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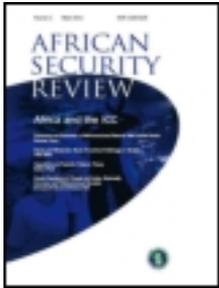
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Whose justice? Contextualising Angola's reintegration process

Inge Ruigrok*

Over the past decade, international efforts to end protracted conflict in Africa have directed large streams of funds towards the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants in rural areas. While designed as an integrated approach, the emphasis tends to lie on short time frames of transition through centrally managed programmes that narrowly target 'the demobilised'. Despite the good intentions of these programmes, there are a number of questions that need to be answered, particularly how the beneficiaries perceive them. This essay tries to answer some of these questions by analysing Caluquembe, a district in central Angola where villagers were subjected to violence on an everyday basis, and where since the war ended in 2002 hundreds of former UNITA soldiers and their families were reintegrated. The essay argues that the ongoing 'normalisation' efforts of reintegrating displaced people and demobilised soldiers are facing a number of challenges due to the narrow targeting of benefits, the lack of involvement of local government, the absence of any form of national reconciliation, and the emphasis on economic reintegration in an environment of extreme poverty and social exclusion. The essay also draws a number of lessons that could benefit reintegration efforts in the Great Lakes Region, particularly for the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi.

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Introduction: Angola's reconciliation process

Angola presents a quite unique and challenging context for a reintegration process, as the country lived through such a long episode in which there were two relatively clearly defined social and political structures, supported by rival ideologies. Both sides have built their internal mobilisation and support through the formation of an exclusive political, even national identity, while claiming to be the voice of the more authentic Angola. At the same time, the political and military divisions were both blurred and fluent during the sequences of war since independence from Portugal in 1975, and often even crossed families. It is now a common belief in broader Angolan society that reconciliation is foremost a process that takes place on a micro-level, with help from the churches, expressed often as *somos todos irmãos*, 'we are all brothers'.

Another factor that complicates Angola's post-war transition is the very nature of this process. The end of war was abrupt and for most, unexpected. While images of the trophy— a lifeless Jonas Savimbi lying on the grass in his underpants – were broadcast all over the world, President José Eduardo dos Santos flew to Lisbon to discuss the new situation with the Portuguese government, and then to the United States to meet with President George W Bush and Ibrahim Gambari, the UN Under-Secretary for African Affairs. Back in Luanda, on 13 March 2002, President dos Santos announced a peace plan that instructed the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) to stop all offensive actions against UNITA (*União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola*) rebels.¹ From then on, events followed one another in quick succession. On 4 April 2002, a new peace agreement was signed in which both sides promised to complete the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

In fact, the political transition occurred without the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) conceding any power. The government's conviction has always been, especially in the last phase of war, that it was protecting the Angolan people and that its military campaign was a defence of democracy and sovereignty, a war that had to be waged for peace. It made a great effort to portray Angola as a 'normal' country, above all through the restart of the constitutional drafting process.² It is for these reasons that the government never felt the need to apologise for any wrongdoings, contrary to UNITA, whose secretary for political issues, Abílio Kamalata Numa, appeared on Rádio Nacional on 6 January 2003 to ask for forgiveness from Angolans who were directly or indirectly affected by UNITA's mistakes.

Angola's 27 years of war has produced winners and losers, although the government has refrained itself from displaying a victorious mood and adopted a forgiving attitude, pre-empting prosecution and punishment for all. Reconciliation has practically been synonymous to a blanket amnesty for crimes committed in the context of war; such laws were continuously updated to include the next phase of conflict. An amnesty clause was

part of the 2002 Luena Memorandum of Understanding, which reiterated the 'national reconciliation' as called for in the Lusaka Protocol.³ At the same time, reconciliation concerned the broadening of Angola's political structures on national and sub-national level to include UNITA, and more recently, with the end of conflict in the province Cabinda, *Fórum Cabindes para o Dialogo* (FCD), and to establish a joint national army and police force.

In the shadow of these arrangements between elites, ordinary Angolans were told to forget the past and look forward to the future. Such an effort to move on is not without danger as injuries are not so much forgiven but publicly ignored, leaving them to fester. The risk is that collective memory becomes a political tool, as the alternation of forgetting and remembering itself etches the path of power (Minow 1998:119). Yet, the complexity of the wounds have even made civil society activists believe that an institutionalised response to human rights abuses (which included a 'scorch earth' policy pursued by the FAA to wrench guerrillas from their support base while the increasingly isolated UNITA forces engaged in savage responses) would not be a favourable option in Angola today. The discourse is much about the necessity of having a 'social peace', a settlement that goes beyond a military agreement to include 'transparent political competition'. 'It is more important that people are lifted out of poverty, and have access to opportunities. Maybe, much later, through a national debate, we can look at the political side to try to understand the lessons that caused the conflict to last for so long. Not at this moment.'⁴

In actual fact, Angola's most inclusive national reconciliation initiative so far is the government's reintegration programme, which it drew up as war ended in 2002 after which it was made to fit the framework of the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). The policy represents the inauguration of a nation-building process in which the Angolan state has increasingly positioned itself as the harbinger of post-war reconstruction. Today, President dos Santos – portrayed as Angola's 'peace-president' – openly admits that only one million people in Angola have the basic conditions for living, a public acknowledgment that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Reintegration, with its emphasis on the fight against poverty and the diminution of political and economic disparities, aims to advance redistributive justice. Improving the benefits and opportunities offered to the military demobilised from active service became a main focus. Priority is placed in the rural areas that were most affected by war, and the re-launching of agricultural production. For the society in general, the programme stimulates the acceptance of a 'new way of conducting social relationships.'

This essay explores one aspect of this reintegration process, namely its local legitimacy. How do those affected perceive the trans-nationally designed policies that seek to reconcile their local society? And how do these policies fit with the way people re-imagine peace, in their homes and in their daily lives? Such questions matter because a

lasting and integrated justice process can lead to greater legitimacy and thus to a greater chance of delivering enduring peace. On the other hand, a reintegration process linked to national reconciliation always runs the risk of a trade-off between security and justice. Addressing these issues calls for a bottom-up and contextualised perspective. The first part of this essay situates Angola's reintegration programme with its redistributive justice features within a wider political framework. The second part brings the perspective of the people of Caluquembe, just one district in the interior of Angola where the outcome of the reintegration process will be determined. The essay concludes with some lessons drawn from the Angolan case for the region.

Reintegration and its political context

The inter-linkages between conflicts in central Africa inspired the World Bank in April 2002 to design a regional approach to channel international donor support to demobilisation and reintegration activities in the region. Under the umbrella guidelines of the MDRP, individual country plans are conceived in conjunction with national governments. Qualifying for support are African countries that participate in the regional peace process for the Great Lakes Region, and that established domestically 'appropriate institutional arrangements' for a national MDRP. The programme aims at enhancing the prospects for stabilisation and recovery in the region. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants are necessary to establishing peace and restoring security; the programme philosophises, which are in turn pre-conditions for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. In this process, the World Bank's role is threefold: the international financial institute acts as manager of the MDRP Secretariat, as administrator of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and as co-financier of national programmes.⁵

The Angolan government, a signatory to the Lusaka agreement that formally ended conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), commenced a series of talks with the World Bank on a possible Angolan version of the MDRP in May 2002. By that time, it was already clear that such a programme would only relate to the reintegration of former combatants in local society, and not to the process of disarmament and demobilisation. To avoid any repetition of the flawed processes of the past, the government had prioritised the demobilisation of 97 138 UNITA combatants, of which 5 007 would stay in the FAA, while 40 would be integrated into the national police. It was effectively managing this stage single-handedly, although it had postponed the security reforms that included the discharge of 33 000 FAA troops.⁶ Disjointedly from the demobilisation process, which was managed by the Joint Military Commission in which both MPLA and UNITA were represented, a comprehensive reintegration program for the demobilised UNITA combatants was put on paper. This policy fleshed out the agreements made between the former belligerent parties in the Luena Memorandum of Understanding and for which the government sought donor funding

to share the estimated costs of US\$55 million.⁷ The Institute for Socio-Economic Reintegration of Ex-Military (IRSEM), an agency within the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reinsertion (MINARS), would be in charge of implementation, while a special inter-ministerial commission would keep an eye on policy development and carry political responsibility.

The World Bank recommended a revision of the government's plans, which would integrate the demobilisation and the reintegration process into one national programme. Such a strategy could then be broadened to include not just the UNITA combatants demobilised under the Memorandum of Understanding, but also 33 000 FAA troops that were to be demobilised, and 'old case-loads'. This last category included 191 400 combatants identified for demobilisation and reintegration under the two former peace processes, but that were abandoned in mid-stream as donors withdrew funds in the wake of renewed war, having received none or only part of the assistance to which they were entitled.⁸ For the 'new case-loads', the World Bank envisaged a 'transitional safety net': a cash allowance that would cover the basic needs of the ex-combatants for a period of twelve months.

Importantly, the assistance to the reintegration of ex-military should be made beneficial to the wider community and consistent with the support to over four million returning civilians and to broader recovery efforts at the local level. A social component would form part of the reintegration programme, with projects focused on reconciliation. Although the government had also clearly envisaged this in its own reintegration programme, the World Bank rationalised that a single centralised government agency would manage the combined reintegration efforts better. A presidential decree created a national commission, *Comissão Nacional de Reintegração Social e Productiva dos Desmobilizados e Deslocados* (CNRSPDD), in early June 2002,⁹ which substitutes the inter-ministerial commission. IRSEM continues as the implementing agency, while responding to the Executive Committee of CNRSPDD, which is headed by the minister of Assistance and Social Reinsertion (MINARS).

The integrated approach that the MDRP demanded was built into the second draft policy, *Programa Geral de Desmobilização e Reintegração* (PGDR), which the Angolan government presented on 10 October 2002. This was a three-year programme, starting from the demobilisation phase in April 2002, although the government financed this component on its own account, which at the time already exceeded US\$100 million. But the final negotiations between the World Bank and the Angolan government planned for November 2002 were delayed to the end of January 2003. Outstanding issues had to be resolved in the exact design of the PGDR, which the World Bank and its donors called the Angolan Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (ADRP). These were concluded in late March 2003 after which the World Bank gave its green light to an IDA credit of US\$33 million.

The amount still needed for the reintegration programme, whose costs was calculated at US\$179,7 million, was a US\$48,4 million grant from the MDRP Trust Fund and US\$16,6 million bilateral donor funding, in addition to further government contribution (World Bank 2003c). Yet, there were concerns among donors regarding the pace and nature of the government's demobilisation efforts. Military IDs, for instance, were not always distributed prior to discharge from quartering areas, and there were indications that some former UNITA troops were taken to places for resettlement against their will. Donors who supported the MDRP Trust Fund felt that IRSEM was not prepared enough to implement such a wide-ranging and complex reintegration programme, and even if it was, the amount of opportunities that could be offered to the demobilised soldiers in their areas of return was still too little (World Bank 2002).

In general there were teething troubles regarding donor involvement in Angola's post-war rebuilding efforts. For the World Bank, the ADRP forms part of a larger package, labelled the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme (PCRRP), which broadly aims at achieving macro-economic stability, and the implementation of a 'pro-poor post-conflict spending program increasingly focused on service delivery' (World Bank 2003a). If a country is to qualify for donor funding, such a general recovery programme must be based on a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, of which the Angolan government only presented a draft version in September 2003, without the required three-years macro-economic framework (*Ministério do Planeamento* 2003). Also, an agreement on an IMF-supported programme is necessary. As Angola is considered to be a 'high-risk high-reward' country, with oil reserves that are not just providing astonishing business opportunities, but also severe development concerns, the conditions attached to the donor aid were even tougher. The government had to pick up the pace with finalising an oil sector diagnostic study, and reduce 'its extra-budgetary and quasi-fiscal outlays'. Furthermore, support to the ADRP would be linked to increased transparency regarding public financial management, the government's plans for the security sector, a reduction in the size of the FAA, and a substantial government contribution to financing the ADRP.

On durability: Reintegration policy in practice

Despite the overall objective to help consolidate socio-economic stability in Angola, and in the Great Lakes Region in general, the World Bank defined its intervention as a short-term measure, intended to give a first push to recovery. Accordingly, the ADRP, which finally came off the ground in March 2004, consists of an array of sub-projects, all limited in time. Each sub-project offers 'opportunities' to a group of ex-combatants in the area where they returned to, based on their wishes and skills, and on what the local economy has to offer. Agriculture is identified as a key possibility for the career-changing soldiers, also because the government hopes to re-launch this sector that once

produced the finest coffee in the world, and develop rural areas that were so affected by war. But demobilised soldiers may also choose to start small businesses, or receive on-the-job training while they are involved in community building projects. If an ex-combatant qualifies, he or she may receive additional 'complementary opportunities' such as micro-credit and job placement in a public or private institution.

The implementation of the ADRP is based on a two-tire strategy. IRSEM, which has offices in each of the country's 18 provinces, forms the centre of the institutional web. As the implementation arm of CNRSPDD, it is in direct contact with the World Bank, although the money flow goes via an independent financial management unit. IRSEM also prepares inventories of the different reintegration projects, the majority of which it contracts out to larger implementing partners who either developed specific activities themselves or established partnerships with smaller organisations that work at grassroots level. These 'primary partners' are usually international NGOs such as CARE, or UN agencies that supplement IRSEM's management capacities while providing technical knowledge and capacity building to the smaller service providers.

This is the programme design on paper. In practice, the time span for reintegration sub-projects proved to be too short, exhausting the smaller organisations that are actually implementing the ADRP at the local level, rather than strengthening them. As the coordinator of one organisation voiced:

[A]n agricultural project can't be implemented in 9 months, there is not enough result by then. There is this bureaucratic network. The payment for the project comes in three phases. Each time, we have to submit a progress report to IRSEM in the province and they send it to IRSEM at national level and finally to the World Bank. It takes two months to analyse it, and in the meantime, the next phase is blocked. Formally, the project has already finished but we have only received 50 percent of the budget. We are now trying to overcome this situation. The process was difficult in the beginning. We had to think about how to engage with ex-military that had fought on the side of the rebels. We were fearful. But once we began it went well, and now we are worried that we have to leave in the middle. We would like to give support until there is minimum stability, so we can look back and say that it was worth the effort.¹⁰

Originally, the ADRP would start before June 2003. The implementation was postponed to March 2004, and then it still took close to a year before the first sub-projects were up and running as IRSEM's partners had to be selected, and their proposals reviewed. By the end of 2004, only 7 288 demobilised UNITA soldiers were benefiting from projects under the ADRP (IRSEM 2005), while the first thousands had already returned to their areas of origin or choice two years earlier. Smaller reintegration projects filled

the gap in the meantime. The MDRP Trust Fund allocated about US\$4,3 million to an UNDP-led pilot project in central Angola that targeted 4 891 demobilised UNITA troops, although only 3 117 of these were recent ex-combatants, the assistance mostly concerned short-term training instead of sustainable employment opportunities. When the project ended in June 2005, close to 45 000 ex-combatants had received agricultural assistance through FAO, although the planned 50 000 agricultural toolkits had hardly been distributed. Also, the government had started its own reintegration initiatives by offering 6 500 ex-combatants jobs at the ministries of Health and Education, while a further 4 448 had received professional training under a programme run by the Ministry of Public Administration, Employment, and Social Security. Approximately 8 000 demobilised soldiers had by early 2004 already found employment at other public or private institutions, without any support, or with financial assistance from sources other than the MDRP (World Bank 2005).

In the rural areas, where most ex-combatants returned to, there often was a dazzling variety of reintegration schemes, set up for the time being by local church groups or NGOs. These projects could only cater to a handful of demobilised soldiers, and offered limited assistance and few benefits. When the much larger national programme was finally formalised, in many cases all demobilised soldiers came to register. Yet, the ADRP not only disqualifies the 'old-case loads', ex-combatants who were demobilised in the context of the two previous peace processes. Also, soldiers that had recently been demobilised, but had already benefited from any other reintegration project, were excluded from the opportunities offered under the ADRP even if they did not feel reintegrated enough yet. This resulted in a substantial degree of confusion and misunderstanding.

When the time span of transnationally designed programmes is short, there is a high possibility that they would have few benefits due to their limited involvement of local state institutions. Working with state institutions is often a drawn out, tedious and highly political process. International donors often prefer to quickly put up their own camps instead of working with local authorities. Such an approach may also jeopardise the durability of the assistance, as well as other processes such as transitional justice.

In Angola, where the general reconciliation process has taken such a strong development angle in the absence of any legal or quasi-legal response to human rights abuses, the coordinating and monitoring task of authorities that are closest to citizens seems to be particularly important. The ADRP broadly recognises that the process 'should be implemented in close coordination with local and provincial administrations to ensure that all activities targeted at ex-combatants remained consistent with overall integration activities at local level' (World Bank 2003, paragraphs 21, 91 and 92).

Yet, in practice, the programme seems to rely entirely on central government agencies with decentralised directorates in the provinces, and on NGOs as implementing

partners. The CNRSPDD has branches outside Luanda that are responsible for resettlement and reintegration, but these are limited to the provincial level and meet on an ad hoc basis. Generally, the ADRP follows the contours of contemporary state administration in Angola, which remains highly centralised, with vertical accountability relations, despite the adoption of a law that realised a partial devolution of the country's political-administrative affairs from Luanda to sub-national governments.¹¹ These state reforms have not yet percolated to the lower levels in a significant way. For instance, most of the ministerial responsibilities have not been delegated to the municipalities.¹² Aggravating this situation are the blank spots in state administration at the level of *bairros* and *povoações*. These lowest administrative units still have no legal framework, leaving a great part of the population, particularly in rural areas, at the outer edges of the state.

People's perceptions: The case of Caluquembe

An obvious, yet not frequently asked question that comes to mind when studying transitional justice processes, designed on a transnational scale, is what legitimacy these programmes have in the eyes of those affected. People's reactions to such initiatives are often manifestly diverse. They depend primarily on what type of justice that is administered, and how it is administered, as well as on the background of the people, and their experiences over time. These experiences do not only include people's encounters with direct violence, and conflict resolution settlements, but also the large-scale process of mobilisation of materials and social resources societies at war usually undergo, and the opportunities and capabilities people have themselves to heal the wounds of war and rebuild their lives and their societies.

It is this question that is central to the following case study of Caluquembe, a district 190 km northeast of Lubango in south-central Angola, although an extensive examination goes beyond the scope of this essay.¹³ Caluquembe, as the breadbasket of Huíla province, was a hotly contested area in Angola's last two war episodes. Although there were incidents of fighting on its outskirts all along, particularly in 1987, the district was drawn into a situation of full-scale war when UNITA occupied the area in March 1991 and attempted to install its own administrative structures there. Initially, the rebel movement enjoyed sizeable support from the population. This changed with the violent run-up to the elections of 1992, a first exercise in democracy that is engraved in people's minds as a traumatic event. Even when the government recaptured Caluquembe in October 1994, the district remained surrounded, turning into a patchwork of government and rebel-held areas. The population that did not flee to safer grounds remained trapped, largely out of reach for humanitarian agencies, until war ended in 2002.

Today, Caluquembe is one of Angola's former war zones where UNITA and MPLA are sharing power in the municipal administration office, while the district's population has

returned to rural life with its lush green hills. Peace brought many changes to Caluquembe. Often cited is that a free movement of people is again possible, that ‘the war does not let us lose our children any longer’, and that the risk of losing land and animals has disappeared.¹⁴ ‘I am not a *deslocado* any more. Having to leave was the most difficult thing that happened in my life. It is very sad. A person loses everything, also respect. To live on the land of others is difficult.’¹⁵ *Deslocado* (‘displaced’) identity among people who had to flee war refers to loss of land and home; it is an empty identity. ‘A *deslocado* is not respected. It is someone who lost everything. That hurts a lot, principally when you know that you still have the strength to work. I don’t want to remember that I was once called like that.’¹⁶

Simultaneously with the returning villagers, 1 074 soldiers that were demobilised under the Memorandum of Understanding settled in Caluquembe. Most, if not all, were born there, and rejoined their families. For some, fighting for UNITA was a question of survival. Not just because it provided a job and an income, or they believed that life would become better once UNITA was in power, but also because they had become party members and feared for their life when war restarted in 1992.¹⁷ Others were abducted as children and forced to fight in UNITA’s army. ‘In 1984, I was taken together with my grandfathers with whom I lived to Chicomba, which was under UNITA’s control from then on. Even though I was only 17, I was installed in FALA. Politicians who wanted power against all costs used us.’¹⁸ Interestingly, although they were taken by UNITA against their will, as children, they stayed in military life for a very long time, sometimes up to 20 years. All interviewed ex-soldiers stayed for more than ten years, having never been demobilised in the context of previous peace processes. ‘In 1994, there were troops that had to stay to reinforce the party structures. These ones did not go to the quartering areas. There was a fear that they would desert if they would be taken to the FAA. These soldiers were selected beforehand.’¹⁹

Politics is a topic that still causes great fear. The experience of having fought on the side of the ‘losers’ and being reintegrated into a local society that suffered vicious UNITA attacks, has silenced many people. The first days at home were difficult. In some areas, people think that only UNITA killed and the other side did not. They clearly remember, while they were living in a government-controlled area, when UNITA attacked and took their fathers, brothers, their animals and burned their homes. These acts left indelible marks in families:

I think the worst situation has already passed. But these first days, when we really got there, the situation was not good at all. People react and say: ‘The ones that have reached my age know very well that my father died, and the oxen went, and who did all this? It was an individual of UNITA.’ But now the situation is improving, little by little.²⁰

Both demobilised soldiers as returning villagers say that they hoped to return to their land, to return to cultivating, to find back their family. Family relations seem to have been the most important reintegration ‘mechanism’.

In the last years, I didn't agree anymore with the war. All I wanted was to return to my land and start a new life. After the war, I decided to install me here in Ngola, because I knew that in the place where you were born you are always welcomed. Until now, nothing bad happened. I found my family again via the party bureau of UNITA, and because I had always a good relationship with them, the reintegration was easy. The life we are having now is very different from military life. With more time, I think we will be able to say that this life is better.²¹

Caluquembe's 1 074 ex-combatants are a target group for the ADRP, although only 800 qualified for the reintegration support that started in January 2006, including 7 women and 19 disabled. Others had already benefited from the carpenter's project the local Catholic Church had set up for ten months with funds from the government, in which their wives learnt how to cook and clean. Also an Italian NGO had started a small initiative, and the government had distributed some cattle, in the hope that the ex-combatants would form a cooperative.

Within the ADRP, most of the demobilised forces work as farmers. Five ex-combatants were given one male and two female goats for breeding, and two oxen they have to share. Additionally, they received basic agricultural equipment and seeds to start growing crops. A group of 35 opted for on-the-job training while building a school for the community, which earned them a salary of US\$50 for six months. Twenty ex-combatants started their own businesses, such as a pharmacy, a furniture workshop, etc. They borrowed US\$300 out of a rotating fund without paying interest. In six months, they made a profit, and refunded the start-up capital. The ADRP in Caluquembe ended in September 2006. By that time, 622 out of 800 qualifying demobilised soldiers had received support. Nationally, just over half of all demobilised UNITA combatants were by then covered under the programme. IRSEM had signed contracts with the implementing partners for the reintegration of 53 387 ex-combatants, of which 52 974 were benefiting from assistance.²² The ADRP was supposed to finish by the end of 2006, but the programme has been prolonged for an indefinite period.

Security concerns represented by the former UNITA soldiers led the channelling of existing resources within the ADRP first and foremost towards their assistance. Other war-affected people would receive assistance under broader, national programmes, such as the poverty-reduction strategy. Still, as the ADRP recognises the need to guarantee that reconciliation at the local level is not jeopardised by the focused support to ex-combatants, a social component was built into the programme. The social reintegration strategy includes sensitising local communities to the return of demobilised soldiers and vice versa, raising the ex-combatants' awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities, and inform them about health related issues, including HIV/Aids. But such activities have usually taken place during the demobilisation phase and are not really sustained

throughout the reintegration process in local communities, when they are most needed. The economic aspects of reintegration dominate.

Such an exclusive support to ex-combatants, however limited and brief, creates an imbalance in a society that as a whole is recovering from war, and where most people – on average in Angola 68 per cent of the population – live below the poverty line, and even 26 per cent live in extreme poverty.²³ Villagers' reactions vary: 'I don't like the demobilised. They killed my children. The wound heals but the scars stay forever. When you look at the scars again, you know that someone has hurt you. It is as they say: you can clean your face but to clean your heart is more difficult.'²⁴ 'The support to the demobilised is justified because they are receiving some skills to restart life. But it is important that they know that the rest of the people have the same difficulties as the demobilised. Everyone here is restarting life and if these rights only go to the demobilised, it leaves us thinking that they are being paid for having made war.'²⁵ 'The demobilised is receiving his share. It is important that they are not thinking of war any longer. But we, as Angolans that suffered in the war, also have our rights, although we never picked up the arms.'²⁶

Both villagers and ex-combatants speak of reconciliation as 'forgiveness' and 'to live well with others'. 'Reconciliation is to forget the war and to forgive the brothers that went with UNITA.'²⁷ 'Reconciliation is forgiveness, that a person can be the way he wants and that nobody accuses him of past crimes.'²⁸

Conclusions: Angola's lessons for the Great Lakes Region

With most of post-war population movement now complete, Angola is at crossroads. Decisions made today will determine whether the huge population of recently displaced and former combatants can fully reintegrate into a peacetime society. This is especially so because reintegration assistance became so intimately linked to a wider, long-awaited process of national reconciliation, in which 'justice-doing' is directed at durable livelihoods and social inclusion. Reintegration was formulated to be a 'transformational' process linked to pronounced development goals, rather than 'transitional' reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

Yet, reintegration assistance in the form of a national version of the regionally designed MDRP did not encompass these features in practice. Although the demobilisation process commenced immediately after the signing of the April 2002 Memorandum of Understanding, a comprehensive reintegration strategy was delayed, which was mainly due to tough conditions imposed by donors and an apparent lack of institutional capacity on the government's side. Simultaneously, the reintegration policy increasingly narrowed its target group and benefits, exhausting local organisation that implemented

the programme at grassroots level. Such an approach jeopardises the opportunity a reintegration process represents for achieving political stability and building peace.

In addition, the lack of involvement of local governments as coordinating and supervising agencies on the local level where people are rebuilding their lives, and the emphasis on economic reintegration in an environment of extreme poverty and social exclusion, proved to be particularly problematic, increasing the latent potential for recurring conflict. This ties into the problem that quick-fix reintegration strategies are difficult to reconcile with the need for rebuilding social cohesion, and healing. A contextualised approach, which keeps a strong eye on the wider political landscape, and local particularities including experiences and perceptions, would greatly benefit reintegration strategies, not just in Angola but also in the DRC and elsewhere in the greater Great Lakes Region. Although conflicts might have taken a regional or trans-regional character, reintegration and rebuilding may still take place on a local scale, among a variety of actors in specific contexts. The legitimacy of a transitional justice process is an important, and often underscored, determinant of its outcome. A fitting conclusion should be this quote from one of the people who fled his family because of war: 'If there is an area where the bees once stung, and you want go back there, you have to take it slow, you have to go carefully.'²⁹

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Notes

- 1 *Declaração do Governo da República de Angola, Governo instrui Estado Maior General das Forças Armadas Angolanas para cessar movimentos ofensivos, 13 de Março de 2002.*
- 2 *República de Angola, Lei 1/98 de 20 de Janeiro.*
- 3 Lusaka Protocol, annex 6, agenda item ii4, general principles, paragraph 5.
- 4 Interview with Eunice Inácio, coordinator of a peace-building programme at Development Workshop, Luanda, October 2005.
- 5 Currently, nine countries in Central and Southern Africa receive support under the MDRP: Burundi, Rwanda, the DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Central African Republic and Uganda. (World Bank 2002a).
- 6 For an overview of Angola's disarmament and demobilisation process, and early reintegration efforts, see Gomes Porto and Parsons 2003.
- 7 *Comissão Intersectorial para o Processo de Paz e Reconciliação Nacional (Comite Executivo), Programa de Reintegração Social dos Desmobilizados dos Ex-Militares da UNITA, Abril 2002.*
- 8 During the Bicesse peace process, 134 289 troops were demobilised (10 402 of UNITA's army FMU and 123 887 of the government's FAPLA). After the signing of the Lusaka Protocol 57 111 combatants were demobilised (48 700 of FMU and 360 of the FAA) (IRSEM 2005).
- 9 *Decreto Presidencial 5/02, Regulamento da Comissão Nacional de Reintegração Social e Productiva dos Desmobilizados e Deslocados.*
- 10 Interview with *Ação para o Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente* (ADRA), Caluquembe, 4 October 2006.
- 11 *Decreto-Lei 17/99 de 29 de Outubro / Orgânica dos Governos Provinciais, Administrações Municipais e Comunais.*
- 12 Decentralised departments of the ministries of Finance, Interior and Justice hardly exist below the provincial level, while these services are important for citizenship reinforcement and local tax collection (UNDP 2005:21, 41–43).
- 13 This case study is part of a larger, ongoing ethnographic research on Angola's political transition, supported by the Wenner Gren Foundation and the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO).
- 14 Interviews with villagers, Caluquembe, October–November 2006.
- 15 Interview with 46 year old man from Vatuco *comuna* who fled with his family to Quipungo – 1993–2002.
- 16 Interview with 59 year old man from Lomba *comuna* who fled with his family to Cacula and Lubango – 1995–2002.
- 17 Interviews with demobilised UNITA soldiers, Caluquembe, October–November 2006.
- 18 Interview with 39 year old demobilised UNITA soldier, Ngola *comuna*.
- 19 Interview with 40 year old demobilised UNITA soldier from Lomopa *comuna*.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Interview with 39 year old demobilised UNITA soldier from Ngola *comuna*.
- 22 World Bank 2006.
- 23 *Governo de Angola, Ministério do Planeamento* 2005.
- 24 Interview with 58 year old woman from Lomba

- comuna* who lost her two children who were fighting on the government side.
- 25 Interview with 59 year old man from Vissapa Yela *comuna* who twice fled to the centre of Caluquembe (1987 and 1992).
- 26 Interview with 58 year old man from Vatuco *comuna* who fled to Malipi, Quipungo, in 1993 until 2002.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Interview with 33 year old demobilised UNITA soldier from Calepi *comuna*.
- 29 Interview with 46 year old man from Vatuco *comuna* who fled with his family to Quipungo in 1993 until 2002.