

**BRIEFING BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL**  
**OF THE OAU, DR SALIM AHMED SALIM, ON HIS**  
**OFFICIAL WORKING VISIT TO**  
**THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA, FROM 5 - 7 MAY 1999,**  
**TO THE FIFTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE**  
**CENTRAL ORGAN AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL HELD**  
**ON MONDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1999 AT 1500 HOURS**

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At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Angola, I undertook an official working visit to Luanda, from 5 - 7 May 1999.

The visit afforded me an opportunity to meet and hold extensive discussions with President Eduardo dos Santos, the Minister for External Relations, the Minister of Social Assistance and Rehabilitation as well as other officials, and the African Diplomatic Group in Luanda. During my stay, I also met with the President of UNITA Renovada led by General Manuvacola.

Our discussions focused mainly on developments in Angola, particularly the evolution of the political and humanitarian situation in that country. However, we also discussed at length, the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo and the relations between Angola and other OAU Member States, particularly, the relations between Angola and the Republic of Zambia.

I wish to point out from the outset, that my visit to Angola was not just one of solidarity, but a serious mission to explore with the Government, how the OAU can, in concrete terms, contribute to the on-going or new efforts, aimed at bringing peace to the long-suffering people of Angola.

I wish, within this context, to commend and pay deserving tribute to the Government of Angola for its commitment to bring about the achievement of these objectives. Unfortunately, as is well known to the Central Organ, the efforts of the Government have not been reciprocated by Mr Savimbi and his Group. The negative and irresponsible role of Mr Savimbi has already been documented and condemned by the OAU, SADC and the United Nations. This is why, Mr Savimbi is held personally responsible by SADC and the OAU for the continuation of the war, which has brought about so many unnecessary loss of lives, human suffering and the destruction of infrastructure in Angola.

But beyond the condemnation of Mr Savimbi and his Group, I believe that the time is ripe for us to explore what more can be done in concrete terms to deal with the unacceptable situation occasioned by the prolongation of the war in Angola and the further traumatization of the Angolan people. This is the context within which my official working visit to Angola should be situated.

During the discussions I had with President Dos Santos, I was reminded of the internal and external dimensions of the conflict in Angola and the efforts made to end the conflict, from the nineteen eighties to the present time. The President recalled in particular, the processes leading to the Bicesse Agreement and the Lusaka Protocol. These two processes in particular, were expected to deliver democracy and a Government of national unity respectively, to Angola. Unfortunately, UNITA consistently failed to implement its own part of the Agreements. On the contrary, it is now evident that Mr Savimbi and his Group were busy hiding weapons and acquiring new and even more sophisticated military hardware, while the Government was working for the implementation of the Bicesse Agreement and the Lusaka Protocol.

According to the President, after three attempts which failed, the Government of Angola had as of necessity to review the situation. At the end of that review, all the Parties in Parliament came to the conclusion that it is not possible to have dialogue with Mr Savimbi and his Group.

President Dos Santos further recalled to me how his Government started off on the assumption that the UN Team in the country was monitoring the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol very effectively. However, it soon became clear to the Government

that while in compliance with the letter and spirit of the Lusaka Protocol, the Armed Forces of Angola were not recruiting or even able to maintain its equipment because it was impossible to procure spare parts, Mr Savimbi was able to acquire tanks and other sophisticated equipment, to back up his plans to take over Cuito, Huambo and Benguela, before proceeding to lay siege on Luanda. According to the President, the heroism and patriotism of the people of Angola and their Armed Forces, put paid to Mr Savimbi's plan. I was reassured by President Dos Santos that the Government of Angola has taken steps to enhance its defensive capacities, while at the same time ensuring that the offensive capacity of Mr Savimbi and his Group is minimized.

I was also informed by President Dos Santos that one of the most serious consequences of the conflict in Angola is the unfolding humanitarian tragedy in that country. Indeed, in my meetings with President Dos Santos, the Minister for External Relations, Mr Joao de Miranda and the Minister for Social Assistance and Rehabilitation Mr Albino Malungo, I was informed of the massive humanitarian problems, particularly, the displacement of people that the Government is trying to cope with. The statistics are staggering. For instance, whereas between 1993 and 1994, there were about 3 million Angolan displaced persons and refugees, the numbers were significantly reduced in 1998 to about 1.5 million. However, as a result of the recent resumption of fighting, there are now more than

2 million people affected. Most of these have found their way to already congested urban centers like Luanda, thus overstressing services and infrastructure and exposed to diseases and epidemics.

In highlighting the political and humanitarian impact of the war, the President regretted the fact that even though the United Nations Security Council had adopted a number of Resolutions to end the conflict in Angola, there are countries in Africa and outside the Continent that are not complying with or implementing these Resolutions, therefore further complicating the political and military problems in Angola and prolonging the war as well as enhancing the capacity of Mr Savimbi to destabilize Angola with all of its tragic consequences. I was informed that as part of the efforts to implement the Security Council Decisions, the Chairman of the UN Committee on Sanctions, will visit Luanda on 11 May 1999, on which occasion, the Government would present evidence on how some African countries and those outside the Continent are working with Mr Savimbi to undermine the UN and contribute to instability in Angola. Already, modalities are being worked out by the UN to establish two Panels of Experts on : (i) the source of revenue, funding and petroleum supplies of UNITA, focussing on UNITA's available resources, violations of sanctions; on the direct or indirect export of diamonds by UNITA; on the sale or supply of petroleum products to UNITA; the movement of UNITA's funds and financial resources (ii) the sources of UNITA's military support, the violations

of Security Council Resolutions that imposed sanctions on the sale or supply of arms and related material to UNITA, on military assistance to UNITA, including mercenaries.

On the political front, the President assured me that the Angolan Parliament is functioning effectively. UNITA Renovada has remained active in Parliament. However, he pointed out that UNITA Ronavado does not have the same profile as Mr Savimbi's Group because it does not have the military power. The President was in any case very confident that Mr Savimbi will be defeated by the people of Angola, because he is carrying out crimes against humanity, bombarding and killing innocent civilians and destroying infrastructure, as well as bringing down UN planes and kidnapping foreigners. I was informed that the Government is preparing a dossier on Mr Savimbi's crimes and at an appropriate time, will make the dossier available to the appropriate body, inline with International Conventions and Laws.

Beyond the situation in Angola, I was also briefed on the role of Angola in Congo Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are strategically important for the peace and stability of Angola. While expressing the commitment of his Government to continue to contribute to efforts to bring peace to these two countries, I was assured by the President that his Government will act firmly and resolutely against any development which threatens

Angola's vital national security interest in the Region. President Dos Santos called for a more active role by the OAU to ensure that its Member States implement Decisions taken by the OAU, the UN Security Council and SADC.

In my response, I assured the President of the Organization's support for all efforts to bring peace to Angola. I referred to the frustrations we have collectively experienced in dealing with Mr Savimbi and his Group. In spite of the setbacks we have witnessed, I stressed the need for us to continue to work together with the UN and the rest of the International Community to give teeth to the sanctions regime decided upon by the UN Security Council. I expressed the concern of the OAU over the deteriorating humanitarian situation occasioned by the resumption of fighting in Angola. I shared the President's desire for us to continue to work together to tackle that unfolding tragedy in order to ameliorate the suffering of the people of Angola. I also expressed to the President my concern over the disturbing developments in the relations between Angola and Zambia as well as some other African countries which are alleged to be working with or supporting Mr Savimbi. I appealed to the President to engage his colleagues with corroborative evidence and to do everything possible to resolve all outstanding problems, borrowing from the traditional African wisdom and bearing in mind, that whatever happens, both Zambia and Angola will remain neighbours with a long history and close relations between the two



peoples. I was encouraged by my discussion with President Dos Santos in respect of the prospects of the normalization of relations between Angola and Zambia. Though more work needs to be done, I am confident that the obstacles that currently exist in the relations between the two countries will be overcome.

I wish to inform this Session that while in Luanda, I also met with the President of UNITA Renovada, Mr Eugenio Manuacola and senior members of his National Executive. They described Mr Savimbi as a leader who is manipulating his people for his selfish ends, leading children to war over a cause they do not understand. In contrast, they described themselves as combatants for peace and the current war as nonsensical, with no meaning for anyone except Mr Jonas Savimbi. They appealed for African support and assistance to achieve their peace agenda.

The UNITA Renovada representatives highlighted the problems confronting the Party as including the following :

- UNITA Renovada is a Party of displaced persons from the villages. The problem of internal displacement is putting a heavy strain on the capacity of the young Party;

- The Party is the second largest Party in the country with Deputies in the Parliament and 4 Ministers in the Government of National Unity and Officers in the Army and the Police Force. This places a heavy responsibility on the Party, with no resources or material means to shoulder this heavy responsibility;
- The Party has to cater for people who are running away from Mr Savimbi's war. These people have no work, no shelter, but large families. They depend on their leaders for their survival;
- The OAU should help Angola cater for demobilized soldiers to prevent them from engaging in counter productive and criminal activities or even dying as a result of a silent genocide unleashed by Mr Savimbi's war and terror;
- OAU should have Angola high on its Agenda;

The President of the Party, Mr Manuacola, who it will be recalled, as the then Secretary General of UNITA, signed on behalf of his Party, the Lusaka Protocol, was emphatic that UNITA Renovada is in Luanda to defend the interests of the Angolan people and the OAU

should help the Party to grow, consolidate and achieve their objectives of ending the conflict in Angola and bringing peace to their people.

### **CONCLUSION**

I believe that we need to focus more closely on the situation in that country and to do our utmost to help the Government and people of Angola to deal with the problems that I have highlighted during this briefing. In specific terms :

- We need to reaffirm our very strong support for the UN Security Council Resolutions;
- We should collectively, and indeed more strenuously, work for the scrupulous implementation of those Resolutions. In particular, we should intensify our campaign for the total isolation of Mr Savimbi, as called for by the UN Security Council, the OAU Central Organ at Summit level and SADC's Summit. We must be true to the letter and spirit of Decisions taken by our leaders;
- We must do all we can to facilitate the efforts aimed at improving the relations between Angola and her neighbours, especially Zambia. Such a rapprochement is

crucial for the peace, security and stability of the Region and the long term peace and development of Angola;

- We need to reactivate the Mechanism which was entrusted with the task of ensuring a more proactive involvement by the Organization in the Angolan crisis. I believe that the Mechanism involving President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Mascarenhas of Cape Verde and myself, either in its present or expanded form, can assist in ensuring that the OAU is at the forefront of efforts to mobilize support for ending the Angolan conflict. This matter will be taken up at the Algiers Summit of the OAU Heads of State and Government.

On the Humanitarian front :

I wish to appeal to all OAU Member States, especially those with the ability to do so, to extend assistance to those in need in Angola and to support the efforts of the Government to cope with the humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Angola. Currently, there are about 3.2 million displaced persons in that country. 46% of these are women and children. There are thousands of orphans in Angola who have lost both parents. Families are abandoning their offsprings. After a visit to the Center for abandoned children in Luanda, I made

a token donation of US\$25,000 for the upkeep of the Center, but that was just a drop in the ocean.

Apart from playing the advocacy role of sensitizing the International Community on the full extent of the humanitarian tragedy in Angola, I believe that other African countries should follow the example of Egypt and South Africa which respectively sent Doctors and Demining Experts, as well as opened a school, to help the Government of Angola to cope with the impact of the war. I wish also to strongly appeal to all neighbouring countries, to continue to treat Angolan refugees humanely and to show compassion to those in need. The OAU Commission on Refugees should also explore what can be done to ameliorate the plight of refugees and displaced persons in Angola.

Finally, I wish to appeal to the wider International Community to keep the humanitarian situation in Angola under active consideration and to increase the level of assistance to the Government and those affected by the conflict. The challenge that lies ahead of us is daunting, but not insurmountable. It is my fervent hope that the Central Organ will join me in sending a very strong signal to Mr Savimbi and his Group and serve notice that the OAU will no longer accept the brutalization of the Angolan people on account of the vaulting ambition of one individual.