

**WARID:** Angola (UNITA) 1998-2002

**STARDATE:** 12 March 1998

**ENDDATE:** 4 April 2002

Related cases: Angola (UNITA) 1975–1995  
Zaire/Democratic Republic (DR) of the Congo (AFDL) 1996–1997  
DR Congo (RCD) 1998–2004  
DR Congo (MLC) 1998–2002  
DR Congo (CNDP) 2006–2009  
Congo-Brazzaville (Cobras/Cocoyes, Ninjas, Ntsiloulous) 1997–1999

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### **Conflict overview**

The second civil war in Angola that started in 1998 can be seen as the resumption of the 1975–1995 war, one of the longest civil wars in Africa. Since 1975, the rebel movement UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) fought the ruling party MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação) in an attempt to seize governmental power. Several peace negotiations and treaties failed, most remarkably in 1992 when the UNITA resumed fighting after having lost the presidential elections. The Lusaka Protocol, signed in November 1994, provided several mechanisms for power-sharing but left the military potential of the UNITA – at the time equal to the size and equipment level of a conventional army – nearly untouched. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Conflict Encyclopedia, fighting continued at a low level until the end of 1995, with an unstable peace prevailing until 1998. When governmental cooperation failed in 1998, UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi led his troops towards the capital, Luanda. However, government troops (Forças Armadas Angolanas – FAA) under control of the MPLA were able to seize UNITA strongholds before the rebels reached the capital. Consequently, the civil war resumed with substantial disadvantages for the UNITA. In the following months, the UNITA lost most of its territory. Nevertheless, the rebels were still able to continue fighting, using guerrilla warfare tactics until 22 February 2002. The armed insurgency of the UNITA ended abruptly on this day with the death of Savimbi, who was killed

in combat by FAA soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

An immediate cease-fire paved the way for a peace agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding. The conflict parties stipulated the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol in this document. As such, the UCDP defines the peace agreement as marking the end of the war [WARENDUC=1]. However, case-specific literature speaks of a clear military victory, as the FAA was able to corner the UNITA with Savimbi no longer able to retreat to safe territory [WARENDOS=4].<sup>2</sup> During the 49 months of fighting [WARDUR=49], the hostilities claimed 7,650 lives according to UCDP estimates [FATALUC=8000].<sup>3</sup> Other sources, such as the Armed Conflicts Location & Events dataset (ACLED)<sup>4</sup>, estimate a significantly higher death toll of 140,000 [FATALOS=140000]. Compared to a population of 12.8 million in 1997 [PREWARPO=12800000], this amounts to a death rate of 0.06% of the population according to UCDP estimates [INTENSUC=0.06] and 1.09% according to ACLED estimates [INTENSOS=1.09].

### **The military balance at the end of war**

Although violence between the MPLA and UNITA ended with the reinstatement of the peace treaty of 1994, the MPLA clearly emerged as the military victor. The death of UNITA-leader Savimbi during a military campaign of the FAA severely damaged the fighting capabilities of the UNITA and consequently effected the demobilization of all its troops [VICTORY= -1].<sup>5</sup> Cunningham et al. (2009) register no territorial control by UNITA throughout the entire conflict. Kyle (2003: 5), Petithomme (2011: 65) and Porto/Clover (2003: 78) describe the provinces of Bie, Moxico and Cuando-Cubango as being under the authority of the UNITA in the initial phase of the renewed civil war. At the same time, Petithomme (2011: 65) depicts a steady decline of territorial control until the MPLA finally reconquered all areas formerly dominated by UNITA. Considering that UNITA retreated to guerrilla tactics, it is plausible to assume that it did not control any important territory by the end of war [REBTERR= -1; MORETERR= -1].

Cunningham et al. (2009) rate the UNITA's fighting capabilities throughout the entire period from 1998 to 2002 as 'moderate' [REBFIGHT=0]. Despite the MPLA's military victory in February 2002, UNITA proved to be capable of military action even in the final stage of the

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1 For a conflict overview, see Hodges 2004; ICG 2003; Malaquias 2007; Porto et al. 2007.

2 Grobbelaar/Sidiropoulos 2002: 9; ICG 2003: 3; Porto/Clover 2003: 66.

3 [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=4&regionSelect=2-Southern\\_Africa](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=4&regionSelect=2-Southern_Africa) (18 Nov 2013).

4 ACLED: <http://www.acleddata.com/data/africa/> (18 Nov 2013).

5 Grobbelaar/Sidiropoulos 2002: 9; ICG 2003: 3; Porto/Clover 2003: 66.

conflict. We find evidence of the increased frequency of guerrilla actions being carried out by the UNITA in October 2001 (UNSC 2001: 10). Furthermore, the International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that the UNITA commanded a total of 105,000 troops (ICG 2003: 1). The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) provides a lower estimation, amounting to 40,000 troops (IISS 2002: 194). After the war ended, 80,000 men who had associated themselves with the UNITA accessed the special camps established for demobilization (Porto et al. 2007; Porto/Clover 2003). Regardless of which estimation most corresponds to reality, we may conclude that the UNITA still disposed of a considerable number of troops during the last weeks of fighting [**CONFIGHT=0**]. Savimbi was evidently killed by the FAA [**LEADER=-1**].

In sum, the military balance shows substantial advantages for the government [**WARBAL=-0.67**].

### **The military balance in the post-war period**

By disarming, demobilizing and detaining UNITA troops in special camps directly after the war had ended in April 2002, the FAA secured the annihilation of the UNITA's military potentials.<sup>6</sup> In the second half of 2002, only 254 former UNITA soldiers were integrated into the FAA, which does not meet our criteria of substantial participation of UNITA troops in the army.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the composition of the FAA's personnel equaled its composition during wartime [**STATEFOR 2002= -1**]. In mid-2003, however, 5,000 former UNITA fighters of all ranks entered the FAA. Sources that occasionally mention the promotion of soldiers associated with the UNITA to the highest ranks in the FAA indicate that former UNITA soldiers constituted part of the state forces [**STATEFOR 2003-2012=0**].<sup>8</sup> We assume that the FAA continued to exclusively be controlled by the MPLA in 2002. In light of the fact that UNITA troops were disarmed, demobilized and detained directly after the conflict's termination, we conclude that only the MPLA disposed of separate forces [**SEPFORCE 2002= -1**]. As in 2003, UNITA troops were integrated into the FAA and neither side possessed separate forces [**SEPFORCE 2003-2012=n.r.**]. Since the UNITA's armed forces were dissolved immediately after the war, we cannot compare its arms and troops to those of the government [**TROOPS 2002-2012=n.r.; ARMS 2002-2012=n.r.**].

As mentioned before, the UNITA no longer controlled important territory when the war ended.

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6 Grobbelaar/Sidiropoulos 2002: 9; ICG 2003: 3; Porto/Clover, 2003: 66.

7 Peace Accords Matrix: [https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/military\\_reform](https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/military_reform) (15 Nov 2013).

8 Peace Accords Matrix: [https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/military\\_reform](https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/military_reform) (15 Nov 2013).

The MPLA quickly established full control over the few areas where the UNITA had previously operated (UNSC 2002: 3) and kept this control throughout the period under investigation [**TERRCON 2002-2012= -1**]. Even though the MPLA did not actually win additional territory after 2002, we code [**TERRWIN 2002-2012= -1**]; otherwise, the fact that the UNITA did not hold any territory throughout the entire post-war period would incorrectly be coded as a compensating factor when calculating the post-war military balance. Similarly, we assume that any party not in control of territory is always more vulnerable [**VULNERAB 2002-2012= -1**]. After 1999, there were no peace-keeping missions in Angola [**PEACKEEP 2002-2012=n.r.**].<sup>9</sup> None of the permanent members of the UN Security Council would have intervened militarily in the case of a renewed armed conflict [**P5ALLY 2002-2012=n.r.**].

The military balance after the war shows a total advantage for the government in the first post-war year. The subsequent integration of former UNITA soldiers into the FAA leads to a value of -0.75 [**POSTBAL 2002= -1, POSTBAL 2003-2012= -0.75**]. As a combined value of **WARBAL** and **POSTBAL**, the total military balance in Angola varies with the latter figure but was consistently to the benefit of the government [**BALANCE 2002= -0.83, BALANCE 2003-2012= -0.71**].

## Economy

Both the Gross Domestic Product (GDP per capita and population estimates by the World Bank increased after the end of the war.<sup>10</sup>

Table 1: GDP per capita in current USD

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population (total)</i>	<i>GDP per capita</i>
2002	14886574	768
2003	15421075	905
2004	15976715	1229
2005	16544376	1707
2006	17122409	2441
2007	17712824	3413
2008	18314441	4596
2009	18926650	3989
2010	19549124	4219
2011	20180490	5159
2012	20820525	5485

9 UN 2013: 1-2, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf> (18 Nov 2013) and Fortna 2008: 19 <http://www.columbia.edu/~vpf4/pk&pkept%20data%20notes.pdf> (18 Nov 2013).

10 <http://data.worldbank.org/country/angola> (18 Nov 2013).

## The scale of compromise

Serving as the basis for the Memorandum of Understanding, the Lusaka Protocol provided for a joint cabinet of both UNITA and MPLA members; this regulation was, however, never fully implemented. Sources differ concerning how many UNITA members actually formed part of the government and at what time. Polity IV (2010) speaks of a Government of National Unity and Reconciliation from 1997 to 2002 but concedes that the effective influence of the respective UNITA ministers and their true affiliation with the UNITA are both highly questionable, especially considering that the government was fighting a war against the UNITA at the time. According to the Peace Accords Matrix, the last minister holding ties to the UNITA was replaced in 2004 with an MPLA member.<sup>11</sup> Despite the scarcity of information concerning the ministers' actual affiliations, the possibility is quite low that UNITA members participated in the government since 2002 in any way that could actually influence decisions in favor of the UNITA [**GOVERN 2002-2012= -1**]. Veto rights did not exist in the government nor in the parliament [**VETO 2002-2012= -1; VETOSAT 2002-2012=n.r.**].

Throughout the post-war period, Freedom House assigns Angola a value '6' in regards to political rights. In accordance with our coding rules, this represents a political environment devoid of free and fair elections [**ELECT 2002-2012= -1**]. This assumption is backed up by case literature that analyzes the 2008 presidential elections, the first elections held since 1992. Indeed, both parties contended in these elections, which ended with an overwhelming victory for the MPLA. Nevertheless, the entire electoral process was basically considered unfair in the aftermath: the MPLA controlled all state resources necessary for manipulating the electoral process, especially the media and treasury. With its full control of the National Assembly, the MPLA prevented the approval of campaign funding budgets for competing parties until late July, less than two months before the elections took place on September 5. Furthermore, the MPLA held eight of the eleven seats in the national Electoral Commission that was in charge of organizing the elections (Roque 2009: 142-143).

Between 1998 and 2002, the MPLA and UNITA primarily fought over access to governmental power. Several authors have stated that the conflict parties did not quarrel about political agendas or ideology (Petithomme 2011: 63-64) and that the main motivation for fighting was economic – such as access to diamond mines (De Boeck 2001: 551-555; Le Billon 2001: 56). As such, we cannot identify any compromise concerning the borders or the allocation of

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11 Peace Accords Matrix: [https://pam.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/powersharing\\_transitional\\_government](https://pam.nd.edu/matrix/status/12/powersharing_transitional_government) (21 Nov 2013).

responsibilities among the political levels [**EXBORDER 2002-2012=n.r.; INBORDER 2002-2012=n.r.; COMPETEN 2002-2012=n.r.**]. None of the parties challenged the (liberal) economic order of the country, even though the MPLA claimed to be Marxist while the UNITA claimed to be Maoist in the 1960s [**ECONOMY 2002-2012=n.r.**].<sup>12</sup> Though the conflict in Angola did certainly have ethnic components – with the UNITA representing the Ovimbundu (Kyle 2003: 4-5; Petithomme 2011: 63-64) –, there were no demands concerning support for ethnic groups or other parts of the population [**SPECPRO 2002-2012=n.r.**].<sup>13</sup> There were no other issues under discussion during wartime [**ISSUE 2002-2012=n.r.; ISSUE2 2002-2012=n.r.**].

After the war, the issue of elections was raised. In April 2005, the UNITA boycotted parliamentary work, claiming that they were not fairly represented on the electoral commission.<sup>14</sup> The law regulating the composition of the electoral commission was not changed until 2012. With a new law introduced in 2012, the electoral commission gained more formal independence and, additionally, the UNITA was successful in replacing the president of the electoral commission through a lawsuit (Amundsen 2013: 3-4). We consider the new law of 2012 as a compromise and UNITA's successful lawsuit as an indicator of its implementation [**NEWCON 2002-2004=n.r., NEWCON 2005-2011= -1, NEWCON 2012=0; NEWCON2 2002-2012=n.r.**]. This compromise proved to be slightly more favorable for the MPLA: the party won the elections in 2012. Furthermore, the UNITA accused the MPLA of electoral fraud but did not place blame on the electoral commission for it (Amundsen 2013: 3-4). Therefore, though concessions made by the MPLA did not diminish their capacity to win the elections, they certainly raised their reputation. No other compromises could be identified [**BENEFIT 2002-2011=n.r., BENEFIT 2012= -1; BENEFIT2 2002-2012=n.r.**].

All in all, the interests of the government clearly prevailed [**COMPROM 2002-2011= -1, COMPROM 2012= -0.8**].

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12 Malaquias 2000: 104-110. The MPLA formally abandoned Marxism-Leninism in 1990 (Hodges 2004: 54).

13 Whereas the link between the UNITA and the Ovimbundu is quite pronounced (Hodges 2004: 26), our reviewer pointed to the fact that the MPLA is linked to different parts of the population that are not necessarily ethnic groups, among them prominently the 'assimilados' (the educated middle class that emerged under colonial rule and adapted to Portuguese language and culture) and the inhabitants of the coastal region, but also the Akwambundu.

14 Angola: Opposition protests composition of electoral body, IRIN News, 14 April 2005, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/53917/angola-opposition-protests-composition-of-electoral-body> (18 Nov 2013).



## Stability of peace

As of 2002, hostilities between the MPLA and UNITA completely ceased [**SAMEWAR 2002-2012=0, DATESAME=n.r.**]; up until December 2012, we count 129 months of peace [**PEACMON1=129**]. Between 1991 and 2009, there was an armed conflict between the government and rebels from the enclave of Cabinda over the independence of this region from the central state.<sup>15</sup> Considering the earlier start date of the Cabinda conflict and its low intensity, this cannot be viewed as a renewed civil war in Angola [**ANYWAR 2002-2012=0, DATEANY=n.r., PEACMON2=129**].<sup>16</sup>

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15 Angola: Cabinda, one of Africa's longest, least reported conflicts, IRIN News, 6 Oct 2003, <http://www.irinnews.org/in-depth/66282/25/cabinda> (21 Nov 2013).

16 [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=4&regionSelect=2-Southern\\_Africa#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=4&regionSelect=2-Southern_Africa#) (5 Dec 2013).

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