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ANGOLA

The Republic of Angola's transition from a single-party state to a multiparty democracy and its recovery from 25 years of civil conflict were hindered by a renewal of fighting between government forces and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the second half of 1998, which continued throughout the year and led to a halt in the implementation of the 1994 Lusaka Peace Protocol between the Government and UNITA. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has ruled the country since its independence from Portugal in 1975. The country's competing independence movements began a civil war immediately after independence, which lasted until the signing of the Bicesse Accords in 1991. Under the Bicesse Accords, one-party rule ended with the passage of a new Constitution that legalized opposition parties and called for U.N.-monitored elections, which were held in 1992. President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of the MPLA won a plurality of the votes cast in an election that U.N. observers considered free and fair. UNITA rejected the results of the vote and resumed the civil war. In 1998 the National Assembly voted to cancel the never-held runoff election between the leading presidential candidates and allow Dos Santos to hold the presidency until a determination is made that proper conditions exist to hold new elections. In 1994 in an effort to end the civil war, the Government and UNITA signed the Lusaka Protocol, which called for the demilitarization of UNITA, the creation of a national army, the seating of a government of national unity and reconciliation, and the extension of state administration to areas formerly under UNITA control. The Government generally complied with its obligations under the protocol, although the conduct of the police and, to a lesser extent, military units in former UNITA areas drew widespread criticism. UNITA failed to comply with several fundamental aspects of the protocol. It maintained a potent military capability and refused to return to state administration the territory it held. In April 1997, UNITA officials joined the newly formed national unity government; however, the Government continues to back a splinter group of UNITA dissidents who are challenging the leadership of UNITA's longtime party president Jonas Savimbi. Fighting resumed between the Government and UNITA at the end of 1998, and by August armed conflict had resumed throughout the country. UNITA had taken substantial

territory and increased its military pressure on government-held areas. The judiciary, where it functions, is not independent of the President and the MPLA.

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for internal security, a function that it exercises through the Angolan National Police, the Rapid Intervention Police (PIR), and other organs of state security. The PIR was created in 1992 as an elite paramilitary force. The Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) are responsible for protecting the State against external threats and have intervened in regional conflicts every year since 1996. In 1997 the FAA integrated some 10,000 UNITA soldiers. With the resumption of localized hostilities inside the country the FAA became involved in counterinsurgency operations against UNITA. The FAA also is involved in similar operations, although on a smaller scale, against separatists who favor the independence of Cabinda province. The Government's security forces firmly are under civilian leadership. Security forces committed numerous, serious human rights abuses.

The security factors that inhibited the country's transition to full multiparty democracy had a similar effect on the country's transition from a directed, state-dominated economic system to one based on market principles. The Government's economic policies remained directed towards a military build-up, with the Government resisting calls for greater transparency in public accounting. The economy was in disarray and despite abundant natural resources, output per capita is extremely low. Angola produces about 780,000 barrels of oil per day. Diamond production by the formal sector in government-controlled areas was estimated at 2 million carats. The estimated value of combined formal and informal sector diamond production in government-controlled areas was \$320 million. Because the diamond-producing areas controlled by UNITA were reduced, diamond sales in UNITA-controlled areas declined significantly to less than \$50 million. There also are lucrative untapped mineral, agricultural, and hydroelectrical resources in the country; however, corruption and mismanagement are pervasive in the public sector and widespread in the private sector. The Government has begun to liberalize its import regimes and reform its regulatory agencies to better allow the importation of the goods and services on which the economy depends. Annual per capita gross domestic product was approximately \$450. The country's wealth continued to be concentrated in the hands of a small elite whose members used government positions for massive personal enrichment, and corruption continued to be a common practice at all levels. The average monthly salary of urban wage earners (approximately 20 percent of the labor force) was far below what is required for basic subsistence. Rural wages are even lower, as the majority of the rural economy is dependent on subsistence agriculture and is highly vulnerable to political unrest. Civilians residing in UNITA-held areas live under a primitive and brutal form of economic feudalism, their crops and other goods are subject to arbitrary seizure by armed UNITA elements, and they are vulnerable to forced labor, including military service. They suffer from extreme scarcities of consumer goods, basic medical supplies, and other necessities.

The Government's human rights record continued to be poor, and it continued to commit numerous serious abuses. Citizens have no effective means to change their government. The second round of the 1992 presidential elections were canceled in a government agreement with the breakaway faction of UNITA. New elections were postponed indefinitely until the U.N. determines proper conditions exist to hold them. Members of the security forces committed numerous extrajudicial killings, were responsible for disappearances, and tortured, beat, raped and otherwise abused persons. The Government

was unable to pay the salaries of the majority of its security service personnel. The poor discipline and poor working conditions of the police force made it the worst offender; military units generally have better discipline and a more effective chain of command. Other than those personnel assigned to elite units, the Government took no effective action to prevent security personnel from supplementing their incomes through the extortion of the civilian population. Prison conditions were life threatening. The Government routinely used arbitrary arrest and detention, and lengthy pretrial detention is a problem. The Government was unable or unwilling to punish those in the security services who were responsible for abuses. The judiciary is subject to executive influence, only functions in parts of the country, and does not ensure due process. The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights and forcibly recruited military-age males. The Government at times restricted freedom of speech and of the press, and intimidated journalists into practicing self-censorship. The Government restricted freedom of assembly, association, and movement. The Government continued to limit independent investigations of human rights abuses, although it allowed international human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, to conduct research in the country. Discrimination and violence against women were common; adult and child prostitution is a problem; and children and the disabled continued to suffer as a result of the ongoing conflict and poor economic conditions. The Government continues to dominate the labor movement and restricts worker rights, although there were improvements in the independent labor sector. Forced labor and child labor are problems.

UNITA also was responsible for numerous, serious abuses. UNITA forces were responsible for killings, disappearances, torture, rape, and other abuse. UNITA military units reportedly pillaged rural areas; depopulated large parts of the country, killed traditional leaders, and eliminated all opposition, real or potential. UNITA tightly restricted freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, and movement. UNITA refused all attempts to conduct investigations in areas under its control. UNITA continued forced military recruitment, including of underage males, and used forced labor for a large part of its local-level logistical support. The sexual abuse of women conscripted to work as porters was reportedly common in UNITA areas.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

Incidents of extrajudicial killings occurred during the year as the war continued and, although figures and details were unavailable, observers believe that the number of such killings increased during the year. Security forces were responsible for numerous extrajudicial killings. Police frequently participate in shakedowns, muggings, carjackings, and killings. Major human rights abuses occurred as government forces carried out counterinsurgency operations. In February government forces reportedly killed several civilians after retaking the town of Mbanza Congo from UNITA. In December there was an unconfirmed report that the FAA killed 47 civilians during operations in the Luanda Sul province. Government aircraft bombed military targets in UNITA-held towns, which reportedly resulted in civilian casualties.

Government soldiers sent to support the Government of the Republic of Congo committed

acts of execution, rape, and looting while in the Republic of the Congo.

Prison conditions are life threatening due to inadequate food, medicine, and sanitation and many prisoners died in official custody (see Section 1.c.).

There were no investigations into, nor was any action taken against those responsible for, the extrajudicial killings of more than 40 persons during 1998, including the UNITA provincial secretary in Xa-Cessau, the UNITA communal secretary of Quibaxe, and the local UNITA secretary of Cangundu.

In January a U.N. chartered aircraft was shot down in an area of active military operations and all nine persons on board were killed. The Government and UNITA both deny responsibility for the shooting. An investigation was pending at year's end.

In January unknown gunmen killed Father Albino Saluaco, a Catholic parish priest, and two catechists in a town in the province of Huambo that was under UNITA military occupation (see Section 2.c.). In September UNITA National Assembly Deputy Joao Ngolongombe Jacob was killed by unknown persons.

A number of killings remain unsolved. The killings of senior UNITA officials in Luanda following the resumption of hostilities in 1992 never have been investigated. The Government has refused to return the bodies of UNITA vice president Jeremias Chitunda and secretary general Salupeto Pena to their families. The 1996 murders of independent journalist Ricardo de Mello and state-television reporter Antonio Casimiro, and the 1994 murder of the vice governor of Malange province also remain unsolved. The results of the investigation of the 1993 death of opposition politician Carlos Simea never were released.

Numerous localities changed hands during the year, a process that often involved the extrajudicial killing of government or UNITA administrators and persons accused of collaboration. Internally displaced persons and refugees risked their lives to flee to government-held areas or neighboring countries. Undocumented Congolese workers in diamond fields were targeted by government or UNITA forces seeking to take control of alluvial diamond mining operations. An unknown number of civilians died in the course of engagements between the security services and insurgents, particularly in the Central Highlands and in the northwest. Landmines laid by both sides during the conflict resulted in approximately 650 deaths. Strong anecdotal information suggests that both sides summarily execute prisoners of war (POW's).

UNITA troops committed numerous extrajudicial killings during attacks on villages. Interviews with refugees indicated that UNITA committed abuses, including public extrajudicial killings, as a deliberate policy. In February UNITA forces reportedly entered a village near Luena and killed the village's soba (traditional leader) and his family. In April UNITA soldiers reportedly killed 25 villagers who were attempting to return to their homes in Muconda in the Luanda Sul province. In July UNITA attacked the town of Catete, killing 9 persons and abducting 22 persons. There were unconfirmed reports that following military actions taken in the fall in Camacupa, Bie Province, mass graves were found containing the bodies of dozens of UNITA victims.

UNITA killed numerous civilians during attacks on civilian traffic on roads throughout the country; such attacks were designed to halt transportation, disrupt commerce, isolate

populations, and maintain a climate of insecurity. For example, in April on a stretch of road between Gabela and Sumbe, UNITA soldiers reportedly attacked a clearly marked aid vehicle, killing five humanitarian workers. In June UNITA soldiers reportedly attacked another aid vehicle, killing two persons.

The shelling of cities by UNITA forces often killed civilians, particularly in Malange, Huambo, and Kuito. According to the Bishop of Malange, more than 1,000 persons were killed, and 700 injured, as a result of shelling; however, this report could not be confirmed.

UNITA allegedly was responsible for some civilian deaths in Namibia.

UNITA engaged in forced conscription and frequently killed persons who attempted to desert (see Section 1.g.).

UNITA never has accounted for the deaths of numerous senior party officials, including Wilson dos Santos and Tito Chingunji. A number of former high-ranking UNITA officials who have defected revealed the extent of extrajudicial killings in UNITA-held areas. Two former UNITA secretary-generals, a former head of UNITA intelligence, and others have reported that Savimbi personally ordered extrajudicial killings of opponents and, in some cases, personally carried out the executions. UNITA also never has allowed the U.N. to investigate any claims of human rights abuses in areas of the country under its control unless those abuses were thought to be the work of government forces.

b. Disappearance

The Government and UNITA continued to accuse each other of abductions and of causing the disappearances of civilians, including government officials, party activists, and traditional leaders. The number of allegations and the prevailing conditions of insecurity made it impossible for the U.N. and other organizations to investigate all of these allegations.

Persons taken into police custody often are reported to disappear without a trace, particularly in rural areas. Suspects accused of illegal weapons ownership or collaboration with UNITA disappeared, as did UNITA party officials in some areas where the Government regained control.

Civilians abducted by UNITA generally either were forced to become soldiers or support personnel, or were considered government collaborators. There were unconfirmed reports in April from internally displaced persons that UNITA abducted persons in Nequile, Chitmebo, and Gimba Filili villages in Bie Province. In July UNITA abducted 22 persons during an attack on the town of Catete (see Section 1.a.). In December, UNITA abducted 20 persons from Namibia, who subsequently were rescued by Namibian forces. The frequent discovery of dead bodies in the aftermath of attacks suggested that suspected collaborators were executed summarily. Those who escaped UNITA custody and were able to return to government-held areas reported that they were subjected to torture, beatings, and sexual abuse (see Section 1.c.).

C. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution and the Penal Code explicitly prohibit all forms of mistreatment of suspects, detainees, or prisoners; however, security forces tortured, beat, raped, and otherwise abused persons. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the U.N., and human rights organizations report that there is widespread government abuse of suspects.

Security service personnel regularly employed torture and other forms of cruel and degrading treatment, including rape. Police used torture and induced confessions frequently during investigations, and rarely, if ever, are punished for such abuses. Those suspected of ties to UNITA regularly are incarcerated under inhuman conditions and are subjected to primitive and brutal forms of interrogation. There have been no cases in which an army or police official has been disciplined for use of excessive force against a UNITA suspect. Police often beat and released suspects in lieu of trials (see Section 1.d.) Police frequently participate in shakedowns, muggings, carjackings, and killings. Police extorted money from travelers at checkpoints, and routinely harassed refugees (see Section 2.d.).

There have been numerous reports of FAA soldiers crossing the border into Namibia and abusing and harassing Namibian civilians. There was at least one report of rape by an FAA soldier, and numerous reports of molestation of women and theft from small shops. In early December, the FAA commander in the south announced the arrest of three soldiers for abusing civilians in Namibia.

There were several incidents in which security forces mistreated journalists. In April a Voice of America (VOA) correspondent was assaulted by a soldier after she reported on the lack of whites or persons of mixed race at a military recruitment center. In May police reportedly beat a journalist during a routine traffic stop when they learned of his profession. In July two television crews were arrested after filming a gunfight between police and suspected robbers. During the arrest, members of one of the crews were threatened, kicked, and hit with the butts of machine guns. There were no investigations into any of these incidents, nor were any actions taken against those responsible.

Two of five UNITA deputies detained by the Government did not receive adequate medical attention when ill, and all of the deputies reported that they were denied food and water for periods of up to 36 hours (see Section 1.d).

Landmines laid by both sides during the conflict resulted in an increasing number of casualties, including maiming (see Section 1.g.)

The U.N. and human rights organizations report that abuse of suspects is universal in areas under UNITA control. Interviews with persons who fled UNITA-held areas revealed that UNITA uses cruel and inhuman practices, including public torture and mutilation, to punish dissent and deter further acts of disloyalty. There have been repeated credible allegations that UNITA President Jonas Savimbi has ordered suspects tortured and executed in his presence.

Prison conditions constituted a serious threat to the health and lives of prisoners. The Government and the National Assembly Committee on Human Rights have acknowledged that conditions are inhuman. Cells are overcrowded and lack basic sanitary facilities. The prison system holds approximately five times the number of prisoners it

was built to hold. Many prisons, lacking financial support from the Government, were unable to supply prisoners with adequate food and health care. There were credible reports that many prisoners died of malnutrition and disease.

Prison officials routinely beat detainees. Prisoners depend on families, friends, or international relief organizations for basic support. Prison officials, who are chronically unpaid, support themselves by stealing from their prisoners and extorting money from family members. Juveniles, often incarcerated for petty theft, are housed with adults and suffer abuse by guards and inmates.

The Government permitted local and international human rights monitors to visit prisons, but not individual prisoners, during the year.

According to widespread reports, UNITA prison conditions are extremely harsh. UNITA reportedly maintained a prison in its Andulo headquarters that included large numbers of persons accused of treason. There was at least one report that UNITA prison officials beat detainees.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

Arbitrary arrest and detention are serious ongoing problems. Under the law, a person caught in the act of committing a crime may be arrested and detained immediately. Otherwise, the law requires that a judge or a provincial magistrate issue an arrest warrant. Arrest warrants also may be signed by prosecutors attached to police commands, and confirmed within 5 days by a magistrate. The Constitution provides for the right to prompt judicial determination of the legality of the detention. Under the law, the prosecution and defense have 90 days before a trial to prepare their case, although both sides generally have the right to request an extension of this deadline under extenuating circumstances. The Constitution also provides prisoners with the right to receive visits by family members. However, none of these rights exist in practice; there is a scarcity of personnel and resources, and a lack of official determination to ensure these rights. Although the Ministry of Justice is nominally in charge of the prison system, the Ministry of Interior continued to systematically, arbitrarily, and secretly arrest, and detain persons for all categories of crimes and for indefinite periods, often with no apparent intent to bring the detainees to trial.

In January authorities arrested five UNITA deputies and members of Parliament on suspicion of treason and subversion (see Section 3). While in prison, the deputies generally were held incommunicado and two deputies who were ill were denied adequate medical treatment (see Section 1.c.). One deputy was released in May and the other four remained in custody until the Supreme Court ordered their release in October due to lack of evidence.

In January authorities detained for 4 days a local employee of the U.N. Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) on suspicion of being a UNITA spy. In June in response to UNITA shelling, government security forces engaged in large-scale arrests of suspected UNITA infiltrators and collaborators in Huambo and Malange. It is believed that more than 1,000 persons were detained, although most were released by year's end.

Police detained approximately 20 journalists for questioning in connection with charges

of slander, defamation, and crimes against the security of the state; however, rather than charging journalists, police often inform journalists that they remain under investigation (see Section 2.a.). In January two journalists from Radio Morena were arrested for rebroadcasting a Portuguese radio interview with a UNITA official. On August 9 and 10 police detained for questioning the director, the news producer, an editor, and staff of Radio Ecclesia after the station rebroadcast a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview with Jonas Savimbi (see Section 2.a.). In August police detained a VOA journalist for 2 hours for questioning and accused him of defamation after he filed a report that local government officials had been diverting humanitarian aid. In September the director of Folha 8 and a journalist were detained and questioned in connection with an article on the Radio Ecclesia detentions. In October the National Department of Criminal Investigation (DNIC) detained Rafael Marques, an independent journalist and human rights activist known for his vocal criticism of the government, and charged him with defaming the President and slandering the Attorney General. Marques was held for approximately 5 weeks before being released in late November pending an indefinitely postponed trial.

In September the police detained several dozen foreign businessmen (see Section 2.d.).

Under criminal law a person may not be held for over 135 days without trial. The National Security Law provides for a maximum of 180 days preventative detention. In practice, over 90 percent of inmates in Luanda still are awaiting trial, and it is believed that the national average is over 50 percent. Inmates who have been awaiting trial for 2 or 3 years are common. In many cases, police beat and then release detainees rather than make any effort to prepare a formal court case.

The Government holds an unknown number of suspected UNITA officials and supporters in areas where government control was regained. The Government invariably accused these persons of illegal weapons possession or collaboration with UNITA, although formal charges rarely were filed.

UNITA continues to detain persons against their will. The number of such persons is unknown, though a number of confirmed cases exist, including two Russian aircrews taken hostage in May and June when their planes were shot down, and four Portuguese and one Spaniard from M'banza, Congo.

In March, alleged FLEC activists kidnapped two Portuguese and one French oil worker who were released later for ransom.

The Lusaka Protocol provides for the release, under ICRC auspices, of persons detained for war-related reasons. With the resurgence in Government-UNITA fighting around the country, both sides have taken POW's. Neither the Government nor UNITA has allowed the ICRC or any other institution access to POW's. Strong anecdotal information suggests that both sides summarily execute POW's (see Section 1.a.).

The Government did not use forced exile as a form of punishment.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary, where it

functions, is not independent of the President and the MPLA. In practice the court system lacks the means, experience, training, and political backing to assert its independence from the President and the ruling party. The President has strong appointive powers, including the power to appoint Supreme Court justices without confirmation by the National Assembly. The judicial system largely was destroyed during the civil war and did not function in large areas of the country.

The court system consists of the Supreme Court at the appellate level plus municipal and provincial courts of original jurisdiction under the nominal authority of the Supreme Court. Only 9 of the 12 seats on the Supreme Court were filled by year's end. The Supreme Court serves as the appellate division for questions of law and fact but does not have the authority to interpret the Constitution. The Constitution reserves that role for a Constitutional Court, which is mandated by the 1991 Constitution, but had yet to be established at year's end. Trials for political and security crimes are supposed to be handled exclusively by the Supreme Court.

Five UNITA parliamentarians, arrested in January on suspicion of treason and subversion, were held incommunicado. One was released in May and the other four were released in October by the Supreme Court for lack of evidence.

The Constitution provides defendants with the presumption of innocence, the right to a defense, and the right to appeal. Legal reform in 1991 established the right to public trials and a system of bail, and recognized the accused's right to counsel; however, the Government does not respect these rights in practice. Judges usually are lay persons, not licensed lawyers. The judge and two lay persons elected by the full court act as the jury.

UNITA has established a nominal military and civilian court system in territories under its control and claims that its Civil Code is equivalent to the Portuguese Civil Code currently used by the Government. UNITA President Jonas Savimbi appoints judges personally, and UNITA trials are not open to the public. Juries consist of male elders chosen from the community. The accused reportedly has the right to a lawyer. However, areas of the country under UNITA control remain under strict martial law.

There were no reports of government-held political prisoners.

There are probable cases of UNITA-held political prisoners.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The Government infringed on citizens' privacy rights. The Government maintained a sophisticated security apparatus dedicated to the surveillance, monitoring, and wiretapping of certain groups, including opposition party leaders, journalists, members of the National Assembly and foreign diplomats. Legal requirements for search warrants routinely are disregarded.

To enforce mandatory military laws, the military and police conducted forced conscription drives in many of the areas under the control of the Government, including Luanda, in which some minors may have been recruited. Persons who could prove that they had jobs usually were released, and those with financial means could buy their way out of the military. The Government denied that forced recruiting was taking place.

Church groups, civil society institutions, and foreign embassies protested the manner of conscription.

UNITA continued to conscript civilians forcibly for military duty (see Section 1.g.).

g. Use of Excessive Force and Violations of Humanitarian Law in Internal Conflicts

The escalation in military operations by both the Government and UNITA resulted in a significant increase in the number and severity of human rights violations. The Government and humanitarian organizations reported that there are several hundred thousand new internally displaced persons, with estimates of the total internally displaced population varying between 1.5 and 3 million. Military attacks have resulted in indiscriminate and summary killings, torture, abductions, destruction of property, and theft. The provinces most affected were Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul, Malange, Bie, Uige, and Huambo. Congolese diamond miners were victims in numerous attacks on alluvial mining operations in Lunda Norte province.

The Government's frequent failure to pay, feed, and equip military and police personnel resulted in extortion and theft. Government personnel frequently confiscated food, including donated relief supplies, livestock, and personal property, including nongovernmental organization (NGO) vehicles, often after forcibly depopulating areas and robbing the displaced persons. However, the reports of such activity decreased in the latter half of the year due to increased troop support and improved field liaisons between humanitarian agencies and the military.

The Government and UNITA continued to use landmines to strengthen defensive positions, and in the case of UNITA, prevent residents within its own areas from fleeing to government-held areas (see Section 2.d.). Landmine explosions increased during the year to approximately 52 incidents per month and resulted in numerous casualties (see Section 1.a.). Approximately 1 in every 356 persons is an amputee as a result of landmine explosions. Observers believe that the increase in incidents is due not to new landmines, but to the movement of internally displaced persons into areas in which they are less familiar. There were reports that some internally displaced persons, desperate for nourishment, used the sticks that marked mined fields to light their cooking fires.

UNITA forces routinely violated citizens' rights and caused thousands of civilian casualties in pursuit of military objectives. UNITA's strategy included ambushes against civilian traffic to halt transportation, driving persons living in the countryside into town in order to overwhelm government services and take over their land, and laying siege to those towns by extensive mining and artillery shelling. The major provincial cities of Kuito, Huambo, and Malange in particular, were affected. In mid-March UNITA shelled Malange, killing 18 persons and wounding 15 others.

UNITA carried out forced recruiting, including of minors, throughout all of the country's disputed territory. Recruits were taken to isolated military camps and subjected to psychological stress and extreme hardships; those who attempted to desert were executed. Women, many as young as 13 years of age, were recruited forcibly to serve as porters and camp followers, and reports of sexual assault were widespread and credible.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of expression and of the press and specifically provides that the media cannot be subject to ideological, political, or artistic censorship; however, the Government does not respect this right in practice. Moreover, unlike 1998, when the Government's record in this area improved, it deteriorated during the year. The Government continued to intimidate and threaten journalists into practicing self-censorship. There were reports that the Government pays journalists to publish progovernment stories. Government authorities, including the Minister of Interior, and the presidential spokesman, consistently warned the press that they were subject to press and national security laws and would be subject to fines and imprisonment for reporting information that "threatens the security of the state." The Government detained or placed under investigation journalists who reported on sensitive issues, including military operations, government corruption, and UNITA, especially Jonas Savimbi. Journalists acknowledge that they exercise self-censorship.

In January the Government issued a memo that effectively ordered a news ban on coverage of the civil war. The ban largely was ignored by the independent media, prompting the Government to accuse it of supporting UNITA. In June and again in September, the Minister of Social Communication threatened the independent press with closure if it did not support the Government's war efforts against UNITA.

Between June and August, the Government prosecuted several cases in the courts against journalists for violating the press law. The editor of the private newspaper Agora received a suspended sentence and was fined approximately \$5 (30 kwanzas) for 90 days for slandering two Ministers. Two other reporters received similar sentences. The Government restricted a small number of journalists from writing and traveling while their cases remained pending.

In April a soldier assaulted a VOA correspondent after she reported on the lack of whites or persons of mixed race at a military recruitment center (see Section 1.c). In May police reportedly beat a journalist during a routine traffic stop when they learned of his profession. In July two television crews were arrested after filming a gunfight between police and suspected robbers, and during the arrest, police abused members of one of the crews (see Section 1.c.).

Police detained approximately 20 journalists for questioning in connection with charges of slander, defamation, and crimes against the security of the State. In January two journalists from Radio Morena were arrested for rebroadcasting a Portuguese radio interview with a UNITA official (see Section 1.d.). On August 9, Radio Ecclesia rebroadcast a BBC interview with Jonas Savimbi; shortly after the broadcast police raided the studio and detained for questioning the director, the news producer, and an editor. They were released the following morning. On August 10, the police again detained for questioning the journalists detained the previous evening in addition to five other staff members. All were released later that day. In August police detained a VOA journalist, Isaias Soares, for 2 hours for questioning and accused him of defamation after he filed a report that local government officials were diverting humanitarian aid. In September William Tonet, the editor of Folha 8, and another journalist, were detained and questioned in connection with an article on the Radio Ecclesia detentions. Shortly thereafter the Government warned Tonet that he still was under investigation and could not to leave the

country. In October the National Department of Criminal Investigation (DNIC) detained Rafael Marques, an independent journalist and human rights activist known for his vocal criticism of the government. Marques was charged with defamation and slander, and held for approximately five weeks before being released pending a trial (see Section 1.d.).

The majority of the media is state-run and carries very little criticism of the Government. Semi-independent newspapers and private radio stations grew increasingly bold in their criticism of government policies and actions. There are five private weekly publications with circulations in the low thousands. There are also five commercial radio stations including the Catholic Radio Ecclesia, and Radio Lac Luanda, which openly criticize aspects of government policies and highlight poor socioeconomic conditions.

A committee composed of the Minister of Social Communication, the spokesman of the presidency, and the directors of state-run media organizations controls media policy and censorship. The MPLA's secretary general also influences the content and tone of state-run media reporting. The Government used its control of the media to engage in a hostile propaganda campaign against UNITA, including unconfirmed allegations of UNITA massacres, as a means of influencing local and international public opinion.

The Government generally did not restrict the activities of foreign media, including the BBC and the VOA; however, it continued to refuse to allow direct retransmission, and in January, after a Portuguese daily newspaper ran a story criticizing the Government, authorities withdrew press credentials from one of the newspaper's reporters and ordered her to leave the country. The Government also denied entry into the country to another reporter from the newspaper. Foreign journalists require authorization from the Ministry of Interior in order to obtain access to government officials or to travel within the country. Travel to UNITA-controlled areas routinely was denied. The Government placed no abnormal visa restrictions on foreign journalists and generally allowed them to report freely on all aspects of society in government-controlled areas. The Government allowed the U.N. to contribute to broadcast content but denied it the ability to open its own radio station.

In UNITA-controlled areas no media organizations can function except under the absolute control of party officials. UNITA media includes Radio Vorgan, which broadcasts sporadically from the highlands, and a UNITA website. No media personnel were allowed free access to UNITA areas by either the Government or UNITA after the resumption of the conflict.

Academic life has been circumscribed severely by the civil war. Generally, there is academic freedom; however, in the Government dismissed a university rector for political reasons during the year. Reportedly the rector came into conflict with the Ministry of Education for supporting higher wages for professors and increased academic standards. The rector's dismissal led to a strike by the university's professors (see Section 6.a.) Academics do not practice self-censorship.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for the right of assembly; however, the Government restricts this right in practice. The law requires a minimum of 3 days' prior notice before public or private assemblies are held, and makes participants liable for "offenses against the honor

and consideration due to persons and to organs of sovereignty." Applications for progovernment assemblies are granted routinely without delay; however, applications for protest assemblies rarely are granted.

The Constitution provides for the right of association; however, the Government restricts this right in practice. Legislation allows the Government to deny registration to private associations on security grounds, and the Government arbitrarily limits organized activities deemed adverse to its interests.

There is no freedom of assembly or association in areas of the country under UNITA control.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including the separation of church and state, and the Government respects this right in practice. Members