

CHAPTER 2

BEYOND 'NORMALISATION': THE MOMENTOUS CHALLENGES OF RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN

Introduction

...the next three months could be the most decisive in terms of the creation of basic conditions for the normalisation of the lives of displaced populations during the war. For the government of Angola, the current dry season could represent the best opportunity for the implementation of assistance and social reintegration programmes of displaced populations.⁵

Understanding the challenges, policies and institutional framework that will guide the resettlement and return of a large proportion of Angola's population must be taken into account if an adequate appreciation of ex-combatant's reintegration is to be achieved. As will be discussed below, the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants is to a large extent underscored by the same norms that guide the resettlement and return programme currently underway in Angola. Consequently, resettlement and return issues not only provide us with a picture of what in reality 'normalisation' implies and therefore a clearer understanding of the challenges facing the government in Angola's post-war environment, but they also highlight many of the obstacles and challenges that the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants will inevitably produce.

According to data provided by provincial governments in a meeting on 10 June 2002, more than four million people were displaced by the war. If we bear in mind that Angola has approximately 13.1 million people in total with an estimated urban population of about 60%, the challenge as well as impact of resettling and/or returning a third of the total population to its areas of origin and resettlement emerges. Angola's internally displaced are strongly heterogeneous, having been displaced at different times during Angola's civil war, resulting in cyclical waves of displacement. Moreover, by the time of the Bicesse Accords in 1991 there were about 800,000 internally displaced people and 425,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. As pointed out by the United Nations, 'in the period between independence and the Bicesse accords, when the war was fought in remote rural areas, displacement tended

to be quite localised, normally involving short-range movements between villages and into nearby municipal centres'.⁶ Of these, only a fraction returned to their areas of origin during the period 1991–92 and when war resumed in 1992 and combat spread to major urban centres, an additional 1.3 to 2 million Angolans were displaced in large-scale population movements which tended to flow to the safety provided by coastal cities. In the four years of 'no war no peace' that followed the signature of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, while some IDPs returned home, 'the numbers were small, because of continuing insecurity and lack of confidence on the part of many IDPs in the durability of the peace process'.⁷ By the end of 1997 humanitarian agencies estimated that more than 1 million were displaced, and when in 1998 the war restarted, only a limited number of these had been resettled.

The resumption of armed hostilities throughout the national territory at the end of 1998 aggravated the problem exponentially, with an additional 3 million displaced from their homes. To be sure, the tactical conduct of this last phase of the war by both sides was largely responsible for the situation.⁸ In fact, 'following a mission in October–November 2000, the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons reported that large numbers of rural people had been displaced by UNITA forces' while 'in the second half of 2001 and early months of 2002, large numbers of civilians were forcibly removed from rural areas, particularly in the east of the country, as part of a FAA strategy to deprive UNITA forces of civilian sources of food'.⁹

As of mid-2002, only 1.4 million of the total number of IDPs had been confirmed by humanitarian agencies for assistance, while only 436,000 were in camps and transit centres and 600,000 were in temporary resettlement sites. Before the signature of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' humanitarian aid reached only 10–15% of the country and humanitarian agencies had access only to 60% of the 272 locations where displaced peoples were concentrated, largely a result of security conditions and logistical constraints. Angola became the most expensive humanitarian operation in the world, with 10 United Nations' Agencies, 100 international NGOs and more than 420 national NGOs providing assistance to 2 million people.

Since the signature of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' on 4 April 2002 the situation has improved although the numbers of internally displaced people have grown with thousands emerging from previously inaccessible areas coupled with the exponential growth in the number of UNITA family members reporting to family reception areas. The Provinces of Luanda, Benguela, Lunda Norte, Huambo and Kwanza Sul stand as the worst affected with a

combined number of close to two and a half million displaced as of June 2002. The cities of Kuito, Malange, Mbanza Congo, Huambo and Uige were identified as being in a particularly acute state. As to characteristics of displacement, the Provinces with the larger number of displaced people to be resettled internally are Kwanza Sul (401,037), Huila (167,399), Malange (167,181), Moxico (145,288), Bie (28,077), Benguela (15,405) and Cunene

| Province | Data Provided by Provincial Governors (10 June 2002) | Reported IDPs (September 2002) | Confirmed IDPs (September 2002) |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Bengo | 179,413 | 120,070 | 21,418 |
| Benguela | 453,331 | 435,013 | 92,194 |
| Bie | 208,952 | 523,016 | 202,740 |
| Cabinda | 11,877 | 11,877 | Na |
| Cunene | 69,278 | 71,908 | 10,050 |
| Huambo | 435,000 | 435,053 | 140,402 |
| Huila | 229,170 | 218,073 | 190,564 |
| Kuando Kubango | 156,445 | 621,044 | 76,031 |
| Kwanza Norte | 109,587 | 109,585 | 24,915 |
| Kwanza Sul | 413,341 | 413,034 | 113,760 |
| Luanda | 673,526 | 84,301 | 17,500 |
| Lunda Norte | 438,203 | 438,013 | 13,040 |
| Lunda Sul | 184,919 | 184,091 | 81,240 |
| Malange | 288,536 | 288,686 | 70,125 |
| Moxico | 206,297 | 550,220 | 80,930 |
| Namibe | 24,812 | 22,275 | 18,454 |
| Uige | 64,832 | 186,960 | 113,058 |
| Zaire | 38,054 | 23,127 | 2,126 |
| Total | 4.185.573 | 4,440,056 | 1,296,303 |

(7,873). As regards inter-Provincial resettlement, Luanda stands at the top of the list (67,943), followed by Huila (29,487) and Namibe (26,832).

The Government's 'Emergency Resettlement and Return Programme', June 2002

In order to tackle the humanitarian emergency, an inter-agency Rapid Assessment of Critical Needs (RACN) was conducted in 28 locations in 12 Provinces, a process which opened up several important road corridors for humanitarian operations. This was expanded to a 'vulnerability assessment' conducted between May and October in 220 locations in 11 provinces.¹¹ The approval of an 'Emergency Resettlement and Return Programme' by the Government of Angola in June 2002 was a critical step in developing a concerted approach to the looming humanitarian catastrophe. Moreover, rather than attempting the gigantic task of dealing with the total number of reported IDPs, this emergency programme prioritised the return, resettlement and social reintegration of those who had been identified by humanitarian agencies. Its target group included 1,550,000 people (approximately 310,000 families) as well as assistance to 350,000 UNITA ex-combatants and their family members.¹² Scheduled to occur between July and December 2002, implementation of this emergency programme was organised in three phases:

1. Return: implementation of an emergency plan to benefit 550,000 people representing 1/3 of the target group;¹³
2. Resettlement: including 'inter-sector actions' to raise awareness of mines and other related risks; resettlement of populations in their areas of origin, in previously established areas or in areas defined as centres of agricultural development;
3. Social reintegration: integrate the remainder 2/3 through a social reintegration plan focused on income and employment generation; educational and professional training and finally infra-structure rehabilitation.

In addition, resettlement and return activities were conceptualised in accordance with the strategic and economic development objectives of the government. In this sense, 'areas of the country considered important from an economic development point of view and offering adequate access and security conditions' were and are being prioritised.¹⁴ This emergency plan is therefore seen as the foundation for a medium term social assistance programme based

on the following principles: the promotion of the sustainable development of target groups in a context of the development of the community as a whole; the reduction of dependency on humanitarian assistance in favour of self-sufficiency; adaptation of the programme for the objective local reality and, finally, the special protection of children, youth, orphans, widows, the elderly and handicapped. Furthermore, underlying the approval of this emergency programme, was the need to accelerate resettlement and return to take advantage of the agricultural calendar, scheduled to start at the end of August last year. As a matter of fact, the concern in restarting agricultural production as a means to assure the sustainability of resettlement and return in a context where employment opportunities are extremely limited, was expressed to the authors in several interviews with humanitarian partners undertaken in Angola between June and October 2002. While this assumption has been heatedly debated, with strong arguments for and against the prioritisation of agriculture, there are those who pointed out that 'even in the best case scenario of large scale return before the start of the planting season in October 2002, the humanitarian case-load [is] unlikely to decline significantly until the harvest in April 2003'.¹⁵

The Norms on the Resettlement of Displaced Peoples, January 2001

While prioritising resettlement and return in areas where economic development is most needed is common sensical, one should bear in mind that these processes are legally bound by a set of norms approved by the government of Angola in January 2001. In what was a truly historic achievement for humanitarian agencies present in Angola under the leadership of OCHA, on 5 January 2001 the Government of Angola issued Council of Ministers Decree N.1/01 on 'Norms on the Resettlement of Displaced Peoples'.¹⁶ These norms, which were later regulated specifically, identify a number of pre-conditions that must be in place, including access (e.g. mine clearance), land availability, security, extension of State administration and water and basic sanitation facilities before resettlement and return can occur. More importantly, at the root of these norms is the issue of voluntary resettlement in that displaced peoples must have indicated that they are willing to relocate or return voluntarily. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluation of resettlement and return in Angola must be conducted on the basis of compliance with these norms and not solely as regards economic developmental priorities.

The practical implementation of the norms on resettlement and return poses a number of interesting questions, some of which are pertinent as regards the

socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. While government compromise on pre-conditions necessary for the adequate return and resettlement is in and of itself an important achievement, the process by which these norms were operationalised '*on the ground*' must also be taken into account, for as will become clear below, it demonstrates the benefits of close cooperation between government, humanitarian agencies and civil society. In fact, this model of cooperation should be taken seriously where socio-economic reintegration of former UNITA soldiers is concerned.

Moreover, the responsibility for the planning and management of resettlement and return lies at the doorstep of Provincial governments. Article 1 of Decree 1/01 clearly states that 'the resettlement and return of displaced peoples will be the responsibility of Provincial Governments' to be undertaken by a 'provincial humanitarian coordination group'.¹⁷ However, Provincial governments lack adequate capacity in manpower, know-how and resources to undertake such large endeavour. It is because of these structural obstacles that the norms subsequently recommend the creation of a sub-group specifically dedicated to the displaced, which brings in all NGOs, humanitarian agencies and other institutions operating in a particular Province side by side with all relevant Provincial government agencies. Consequently, a variety of different stakeholders are made responsible for the programming and managing of the resettlement and return, assuring the adequate application of the norms.¹⁸

The norms are clear in specifying that, before resettlement and return occurs, Provincial governments must assure that state administration is present and functioning, or the situation 'normalised' as described above. Following the extension of state administration, the sub-group must undertake, in consultation with local communities and traditional authorities, the identification of adequate available land and proceed with giving '1/2 hectare adequate for agriculture to each family'.¹⁹ It is clear that the methodology chosen to implement the emergency programme attempts a degree of decentralisation and 'de-concentration' allowing the Provinces the operationalisation of the national plan into local interventions. As is made clear by the programme,

...in the discussion of resettlement issues, decision-making should bear in mind the lowest possible decision-making level because it affects directly and immediately the populations; that is, it should include civil society's participation in the most representative way.²⁰

However, in many regions IDPs have not waited for the implementation of these norms but have been spontaneously returning to their villages regard-

less. ,000 estimated to have returned by October 2002, only 15% had returned as part of an organised plan, and 70% were living in places where the 'norms' were not yet in place.²¹ It is unclear in these cases whether the 'norms' will in fact be fulfilled. Many adopted a strategy of 'keeping two residences—one at the return site where family members constructed shelters and prepared land and the other in provincial and municipal centres where households continued to receive assistance'.²² This obviously favours return to areas near these centres however, whereas in more remote areas returning populations were considerably worse off.

The PEPARRs

In practical terms, the development of Provincial emergency plans has taken the form of a document prepared by Provincial Governments called PEPARR (Provincial Emergency Plan for Resettlement and Return).²³ Not limited to ensuring that return movements are conducted in accordance with the norms, the PEPARR process represents in itself an important capacity-building action for Provincial governments, as the cases of Huila and Uige Provinces make clear.

In June 2002 MINARS convened the third annual Provincial Planning Workshop in Luanda, with support from UN agencies. Its aim was to agree on a common operational approach to resettlement and return as well as to train provincial representatives in preparation for planning and implementing return movements on the basis of the norms.²⁴ By the end of July all 18 Provincial authorities had, in conjunction with humanitarian agencies, completed their emergency resettlement and return plans (PEPARRs). These 18 PEPARRs cover 1,749,867 internally displaced people (350,696 families) in 18 Provinces, of which as many as 1,576,587 are considered expected to resettle or return to areas of origin within the provinces they are currently resident. After the completion of these Provincial emergency plans, a clearer picture of the most pressing needs of displaced peoples in Angola emerged. Priority interventions defined for all 18 Provinces included food security (food assistance; seeds and tools' distribution necessary in all locations); health and nutrition (seven municipal hospitals, 19 health centres and 129 health posts require rehabilitation in ten Provinces); water and sanitation; non-food items and shelter; education; protection; mine action and finally, logistics. PEPARRs were revised in September and October 2002 for phase two of return and resettlement.

According to OCHA, between April and the end of November, approximately 1.1 million people have returned to their areas of origin throughout the

Case Study One: Huila Province

The process by which Huila's Provincial government developed its PEPARR illustrates some of the challenges and obstacles involved, and could serve as a template for the implementation of socio-economic reintegration of former soldiers. Entrusted with the management of resettlement and return in that Province, the resource-meagre Provincial government was confronted with the tasks of registering displaced peoples throughout the Province; identifying priority interventions and budgeting them; and identifying and coordinating humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organisations and community based organisations present in the Province that could be involved in the resettlement and return. Throughout this process, OCHA provided guidance and orientation, as well as capacity-building.

Huila's Provincial government recognised that resettlement and return was a multi-dimensional problem requiring the involvement of 'all forces at the local level', including humanitarian agencies and civic associations, churches and NGOs, as well as political parties and government agencies. In fact, Huila's PEPARR states that 'this must be a multidisciplinary and self-sustaining intervention; only this will stimulate in an objective way the return of populations to their original regions'. Consequently, a large number of organisations and government agencies were identified and grouped into intervention type and geographical area type clusters.

Following identification, the Provincial government began developing 'practical programmes to support the resettlement and return of these populations to their areas of origin, [in order to] give them a logistical package and possible conditions that will enable them to, in the shortest possible time, restore their dignity, self-esteem, self-sustenance, professional training, a solid and comfortable home, a quality school, preventive and curative health services, fight against poverty, social exclusion and food security that will entail the integration of populations in activities that are socially useful, that create income and are sustainable economically, prioritising agriculture'. In Huila Province, the following areas were prioritised: food security; rural extension and technical assistance; micro credit and micro finance; cooperatives; schooling and, finally, diversification of production in rural areas in terms of non-agricultural activities.

country, particularly in Bengo, Bié, Huambo, Kuanza Sul and Malanje. However, only 15 percent moved under an organised plan and only 30 percent of returnees are living in areas where the pre-conditions specified in the norms and regulation are in place. As of 19 December, OCHA reports that ‘number of people requiring food assistance has reached 1.8 million and an additional 300,000 people may become food insecure in the months ahead. Credible reports indicate that as many as 200,000 vulnerable people may be in critical distress in inaccessible areas. High rates of severe malnutrition exist in at least 15 locations and additional pockets may be present in remote communities. Morbidity and mortality levels remain at emergency and acute levels in many locations and millions of children are vulnerable to killer diseases,

Case Study Two: Uige Province

In Uige Province the process has been a little slower as a result of a two month gap between the appointment and swearing in, in January 2003, of a new Provincial Governor from UNITA, as agreed under the Lusaka Protocol. Uige was always one of the most insecure provinces, with large portions of the countryside under UNITA control right until the end of the war and the provincial capital itself passing several times from government to UNITA control. Today the provincial infrastructure is almost completely destroyed and large portions of the province are inaccessible, a situation made worse by the rainy season. In Uige, like in other Provinces, displacement occurred in several waves. In 1992 the number was put at 66,736; between 1992 and 1998 a further 130,456 were registered as internally displaced and between 1998 and 2002, 186,962 are believed to have been displaced in Uige Province. The majority of these were from within Uige itself.

Under PEPARR I, approximately 4 500 returned to their areas of origin by organized means from IDP camps. It is difficult to know how many returned spontaneously from outside camps, or from outside the province. Within the province 59,162 IDPs have declared themselves willing to return under a second phase of resettlement under PEPARR II, which provides for organized resettlement of IDPs located outside camps. Of the three IDP camps in Uige only Quituma still has a (small) resident IDP population, having been turned into a transit camp for ex-UNITA combatants. That the other two were emptied so quickly may be more indicative of problems within the camps than of the attractiveness of return, including poor conditions in Cawafeira and security problems and theft of crops by neighbouring FAA troops in Bengo

Novo. Indeed some that were returned under PEPARR I subsequently came back again because of the lack of sustainable living conditions in areas of return. Spontaneous return has also taken place in many areas with poor conditions and which are inaccessible for humanitarian assistance.

Return of IDPs has therefore progressed despite the almost complete absence of humanitarian assistance in most areas, where conditions are desparately bad. The overall cost of resettlement and return in Uige is currently estimated at over \$10m, with NGOs also contributing substantial sums in limited sectors of the province. Contracts have also been signed with the private sector to work on road construction, electricity, water and sanitation but work has not begun. So far, however, little progress has been made, in a situation made worse by the rains, and it remains to be seen if the new Provincial Government can muster the resources and the will to tackle the problem.

including measles'.²⁵ According to Government figures, more than 2.8 million people are still displaced in Angola and approximately 290,000 IDPs continue to live in camps and transit centres. Furthermore, mine accidents have increased during the seasonal rains, and as a result, several organisations have reduced or temporarily suspended their operations. In fact, according to humanitarian agencies, approximately 40 percent of the areas where humanitarian agencies are operational may be cut-off during the seasonal rains.

Repatriation of refugees

A final consideration is the repatriation of as many as 400,000 refugees from Namibia, Zambia, Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Formal repatriation programmes have not yet begun but by mid December around 86,000 were estimated to have spontaneously returned, the majority to areas where basic conditions for return were not in place.²⁶ Formal repatriation agreements were signed in November and December with Namibia, Zambia and DRC.²⁷