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Angola

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Angola is a constitutional republic in transition after its 27-year civil war ended in 2002. Legislation provides for decentralization; however, the government remained highly centralized and dominated by the presidency. UN observers considered the 1992 presidential election generally free and fair. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces.

While the government's human rights record showed improvements in a few areas, it remained poor and serious problems remained. The following human rights problems were reported:

- abridgment of the right of citizens to elect officials at all levels
- unlawful killings, disappearances, torture, beatings, and abuse of persons
- harsh and life-threatening prison conditions
- corruption and impunity
- arbitrary arrest and detention and lengthy pretrial detention
- lack of due process
- an inefficient and overburdened judicial system
- restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, and assembly
- violence and discrimination against women and children

The government was increasingly open to civil society and opposition participation in political processes, especially during the debate and passage of the package of electoral laws. The National Election Commission and the Ministry of Territorial Administration began preparations for the scheduled 2006 elections. While access to media in the provinces continued to be an area of concern, the government gave more access and information to independent media. The appointment of a human rights ombudsman was an important step in ensuring citizen's ability to report human rights concerns directly to an independent governmental body.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

The government or its agents did not commit any politically motivated killings; however, security forces killed an unknown number of persons. Local human rights organizations reported that police were the primary human rights abusers and responsible for most unlawful killings (see section 1.c.). Unlike previous years, members of the civil defense organization (ODC) were not implicated in unlawful killings. Impunity remained a problem.

There were unconfirmed reports of unlawful killings by police and private security forces in Cabinda. There also were unconfirmed reports of clashes in the enclave between the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) and the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC); however, combat in this province had largely ceased.

Domestic media reported cases of police resorting to excessive force, including unlawful killings. In January independent media reported that police shot and killed a young man, mistakenly believed to be a wanted criminal, in his home in the Cazenga neighborhood of Luanda. On February 5, independent media reported that the police of killing a 24-year-old man in the Rangel neighborhood of Luanda. On July 9, independent media reported that police killed a 2-year-old child in Luanda Norte Province while trying to extort money from the child's mother. According to the Association for Justice, Peace and Democracy, a man died in custody after his arrest in September. In October independent media reported that police killed a known gang member in his home in the Zambizanga neighborhood of Luanda. Independent media reported extensively during the year on extrajudicial killings of known criminal gang members. Police largely viewed these killings as an alternative to relying on the country's ineffective judicial system.

A human rights activist reported that in January at least one person died during an operation to expel illegal migrant workers from the country (see section 1.c.).

Unlike past years, police and the armed forces did not kill civilians during protest demonstrations.

There were no further developments in 2003 killings by police.

Eight provinces, encompassing approximately 50 percent of the country, contain areas that were heavily mined during the

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