

**APARTHEID'S  
WAR  
AGAINST  
ANGOLA**

**Marga  
Holness**

# **APARTHEID'S WAR AGAINST ANGOLA**

by Marga Holness

An account of South African aggression against  
the People's Republic of Angola



A joint United Nations Centre against Apartheid and  
World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration  
with South Africa publication

Centre against Apartheid  
United Nations New York NY 10017 USA

World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration  
with South Africa  
PO Box 2, Lindeberg Gaard Oslo 10 Norway

February 1983

ISBN 0 946516 00 6 40 pence



**The United Nations Centre against Apartheid**, in the UN Secretariat, was established to service the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, to publicise the evils of apartheid and to administer UN funds for assistance to the victims of apartheid. The Centre is headed by UN Assistant Secretary-General Mr E S Reddy. Copies of its publications can be obtained from UN Information Centres as well as from the Centre against Apartheid itself: **United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA.**

**The World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa** was established following consultations with the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid; with representatives of the front line states of Southern Africa; and with the Southern African liberation movements. The World Campaign has worked in close cooperation with the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, and with anti-apartheid and solidarity movements.

The objectives of the World Campaign include:

- \* To promote the widest awareness by world public opinion of the grave and increasing threat to international peace and security created by the system of apartheid in South Africa
- \* To campaign for an end to all forms of military, nuclear and security collaboration with the racist regime in South Africa
- \* To publicise all information concerning military and nuclear plans of the South African regime, its threat to and breaches of international security and actions by governments and organisations to end all collaboration with that regime.

The Founding Patrons of the World Campaign include Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania and Chairman of the front line states; the late Dr Agostinho Neto, former President of Angola; the late Sir Seretse Khama, former President of Botswana, Lt-General Olusegun Obasanjo, formerly Head of State of Nigeria; and Dr Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia.

Organisations and individuals are urged to provide any information concerning breaches of the UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa to the World Campaign: **PO Box 2, Lindeberg Gaard, Oslo 10, Norway. Tel (02) 30 13 45. Telex 72314 AAMN.**

Copies of *Apartheid's War against Angola*, can also be obtained from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous Street, London NW1, England. Tel 01-387 7966



## PREFACE

The constant and escalating acts of aggression, destabilisation and terrorism committed by the racist regime of South Africa against the independent African states have created a growing threat to international peace. The peoples of Southern Africa, who have achieved independence after heavy sacrifices, have known no peace for many years. Their efforts for economic and social development are frustrated and the infrastructures in their countries are being destroyed.

As the winds of freedom moved into Southern Africa, and as resistance of the oppressed people of South Africa increased, apartheid has become inseparable from savage repression and flagrant violation of international law and international morality.

The People's Republic of Angola has been the worst victim of apartheid aggression, suffering the loss of untold lives and damage estimated at ten billion dollars. For it was born in defiance of the nefarious plans of the Pretoria regime to bring that country under a dependent regime and gave its hospitality to the national liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia.

This pamphlet — prepared in pursuance of the activities of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid to publicise the acts of aggression by South Africa and to promote assistance to Front Line States — gives a brief account of the sacrifices made by Angola in the discharge of its responsibilities for African freedom.

I hope it will enable public opinion to appreciate the duty to assist Angola and all other Front Line States in this crucial period and to denounce all those who collaborate with the Pretoria regime and protect it from international sanctions.

There can be no peace so long as apartheid survives in South Africa and the racist regime is allowed to act as an outlaw.

**HE Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule**  
Chairman, UN Special Committee against Apartheid

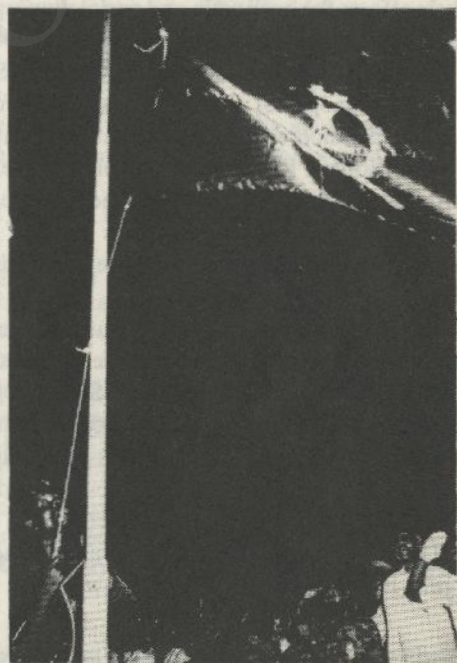
## INTRODUCTION

The South African apartheid regime has long been condemned by the international community for its suppression of political, social, economic and other basic human rights within its borders. But since the independence of Mozambique and Angola – and subsequently Zimbabwe – the increased militarisation of the South African regime has been accompanied by alarming expansionist tendencies and the use of violence to attempt to influence the course of events outside South Africa's borders. All the Front Line and neighbouring independent states in Southern Africa are increasingly threatened by the aggression and destabilisation efforts of South Africa, the most economically and militarily powerful regime in Africa. Pretoria is seeking to push back the frontiers of independent Africa, secure its economic hegemony in the region and, ultimately, to ensure the survival of the apartheid system itself. Its hostile actions against independent African states take various forms – direct military invasion and occupation by the South African regular army, bombing raids and incursions, the use of mercenaries and groups of nationals hostile to the governments of independent states, economic sabotage and pressure, the assassination of individuals, virulent propaganda campaigns and, in general, attempts at political and economic destabilisation. These methods have been used in different combinations and to differing degrees against all the African countries which border on South Africa or South African-occupied Namibia.

The People's Republic of Angola has suffered more in this respect than any other African country. This has included

several large-scale South African invasions. Even on the eve of Angola's independence in 1975, South African regular forces staged a massive invasion of Angola – an event without precedent in Africa's history – and occupied large areas of the country for several months, including most of Angola's main towns and industrial centres.

There are manifold reasons why Angola has been singled out as a special target of aggression. Owing to its strategic geographical position and immense riches – including oil, uranium, gold, diamonds, iron and phosphates – South African and other foreign interests were determined long before independence to maintain control of Angola's economy. Far from being dependent on or interlinked with the South African economy or transport system – as many other Southern African states were and to differing degrees still



Independence night: the hoisting of the flag



President Agostinho Neto reads the proclamation of independence

are — Angola's independent resources and facilities were seen by South Africa as a potential threat to its own economic domination of the region. Angola's large deposits of oil — a commodity lacking in South Africa — could be a valuable source of energy in a regional perspective as well as holding the potential for a strong and independent Angolan economy. The Benguela railway, which links the Zambian and Zairean copperbelt regions with Angola's Atlantic port of Lobito, is a cheaper and more direct mineral outlet than the longer route through the South African port of East London. Hence South African-backed attempts to control the railway or at least prevent it from operating properly. A similar pattern can be seen in sabotage and disruption of transport facilities in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, showing a clear intention to prevent the regional cooperation that independent countries of Southern Africa are striving to establish and strengthen.

In addition to economic factors, the Front Line States of Southern Africa have played a most important part in supporting the decolonisation process in Namibia,

a territory with which Angola happens to share an extensive border. And the colonial power in Namibia is South Africa itself. Its refusal to envisage full decolonisation and the establishment of a genuinely independent government has been amply proved by the stalling devices Pretoria has set up against the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435 and the plan for Namibia's independence.

By supporting the struggle of the Namibian people, led by SWAPO, Angola and the other Front Line States are merely complying with countless United Nations and Organisation of African Unity resolutions calling on the international community to support that struggle.

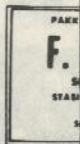
The People's Republic of Angola has fully cooperated with United Nations and Western efforts to achieve a peaceful negotiated solution to the Namibian problem, a solution prevented only by South African intransigence.

In both these respects Angola is serving the cause of African freedom and the cause of humanity. But it continues to pay a very high price for doing so.

# DIE BURGER

BY DE HOOFDSTAD EN OORSTREEK

LAAT UITGAWE



KAAPSTAD. SATERDAG. 5 FEBRUARIE 1977. TWEE-EN-SESTIGSTE JAARGANG. PRYS TIEN SENT.



South African Defence Minister P W Botha in Huambo (then Nova Lisboa) during the 1975 invasion, with South African officials and Jonas Savimbi of 'Unita'

## THE 1975-76 INVASION

South Africa's invasion of Angola just before independence marked a qualitative change in Pretoria's interference in events outside its borders. Although South African regular forces had operated with the Portuguese colonial army in both Angola and Mozambique, and were still working at the time with Ian Smith's forces in what was then Rhodesia, never before had South African Defence Force units — estimated to number about 6,000 men — invaded an African country with the aim — later avowed — of marching on the capital.

The South African invasion was the culmination of efforts promoted by certain Western countries to prevent the People's Movement for the Liberation of

Angola (MPLA) from proclaiming independence and forming a government in Angola.

In August 1975, South African forces entered Angola and occupied the hydro-electric dams at Ruacaná and Calueque, on the Cunene River. On 14 October — three weeks before independence day — the large-scale invasion started, an armoured column moving rapidly northwards and taking town after town. On 11 November, when the independent People's Republic of Angola was proclaimed, three South African armoured columns, code-named 'Zulu', 'Foxbat' and 'Orange', occupied the whole of the centre and south of Angola, the northernmost line of occupation running from the Atlantic port of Lobito to Luso (now Luena), capital of Moxico Province in the east. Dressed in Portuguese uniforms, in



The South African invading forces returning to Namibia after being driven out of Angola in March 1976

an attempt to hide their identity, the South African armed forces installed Unita officials in the towns they occupied.

The invasion was halted. In response to appeals for assistance, a number of African countries, and especially Cuba, sent troops to defend Angola's threatened independence. A powerful counter-offensive after independence drove the invading forces out of Angola, the date 27 March 1976 marking the final departure of the South African forces.

The destruction caused by the invasion was enormous. Large numbers of people had been killed or wounded. Many were missing. Towns and villages had been destroyed and vast numbers of vehicles, machines, fishing boats, cattle and other property taken out of Angola by the invading troops. Agricultural and livestock production had been devastated,

and factories in many cases stripped. In a report to the United Nations, the People's Republic of Angola estimated the damage as amounting to US\$6.7 billion.

In resolution 387 of 31 March 1976, the United Nations Security Council condemned South Africa's aggression against Angola and called upon 'the Government of South Africa to meet the just claims of the People's Republic of Angola for a full compensation for the damage and destruction inflicted on its State and for the restoration of the equipment and materials which its invading forces seized'.

Far from indemnifying the People's Republic of Angola for the devastation it had caused to a newly-independent state embarking on national reconstruction after years of colonial domination, South Africa continued its aggression against the Angolan people.



## RENEWED AGGRESSION

After March 1976, South African aggression against Angola took the form of bombing raids and violations of Angolan airspace, incursions by troops transported by helicopter, border provocations, infantry attacks, artillery shelling and mine-laying.

The independence of Angola and Mozambique had radically changed the political map in Southern Africa, the balance of forces in the region having shifted in favour of national liberation. Those who had doubted that national liberation movements fighting guerrilla wars in Southern Africa would ever be in a position to form governments in their countries were faced with the reality that this had in fact happened. It had become abundantly clear even to the supporters of colonial and minority rule in Southern Africa that this unjust system was doomed and its days numbered. During this period there emerged a number of Western initiatives to achieve negotiated solutions in what was then Rhodesia and in Namibia. When — years earlier — the liberation movements had sought to negotiate their independence, such a possibility had not been countenanced by the colonial and minority regimes. But the independence of Angola and Mozambique and the mounting pressure of the national liberation struggle where freedom still remained to be won had opened the way to a new — albeit grudging — receptivity to negotiations.

The national liberation movements and the Front Line States readily cooperated with the international efforts to achieve negotiated solutions. In the case of Namibia, where the legal administering power was the United Nations, these

efforts resulted in 1978 in agreement between SWAPO, the Front Line States and the 'Contact Group' — Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom and United States of America, the five Western members of the Security Council in 1977 — on the United Nations plan for Namibia's independence, enshrined that same year in Security Council resolution 435. While the Republic of South Africa on several occasions agreed in principle to the terms of the United Nations plan, it consistently found fresh objections to delay its implementation. Within the context of its military activity, it became increasingly apparent that intensified armed aggression against the People's Republic of Angola generally took place at moments when it appeared that some progress was being made towards agreement on the plan. There was every indication that South Africa saw its criminal aggression against the People's Republic of Angola as a means of negotiating from 'a position of strength'. The massacre at Kassinga, for example, came at a time when it appeared that SWAPO was about to accept the United Nations plan.

On 4 May 1978, the South African armed forces made a large-scale and immensely brutal attack on a Namibian refugee camp at Kassinga, in Huila Province. The attack involved 200 South African paratroopers, C-130 troop transport aircraft, Alouette and Puma helicopters, Mirage III planes and Cessna F-1 and F-2 reconnaissance planes. South African troops landed by helicopter entered the camp, shot hundreds of its inhabitants in cold blood and mined access routes to the camp to prevent Angolan soldiers from coming to the help of the refugees. The casualties of 4 May were



Mass grave at Kassinga. Inset: Namibian refugee children at Kassinga

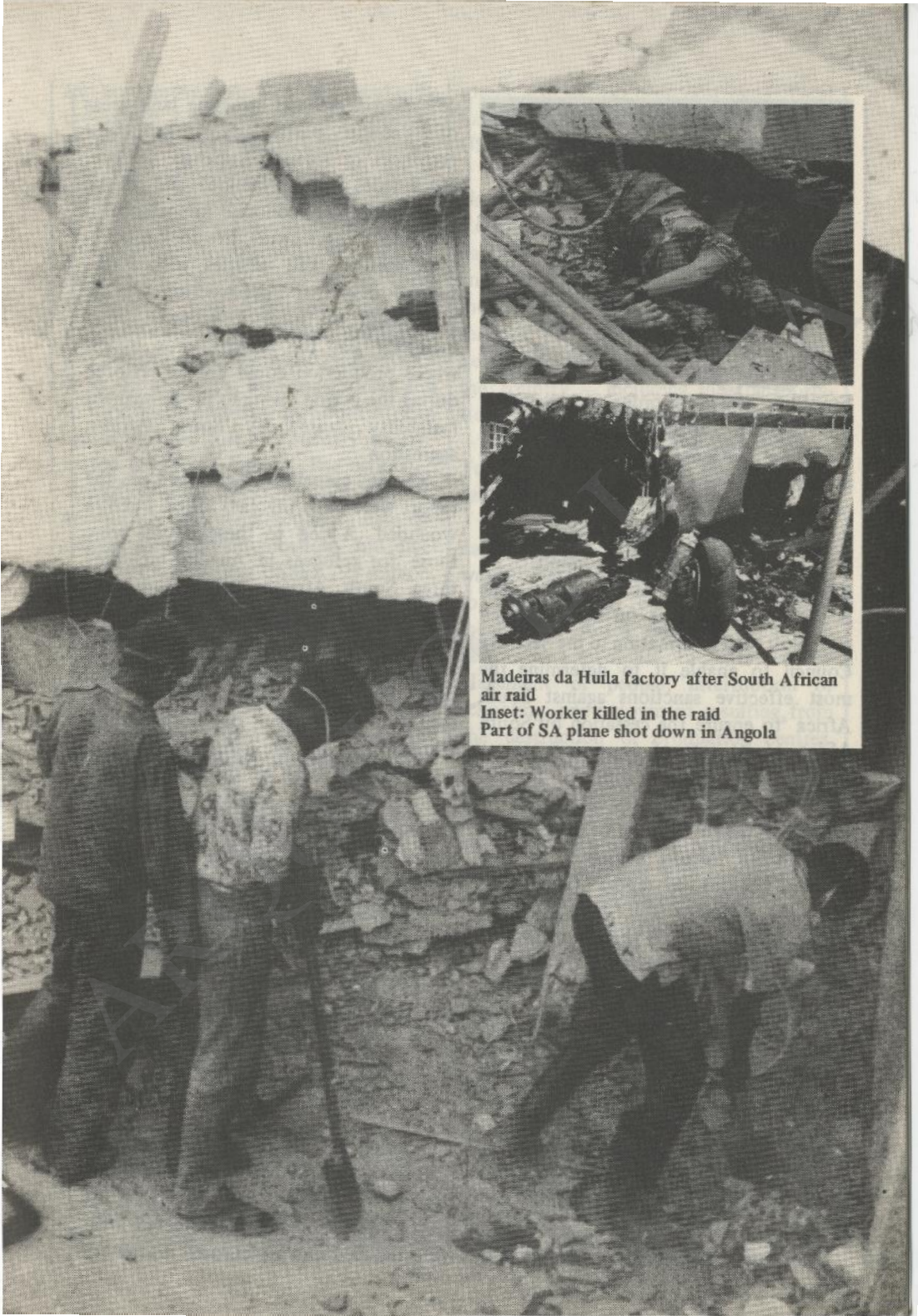
612 Namibian refugees (147 men, 167 women and 298 children), 12 Angolan soldiers and three Angolan civilians killed, 611 Namibian refugees, 62 Angolan soldiers and 15 Angolan civilians wounded.

United Nations Security Council resolution 428 of 6 May 1978 expressed grave concern 'at the armed invasions committed by South Africa in violation of the sovereignty, airspace and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Angola, and in particular the armed invasion carried out on 4 May 1978'. The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Namibia to self-determination and independence, and the legitimacy of their struggle to secure the enjoyment of those rights, and commen-

ded 'the People's Republic of Angola for its continued support of the people of Namibia in their just and legitimate struggle', demanding 'that South Africa put an end to its illegal occupation of Namibia without further delay, in compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions...'. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

On 26 February 1979, there was a further large-scale attack on a refugee school at Boma, near Luena, capital of Moxico Province, a coordinated action by South African and Rhodesian forces. During that attack, 198 Zimbabwean refugees were killed and 600 wounded. Material damage was estimated at US\$4,451,957.





**Madeiras da Huila factory after South African  
air raid**  
**Inset: Worker killed in the raid**  
**Part of SA plane shot down in Angola**

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL ASKS ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT FOR REPORT

Security Council resolution 447 of 28 March 1979 again condemned South African aggression in the strongest terms, requested 'Member States urgently to extend all necessary assistance to the People's Republic of Angola and other Frontline States in order to strengthen their defence capacities', and requested the Secretary-General 'to obtain available information from the People's Republic of Angola on the human casualties and material and other damage resulting from repeated acts of aggression committed by the racist regime of South Africa'. The Secretary-General was further requested to submit such information to the Security Council to enable it to determine the most effective sanctions against South Africa 'to ensure the cessation by South Africa of its acts of aggression against Angola and other Frontline States'.

In response to this resolution, on 11 June 1979, the government of the People's Republic of Angola presented to the United Nations a report (Document S/13473) giving a full description of South African acts of aggression against Angola between 26 March 1976 and 11 June 1979. In a letter to the Secretary-General accompanying the report, the Angolan Permanent Representative to the United Nations pointed out that the information was by no means complete, because the task of assembling all relevant facts had been complicated by the vastness of the areas affected, the scattered nature of the population and the continuous acts of aggression perpetrated by South Africa.

The report described continuous acts

of armed aggression affecting large areas of the country, particularly in the southern provinces of Kuando Kubango, Cunene, Moçâmedes (now Namibe) and Huila, areas of special economic importance in the fields of agriculture, livestock production, industry and fisheries, with a substantial industrial infrastructure for the processing of local production, and including also the Kassinga iron mines, where production could not be restored during the period owing to the permanent instability caused by South African aggression.

Known casualties mentioned in the report were 570 Angolans killed and 594 wounded. Added to these figures were those for refugees in Angola, including three South Africans killed and eight wounded; 198 Zimbabweans killed and 600 wounded; and 612 Namibians killed and 611 wounded. Annex IV to the report listed the names of the Angolans who died as a direct result of South African aggression, giving the name, age, sex and occupation of each of the victims. They included teachers, soldiers, housewives, students and schoolchildren, drivers and mechanics, but the overwhelming majority of them were peasants. These deaths, the report pointed out, were the result of 193 mine-laying operations, 94 airspace violations, 21 ground incursions, 21 border provocations, 24 bombing raids and a large-scale combined operation involving ground and air forces. The report provided a detailed list of all recorded South African acts of aggression during the period.

Turning to the social and economic consequences of South African aggression the report describes how crops of the main staple foods in the affected areas were reduced and agricultural machinery

and equipment destroyed. Meat and milk production had been seriously impaired by the killing and theft of cattle in the four most affected provinces, the richest cattle and livestock regions of Angola. This had meant a heavy drain on foreign exchange used to import food, as well as cattle to reconstitute the herds. Large amounts of civil engineering and construction equipment had been destroyed, and building, rebuilding and maintenance work on highways, bridges, airports and so forth made necessary by South African aggression had cost the country an estimated US\$21.65 million. The estimated cost of replacing trucks, vehicles, tractors, agricultural and construction equipment, railway lines, communications and electrical equipment was US\$52.797 million. These figures did not take into account the economic losses resulting from the fact that South African armed action prevented the movement of goods and people in and out of the affected areas, isolating them from the rest of the country and therefore impeding development there.

Although not directly hit by the South African armed forces, fish catches in Moçâmedes (now Namibe) Province had been substantially reduced as a result of the climate of instability which forced the fishing boats to remain at their moorings. As a result, further foreign exchange expenditure, estimated at US\$17.75 million, had had to be made to meet the people's food needs.

The Angolan government's efforts to restore retail trade in the country had been completely undermined by the acts of the South African armed forces, which prevented the free circulation of goods. In addition, stores, shops and stocks of food, clothing, footwear and other con-

sumer articles had been destroyed. Total losses in this sphere were estimated at US\$14.285 million.

The report presented to the United Nations by the government of the People's Republic of Angola went on to assess the damage done to public buildings, hospitals and schools, depriving the people of medical care, education and administrative services. The cost of providing alternative health care in hospitals in other parts of the country — including the transportation of victims of South African aggression — was estimated to be about US\$3 million. Total material damage in this sector was estimated at US\$44.322 million.

The grand total of the destruction and damage during the period under review was estimated to be US\$293.304 million, to which should be added the other incalculable losses resulting from such factors as loss of life, the enforced displacement of people, interruption of schooling, unemployment resulting from the destruction of production centres, loss of social services, nutritional deficiencies among the people in the affected areas, and the non-completion of social and economic projects programmed in those areas, together with the impact of this on the rest of the national economy.

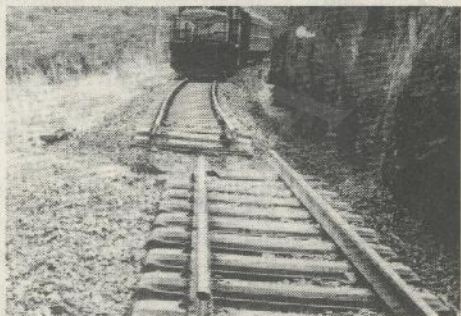
Annex V to the report was the report of a joint UNHCR / WHO mission to Kassinga on 30 May 1978. The United Nations agency officials vouched for the civilian character of the Namibian refugee population at Kassinga and spoke of 'the spirit of extermination and destruction of the South African air force and airborne troops from Namibia'. They called for urgent action to provide emergency aid to the survivors, including food, shelter, medicines, domestic articles, school materials and vehicles.

## SOUTH AFRICAN AGGRESSION IN LATE 1979 AND 1980

After June 1979, violations of Angolan airspace, ground attacks, bombing and shelling incidents, attacks by heliborne troops and other acts of aggression by the South African Defence Force (SADF) continued. In September 1979 there was a sudden increase in the scale of aggression, with massive attacks on economic targets and communication lines in the People's Republic of Angola. Following only a few days after the death of President Agostinho Neto, the South Africans may have calculated that these attacks would cause large-scale disruption in the stunned and shaken country.

On 26 September, four South African aircraft bombed the Madeiras da Huila furniture factory in Lubango, capital of Huila Province, killing 26 workers outright and destroying a substantial part of the factory, one of the largest furniture factories in the country. During the same attack other factories were damaged, including another furniture factory, a paper factory, a saw mill, two flour mills and a liqueur factory. That same day, South African planes bombed Xangongo, in Cunene Province, killing 30 civilians and wounding 100, destroying a school and a food warehouse.

Shortly after that, on 28 October 1979, there was a particularly murderous and destructive attack in the Serra da Leba mountain range in Huila Province. South African air force Puma and Alouette helicopters landed troops on the scenic winding highway linking the towns of Moçâmedes and Lubango. They stopped passenger cars — some of them containing families on their way back to Lubango



after Sunday at the beach at Moçâmedes — and machine-gunned the occupants in cold blood. Twenty people were killed, all civilians. Several of them were young children and one was a woman in the last month of pregnancy. During the same operation, 15 metres of the Mocamedes railway line were destroyed and a further 20 metres mined. A railway tunnel was damaged and various parts of the railway line between Lubango and Kuvango were blown up. Substantial damage was also done to the highway.

These large and destructive attacks on purely civilian targets were followed by continuous bombing raids, mining operations and ground attacks, particularly in November. On 25 November, Cuamato and Naulila, in Cunene Province, were occupied by South African armoured units supported by artillery, air cover, cavalry, police dogs, motorcycle units and ground forces. There were also attacks on Cuangar, in Kuando Kubango Province.

The attacks were gaining in intensity and casualties were increasingly heavy. On 12 May 1980, Xiede, in Cunene Province, was occupied, resulting in three Angolan soldiers and 54 civilians killed and 19 civilians wounded. This was followed on 21 May by an attack on Savate, in Kuando Kubango, which was occupied after heavy fighting in which Battalion 32 of the SADF, made up of mercenaries from various countries, took part.

All these actions were leading up to the invasion of June 1980, code-named 'Operation Smokeshell' by the South Africans, when about 3,000 South African forces entered Angola and advanced 140km inside the country. During the operation more than 378 Angolan civilians were killed, 38 Angolan soldiers were killed in the heavy fighting and 32 soldiers were wounded. As usual, the South African military authorities stated that this was a 'hot pursuit' operation against SWAPO guerrillas and that Angolan targets were being avoided. They said the Angolans had been warned to steer clear of their forces' operations. Reference to 'hot pursuit' operations is persistently made by South Africa in an attempt to give an aura of legality to its criminal aggression against Angola. However, the concept of 'hot pursuit', under international law, applies solely on the high seas. Moreover, Angolan villages are attacked and Angolans killed and wounded, and Angolan sovereignty and territorial integrity violated by the armed forces of a foreign country. Even to suggest that FAPLA — the Angolan armed forces — should stand by while this happens shows the contempt in which the South African authorities hold the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The People's Republic of Angola again

took the matter to the United Nations Security Council. Security Council resolution 475 of 27 June 1980 strongly condemned 'the racist regime of South Africa for its premeditated, persistent and sustained armed invasions of the People's Republic of Angola, which constitute a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country as well as a serious threat to international peace and security'. The resolution once more called for payment by South Africa of 'full and adequate compensation to the People's Republic of Angola for the damage to life and property resulting from these acts of aggression'.

The resolution was ignored and South Africa continued its undeclared war against Angola, the largest action during this period being the taking of Mavinga, in Kuando Kubango Province, on 19 September, by South African troops supported by heavy artillery and armoured cars. There were heavy casualties and the town was destroyed. Since then Mavinga has become a ghost town.

Estimated Angolan casualties caused by South African aggression during the period from 11 June 1979 to 21 December 1980 were 400 civilians killed and 640 wounded, 85 military killed and 95 wounded. An unknown number of people had been kidnapped and taken into Namibia. It was not possible to give exact figures for the large numbers of Namibian refugees killed and wounded during the same period. Geographical conditions, especially in Kuando Kubango Province, a semi-desert region of Angola with an extremely low population density, also made it impossible to assess full material damage caused. The damage actually assessed for the period amounted to US\$230,996,805.



## INTENSIFICATION OF AGGRESSION IN 1981

The military situation in southern Angola worsened substantially in 1981, with a sharp increase in the number of South African reconnaissance flights, air raids, landings of heliborne troops and ground incursions into Angola.

In January 1981, the United Nations Secretary-General convened the Geneva Conference on Namibia, having previously expressed the hope that a settlement was near and a ceasefire only months away. Optimism was shortlived, because South Africa scuttled the conference, this time contending that the United Nations was not 'impartial'. In keeping with usual practice, South Africa chose this moment to intensify its aggression against the People's Republic of Angola. On 15 and 17 January, there were ground and air attacks on Cuamato, in Cunene Province, resulting in fierce fighting and heavy casualties on both sides. Angolan anti-aircraft gunners shot down an SADF Buccaneer aircraft.

In June 1981 there was an increased number of actions aimed at intimidating the population and forcing them to leave the border areas. In July, the Angolan military authorities announced that about 40,000 South African troops equipped with heavy armour were massed on the Namibian border. This was a prelude to the largest South African invasion of Angola since 1975/76, code-named 'Operation Protea' by the South African authorities.

The international climate had changed with the coming to power in the United States of the Ronald Reagan administration, which early announced its 'friendly'

feelings towards Pretoria. One of its early pronouncements was on its intention to secure the repeal of the Clark Amendment, which prevented covert military aid for South African-backed Unita without congressional approval. South Africa felt encouraged in its military aggression against Angola by this more sympathetic stance of the new US administration, which was also initially prepared to abandon negotiations on Namibia's independence within the framework of United Nations Security Council resolution 435, described at the time by one of its high-ranking officials as 'a time-wasting charade'. Only later, owing essentially to the position of the Front Line States and other members of the Western Contact Group, did the new administration accept the principle that resolution 435 should be the basis for negotiations. This implied acceptance of the principle that diplomatic channels should be used to solve problems in the region, the only other alternative being further recourse to military means. But South Africa continued to deploy its military might as a diplomatic lever, seeking to wring ever more concessions from Angola and other Front Line States through the practice and threat of direct and indirect armed aggression.

On 23 August 1981, the South African armed forces started 'Operation Protea', invading Angola with more than 11,000 men, around 36 Centurion M-41 tanks and 70 AML-90 armoured cars, 200 Ratel, Buffel and Saracen armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery, including 155mm guns, 127 Kentron missiles and around 90 aircraft and helicopters. At the start of the invasion the South African air force established its control of the airspace in Angola's Cunene Province. Angolan civilian flights to the province had to be



August 1981 invasion. Top: refugees from Cunene at Chibia, Huila Province  
Bottom left: captured napalm canister  
Bottom right: wounded Angolan soldier in Lubango hospital

suspended. Constant overflying of the main highways and strafing and bombing of all road traffic by South Africa were aimed at cutting off supplies to the south, both civilian and military. Urban centres as far north as Cahama and Chibemba, more than 250km from the Namibian border, were massively bombed. This was followed by the advance into Angola of three motorised columns of South African regular forces. By 28 August, after days of heavy fighting, the South African army had occupied the localities of Xangongo, Mõngua, Humbe, Uia, Cuamato, Anhaca, Nehone, Mucope, Evale, Mupa and Njiva, the provincial capital of Cunene.

The decisive factor which enabled Pretoria's armed forces to occupy these urban centres was the massive use of their air force. It was a human tragedy of enormous proportions. People fleeing from the occupied areas had to travel for days on foot – many of them injured, many with small children – through a drought-stricken area. They had to avoid the highways – where everything that moved was liable to sudden violent attack from the skies – and many were lost in the bush. An estimated 160,000 people were made homeless.

Owing to the continued occupation of about 55,000 sq km of Cunene Province, it has been difficult to assess the casualties. Known figures for Angolan losses as a result of South African aggression in 1981 are as follows:

206 soldiers killed
389 soldiers wounded
1,086 soldiers missing
158 civilians killed
265 civilians wounded

The material loss to Angola has been staggeringly high. The government has

estimated the cost of relief for displaced persons to be US\$170 million. Towns and villages in southern Angola have been razed. Estimates of economic and social losses as a result of South African operations in 1981 – and again these are only initial figures because of continued occupation – can be broken down as follows:

Sector	US\$million
Agriculture and livestock production	144.9960
Industry and fisheries	15.0593
Construction	33.8000
Transport facilities	28.1300
Trade and food supplies	15.8900
Administration, housing and services	115.8400

According to eye-witness reports, administration and social services have broken down completely in the South African-occupied areas.

On 24 August, the day after the start of the invasion, President José Eduardo dos Santos of the People's Republic of Angola sent a message to the United Nations Secretary-General warning that the situation was 'serious' and might 'provoke a war with unforeseeable consequences'. On 28 August, at the request of the People's Republic of Angola, the United Nations Security Council met to debate South African aggression against Angola. Speaker after speaker condemned the invasion. On 1 September the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution condemning the invasion and demanding the withdrawal of South African troops, payment of compensation to Angola by South Africa and an on-the-spot United Nations investigation. The international community was hamstrung.

On 30 November 1981, there was a qualitative escalation of South African



**British-made Buccaneer of the South African air force**

Movement and other international institutions.

The United Nations Security Council, responsible for ensuring international peace and security, has adopted a number of resolutions on the subject, some of them unanimously. They have called unequivocally for the cessation of South African aggression against the People's Republic of Angola, demanded that South Africa scrupulously respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Angola, requested member states urgently to extend all necessary assistance to the People's Republic of Angola and other Front Line States, in order to strengthen their defence capacities in the face of South African acts of aggression against these countries, and called for the payment by South Africa of full and adequate compensation to the People's Republic of Angola for the damage to life and property.

The international community is therefore called upon to assist the People's Republic of Angola in its economic development, both bilaterally and through United Nations agencies. Massive relief

assistance is required for persons in Angola displaced as a result of South African acts of aggression, and for Namibian refugees. It is also necessary to defend the right of the People's Republic of Angola to ensure its self-defence, in the face of continuous South African aggression, if need be by invoking Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which entitles countries subject to external aggression to seek assistance from other states.

Urgent efforts must be made to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolution 435, putting into effect the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia. The strengthening and strict implementation of Security Council resolution 418 on the arms embargo against South Africa is a prerequisite for ensuring peace in Southern Africa and removing the threat to world peace represented by the increased militarisation and aggressiveness of the Pretoria apartheid regime. Finally, and also in the interests of peace and security in the African subcontinent and the world, effective economic sanctions must be brought to bear on apartheid South Africa.

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## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING SOUTH AFRICAN AGGRESSION AGAINST THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

**Resolution 387 of 31 March 1976:** Adopted by 9 votes to none, with 5 abstentions (France, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America)

**Resolution 428 of 6 May 1978:** Adopted unanimously

**Resolution 447 of 28 March 1979:** Adopted by 12 votes to none, with 3 abstentions (France, United Kingdom, United States of America)

**Resolution 454 of 2 November 1979:** Adopted by 12 votes to none, with 3 abstentions (France, United Kingdom, United States of America)

**Resolution 475 of 27 June 1980:** Adopted by 12 votes to none, with 3 abstentions (France, United Kingdom, United States of America)



**STOP PRETORIA'S AGGRESSION  
AGAINST INDEPENDENT AFRICA!**



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