



Angola – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 14 June 2012

Is the campaign for Cabindan independence still active? What is the current treatment of those actively supporting Cabindan independence?

A report published by the *UN High Commissioner for Refugees*, in a section titled “Applicability of ‘Ceased Circumstances’ Cessation Clauses to Refugees from Angola” (paragraph 23), states:

“Since the Luena agreement of 2002, Angola has enjoyed relative peace and tranquility, with the exception of Cabinda Province where sporadic violence in relation to a secessionist movement has occurred.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (15 January 2012) *Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy for the Angolan Refugee Situation, including UNHCR’s recommendations on the applicability of the “ceased circumstances” cessation clauses*, p.5)

A *Freedom House* report states:

“In 2006, the government signed a peace agreement with secessionists in the oil-rich northern exclave of Cabinda, hoping to end a conflict that had continued intermittently since 1975. While between 80 and 90 percent of the rebel fighters have reportedly joined the army or demobilized, some violence has continued. The military continues to arrest Cabindans for alleged state security crimes. Most of these detainees are allegedly denied basic due process rights and subjected to inhumane treatment. Citing continued attacks by rebels, the military restarted a counterinsurgency campaign in Cabinda in March 2011.” (Freedom House (8 June 2012) *Freedom in the World 2012 – Angola*)

The *Human Rights Watch* annual report on Angola, in a section titled “Cabinda”, states:

“An intermittent conflict with a separatist movement has persisted in the enclave of Cabinda since 1975, despite a 2006 peace agreement. In March the government officially resumed military counter-insurgency operations in the enclave. The authorities continued using the conflict to justify restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. In December 2010 all political dissidents who had been convicted and imprisoned following the armed attack on the Togolese soccer (football) team during the Africa Cup of Nations in Cabinda on January 8, 2010, were released, following a parliamentary review of the abusive 1978 state security crime law under which they were sentenced. However, on February 13 the government banned anti-government protests in Cabinda, and on March 7 and April 10 the police briefly detained a number of alleged protesters. They were released without charge. On July 26, police arrested nine activists who intended to present a letter to a visiting delegation of European Union ambassadors. Although a judge acquitted them on August 3, ruling that the

police maltreated them upon arrest, the police sued a Voice of America journalist who covered the event for defamation, as well as two of his interviewees who commented on police violence and arrests. At this writing there had been no progress in the case.” (Human Rights Watch (22 January 2012) *World Report 2012 – Angola*)

The 2012 *US Department of State* country report on Angola, in a section titled “Arbitrary Arrest or Detention”, states:

“There was one report of citizens from the northern province of Cabinda being detained for crimes against the state. In November 2010 the National Assembly approved a new law on state security, replacing the 1978 law. According to press reports, on July 26, police detained nine young persons in Cabinda under the new law on state security for ‘inciting social disorder’ when the youths attempted to deliver a letter requesting water, electricity, respect for human rights, and transparency to a visiting international delegation. All nine were acquitted the next day.” (US Department of State (24 May 2012) *2011 Human Rights Reports: Angola*)

In a section titled “Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention” (paragraph headed “Arbitrary Arrest”) this report states:

“Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of security forces detaining Cabinda residents suspected of FLEC activity or collaboration. The six individuals arrested in January 2010 in Cabinda for ‘crimes against state security’ by collaborating with FLEC were freed in December 2010.” (ibid)

In a section titled “Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights” (section 5) this report states:

“Mpalabanda, a civil society organization formerly based in Cabinda, remained banned. Its registration was rescinded in 2006 when it joined the Cabindan Forum for Dialogue, an umbrella organization that negotiated peace with the government. The government determined that Mpalabanda was acting as a political entity outside of its legal mandate as a civil society organization. Mpalabanda supporters continued to distribute statements through the Internet and attend public forums throughout the year. Former leaders experienced low-level harassment and intimidation throughout the year. For example, four of the seven individuals detained in Cabinda for links with the attack on the Togolese soccer team were former members of Mpalabanda. In December Mpalabanda petitioned the Supreme Court to reexamine the 2006 decision.” (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

Freedom House (8 June 2012) *Freedom in the World 2012 – Angola*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=4fd5ee142d>
(Accessed 14 June 2012)

Human Rights Watch (22 January 2012) *World Report 2012 – Angola*
http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/angola_2012.pdf
(Accessed 14 June 2012)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (15 January 2012) *Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy for the Angolan Refugee Situation, including UNHCR's recommendations on the applicability of the "ceased circumstances" cessation clauses*
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4f3395972.pdf>
(Accessed 14 June 2012)

US Department of State (24 May 2012) *2011 Human Rights Reports: Angola*
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011/af/186163.htm>
(Accessed 14 June 2012)

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Front Line Defenders
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Refugee Review Tribunal
UNHCR Refworld
US Department of State