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Angola: Recourse available to victims of domestic abuse (by spouses, parents or other relatives) and any services or agencies that offer assistance to victims

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Prevalence

There are indications that violence against women and children is widespread in Angola (ANGOP 2 Aug. 2004; *ibid.* 16 July 2004; *ibid.* 29 July 2003; *Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Intro.; Women's Commission 15-28 Feb. 2001).

In addition, several articles reported on a growing trend of attacks and domestic abuse targeted at people, especially children, who have been accused of practising witchcraft (World Pulse 7 May 2004; *The Chicago Tribune* 28 Mar. 2004; IRIN 27 Jan. 2004).

Legislation

There are no laws specifically banning domestic violence (IWRAW 6 July 2004; IRIN 13 July 2004) and sources indicate that the courts tend to be lenient when sentencing perpetrators of violence against family members (*ibid.*; One World Action n.d.).

Services

Several sources mentioned the Ministério da Família e Promoção da Mulher (MINFAMU / Minfam), which was translated variously as the Ministry of Women and Family (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 5), the Ministry of Family and Women Promotion (ANGOP 9 June 2004) or the Ministry of Family and Women Affairs (*ibid.* 29 July 2003).

Articles about MINFAMU indicate that it collects data about domestic violence (*ibid.* 9 June 2004), provides access to legal help (*ibid.* 24 Sept. 2003), participates in conferences on women's issues such as domestic violence (*ibid.* 29 July 2003) and establishes facilities such as confidential counselling centres (*ibid.* 13 Aug. 2003). The organization Rede Mulher suggested that MINFAMU has "limited influence and outreach" (One World Action n.d.).

Information was found on two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide services to women victims of domestic abuse in Angola: Rede Mulher (One World Action n.d), and the Angolan Women's Organization, which provides legal assistance to women who have been victims of domestic abuse (SARDC Feb. 2001).

An article on children who have escaped the alleged abuse of family members who have accused them of practising witchcraft, indicated that some Catholic churches or orphanages have provided refuge to such children (*The Chicago Tribune* 28 Mar. 2004; IRIN 27 Jan. 2004). Some children accused of witchcraft end up living on the streets

(ibid.; *The Chicago Tribune* 28 Mar. 2004). According to *Country Reports 2003* ,

The government-sponsored National Institute for Children was responsible for child protection, but it lacked the capacity to work adequately with international NGOs. The Government publicized the problems of street and homeless children during the year and held a conference in May on the plight of street children. No program had been implemented by year's end (25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 5).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Institute, Amnesty International, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Online Journal of
Peace and Conflict Resolution, Peace Women, Save the Children.

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