

# **ANGOLA FROM THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT TO THE FOURTH WAR**

**By:**

Paul Robson

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No-one is willing to name a date on which died the peace process put in motion by the Lusaka Agreement. Throughout 1998 the words "Acordos de Lusaka" were used more and more as a mantra than as something was real. For some Angolans the Lusaka Agreement peace process was never real. The period 1995 to 1998 was described by them as "not war and not peace". There was never the momentum and the euphoria of the period following the Bicesse Agreement of 31st May 1991: the country remained divided, and access limited to many other areas. Displaced people resolutely stayed put. Normal trade did not develop. Reconstruction did not take-off. The best date for the official end of the Lusaka Agreement peace process is probably 18th January 1999 when the UN Secretary- General announced that the United Nations would be withdrawing its peacekeeping operation from Angola. "The events of the last few months" he said "have clearly demonstrated that, for all intents and purposes, the Angolan peace process has collapsed and the country is now in a state of war".

In the first week of December 1998, an attempt by the Angolan Armed Forces to move militarily into the Municipalities in northern Huambo and north-western Bie which UNITA had failed to hand-over to state administration provoked a strong military reaction from UNITA. This reaction was not only a defence of the two UNITA strongholds of Bailundo and Andulo, but also involved shelling and attempted capture of the cities of Kuito, Huambo and Malanje. Since then the sieges of these cities have been lifted and security in these areas improved, but the area of heavy fighting has moved north-westwards towards the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. This causes a potential threat to the oil town of Soyo (on the coast close to the DRC border) and makes the diamond areas of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul less accessible, probably creating the conditions for UNITA to recapture diamond mines and increase its revenue stream to finance further arms' purchases and alliance building. UNITA has been shown to be very heavily armed, despite having signed a declaration in March 1998 that it had completely disarmed and become an unarmed political movement. Thousands of people have been displaced, both from rural areas into Provincial cities and from the Provincial cities of Kuito, Huambo and Malanje to the capital, Luanda. No accurate figures are available: many displaced people are staying with friends and relatives, not in camps where they can be counted. The figure of 150,000 sometimes quoted probably includes only those easily identifiable and in the worst conditions.

Since announcing the withdrawal of MONUA, the UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations has shifted ground somewhat. While most of MONUA is in the process of being withdrawn, the UN Security Council announced on 21st January 1999 that "it attaches great importance to the continued multidisciplinary presence of the United Nations under the direction of a representative of the Secretary-General in Angola". Portugal had argued strongly that the UN should not abandon Angola in such a precipitous way: some of MONUA's responsibilities were being handed over to other UN agencies which are completely unprepared for such tasks; the situation in Angola and in neighbouring countries needs to be monitored and contained. The British and Canadian Governments, altered by lobbying from humanitarian organisations, also began to argue that the UN should not disengage and eventually the USA Government came round to this view. But a continued presence of such a kind by the UN will have to be negotiated with the Angolan Government which has so far expressed the opinion that the UN has recently only complicated matters, got in the way and ought to leave.

Some events in 1998 31st March

Final deadline (after many postponements) for the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement: by this date all demobilisation, demilitarisation and restoration of state administration was to be completed. UNITA had declared to the UN that it had completely disarmed, following which the Government legalised UNITA as a political party. This should have led to the movement of all of UNITA's structures to the main cities but there was an angry response from UNITA to legalisation and no movement of UNITA structures to the cities. Clear signs of alienation emerged between UNITA in Bailundo and Andulo and some of its representatives in the negotiations in Luanda.

Death of Maitre Beye, the UN Secretary-General's special representative, in a mysterious air-crash in west Africa, apparently while on a mission to west African countries to persuade them cease their support to UNITA 6th October Letter from the new Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to Jonas Savimbi asking him to respond to proposals for restoring the peace process: Jonas Savimbi never replied 3rd December UN Security Council Resolution 1213 which "emphasises that the primary cause of the crisis in Angola and in the current impasse is the failure of the leadership of UNITA in Bailundo to comply with its obligations" and which "demands that UNITA comply immediately and without conditions with its obligations, in particular the complete demilitarisation of its forces and full cooperation in the immediate and unconditional extension of State administration throughout the national territory ... and that UNITA withdraw immediately from territories which it has reoccupied through military or other action. "

Two diverging views of the causes of the fourth war.

"The statement by the (UN) Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, last Monday (18th January) is an admission that the UN has had its most serious failure in Africa since the Congo debacle in the 1960s." Victoria Brittain, Guardian Weekly, 24th January 1999. "It is unhelpful for the Angolan Government to ask why the international community had failed to disarm UNITA: it only poisons the atmosphere." An un-named diplomat quoted on the BBC World Service, 21st December 1999. "The problem for the UN has been its difficulty in persuading the Angolan Government from seeking a military solution to the current crisis". The UN Secretary General's Special Representative in a meeting with other UN agencies.

During December 1998 and January 1999, the Angolan Government and the United Nations have been expressing very different views about the causes of renewed fighting. For the Angolan Government the issue is that UNITA has failed to abide by the Lusaka Agreement of November 1994, it has failed to disarm and become a normal political party: the United Nations is thus seen as a party to that failure as it should have ensured that UNITA did disarm and emerge as a political party, but to some extent acted as a screen behind which UNITA was able to re-arm. The Angolan Government sees this as the second failure (the first being the crisis of October 1992) in which the international community had promised to create a multi-party democracy by bringing UNITA into the normal political arena but failed to do so. The issue is one of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. From the end of March 1998 the situation had been allowed to drift dangerously and some action had to be taken, otherwise the risk of Angola becoming divided de facto or of an attack by UNITA would grow. Military mobilisation by the Government is this inevitable, given the lack of any credible alternative which would not put national sovereignty in jeopardy. On the other hand, the public statements by the United Nations include the military actions by the Angolan Government part of the problem, or sometimes give the impression that the UN sees them as the main cause of the current crisis. These statements imply that a negotiated settlement could have been created through dialogue, but that the Angolan Government did not want to negotiate and preferred a military solution.

The insistence by the Angolan Government, and by the National Assembly and some of the national press, that Jonas Savimbi should be treated as an international terrorist is intended to stress to the

diplomatic community that it has been impossible to negotiate with Jonas Savimbi, but it serves only to irritate the international community. The repeated calls by various parts of the international community for continued dialogue and building trust between the various parties serves only to irritate the Angolan Government who do not see how trust can be built when UNITA has failed to comply with the Lusaka Agreement. This divergence in views can be traced back to two different facets of the Lusaka Agreement. On the one hand the peace process emanating from the Lusaka Agreement was presented as a strictly-timetabled series of steps in which UNITA would disarm and become a political party: UNAVEM III (later known as MONUA) would be a strict referee which would push the process forward and sanction delays; momentum would be built up, and this would create confidence which would in turn encourage reconstruction and return of displaced people, which would in turn build peace by eliminating no-go areas where arms could be hidden and by encouraging reconciliation between various communities.

On the other hand the first Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Maitre Beye, presented the peace process as one in which trust would be developed gradually, rather than through momentum. The original plan was for UNAVEM III to leave Angola in February 1997 (two years after their arrival in February 1995, three months after the signing of the Agreement in Lusaka). This was perceived as allowing plenty of time for the various steps in the peace process and a large margin of error. But from the beginning the timetable began to suffer from slippage. The various omissions and ambiguities in the Agreement were discussed at length and deadlines were allowed to pass. The dynamic of the two approaches is very different, and it is difficult to see how they could be reconciled. The two approaches interfered with each other and cancelled each other out. After four years, dialogue had not been nor has there been demilitarisation. From the point of view of the Angolan Government, the drawn-out discussions during 1996 and 1997 about the special status of Jonas Savimbi were a delaying tactic by UNITA so that it could recuperate from its weak position in late- 1994, when it had been obliged to sign the Lusaka Agreement after being forced to retreat from Huambo. From the point of view of the United Nations, these discussions could have been positive if both sides had trusted each other and had allowed discussions to go on without taking military action. One independent newspaper (Actual, 30th January 1999) put it this way. The UN position is that the UN succeeded in Mozambique so it cannot be blamed for failing in Angola: the problem in Angola is that the two sides do not trust each other. Did no-one tell the UN this before they got on the plane from Maputo to Luanda?

Whatever happened to reconstruction?

The Lusaka Agreement was supposed lead to a momentum towards peace. But as the deadlines were missed, confidence fell and cynicism grew. The donor countries fell prey to this cynicism and held back their funds for reconstruction until after peace had been consolidated. One of the results was that when State administration was extended to former UNITA areas it did not bring with it the rebuilding of roads or access to health and education. It mainly consisted of an administrator protected by a few policemen, who were often brought in by a UN helicopter and left behind after a quick ceremony. It was not intended to happen that way. The Round Table Meeting of Donors in Brussels in September 1995 approved a Community Rehabilitation Plan which was specifically intended to be a complement to the Lusaka Agreement. It was supposed to run in tandem with the peace process, consolidating peace by bringing services to people so that they could see the immediate benefit of peace. The UN was supposed to provide the capacity to implement this ambitious programme and the donors were supposed to provide the funds while the peace process was in motion. Little of this happened. The donors preferred to wait and see if peace was consolidated before writing out the checks, even though they had committed themselves to funding something which would contribute to consolidating peace. The UN did not provide the people, funds, equipment and transport to coordinate the programme.

The Community Rehabilitation Programme became a very small UNDP programme in the Ministry of Planning, slowly disbursing funds for micro-projects. Ironically UNDP sees the CRP as a capacity-building programme; while there is certainly a need for capacity-building, and these are quite rare, this was one programme which should have brought in capacity for rapid implementation. The renewed fighting from December 1998 onwards threatens to reduce further the amount of reconstruction aid that Angola receives. The donor countries are nervous about being involved in reconstruction in a country which is at war. And to some extent the donor countries want to show their displeasure to the Angolan government for having chosen a military option. The World Bank is threatening to withdraw from Angola, and this would push a number of other donors to withdraw as well. The amount of aid which is emergency aid is increasing, and further withdrawals by donors would increase this trend. One of the lessons which might be learnt from the last four years is that reconstruction should not wait for peace to be consolidated. That is still a valid lesson. Despite war, there are large areas of the country which are not affected by war and where physical reconstruction is needed. The needs for rebuilding civil institutions, damaged by years of conflict and neglect, is great. There is a high risk of increasing the risks of ongoing instability but abandoning reconstruction now.

### Regional instability

The renewed war has an important, dangerous aspect: it is linked to other wars and other interests in Africa spreading as far as Libya, Sudan and the Ivory Coast. This was little discussed in Angola before December 1998, and only one independent newspaper discussed it before then. Even the diplomatic community seemed to be unaware of the links with the rest of Africa before the war really flared up. It is now an important aspect of the reporting in the *Jornal de Angola*, and other newspapers, with much attention being given to revelations in Europe about networks for smuggling arms and diamonds and to the apparent involvement of Zambia and Uganda with UNITA. The central feature of Angolan Government regional diplomacy has always been to reduce the risks of UNITA using neighbouring countries as rear-bases. Contacts with SADC countries, and with Gabon and with Sao Tome, appear to have been aimed at maintaining stability and predictability. Angola intervened twice in the Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire), firstly to help remove Mobutu when it appeared that he was being propped up by UNITA (early 1997) and secondly when the uprising against Kabila seemed to be bringing hostile armed forces into the western Congo close to the Angolan border. The decisions to intervene appear to have been taken quickly, especially the latter which followed the appearance of UNITA troops in the western Congo. Angola intervened in Congo-Brazzaville in late 1997, again as a rushed reaction to the apparent participation of UNITA forces in troop movements near Pointe Noire. However involvement in DCR has proved to have many risks.

The number of countries who have intervened, either for Kabila or against him, are many and stretch as far as Libya and Sudan. The dynamics of these interventions are different and sometimes obscure. France and the USA have different interests in the region, and Angola risks being caught in the rivalry between the two and losing the balance that it has managed in the past between the oil industries of the two countries in off-shore oil exploration. The support of Uganda for the rebels in the DRC, and the resulting involvement of Sudan in support of Kabila, creates the risk that the USA will become more hostile to Angola. Mozambique and South Africa have been careful to keep their distance from the conflict, and thus to some extent have distanced themselves from Angola. Some West African states are said to be providing support to UNITA again. The accusation in the Angolan press is that UNITA is buying support with its diamond wealth, and that there is a regional conspiracy to loot Angola's mineral wealth.

There are no clear predictions about where this regional instability will lead. An analysis in *Le Monde Diplomatique* by Mwayila Tshiyembe (January 1999 in both English and French versions) is difficult to

follow, but does come to the conclusion that "the realignment of forces on the region has not yet crystallised". The analysis is also particularly critical of the USA for having badly misjudged recent events in the region, and of the UN for intervening in the internal affairs of various countries (and thus reducing national sovereignty) but not managing to resolve the problems which brought them there. Meanwhile, back at home the fall in the world market price of crude oil to about 9 US Dollars per barrel makes a significant difference to the budget of the Angolan government. The State Budget made at the beginning of 1998 assumed a price of oil almost twice that amount, and oil is the major income for the State budget. Increased military expenditure will squeeze the budget from the other end. The result is likely to be the continuing disintegration of State basic services such as health and education.

Despite the drop in the price of oil, oil exploration is seeing a boom. Angola is now seen, in the long-term, as a major oil producing country which might rival some Middle East states. The large French oil company ELF, and a series of smaller American oil companies, are very active in exploration and the areas being explored have now reached as far south as Lobito (where a refinery is being constructed) and out to the deep-sea. Meanwhile SONANGOL, the Angolan oil company, has taken an interest in the Sao Tome oil company which has reported an oil find in Sao Tome territorial waters.

The oil exploration boom means that the urban economies (mainly in Luanda) continue to grow. There is new housing for expatriate oil workers and new offices and shops. Little of this spins off though into the rest of the economy: there are few jobs for Angolans in oil exploration; many of the building contractors are Portuguese. The urban economy has still failed to start to expand into the rural areas. The new Lobito oil refinery is a poignant example of this: it stands next to the terminus of the Benguela Railway which used to run right across Angola to the Zaire border and carried goods to and from farms, forest and plantations right across the country. The Benguela Railway now runs 25 kms to Benguela. Less than 100 metres from the end of the platforms at Benguela station, the tracks end and the trackbed is occupied by a charcoal market. The economy now looks out to sea, not along the Benguela Railway. The oil industry is now 60 per cent of GDP, agriculture about 7 per cent (the reverse of 20 years ago). Need for new thinking When the Bicesse Agreement was signed in mid-1991, the Soviet Union still existed (just). The USA took the lead in policy matters by the "international community" towards Angola and the USA was still in its "rollback" phase, supporting UNITA as part of a policy of creating changes in the USSR through proxies.

The signing of the Bicesse Agreement was seen as a big success by the USA, bringing multi-party democracy and an orientation to the market to the USSR and to Angola. Eight years later, the USSR does not exist. The former USSR is unstable. The three countries where rollback was practiced (Angola, Afghanistan and Cambodia) are also unstable. Africa is not in the centre of the attentions of the USA which is troubled more by Iraq, some parts of eastern Europe and the private life of its President. According to the Commission on America's National Interest in 1996 "The United States is adrift in the world, bereft of a clearly focused foreign policy and undecided about its national interest". However much of the "international community's" thinking about Angola still bears the hallmarks of the late 1980s, multi-party democracy and the market economy. The preoccupation of the World Bank is still privatisation: it held a seminar about the private sector in the water industry in January 1999 and is holding up approval of funding of improvements to the Luanda water system until the Luanda Water Company is privatised. The two peace processes (Bicesse and Lusaka) tried to build multi-party political systems simply by bringing together the two biggest political parties (who had been fighting each other for many years): the assumptions behind creating democracy through this process are many and dubious. What is rarely asked is "what would have happened if either of the peace processes had succeeded?" Do any of the political parties have the structures to monitor what is happening in people's lives, to listen to public opinion, to formulate policies?

A more profound analysis of Angola would see the weakness of its institutions as the key problem. Some of the new thinking about aid and development sees Angola as a "complex, political emergency" in which not only have economic and communications infrastructure of a society been damaged by war, but also its institutions and organisations. Cultural, educational and health structures; market and business networks; human resources and skills' bases; social, civil and political organisations have been damaged leaving an institutional void, thus undermining the foundations upon which conventional social relations are based and upon which recovery should be built (see Mark Duffield, 1994: Complex political emergencies with reference to Angola and Bosnia; an exploratory report for UNICEF. School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, UK). The problem is not that the State is too strong, but that the State is too isolated, without links to the rest of society. The successive blows of the last 25 years (the Cold War, the struggle against apartheid, the elections and afterwards) mean that it has focused only on its own defence, and on the main mineral resources (oil and diamonds).

The parts of the State which interact with ordinary citizens (local administration, schools, health posts) remain very weak and (in some places) almost invisible. Civil society institutions remain weak, struggling to come to terms with rapid change and instability. Multi-party elections and the market have done little to fill this institutional void. And international aid has failed to come to terms with the need to help create new institutions: there is still a tendency to rush in with emergency aid (even when this is damaging to local coping mechanisms and institutions) and to turn aid on and off according to progress towards peace and market reforms. This probably applies also in other countries in the Region. The aid donors were very reluctant to push forward with reconstruction in Rwanda in 1995, worried that this would give legitimacy to a new government which had no effective opposition. Despite much talk about governance, main aid donors are more interested in multi-party elections than in filling the institutional void (and reversing institutional decay) in Africa.

Africans still seem to be skeptical about this: as a study in rural Tanzania showed, multi-party systems were seen as "having to deal with two elephants rather than one, and they have a tendency to damage the grass when they fight; for people who feel themselves to be vulnerable, multi-party politics is just another risk of instability and uncertainty, an experiment by outsiders" ("Social, economic and cultural change in contemporary Tanzania: a people oriented focus" Paper to SIDA by Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, 1993).

For Angolans, the question is less about who is in power but about whether anyone in power will listen to them and cooperate with them. A recent TV programme about water and electricity in Luanda illustrates this. The people from the water and electricity companies saw the problems only in macro-terms, how much water and electricity was being produced and the problems of keeping the dams and treatment plants working. Two local NGOs however, saw the problem completely differently: as one of poor distribution systems, lack of contact between communities and the companies, the lack of communication channels, the lack of capacity of local administrations to help mediate this contact. The NGO community continues to struggle to build new institutions in Angola, but with declining outside assistance and with strong pressure to become again agents of emergency aid. New thinking across the region If you go to a travel agent in Luanda, you can get a ticket to Lisbon, Brussels or Paris in 10 minutes. If you ask for a ticket to Kampala, Dar es Salaam or Kigali that is much more difficult: there are no direct flights, the agent does not know who flies there and the price is not in the book. The best way to fly is via Europe or Johannesburg, not across the country. This is indicative of the lack of contact between the countries who now find themselves caught up in a simmering regional conflict. There is an institutional void at the regional level as well, to exchange experiences about peacebuilding, peace-processes, institution-building, reconstruction and democracy. There is a risk of the conflict being mediated by outsiders, whose track-record is poor and whose understanding is limited. A few of years ago I used to travel two or three times a year between Dar es Salaam and Luanda. Few people in

Angola know much about Dar es Salaam, and vice versa. It takes more than two days to make the flight, going by South Africa. Yet the rumours are that military equipment imported for UNITA to use in Angola came in through Dar es Salaam. Is there any real reason why people in these two capitals should be sucked into a regional quagmire?