLA's central committee on 25 January that the party should refresh its values and approaches and improve service delivery in municipalities. He also criticised the policy of cadre deployment (giving key public jobs to party members), saying that it was problematic and had created conflicts of interest. President dos Santos called for qualified personnel to be recruited for more 'efficient' and better 'disciplined' programmes.

The speech has increased speculation of a reshuffle of provincial governors, in response to growing discontent over service delivery at a municipal level. In the 2012 general election, despite retaining its two-thirds majority, the MPLA suffered losses in a number of urban areas, particularly in Luanda. This has led to concerns for the party ahead of the country's first local elections, expected in 2015.

There is growing speculation that Bento Joaquim Sebastião Francisco Bento, Luanda governor and provincial first secretary of the MPLA, will be sacked following the speech, as President dos Santos said that problems were most acute in Luanda. Bento Bento has been blamed by some in the MPLA for the decline in support for the party in the capital.

### 2013 budget approved, despite some opposition

The 2013 national budget was approved by parliament on 14 February. The country's public finances are expected to remain healthy, although the government expect the fiscal balance to move into deficit, due to the incorporation of some of state oil company Sonangol's financial operations into the budget. A move encouraged by the IMF to improve transparency. The government predict a GDP growth rate of 7.1 per cent and have based the budget on a conservative oil price of \$96 per barrel. Oil production is expected to rise from 1.8 million barrels per day to 1.84 million. Oil revenues make up approximately three quarters of domestic revenue, making the budget highly vulnerable to fluctuating prices. If world oil prices are higher than the government estimates, as some financial commentators predict, then there is likely to be a budget surplus.

The budget debate saw some opposition in parliament, with UNITA and CASA-CE using the debate to pose their concerns about spending priorities, a move which is uncommon in Angola. Both parties criticised the allocation of 17 per cent of government spending on defence and security, questioning the need for this level of spending, 11 years after the end of the war.

According to the government the budget would deliver on the MPLA's election promises by allocating a third of spending to education, health, social welfare and housing. However, CASA-CE, the second biggest opposition party said this was misleading. "The increase in resources for the social sector is a fallacy, as the biggest slice of the spending is on fuel price subsidies, which benefits the few rich in Angola and not the poor majority of the population."

The government has also promised an increase in public investment in infrastructure to support agriculture, industry and mining, in an attempt to diversify the economy and reduce reliance on the oil industry. The budget was approved, with 155 in favour, 38 against and five abstentions.

### **Campaigners call for investigation into Russia debt deal**

Members of the anti corruption campaign group Associação Mãos Livres have launched legal actions in Switzerland and Angola over a debt repayment deal between Angola and Russia. They have filed a criminal complaint with the Swiss Federal Prosecutor's Office asking it to reopen an earlier investigation into the deal, closed in 2004, on account of new information revealed in a report, released in April, by Corruption Watch UK and Angolan anti-corruption group Mãos Livres. They have also filed a criminal complaint with the Angolan courts, after an earlier complaint filed in 2006 was not taken up by the prosecutor's office.

The report, 'Deception in High Places: The Corrupt Angola-Russia Debt Deal', alleges that government repayments for Angola's historic soviet era debt to Russia were diverted to the private bank accounts of European arms dealers, a Russian oligarch, and President dos Santos and other officials, following a debt deal signed in 1996 between Angola, Russia and Abalone, a private offshore intermediary.

The report also accuses senior bankers at the Swiss Banking Corporation of enabling the transaction. Angolan lawyer David Mendes, who was a signatory to the complaints said "We now know much more about where the money went, and how this corrupt deal was put together. Switzerland's banking system allowed this money to be stolen from one of the world's poorest countries; it is not too late for Switzerland to properly investigate all those who made it happen, and to seek restitution."

Corruption Watch UK's Director and co author of the report Andrew Feinstein said "As well as new information about beneficiaries and bank accounts, we also have questions about how the old evidence was interpreted, particularly in relation to a testimony given by an expert witness at the time."

The report calls on Angola's parliament to set up an independent commission to investigate the debt deal and other corruption cases. It also urges the attorney general to investigate any public officials who may have unlawfully benefitted from this and any other deals. In addition to reopening investigations, the report calls on the Swiss government to increase the transparency of commodity trading companies and extend money laundering controls.

### **Angola marks 11 years of peace**

Angola celebrated the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of its civil war and signing of a peace agreement between the MPLA and Unita, on 4 April under the theme 'United let us defend peace and democracy'. Luanda's governor Bento Bento expected over one million people to attend the main celebrations in Luanda, whilst political, cultural and sporting activities took place throughout the country.

### **Government launches criminal investigation into Church stampede**

The government has launched a criminal investigation into the tragic stampede on New Years Eve at a Pentecostal Church event at Cidadela Desportiva Stadium in Luanda. 16 people were killed and more than 120 injured when 250,000 attempted to enter the stadium for the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) event marketed as 'The Day of the End'.

The Presidency has blamed the event on misleading publicity and a 60 day suspension has been placed on the Church as well as a criminal investigation. Some have criticised the ban as a smokescreen to

distance key figures in the MPLA from the Church, including Luanda governor Bento Bento and defer responsibility for safety from the government. The IURD claims to have a congregation of half a million in Angola.

## Economic news

### **De Beers confident of new diamond concession**

Diamond mining company De Beers is confident it has identified a major diamond deposit in Lunda Norte. The company has found diamonds in a 3,000km<sup>2</sup> concession near Lucapa, 800km east of Luanda; one of five concessions De Beers has explored, since it returned to the country in 2005.

De Beers Angola business manager Pedro Lago de Carvalho said "We are confident we can find something that will allow us to recover all our investment," referring to the \$250 million the company has spent on exploration. De Beers, which is owned by Anglo American, has a large exploration team in Angola, numbering up to 200.

Evaluation studies of three ore bodies, detailing the economic value of the concession, are due to be published soon, following which De Beers will agree the terms of the mining contract with state owned diamond company, Endiama. De Beers has a 49 per cent share in the Mulepe concession, with Endiama owning the remainder. Angola's mining laws were changed in 2011, reducing the minimum government should hold in projects to 10 per cent and reducing corporation tax.

De Beers is clearly confident of Angola's diamond resources. Strategy head Bruce Cleaver said Angola is "probably the most prospective country for diamond exploration in the world. If there is a big mine to be found, it would be in Angola."

### **Portuguese journalists criticise Angolan media investment**

Journalists in Portugal have questioned the impact of growing Angolan interests in the country's media sector. Angolan investors have increasingly invested in Portugal's banking, telecommunications, energy and media sectors since the beginning of the global economic crisis. A number of investors, who gained their wealth through Angola's oil and diamond industries are said to be linked to the MPLA.

A number of media outlets have welcomed the new investment, particularly at a time when many publications are making redundancies, due to the decline in advertising revenue. However, some are concerned that the Angolan government's strict control over its own media will lead to increasing self censorship within Portugal's media, particularly as a number of publications from Portugal are popular in Angola.

Concerns have been raised about the Newshold media group, which owns stakes in numerous major publications and has expressed an interest in buying the public service broadcaster Radio e Televisão Portuguesa, should government decide to sell. Newshold is owned by Panama based Pineview Overseas, whose shareholders include major Angolan investors.

Member of the European Parliament for Portugal's Green Party, Rui Tavares, said "Cash-strapped media, at least some of them, think that they can be saved by Angolan money... They have therefore an interest in keeping good relations with Angola, which leads to self-censorship."

US watchdog Freedom House classified Angola's press status as "not free" in its 2012 Freedom of the Press report.

### **Sonangol ranked second largest company in Africa**

State oil company Sonangol is the second largest company in Africa according to Jeune Afrique magazine. The annual study, which ranks 500 African companies and companies with their headquarters in Africa, placed Sonangol behind Algerian fuel company Sonatrach, for a second year.

Other Angolan companies included in the study were Total E&P Angola in 50th place, mining company Catoca Sociedade Mineira in 227th place, and state diamond company Endiama in 128th place.

### **Sonangol signs major loan with China Development Bank**

State oil company Sonangol has agreed a US\$1.32bn loan from the China Development Bank (CDB). No details were given about what the ten year loan would be used for. Since 2004 Angola has taken on almost \$15bn worth of oil backed credit lines from China.

The latest loan further cements diplomatic relations between the two countries, which are largely focused on oil. In recent years Angola has seen growing Chinese interests in the construction, telecoms, commerce, power and mining sectors.

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## **Human rights news**

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### **UN Human Rights High Commissioner visits Angola**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay visited Angola at the end of April. At the end of the three day delegation, in which she met with civil society, the President, ministers, the Constitutional Court and the Governor of Lunda Norte, she briefed journalists.

The High Commissioner spoke of the progress that Angola had made in the last ten years, since the end of the civil war, in particular the rapid development of infrastructure in the country. She noted the building of schools, medical facilities, housing, roads, prisons, improved utilities and land mine clearance, but raised concerns that the controversy of these developments, particularly in an around Luanda. She noted a vast and growing inequality between the richest and the poorest, and the “sometimes harsh methods used to evict people from land earmarked for development.” Many of Angola’s recent housing developments are beyond the means of most and recent forced evictions in Luanda have received a great deal of international criticism. Navi Pillay said “people should never be ejected, and their housing bulldozed, without prior consultation, adequate compensation and alternative housing being made available.” She called on the government to abide by international standards on relocations and agreed a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing.

In her meeting with President dos Santos the High Commissioner raised concerns about the need to address corruption, unemployment, high cost of living and extreme poverty in the coming four to five years. She also called on the government to do more to register millions of Angolans and the potential impact on their lives if it failed to do so. 68 per cent of under fives in Angola have not been registered.

A major focus of Navi Pillay’s speech was on the need to strengthen human rights protections. While she welcomed changes to the constitution and the constitutional court, as well as some progress on improving women’s rights she raised major concerns about access to justice and restrictions on freedom of assembly, expression and freedom of the press.

She criticised the police for “sometimes suppressing protests in a heavy-handed fashion” and highlighted reports of arbitrary detention and excessive use of force, particularly in Cabinda. The Commissioner received assurances from the Minister of Interior and the Attorney-General that the investigation into the disappearance of two protest organisers in May 2012 was ongoing and that anyone responsible for abuses would be brought to justice.

She was critical of restrictions on civil society saying “organisations are clearly feeling vulnerable and therefore constrained in Angola. Freedom of assembly, freedom to protest, and freedom to investigate and expose possible abuses, should not be undermined by heavy-handed actions, threats and intimidation on the part of the authorities.”

On media freedoms Navi Pillay said the law on defamation was a threat to investigative journalism and called on the government to respect dissent and “lift restrictions on and broaden the reach of independent media...and to increase the access of different points of view to the State-run media.”

Following her visit to the border with DRC the High Commissioner raised significant concerns about the continued abuse, including sexual abuse, of migrants into Angola by security forces and border officials. She made it clear that the human rights abuses were the responsibility of the government alone and called for action including a full cross border investigation and sensitisation of the security forces to make it clear that sexual abuse of female migrants would no longer be tolerated.

Navi Pillay also welcomed the government’s commitment to improving human rights and called for a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), in accordance with the international Paris Principles, a system adopted by over 100 countries.

### **Police break up youth protest**

18 young people were arrested by national police in Luanda on 30 March, in the country’s first youth protest since elections last August.

Approximately 100 national police, including mounted officers and dog handlers blocked the 50 or so protestors as they gathered in the morning at the Santa Ana cemetery. Amongst those arrested was the rapper Luaty Beirão and Adolfo Campos, a leading member of the Revolutionary Youth Movement. All were released by the police, without charge, later that day. A number of protestors were allegedly beaten with batons by police. According to the group Central Angola 7311 the protest had met all legal requirements.

Luanda’s police commander for public order, Orlando Bernardo, said that there were no reasons for the demonstration. He told journalists, who were prevented from covering the protests, “Police agents have realised that a youth group in front of Santa Ana cemetery wanted to start a [non-peaceful] demonstration...Twelve demonstrators were taken to the police station, after inspection they were found with five tubes containing a harmless substance, and after that freed.”

The demonstration “The right to life and liberty to those who think differently” was called on by the Revolutionary Youth Movement to demand that the government make a statement on the disappearance of two activists, Alves Kamulingue, a protest organiser, and Isaías Cassule, in May 2012.

### **Government evicts Maiombe residents**

Members of the military, Rapid Intervention Police and private security evicted over 5,000 residents from the Maiombe neighbourhood of Cacuaco municipality in Luanda at the beginning of February as properties were demolished by bulldozers. Authorities said that they were occupying state owned land illegally. At least 40 residents were arrested and charged for illegal land occupation or disobedience. According to Human Rights Watch their summary trials did not comply with international standards.

The evicted families were reportedly not given notice of the evictions, however, Rafael Morais, coordinator of housing rights organisation SOS Habitat, said that some residents had heard rumours of the demolitions three days beforehand. Whilst authorities provided transport for residents and their possessions, many said they weren’t given enough time to gather their belongings. Residents were temporarily moved to a transit area in the Kaope-Funda neighbourhood in Cacuaco municipality, but were not provided with shelter, drinking water or sanitation. The registration process for relocation was said to be lengthy and the area also lacks basic infrastructure.



According to Amnesty International, the evictions were in breach of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), to which Angola is a State Party. ACTSA wrote to the Angolan government to raise concerns about the evictions.

Leslie Lefkow, deputy Africa director at Human Rights Watch said "It adds insult to injury to first evict people with brute force, with no warning or time to prepare, and then imprison them when they are left homeless and destitute...The government should promptly ensure that the people evicted from Maiombe have access to shelter and are compensated for the material loss the government's actions caused them."

On 23 February a 50 person delegation from UNITA, including party president Isaias Samakuva, was prevented by security forces from meeting with the community, and some were beaten.

### **Generals sue journalist over blood diamonds book**

A group of eight Angolan generals are taking legal action against journalist Rafael Marques and publisher Tinta-da-China over the publication of his 2011 book "Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola" in Portugal.

Rafael Marques was notified of the action of 7 March. The generals are seeking 300,000 Euros for libel and defamation. The civil prosecution follows a failed criminal complaint filed by nine generals, which the Portuguese Public Prosecutor's Service decided not to further pursue in February, after ruling that the investigative material in the book was of public interest and there was a lack of evidence that the author had defamed the generals.

The book accuses Angolan soldiers and Teleservice guards of human rights abuses, connected with the diamond industry, including murder and torture. The generals are shareholders of the security company Teleservice as well as the diamond mining company Sociedade Mineira do Cuango.

At the beginning of April Rafael Marques was questioned and named a suspect by the Angolan Department for Combating Organised Crime of the National Criminal Investigation Directorate (DNIC) after three shareholders and managers from the company ITM-Mining accused the journalist of defaming them in his "Blood diamonds" book.

Rafael Marques has previously lodged a criminal complaint himself, with the Angolan Office of the Attorney General, following the publication of the book in November 2011. The attorney general set the case aside after a summary inquiry in which he heard from four witnesses.

International interest in the issue has been high. Rafael Marques appeared at the European Union in February and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in April.

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## **Aid and development news**

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### **UN meets with civil society to review Millennium Development Goals**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and national teachers union Sinprof hosted a regional conference in Huila Province in February to assess the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their future.

The meeting brought together teachers, civil society, government, faith leaders and youth to discuss and feed into the post 2015 development agenda (the successor to the MDGs). Angola is one of 19 countries

in Africa running consultations on local and national priorities which will feed in to the UN's report to its General Assembly later this year on the post 2015 development agenda.

Two UNDP supported projects focused on MDG three 'Promote gender equality and empower women', came to the end of their first year of operation in February. The projects are focused on the empowerment of women, education and political, social and economic rights.

In Huambo and Bie the Ester project has provided training to women, particularly in agriculture, in literacy, business skills, social and economic rights and encouraged participation in the 2012 elections. In Luanda, the Angolan Association for Adult Education, has been encouraging literacy groups for adults with 270 students undertaking a three-year literacy programme in Zango and 1,100 students being trained in Viana.

#### **Rehabilitation programme agreed for Iona National Park**

An agreement signed in April between Angola's Ministry of Environment, the Global Environment Facility, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme will see the agencies working together to protect the 1.5 million hectare Iona National Park, a coastal conservation area straddling the Angola-Namibia border. The park's unique ecosystem hosts rare wildlife and a number of rare plants, unique to the area.

Poverty as well as access to water are major challenges for the 15,000 people living in the national park. The US\$10 million project aims to provide infrastructure, equipment and train rangers to tackle the increasing level of poaching in the area. It will also support community based eco-tourism, to support local communities.

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