



Southern African Regional Assessment Mission Report

Angola



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Executive Summary

It is not possible to understand the meaning of, or the need for, transitional justice in Angola without understanding the country's broader socio-economic and political landscape. In contrast with other countries in the region, such as Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique – where peace came through negotiated settlement – Angola's transition from war to 'peace' was the result of a clear and definitive military victory by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the government of Angola. The military victory of the MPLA, which had effectively been the ruling party since 1975, meant that the 2002 peace agreement did not result in a regime change. The ultimate cessation of conflict was marked by the signing of the Luena Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2002, itself built on the foundation of two previous attempts at negotiated settlements in the post-independence period; namely the Bicesse Accords of 1991, and the Lusaka Protocol of 1994. The Luena MoU devotes a single paragraph to 'national reconciliation', framing it solely in terms of a global and general amnesty for crimes and human rights violations committed during the armed conflict.

General amnesty was accepted as the only viable option, given the intensity and duration of the conflict, as well as the perception that the majority of Angolans had in some way participated in or supported the war. Given this perception of deep and widespread involvement of the population in the conflict, the question many interviewees asked was, 'Who would then testify at something like a TRC?' As a result of this confluence of factors, the ruling party has not engaged in a formal recognition of or inquiry into past human rights atrocities, whether committed by the opposition or by its own forces; in other words, there has been a conscious decision not to pursue the route of a public truth and reconciliation process. Across the spectrum of people interviewed, there was an overwhelming expression of war fatigue; the opposition to any form of truth commission seemed to stem not only from not wanting to talk about the past, but also not wanting to open up old wounds.

There is a national discourse on reconciliation that takes many different forms; however, it seems to hold little meaning for the majority of Angolans. At the political level, reconciliation is articulated through election propaganda as part of the ruling party's broader reconstruction agenda. However, there is little evidence of either reconciliation or reconstruction occurring in urban or rural areas. The rhetoric of reconciliation has been limited to political reconciliation: that is, the consensus agenda between MPLA and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a pact of the political elite.

Yet the promise of reconstruction remains unfulfilled. Luanda appears to be a city in rapid decay, with extraordinary levels of poverty and inequality, and serious structural and social injustice, particularly with regard to people's access to health and education. Thus, while there is an attempt by the ruling party to create consensus that reconstruction is happening, in reality the worsening economy, poverty, inequality and the notable absence of reconstruction and development has further undermined prospects for reconciliation. The development of strategic socio-economic plans for the provinces (within a national strategy) and the strengthening of efforts to create basic conditions at

local level are regarded as fundamental, if the current situation of extreme poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation are to be appropriately tackled.

Although the political rhetoric of reconciliation is largely meaningless, the discourse about reconciliation occurring at the community level across the country is organic and spontaneous, with community structures and religious and traditional leaders playing a key role in the process. The state appears to be largely absent at this level, with no funds allocated for these purposes. Further challenges faced by community-based reconciliation efforts include the fact that many of these communities are being reconstituted for the first time after many years; as such, they are 'proto-communities', or communities in the making. Returnees, refugees, demobilised ex-combatants and the very few remaining residents are now, for the first time in years, learning how to live with one another.

It would also appear that community level reconciliation is not occurring *between* communities, but rather *within* them, even down to the cleavages that happened within a family, as when, for instance, two brothers took opposing sides as UNITA and MPLA soldiers.

Another factor is that large parts of the country are only now experiencing the extension of state administrative support and intervention. The state is largely absent from the lives of people, especially in the provinces; meanwhile, the state security apparatus remains ever-watchful in the form of police and military presence. While this keeps household and other forms of localised violence contained, it also leads to the psychological suppression of the multiple traumas suffered by the population.

Introduction

'... the country's experiences in conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building ... provide valuable lessons for the rest of the world.'¹

Ibrahim Gambari, United Nations Under-Secretary of African Affairs and Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General in Angola (2003)

The assessment mission to Angola in June 2008 was part of a broader enquiry into the transitional justice landscape in the Southern African region. This was driven by four broad objectives:

- to map and assess the current status (or lack thereof) of transitional justice initiatives in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe, as well as in South Africa;
- to identify and understand local priorities in the transitional justice area;
- to ascertain the capacity of civil society organisations to play a role in any future transitional justice initiatives; and
- to make recommendations on how to address transitional justice in each country.

The key objectives of this particular mission were threefold:

- to identify the major transitional justice issues in Angola;
- to map and assess the current status of transitional justice initiatives in Angola; and

- to identify the capacity of civil society organisations that are playing or have the potential to play a leading role in any future transitional justice initiatives.

Methodology

The in-country assessment took place from 15–21 June 2008. For details of those interviewed, including the organisations they represent, please contact the author. The choice of interviews was based on the need to obtain a variety of perspectives across a spectrum of government, civil society, international institutions and community organisations, in order to understand the issues of transitional justice within the broader framework of the current socio-economic and political landscape. Because of the language barrier, the research team was supported by a translator, who was present at all meetings.

Background to country assessment mission

Several key themes emerged with regard to understanding the challenges facing transitional justice practitioners in Angola:

- the long and protracted duration of the civil war, lasting from independence in 1975 until 2002;
- the internationalisation of the conflict, including the intervention of South Africa and Cuba, as well as the superpowers – the United States and the then-Soviet Union – in pursuit of their Cold War policy agendas;
- the intensity and scope of the war, with most Angolans both affected as victims of the conflict and implicated as participants in it;
- the strong internal causes of the war, including ideology and class, regional disparities and colonial-era grievances, the cosmopolitan and interracial coastline cities versus the rural African hinterland, race and ethno-linguistic affiliations, control of natural resources and government;
- the cycles of war and displacement that contributed to the development of very large informal settlements in peri-urban areas around all urban centres of the country, but particularly Luanda;
- the failed attempts at negotiated peace settlements through the Bicesse Accords in 1991 and the Lusaka Protocol in 1994;
- the pact of the political elite after the 2002 peace agreement, with the co-option of UNITA's elite into the new government; and
- the use of amnesty as the strategy for reconciliation in each peace agreement, resulting in a popularised national discourse of 'forgive and forget' towards the atrocities of the war period – and which is now preserved, at least in part, through a sense of fear of what reopening the wounds of the past might do to the country.

Historical background

The Angolan conflict was rooted in a local power struggle that began even before independence, and which was seized on and perpetuated by superpower rivalries in the post-independence period. The Alvor Agreement, signed in 1975, granted Angola

independence from Portugal, and handed over power to a coalition of the three largest independence movements: the MPLA, UNITA, and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The coalition government quickly broke down as each movement's doubts grew about its partners' commitment to the peace process, and the country descended into civil war. The ensuing chaos provided international players with an opening through which to intervene in the conflict in pursuit of Cold War objectives.

Zaire and South Africa intervened militarily, with support from the United States, in favour of the FNLA and UNITA, with the intention of taking the capital city of Luanda before the declaration of independence. In response, Cuba intervened on the side of the MPLA, which successfully held Luanda and declared independence on 11 November 1975, the day the Portuguese left the country. The FNLA and UNITA both proclaimed their own short-lived republics (the Democratic Republic of Angola and the Social Democratic Republic of Angola) for the zones they controlled on 24 November 1975, with Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi as co-presidents. However, by the end of January 1976, the Angolan Army, the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and the Cubans had all but crushed FNLA, the Zairians and UNITA, and the South African forces withdrew.

Nevertheless, the proxy war continued. The (MPLA-controlled) government of Angola requested that Cuban forces remain in the country, while continuing to receive support from the USSR and eastern bloc countries. UNITA received more or less clandestine support from the US, and took up activities in the south-east of the country. South Africa soon established bases in southern Angola and increased support to UNITA, which gained control of more and more territory. In 1987, FAPLA, with Soviet support, launched an offensive in an effort to deliver a final blow to UNITA and to drive South Africa out of the country.

Despite the campaign's early failures and defeats, the Cubans successfully intervened to stop UNITA and South African advances, culminating in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, from 13 January to 23 March 1988, the biggest battle in African history since the Second World War. Meanwhile, Angola and the United States had been in negotiations for a peaceful solution since June 1987. Following the turning point at Cuito Cuanavale, the United States agreed to include Cuba in direct talks, which it joined on 28 January 1988; South Africa joined on 9 March. Angola, Cuba and South Africa signed the New York Accords on 22 December 1988, in which the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola was linked to the retreat of South African soldiers from Angola and Namibia.

Angola went through several cycles of failed negotiated peace settlements following the withdrawal of international forces. The 1991 Bicesse Accords spelled out an electoral process for a democratic Angola under the supervision of the United Nations. The MPLA won the first round with 49 per cent of the votes, against 40 per cent for UNITA. UNITA leader Savimbi refused to accept the results, and initiated another cycle of war. On 20 November 1994 a second peace accord, the Lusaka Protocol, was brokered in Lusaka, Zambia. The peace accord between the government and UNITA provided for the integration of former UNITA insurgents into the armed forces, as well as the inclusion of

UNITA professionals and members of the political elite into public sector positions in the new government. However, in 1995 localised fighting resumed. A 'Government of National Unity and Reconciliation' was installed in April 1997, but serious fighting resumed in late 1998 when Savimbi renewed the war for a third time, claiming that the MPLA was not fulfilling its obligations. The UN Security Council voted on 28 August 1997 to impose sanctions on UNITA.

This third cycle of the war was even more brutal than its predecessors, and was characterised by violence aimed directly at the civilian population. Whole cities were reduced to ruins, hundreds of thousands of people were killed or died from war-related deprivation and disease, and millions were displaced, some for the second or even the third time.² Complete villages were moved and emptied, crops burned and populations forcibly displaced in areas controlled by the government, as the government sought to cut off all potential sources of support for UNITA in a scorched-earth and counter-insurrection strategy.³ The Angolan military launched a massive offensive in 1999 that destroyed UNITA's conventional capacity and recaptured all major cities previously held by Savimbi's forces, forcing UNITA to revert to guerrilla tactics.

The death of UNITA leader Savimbi on 22 February 2002 transformed Angola's prospects for peace. Immediately following Savimbi's death, the government announced it would halt all military actions by 13 March 2002. Military commanders for UNITA and FAPLA agreed to a ceasefire, and on 4 April they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Luena as an addendum to the Lusaka Protocol. UNITA forces were incorporated into the new Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and the National Police, and UNITA's political elite was incorporated into a new Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

It is estimated that almost one million Angolans died during the 27-year civil war, with more than four million being internally displaced. The war devastated the country's infrastructure in rural areas, hampered government's capacity to deliver basic services, and severely disrupted family and community networks.

Economic background

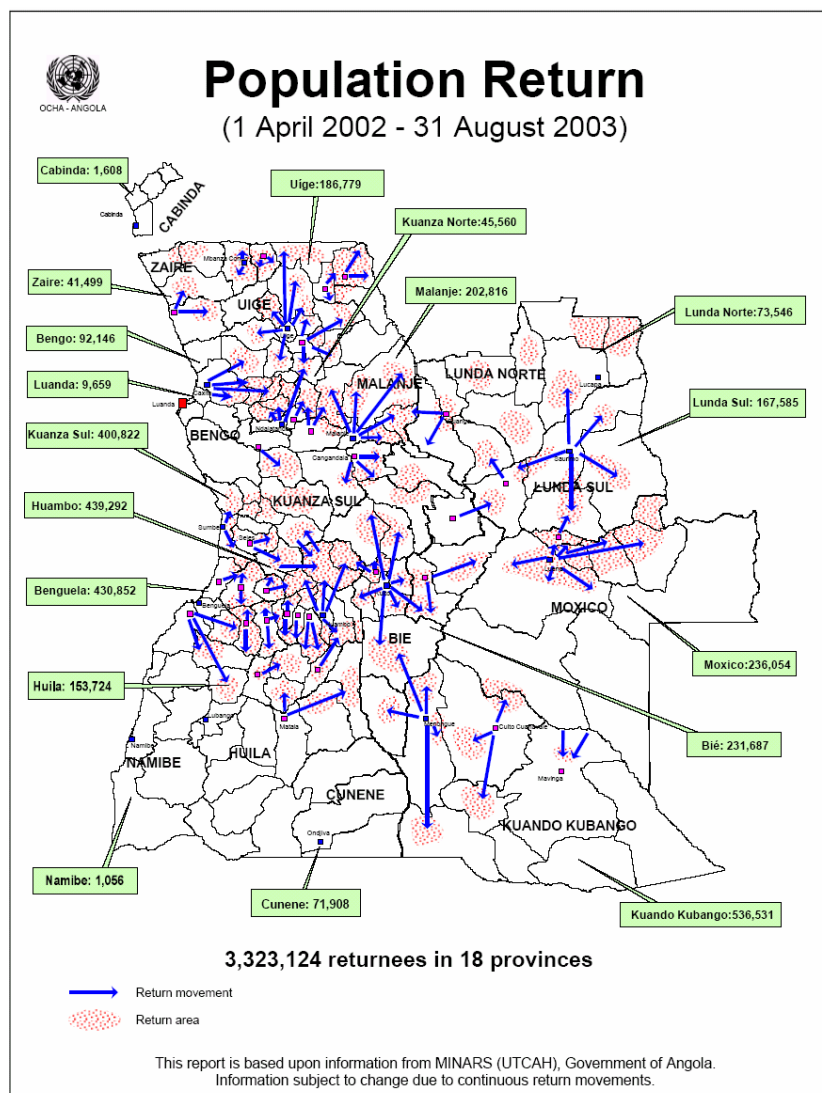
Angola is exceptionally rich in resources. It is sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil producer, with output currently running at 1.9 million barrels a day, almost entirely from offshore oil fields along the northern coast.⁴ It is also the world's fourth-largest producer of diamonds (by value), accounting in 2000 for about 15 per cent of the world's production of rough diamonds.⁵ Yet despite its rich endowments of diamonds and oil resources, Angola is one of the world's poorest countries; mismanagement and the squandering of natural resources as a means to bankroll the war have led to the poor performance of the economy.⁶

Nevertheless, Angola's economy has undergone a vast transformation in recent years, moving from the disarray caused by a quarter-century of war to being the second-fastest-growing economy in Africa, and one of the fastest globally. Rapidly rising production

and revenues from the oil sector have been the main driving forces behind the improvements in overall economic activity. Control of the oil industry is consolidated in Sonangol Group, a conglomerate owned by the Angolan government. In December 2006, Angola was admitted as a member of OPEC. The economy grew 18 per cent in 2005, 26 per cent in 2006 and 17.6 per cent in 2007; and it is expected to stay above 10 per cent for the rest of the decade.⁷

These indicators of a booming economy contrasted sharply with the widespread and deepening poverty in Luanda observed by the in-country assessment team. The economy's growth strategy is based on the non-labour-intensive diamond and oil industries; meanwhile, the results of capital-intensive growth in the form of roads and infrastructure have not trickled down fast enough to meet the basic needs of millions of people. As one respondent noted, 'growth can bring hardship to the poor.' In addition, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index rated Angola one of the most corrupt countries in the world in 2008.⁸ Basic service provision is still the privilege of only a few Angolans – and millions live without access to basic water, sanitation and electricity. While Angola has a small population of only 14 million, a 2001 national poverty study showed that 66 per cent of the population lived on less than \$1.70 a day, and 25 per cent on less than \$1.00 a day.⁹ The country also has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, at 154 out of 1 000 live births.

From the perspective of the assessment team, Luanda appeared to be a city in rapid decay, with a noticeable increase in the number of informal peri-urban settlements since one team-member's last visit in 2005. During the war, economic links between the coastal cities and the agrarian hinterland virtually disappeared. The cities, especially Luanda, survived on imported food paid for by oil royalties rather than on home produce from the countryside. Meanwhile, the countryside was neglected and left to its own subsistence strategies. The lack of opportunities in the rural areas made prospects in the urban centres seem more attractive, despite the poverty of the great slums.¹⁰ Over the years, many people fleeing the war migrated to the towns, and the city of Luanda grew to an estimated population of four million by the war's end.¹¹ The assessment team noted that slums, called *musseques*, stretch for miles beyond Luanda's former city limits. The evidence that these settlements had not only failed to disappear in the aftermath of the war, but have in fact grown, was a striking illustration of the failure of the government's post-war 'rural resettlement' strategy, and its inability to manage the rapid movement into the cities. The map below provides a visible measure of the scale of resettlement and return movements in the immediate post-war period.



This map illustrates the large numbers of people that were considered ‘resettled’ in rural areas a little more than a year after the end of the war. The blue arrows highlight the typical movement of IDPs from urban and peri-urban areas, which were considered safe havens during the war, to rural areas where people had lived prior to the conflict. However, in-country interviews revealed that a large number of these people did not stay in the rural areas, because of a lack of infrastructure, services such as health care or education, or opportunities for economic livelihood. This large-scale return to urban areas has important implications not only for reconstruction, but also for reconciliation and transitional justice. As more and more people from different sides of the conflict and from different ethno-linguistic groups concentrate around urban areas in extremely poor conditions, while simultaneously competing for survival in the informal economy, fault-lines for violence become more pronounced, and reconciliation and community-level conflict resolution becomes critical.

Legacies of the conflict

The transition initiated by the 2002 military victory of the MPLA against UNITA is characterised by a state-led national reconciliation discourse, local reconciliation initiatives led by community organisations, reconstitutions of families and villages, and re-integration of ex-combatants. Although organised violence has ended and there is an official ‘reconciliation’ narrative – in reality, more a ‘forgive and forget’ narrative – for many, this has not translated into meaningful social, psychological or economic benefits.¹² There is a disconnect between the official government narrative and the reality of people’s daily lives – whether in the cities or the rural areas. The narrative omits the full truth of what transpired during the conflict, and there is a reluctance to revisit the past. As one interviewee said, ‘Let’s think of the future, not the past.’ It is important to note that while the government has attempted to build the perception that there is one truth and one national historical narrative, each individual and community continues to understand the conflict in terms of their own experience. The lack of space to share these experiences or reflect on the past may in fact act as an obstacle to the rebuilding of relationships among citizens.

The impact of the conflict itself on the country as a whole was devastating, and this was further aggravated by the accompanying years of neglect and bad governance. By 2002, large areas of the country were inaccessible. This meant that there were large areas of the country where government had been absent for many years, and where post-conflict humanitarian conditions were largely unknown.

Violence and trauma

Twenty-seven years of war have normalised violence in Angolan society; however, the visible presence of the security apparatus prevents the violence from spilling over – ‘containing’ it instead at the community or household level. Interviewees shared a pervasive perception of violence that has been shaped and influenced by people’s experience of the war and its authoritarian nature. All interviewees agreed that there are high levels of ‘household violence’, especially against women and children. They also identified other forms of violence, such as street fights, community struggles, and gangs of young men terrorising communities in Lubango. Some respondents indicated that the high levels of household violence were considered to be a manifestation of the collective and individual multiple traumas suffered by Angolans.

Perhaps more than any other indicator, the disruption and separation of families and communities stands as evidence of the traumatic and widespread nature of this conflict. Government officials interviewed by the assessment team emphasised the accomplishments of the family reunification programme, which was initiated nationwide shortly after the end of the war. Thousands of people were reunited with their families during the two-year programme. But the in-country assessment team learned that the ministry charged with implementing this programme, as well as all programmes aimed at the family and household level, had the smallest budget allocation in government. This

has inevitably placed huge constraints on the ministry's ability to address the emerging violence and traumas experienced at the household and community levels.

Interviews in Angola also revealed that little has been done with regard to the 'reconstruction of minds' as a result of violence; in other words, in implementing practical activities towards national reconciliation, particularly at a socio-psychological level. Interviewees explained that Angolans are still considered to be affected by multiple traumas resulting from 'a history marked by fighting', a history in which most Angolans were themselves party to the conflict. To a large extent, the 'amnesia' approach to dealing with the past is a consequence of these multiple traumas, of an inability to address issues of restorative justice, and in fact of a fear of the consequences of addressing these issues. This is an area where intervention seems to be critical. The Ministry of Family and Women Promotion emphasised the need for psycho-social and trauma healing work to be done across the country, but it currently lacks the resources to undertake this. There is space, therefore, for the transitional justice sector to begin to fill this gap.

Children

The legacy of the conflict has also left a visible impact on the social and educational development of children. All of Angola's children are direct or indirect victims of the war, because they have been the most disadvantaged by the conflict, and remain the most vulnerable in post-conflict society. According to UNICEF, more than 100 000 children were orphaned or separated from their families during the course of the war, and currently 43 000 children remain separated from their families. Thousands of children were maimed by landmines and subjected to different forms of abuse and violence.¹³ Countrywide, there are thought to be over 10 000 street children in Angola, of whom an estimated 5 000 are in Luanda, driven to the urban areas by both poverty and the civil war.¹⁴ Separated from their families and unable to rely on kinship networks, they become victims of child labour, trafficking and sexual exploitation, all of which have arisen in Angola. School violence, delinquency and the availability of weapons also contribute to a potentially explosive and hostile environment for children.

Thousands of children are also struggling to make the transition to normal lives after being forced to serve as soldiers in the conflict. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers estimates that 7 000 children served with UNITA and government forces in the last round of fighting between 1998 and 2002. Child protection workers in Angola have suggested that as many as 11 000 from the two sides may have lived and worked in combat conditions.¹⁵ While some children may have willingly worked for UNITA, others were abducted while walking to schools, markets and their homes. Children captured in these raids served as 'apprentice-soldiers' or 'auxiliaries'. Given menial tasks at first, some of these soldiers-in-training were later given arms and weapons training, and became fighters. Abducted girls were used as cooks, domestic workers and porters in roles similar to that of boys. Women and girls were also 'given' to UNITA commanders and soldiers, and forced into sexual relations and 'marriages'. Refusals were met with severe punishment, and attempts to escape often meant death. Access to girls held in UNITA areas after the war was difficult. A child rights expert working in Luanda

estimated that the number of underage wives married to UNITA soldiers was somewhere between 5 000 and 8 000.¹⁶

Developmentally, adolescents are at the psychological phase where they are forming their identity and making key decisions with regard to their future and their relationship to society. Affected by war trauma and growing up amid normalised violence, many child soldiers cannot conceptualise that peace is the rule rather than the exception, and are at risk of perpetuating these cycles of violence.¹⁷ For these reasons, child soldiers in particular need rehabilitation programmes tailored to their specific experiences. Without assistance, they are at risk for future manipulation, and are vulnerable to the lure of criminal or violent activities.

The war also destroyed many of the institutions necessary for the rehabilitation of children, particularly schools. Since 1998, 80 per cent of the schools in Angola have been destroyed or abandoned. Some teaching at under-staffed and under-equipped schools takes place in the provinces, though most of these schools are in an advanced state of disrepair. There is a general scarcity of teachers.¹⁸ It is only in Luanda that children stand a chance of getting an adequate education, but here too there are severe constraints – fewer than half of the teachers are adequately trained, there is a severe lack of classroom space, and teacher/pupil ratios can be as high as 1:80. Failure rates are high, and few children enter high school. Only 5 to 10 per cent of children are registered at birth, and this lack of documentation limits access to education, health facilities and employment. Aside from this, in a country that has an official poverty rate of 67 per cent, few parents can afford schooling. The government has reported that 70 per cent of children between six and fourteen years old are likely to remain illiterate.¹⁹ The government has consistently spent below 15 per cent of its budget on the social sector (and in some years, below 10 per cent); and most of this spending simply goes to salaries and administration in the health and education sectors.

The field research team learned that Save the Children has developed a child-protection programme that focuses on the creation of child-protection committees at the community level to address the problem of school violence. The same actors who are part of these committees also appear to be actors in other arenas, such as local reconciliation efforts and conflict resolution processes. They include traditional healers, teachers, catechists, activists (especially women) and local administrators. This is a model that with the potential to be replicated and expanded to provide increased psycho-social services and support for orphaned or homeless children struggling to adapt to a post-war existence. Save the Children has also emphasised the importance of education programmes with a focus on reconciliation, and the development of curricula around ‘cultures of peace’. The organisation is also deeply involved in trauma counselling for children.

Landmines

Angola continues to be one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Exact figures of the number of landmine casualties remain unknown, but hundreds have died and nearly 80 000 have been injured, many of them women and children. Access to services for victims of mine-related injuries is limited; since the end of conflict in 2002,

economic and political resources have been dedicated to reconstruction, demobilisation of ex-combatants, and resettlement of refugees and displaced people, which has delayed programmes for mine survivors and people with disabilities as a result of their injuries. Rehabilitation services are located far from mine-affected areas, and lack staff and equipment. In addition, limited transport and financial resources hinder access to services for rural survivors. It is estimated that only 25 per cent of needs are being met by existing facilities.

Most people with disabilities face physical and social barriers that hinder their full participation in society. Psycho-social support programmes for this population are limited and exist only at the community level. Staff lack the expertise to ensure the comprehensive re-integration of survivors, and disability awareness among the general public is low. Many survivors do not have access to education, and few are able to earn a living. This situation is further aggravated by high general unemployment, illiteracy and large numbers of disabled persons of working age. Some vocational training programmes are provided by the government and NGOs, but most services are in Luanda or provincial capitals.²⁰

Gender-based violence

Former combatants returning home have found the conditions and structure of family life drastically changed. As with conflict situations elsewhere, male combatants have returned to find traditionally male family roles now occupied by women. These include providing for the household, disciplining male children, building and repairing houses, dealing with community leaders and government officials, and fulfilling religious and social obligations. In Angola, some women have continued to perform these tasks in peacetime, in particular where husbands have died or deserted the household.²¹

Women's earnings in the informal sector of the economy have also started to pose a serious cultural challenge to men's traditional income-earning role and, as a result, to gender relations in the family. These changes may partly explain the upsurge of domestic violence against women and children since the early 1990s, as men returning from war have sought to reassert their authority in the household.

Angolan gender specialist Henda Ducados (2004) has written that economic problems stemming from the conflict were at the root of the issue. Ducados emphasises that 'Because of the war, a lot of men are unemployed and unable to contribute to the household on a regular basis. It seems many feel undermined by the fact that women are bringing home the earnings. Their frustrations have often led to greater drug and alcohol consumption and violence against women. Men feel a sense of frustration from their economic condition, also the fact that many have come back from the war and haven't been re-integrated into society.'²² Interviewees in Angola emphasised men's frustration at not being recognised by society for their efforts as combatants, high levels of substance abuse among males, and the fact that many men are 'absent fathers' and refuse to legally recognise paternity, as sources of domestic disputes.

Women also suffered the direct effects of war in distinct ways. In addition to the large number of women who died as a result of combat operations, many were raped by fighters on both sides. While soldiers were supposed to protect the population, many used their position to exploit women instead. The interaction of thousands of soldiers with the destitute population in front-line regions had also had tremendous long-term gendered impacts. For instance, young women who engaged in prostitution for survival during the conflict may suffer from serious health problems, poor self-esteem, and social exclusion, especially if they become pregnant and/or contract sexually-transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. At the household level, the long years of conflict have also created situations in which women find it difficult to marry and remarry, especially if they have suffered sexual abuse. Women have also suffered disproportionately from landmine explosions, because they are responsible for the task of gathering food. Many have lost their husbands and sons because of the war, thus increasing the number of female-headed households.²³

There is a legal framework in Angola that protects women's rights to own property, to engage in contracts and run businesses, to have access to free family-planning resources, and to have only consensual unions recognised as marriage. However, in practice this framework goes unenforced because traditional norms favour men over women. Thus, in practice, the majority of Angolan women are still fighting for their rights to be acknowledged and respected.²⁴

The in-country assessment team encountered little or no discourse regarding the gendered effects of the conflict or gender-based violence. This conspicuous absence of discussion of the issue – in contrast to the evidence of rising levels of gender-based violence – revealed that neither NGOs nor the general population are sensitised to the issue, which is conceptualised only under the rubric of 'household violence'. This limited understanding of the gendered dimensions of the conflict has resulted in a dearth of programming addressing these issues. However, the assessment team did learn that the Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women has engaged in several activities to support women, including the creation of women's associations for micro-credit, education and capacity-building; strengthening the Organizacao da Mulher Angolana, which defends women's and children's rights; and continuing with the sensitisation work against domestic violence. A 'Family Code' is also currently being debated in parliament, and respondents believe that this will contribute to strengthening protection for women and children. However, the Ministry expressed a strong willingness to provide more extensive services, and is in need of further support and sensitisation.

The transitional justice landscape

Understanding and defining transitional justice in Angola

The in-country assessment revealed that Angola poses a unique and challenging context to dealing with the legacy of its past conflict. In part, this is because the country lived through such a long period in which there were two relatively clearly defined social and political structures, supported by rival ideologies. Both sides built their internal mobilisation and support through the formation of an exclusive political or even national

identity, each claiming to be the more authentic voice. The transitional justice landscape is also complicated by the very nature of Angola's post-war transition. The end of war was abrupt, and for most, unexpected. Angola's 27 years of war produced winners and losers, although the government has refrained from displaying a victorious mood, and has adopted a forgiving attitude, pre-empting the notion of prosecution and punishment for all. Reconciliation has largely been synonymous with a blanket amnesty for crimes committed in the context of war; indeed, the amnesty provisions were continuously updated within each subsequent peace agreement, beginning with the 1991 Bicesse Accords, to include the next phase of conflict. The in-country assessment team learned that this has created a long association in the minds of Angolans between reconciliation and amnesty.

This approach to transitional justice is reflected in Article 6 of the Lusaka Protocol, which states that 'In the spirit of National Reconciliation, all Angolans should forgive and forget the offences resulting from the Angolan conflict and face the future with tolerance and trust.'²⁵ In 2002, when the Luena MoU was signed between the MPLA and UNITA, the priority of the winning party, the MPLA, was to integrate the armed forces into a united Angolan fighting force. The agreement's sole reference to 'peace and national reconciliation' is couched as a general amnesty for all those who had committed crimes during the 27-year-long war.²⁶ Interviews revealed that for many Angolans, this has been interpreted as taking any recourse to the courts out of their hands.

Political actors continually invoke the concept of reconciliation as an important aspect of consolidating peace in Angola, but in practice, reconciliation has been limited to the warring parties putting aside all past differences, without exploring the causes of the conflict. Little attention has been paid to the social processes that enable individuals and communities to address and overcome the distrust, polarisation and pain caused by the conflict. In the shadow of these arrangements between political elites, ordinary Angolans were told to forget the past and look forward to the future. Such an effort to move on is not without danger, as injuries are not so much forgiven as simply publicly ignored.

Yet the complexity of the wounds suffered by the Angolan people has made even some civil society activists in Angola believe that an institutionalised response to human rights abuses would not be a favourable option today. Interviewees shared the view that, because of its specificity, a South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission is not suitable for Angola. The interviewees noted that although the TRC model was suited to the South African context, where it was perceived that the conflict was clear-cut and there were easy categories to be distinguished, between perpetrators and victims, this is not the case in Angola, where virtually the entire country was involved in the conflict. One respondent asked, 'Should we (Angolans) all sit at an Angolan TRC? How can we expect Angolans, exhausted from years and years of conflict, to even entertain such an idea?' The struggle of day-to-day existence leaves very little time for any other issues, including reconciliation. Moreover, concerns were raised that a TRC would taint the government's record as liberators, compromising the 'liberation discourse' so cherished by government since the end of the war. It could also compromise the so-called political reconciliation with UNITA.

Rather than suggest public truth hearings, several respondents indicated that national reconciliation was more closely linked to socio-economic justice and human rights, with the focus being on increasing the pace of service delivery and poverty alleviation. The discourse is also much more about the necessity of having a ‘social peace’, a settlement that goes beyond a military agreement to include ‘transparent political competition’. As one interviewee said, ‘It is more important that people are lifted out of poverty, and have access to opportunities. Maybe, much later, through a national debate, we can look at the political side to try to understand the lessons that caused the conflict to last for so long.’

However, there are signs that even ‘transparent political competition’ remains elusive. The assessment mission to Angola was conducted just three months before the country’s first general election in sixteen years. In discussions with civil society actors and opposition party members, it appeared that there had been deliberate manipulation of the electoral process, such as making it impossible for opposition parties to register according to the rules; manipulation of the youth; and disruption of opposition party rallies. At the same time, respondents indicated that there were attempts to manipulate and control what happened at the community level, with the government trying to reinforce the view that it has been the main protagonist in the reconstruction agenda. The ruling party has almost absolute control of the media in the provinces, especially radio and TV, which are mobilised for these purposes. Five million dollars have been allocated to 68 municipalities for capital-intensive reconstruction development, such as the building of community centres, health clinics and roads – most of these in key rural and urban constituencies. As one interviewee said, ‘This is buying the negative peace.’

Most interviewees spoke about the forthcoming elections, usually without being prompted, and most expressed high levels of fear. For many of those interviewed, the fear is multi-layered, and includes the fear of a return to war if the MPLA loses the elections (in people’s memory, losing an election means a return to war) despite the fact that UNITA no longer has its own military power. This fear is rooted in memories of the 1992 MPLA witch hunt of UNITA supporters after Savimbi went back to war, conducted in large part by MPLA-armed civilians. Millions of small arms remain in civilian hands, raising the possibility that such reprisals could happen again. Luanda was a critical pre-election battleground for the political machinations of the major parties, with no side able to predict how the 8.2 million registered voters, 40 per cent of whom were said to be between 18 and 24 years of age, were likely to vote. Levels of localised conflict were reported to have increased in the lead-up to the election, related to politics, but also related to forced evictions and other property issues. Respondents also expressed fear that the current economic conditions would not improve; fear of authority and informants, attesting to a pattern of authority in the country that has been marked by violence, including violence at the hands of the security forces and the ruling party; and a deep fear that the unpredictability of the past will continue – whether related to elections or not. There was also a sense of powerlessness, an inability to alter or influence the events leading up to the election, and therefore its outcome.

The Angolan government calls itself the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation (including UNITA as ministers and deputies, UNITA teachers and nurses in public services, and so forth), a term derived from the 1994 Lusaka Protocol. National reconciliation has become the mantra of government, as well as a motto for private sector activities – a motto ever-present on the government-controlled media. However, the ‘national reconciliation’ discourse in Angola has up until now been void of any real meaning or practical expression; it has been limited to the building of political consensus between the two parties, as evidenced by the conferring of economic advantages among political elites. Moreover, reconciliation has not extended down to the grassroots level. While the political elites exchange economic favours, Angola faces a severe humanitarian crisis, with the number of unemployed, displaced, and poor growing exponentially, limiting the benefits of ‘peace’ and posing a threat to the consolidation of democracy. Even the depth of UNITA’s own embrace of reconciliation and its motives for doing so remain uncertain, and it is unclear how deeply the supposed consensus on unity penetrates into the two parties’ structures.

It is now a common belief in broader Angolan society that reconciliation is first and foremost a process that takes place on a micro-level, with help from the churches, expressed often as *somos todos irmãos*, ‘we are all brothers’. The majority of the Angolan population has been severely affected by the war, and as a result, fear and distrust are now embedded in relationships among Angolans.²⁷ The situation is aggravated by cultural values that inhibit the expression of grief and pain. Although the war and its consequences have been extensively written about, individual traumas and collective suffering are scarcely mentioned, either in private or in public.²⁸ Beyond the micro-level, respondents re-emphasised that national reconciliation should be focused on social justice. In concrete terms, this was expressed as:

- no return to war;
- basic services;
- security at household and community levels; and
- employment.

At a community level, respondents indicated the existence of a few key actors working on deepening both reconciliation and democratisation. At the grassroots level, it is important to note that ad-hoc, organic community reconciliation is already happening in a very private manner, but it is also at this level that the occurrence of violence has increased, particularly political violence related to the pre-electoral phase. The existing ad hoc reconciliation processes need to deepen further at the family level, through churches, catechists, civil society leaders, and traditional leaders (known locally as *Sobas*). In the absence of the presence of local administration in vast areas of the country, these actors play a fundamental role as arbiters of conflict. Yet very little research has been done on how these processes should happen, and how they have been happening during the last five years. Virtually no data exists.

Disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR)

The Luena MoU represented the third time that Angola has attempted a DDR process in an effort to consolidate a sustainable peace. The previous two peace processes were the

result of negotiated settlements, and called for UN participation in the DDR process. The Luena MoU stands apart from these previous attempts at peace, both because it resulted from the MPLA's decisive military victory, and because the ensuing DDR process was managed and financed by the Angolan government, with no provision for formal third party monitoring or verification.²⁹ A Joint Military Commission (JMC) comprising representatives of the government, UNITA, the UN and the Troika (composed of Portugal, Russia and the United States) was established to monitor and assess the implementation of all outstanding issues from the MoU.³⁰

Early stages of the DDR process were characterised by a gross underestimation of the number of UNITA soldiers that would seek benefits, and unrealistic timetables for disarmament, resulting in huge numbers of ex-combatants not receiving resettlement kits, reinsertion subsidies or government-sponsored training.³¹ Moreover, only four months into the DDR process, the JMC announced that the demobilisation and disarmament components of the programme had been completed, but large numbers of ex-combatants remained unregistered and continued arriving at the quartering and reception areas many months later.³²

Improving the benefits and opportunities offered to those demobilised from active service was a main focus of the re-integration programme in Angola; yet implementation of socio-economic re-integration programmes has proceeded haltingly. These programmes have been hampered by lack of funds and institutional capacity, the sheer scale of the re-integration effort, and the inability of government institutions and international partners to agree.³³ The government-sponsored Angolan Demobilisation and Re-integration Programme (ADRP) broadly recognises that the process 'should be implemented in close co-ordination with local and provincial administrations to ensure that all activities targeted at ex-combatants remained consistent with overall integration activities at the local level.'³⁴ Yet in practice, the programme seems to rely entirely on central government agencies with decentralised directorates in the provinces, and on NGOs as implementing partners. Moreover, the re-integration policy has increasingly narrowed its target group and benefits, exhausting the local organisations that implement it.

The priority of ADRP has been to redevelop agricultural production in the rural areas that were most affected by the war, both as an employment option for career-changing soldiers, and as a way to prevent a rural exodus to urban areas. In the rural areas, where most ex-combatants returned, there was often a dazzling variety of re-integration schemes, set up for the time being by local church groups or NGOs. However, these projects could only cater to a handful of demobilised soldiers, and offered limited assistance and few benefits. When the much larger national programme was finally formalised, in many cases all demobilised soldiers came to register. Yet ADRP not only disqualifies the 'old-case load', ex-combatants who were demobilised in the context of the two previous peace processes, but also soldiers that had been more recently demobilised, but had already benefited from another re-integration project.³⁵

Regardless of the government's approach, the social, economic and political re-integration of these different factions of soldiers remains an urgent priority.³⁶ This

sentiment was echoed by interviewees in Angola, who emphasised that the socio-economic and cultural aspects of re-integration would determine the success or failure of re-integration efforts. They noted that the various factions would inevitably make up newly-constituted 'communities in the making', and would have to learn to understand one another, and their specific roles and responsibilities within the new community. As one interviewee said, 'One has to learn one's place in these new communities.' This interviewee made a further link between the process of re-integration and citizenship, a link he said could only be made through reconciliation.

ADRP also excluded the following groups from direct benefits: women married to ex-soldiers; unmarried and married women and girls who worked in support functions for the armed forces; women abandoned by their soldier husbands; women who have chosen to leave their soldier husbands; and military widows. The programme's focus on male combatants assumed that all women associated with the armed forces – with the possible exception of woman fighters or combatants – were dependants reliant on men, that male recipients would use their benefits in the interests of their entire household, and that there would be no misuse of benefits. There was also an assumption that the work done by non-combatant women who had been abducted by the armed forces to serve as servants, cooks, or wives did not qualify as soldiering work.

As a result of these assumptions, demobilisation support was made available primarily to male ex-combatants, with women and girls only eligible to receive assistance if they were recognised as ex-combatants, or if they had an official or 'goodwill' link to a male soldier's family. Community acceptance of and assistance to returned female soldiers appeared to be dependent upon their being accepted by a family member in the area of return, or returning with a husband. However, a large percentage of young married women were abandoned by their husbands upon returning to the husbands' areas of origin. Women who were abducted by UNITA also faced the dilemma of whether or not to leave their UNITA husbands and return to their original homes, where they risked social rejection.³⁷

According to research conducted by Human Rights Watch, DDR programmes also discriminated against child soldiers, many of whom carried out the same duties as adults during the conflict. While adult combatants have received identification cards, resettlement kits and food assistance from the government, many child soldiers have been excluded from the demobilisation process, receiving only identification cards and food aid. Beyond the hardships of war, child soldiers were deprived of educational, vocational and developmental opportunities.³⁸

There was no provision in the DDR programme for disarming civilians, and studies show that 10 per cent of uncollected arms remain in the hands of civilians. Given the rise of household and localised violence, the continued presence of weapons among the civilian population represents a pressing security threat.³⁹

Criminal justice system

The legal framework in Angola gives citizens legal protection for a wide range of political, civil, social and economic rights, as well as constitutional guarantees for the right to seek redress should these rights be violated. Yet there is a wide gap between the constitutional rights given to people and the actual enforcement of such rights. Angola is a highly unequal society, where discrimination and corruption have been rampant in many spheres of social, political and economic life.⁴⁰ And access to justice remains a critical problem in a country marked by impunity and widespread violations of human rights. Interviewees cited several cases where the police and the armed forces have been taken to court on charges of violence against civilians, including charges of murder.

The first and most pressing challenge to access to justice in Angola is that there is no tradition of using the formal court system. Angolans are reported to be rather sceptical of formal legal structures, and levels of trust in the formal legal system are generally low. Historically, the vast majority of disputes have been settled through local dispute resolution structures, especially at the village level. Elders and prominent men in the local environment are entrusted with finding solutions to disputes. Where these efforts fail, people approach the formal courts as a second instance of appeal. This is particularly true for people in Luanda, who are the only ones who have access to courts in any meaningful sense of the word.⁴¹ During the war, the courts barely functioned at all, and today, key access barriers continue to include lack of information, lack of physical proximity to courts, high financial costs and language barriers. The courts themselves are severely constrained by a lack of human, technical and financial resources, and one or two judges often serve millions of people. Moreover, in many areas, municipal courts, the first point of entry into the legal system, are barely functioning.⁴²

Traditional justice mechanisms

In Angola, traditional leaders are viewed as community elders, who play an active role in administering their communities. *Sobas* traditionally handle a multitude of local governance matters, including land administration and management, in conjunction with village elders.⁴³ The distinction between the traditional governance structure and the formal structure has blurred in the last decades; in some areas, the *Sobas* have steadily lost power, while in others they have become employees of the government. A recent development in this regard is the government's co-option of the *Sobas* by giving them uniforms and salaries. This has contributed, in the eyes of some respondents, to increased conflicts at local level, as in order to serve their functions, the *Soba* must remain impartial and above political pressure; but they are now seen, in several areas, as partisan actors. The salary given by government is a particular point of contention. During the week of the in-country assessment, a national conference on the role of traditional authorities was convened by the government. Little clarity seemed to emerge from the meeting, and it appeared to be little more than a further pre-election political ploy.

In post-conflict Angola, traditional authorities nevertheless retain a strong symbolic importance. Many people consider the *Soba* to be the most important person in the community, while recognising that in practice the *Soba*'s powers are becoming more and more limited.⁴⁴ Yet in-country interviews revealed that very little research has been done

on indigenous approaches to the resolution of disputes and more serious conflicts. The Ministry of Justice is currently preparing a large-scale study on how to incorporate alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation and conciliation, into Angola's formal legal system. *Sobas* may be uniquely situated to take on some of these responsibilities should they be formally institutionalised, but additional research is needed to support this effort.

South African military and political involvement in Angola during apartheid

South African military incursions into Angola in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as its support for UNITA, are distant memories only for the majority of Angolans. This is in part because these incursions were limited to the southern (rural) provinces of Cunene and Cuando-Cubango, but also because the widespread war that engulfed the entire national territory, and in particular the urban areas post-1992, was of huge intensity and scale compared to the first phase of the civil war between 1975 and 1992. This does not mean that the wide-scale infrastructural damage caused by the South African Defense Force (SADF) during this period has not had a lasting impact, but it was nothing compared to what happened subsequently. Several of the respondents pointed out that the two cycles of war, from 1992 to 1994, and from 1998 to 2002, were of a different magnitude, intensity and devastation, having provoked casualty levels incomparable to the period before. This remains people's most recent memory of the war period.

There is also an understanding and appreciation (primarily among the military generals) of the geo-strategic nature of the Angolan civil war, conducted primarily during the Cold War period. South African military incursions into Angola (plus the deployment of 50 000 Cuban troops) were part and parcel of this larger global context. When asked about their perception as to whether SADF incursions should have been part of the TRC's mandate in South Africa, respondents dismissed the idea outright, seeing no value in pursuing this line of action. As one respondent expressed it: 'South Africa's transformation from an apartheid regime to a constitutional democracy is sufficient reparation.'⁴⁵ It begged the question – where do we draw the line in addressing past human rights abuses?

This attitude towards the role of the SADF in the Angolan war is consistent with the more widespread Angolan disinclination to dig up or revisit the past; rather, the emphasis is on building the future, which in turn reinforces the central message of the MPLA government – reconciliation and reconstruction. South Africa is regarded as a very important partner for Angola, with the two countries standing to gain a lot from a close co-operative relationship within the framework of SADC and a regional economic approach. Therefore, a much greater interest was expressed in building the bilateral relationship between the two countries in the current context, with a keen awareness of the changing political landscape in South Africa, and how this could signal improved relations between the two countries.

The lack of interest in a TRC-type process for Angola is further reinforced by respondents' understanding of the key differences between the conflict in Angola and South Africa. In South Africa, much of the war had been covert, and uncovering the truth

was an important step towards national reconciliation: the identification of perpetrators and victims (those who perceived themselves as such) was a clear and relatively simple task, with one major aggressor or perpetrator. In Angola almost everyone was involved in the war, and it is difficult to separate aggressors and victims. Added to this, as already discussed, is the overwhelming sense of national ‘war fatigue.’

Some of the respondents had personal experience of working with the commanders of ANC camps in Angola prior to 1990. These camps were independent and wholly under ANC control, and respondents reported that they had no knowledge of human rights abuses within the camps. However, it was recognised that a guerrilla war was being fought, which inevitably brings its own abuses of authority.⁴⁶

Recommendations

1. Provide support to appropriate government agencies that engage with the links between past and present traumas

The Ministry of Family and Women Promotion has demonstrated a desire to be more proactive in supporting psycho-social and healing work that addresses the interaction of both long-term war traumas and the traumas of more recent violence. However, despite this ministry’s openness to engaging with long-term traumas, there is still an underlying fear of re-opening deep wounds. At the time of the interviews, Angolans’ fear of the forthcoming elections was deeply connected to their earlier experiences with unmet expectations. This is perhaps the most important reason that people resist talking about the war, out of fear that this simple act will bring back the old animosities, mistrust and recrimination. Meanwhile there is no acknowledgement of loss. While people may not want to talk publicly as part of a process at national level, it is imperative to create, as one respondent said, the ‘space for memories’ to be shared, discussed and reflected upon. At present, there is no such space. Furthermore, what remains is a ‘story of men’ – the gender dimensions of loss and trauma are entirely ignored.

Linked to this is the need for sensitisation and education at a government level, but also throughout Angolan society, on issues of gender-based violence. This relates to unresolved traumas that appear to be manifesting in domestic spaces, but also to increased awareness of the way in which this violence is gendered – a discussion that appears obscured at present by the characterisation of the violence as ‘household violence’. The impression that this violence is ‘contained’ at this level also points to the need for an understanding of the damage the legacy of the conflict can do if the conflict is unresolved; in being passed on as intergenerational trauma, and in future cycles of violence.

The in-country assessment team concluded that the Ministry of Family and Women Promotion would be an important potential government partner with which to begin addressing the source of these traumas. The assessment team also concluded that the transitional justice sector could add the most value to the Ministry’s efforts by helping the Ministry to see the links between past traumas and current traumas in a way that is safe and non-threatening to the country’s newfound stability. Civil society can also play an

important advocacy and lobbying role to promote dialogue as an important part of reconciliation.

2. Collaborate with community-based organisations on researching local conflict-resolution mechanisms

The key spaces for reconciliation work have been opened at the community level, especially by religion-based organisations. However, the prevailing alternative dispute resolution (ADR) model undertaken by foreign NGOs has been imported from the West, and implemented in Angola without adequately examining local conflict resolution mechanisms. The very few organisations that have undertaken conflict resolution training at community level have not preceded their interventions with appropriate ‘baseline’ research – thereby missing extremely important indigenous approaches to the resolution of disputes and more serious conflicts. Much more research needs to be undertaken before these types of ADR interventions are considered and executed. Pilot studies should be undertaken in different provinces, including at least one peri-urban and one rural area, to gauge local, indigenous processes of conflict resolution before training in ‘Western-style’ approaches is considered.

In addition, there is a need to help these organisations develop their capacity for gathering and analysing data to help inform the approaches taken toward conflict resolution. The in-country assessment team identified Development Workshop as an ideal partner for this kind of collaboration, because it has already developed foundational materials and workshop programmes on conflict resolution and violence prevention, and has both high credibility and a wide impact.

With regard to education-based reconciliation initiatives, Save the Children would be an ideal partner for projects in Angola. Save the Children’s ‘Revisiting the Future’ programme focuses on addressing the lack of access to education, and on developing a new model of education around ‘cultures of peace’ at a very early age.

Further research should also be conducted to supplement the Angolan Ministry of Justice’s study on incorporating alternative dispute resolution mechanisms into Angola’s formal legal system. The need for this research is suggested both by the growing levels of community-based conflict and the absence of the judiciary in large parts of the country. More research is likewise needed on *Sobas* – experience in other African post-conflict settings demonstrates that it is these structures that are the most relevant and most utilised by local communities, but equally they are also the most often corrupted or undermined through politicisation and conflict. Research is needed on how communities have re-integrated, what structures they have utilised to manage conflict and resolve or minimise faultlines for violence, where this has occurred, and how local structures can be strengthened and democratised to increase access to justice while also contributing towards establishing a culture of human rights.

3. Improve data-gathering capacity

The absence of socio-economic data – or baseline data in general – and the severe lack of capacity to gather this data is a huge challenge. The lack of data has made it impossible

for the UNDP to report on progress on the 2008 Millennium Development Goals for Angola. Although a large household survey is being conducted by the government (with the National Institute of Statistics), UNDP does not expect the results to be released before the first quarter of 2009. The result is that no single agency or organisation in Angola has accurate data or statistics on population or socio-economic indicators.

This also impacts on the capacity to meet victims' needs for redress, or to understand what these needs and desires are. Research in general – and building the capacity of local researchers – is needed to document levels of trauma, experience of conflict, levels of gender-based violence, justice needs and more. Work should also be conducted on the issue of reparations – this is a legal right of victims of gross violations of human rights, and yet it was not mentioned by any respondents during the course of the research.

Challenges

The government's clampdown on civil society, and its shutting down of the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in-country offices, have created major constraints and questions about how much political and operational space NGOs will have in which to work. Interviews with certain respondents revealed that such space was limited and narrow. There are divisions in the orientation of Angolan civil society organisations, with some acting as virtual mouthpieces of government policy, and others quite eager to engage with transitional justice issues. This means that finding appropriate in-country transitional justice partners will be a challenge. Moreover, the government's 'forgive and forget' approach to the post-war context means that programmes and initiatives that are couched in terms of addressing the traumas and injustices of the war will encounter resistance. Such programmes will gain more traction and support if they are framed in terms of social justice and development, or as dealing with present-day trauma, which is more in line with the government's 'reconstruction' approach to post-war reconciliation.

The language barrier will present a challenge to working in the Angolan context. Most respondents in this study could not speak English, and even those with good English skills often lacked the technical vocabulary to engage in relevant content discussions.

Appendix 1: Members of the Mission to Angola

In-country assessment team

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- ¹² Carlinda Monteiro, 'Peace and Reconciliation' in *From Military Peace to Social Justice? The Angolan Peace Process*, ed. Guus Meijer (Conciliation Resources, 2004), <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/angola/contents.php>.
- ¹³ Estimates of the number of children orphaned in the conflict vary widely, with UNICEF reporting more than 100 000, and Christian Children's Fund reporting more than 1 million. These huge discrepancies highlight the lack of demographic data in the country. See <http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/content.aspx?id=170> and <http://www.unicef.org/angola/protection.html>.
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- ¹⁵ Estimates of the total number of children forcibly recruited to act as soldiers and support staff for the armed forces vary widely. Because many soldiers came of age during the course of the fighting, most estimates, which are based on the number of child soldiers who went through demobilisation programmes, are not fully reflective of the total number of children who were involved in the conflict over the 27-year period.
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⁴² Skaar et al., *Courts under Construction in Angola*. There is, however, another dispute resolution body through which people may present complaints: the Human Rights Commission, which was established by the executive and located in the National Assembly. The Commission works broadly on human rights and civil rights, offering advice on a wide range of issues, such as land issues, housing rights and violation of labour rights. It also offers free legal aid. The Commission handles between 200 and 300 cases per year, which is the majority of the cases brought before it.

⁴³ Carolina Cenerini (2008), 'Access to legal information and institutions', *Tales from Angola: SAN LAND RIGHTS IN HUILA PROVINCE*, Working Paper, <http://www.fao.org/participation/Cenerini2008Angola.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Porto et al., *From Soldiers to Citizens*.

⁴⁵ The reference to reparation here is interesting given the context in which it is used, and that it was not mentioned by other respondents (in terms of individual reparations for past human rights violations), despite its importance as a tool of transitional justice and an obligation of international law.

⁴⁶ The only other comment on this issue by respondents (and a common one) was that ANC cadres were reluctant to engage in combat in Angola, which was not seen relevant to their cause – this reluctance extended to refusing to protect the perimeter of their own camps.