



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Genocide Watch: Angola August 2021

Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975, and immediately plunged into a 27-year civil war. Conflict for control of the government and Angola's enormous oil resources drove the civil war between the Soviet and Cuban-backed People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the U.S. and apartheid South African-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

During the civil war, 500,000 people died, 1 out of 3 children became [child soldiers](#), and 550,000 refugees fled to neighboring countries. By rigging state elections and without an [independent judiciary](#), the MPLA has maintained political control since 1975.

In 1975, Cabinda became part of Angola. Although Cabinda has half of Angola's oil, Cabindans do not benefit [from oil extraction](#). A separatist struggle ensued, led by the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). A peace agreement was signed in 2006. Nevertheless, [sporadic attacks continue](#).

Angola has vast oil and mineral resources. It receives very little foreign aid. Corruption permeates state-owned oil firms and the government. Despite Angola's oil wealth, its citizens are impoverished.

The Angolan government owns all media and permits little criticism. Though protests against the government have increased [since 2018](#), Angolan police violently suppress peaceful protests.

Foreign workers are [vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor](#). Religious minorities, notably Muslims, face obstructions to their freedom of expression because they have [not been registered](#).

Essential workers like police, prison guards and oil workers, are prohibited from legally striking. Unions unrecognized by the MPLA face interference, conflicting with their [right to assemble](#).

During the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the government imposed medical restrictions, and the National Police and Army used excessive violence to enforce them.

Street markets, on which indigent Angolans depend, were closed. Herders lost many cattle due to a severe ongoing drought. The government did not provide [adequate food](#) to prevent widespread hunger and malnutrition. Lockdowns prohibited movement from peoples' homes. When poor Angolans left their homes to search for food, they were arrested.

Genocide Watch considers Angola to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination** and **Stage 6: Polarization** of the Ten Stages of Genocide.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The Angolan government should stop targeting and arresting peaceful protesters.
- Angola should promote preventive measures to stop Covid-19 without increased repression.
- The African Union and United Nations should support efforts to hold free and fair elections.