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PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO'S MESSAGE TO THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF FIRST MPLA OFFICE IN LUANDA

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Compatriots and Comrades,

Angola will soon be independent, thanks to our people's heroic resistance, thanks to the sacrifices made by the militants, thanks to sweat and blood and the lives given for our country; the Angolan people will soon enter a new phase of their lives, the phase preparatory to national independence. On 21 October this year, a truce between the MPLA and the Portuguese Government was signed, a truce which means only the cessation of the hostilities started on 4 February 1961 by a small and barely armed group against the colossal Portuguese army. The truce was made possible by the Portuguese Government's official and public recognition of the Angolan people's right to self-determination and independence, this recognition being a victory of our armed forces and our people.

More than thirteen years of armed struggle were needed for us to win back that right, a struggle during which national consciousness was formed, together with the political and military instruments needed to attain independence. The happiness of the times we are now living through was prepared for throughout a long period dotted with bloody episodes, marked with tragic events, but it also most certainly came out of justified victory. Our liberation struggle was an essential factor in the overthrow of fascism and it still is an essential factor for democratisation in Portugal. Our action has always transcended national frontiers.

We can regard ourselves as now being at the moment which precedes victory. Independence is certain. But we must also know how we are going to accept independence, what kind of independence it will be. Our people, led by their vanguard the MPLA, will know how to carry on their struggle until we achieve complete independence. They will know how to distinguish between what is real and what is false in the impetuous current leading to victory. There are certain currents bent on deflecting us from the goal to be attained.

Compatriots, Comrades: we cannot consent to the partition of our national territory by those who wish to seize the fruits of our struggle. We define our territory as coming within the present geographical boundaries, in accordance with the principle adopted by the OAU. We cannot therefore allow succession to take place freely in Angola. It must be

fought against, because it is yet another enemy action. In our country, which is rich and strategically well situated, there will in future be the freedom we are building with determination, and there will be room for all. For black and white Angolans, for Portuguese and other foreigners who observe the laws of our independent country. And the sole guarantee that the honestly acquired material property of anyone whatsoever will be protected is the prerequisite that political power pass completely and definitively into the hands of our people. Our people will not see it as genuine independence if a part of political power remains in the hands of the former colonisers.

Who are our people? We define our people, irrespective of race, as all the peasants, workers and patriotic petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals. It is on these strata of the population that we must rely. We cannot accept without serious reservations the concept of the white community as a political entity, because we cannot divide our population along racist lines. The most correct way of seeing our country is to consider that there are no Angolans and foreigners in it; there are colonisers and colonised, regardless of skin colour. And among these there are those who are for progress and there are reactionaries.

At this time when an MPLA office is being opened in Luanda, I should like once more to pay tribute to the guerrillas, to the militants in clandestine struggle and legal action, to our heroic and selfless people who, through their gigantic efforts, contributed to this victory, a victory over five centuries of colonialism.

The process now unleashed is irreversible, whatever the sacrifices that still have to be made for our country to be free, independent and progressive. We militants will never tire in the battle for the people's well-being, for their freedom, for democracy and for true independence. May unity and intransigent struggle against all attempts at domination of a new type be the purpose of all militants, of all healthy elements among our people.

Compatriots, comrades, our victory is certain.



Flags of the people's movement for the liberation of Angola abound at Luanda Airport as 300,000 MPLA supporters welcome an MPLA delegation to open the movement's first office in the Angolan capital.

THE MPLA'S FIRST OFFICIAL OFFICE IN LUANDA OPENED ON 8 NOVEMBER 1974!

Stupendous welcome for MPLA delegation at Luanda airport

A moving and indescribable scene of support for the MPLA took place at Belas Airport in the Angolan capital. The whole of Luanda was at the airport to hail the Angolan heroes who led the people to the stage of independence. Indeed, how many years have they been paving the way for this so fervently longed for moment? Death, imprisonment, exile — all these sacrifices will have their reward, the joy of being a country in the community of nations and of having helped to abolish one of the most hideous systems of exploitation.

It was the MPLA that struggled and actually waged war despite the many obstacles placed in our way by the enemies of our people. The MPLA was the African liberation movement which had to struggle amid the greatest difficulties. It had to cross from one side of Africa to the other to supply the fronts in the East and Centre of the country. And although the northern border was closed to us, we never abandoned the Northern Front, our First Region. We did everything humanly possible to sustain that focal point of resistance to Portuguese colonialism, and the people in the forests never gave themselves up to the enemy, always trusting in our Movement.

On 8 November, there were 300,000 people waiting for our delegation. People tried to touch the delegates and speak words of gratitude and affection to them. So big was the crowd that it was extremely difficult to clear a passage to the VIP lounge, and it took a full hour for the delegates to cover those few metres. Everyone was shouting "Long Live President Neto" and "Long Live the MPLA." Some of our delegates were so moved that they were unable to say a word.

MPLA flags fluttered in the wind and the Organisation of Angolan Women, OMA, dressed in the red and black of our flag, with its yellow star emblazoned on their fronts, put up an enormous MPLA flag they had made themselves.

A TASS correspondent who happened to be near the microphones was asked to say a few words to describe the scene. He answered that he was really amazed to see the people so spontaneously knowing how to express what and who they wanted.

The people showed great discipline, and they themselves took care of security with the help of our militants and Angolan soldiers from the Portuguese army. Agents provocateurs were discovered with grenades and other weapons on them.

There was tremendous rejoicing in many parts of the country. In Malange, 10,000 people demonstrated, marching through the streets with students from all the town's schools at their head.

At the meeting held at the Luanda Football Club "Citadela", in addition to the democratic organisations present, MDA and FRESDA, the student associations had called on all students to attend.

There were demonstrations in support of the MPLA throughout the country, and many messages and telegrams sent to the MPLA delegation were read over the Official Radio of Angola.

What better reward could our MPLA, the Angolan people's vanguard, have ever hoped for?

LUANDA

It is to be deeply regretted that reactionary bandits have put the city of Luanda in mourning after disturbances provoked in many parts of the capital in an attempt to cloud the radiance and joy caused by the MPLA delegation's arrival and the start of a new era.

The reactionaries will be severely punished and our people will know how to mete out the punishment they deserve.

The MPLA is alert to all manoeuvres and we will win!



Thousands march to see the opening of MPLA's first Luanda office.



OMA waiting MPLA delegation at the airport.

SOLIDARITY WITH OUR STRUGGLE

FRANCE

On 5 August 1974, Muguette Liucci, Secretary-General of the Union of French Women, sent OMA the following message:

Dear Friends,

It was with profound emotion that we learnt of the statement by the President of the Republic of Portugal on recognition of your peoples right to independence.

We hail with enthusiasm this further victory, of the peoples for the right to independence, freedom and democracy.

At this inspiring time in your country's history, we pay a heartfelt tribute to all the men and women who have struggled and given their lives in order that this might happen today.

We wish to tell you just how much we share your joy, how happy we are that a real future of peace and progress is opening up for your children and yourselves.

In this prospect, we wish to assure you of all our friendship, all our solidarity and our hope that these ties will become ever closer.

Please accept, dear friends, the assurances of our deep friendship.



A number of committees of the Union of French Women have also sent us parcels for the Deolinda Centre containing needles, thread and other sewing materials. We express our gratitude to our friends.

AUSTRALIA

Several branches of the Australian Women have given us substantial aid in the form of sewing and knitting material and children's clothing for our Deolinda Centre. Our militants express thanks for this solidarity with our struggle.

LISBON

On 29 October, a huge rally in support of the MPLA was held at the Lisbon Sports Palace, attended by thousands of Angolans and Portuguese who met on fraternal terms throughout that night, returning to their homes only at 7 o'clock in the morning.

Rosio Square, the main square in Lisbon, is full of photographs of Dr. Agostinho Neto, our Movement's President, many showing him standing with Portuguese after the truce with the MPLA was signed inside our country.

THE TRUCE BETWEEN THE MPLA AND THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT

On 21 October, in Eastern Angola, 70 km from the Zambian border, a truce was signed by the MPLA and the Portuguese Government.

Although this agreement is not a ceasefire, and hence the MPLA has not yet laid down its arms and will not do so until our people's demands are met, it is nevertheless a big step towards peace and a prelude to negotiations which, we hope, will end the longest liberation war conducted anywhere in Africa.

Fourteen years of bloody warfare during which our people lost half a million of their compatriots in order to win back their dignity and their place in the community of nations. Fourteen years of constant sacrifices, during which there were vast savannahs to be crossed under the burning sun, with water up to one's chest in the rainy season, or in the dense equatorial forests of Cabinda, where the humidity and mosquitoes are a source of torment, and where scaling steep mountain crags with an overloaded rucksack was no easy task.

Fourteen years of clandestine struggle, during which the people in the bush and towns and throughout Angola suffered and confronted the persecution and torture of the blood-thirsty PIDE.

The mothers, wives and orphans will greet this truce agreement with tremendous joy!

We therefore hope that we shall overcome this decisive stage peacefully, and that our people, in peace and happiness, will prepare for this new phase of the struggle in which the MPLA will always be their guide and lead them to the end of the exploitation of man by man.

ACTIVITIES ABROAD

After attending the WIDF Council Meeting in Poland from 20 to 23 May comrades Rode Gil and Maria Paim went to Viet Nam at the invitation of the Viet Nam Women's Union and spent a few days there during which they were able to exchange experiences.

Our comrades were impressed by the fantastic courage and abnegation Vietnamese women have shown over these many years of struggle and hardship, and OMA benefitted greatly from the exchange of experiences.

Comrade Antonia Silva visited Sweden last September, invited by the Africa Group, which held a week of solidarity with the struggle of the peoples in the Portuguese colonies. Our organisation was asked to send a delegate to represent Angola, which we regard as a great honour.

OMA ATTENDS UWT CONFERENCE

On 19 August, OMA attended the 6th Conference of the UWT, the Tanzanian women's organisation, which was held in Tabora. We addressed the following message to our Tanzanian sisters:

Madam Chairwoman,
Dear Comrades,

It is with the greatest pleasure that we are for the first time attending a conference of your women's organisation. We bring to it our full support as fighters, our solidarity and hopes for the building of a better future. It seems to us that a woman must be a true mother and wife, but also a companion involved in society with man, as one equal to another. But if we are to achieve this aim, the emancipation of women, we must create the necessary conditions.

Women who have fought arms in hand alongside men are already building a new society. And we cannot fail to appreciate all the support that our beloved MPLA has given us in this respect. We are actually creating a new society in the liberated areas. And new people are being created there.

Dear Friends,

Our presence here shows your solidarity with our women's organisation and with the MPLA, the vanguard of the Angolan people in arms. Indeed, OMA, at the side of the MPLA fighters, also contributed to the fall of fascism in Portugal. It was on 4 February 1961 that the peoples in the Portuguese colonies entered a new era. On that day selfless MPLA militants risked their lives to attack the colonialists' prisons, lighting the torch of freedom, which was to spread to Guinea and Mozambique a few years later.

The defeat of fascism and Portuguese colonialism is due to our people's consistent abnegation. The MPLA's leaders have been able to lead our people from victory to victory, and it will continue to be thus until our country's independence.

The struggle is the sum total of small and big victories and sometimes even of defeats. And it is they which often show us which is the best road to take. The MPLA will not retreat in the face of difficulties, and now as in the past it will assume its historic duty. Angola will be free!

One of our major concerns has always been to raise the cultural level of the masses of the people, since they are the real mainstay of the national liberation struggle. It is for this that we have started a woman's centre, the Deolinda Centre, where our peasant women follow courses in literacy, agriculture, sewing, knitting and political education. They learn why we are fighting and who is our real enemy. They know that the MPLA wants to give them true independence and democracy, where all have the same rights and duties. The watchword of the centre is: Learn in order to teach. And indeed, once they have finished their course, these comrades must teach others.

We are certain that we shall learn a great deal from your experience at this Conference, because each people has something useful to pass on to other peoples. And this has in fact been the case. During our stay in your country we have learnt a great deal from your

solidarity with the freedom fighters. We shall never forget your generosity in welcoming us here. We therefore regard your aspirations and your difficulties as our own and we shall always be at your side in good times and bad. You will also be able to count on us. By supporting the national liberation struggles, Tanzania has made new friends for the future who hope to advance with you along the road to progress and peace.

We wish every success to this Conference and to your organisation in the struggle for the emancipation of women, for progress and for freedom in Africa and throughout the world.

VICTORY IS CERTAIN!

UNITED WE WILL WIN!

THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE NEW TASKS

After almost fourteen years of armed struggle, the Angolan people are preparing to enter a new phase of their advance towards winning independence.

This historical turning point is no act of fate, but a result of the national liberation wars conducted by the MPLA, FRELIMO and the PAIGC in their respective countries, for which Angola paid the price of 500,000 dead. And its people were unsparing in the efforts and sacrifices they made to support the struggle led by their vanguard, the MPLA, and their leader Dr. Agostinho Neto.

Conscious of the importance of the role of their Movement in the national emancipation process, in the second week of September this year the MPLA members held the Inter-Regional Conference of Militants in one of the liberated areas in Mexico district. Given the large number of participants who came from every corner of the country and the subjects discussed and decisions taken, the Conference was an event of cardinal importance, a milestone.

A thorough analysis of all the MPLA's activity, especially in the period from 1961 to 1974, made it possible to make the requisite criticisms, assess the present situation, define who are our enemies, friends and allies, and outline future tasks. In this transitional phase, it had become necessary to use new tactics to face the present situation in Angola. And for these to be correct, for the watchwords and methods of work to be right, it was indispensable to know against whom the Angolan people are struggling. The following conclusion was reached: up to now the direct enemy against which the guerrilla forces have been fighting on the terrain is Portuguese colonialism; the principal enemy, the financier of the colonial wars and the prime exploiter of Angola's resources, is imperialism. In the face of the inevitable defeat of the colonialist forces, the latter is gradually becoming the first enemy.

Yet there are still small groups that persist in wanting to maintain an already moribund system. Hence with the complicity of like-minded elements in the army and the police, they are inciting and arming groups of settlers to attack the defenceless population, murdering the most conscious and frightening the less strong. In this way, they provoked and are continuing to provoke disturbances in Luanda and various other cities, towns and villages in Cabinda, Malange, Cunene and other districts. Such acts of reactionary violence are obliging the people to take self-defence measures which are legitimate and totally justified.

Owing to its fabulous wealth, Cabinda District is at present the target of a direct and large-scale offensive by neo-colonialist forces, and it therefore called for special attention. Powerful foreign interests are encouraging separatist parties which have always remained outside the struggle and only emerged from their inactivity after the defeat of fascism in Portugal to demand the independence of the district. It is revealing that the vast majority of leaders of these parties were former emigrants in the Republics of Zaire and Congo, or else individuals who up to a few months ago vigorously and publicly claimed that they were Portuguese, while some of them are known as close collaborators of the PIDE.

The Inter-Regional Conference reaffirmed that Cabinda is an integral part of Angola, the right to territorial integrity having been moreover recognised by the UN and the OAU and confirmed in the joint statement of the Portuguese Government and the UN Secretary-General.

In this context, the creation of the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola, the FAPLA, was hailed with joy, since it guarantees the gains of the national liberation war, the defence of the interests of the most exploited strata, the establishment of a democratic, popular and progressive regime, and the individuality of the nation and its territorial integrity.

The decolonisation process that it intended to impose on Angola was repudiated. The MPLA rejects manoeuvres which tend to divide the Angolan people along racial lines, which is tantamount to a racist policy, and does not accept that Angolan whites be given minority status. For the MPLA, there are neither minorities nor any special status for any part of the people. The watchword ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION is correct, and all Angolans therefore have equal rights and duties.

This attitude is a logical result of the anti-racist policy consistently practised by the MPLA and reaffirmed once again by the Inter-Regional Conference when it guaranteed protection of the persons and property of all foreigners who observe the laws in force in the country, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Hence there is no justification for the hasty departure of some technicians who have never been systematically or violently opposed to national independence and who could play a useful part in the reconstruction of the Angola of tomorrow. But it should in no way be forgotten that one of the objectives of the national liberation struggle conducted by the MPLA is that independence should essentially benefit the interests of the peasant and worker masses, the two largest groups in the country which together constitute almost the entire population of Angola.

Over the past fourteen years the MPLA has been able to combine all forms of struggle—military, political and diplomatic, legal and clandestine, economic, social and cultural — because they were all parts of the same whole, the national liberation struggle. Today, after the signing of the truce agreement of 21 October 1974, the experience accumulated over this period will be used to the full. The present tasks are many and they involve various sectors of the Movement. The most important ones are those related to the consolidation of the liberated areas, the structuring of the FAPLA and the problems of production, increasing it and seeing to its distribution. Special attention will be given to the areas which have been under enemy control up to now, which means stepping up our work there. The masses merely touched by clandestine work carried out under extremely difficult conditions will be organised and politicised on the basis of the MPLA's principles, the main emphasis being on mobilising the most exploited masses in the towns and rural areas. Exchanges will be encouraged between the youth in different parts of the country, as a conscious and practical way of eliminating existing differences between various strata of the population. Measures will be taken to raise the political and cultural level of women and promote their struggle for equality in society, so as to enable them to contribute more fully to the total liberation of the Angolan nation.

The unity of Angolan nationalism has always been one of the MPLA's foremost objectives, since it is one of the essential preconditions for gaining total independence. The MPLA has always upheld the principle of creating a broad national front for the independence of Angola, formed inside our country and with all truly patriotic organisations.

These were the main points touched on during the Inter-Regional Conference of Militants. The enemy, despite the defeats they have sustained, have not yet laid down their arms or given up their intentions. Hence all MPLA militants and the Angolan people as a whole must redouble their vigilance, so as to expose and smash the manoeuvres of the enemies of the Angolan nation, whatever the colour of their skin. At this decisive time, everyone without exception must make every effort to overcome internal contradictions and tribal and racial barriers, so as to be able to achieve in the shortest possible time our principal objective: immediate and complete independence!

MPLA FORESEES JUST FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN ANGOLAN AND PORTUGUESE PEOPLES.

The 2nd Light Infantry Company of Battalion 4519, a company stationed in Cabinda which on 31 May had refused to go to Belize in Northern Cabinda to fight the MPLA, played a football match with MPLA guerrillas on 27 October this year.

Fraternalisation between our guerrillas and Portuguese soldiers is a clear sign that once colonialism has been defeated friendly relations between our peoples can be harmonious and fraternal.