



Joint UNHCR/IOM Donor Update Voluntary Repatriation of Angolan Refugees November 2011

"Homeland is always homeland!"
- Viktor Ucuyl, recently returned Angolan refugee from Zambia

Context

By early 2011, there were an estimated 114,000 Angolan refugees in neighbouring countries, 60,000 of whom have expressed an interest in returning to Angola during 2011 (34,000) and 2012 (26,000). UNHCR and other stakeholders see the need to bring closure to this refugee chapter particularly in light of the invocation of the cessation clause on 30 June 2012. UNHCR has over the past months stepped up efforts to find a lasting solution to the predicament of the remaining Angolan refugees either through voluntary repatriation, local integration or an alternative status.

The **Government of Angola** has expressed its commitment to supporting the return and integration of these Angolan citizens and will provide them with reintegration assistance upon return, with the support of **UNHCR** and the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**. Following a series of tripartite meetings in late 2010 and early 2011, between UNHCR, and the Governments of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Zambia and more recently, the Republic of Congo, it was agreed that the organized repatriation of Angolan refugees from neighbouring countries would begin in May 2011. As a result of these meetings, the first set of returns started on 20 May from Botswana and were soon followed by returns from Zambia on 16 June. Returns from the DRC have begun on 4 November 2011, with the first convoy of 340 refugees.

Key developments (See *country specific developments* below)

- Mass information campaigns promoting voluntary repatriation as well as awareness raising through Go-and-See-Visits have continued in Botswana, the DRC, Namibia and Zambia.
- A number of Tripartite Commission meetings have been held since the beginning of the year to establish a framework for the promotion and implementation of voluntary repatriation.
- In light of the limited progress achieved in providing durable solutions to Angolan refugees, UNHCR has proposed an extension for the invocation of the cessation clause, from 31 December 2011 to 30 June 2012.

Priority actions

- Maximize the number of returns to Angola within the limited resources available through efficacy in management.
- Complete the transit centre infrastructure, deploy resource to areas of most need, and preposition essential supplies such as food and the reintegration kit, in order to allow for proper reception of returnees.
- Provide returnees with the full reintegration packages, in keeping with the package agreed to.
- Continue to create awareness among the donor community in order to draw attention to the need for additional contributions ultimately to meet return objective of all refugees who desire to return home.
- Ensure continued commitment by all involved Governments to complete the repatriation plan as envisaged.

Challenges and constraints

One of the main challenges is related to funding constraints, which in turn have an impact on:

- Transportation, documentation and provision of assistance such as reintegration packages to returnees.
- The ability to increase the capacity (human resource) to monitor, coordinate and manage the repatriation and reintegration processes efficiently and in a cost effective manner.
- The ability to use large air carriers to transport returnees from Zambia (currently the small Zambia Air Force plane with a carrying capacity of 47 people is being used and it would take at least 700 trips to complete the repatriation exercise just for 2011); Transport by road is not viable for many areas of return because of poor road conditions resulting from heavy rain.
- The need to expand water supply and accommodation facilities to cater to an increase in returnees, and to provide complete reintegration kits and adequate food. On average, returnees spend up to three nights before being transported to their final destination, mainly due to the lack of limitations related to availability of take home food and reintegration kits which they receive at the reception centres.
- The ability to operationalize some of the repatriation structures such as transit centres.

An additional challenge is that Angolan authorities have indicated that they can only provide assistance for returnees who will arrive in 2011, because of competing priorities in 2012.

Financial information

UNHCR, IOM and the respective governments have used the available limited resources to conduct the returns to the extent possible. Accordingly, UNHCR allocated funding for the operation from its reserves and so through reprioritizing and rationalization of existing priorities. UNHCR provided IOM with USD 2,873,000 to implement the logistical arrangements while IOM from its own internal mechanisms made USD 513,000 available to its Angola and DRC missions in order to kick start the movements. Brazil and France complimented these efforts by UNHCR and IOM with contributions amounting to USD 854,275.

Funding/ contribution breakdown

Agency	Required Funding (USD)	Funding Received (USD)	Funding Sources	Targeted Country Operation
UNHCR	5,777,657	580,000	Brazil	Angola
		274,275	France	DRC
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>854,275</i>		
IOM	14,987,158	1,152,000	UNHCR	Zambia
		901,000	UNHCR	DRC
		820,000	UNHCR	DRC/Zambia
		513,000	IS/IOM	Angola
<i>Sub-total</i>		<i>3,386,000</i>		
Total		4,240,275		

Population of concern and planning figures

It was originally planned to repatriate 34,000 Angolan refugees in 2011, the majority of whom would come from the DRC and Zambia. However, unforeseen vagaries such as rains as well as the timing of the planting and harvest seasons, have impacted on the pace of the repatriation. This has been further compounded by inadequate funding. Consequently only 1,719 people have been repatriated to date. The return of some 18,620 Angolan refugees is planned in 2012 but given the poor showing in 2011, optimism remains low.

Country current population 2011 planning figures

Country	Current population*	Planning figures for 2011 as per the Special UNHCR/IOM joint appeal July 2011
Zambia	25,265	4,000
DRC	79,625	30,000
ROC	2,652	100
Namibia	5,920	100
Botswana	479	50
Total	113,941	34,250

* UNHCR statistics as of December 2010

Coordination and Implementing Arrangements

The Government of Angola through the Ministry of Social Welfare and Reintegration (MINARS) is coordinating the return and reintegration process inside Angola with support from UNHCR and IOM, and in coordination with the UN country team. Movements from the neighbouring countries are organized in close coordination with the government authorities in each country. The Government of Angola provides returnees with a reintegration kit and its Ministry of Justice provides documentation. In all the 3 locations (Angola, DRC and Zambia), IOM is operational through funding made available by UNHCR.

Conclusion

Due primarily to funding shortfalls, the goal of the Multi-Country Voluntary Repatriation project to assist 34,000 returnees, as foreseen in the first half of 2011, is likely not to be met. As such, tens of thousands of Angolan refugees who wished to return to their country will remain in the countries of asylum. This is likely to leave a very large residual population of Angolans in limbo in neighbouring countries with limited local integration prospects.

Country specific developments

Angola

- IOM is working closely with local and national authorities in establishing and maintaining nine reception and transit centres where accommodation, water and sanitation facilities, kitchen and administration facilities are being provided to the returnees. The returnees have been received at the Luena (Moxico province), Menongue (Kuangobango province), Huambo (Huambo province) and Kuito (Bie province) reception centres. IOM is also supporting the establishment of two additional Centres (Mama Rosa and Kiowa Reception Centres in Zaire province) and will soon supporting to Centres in Uige province.
- Angola has committed to providing all returnees with a reintegration kit, a three-month food ration, documentation, as well as awareness and education on mines and HIV/AIDS.
- UNHCR has conducted four monitoring missions to Luena (Moxico province), Menongue (Kuangobango province), and Huambo province to verify the suitability of the reception conditions to return. UNHCR has also interviewed returnee families reintegrated into local communities.
- UNHCR has supported Portuguese language training for more than 1,200 returnees from Zambia and DRC, through the establishment of three centres in Zaire and Moxico provinces. In Moxico province, five class rooms were built and in Mbaza Congo (Zaire province), a school is being built to support the activities.
- IOM is responsible for all transportation arrangements in Angola including transport from the reception centre to the final destinations as well as medical escorts for vulnerable individuals. IOM also coordinates and organizes the logistics for the transport, database management, warehousing, catering, luggage handling as well as distribution of the social reintegration kits and food assistance packages provided by MINARS.

Zambia

Since 16 June 2011, some 1,700 Angolans have been assisted to return to Angola on 39 flights. A further 300 persons are expected to return on 5 flights by the end of 2011. Four flights to Luena for some 200 people was scheduled for 18 and 19 October. However, unless more funding is received, this was the last return movement from Zambia.

The logistics are carried out by IOM with funding from UNHCR Zambia. Specifically, IOM has been involved with the management of the refugees' personal belongings, road transport from the transit centres in the settlements to the airport or to the border, organization of air transport, sourcing of trucks, buses and planes, management of related arrangements for fuel, landing rights and custom clearance.

DRC

UNHCR is in the process of confirming refugees' intention-to-return in the Bas-Congo, Kinshasa and Katanga provinces. Some 19,600 have so far registered for voluntary return.

Organized voluntary repatriation movements are planned to begin in early November 2011 (subject to the confirmation of the Governments of the DRC and Angola). The repatriation manifests for nine convoys of some 2,840 persons from Bas-Congo and Katanga provinces have been prepared and verified by UNHCR.

Two weekly movements of over 300 passengers each will be conducted between the Bas-Congo province of the DRC and the Zaire province in Angola while two additional weekly convoys of 250 persons will be conducted from Katanga province in the DRC to the Moxico Province, Angola.

Two transit centres have been built in Kimpese (Bas-Congo) and Dilolo (Katanga). A way station has also been built at Lufu (Bas-Congo border). Each centre has accommodation, registration, medical, warehousing (for baggage, food and non-food supplies) and cooking facilities, as well as water and sanitation facilities for men and women.

Thirty kilometres of road have been rehabilitated by IOM in Dilolo.

Three buses have been purchased by UNHCR and will be on loan to IOM for the operation. In addition, two trucks and five light vehicles have already been allocated to IOM by UNHCR to meet transportation needs.

Some 10,000 doses of yellow fever vaccinations have been purchased by UNHCR and are currently in Kinshasa. The vaccines will be handed over to IOM.

WFP has committed to giving food for hot meals provided at the transit centres.

Botswana

On 20 May 2011, twenty-eight Angolan refugees were transported to Menogue province in a military aircraft provided by the Government of Botswana.

Namibia

A profiling exercise in which some 4,270 Angolans were verified and profiled was completed in August 2011. Two per cent of them expressed a willingness to return to their country of origin.

To date, 15 Angolan refugees have registered with UNHCR to return to the Huambo, Huila and Bie provinces in Angola in October 2011. Another 19 Angolan refugees have so far registered to return in November 2011.

Go-and-See-Visits are planned to areas of origin in Angola (Lubango, Menogue, Bie, Huambo, and Calai)



UNHCR/A. Hampson

Mr. Viktor Ucuu returned to Angola three weeks ago with seven family members, including four children, after spending 11 years as a refugee in Zambia. His son returned four years ago and found a job with an Angolan oil company, which paid for the house he now shares with his family. *"I would have returned before, but couldn't for health reasons,"* he told UNHCR. *"Now I decided to come home and am happy to be back in my country,"* he said, explaining that he has access to a clinic close to the house where he lives so he continues to receive treatment. *"My family is happy to be back in Angola,"* he said, with a wide grin as a small child pulled at his shirt, *"homeland is always homeland."*

For more information, please contact:

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