

Angola- Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Angola, the 7th largest African country, is situated on the western coast of the continent. It was colonized by Portugal until 1975, when the USSR helped rebels put in place a communist government. However, a civil war broke out soon after, which lasted until 2002, when the presidential republic was installed. Angola currently has one of the world’s lowest life expectancy and the highest infant mortality rate. It has a very diverse population and has one of the fastest growing economies thanks to its petroleum and mineral reserves. President José Eduardo dos Santos has been in power since 1979, and is Africa’s second longest serving leader.

Official language: Portuguese, **Recognised national languages:** Kikongo, Chokwe, Umbundu, Kimbundu, Nganguela, Kwanyama

Ethnic groups: 36% Ovimbundu, 25% Ambundu, 13% Bakongo, 22% other African, 2% Mestiço

Government: Unitary presidential republic

- President: José Eduardo dos Santos
- Vice President: Manuel Vicente

Death penalty: Abolitionist for all crimes

Population: 25.79 million

Life expectancy: 52.3 years

Under-5 mortality: 12.1 per 1000

Adult literacy: 91.4 percent



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ²



0.532 – Low Human Development ³

According to the UNDP, Angolans enjoyed a gross national income per capita of USD 4,180 and could expect to have on average 11.4 years of schooling. However, other countries with comparable gross national income per capita tend to have a much higher HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Largely disrespected ⁴

Police and security forces have used excessive and sometimes lethal force during their operations.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁵

There are no reports of disappearances in Angola.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Largely disrespected ⁶

The police are known for using excessive force during interrogations or when trying to disperse protestors during demonstrations. Prisoners often face harsh and life threatening conditions in detention.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Largely disrespected ⁷

The laws in place forbidding arbitrary detention are not respected. Security forces routinely arrest and detention persons without accusing them of crimes. Moreover, antigovernment supporters are often arrested without charges and sometimes arrested “preventively.”

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Largely disrespected ⁸

There has been some improvement in trying to guarantee the independence of prosecutors, yet judicial institutions remain very weak and ineffective. The lack of municipal courts – and therefore usage of informal courts – results in disparities between decisions.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Largely disrespected ⁹

Critics of the government, journalists, members of opposition parties and activists claim that they are often under surveillance from the government.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹⁰



Score: 39.89, Rank: 123 / 180 – Partially controlled, limited or intimidated ¹¹

Individuals and the press practice self-censorship. Therefore the provisions for free speech included in the constitution and the legal code remain limited in their effectiveness.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected ¹²

There are no restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Largely disrespected ¹³

Angola's constitution technically provides for the right of assembly, but it is often restricted by the government in cases of nonpartisan groups' gatherings.

Freedom of religion



Largely disrespected ¹⁴

The state is secular and provides for freedom of conscience, religion and worship, but it also requires all religious groups to register. It has not approved any new religious groups since 2004. Security forces have closed 44 churches and demolished two mosques.

Freedom of movement



Partially respected ¹⁵

The freedom of movement is enshrined in the constitution, but it is sometimes restricted. Communities from diamond mining areas are sometimes limited in their movements by security forces.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially respected ¹⁶

The government collaborates with the UNHCR and other migration organizations to help refugees and stateless persons. There have been many reports of security forces abusing irregular migrants, especially near the Democratic Republic of Congo border.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*) ^{17 18}



6 / 7 – Not free ¹⁹

Almost all of Angola's media outlets are state owned. These last years have been hard economically and the government adopted many unpopular measures. The government censors any kind of criticism and also suppresses protests, sometimes violently.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²⁰



6 / 7 – Not free²¹

The three branches of government are not really separated and the National Assembly has very little power, as 90% of the legislation comes from the executive. President dos Santo has been in power for 36 years and under the constitution, he could legally rule until 2022.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²²



Score: 18%, Rank: 164 / 175 – Extremely Corrupt²³

Corruption is widespread within all levels of government and accountability is very limited. Moreover, transparency remains a problem as information is limited and accessed with difficulty.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Largely disrespected²⁴

Angola's civil society often finds its activities obstructed by government officials. A new law regarding NGOs' specific areas of activity has been used to discourage and limit their work.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁵



Listed – Bakongo, Cabindans, Ovimbundu, Pastoralists, San and Kwisi at risk²⁶

According to Minorities Rights Group International, the Bakongo, Cabindans, Ovimbundu, Pastoralists, San and Kwisi are under threat.

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁷



Score: 64.3%, Rank: 117 / 144 – Very unequal rights²⁸

The law provides for the equality of women and men but discrimination is present, especially in rural areas. Violence against women is high and prosecution of crimes against women is often unsuccessful. The maternal mortality rate is high due to lack of adequate healthcare facilities.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)²⁹



Score: 40 %, Rank: 155/ 165 – Slightly vulnerable³⁰

Due to processing delays, 69% of children below five-years-old do not have birth certificates. Undocumented children can only attend school until fourth grade and in many rural areas, secondary education is very limited. Child abuse also remains a widespread phenomenon.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Partially respected³¹

Laws are in place to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and the government is making many efforts in strengthening this. Yet, discrimination persists and people with disabilities have trouble finding employment and getting an education.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Largely disrespected³²

The discrimination of migrant, foreign born workers in Angola, is institutional and widely reported on by both local international observers.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Partially respected^{33 34}

The constitution defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Violence against LGBTI individuals is rare but discrimination is widespread. The government has initiated projects to decrease the discrimination and is making efforts to improve the situation.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³⁵

Apart from public sector employees, workers have the rights to unionize and strike. However, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are not always respected.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Largely disrespected³⁶

The forced labour laws in place are hardly enforced due to a lack of inspectors. Kids are often sent to rural areas in order to work on farms.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Largely disrespected³⁷

Children were often employed in the informal sector even though laws prohibit employment before 14 years of age. Government officials have tried to strengthen child protection networks, but the lack of resources make the monitoring and prosecution of violations very hard.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Partially respected³⁸

The minimum wage does not apply to informal sector workers who make up about 60% of the economy. Labour law provides for paid annual leave, rest periods and excessive compulsory overtime. It also guarantees safe environments for employees.

Right to employment



6.7% - Reasonable unemployment³⁹

The unemployment rate of Angola has been quite stable for the last ten years. Only a 0,3% rise happened from 2008 to 2014. It is projected to remain the same for the upcoming years.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

³ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, Angola" UNDP, based on 2014 or the most recent year available. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Angola." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

- ⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a “disappearance” is different than simple arbitrary detention because a “disappearance” is considered permanent.
- ⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ¹⁰ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.
- ¹¹ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php>.
- ¹² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Angola." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016 Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.
- ¹³ "Angola." World Report 2014: Angola. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/Angola>.
- ¹⁴ "Angola." International Religious Freedom Report for 2013. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.
- ¹⁵ "Angola." World Report 2014: Angola. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/Angola>.
- ¹⁶ "Angola." World Report 2014: Angola. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/Angola>.
- ¹⁷ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).
- ¹⁸ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free) Accessed February 20, 2016 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>
- ¹⁹ "Angola." Freedom in the World 2014: Angola. January 1, 2016 Accessed February 20, 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/Angola-0#.VIIIHzGG9e8>.
- ²⁰ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed February 20, 2016 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>
- ²¹ "Angola." Freedom in the World 2014: Angola. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/Angola-0#.VIIIHzGG9e8>.
- ²² Transparency International (TI) publishes a “Corruption Perceptions Index” annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt
- ²³ "Angola." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2016. <http://www.transparency.org/country#BHR>.
- ²⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Angola." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.
- ²⁵ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed February 20, 2017 <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.
- ²⁶ "Angola." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2015, or most recent data. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.
- ²⁷ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights
- ²⁸ "Angola." World Economic Forum. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=AGX>.
- ²⁹ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable
- ³⁰ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>
- ³¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Angola." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.
- ³² Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ³³ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.
- ³⁴ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.
- ³⁵ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 Angola." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2015. Accessed February 20, 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

³⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

³⁹ "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 2016. Accessed February 20, 2017. http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS_233936/lang--en/index.htm