

Peace under-mined



The signing of the Luena Accords on April 2002 between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) Government and the insurgent National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), paved the way for a tense post-war period. Obstacles to human security abound. In the aftermath of the war, characterised by destruction and poverty, with thousands of people killed or mutilated by mines, the Government's response is repression and terror.

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War in Angola had continued without a break since 1975, until at last, the peace accords were signed in 2002. According to an Intermón-Oxfam paper, "around one million dead, 4 million people displaced in their own country, more than 500,000 refugees (out of a population of 12 million), millions of buried anti-personnel mines, and the destruction of the material infrastructure of the country... is the balance after 27 years of armed confrontation between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which has been in government since 1979, and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). ...the Memorandum of Understanding (known as MOU, or the Luena Accords) signed on 4 April 2002 by the Government and UNITA, and based on the Lusaka Accords of 1994, has opened the door for new hopes and a historic opportunity to reconstruct a country that has been totally devastated."¹

The Luena Accords should have established a basis for the reconstruction of the country which, after 30 years of war, needs urgent structural changes. However, it is evident that although military authorities on both sides have declared their desire for national reconciliation, and the Government has announced new plans to overcome the crisis, in practice nothing has been achieved.

Insecurity, born of unemployment and the lack of basic foodstuffs, continues to be felt throughout the country even now that the war is over. The peace is the result of the surrender of one of the warring factions, and is tarnished by the process which made it possible, with all its inadequacies and improvisations.

There has been an alarming increase in crime since the end of the war. The return of hundreds of thousands of former insurgents has

TABLE 1

Human Development Indicators 2003		
Human Development Index rank	2003	164
Total population (millions)	2001	12.8
Annual population growth rate (%)	1975-2001	2.8
Population under age 15 (as % of total)	2001	47.4
Population over age 65 (as % of total)	2001	2.7
GDP (USD billions)	2001	9.5
GDP per capita (USD)	2001	701
Population with access to improved sanitation (%)	2000	44
Population with access to an improved water source (%)	2000	38
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	1995-2001	23
Physicians (per 100,000 people)	1990-2002	5
Undernourished people (as % of total population)	1998-2000	50
Life expectancy at birth (years)	2000-05	40.1
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	2001	154
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	2001	260
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	1995	1,300
Net primary enrolment ratio (%)	2000-01	37
Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above)	2001	42
Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	1998-2000	2.7
Public expenditure on health (as % of GDP)	2000	2
Military expenditure (as % of GDP)	2001	3.1
Total debt service (as % of GDP)	2001	19.7
Internally displaced persons (thousands)	2001	202
Total armed forces (thousands)	2001	100
Total armed forces Index (1985=100)	2001	202

Source: UNDP. Human Development Report 2003; and UNICEF. The State of the World's Children 2000.

tripled unemployment and underemployment, which now affect over half of the population. The number of children living on the streets is increasing, and so is the number of people killed and mutilated by mines left behind by the Cuban, Soviet and South African armies.

Poverty and repression

Immediately after the signing of the peace accords the Cabinet announced the Government's priorities, placing emphasis on re-opening the main roads to restore communications and transport of people and goods. The budget for

the Economic and Social Programme for 2003-2004 stated the following priorities:

- Emergency shelter, food aid and health services for people displaced by the war and their families.
- Help for abandoned children.
- Help for those disabled by the war.
- Reintegration of displaced people and ex-combatants into society.
- Extension of State administration to all areas of the country.

¹ Intermón-Oxfam. *Angola: construyendo la paz. Retos y perspectivas tras un año de la firma de los acuerdos*. May 2003. www.intermonoxfam.org/cms/HTML/espanol/86/Angola_construyendolapaz_mayo03.pdf

- Extension of health services and education to every community.
- Extension of financial services to the whole country.

The main obstacle to implementing the programme outlined above has been an obvious lack of political will on the part of members of the Government, as the army and the police have continued to receive the lion's share of budget allocations.

Since mid 2003, the necessities of survival have led to increases in both demand for jobs and criminal offences. The Government has responded with repression. Protests organised by political parties are banned. In order to confiscate weapons in the hands of the people, the police behave like terrorists and appear in full battle gear. Although the Constitution does not support the death penalty, alleged criminals are publicly executed. A special anti-terrorist brigade, a rapid response police unit, a helicopter brigade and a canine brigade have been created. The presidential bodyguards, too, are involved in spreading terror.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary, which is not yet independent from the Executive, is powerless to maintain constitutional legality. One serious threat to human security is that the principle of the equality of all citizens before the law is not respected in practice. An example is the case of MPLA diplomats put on trial for corruption, who are sure that they will never go to prison, unlike those belonging to the opposition.

Without schools or doctors

One of the cornerstones for building human security in the short term is education. It is through education that people must become conscious of the importance of freedom and the right to life. But it is a privilege that is beyond the reach of many children. There are too few schools - many areas have none at all - and obtaining a place means being exposed to the corruption that is prevalent there.² Non-governmental organisations have taken this problem on board, as in the case of the Catholic Church's Evangelisation and Cultural Foundation (FEC), which has recruited teachers and educationists in Portugal for educational projects in the interior of the country.

According to the Ministry of Education, about 3 million children and young people are studying, while more than 40,000 are on the streets waiting for schools to be built. Teachers have no teaching materials, no curriculum and no text books for their classes, and their average salary is USD 70 per month.

With regard to the health situation, there is one doctor per 20,000 people and only 30% of the population have access to health care. Infant mortality is more than 154 per 1,000 births and life expectancy is less than 40 years. Sixty-five percent of sanitation infrastructure was destroyed during the war.³

By the end of 2003 the Government had not repaired any major road. The Government is unable to provide food for the neediest and most remote population centres, such as the refugee camps for former rebel insurgents and their families, where deaths from starvation have begun to increase.

Landmines continue to be a major cause of death in rural areas. According to the National Institute for Removal of Explosives, around 10 people a day are killed trying to work or look for food in minefields. There are some 10 million unexploded mines spread throughout the country. Seventy thousand people have been mutilated by landmine explosions, of whom 8,000 are children.⁴ Victims of the mines, whether civilian or military, have not received the medical attention they need.

Financial help from the Government is meagre, so international aid is being sought to deactivate the mines, and to provide artificial limbs for the victims. An African meeting on landmines will attempt to adopt a unified position to take to the Conference to review the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Kenya later in 2004.⁵ ■

³ www.ibacom.es/Unicet/emergencia

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The First Review Conference / 2004 Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World will take place from 29 November to 3 December 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. www.icbl.org/reviewconference/

² Information provided by *The World Guide 2005-2006*, which will be made available on the Internet in October 2004.