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## Angola

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Angola is a constitutional republic in transition after the end of its 27-year civil war in 2002. The Government is highly centralized and dominated by the Presidency. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has ruled the country since its independence from Portugal in 1975. President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of the MPLA, who assumed power in 1979, won a plurality of the votes cast in a 1992 election that U.N. observers considered free and fair. The Government was formed in 1997 after the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and 10 smaller opposition parties joined the ruling MPLA in a government of national unity and reconciliation. The National Assembly was weak; while opposition deputies held about 43 percent of National Assembly seats, few mechanisms exist to check the power of the MPLA majority or defeat legislation supported by the executive branch. Poor governance, including endemic corruption, continued to limit the provision of basic services to most citizens. The judiciary was subject to executive influence, functioned only in parts of the country, and did not ensure due process.

The most recent period of civil war ended after the Government and UNITA signed the Luena Agreement ceasefire in April 2002; the Luena Agreement provided for disarming and disbanding all UNITA military forces and implementation of the remaining provisions of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol under U.N. supervision. The official peace agreement concluding the war and completing the Lusaka Protocol was signed in November 2002. UNITA has transitioned into an opposition political party. Consultations among the MPLA, opposition parties, and civil society on a new constitution, electoral law, and a timetable for national elections were underway at year's end.

The Ministry of Interior, through the Angolan National Police (ANP), is responsible for internal security. The internal intelligence service is directly answerable to the Office of the Presidency. The Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) is responsible for external security but also has domestic responsibilities; the FAA conducted counterinsurgency operations against the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda-Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC). The civilian authorities maintained effective control of the security forces. Security forces continued to commit serious human rights abuses.

The mixed economy, dominated by oil exports, grew by 4 percent during the year, but most of the country's wealth remained concentrated in a few hands. Corruption, nontransparent contracting practices, and unfair enforcement of regulatory and tax regimes favored the wealthy and politically influential. Although commercial and agricultural activity in urban and rural areas increased with the end of the war, 80 percent of the population of approximately 13 million continued to live in poverty. Annual per capita income was \$865. Approximately 80 percent of the population were employed in agriculture, mostly on a subsistence level. The Government took some steps to improve its management of the economy, including increasing transparency of oil sector accounts and reducing the estimated 50 percent of state expenditures not reflected in the official budget, but its commitment to reform remained uncertain. The Government began to repair infrastructure damaged or destroyed during the war, but the poor state of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and other government facilities impeded economic recovery and development. In September, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 3.1 million citizens had returned. Although conditions were gradually improving in most parts of the country, OCHA estimated that 2.7 million citizens were still at risk of food insecurity and 10 percent of the population depended on humanitarian aid at year's end.

The Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. The right of citizens to change their government remained restricted due to the postponement of elections. Members of the security forces committed unlawful killings, were responsible for disappearances, and tortured, beat, raped, and otherwise abused persons. Impunity remained a problem. Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening. The Government continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention, and lengthy pretrial detention was a problem. The Government at times infringed on citizens' privacy rights. The FAA employed forced movements of rural populations as part of its counterinsurgency operations against FLEC. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of forced recruitment of military-age males. The Government at times restricted freedom of speech and of the press, and harassed, beat, and detained journalists. The Government restricted freedom of assembly, association, and movement; however, it allowed peaceful public protests and opposition party meetings. The number of persons displaced by the conflict decreased significantly during the year. In some instances, internally displaced persons (IDPs) were forced, or otherwise induced, to return home to unsafe conditions. Violence and discrimination against women, as well as adult and child prostitution, was common. Children and persons with disabilities continued to suffer as a result of poor economic conditions and limited protections against discrimination. The Government continued to dominate much of the labor movement and did not always respect worker rights. Child labor was a problem. There were reports of trafficking in persons.

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