

## PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

### Physical security

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#### **Human Rights Watch claims that protection needs of Angolan IDPs are not being met (July 2002)**

- HRW reports that displaced in Angola continue to face serious security threats and human rights abuses
- Neither the Angolan government nor the UN is ensuring adequate protection for IDPs as resettlement plans go ahead, claims HRW
- HRW promotes idea of UNHCR as lead agency for protection of IDPs in Angola, while criticising OCHA's role in this domain

"During the first two months of 2002, about 98,000 displaced persons were newly registered by United Nations (U.N.) and nongovernmental humanitarian agencies in Angola. Since February, new arrivals have averaged some 30,000 people a month. These people are no longer fleeing the war, but are trying to escape starvation and find assistance where it is provided. At least half of these people require immediate medical care and food provision. Of the 1.4 million displaced people that were already receiving humanitarian assistance, more than 400,000 are living in more than one hundred camps and transit centers. Many of these facilities have very poor conditions. The displaced also continue to face serious security threats, including harassment by government forces, restrictions on free movement, and possible forced return to areas where they would be at risk of political persecution and human rights abuses.

The government and U.N. agencies are currently developing plans to resettle the internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their areas of origin. The operation, due to start in July, is expected to move 500,000 people by the end of this year. Human Rights Watch is deeply concerned, however, that human rights considerations are being marginalized within these plans, and that neither the government nor any U.N. agency is taking responsibility for implementing an effective protection system for the displaced as the resettlement plans go forward—including ensuring that nobody is forced to move against their will. Given the past protection problems faced by IDPs in Angola, among them those housed in government-approved camps, this is a serious omission.

[...]

Within the U.N., the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been responsible since mid-2001 for coordinating U.N. initiatives in relation to the protection of the internally displaced. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), though it has only a limited mandate in relation to IDPs and a very small presence in Angola, has also played an important role in focusing attention on protection issues. However, following the failure of major donors to renew funding, UNHCR's program for IDPs in Angola is currently scheduled to close in 2002. OCHA is also reviewing its work with the internally displaced; Human Rights Watch has learned that there is even a possibility that it too may withdraw from protection work. Even as it is, the latest draft of the U.N. inter-agency 'protection strategy for IDPs and returnees' only provides for human rights issues to be taken up with the government authorities in the case of harassment of humanitarian personnel and looting of humanitarian assets. In case of forced resettlement or harassment of returnees and others, the strategy focuses on monitoring and sensitisation, the promotion of community-based protection initiatives, and the development of referral systems for victims rather than direct intervention with government authorities regarding the protection of IDPs. This is seriously inadequate and should be changed.

Human Rights Watch has been critical of OCHA's protection role with IDPs in Angola. The agency is overstretched with other responsibilities and lacks experience in protection work. [...] We also believe that as the international agency mandated to protect refugees, UNHCR has greater expertise and experience in providing protection to forcibly displaced people. As such, UNHCR would appear in principle to be the most appropriate agency to lead protection work among the internally displaced in Angola." (HRW, 3 July 2002)

### **Greater emphasis given to protection in 2001 than in the past (April-May 2001)**

- Greater emphasis on protection by international agencies
- Protection workshops being held in provinces to establish practical frameworks for protection at local level

"Humanitarian principles and human rights remain a major preoccupation. Evidence continues to mount that populations, including women and children, are suffering from extended periods of forced portage and other gross violations in rebel areas. An increasing number of these populations, the overwhelming majority of whom are in extreme distress, are seeking safety and assistance. Forced displacement, looting, physical assaults and forced recruitment are continuing and are concentrated in areas where armed combatants do not receive adequate logistics support." (OCHA 22 May 2001, Humanitarian context)

"The intensification of guerrilla and counter-insurgency warfare has led to a notable increase in protection violations including forced displacement, looting and physical assaults. As a result of this increase and to ensure a successful integrated approach, greater emphasis is being given to protection issues than originally indicated in the Appeal. Workshops led by joint teams of Government and UN trainers have been held in six provinces during the first three months and will be convened in all 18 provinces by the end of June. The aim of the workshops is to develop Provincial Protection Plans that establish practical frameworks for addressing protection issues at the provincial level. Partners are working closely together to develop other initiatives in information gathering, capacity-building and community mobilisation that will be implemented as a matter of priority during upcoming quarters." (OCHA 30 April 2001)

### **Physical security of internally displaced persons threatened by UNITA, government forces, and local authorities (2000-2001)**

- Theft of food and non-food items by both UNITA and government forces reportedly common
- Populations suffering from forced portage and other gross violations in UNITA-held areas
- Displaced report that UNITA murders villagers with machetes
- IDPS sometimes expected to hand over portion of assistance to local authorities
- Populations formerly under rebel-control are targeted most commonly

#### ***General:***

"Humanitarian principles and human rights remain a major preoccupation. Evidence continues to mount that populations, including women and children, are suffering from extended periods of forced portage and other gross violations in rebel areas. An increasing number of these populations, the overwhelming majority of whom are in extreme distress, are seeking safety and assistance. Forced displacement, looting, physical assaults and forced recruitment are continuing and are concentrated in areas where armed combatants do not receive adequate logistics support." (OCHA 22 May 2001, Humanitarian context)

"29. The [UN Inter-Agency] rapid assessment [of April 2000] found that the most widely observed protection problems concerned the delivery of humanitarian assistance and freedom of movement....Theft

of food and non-food items by combatants was common, particularly in areas where troops were not regularly paid. Other reports suggest that extortion and theft by government troops had on occasion involved or resulted in forced displacement. Harassment by armed troops appeared to be targeted towards populations from areas formerly under UNITA control, for example Andulo, Bailundo and Malanje. There were reports that displaced persons who had ventured past the security perimeters of towns to collect food or firewood had been beaten and robbed by armed UNITA groups or bandits, or had fallen victim to landmines. There were also reports of forced recruitment of displaced persons, including of children, by both sides." (CHR 25 January 2001, para. 29)

"The UN pointed to dangers that stalked displaced families even after they reached supposed safe havens. 'Displaced populations have been prevented from entering the provincial capitals of Huambo, Malanje, and Kuito and, in several cases, have been involuntarily resettled in the outskirts of these cities,' the report stated. 'In certain areas, displaced persons are forced to pay bribes to local or traditional authorities in order to be included on distribution lists. Displaced persons are sometimes expected to hand over a portion of their assistance to local or traditional authorities...Theft by combatants is common, particularly in areas where troops are not regularly paid,' it added." (USCR August 2000)

"In certain areas, displaced persons are forced to pay bribes to local or traditional authorities in order to be included on distribution lists. Displaced persons are sometimes expected to hand-over a portion of their assistance to local or traditional authorities. The assessment confirms that misappropriation by combatants is common, particularly in areas where troops are not regularly paid. Populations formerly under rebel-control, for example in Andulo, Bailundo and Malanje, are targeted most frequently. (OCHA 15 April 2000, pp.14-15)

### **UN Senior Network mission notes that protection needs of internally displaced go largely unaddressed (March 2001)**

- More focused and active approach required to address protection needs of IDPs
- Responsibility for protection lies with GoA
- Still, mission noted progress of international humanitarian actors in appointing protection focal points at the provincial levels

"The Mission recognised that, notwithstanding the efforts of the ICRC and other actors, many protection needs of the displaced go largely unaddressed. Primary responsibility for protecting displaced civilians rests with the GoA, including through the respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. A step forward in this regard has been the promulgation of Norms on the Resettlement of displaced populations, based on the Guiding Principles, as well as the development of provincial protection plans, also based on the Guiding Principles. The GoA, in collaboration with the UN and other humanitarian agencies, is currently overseeing the elaboration of operating procedures for these Norms.

The Mission noted that, while both GoA and agencies have made some progress in implementing the recommendations stemming from the visit of the RSG on IDPs, a more focused and active approach to protection is required by the Government including with regard to the prevention of arbitrary displacement. The lack of capacity and commitment on the part of the GoA to ensure the protection of IDPs is also reflected in and compounded by the weakness of the justice system and the rule of law.

The Mission noted the attention given to and the progress made by the international humanitarian community in the development of a comprehensive protection strategy, based on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. As an exceptional and immediate measure, the HC/RC will designate a focal point in each province for protection monitoring and, as appropriate, intervention at the provincial level. An inter agency group will determine appropriate advocacy at the national level. As part of an

integrated strategy, the Human Rights Division of the UN Office in Angola (HRD/UNOA) envisages expanding its presence and activities in the areas of advocacy, capacity building and community empowerment at the provincial level and should be supported to do so." (OCHA 23 March 2001, Protection)

## **Freedom of Movement**

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### **Alarming situation of landmines throughout the country threatens safety of displaced persons seeking to move about and to resettle (2000-2002)**

- Angola most mined country in the world
- Independent groups put the number of landmines between eight and 15 million, covering approximately 40 percent of the countryside
- Government of Angola says number is five to eight million
- Return, resettlement and agricultural production are obstructed by danger of landmines
- Absence of systematic approach to mine clearance in country is extremely worrying

"An international demining agency on Tuesday called on donors to coordinate their funding for mine action in Angola with their aid for other emergency activities.

The British-based Mines Advisory Group (MAG) said that as word spread across the country's 18 provinces that the war had finally ended, people had spontaneously moved back to their homes and found new areas to resettle in.

'The situation at the moment is very fluid. We are concerned about reports that groups of IDPs (internally displaced persons) are already on the move throughout the country. Some of the areas chosen for resettlement are still littered with anti-personnel landmines,' MAG's Africa coordinator, David Greenhalgh told IRIN.

Although the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) is expected to organise repatriation of Angolans from across the sub-region early next year, already an estimated 9,000 refugees from camps in northern and western Zambia have crossed back into Angola since the 4 April ceasefire.

In Moxico province, probably the most heavily-mined area of Angola today, MAG works closely with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

'Moxico has been identified for mine action due to the fact it was also one of the last areas to suffer conflict earlier this year. Also it has a large number of IDPs and its border towns will be points of entry for many refugees from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo,' Greenhalgh said.

He added that close to 80,000 people are expected to spontaneously repatriate to the province before the end of the year.

In the southern province of Cunene, MAG had already widened paths through minefields and erected minefield warning signs. Part of the demining process included targeting community liaison groups with detailed messages.

Said Greenhalgh: 'Mine awareness messages should be focused on how to travel through unfamiliar areas safely, rather than 'mines are dangerous, do not step on them'. People need correct information. One of our

biggest challenges is how to let people know which areas are safe and which are unsafe. At times people will occupy an area because of economic hardship."(IRIN, 30 July 2002)

"At least seven provinces, accounting for approximately 40 percent of the countryside, are heavily mined. In addition, active fields encircle the provincial capitals of Huambo, Bié, Luena, and Malanje and new mines continue to be laid, particularly along logistics corridors. Widespread mine infestation is a major obstacle limiting agricultural production and the free movement of people and goods. The presence of mines also impedes resettlement and return and puts thousands of Angolans at risk of grave injury or death. During the first eight months of the year, 385 mine incidents were reported in 15 provinces, up from the same period a year ago. A large percentage of landmine casualties continue to be women and children, who often fall victim while farming, searching for wood, or travelling by road." (UN November 2001)

"The [UN] Representative [on Internally Displaced Persons] was seriously concerned at the landmine situation throughout the country which, in addition to posing an obvious danger to displaced and resident populations, gives rise to problems regarding access to displaced populations by international agencies and NGOs, as well as access of the internally displaced to land for resettlement and agricultural activities.

[...]

108. As well as increasing the dangers to the displaced and the population at large and posing problems for the future development of agricultural production throughout the country, the continued use of landmines is compounded by the absence of a systematic approach to mine action which needs to be addressed urgently. Part of the problem to date has been dispute over the role of INAROOEE, which was established within MINARS to accommodate the preference of donors to fund civilian rather than military mine action..." (CHR 25 January 2001, paras. 105, 108)

"According to the Angolan National Institute for the Removal of Land mines and Unexploded Ordnance (INAROOEE), there are an estimated six to seven million land mines scattered throughout the country. The provincial capitals of Huambo and Bié, as well as many locations in Benguela, Malanje, Moxico and Uige have the highest levels of landmine contamination. In a sixteen-month period between mid 1998 and January 2000, 1,117 Angolans fell victim to land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). The majority of incidents affect civilians, many of whom are women and children, travelling by road, farming or search for wood. Mines laid during previous wars have caused an estimated three-quarters of recent accidents." (UN November 2000, p. 16)

"Incidents of mine accidents and other war-related wounds indicate that civilian populations outside of city centers continue to be affected by the ongoing conflict. In Kuito's hospital, MSF's surgical program conducted over 23 mine-related amputations in the first three months of 2000. This number reflects an increase in such injuries. In all of 1999, the total figure of amputations at the same hospital was 35; there were only 13 in 1998." (MSF 26 July 2000)

"Agencies estimate there are seven million landmines and at least ten times this number of unexploded ordnance (UXO), causing numerous injuries and preventing access to farming and grazing land." (OCHA 17 July 2000, sect. B)

### **Some displaced persons involuntarily resettled in unsafe areas (2000-2001)**

- Displaced persons have been moved near military camps or to other unsafe areas
- Resettlement schemes planned against will of displaced persons and implemented without proper planning
- GoA attempted to justify moves by the need to free up facilities where displaced had settled
- Displaced populations from the central highlands often treated as "subversives"

"31. The [UN Inter-Agency] assessment [of April 2000] found that displaced populations had been prevented from entering the provincial capitals of Huambo, Malanje and Kuito and, in several cases, were involuntarily resettled in the outskirts of these cities. In Cambondo, approximately 800 displaced persons were transferred in January [2000] to a site near a local military camp and in Luena, local authorities had established a resettlement site in an area with mines. Similar concerns were noted by the inter-agency mission of March [2000], which reported that in various instances the Government had forcibly relocated displaced populations, usually to areas outside the national or provincial capital security perimeter. In most cases, such movements were implemented without planning or coordination and imposed on both the displaced and the humanitarian community, resulting in human suffering. The Government justified these moves by the need to free up the facilities where the displaced had settled, i.e., factories or military camps. However, the relocation is regarded by many as part of the Government's attempt to consolidate its presence and control in newly liberated areas. The inter-agency mission was informed of cases of forced return where the Government had 'strongly encouraged' the displaced population to regain their areas of origin, without ensuring adequate safety and living conditions. In some cases, the areas of return were attacked and the displaced forced to flee once more." (CHR 25 January 2001, para. 31)

"Authorities in certain provincial capitals fear infiltration by UNITA elements and try to concentrate the newly displaced in separate locations in order to segregate them from the general population. There is also a general perception in coastal areas and urban centers that the population from the rural hinterland are "anarchistic elements that need to be controlled"... Consequently, the displaced tend to be treated as second-class citizens.

In Huambo, provincial capital of the heartland of the conflict, IDPs arriving since a year are maintained in 'concentration centres' under unacceptable conditions. In Benguela, authorities are pursuing resettlement schemes against the resistance of the displaced and without adequate planning (no land entitlements, lack of water and health infrastructures, etc.). Such examples illustrate, again, that the protection needs of IDPs will increase as authorities make additional efforts to reaffirm governmental control in the new phase of the conflict." (OCHA January 2000)

"Some displaced populations have been resettled in the peripheries of provincial capitals such as Huambo, Malanje and Kuito and, in several cases, have been involuntarily resettled in the outskirts of these cities. In Cambondo, approximately 800 displaced persons were transferred in January to a site near a local military camp. In Luena, local authorities have established a resettlement site, Sangondo, in an unsafe area that has not been completely demined." (OCHA 15 April 2000, pp.14-15)

### **UNITA reportedly requires a permit for travel in all areas under its control (2000)**

"Freedom of movement continued to be denied in all areas controlled by UNITA. A permit for travel even to the next village was demanded by those in command. In the central highlands, UNITA was also responsible for forced displacement as it lost or captured territory, and its forces continued to loot and destroy private property." (HRW December 2000, Human Rights Developments)

## **Vulnerable populations**

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### **Women and children at risk of rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution and military recruitment (1999-2001)**

- Young women raped, sexually assaulted, and forced into marriages or prostitution

- Some 300,000 children are estimated to have been forced into combat by rebel and government forces
- UNICEF estimates that some 300,000 children are without parents in Angola; one million children have no access to education or health care

"While the breakdown of government infrastructure and social structures have led to millions of children suffering, it is estimated that at least 300,000 children have been forced into combat in Angola by rebel and government armed forces. Those who have survived say they are used to flight, to work in military camps, transport heavy loads on their backs as soldiers, move location and also as sex slaves.

According to UNICEF's Lidia Borba, who works in child protection services, about 1 million Angolan children have lost one parent in the war and almost 300,000 have lost both parents. In addition, more than 1 million children across the country are believed to have no access at all to education and health facilities. 'In general,' she told IRIN, 'all children are direct or indirect victims of this war. Not a single family has not been affected.' (IRIN-SA 14 June 2001, The war generation)

"30. The assessment found that internally displaced women, particularly those living near military encampments were subject to sexual harassment and some had been forced into prostitution in order to procure basic necessities. There were also reports of women and girls abducted from camps for the displaced by UNITA. In addition, there are large numbers of unaccompanied and orphaned children among the displaced. The assessment notes that although many of these children have been integrated into kinship networks or community structures, many of their needs are not met. Unaccompanied children are vulnerable to forced recruitment and abuse. Furthermore, the poverty, disease, domestic violence and child abuse associated with displacement prompt many children to leave their homes voluntarily. In so doing, they become increasingly vulnerable to disease and abuse." (CHR 25 January 2001, para. 30)

"Among these IDPs, an estimated one million are children. They are the most disadvantaged, and the ones most adversely affected by the conflict. They have little access to the poorly-run social institutions that provide health and education, as well as food, and they are the ones most at risk of disease. They are vulnerable to a number of varying forms of abuse, such as beatings and sexual abuse, and are also under the threat of being enrolled to serve in varying functions as child soldiers." (UNICEF 2001, Country Background)

### **Abductions of children occur with regularity in conflict in Angola (October 2001)**

- Most recent case involves some 16 children in Kwanza Norte province
- Over sixty children abducted in Caxito during raid on village in May 2001
- Children are abducted for recruitment in armed forces, sexual abuse and forms of forced labour

#### ***Kidnapping in May in Caxito, 60km north of Luanda:***

"Straight after the attack on Caxito, one group of fifty UNITA soldiers attacked an orphan's home run by the Danish agency Development Aid from People to People (ADPP). The rebels sacked the orphanage, and took 60 children hostage, along with a teacher. Two teachers are reported to have been killed...

[...]

The children were freed on 25 May, but there are conflicting versions of events. UNITA issued a statement claiming that it had released over 60 orphans to a Catholic priest, Father Antonio Joaquim Ribeiro in Ambaca (over 150km from Caxito). However, the Angolan army statement claims that the children were freed after its troops surrounded the UNITA fighters at Ambaca." (Action for Southern Africa 7 June 2001)

#### ***Abduction in October in Kwanza Norte:***

"UNICEF Angola and the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Angola were shocked and concerned by the recent declaration from the Catholic Bishop of Kwanza Norte on the abduction of 16 children and their relatives during a religious service in the village of Kiluange in the Municipality of Golungo Alto, Kwanza Norte.

[...]

UNICEF and the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator call for their immediate release and strongly condemn all violations of children's rights in Angola. This is not the first time that children have been abducted: similar abductions have occurred throughout Angola's prolonged conflict in various parts of the country. The majority of these children have not been heard from since.

The motivation for these abductions is not always clear, but children abducted in conflict countries are often used by armed groups to carry goods and ammunition and to cook and clean. In the worst case, children, particularly young girls, may be sexually abused and both girls and boys may be used in combat or as a defensive shield." (UNICEF 16 October 2001)