

OFDA  
**Disaster  
Case Reports**

Angola Civil Strife  
1975-1976

**Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance  
Agency for International Development  
Washington, D.C. 20523**



## ANGOLA - Civil Strife

### Data:

Date: 1975-1976 (FY 76)

Location: Entire country

No. Dead: 10,000

No. Affected: Approximately 310,000 persons airlifted from Angola to Portugal between May 1 and November 3, 1975; additional numbers of displaced persons, refugees, and other victims of civil strife not reported

Damage: Country badly disrupted by civil war

### The Disaster

Guerrilla opposition to Portuguese colonial rule in Angola broke out in 1961 and continued despite extensive operations by a sizable Portuguese military presence. When the new government in Lisbon announced plans to grant independence in 1974, there were three rival independence movement operations in different parts of Angola. Hopes that the opposing factions would be able to reach a compromise before the announced independence date of November 11, 1975, were not fulfilled and, with the gradual withdrawal of Portuguese troops in the early months of 1975, civil conflict began to spread. The deterioration of security left some 300,000 Portuguese and many thousands of Angolans in hazardous circumstances. The Portuguese began to leave the country while native Angolans sought safety by leaving the cities for rural areas. The medical situation became desperate because most doctors left the country, leaving behind whole populations without medical care. As road transport became increasingly paralyzed, basic food supplies began to run short.

### Action Taken by the Government of Angola (GOA)

A transitional government headed by a Portuguese high commissioner and representatives of each of the three competing factions formally held power prior to independence. However, the transitional government broke down almost completely and power passed into the hands of local groups. In Luanda relief centers were set up and operated by the National Committee for Aid to Displaced Persons (CNAD). The Committee consisted of one representative each from the Departments of Social Assistance, Housing, (Portuguese) Armed Forces, Commerce, and Health, plus the national Red Cross and Caritas. The committee became the responsible executing agency for handling reception, shelter, feeding, health, equipment, tickets, social reintegration, transport, and baggage. TAP, the Portuguese national airline, played a major role in evacuating Portuguese to Lisbon, and on return flights carried many tons of relief supplies free of charge.

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Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On July 12, 1975, the U.S. Consul in Luanda declared the existence of an emergency situation and presented \$25,000 of discretionary disaster relief funds to the Portuguese High Commissioner to help with emergency feeding programs.....\$25,000

Between August 1975 and January 1976 the USG responded to three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appeals for support of relief programs in various parts of Angola for a total of.....\$600,000

Faced with the evacuation by air of up to 300,000 people before independence, the Portuguese government appealed to other countries for assistance. The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) arranged through the Department of Defense for the charter of two American aircraft through the Military Air Command (MAC). On September 7, these planes began direct flights between Nova Lisboa, one of the two staging points for the airlift, and Lisbon. After the completion of operations from Nova Lisboa on October 4, the planes were added to the Luanda-Lisbon airlift. Two additional planes were chartered late in October in response to a Portuguese request for additional help in the final days before the November 10 deadline. The last American flight was on November 3. A total of 117 missions, transporting 31,597 passengers, was flown by American aircraft at a cost of.....\$7,358,211

An OFDA disaster relief officer and an officer from the American consulate in Luanda were assigned to Nova Lisboa for the duration of American participation in the airlift. In the absence of any functioning governmental authority, their efforts, combined with those of the representatives of the airlines under charter and volunteer civilian committees in Nova Lisboa, are credited with the successful organization and implementation of the Nova Lisboa evacuation. After the termination of flights from Nova Lisboa in early October, both officers were assigned to the Luanda airlift. The cost of the U.S. airlift management team, including the cost of communications equipment was.....\$19,320

The USG reimbursed Church World Service (CWS) for air-freight of medicines to Angola.....\$47,295

TOTAL            \$8,049,826

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Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies \*

Catholic Relief Services - shipment of rice

Church World Service - contribution through the World Council of Churches for a relief program of the United Methodist Church in the Luanda and Malanje areas of \$5,000; and a shipment of medicines valued at \$71,954 for a total of \$76,954

TOTAL            \$76,954

Assistance Provided by the International Community \*

International Organizations

European Economic Community (EEC) - 200 tons of powdered milk through ICRC

U.N. Development Program (UNDP) - 3,600 blankets; UNDP and UNICEF jointly sent a liaison officer to Lisbon to coordinate procurement and shipment of relief supplies for a total of \$20,000

U.N. Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) - blankets and food totalling \$20,000

UNICEF - medical supplies worth \$150,000

World Food Program (WFP) - emergency food aid valued at \$200,000

Airlift

The following countries participated in the airlift between September 1 and November 3, 1975:

<u>Country</u>	<u>No. of Flights</u>	<u>Type of Aircraft</u>	<u>No. of Passengers</u>
France	20	DC-8	3,875
Dem. Rep. Germany	26	IL-62	4,137
Fed. Rep. Germany	17	707/747	4,245
UK	44	VC-10	6,178
USSR	30	IL-62	4,680
USA	117	DC-8	<u>31,597</u>

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	<u>No. of Passengers</u>
Portugal	
TAP or TAP-contracted	102,705
Portuguese Air Force	<u>1,381</u>
	158,798
TAP commercial flights May 1 - August 31	<u>150,000</u>
	308,798

Sweden made a contribution to Portugal toward the cost of chartering aircraft of \$1,000,000

Portugal evacuated 5,104 persons by ship and the USSR 609 persons.

### Governments

The following governments contributed in cash and/or in kind to appeals by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC):

Canada - \$89,600  
Denmark - \$54,000  
Germany, Federal Republic - \$64,000  
Luxembourg - \$7,490  
Monaco - \$1,125  
Netherlands - \$202,800  
New Zealand - \$2,150  
Norway - \$39,640  
Switzerland - \$466,120  
UK - \$56,500

### Voluntary Agencies

The following national Red Cross societies contributed in cash and/or in kind to appeals by the ICRC:

Belgium - \$6,628  
Canada - \$16,059  
Denmark - \$18,000  
Germany, Federal Republic - \$53,940  
France - \$15,200  
Greece - \$1,870  
Ireland - \$4,506  
Japan - \$3,600  
Luxembourg - \$1,500  
Netherlands - \$18,000  
Norway - \$74,100

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Poland - \$5,200  
Sweden - \$73,440  
Switzerland - \$108,426  
United Kingdom - \$4,656

The following private voluntary agencies contributed in cash and/or in kind to appeals by the ICRC:

Caritas Freiburg - 5,500 blankets worth \$22,000  
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development - \$2,150  
Other - \$750  
OXFAM - \$10,580  
OXFAM - 9,000 blankets and 10 tons non-fat dry milk for a total of \$33,000  
Save the Children - \$990

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - issued three appeals between July 1975 and January 1976; deployed as many as 43 people, including 15 doctors and nurses (medical teams were made available by the French, Danish, Swiss, and Swedish Red Cross societies); carried on traditional activities such as visits to prisoners, prisoner exchanges, etc.; chartered a plane to carry out mercy missions and ferry supplies; forwarded more than 300 tons of relief supplies to Angola, primarily drugs, medical supplies, and food commodities. After Independence on November 11, the ICRC was the only international organization working in Angola. The program was turned over to the new national society in April 1976.

TOTAL \$2,848,020

\* Please note: the figures for total U.S. voluntary agency and international assistance are an approximation. In many cases the cash value of in kind aid is unavailable.



This publication does not require CRB approval.

