

excessive disruption of fragile commodity markets (especially diamonds) may lead to the collapse of commodity-dependent African economies.

2. Internal Context and Factors Contributing to the Civil War

Since its independence from Portugal, in 1975, Angola has been enveloped in a civil war with serious and wide-reaching implications. The long-standing conflict between the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) has paralysed the country's development and caused a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions. Peace has been thwarted twice this decade as UNITA's leader Jonas Savimbi refuses to accept the electoral victory and leadership of the MPLA. (The first peace accord between UNITA and MPLA was signed in 1991 at Bicesse, Portugal. The second agreement was reached in Lusaka in late 1994). The rich resources Angola possesses in oil and diamonds have supported and sustained the war. The international community, including the United Nations, is seen to have failed in effectively facilitating and supporting the peace process in Angola.

Power in Angola has been systematically monopolised since the colonial era. The majority of Angolans have been marginalised politically, socially and economically for decades. As a result of these processes, there was no chance to build a national Angolan identity, civic culture or to develop a sense of common good. The colonial era has also left Angola with deep regional divisions based on religious lines. The "Western" political solution to reconciliation has been based on majoritarian models that do not work in the Angolan context. The bipolar conflict can only be resolved by consensus. Some participants blamed the passive Angolan civil society for its inability to mobilise for change in support of the peace process and pointed to examples showing that activism works. (When mothers in Angola expressed their resolve not to let their children take up arms and fight, the government was forced to alter recruitment practices.)

Another factor sustaining the war in Angola is the lack of understanding of Angolan history. No systematic evaluation of the colonial as well as post-colonial past has been done. Lessons have not been learnt. Neither societal de-politicization and marginalization nor the expropriation of natural resources have been addressed.

A major dilemma emerged during the roundtable: the causal link between security (i.e., peace) and development. Some argued that as long as the war and bearing arms remain the most viable means to basic human survival including, nourishment, shelter and sense of security, soldiers will not disarm. Therefore, conditions/incentives must be created for soldiers to perceive they have other alternatives. Others pointed out that no such conditions/incentives can be created while armed hostilities continue and argued that peace must come before development.