



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992

*Old Dominion University Model United Nations Society*

### Introduction

For twenty-seven years, from 1975 to 2002, the Angolan civil war was the most destructive of its era, where ideological and ethnic rivals fought for control, sustained by foreign sponsors. The only war of the era that matched its destructiveness was the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.

For seventeen years, 1972-1992, the Angola war quickly escalated into one of the most dangerous confrontations of the late Cold War, as the Soviet Union backed its ideological allies and brought a large, *proxy military force* from Cuba to fight with them. Officially racist (Apartheid) South Africa, threatened by chaos and Soviet presence to its north, rushed in to support the rival side, with quiet assistance from the United States, also anxious to balance the expansion of Soviet influence.



When the war ended, an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 Angolans had been killed, hundreds of thousands maimed, and 4 million had lost their homes and livelihoods. The Angolan civil war,

and especially the Soviet role, was a crucial factor leading South Africa to develop nuclear weapons in the 1980s.

Initially stymied by American vetoes in the 1970s and early 1980s, the United Nations Security Council negotiated a series of resolutions to resolve the war. These led to negotiations and creation of international peacekeeping forces, culminating in the settlement of the conflict. The war slowed after 1992, but as a template for African rebellion, strongman leadership and civil war had been demonstrated. Similar wars would engulf Central, North and West Africa, leaving the continent overwhelmed by civil war. If only the Angolan civil war had been resolved sooner, the post-colonial history of the continent might have been much different.

**The body:** In this simulation, participants meet in the initial governing cabinet of the newly independent state of Angola, where they aim to build a country, while advancing the interest of their own ethnic groups and factions, as well as their personal interests. Which leader and group will emerge triumphant cannot be known, nor can the implications for the other countries in southern Africa, the regional role of apartheid South Africa, global competition between the Soviet Union and the United States, or the global influence of Cuba.

The following history presents events as they happened, in the most violent period of the Angolan civil war, 1975-92. Modest changes might have led to radically different outcomes. Playing the characters described at the end of this issue brief, simulation participants will find opportunity and alternatives much as their real counterparts did, with possibilities to transform the Cold War, Angolan and world history.



### **The Angolan Civil War (1975-2002): A Brief History**

South African History Online, n.d.,

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/angolan-civil-war-1975-2002-brief-history>

### **Independence to Civil War**

The overthrow of Portugal's Prime Minister, Marcello Caetano, on 25 April 1974 hailed a watershed moment for the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Angola. The Armed Forces Movement (AFM) had overthrown the dictatorship in a mostly bloodless coup, thereby ending Portuguese colonial rule in Africa.

Thus, Angola attained official independence on 11 November 1975 and, while the stage was set for transition, a combination of ethnic tensions and international pressures rendered Angola's hard-won victory problematic. As with many post-colonial states, Angola was left with both economic and social difficulties which translated into a power struggle between the three predominant liberation movements. Three rebel movements inherited the new country. When the original power-sharing agreement between the three groups collapsed in 1975, the country collapsed into catastrophic civil war, made worse by ethnic hatred and foreign intervention.

*The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)*, formed in December of 1956 as an offshoot of the Angolan Communist Party, had as its support base the *Ambundu* (or *Kimbundu*) people and was largely supported by other African countries, Cuba and the Soviet Union.

*The National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA)*, founded in 1962, was rooted among the

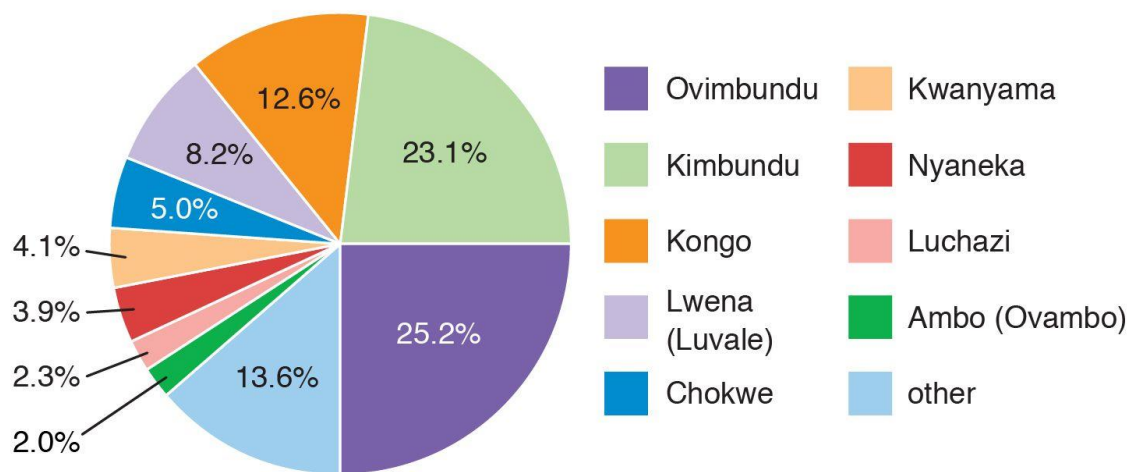
*Bakongo* (or *Kongo*) people and strongly supported the restoration and defense of the Kongo empire, eventually developing into a nationalist movement supported by the government of Zaire and (initially) the People's Republic of China.

The *Ovimbundu* people formed the base of the *National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)*, which was established in 1966 and founded by a prominent Jonas Savimbi, formerly a leader of the FNLA. UNITA was supported by South Africa and the United States. **Origins of the Conflict**

*Ethnic Tensions*: A salient reason for the continuation of civil war after independence was a result of the reluctance of the dominant liberation movements to share power within a multi-ethnic society. Unlike former Portuguese colonies, the Angolan people fought their colonizers on three fronts. The MPLA called for a single united front of all anti-colonial Angolan forces, however its popular appeal was largely limited to the Mbundu – Angola's second largest ethnic group – and the multiracial Mestizos. The MPLA's nationalist drive did not appeal to the Bakongo people, who rallied to militant right-wing FNLA leader, Holden Roberto's, call for the reestablishment of the ancient Kingdom of Kongo in the north of Angola. FNLA supporters were largely rural and remained separated from colonial society, but suffered extensively from land dispossession under colonial authorities in the 1950s. The formation of UNITA in 1966 attracted the largest support base; the Ovimbundu ethnic group, although geographically fragmented, were largely integrated into colonial society, and used UNITA as a vehicle for opposing the ethnic groups supporting the FNLA and the MPLA.



## Ethnic composition (2000)



© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Ideologically speaking, the three movements were also at odds. While the MPLA initially espoused a Marxist-Leninist discourse and later switched to a social democratic model, the rural FNLA and UNITA were far more militant and right-wing, harboring a distaste for the bourgeoisie MPLA supporters.

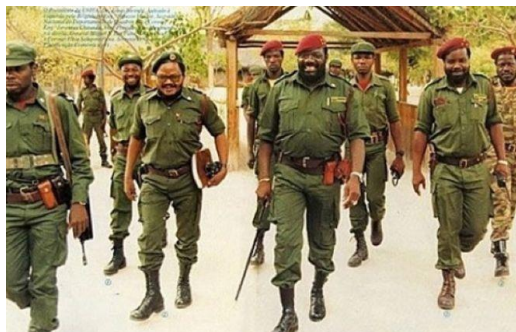


Weapons training for Cuban and MPLA soldiers - Source: s3.amazonaws.com

*The Resource Curse:* Angola spans around 481,226 square miles (about the same as California, Arizona, Oregon and Washington

state combined) along the southwest coast of Africa, and is rich in oil, iron, copper, bauxite, diamonds and uranium. Angola's resource wealth became a means of funding the ongoing war between the MPLA and UNITA, with both parties exploiting the country's oil and diamond reserves. During the years of civil war, UNITA was able to capture several major diamond mines (by capturing the areas of Lunda Sul and Lunda Norte Provinces) which served as a primary resource for financing arms and fuel, and funding the liberation movement's guerrilla campaigns against the MPLA.

With the approaching independence in 1975, each of the three major contenders began to secure Cold War patrons. The MPLA solicited the support of the Cubans who harbored a similar ideological stance, while UNITA was able to secure the support of the South African government. The United States sided with the increasingly inefficient FNLA, stationed in the north of Angola.



UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi (centre right) with members of the UNITA armed forces - Source: [www.angola24horas.com](http://www.angola24horas.com)

## A Brief Account of the Conflict

Subsequent to the Portuguese withdrawal from Angola, the Cuban- and Soviet-backed MPLA had secured control of Luanda – Angola’s capital city – and declared itself as the new government of independent Angola. Bolstering its position was the fact that it had received support and recognition from several other African countries; in 1969 the Organization for African Unity (OAU) referred to the MPLA as the only truly representative party of Angola, and in 1976 the MPLA was formally recognized by the OAU as the legitimate government of independent Angola. The period between 1975 and 1976 was characterized not only by the withdrawal of the Portuguese, but also by the arrival of Cuban forces and the South African invasion into Luanda. Additionally, this period saw the defeat of the FNLA and the rise of UNITA as challengers to the MPLA’s self-established rule.

Subsequent to the Portuguese coup the FNLA’s internal support had already deteriorated considerably, although it maintained steady relations with Zaire and was thus well armed. This led the FNLA to attempt a forceful overthrow of the MPLA in Luanda, although the MPLA, backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, deflected the onslaught and subsequently turned their antagonism towards UNITA. While the

weakest in terms of military strength, UNITA harbored the greatest potential for electoral support, thus threatening the MPLA’s position of power. The FNLA and UNITA established a rival government in Huambo, pleading assistance from the South African forces to aid in ousting the MPLA. The MPLA retaliated with an influx of around 40,000 to 50,000 Cuban troops who succeeded in forcing out the internationally isolated South African troops, thus gaining control over the provincial capitals. The Cuban troops remained stationed in Angola as a means of maintaining stability and warding off further South African attacks. In 1977 the MPLA established itself firmly as a Marxist-Leninist party, pursuing a economic communism. The result of this, however, was disastrous, and Angola’s saving grace came in the form of its externally managed oil industry which prevented total economic and military collapse. The death of President Augustinho Neto in 1979 led to the inauguration of the MPLA’s former minister of planning, José Eduardo dos Santos.



In the meantime, the FNLA grew weaker in exile. UNITA, however, secured foreign support and established itself as an effective guerrilla army. In addition to aid from the US, UNITA was also supported by South Africa. On May 12, 1980, the SADF launched an attack on

Cunene Province and was accused by the Angolan government of inflicting civilian casualties. Nine days later, the SADF again launched an attack, this time in Cuando-Cubango, incurring threats of military retaliation by the Angolan government. Disregarding these warnings, the SADF undertook a full-scale invasion through the two invaded provinces on 7 June, eradicating Namibia's SWAPO operational command headquarters in the process. South Africa's actions were condemned by the UN Security Council and Zaire, and Cuba reacted by increasing its forces from 35,000 in 1982 to 40,000 in 1985.



Cuban troops deployed in Angola to help fend off South African forces during the 27-year civil war between the MPLA and Unita. Getty Images

Although UNITA received military aid from the US beginning in 1985, thus rendering its campaigns more effective, the newly named MPLA-PT launched large-scale military campaigns against UNITA in 1987 which resulted in a stalemate as neither side was able to gain the upper hand, and war engulfed the country. In September of 1987 the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale took place as the Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA – the armed wing of the MPLA, which eventually became the official armed force of Angola when the MPLA assumed power) advanced into Angola via Cuito Cuanavale in an attempt at flushing out and destroying UNITA's guerrilla forces. The SADF – at that stage still mandated to protect and support UNITA – intervened in the attack and halted the advance of FAPLA and

its Cuban allies, resulting in a temporary stalemate.

In 1988 South Africa agreed to grant independence to Namibia and cease support to UNITA in exchange for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Sceptical of this agreement, the MPLA-PT launched an attack in an attempt to capture Mavinga airfield from which it would be able to attack UNITA headquarters. Evidently, the MPLA-PT had underestimated the strength of UNITA and was forced to assume a conciliatory demeanor as UNITA grew increasingly effective in its military pursuits and attacks on oil installations. June 1989 saw negotiations between Savimbi and dos Santos with the aim of reaching a ceasefire agreement. The agreement, however, broke down very soon after it was established.

This period coincided with the international breakdown of communism which also resulted in deteriorating support of Eastern Europe for the MPLA-PT. This further spurred negotiations for the establishment of a new constitution and the abandonment of a one-party state. The MPLA veered away from its orthodox Marxist-Leninism and abandoned the 'Partido Trabalhista' (PT) at the end of its name. After a (mostly) free and fair election in which the MPLA received the majority of votes, UNITA accused the leading party of election fraud and resumed civil war. UNITA representatives in Luanda were massacred in what was speculated to have been a government-endorsed uprising.

By 1992 UNITA had gained control of around two thirds of the country, including resource-rich diamond mines used to fund the war.

Fighting continued as the MPLA government gained increasing international support and recognition from the US, the UK as well as South Africa. Pressure mounted for the UNITA and the government to reach a peaceful solution, but UNITA was not complying. It incurred sanctions by the UN after it broke a ceasefire agreement. On 20 November 1994 the Lusaka

Accord was signed by both parties in an attempt to reach a compromise; UNITA would cease all fighting, and in return it was to be incorporated into the government. The agreement was complicated by continuing tensions, aggravated by the refusal of Savimbi in 1997 to attend the ceremony in which UNITA members joined with the MPLA government. Compounding these problems was the regime breakdown in the Democratic Republic of Congo, wherein UNITA supported the government due to former ties while the MPLA government supported the rebel faction led by Laurent Kabila.

Continuing tensions eventually led to the expulsion of the UNITA delegates from government.

The assassination of Savimbi on 22 February 2002 eventually led to negotiations between UNITA and the MPLA, resulting in a peace agreement in April of 2002 and bringing to an end a 27-year civil war.



Signing of the Lusaka Protocol in Zambia. MPLA President Eduardo dos Santos (right) with UN special representative, Alioune Blondin Beye (left). [exhibitions.nypl.org](http://exhibitions.nypl.org)

### How was the conflict funded?

**UNITA:** External support played a major role in the funding of Angola's civil war, and one consequence of the Cold War was the flow of Western funding to UNITA. During the 1980s, UNITA was supplied with US\$80-million in arms, military training and logistics by the South

African government, while the South African Air Force contributed regular drops of arms, ammunition, medicine and food to UNITA troops. Additionally, UNITA troops received varying support from other African countries; UNITA troops underwent training in Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia in the 1970s, and received financial and military aid from Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Somalia and Tunisia. It was also reported that Israel contributed aid and training in Zaire, while several Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait supplied support valued at around US\$60 to US\$70-million per year. The United States' Central Intelligence Agency was speculated to have supplied between US\$15 million and US\$20 million annually in weapons, medicine, logistics and training.

During the power struggle between UNITA and the MPLA, UNITA managed to fund its military actions through the sale of diamonds valued at US\$3.72 billion. In reaction to this, the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1173 in 1998 which banned the purchase of diamonds from Angola.

**MPLA:** While UNITA secured external funding through the sale of Angola's diamonds, the MPLA was receiving the bulk of its funding from the USSR, Cuba and the People's Republic of Congo. When in 1974-1976 South Africa intervened on behalf of the FNLA and UNITA, Cuba aided the MPLA by sending thousands of troops who remained stationed in Angola throughout the civil war. While a UN arms embargo in the 1990s prevented the sale of arms to Angola, dos Santos turned to a French acquaintance – the French Socialist Party's expert of Africa, Jean-Bernard Curial – who subsequently persuaded the son of the former French president, Francois Mitterand, to assist. Jean-Cristopher Mitterand introduced Curial to Pierre Falcone who had in the past arranged weapon sales for the French government. Together with a Russian ex-KGB colonel, Gaydamak, Falcone allegedly established a front-company in Eastern Europe which acted as a means to ship military equipment to Angola.



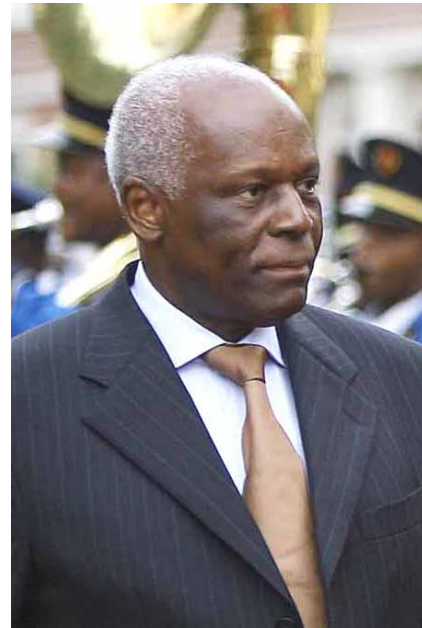
## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



This included tanks, armored vehicles, weapons and ammunition. Evidence of Falcone's transactions were later found, supporting the charges that Mitterrand had received 14 million francs for arranging the deals. Supposedly, the Angolan government secured US\$47 million worth of ammunition and artillery on 7 November, 1993, which was then received in December. In 1994, aircraft and tanks to the value of US\$463 million were purchased.

Aside from external funding and aid, the exploitation and external trade of Angolan oil and diamonds (not already secured by UNTA) largely contributed to the MPLA's finances.

**FNLA:** During the civil war period the FNLA received support from several external sources. France supplied troops and presented the FNLA with a loan of 1 million pounds sterling, without interest, while the US financially supported the FNLA by directing one-third of its Zaire budget to both the FNLA and UNITA. FNLA leader, Holden Roberto, secured funding from Israel after visits in the 1960s, and FNLA troops were sent to Israel for training. Arms were supplied to the FNLA by Israel during the 1970s through Zaire. Additionally, the FNLA received support (arms) from the People's Republic of China in 1964.



Dos Santos held several positions including Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of independent Angola's first president, Agostinho Neto. Following Neto's death in 1979, dos Santos was elected the country's new president, supported by the Soviet Union and inheriting a civil war against Western-backed anti-communist rebels, most notably UNITA. By 1991, his government agreed with rebels to introduce a multi-party system, while changing the MPLA's ideology from communism to social democracy. He was elected president in the 1992 Angolan general election over UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, and presided over free-market economic liberalization and the development of Angola's oil sector.

### Characters

*From Wikipedia*

**José Eduardo dos Santos**, 1942-2022, was president of Angola from 1979 to 2017. As president, dos Santos was also the commander-in-chief of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and president of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the party that has ruled Angola since it won independence in 1975. He was the second-longest-serving president in Africa, surpassed only by Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea.

**General Henrique Teles Carneira**, 1933-2000, best known by the nickname Iko Carneira, served as the first Defense Minister of Angola from 1975 to 1980 during the civil war. After the death of Agostinho Neto his position in the party weakened. He later served as ambassador to Algeria and military attaché to Spain.

He was born to civil servants in Angola. He joined the Independence Movement in 1957 and went underground in 1964, moving to Zambia and Algeria to receive training from military training. He was an officer in the People's Movement for the Liberation



of Angola (MPLA), Agostinho Neto's armed wing fighting against Portuguese colonial apartheid like rule. Founder and commander in chief of the Angolan Armed Forces, he defeated the FNLA in the north and UNITA in the south during the first civil war. Considered to be the regime's second in command until Neto's death, he was the first African military officer to receive a degree as a general from a Soviet military academy.



General Iko Carreira's last struggle was to combat his illness, a stroke that paralysed his entire left side for the last 13 years of his life, writing two novels with one finger, on a special computer. The novels are titled: *O Pensamento Estrategico de Agostinho Neto* (Publicacoes Dom Quixote), and *Memorias* (published in Angola by Nzila). In June 2000, The Guardian's Victoria Brittain wrote in an obituary : "Like his friend and mentor, President Neto, Carreira will always remain a reference point for Angolans for the heroic period of their history."

A controversial figure, dos Santos received many international awards for his commitment to anti-colonialism and promotion of peace negotiation with rebels to end wars, and was also praised for improving Angola's economy and attracting significant foreign investment. He was criticized as having been a dictator and was accused of creating one of the most corrupt regimes in Africa, with a deeply-entrenched patronage network.



**João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço**, 1954- , is an Angolan politician, who has served as the president of Angola since 26 September 2017. Previously, he was Minister of Defence from 2014 to 2017. In September 2018, he became the Chairman of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the ruling party. He was the party's Secretary-General from 1998 to 2003.

João Lourenço was designated in December 2016 to occupy the party's number one position in the August 2017 legislative election. In terms of the 2010 constitution, "the individual heading the national list of the political party or coalition of political parties which receives the most votes in general elections ... shall be elected President of the Republic and Head of the Executive" (Article 109).[5][6] As the MPLA won a majority of 150 seats, Lourenço automatically became President of Angola, succeeding José Eduardo dos Santos, who had been in power for 38 years. Lourenço was officially sworn into office on 26 September 2017.

**General António Santos França "Nдалu"** is a former footballer and Angolan politician, born in the town of Mupa in Cunene on April 9, 1938. He played as a midfielder. Following his short sporting career, he completed his studies in Portugal y Cuba and returned to Angola, where he became a fervent anti-colonial activist, and became General "Nдалu". In 1988, dos Santos França was chief of staff for the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA).



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



Dos Santos França later became Minister of Defence, first Angolan Ambassador to the United States 1995, and a member of the De Beers Angola Board from October 2005 to March 2010.

**Lúcio Rodrigo Leite Barreto de Lara**, 1929-2016, also known by the pseudonym *Tchiweka*, was a physicist-mathematician, politician, professor, anti-colonial ideologist and one of the founding members (and president) of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). He served as General Secretary of the MPLA during the Angolan War of Independence and Angolan Civil War. Lara, a founding member of the MPLA, led the first MPLA members into Luanda on November 8, 1974. He swore in Agostinho Neto as the first president of the country.

He was acting president of Angola for ten days, from 10 September 1979 to 20 September 1979, briefly leading the country between the death of Agostinho Neto and the inauguration of José Eduardo dos Santos. He was a member of the Angolan parliament from independence until 1992.

**Kundi Paihama**, 1944-2020, was an Angolan politician who served as Angola's Minister of Defense from 2002 to 2010. He served subsequently as Minister for War Veterans.

Paihama was the 18th candidate on the national list of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the September 2008 parliamentary election. He won a seat in this election, in which the MPLA won an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly.

Kundi Paihama owned 33.15% of the shares of the Banco Angolano de Negócios e Comércio.

Paihama died in a private hospital in Luanda.

Paihama was sometimes a controversial figure in Angola's ruling party, the MPLA with a few famous quotes including: "Não percam tempo a escutar as mensagens de promessas de certos políticos, trabalhem para ser ricos" (do not waste your time listening to the promises of certain politicians, work hard and get rich) and "Durmo bem, como bem e o que restar no meu prato dou aos meus cães e não aos pobres" (I sleep and eat well, my leftovers go to my dogs, not the destitute).

**Jonas Malheiro Savimbi**, 1934-2002, was an Angolan revolutionary politician and rebel military leader who founded and led the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA waged a guerrilla war against Portuguese colonial rule from 1966 to 1974, then confronted the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) during the Angolan Civil War.



After surviving more than six assassination attempts, and having been reported dead at least 17 times, Savimbi was killed on 22 February 2002, in a battle with Angolan government troops along riverbanks in the province of Moxico, his birthplace. In the firefight, Savimbi sustained 15 gunshot wounds to his head, throat, upper body and legs. While Savimbi returned fire, his wounds proved fatal; he died almost instantly.

Savimbi's somewhat mystical reputation for eluding the Angolan military and their Soviet and Cuban military advisors led many Angolans to question the validity of reports of his 2002 death until pictures of his bloodied and bullet-riddled body appeared on Angolan state television, and the United States State



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



Department subsequently confirmed it, did the reports of his death in combat gain credence in the country. He was interred in Luena Main Cemetery in Luena, Moxico Province. On 3 January 2008, his tomb was vandalised and four members of the youth wing of the MPLA were charged and arrested. His body was exhumed and reburied publicly in 2019.

Legacy

In the years since Savimbi's death, his legacy has been a source of debate. "The mistake that Savimbi made, the historical, big mistake he made, was to reject (the election) and go back to war", Alex Vines, head of the Africa program at London-based Chatham House research institute said in February 2012. Africa expert Paula Roque, of the University of Oxford, says Savimbi was "a very charismatic man, a man who exuded power and leadership. We can't forget that for a large segment of the population, UNITA represented something."

He was survived by "several wives and dozens of children".

**General António Sebastião Dembo**, 1944-2002, served as Vice President (1992–2002) and later President (2002) of UNITA, an anti-Communist rebel group that fought against the MPLA in the Angolan Civil War.

Born to Sebastião and Muhemba Nabuko in Nambuanguo, Bengo Province, he completed his primary schooling at Muxaluando and Quimai Methodist schools. His secondary education was at El Harrach and École Nationale d'Ingénieurs et Techniciens d'Algérie in Algeria.

António Dembo joined UNITA in 1969. After traveling throughout Africa on behalf of UNITA, he returned in 1982 to become commander for the Northern Front and later the Northern Front chief of staff. He became UNITA's Vice President in 1992 when the Angolan Civil War resumed, succeeding Jeremias Chitunda, who was assassinated by the Angolan government in Luanda that year. He also became the general in charge of UNITA's Special Commandos, the Tupamaros.

After the war turned against UNITA in 2001–2002, Dembo's forces were constantly on the run from government troops. Following the death in battle of its leader Jonas Savimbi on February 22, 2002, Dembo became the President of UNITA. However,

Dembo was also wounded in the same attack that killed Savimbi and, already weakened by diabetes, died three days later.

Dembo's succession of Savimbi had been pre-ordained by Savimbi and the UNITA leadership. In 1997, Savimbi and the UNITA leadership named Dembo Savimbi's successor in the event of Savimbi's death. Consistent with this pre-ordained succession, Dembo assumed leadership of UNITA immediately following Savimbi's death in combat.

Following Dembo's death, UNITA's leadership was assumed by Isaías Samakuva, who had served as UNITA's ambassador to Europe under Savimbi.



Jeremias Chitunda and Rafael Picklesimer of the Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., 1986.

**Jeremias Kalandula Chitunda**, 1942-92, served as the Vice President of UNITA until his assassination in Luanda, as part of the Halloween Massacre shortly after the first round of the presidential election, held on September 29–30. He was UNITA's second in command, after UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi.

Chitunda moved from Angola to Zaire, fearing arrest by the Portuguese colonial authorities. He joined UNITA in 1966 and served as its representative to the U.S. southwest before being promoted to representative to the U.S. in 1976. He became the



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



Vice President of UNITA in August 1986 at the sixth party congress.

In 1992, after decades of war between UNITA and the governing MPLA, the first Presidential elections were scheduled. José Eduardo dos Santos officially received 49.57% of the vote and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi won 40.6%. Because no candidate received 50% or more of the vote, election law dictated a second round of voting between the top two contenders.

The election process broke down on October 31 when government troops in Luanda attacked UNITA. Civilians, using guns they had received from police a few days earlier, conducted house-by-house raids with the Rapid Intervention Police, killing and detaining hundreds of UNITA supporters. On November 2, 1992, assailants attacked Chitunda's convoy, pulling him and another UNITA official from their car and shooting both of them in their faces.

**Brigadier Demosthenes Amos Chilingutilla** served as the Chief of staff of the Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FALA), the armed wing of UNITA, from 1979 to January 1985 and again after October 1986.

Jonas Savimbi, the leader of UNITA, demoted Chilingutilla for UNITA's military failures in the 1970s to Chief of Operations in 1985. Alberto Joaquim Vinama succeeded Chilingutilla until his death in a car accident in October 1986. Chilingutilla then regained his office.

**General Paulo Armindo Lukamba "Gato"** (born Armindo Lucas Paulo on May 13, 1954) led UNITA, from the death of António Dembo on March 3, 2002, until he lost the 2003 leadership election to Isaiás Samakuva.

Lukamba was born in the province of Huambo, in central Angola. Lukamba joined UNITA during the Carnation revolution in Portugal. He eventually served eight years in France as UNITA's representative there.

From 1995 until the death of Jonas Savimbi in February 2002, Lukamba served as UNITA's Secretary-General. Upon Savimbi's death and the subsequent death of Vice President António Dembo just 10 days later from diabetes and battle wounds,

Lukamba assumed control of the rebel group. Lukamba led UNITA in negotiations that ended the Angolan Civil War in April 2002.

Lukamba led UNITA's political party until 2003 when Isaiás Samakuva won the leadership election. Samakuva is the President of UNITA until November 2019.



**Álvaro Holden Roberto**, 1923-2007, was an Angolan politician who founded and led the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) from 1962 to 1999.

Roberto met with United States President John F. Kennedy on April 25, 1961. Leading Angolan nationalists in exile, Roberto established a political alliance with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko by divorcing his wife and marrying a woman from Mobutu's wife's village. Roberto visited Israel in the 1960s and received aid from the Israeli government from 1963 to 1969.

Savimbi left the FNLA in 1964 and founded UNITA in response to Roberto's unwillingness to spread the war outside the traditional Kingdom of Kongo. Zhou Enlai, Premier of the People's Republic of China, invited Roberto to visit the PRC in 1964. Roberto did not go because Moise Tshombe, the President of Katanga, told him he would not be allowed to return to the Congo.

On the eve of Angola's independence from Portugal, Zaire, in a bid to install a pro-Kinshasa government and thwart the MPLA's drive for power, deployed armored car units, paratroops, and three battalions to Angola. However, the FNLA and Zaire's victory was



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



narrowly averted by a massive influx of Cuban forces, who resoundingly defeated them.

In 1991, the FNLA and MPLA agreed to the Bicesse Accords, allowing Roberto to return to Angola. He ran unsuccessfully for president, receiving only 2.1% of the vote. However, the FNLA won five seats in Parliament but refused to participate in the government.

Roberto died on August 2, 2007, at his home in Luanda. After Roberto's death, President José Eduardo dos Santos eulogized, "Holden Roberto was one of the pioneers of national liberation struggle, whose name encouraged a generation of Angolans to opt for resistance and combat for the country's independence," and released a decree appointing a commission to arrange for a funeral ceremony.

**Daniel Chipenda**, 1931-1996, fought in the Angolan War of Independence, serving as the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola's (MPLA) field commander in the Eastern Front before founding and leading the Eastern Revolt, a faction of the MPLA. He later joined the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA),<sup>[1]</sup> but left, rejoined the MPLA, and left again in July 1992. He was an Ovimbundu.

Chipenda, then a member of the MPLA, established the Eastern Front, significantly expanding the MPLA's reach, in May 1966. When the EF collapsed, Chipenda and MPLA leader Agostinho Neto each blamed the other. In 1972 the Soviet Union allied with Chipenda's faction, giving him aid. Following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, Joaquim Pinto de Andrade, the President of the MPLA, organized an MPLA congress in Lusaka. Neto and Chipenda attended with 165 delegates respectively and Mário Pinto de Andrade's Active Revolt faction had 70 delegates present. After several days of negotiations Neto's faction quit the congress, so that the MPLA remained split into three factions. Chipenda left the MPLA, although he arguably left it before the coup in Portugal, founding the Eastern Revolt with 1,500 former MPLA followers. He opposed the MPLA's leadership which he accused of being "creole" and was wary of the Soviet Union, despite its support.

In 1973 the government of the Soviet Union invited Neto to Moscow and told him Chipenda planned to assassinate him. The USSR resumed aid to the

MPLA, Neto again firmly in control, in 1974. In September Chipenda joined the FNLA again, and returned to the MPLA only after the multiparty elections of 1992.

**Antonio Enrique Lussón Batlle**, 1930- , Cuban military officer and one of four Cuban Vice Presidents of the Council of Ministers.

Batlle was born in Santiago de Cuba to a financially stable family. and he obtained a good education, but he was not able to finish high school due to economic problems. He worked as a farmer, a "pequeño colono," a truck driver and a peddler. He was a member of the Partido Ortodoxo and after Batista's military coup, he engaged in underground activities in the Organización Auténtica (OA). He left the organization later and joined the MR-26 July. He joined the guerrillas, as a sergeant, under the command of Raúl Castro. Considered an excellent tactician with exceptional personal courage, in less than six months he became a comandante and was entrusted with one independent guerrilla column that had one of the best fighting records until December 1958. He was second-in-command to Juan Almeida in 1959 at Managua Garrison and for several months was the Chief of Logistics. He also distinguished himself at Bay of Pigs Invasion.

For most of the 1960s, he was chief of the Western Independent Army Corps. His military education consists of two courses: Officers Basic Training and a Higher Course at El Morro Academy (predecessor to the current "Máximo Gómez" Academy). He was Minister of Transportation, Merchant Marine, and Ports from 1970 to 1980. The first five years of his administration were considered successful, with major projects and investments, but by the late 1970s public transportation was in the same condition as in the late 1960s. Fidel Castro, frustrated with his performance, ousted him and sent him to the Youth Labor Army (Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo or EJT) to command Camaguey's army corps. Two years later, he was sent to Angola for the first time. He spent seven years in Angola. From 1982 to 1985 as top commander of LCB forces against UNITA and from 1986 to 1989 as military commander of Luena Province.

He was Vice President of INRE from 1990 to 1996. He is the Division General and Chief of the Special Forces Directorate of the Cuban Revolutionary Army

since 1998. Extensively decorated, he is considered a Hero of the Republic of Cuba.



Fidel Castro (right) with General Arnaldo Ochoa. (CC)

**Arnaldo Tomás Ochoa Sánchez**, 1930-1989, was a Cuban general. He was executed by the Cuban government after being found guilty of a variety of crimes including drug smuggling and treason.

He was part of Cuban forces against the American CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961. In 1965 he became a member of the Communist Party of Cuba. Ochoa was a member of the Party's Central Committee for more than twenty years. He attended the War College in Matanzas, Cuba, and was later sent to the Frunze Academy in the Soviet Union. In 1966 Ochoa along with 15 other Cuban officers was sent by Castro to Venezuela to support guerrillas fighting the government of Raúl Leoni, an effort that ended in a major strategic loss at large human cost.

Between 1967 and 1969, he trained rebels in the Congo. In 1975, Ochoa was sent to fight in a critical campaign against the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) in Luanda, Angola, where he won the respect of both Soviet and Cuban commanders. In 1977 he was named commander of Cuban Expeditionary Forces in Ethiopia under the command of Soviet General Petrov. His successes during the Ogaden War impressed the Soviet commanders in the field.

By 1980, Ochoa was widely considered a great internationalist, and was awarded the title "Hero of the Revolution" by Fidel Castro in 1984.

**Valentin Ivanovich Varennikov**, 1923-2009, was a Soviet/Russian Army general and politician, best known for being one of the planners and leaders of the Soviet–Afghan War, as well as one of the

instigators of the 1991 Soviet coup d'état attempt to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev.

In 1969 Varennikov took charge of the 3rd Shock Army, and in 1971 he was appointed as the First Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. On 1973, he became the commander of the Carpathian Military District. From 1979 to 1984, he served as the Head of the Main Operations Directorate and First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR.



Between 1984 and 1985, Varennikov worked with the Soviet military mission in Angola, then in the throes of a bloody civil war. In a sharp contrast with the official policy of only permitting Soviet military advisers to serve in non-combat roles, Varennikov supported allowing the advisers to fight alongside their Angolan allies in the event they came under attack. He was the senior Soviet general officer in Angola during Operation Askari, and personally advised Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos on defensive measures to counter the South African Defence Force's incursion. During the Chernobyl Disaster of 1986, Varennikov was the main organizer of the work of military units in deployment of troops to the location of the catastrophe, to help in recovery efforts.

During the last few years of the Soviet–Afghan War, Varennikov was the personal representative in Kabul



## The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1992



of the Soviet Defence Minister and held negotiations with the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan members who oversaw the withdrawal of Soviet troops, 1988-89. Varennikov continued to defend the war even after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. In 1989 General Varennikov was named Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Ground Forces and Deputy Minister of Defence.

**Michael (Mike) Louw**, 1940-2009, was Director-General of the South African National Intelligence Service (NIS) and after the 1994 South African elections, head of the new South African Secret Service. He played a key role as a representative of the South African government in the secret negotiations held between them and the ANC in exile and which brought about the unbanning of the latter in 1990 and the release of Nelson Mandela.



A rare photo of Mike Louw, from a group picture.

He joined the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), renamed the Department of National Security (DONS) in 1978 and in 1980 to the National Intelligence Service. At the time of its name change, Louw was working as the Director of International Political Research.

Under Niel Barnard's restructuring of BOSS from 1980 into the NIS, the intelligence research division's importance grew and Louw was instrumental in growing the reputation of the organisation with a daily product called National Intelligence Flashes and Sketches (NIFS). He would be promoted to Chief Director Research in the early eighties. In 1985 he was promoted to Deputy-Director NIS, responsible for coordinating South African military and intelligence assistance to UNITA in Angola.