

**DEALING WITH SAVIMBI'S GHOST:  
THE SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN  
CHALLENGES IN ANGOLA**

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## DEALING WITH SAVIMBI'S GHOST: THE SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN ANGOLA

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Emerging slowly from decades of civil war, Angola stands at a crossroads between a spectacular recovery or further cycles of instability and crisis. The government that won the fighting must now move on a number of fronts – with international support – to win the peace.

Although there are critical longer term political and economic issues (to be considered in a subsequent report), several immediate security and humanitarian challenges must be addressed to avoid laying the foundations for a return to conflict. The late rebel leader Jonas Savimbi's ghost, the legacy of a war that killed a million people and uprooted a third of the population, will haunt the country for years. Millions who are either internally displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries must be resettled in their areas of origin. 105,000 fighters of the former rebel organisation UNITA – each with an average of six civilian dependents – must be reintegrated into civilian life on an urgent basis. The removal of millions of mines laid over the past half-century has to be accelerated.

If the government addresses these challenges responsibly and is helped by the international community, Angola can stabilise. If it ignores or minimises them, at best banditry and organised crime will intensify insecurity in the provinces; at worst, resentments will build, intersect with remnants of potential organised and armed resistance, and form the nucleus for future instability.

Reintegrating the UNITA rank-and-file back into civilian life is first priority. There are reports of their increasing disenchantment, as government promises of support do not materialise and camp conditions remain poor. The related problems – security,

economic, psychosocial, capacity and political – are enormous. How they are met will be a major determinant of whether or not, five years down the line, the country has succeeded in building peace.

The scope of population flows in Angola has few equals. Approximately two million of a total displaced population of over three million have been, are, or soon will be on the move, most seeking to go home. These massive movements ensure the continuation of at least a low-grade humanitarian emergency. Indeed, a year after the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi and the *de facto* end of the war, mortality rates remain at emergency levels. The rainy season, landmines, and the regional food crisis limit access for aid agencies and mean the situation could worsen considerably over the several months before the next harvest. Already, aid officials in five different provinces have reported acute levels of malnutrition.

Landmine infestation – among the worst encountered in any post-conflict situation globally – is the biggest challenge to resettlement. Injuries have increased particularly on the Planalto, the central highlands. This is happening as the hungry season is at its height and the rains have reached their peak. Nascent commercial traffic has been inhibited by the incidents, which, if they do not decrease, and especially if it is determined that new mines are being laid, will seriously affect aid agency operations. This would both impact deliveries to current populations – which in a number of provinces are highly dependent on such deliveries – and prevent assessments for post-harvest aid.

In the context of forthcoming democratisation efforts, the government needs to recognise that it is in its strategic self-interest to become more responsive and

accountable. A good start would be to redirect some of its oil money to social services and public investment in order to build wider support for its policies. State building should be understood as a conflict prevention strategy, and service delivery as a peace consolidation strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **To the government of Angola:**

1. Demonstrate that it is assuming responsibility for the welfare of all Angolans, most urgently by visibly taking the lead in the process of resettling internally displaced persons (IDPs) and former UNITA combatants, including by:
  - (a) building government capacity to deliver social services and agricultural inputs in the provinces;
  - (b) investing transparently in infrastructure (roads and bridges) and public works programs; and
  - (c) developing a strengthened partnership with donors for de-mining.
2. Establish the necessary infrastructure for implementing the reintegration plans for former UNITA combatants as soon as the rains end in April, and engage UNITA, affected communities, civil society organisations, aid agencies, and donors actively in this process.
3. Revitalise the provincial-level Reintegration Commissions, which currently involve government and UNITA representatives, and expand involvement to include UN agencies, NGOs, local community representatives, and – where possible – donor government representatives.

4. Develop specific reintegration programs that include real livelihood alternatives for former UNITA officers.
5. Develop the capacity to do serious humanitarian de-mining.
6. Create a peace dividend by reallocating expenditures in favour of the social sectors and humanitarian assistance.
7. Commit to humanitarian assistance and development as basic conflict prevention and stabilisation tools.

### **To donor governments and UN agencies:**

8. Engage the government through both quiet diplomacy and public pressure on its social welfare responsibilities, particularly regarding reintegration of former UNITA combatants and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
9. Work closely with the Angolan government, UNITA and civil society in order to help meet the country's massive requirements for rehabilitation and reconciliation initiatives.
10. Increase de-mining assistance, including through the provision of South African-made Chubby mine detection and clearance vehicles specifically suited for Angola's circumstances.

### **To UNITA:**

11. Work closely with the government to address the significant challenges inherent in the effort to reintegrate its former rank-and-file fighters and to develop alternative livelihood programs for its former officers.

**Luanda/Brussels, 26 February 2003**

## DEALING WITH SAVIMBI'S GHOST:

### THE SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES IN ANGOLA

#### I. INTRODUCTION

One year after the death of rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, Angola has its best opportunity for peace in the last half century. The organisation that Savimbi founded and led – the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) – no longer exists as a nationally integrated fighting force. The military superiority of the government's army is unchallenged, as is the political dominance of the government led by the ruling party, the Popular Liberation Movement of Angola (MPLA).

The government has indeed won the war<sup>1</sup> but it now must decide whether it will commit the resources and political will necessary to win the peace. Festering security and humanitarian issues, if left unaddressed, will lay the foundation for future instability and warlordism in an already devastated country.

As it emerges from the war, the government will have an increasingly important role in the region and ultimately throughout the continent. It has already projected its military force throughout the region in the service of its strategic interests. It now aims to project its political influence in a more systematic and focused manner by taking advantage of election to the United Nations Security Council in January 2003, its October 2002 rotation to the Chair of the regional organisation SADC, and, in 2004, its assumption of the Chair of the African Union. For the first time since independence in 1975, it faces no serious, immediate internal threat. Furthermore, massive oil reserves provide it a seat at the table when strategic

discussions are conducted about global energy security.

Top MPLA officials feel a new level of confidence and some element of manifest destiny. They won the war and are a major oil exporter. There is a richly endowed country only beginning to approach its full potential. A diplomat observed:

This is not Mozambique or Congo. The Angolans achieved peace by themselves. They believe they have the upper hand and are masters of their own timetable. Angola will be very assertive, projecting its power throughout the region.<sup>2</sup>

Despite their government's regional and global aspirations, the Angolan people remain beset by the legacy of a war that left a million dead and a third of the population displaced. Humanitarian and security crises must be addressed urgently. Estimates that range as high as fifteen million landmines on Angola's roads and in its fields<sup>3</sup> have forced humanitarian organisations to reduce or suspend operations in parts of the country. Symptomatic of the precariousness of the situation, the World Food Programme has resumed airdrops of food in some areas due to landmine incidents and washed-out roads.<sup>4</sup> Some 105,000 UNITA ex-combatants – each with an average of six civilian dependents – are in quartering areas awaiting reintegration into civilian life.<sup>5</sup> The large numbers of small arms – some not turned in by UNITA during its demobilisation, others

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<sup>1</sup> There still remains a destructive insurgency in the oil-rich northern province of Cabinda, which will be the subject of a future report. This report is focused on the aftermath of the war with UNITA.

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<sup>2</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>3</sup> David Hartley, "Halo Trust in Angola", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 6.2 2002, p.13. Some NGOs in Angola say this figure and other similar ones used by the UN are exaggerated.

<sup>4</sup> IRIN, 10 January 2003.

<sup>5</sup> UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Mission in Angola", 7 February 2003, p. 3.

owned by civilians armed by both sides during the last decade – will also create opportunities for increased crime and localised instability.

The combination of extraordinary numbers of people on the move and the rainy season, which corresponds with the height of the hungry season, suggests the humanitarian situation could well deteriorate significantly before the April harvest comes in. Given the extreme vulnerability of large segments of the rural population, even small supply shocks could push communities into severe malnutrition. Further displacement could provoke a rapid spread of disease.

Angola will remain unstable unless there is early progress on de-mining, the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other rural residents and integration into productive civilian life of the erstwhile UNITA fighters. Crime and localised humanitarian emergencies will increase in the short-run, while instability – likely in the form of factionalised warlordism – could return in the long run, especially in the UNITA strongholds of the Planalto (central highlands). “We will see Savimbi’s ghost if the reintegration effort fails”, said one senior Western diplomat. “It could be scary and disorganised in the context of an eroded or collapsed state. There are lots of arms out there. If these men are not reintegrated, and are starving, they have the means to dig up weapons and become bandits”.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond these immediate priorities, UNITA needs to reconstruct itself as a political party able to operate in a post-conflict environment. Civil society must continue to grow and assert itself. The government should renew its commitment to the revitalisation of state services, prepare for elections, and introduce more transparency and accountability into the management of state resources and revenues. ICG will address these longer-term political and economic issues in a subsequent report.

## II. THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Few countries in the world have experienced as sustained and violent a conflict as Angola. The country’s independence on 11 November 1975 was preceded by fourteen years of anti-colonial warfare waged against the Portuguese by the MPLA, UNITA and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). At independence, although the MPLA secured Luanda, Angola became embroiled in one of the deadliest surrogate struggles of the Cold War era. The civil war in which the country was mired for the better part of the 1970s and 1980s was essentially between the MPLA and UNITA but it was exacerbated by ethnic and racial diversity, geography, Cold War politics and outside designs on its natural resources. The U.S., the Soviet Union, Cuba and South Africa were all active in pursuit of their national goals in Angola through military means. There was little economic and social development in spite of the fact that Western oil companies began to make significant finds off the coast.

In May 1991, the U.S., Portugal and the Soviet Union came together as a troika to broker a peace accord – known by the name of the Portuguese town where it was negotiated, Bicesse – that paved the way for a cease-fire, a unified national army, and national multi-party elections. During sixteen uneasy months of the cease-fire and while preparations were being made for elections, UNITA and the MPLA government actually integrated their armed forces. Elections were held in September 1992, with 75 per cent of the electorate participating and the MPLA winning a plurality (Dos Santos, the MPLA leader, received 49.6 per cent, Savimbi 40 per cent). UNITA, however, rejected a UN finding that the elections had been substantially free and fair and returned the country to full-scale war.<sup>7</sup>

Another truce was reached in September 1993, when the UN imposed an oil and arms embargo on UNITA. This led to resumption of negotiations under UN and troika auspices, and eventually to the Lusaka Protocol of November 1994,<sup>8</sup> which called for a renewed cease-fire, disarmament and demobilisation

<sup>6</sup> ICG interview, February 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Cook, “Angola: Recent Developments and U.S. Policy”, Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress, 24 April 2002, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> For a fuller account of this period see Paul Hare, *Angola’s Last Best Chance for Peace*, U.S. Institute of Peace, 1998.

of UNITA and its participation in a government of national unity. The UN deployed 7,000 peacekeepers to help implement the accords. However, Savimbi did not come to Lusaka to sign the final protocols.

With the collapse of the Mobutu government in the Congo in April 1997,<sup>9</sup> UNITA lost its most important backer, and the decision by the UN a half-year later to impose stronger sanctions, including a flight and travel ban, further isolated the organisation.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, by mid-1998, freshly rearmed and demanding significant amendments to the Protocol, it resumed a low-intensity war.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, the government's pressure, the impact of sanctions and the unrelenting harshness of life in the bush combined to weaken the organisation militarily. The 27-year insurgency finally collapsed on 22 February 2002 when government forces killed Savimbi in the eastern province of Moxico.

### III. THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

The protracted armed conflict ended formally on 4 April 2002, with signature of the Luena Accords.<sup>12</sup> They replaced Annexes 3 and 4 of the Lusaka Protocol, which otherwise remains the accepted and legitimate framework for peace in Angola. The Luena Accords provided for implementation of the ceasefire in the following ways:<sup>13</sup>

- ❑ an amnesty law for all crimes committed within the context of the armed conflict
- ❑ disengagement, quartering and demilitarisation of UNITA's military forces;
- ❑ disbanding of UNITA military forces
- ❑ integration of UNITA officers, non-commissioned officers and ordinary fighters into the government's army, in accordance with structural vacancies;
- ❑ integration of senior UNITA officers and officials into the national police;
- ❑ demobilisation of excess UNITA military personnel; and
- ❑ vocational re-integration of demobilised personnel into national life.

The Accords also created two institutional structures, a Joint Military Commission (JMC) to oversee implementation and a Technical Group (TG) to assist the JMC. The JMC was headed by military representatives from both the government and UNITA, with UN and troika country observers. The TG was composed of up to twenty military experts from both sides.<sup>14</sup>

On 15 August 2002, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1433, authorising establishment of a new United Nations Mission in Angola (UNMA). UN Under Secretary for African Affairs Ibrahim Gambari was named interim head of UNMA on 13 September. The Security Council also extended the financial and trade sanctions against UNITA, although the travel

<sup>9</sup> See ICG Africa Report No. 26, *Scramble for the Congo: Anatomy of an Ugly War*, 20 December 2000; ICG Africa Report No. TK

<sup>10</sup> Cook, "Angola", op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> John Prendergast, "Angola's Deadly War: Dealing with Savimbi's Hell on Earth", U.S. Institute of Peace Special Report, 12 October 1999, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> Formally known as the "Memorandum of Understanding: Addendum to the Lusaka Protocol for the Cessation of Hostilities and the Implementation of the Outstanding Military Issues Under the Lusaka Protocol".

<sup>13</sup> Joao Gomes Porto, "Angola at DD+40", Institute for Security Studies, 4 June 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

ban on its officials was suspended. All UN sanctions against UNITA were lifted on 10 December 2002.

The two sides signed a "Memorandum of Commitment for the Final Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol" on 26 August 2002. Its additional requirements included: allocation of facilities for UNITA and residences for the party leadership; submission of UNITA's nominees for positions in a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and in the public service; establishment of UNITA as a political party and the reinstatement of its status as the largest opposition party; and review of Angola's national symbols. The Memorandum also established a Joint Commission on the Peace Process, chaired by Gambari, with participation from government, UNITA and troika states. The Joint Commission completed its work on 20 November 2002.<sup>15</sup>

While the immediate political issues were successfully handled, the humanitarian situation has remained serious. By the time of Savimbi's death, hundreds of communities throughout the country had been displaced as part of deliberate war strategies aimed at depopulating the countryside and depriving combatants of food and other forms of social support. Once the peace accords were signed, humanitarian organisations found that in 70 per cent of the newly accessible areas, people had either low levels of food security or were at risk of serious hunger. In half the areas, malnutrition levels and child and maternal mortality rates were critical. For example, only five per cent of the population had access to clean drinking water and very few children attended school.

By June 2002 the caseload for emergency assistance had climbed from 1.9 million to nearly three million, one-third of whom were on the brink of survival.<sup>16</sup> Malnutrition among Angolans emerging from the conflict zones was among the worst seen in Africa in the past decade, according to aid agencies.<sup>17</sup> The situation improved in the second half of 2002, but high levels of displacement, mine infestation, and uncertainty surrounding the reintegration of UNITA fighters meant that a new crisis was only one step

away. It was in this fragile environment that Angola had to begin the process of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Interim Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Angola", S/2002/1352, 12 December 2002, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>16</sup> "The 2003 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, December 2002, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> "Angola: Year-ender 2002 – Political Challenges for the future", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 22 January 2003, p. 1.



#### IV. WINNING THE PEACE: SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

Although UNITA is no longer an immediate military threat, significant efforts must be undertaken now to prevent conflict and instability from eventually returning. Urgent priority areas are the reintegration of UNITA ex-combatants, resettlement of IDPs and refugees, and removal of landmines. More than 100 international NGOs, nearly 300 national NGOs and 24 UN agencies are helping<sup>18</sup> but government leadership is imperative if the seeds of future conflict are not to be sown.

##### A. REINTEGRATION OF UNITA EX-COMBATANTS

One of the most potent fault lines in the country today is the question of what to do with the 105,000 UNITA ex-combatants – each with an average of six civilian dependents – living in quartering areas after voluntarily disarming.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, over the next twelve to 24 months, organising and underwriting the reintegration of the UNITA rank-and-file back into civilian life is the principal means by which to prevent future instability, and, perhaps, localised conflict. There are reports of increasing disenchantment among the former rebels as promised reintegration support does not materialise, and camp conditions remain poor.<sup>20</sup> Despite the government's announcement that it is committing U.S.\$125 million to a two-year reintegration plan,<sup>21</sup> payments have been "irregular and not universal", according to the UN, and twenty per cent of the ex-combatants have not yet been included on the payroll.<sup>22</sup> Promised programs to provide seeds and tools did not materialise, ensuring another year of aid dependency for the majority of the ex-combatants.<sup>23</sup> A top UNITA official warned:

How these people are treated will determine the stability or instability of the country. The government must be willing to pay the price of peace and stability. These men are still soldiers without guns. If the government fails in its reintegration program, everything in life has its price. The causes of social conflict are still alive.<sup>24</sup>

A Western diplomat agreed: "If it doesn't go well, this will put in jeopardy the peace process and the stability of the country".<sup>25</sup> Even a top Angolan government official conceded, "If we don't do this right, we could return to war".<sup>26</sup>

The challenges are enormous. Land and property issues must be resolved; transport back home must be arranged; areas must be prepared for reintegration, and programs must be established both for those being reintegrated and the communities that are absorbing them. Any of these elements could undermine the entire effort.

Implementation has thus far been uneven. The government says that it is willing to pay the price but there is no evidence yet in the provinces of infrastructure with which to begin any serious process of reintegration. "We don't have the experience on this issue, and we need help", said a senior government official. "We have money, but we need to construct relevant programs".<sup>27</sup> An aid agency official noted, "The government promised heaven and earth to the UNITA ex-combatants, but haven't delivered much of anything".<sup>28</sup> An outside military observer added:

Conceptually the government can talk a good game, but their capacity to implement is minimal, and they don't really care. The FAA [the Angolan Army] wanted to get this right, and complain about the central government not giving the resources to make it work. The government has given the FAA an impossible mission with no resources. This is antagonising the FAA leadership".<sup>29</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "Humanitarian Presence: International Non-Governmental Organisations and UN Agencies", "Humanitarian Presence: National Non-Governmental Organisations", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Angola, United Nations; United Nations Security Council, "Interim Report of the Secretary-General", op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> "Angola: Activists Urge UN to Act on Allegations of Abuse", IRIN, 10 January 2003.

<sup>20</sup> ICG interviews in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>21</sup> IRIN, 30 January 2003.

<sup>22</sup> UN Security Council, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> IRIN, 3 February 2003.

<sup>24</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>25</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>26</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>27</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>28</sup> ICG interview in Lobito, December 2002.

<sup>29</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

This is puzzling given that the government passed its first major test in the way it organised the camps for UNITA soldiers to demobilise. Although there were serious humanitarian problems in some, within 90 days of the cessation of hostilities, the FAA and UNITA together had built and opened quartering sites all over the country, and the FAA was trying to feed 400,000 people. "The process moved too quickly for everyone", said a military observer. "But the will of the FAA was there. In comparison, in 1994, when the UN was charged with establishing quartering areas, it took them eight months to establish the first quartering area for 800 people".<sup>30</sup>

If the government and its aid agency partners do not provide resettlement/reintegration packages to the former UNITA fighters, significant problems could result. The first test, the provision of reintegration "kits" including tools and other basic necessities, failed when the contract for their procurement was botched. Now that the kits are being purchased, the lack of provincial government capacity to deliver has stymied the program.<sup>31</sup> Most people interviewed by ICG in the provinces, including UNITA representatives, do not think that in the short run UNITA would go back to the bush as an organised fighting body. They do believe, however, that there will be banditry, more organised criminal activity, ambushes and similar violence if needs are not addressed.<sup>32</sup> (The actions of many UNITA units had degenerated into precisely this kind of activity in the year before Savimbi's death, as logistics slowly eroded.<sup>33</sup>) Mine laying would also be a possibility.

"UNITA has different tendencies at the local level", said one observer in Benguela Province. "They are not monolithic. How they react will be very unpredictable from location to location".<sup>34</sup> Since November 2002, banditry has increased in some locations near quartering areas. It is not clear whether any new mines have been laid, and, if so, by whom

although some NGOs working in these areas contend that no new mines have been laid.<sup>35</sup>

The government sought to close the quartering areas by the end of December 2002 but has not enforced this deadline.<sup>36</sup> Most ex-combatants have not yet been paid, and the government appears totally unprepared to deliver the over-promised resettlement packages (skills training, money, agricultural support, etc.). Furthermore, many ex-combatants and their families have planted crops in the zone surrounding the quartering areas and will not leave unless they have prospects of planting elsewhere this year.<sup>37</sup> One military analyst was pessimistic about the government's commitment to reintegration at this point: "The government is washing its hands of this process. It didn't take care of other former ex-combatants in the past, and won't do so here. The key to any action will be for the international community to keep the government's feet to the fire".<sup>38</sup> The World Bank will be key in refocusing attention on reintegration. It agreed with the government in January to implement with it a multi-donor program aimed at demobilising 167,000 FAA and UNITA fighters and pay reintegration benefits to over 100,000 of them. The government's Commission on the Social and Productive Reintegration of Demobilised and Displaced People is actively seeking international assistance to help transport the ex-combatants back to their areas of origin and to fund reintegration kits.

The government's motivation for early closure of the camps is political. Some see an opportunity to break the back of UNITA's armed wing and further weaken its organisational cohesion by dispersing the remaining ex-combatants and further distancing them from their leadership. These officials do not

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<sup>30</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>31</sup> IRIN, 3 February 2003.

<sup>32</sup> ICG interviews in Huambo, Kuito and Lobito, December 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Organisational cohesion was partially restored, ironically, when UNITA units went to the quartering areas by mid-2002 and had a semi-regular logistical supply line. In some places this is beginning to degenerate again, which is where much of the banditry is concentrated.

<sup>34</sup> ICG interview in Lobito, December 2002.

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<sup>35</sup> A top UNITA official confided that the threat of banditry and insecurity will be highest in the provinces of Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul, Huila and Cuando Cubango. ICG interview in Angola, December 2002. In Benguela Province, on the road from Lobito to the Chingongo gathering area, there have been reports of hijackings and banditry. ICG interviews in Lobito, December 2002.

<sup>36</sup> However, the government did use force to close two camps – Amboiva and Catofe – in Kuanza Sul.

<sup>37</sup> Many former combatants are wary of leaving the camps before they receive their decommissioning payments (about U.S.\$100) as well as their relocation kits of tools, seeds, etc. (42 items in all). The government has told the ex-soldiers they will receive their payments and kits from municipal officials in their areas or origin.

<sup>38</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

want pockets of UNITA strongholds to survive, either for future military activity or to provide cadres to the political party. Savimbi is dead; the remaining top military and political leadership is in Luanda; the next level of leaders is largely under control in provincial capitals, recipients of cars, houses and cash; but the grassroots leadership is still in the quartering areas with the rank-and-file. Therefore, although the old hierarchical system was destroyed at Savimbi's death, command and control still exists to some degree at the basic operational level.

In Luanda, some UNITA leaders – attempting to increase their leverage – implicitly threaten that if things go very wrong, the rank and file will threaten Angola's stability. Others say that this is impossible. Even with the deterioration of UNITA's command and control and broader organisational coherence, however, some within the MPLA leadership and key FAA officers continue to believe that it could be a lightning rod for more general dissatisfaction with the government and create the foundation for future instability. The government does not want to take any chances and appears committed to dispersing this population as quickly as possible.

The government has a point. It is important to encourage the return of this population to their homes, although many are with their families in the quartering areas and are thus less committed to a return to a specific location. The biggest mistake would be to keep them together and treat them as a group. The case of post-war Mozambique is instructive. The formal rebel insurgency, RENAMO, was a security threat but its rank-and-file were very quickly returned to family networks, and numerous initiatives were undertaken to support reconciliation and traditional justice at the local level. In Angola, these local mechanisms of reconciliation and justice have been deeply compromised over the years and thus will be more difficult to resurrect for long-term conflict resolution.

Another factor to watch closely is the degree to which UNITA rank-and-file lose their confidence in – and thus loyalty to – their superiors in Luanda. Reports of commanders who went to the capital and were rewarded with houses and cars have caused unhappiness among those left behind in the quartering areas with little or no assistance.<sup>39</sup> Luanda-

based UNITA leaders, including General Gato, are unlikely to attempt to confront the government militarily. However, it is more plausible that officers left in the camps will create small gangs to engage in banditry in the absence of systematic delivery of promised support for the immediate needs of the population and long-term solutions leading to sustainable livelihoods. The likelihood of this scenario increases proportionate to the perception of the ex-combatants that the government is not delivering. This is closely linked to another problem, that of soldiers not understanding what their benefits actually are, which in turn led a UNITA leader in central Angola to say, "The UNITA rank-and-file feel like the government is swindling them".<sup>40</sup>

Another worrying issue is the psychological state of many of the erstwhile fighters. For years they have seen and been subjected to a variety of horrors. "These men have been in the bush for years, and have been radicalised by their life experiences", said one military observer.<sup>41</sup> When ex-officers in the quartering areas have been paid, drunken terror has sometimes resulted, apparently mostly among those who were in the bush longest. Scores are settled in a frightening manner. "It is a form of social retribution", said one humanitarian official. "High levels of social deprivation combined with extreme levels of social control, including maiming and torturing to ensure conformity, produce madness borne of the depredations and terrors of war".<sup>42</sup>

In many cases local populations do not want UNITA ex-combatants to return home because of the abuses they committed and fear that increased violence and banditry would result. Many of their homes and properties have been taken, which could produce localised conflict as these populations come back home. An Angolan church official reported, "Angolans are not ready to forgive. It is dangerous to bring the ex-combatants back to their home areas. Returnee conflicts will be a major problem".<sup>43</sup> A senior aid official warned, "Reintegration programs targeting only ex-UNITA, such as that designed by the World Bank, will aggravate this feeling and might also add an additional level of resentment and

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<sup>39</sup> ICG interviews in Angola, December 2002. Key UNITA military leaders were made three-star generals in the FAA when they joined the government in August, a move some

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believe was aimed at driving a further wedge between UNITA leaders and rank-and-file. *Africa Confidential*, 11 October 2002.

<sup>40</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>41</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.

<sup>42</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>43</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

rejection".<sup>44</sup> Consequently, programs should support the communities to which the ex-combatants are returning, in addition to whatever direct assistance the latter receive.

In some locations, UNITA commanders themselves would like to keep the camps open. Some are close to diamond-mining areas, and officers want to maintain access to the gems; others are near their home areas, and commanders wish to preserve the existing military hierarchy, even without weapons.

A major survey by the International Organisation of Migration found that the desires of the ex-combatants were rather simple. Half had farms before joining UNITA and wanted to return to farming. The other half wanted some kind of professional training.<sup>45</sup> A concerted effort to move at least those who want to go back to agricultural production should be launched as soon as the April harvest is in, so that they are ready to plant when the rains next begin.

## **B. THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

Angola will need years to recover from the systematic attacks that were directed against civilian targets over decades of insurgency and counter-insurgency. A year after the war's end, mortality rates are still at emergency levels. A third of the population was displaced during the war. The government estimates that more than 3 million Angolans remain displaced, including 442,000 refugees still outside the borders.<sup>46</sup> Over a million had already resettled in their home areas before the rains began; only a fraction received international help in doing so, however, given the speed with which they moved.<sup>47</sup> The vast majority of these have gone back to areas unsuitable for resettlement because of landmines, absence of government services, or inaccessibility for aid agencies. Thousands have taken refuge in crowded, abandoned buildings because there are no sustainable

living conditions in their home areas.<sup>48</sup> Most returning refugees are in a desperate situation, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>49</sup> The Geneva-based Global IDP Project found that returning internally displaced Angolans face ongoing human rights abuses and localised humanitarian crises.<sup>50</sup> Hundreds of thousands more will be on the move when the rains end in March.

Since social services are virtually non-existent, people are almost entirely reliant on international organisations for basic services but huge resource constraints and donor scepticism restrict where and when these can be delivered. The national health system, in particular, must to be revamped to deal with growing numbers of HIV/AIDS victims and landmine survivors. Nearly 2.5 million Angolans will require food assistance before the harvest in April.<sup>51</sup> Satisfaction of their needs is complicated by competing demands, as Angola is part of a wider regional humanitarian crisis fuelled by drought throughout southern Africa and by the destruction of Zimbabwe's commercial agricultural sector. This will make emergency deliveries over the coming year even more unpredictable.

The scale of concentrated population movement in Angola has few parallels. Perhaps up to two million people have been, are, or soon will be on the move, including IDPs, ex-combatants and their families, and refugees. Most seek to go home, although the level of rural to urban flows will be unpredictable. These massive movements ensure that at least a low-grade humanitarian emergency will continue. What makes matters worse is the land mine problem, which confronts every family trying to go home, as does the complete lack of government services and administration in most areas.

Many IDPs have kept two residences, one at the return site where families built shelters and prepared land, and the other in provincial and municipal centres where households continue to receive assistance. Although the majority of those who returned to prepared land prior to the planting season did so voluntarily, the IDPs were frequently encouraged to resettle by promises of future assistance. In other instances, authorities threatened to cut off aid to government-designated reception

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<sup>44</sup> Correspondence with ICG, February 2003.

<sup>45</sup> IRIN, 30 January 2003.

<sup>46</sup> "Humanitarian Situation in Angola", Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, November-December 2002, p. 3. "Angola – Complex Emergency Situation Report #1 (FY) 2003", Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, USAID, 31 October 2002.

<sup>47</sup> "Humanitarian Update", Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 19 December 2002. Roughly 1.3 million IDPs and 85,000 refugees spontaneously returned to their home areas during 2002, and the UN expects a further 1.2 million to return in 2003.

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<sup>48</sup> ICG correspondence, January 2003.

<sup>49</sup> IRIN, 20 February 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Global IDP Project, Press Statement, 21 February 2003.

<sup>51</sup> UN Security Council, op. cit. p. 4.

areas. According to the UN, of the IDPs who had resettled or returned to areas of origin by the end of 2002, 15 per cent had done so under an organised plan and 30 per cent were living in areas that conformed to the terms in the Luena Accords. The most significant return movements occurred in Huambo (189,390), Kuanza Sul (145,257), Bie (129,599) and Bengo (84,892) provinces.<sup>52</sup>

There will be a further influx of refugees from neighbouring states. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 84,400 such refugees have returned already in 2003 but five times that figure remain in Zambia, Namibia, the Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).<sup>53</sup>

The government's occasional coercion of communities to move is an additional complication. Displaced people in some centres are being told to go home, and in several instances UNITA ex-combatants have been forced to leave quartering areas. The lack of coordination between the government and the international aid organisations makes matters worse and hampers the ability of the system to respond to people's needs.

The isolation caused by the war helped keep the percentage of HIV/AIDS cases relatively low, 5.5 per cent, in comparison to Botswana (38.8 per cent), Lesotho (31 per cent), Swaziland (33.4 per cent) and Zimbabwe (33.7 per cent).<sup>54</sup> However, an estimated 40 per cent of Angolan soldiers are HIV positive, and peace has produced an increase in trade, migration and travel – three of the main social vectors for the spread of the infection.<sup>55</sup> “People will be shocked by the high rate of HIV/AIDS among senior army officers”, said one Western diplomat.<sup>56</sup> Expectations are that the number of HIV/AIDS cases will rise considerably.<sup>57</sup>

The general lack of HIV/AIDS awareness is a hindrance to prevention efforts. One humanitarian

NGO reported that 65 per cent of Angolans do not utilise any method to prevent transmission of the disease and only 9 per cent have adequate information about it.<sup>58</sup> The years of war also affected health care and other essential services making it very difficult to access facilities as well as monitor the epidemiological trends of most diseases, which could explain why the statistics are still very low.<sup>59</sup> Underreporting of HIV/AIDS cases due to limited clinical and laboratory capacity for diagnosis<sup>60</sup> will be a concern until the government and the international community make a priority of restructuring the health system and instituting an aggressive prevention campaign. An Angolan National AIDS Program was mounted in 2000, but the response has been disjointed, and most NGOs and AIDS service organisations still do not have the capacity for meaningful intervention.<sup>61</sup> “Here we have a chance to prevent the explosion but nobody wants to do anything until the explosion is here”, admonished one AIDS awareness worker.<sup>62</sup>

HIV/AIDS becomes a security issue in Angola when former combatants return to villages experiencing a rising prevalence of the disease, and when infection rates begin to increase in the security services. Some analysts warn that aid agencies have not adequately factored the role of the disease in reconstruction efforts in Angola. “It can aggravate and provoke social fragmentation and political polarisation”, warned an official of the Pretoria-based Institute for Strategic Studies.<sup>63</sup>

### C. THE LANDMINE LEGACY

The biggest challenge to resettlement and, indeed, one of the most significant crises facing the country, is landmine removal. Not only are up to fifteen million of these devices planted in Angola's roads, farming areas and walkways, but at least 76 different types, manufactured in 22 countries, have been

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<sup>52</sup> United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Situation in Angola, Quarterly Analysis, August-October, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> “AIDS Epidemic Update”, UNAIDS, December 2002, p.16.

<sup>55</sup> Ada Williams and Veronika Martin. “The Next War in Angola: Combating HIV/AIDS”, Refugees International report, 30 July 2002, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> ICG interview, February 2003.

<sup>57</sup> “AIDS Epidemic Update”, UNAIDS, December 2002, p.16.

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<sup>58</sup> “Angola Appeal N°01, 14/2003”, ReliefWeb, 17 December 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Williams and Martin, “The Next War in Angola”, op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> “Global AIDS Program: Countries: Angola”, Centre for Disease Control.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> *The Guardian* (UK), 7 February 2003.

<sup>63</sup> IRIN, 6 February 2003.

found.<sup>64</sup> This has resulted in more than 70,000 mine-disabled people – one in every 415 Angolans.<sup>65</sup>

Angola is one of the worst places in the world for landmines. According to many aid workers, Angolan officials and representatives from civil society,<sup>66</sup> the recent spate of explosions – most serious in the central highlands (Planalto), which has seen an enormous increase – is the result of various factors. These include the sheer number of mines laid during the war, the increased volume of traffic on the roads since fighting ended in April 2002, the opening of new roads for returnees and ensuing commercial traffic, and the onset of the rains, which have removed soil and exposed unexploded mines. The impact has been chilling on the delivery of vital services to millions.

If incidents do not decrease, and especially if it is determined that new mines are being laid, aid agency operations will face further restrictions, both impacting deliveries to current populations in need and preventing assessments for aid deliveries that will be needed after the harvest. All this unnerves recently revived commercial traffic and comes as the hungry season is at its height and the rains are more frequent. If the agencies are forced to cut off food distribution, there will be serious repercussions because dependence is high in certain provinces.

There is much speculation as to whether new mines have been laid, particularly because in a number of the most recent incidents, devices were on the surface and in the middle of key roads leading to quartering areas. On the UNITA side, speculation centres on certain UNITA ex-combatants who are angry and could be trying to embarrass the government. Some on the government side allege that the army might be planting mines to prevent aid from reaching the quartering areas and so hasten the dispersal of the former UNITA fighters or to protect the commercial monopolies controlled by generals in some locations.<sup>67</sup> Countering speculation that FAA officers might be involved is the trend towards diversification of their economic interests. They have moved beyond investment in air transport into long-haul

trucks to take advantage of the shift to ground delivery of humanitarian aid. They are also taking over – unilaterally or as partners – some diamond concessions formerly managed by UNITA, thereby making up for revenue lost in the transition from the war economy.

There are two groups of mines: first, those used for classic perimeter defence of strategic areas; secondly, those on roads to prevent access to and from strategic areas or targets. The risk to civilians is enormous, as both strategies were aimed at reducing civilian traffic as well as impeding opposing forces.

Illustratively, a plastic anti-tank mine was found in the middle of a secondary road near Huambo in mid-December 2002. It was an intricate, powerful weapon, not picked up by metal detectors, that would have killed many people had it been detonated. It was on a road that humanitarian organisations had been using regularly for weeks. It is almost impossible to determine whether it was old or new. Between mid-November and mid-December, more than ten humanitarian workers were killed in at least nine incidents on roads used by humanitarian organisations in Bie, Huila, Kuando Kubango, Kuanza Norte and Kuanza Sul provinces. As a result, several such organisations reduced or temporarily suspended operations. In one area in Huambo province alone, this meant that food and medicine were cut off for nearly 75,000.<sup>68</sup>

The FAA's mine clearance capacity is poor. Reportedly, there have been instances when its personnel prematurely declared an area safe for civilians to return, only to have a mine go off soon thereafter, resulting in casualties. The standard for the FAA's military de-mining is much lower than that for humanitarian de-mining, which seeks to eliminate all devices from a given location in order to ensure total safety for civilian populations. FAA involvement could have a deleterious effect on the overall de-mining effort if more incidents of this nature occur. In other instances, both the FAA and UNITA have been helpful to NGOs in identifying minefields.<sup>69</sup>

The government's mine action office, the National Institute for the Removal of Landmines and

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<sup>64</sup> Hartley, "Halo Trust in Angola", op. cit., p.13.

<sup>65</sup> Helen Long, "Angola, An Eyewitness Report of the Landmine Crisis", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 3.3, 1999, p. 17; International Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Landmine Monitor Report 2002*, p. 74.

<sup>66</sup> ICG interviews in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>67</sup> ICG interviews in Angola, December 2002.

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<sup>68</sup> "Humanitarian Update," Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 19 December 2002; ICG interview, Huambo, December 2002.

<sup>69</sup> ICG interviews in Lobito and Huambo, December 2002.

Unexploded Ordnance (INAROE),<sup>70</sup> reportedly suffers from lack of proper mandates, poor overall planning and cooperation between key organisations, contradictory messages to donors, and gradually increasing international distrust in its work.<sup>71</sup> To rectify this, the government established the National Inter-Sectoral Commission on De-mining and Humanitarian Assistance for Mine Victims (CNIDAH) in 2001. Angola hopes to restore donor confidence over time by clearly separating policy, co-ordination, and fund-raising on the one hand, and implementation of mine action activities on the other.<sup>72</sup>

Some progress has been achieved on removal. For example, in the first ten months of 2002, 227 locations in nine provinces had been cleared of 230 anti-personnel mines, twenty anti-tank mines, and 6,077 other unexploded ordnance. Seven provinces remain heavily mined, however: Benguela, Bie, Huambo, Huila, Kuando Kubango, Malanje and Moxico, and mines are suspected in 50 per cent of all return sites.<sup>73</sup> These provinces include Angola's most fertile growing regions as well as the largest concentration of demobilised soldiers, their families and IDPs.

In general, more comprehensive mine clearance and enhanced information sharing between localities and the centre would permit the process to go exponentially faster. However, capacity is limited by lack of resources, including lack of government capacity in humanitarian de-mining. Addressing these constraints would have very positive implications for humanitarian access, intra- and inter-provincial trade, agricultural development, and even the political process, as the election likely in late

2004 will need much greater freedom of mobility to succeed. The U.S. could assist greatly by donating or lending Angola a few of the South African-made Chubby de-mining vehicles it recently purchased.

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<sup>70</sup> INAROE was established in 1995 with UN support as the primary national organisation responsible for mine activities in Angola. However, in 2002 (according to the *Landmine Monitor Report 2002*), "the organisation was reportedly in crisis and has reduced its activities to a minimum. A severe lack of confidence in the institution on the part of donors, mine action NGOs, and others led the UN to suspend its technical assistance in August 2000. Its minimal government funding covers salaries, but very little in the way of mine action operations. With the creation of CNIDAH, a major restructuring of INAROE will take place, but its future role has yet to be defined".

<sup>71</sup> *Landmine Monitor Report 2002*, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>73</sup> United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Situation in Angola, Quarterly Analysis*, August-October, 2002, p. 4.

## V. STRATEGIES FOR CONSOLIDATING THE PEACE

Angola's government, political parties, and civil society and international partners must move urgently on a number of fronts to prevent an intensified humanitarian crisis. This is also imperative for conflict prevention and peace consolidation. The resentment in the provinces that would result from ignoring these areas would likely only smoulder for now but could erupt over time into renewed instability and localised warlordism.

It will be crucial for the government – with aid agencies in support – to demonstrate that it has assumed responsibility for, and accountability to, the people. This means, among other things, taking a lead role in resettling IDPs and ex-combatants. If that is handled well, many of Angola's fault lines will remain dormant but it requires serious and visible commitment in the provinces to building government capacity to deliver social services and agricultural inputs, government investment in infrastructure (roads and bridges), public works programs, and a strengthened partnership for de-mining. All are relevant for dealing with the ex-combatant challenges. In the first two cases, the government must be out in front, with international agencies supplementing. In de-mining, the international community must lead, with the government and UNITA supporting.

Donors should not hold Angolan civilians hostage to the understandable desire to see the government use more of its oil wealth to help its own people.<sup>74</sup> That said, there remains much ground for more innovative engagement of the government on its responsibilities and for building the capacity to deliver on its promises.

Regardless of the form, the government most importantly must invest, and be seen to invest, in the productive capacity and social service needs of its people. This will most visibly manifest itself in support for reintegrating ex-combatants, resettling IDPs and refugees, and de-mining areas of civilian concentration. "Donor countries must pressure the government to take responsibility for the Angolan

people", urged an agency official in central Angola. "Absent any government support for social services, it is very difficult for international organisations to make an appreciable difference".<sup>75</sup> Another agency official echoed that sentiment: "The international organisations are supposed to complement the government, not replace it".<sup>76</sup> There is an urgent need to reallocate expenditures in favour of the social sectors, including humanitarian assistance, given that there has been no improvement in poverty indicators. That requires an understanding of – and commitment to – humanitarianism and development as basic conflict prevention and stabilisation tools.

As noted, it is particularly important that infrastructure for implementing the plans for reintegration of former UNITA fighters be in place when the rains end in April. The clock is ticking for the government to do something to rescue this conflict prevention priority. At various times it has promised job training, education, cash payments, and support for small-scale farming or entrepreneurial activities. The successful revival and implementation of the process is contingent upon close collaboration between the government and UNITA.

Public works could be part of this equation. The goal would be not only to employ UNITA ex-combatants but to contribute to reconstruction of the nation as well.<sup>77</sup> The FAA is already taking steps in this direction as it has been deployed to administer some sanitation services in Luanda.<sup>78</sup> However, public works programs typically do not involve skills training and thus would not return individual former fighters to society as cleanly as other skills-building initiatives. Were these part of a long-term commitment to road construction and rehabilitation in the context of a larger development blueprint, however, they would constitute a strategy the government should consider.

Because of the glaring disconnect between rhetorical support for reintegration programs in Luanda and the reality of non-implementation in the provinces, it will be crucial to revitalise the provincial-level

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<sup>74</sup> As it stands now, according to an aid agency official, "The Angolan people are being crushed between the inefficiency and lack of concern of the government on one hand and the stubbornness and intransigence of the donors on the other". ICG interview in Huambo, December 2002.

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<sup>75</sup> ICG interview in Huambo, December 2002.

<sup>76</sup> ICG interview in Kuito, December 2002.

<sup>77</sup> It is important that the ex-combatants not be isolated and thus stigmatised in the context of any reinsertion programme. They should be mainstreamed to the maximum extent possible, thus breaking up military structures but replacing them with economic benefits.

<sup>78</sup> ICG interview in Luanda, December 2002.



Reintegration Commissions. They currently involve only government and UNITA representatives. It would be constructive, and build donor commitment, to add UN agencies, NGOs and – where possible – donor government representatives, as well as representatives of local communities in order to build local ownership of the process.

The UNITA rank-and-file are not the only ones who should be a government priority. Policy-makers in Luanda and aid agency partners must also focus on ex-officers. “The officers who didn’t get positions in the FAA could be a threat”, admonished a top UNITA official. “They need to get loans for establishing livelihoods. The government is not fully reading the risk of instability coming from the reintegration process”.<sup>79</sup>

Not enough can be said about the urgency of addressing the landmine problem. De-mining opens roads, which in turn frees up commercial traffic, which promotes agricultural development, which improves food security, while at the same time facilitating further political outreach, which supports the transition to democracy, and undergirds the reconciliation process. Angola needs significant international assistance to remove landmines. While the FAA and UNITA have been supportive in working with NGOs, their capacity to do the job themselves is extremely limited.<sup>80</sup> Sooner rather than later, the government must develop the capacity to do serious humanitarian de-mining, which has a higher threshold than the kind of de-mining it does presently.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Responding to the immediate humanitarian challenges presented above – reintegration of the UNITA ex-combatants, resettlement of the IDPs and refugees, and intensification of de-mining – is an investment fundamental to any conflict and crisis prevention strategy in Angola. Instability and crime resulting from conditions of chronic humanitarian crisis and future conflict resulting from inequities not addressed and a botched effort to reintegrate former UNITA fighters are real threats that can be avoided with immediate action. This needs to entail the government committing oil revenues to the challenges. In this case, fortunately, good politics dovetail with good policy. The peace is there for the government to win or lose.

Indeed real stability is likely to come to Angola only when the government redirects more oil money to social services and public investment in order to build wider support for its policies. When the government sees that it is in its strategic self-interest to widen its internal constituency by becoming more responsive and accountable, reform efforts will take on a life of their own. State building will then become a conflict prevention strategy, and service delivery a peace consolidation strategy.

After the government has for years blamed the lack of domestic investment and social services on the war, peace creates new expectations and demands. The continuing expansion of the oil sector – and revelations about missing revenues – further fuel the expectations Angolan citizens have of their government. The government has the responsibility, in the final analysis, to produce significant and visible peace dividends.

**Luanda/Brussels, 26 February 2003**

<sup>79</sup> ICG interview in Angola, December 2002.

<sup>80</sup> ICG interview in Huambo, December 2002.