Angola
Sacrifice of a people

Report

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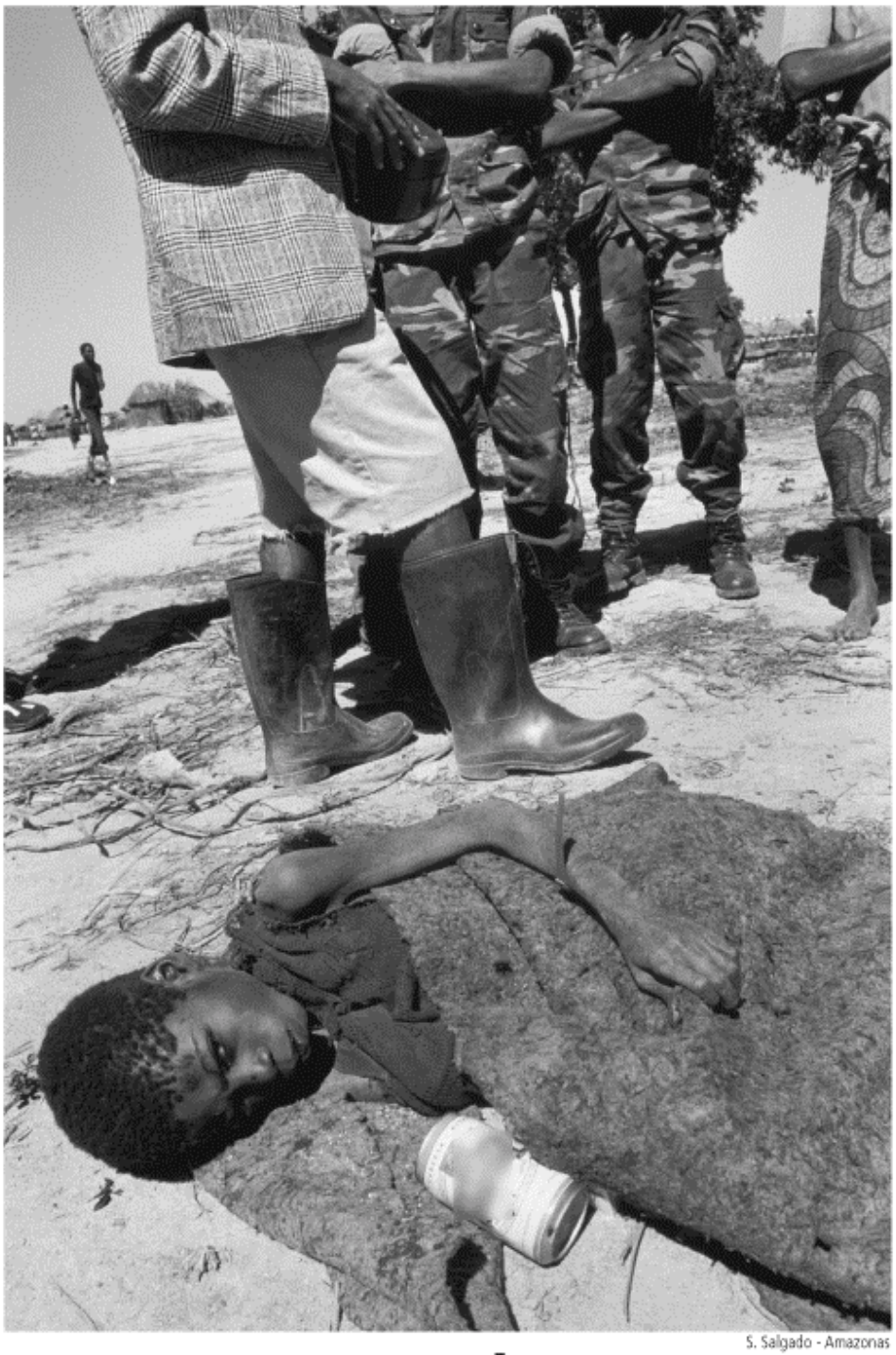

S. Salgado - Amazonas

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Introduction

On 4 April 2002, a ceasefire agreement between the Luanda Government and Unita forces brought a temporary halt to more than 27 years of war. All over the country, families were reunited after many years of separation. The country's major highways were reopened to traffic, enabling people both to find their loved ones again and return to their home cities, towns or villages. Ernesto, a 48-year-old widower interviewed in Mavinga, summed up the general feeling*: "Here in Angola, we lost much of our wealth because of the war. We don't want any more war. We never want to hear the word again. Now the problem's hunger: when people are hungry, they'll do anything".*

This immediate post-war phase, mingling hopes and fears for the future, can never obscure the realities of a recent past marked by acts of brutality against civilians and a present that seems to want to pay little attention to the very same people. Looking back now at the fighting and the military strategies employed since 1998, we can gauge the extent of the criminal contempt expressed by the two conflict participants towards the vast majority of Angolans. It was the people of Angola who were condemned to endure the outrages of this war. The tragic results of these political choices were witnessed in the field over many years by Médecins Sans Frontières' teams. When the fighting resumed in 1998, we were active in most of the country's provinces, but were then forced to halt several projects. MSF teams gave their last consultations at the health centre in the town of Bunjei (Huila Province) in January 1998 and were not able to resume their work there until March 2002. For almost four years, much of Angola was inaccessible. Only the end of the fighting that followed the ceasefire enabled us at last to move around in the grey areas and uncover the extent of the tragedy that had been unfolding, undetected, during all those long years.

The gathering of witness accounts is central to the work of MSF volunteers. We began to gather these accounts as soon as we were able to enter the previously inaccessible areas. The interviews were carried out over a period of several weeks in four provinces (Huambo, Huila, Cuando-Cubango and Lunda Sul). Our intention was not to produce a picture of the whole country or to represent all of Angolan society. The survey involved 145 heads of household (fathers or mothers), who were interviewed at medical facilities supported by MSF. It represents an attempt to understand our teams' working environment, as well as the causes of the distress of people who were exhausted by four years of relentless fighting.

All the witness accounts agree about the nature of the violence suffered by the victims of Government forces and Unita. Some people were kept in the brutal grip of Unita forces, compelled to work for them and, in most cases, obliged to abandon their homes whenever troop movements made it necessary. Others were gradually displaced, by Government forces – either on a voluntary basis or by force – from territories previously controlled by Unita. Here, the aim was to deprive the rebels of human and logistical support. The displaced were resettled in advanced positions of the national army, where they were abandoned to their fate and mostly denied the right to move about freely. This military strategy was used by both warring parties, and effectively used civilians as a weapon. It could not fail to have tragic consequences. Having become hostages of one side or the other, these people were no longer able to see to their own needs. Because the first phase of the war (1998-1999) was fought around front lines that were to be defended or broken, some population groups were able to go on living their lives away from the daily violence. But the second phase, which began in 2000 when the national army entered regions previously sheltered from the fighting (thus provoking Unita's withdrawal), truly marked a hardening of the two enemies' attitude towards civilians.

Although MSF workers were denied access to a large part of Angolan territory, they were confronted daily with civilians who were able to escape into the secure zones. The disastrous general condition (medical, nutritional, etc.) of these people enabled us to guess at the plight of those who remained prisoners of the fighting. And yet, we were powerless to intervene. Once the ceasefire was in place, MSF was able to access the formerly disputed areas. Our teams then began 15 exploratory missions in order to evaluate the people's needs and set up medical programmes to deal with their most urgent necessities. Over a period of five months, at 23 intensive feeding centres, more than 16,000 children have been able to escape certain death. However, a retrospective mortality survey revealed that the number of deaths due to lack of food or medical care in the months before our missions began was very high (see Chiteta/Bunjei survey). As was the case with all the other humanitarian agencies, our intervention came too late to meet these people's glaring needs. Today, the situation remains desperate for all those who survived the years of war in the grey areas. The numerous nutrition programmes or general food distribution programmes are still not enough to deal with the situation brought to light following the ceasefire.

The military and political agreements finalized by the two former warring parties several months ago, beneath the approving gaze of the United Nations, Russia, Portugal and the United States, ignore the history of the people trapped by a war that the two parties to the conflict desired and organized. Several thousand civilians were sacrificed in a futile effort to win an illusory victory. Others were able to survive under horrifying conditions, but still today they must wait, day by day, in the hope that they will find enough food to live on. The responsibility of the Angolan Government and Unita for the suffering of the Angolan people is undeniable. During the fighting, these two former enemies made strategic choices that were wholly contrary to the principles of humanity. Furthermore, they obstinately refused to allow humanitarian organizations access to the people most deeply affected. Having used those civilians as a weapon, they now "forget" to take their vital needs into account.

The testimonies in this report document how during fighting between 1998-2002 both Unita and the Government of Angola carried out deliberate acts against civilians, including forced displacement of populations, rape, involuntary recruitment, and violence, that were clear violations of International Humanitarian Law and constitute war crimes. The United Nations, the diplomatic community, and other members of the international community failed to intervene to avert this tragedy. Denied access to the war zones, humanitarian organizations were powerless to aid civilians caught in the conflict.

The representatives of the international community involved in the Angolan crisis for many years showed themselves to be totally powerless to intervene decisively among the warring parties throughout the long years of conflict, even to ensure respect for the civilians trapped by the war. Since the end of the conflict, they have appeared just as incapable of dealing with the suffering endured by the civilians or of understanding the urgent need to act now in order to help them regain their basic human dignity.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1998-2002

1998: Suspension of peace process and resumption of fighting, in many provinces, between the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) and Unita's military wing (FALA). MSF evacuates its missions at Maquela do Zombo (Uige Province) and Quiculongo (Kwanza Norte Province) in June 1998.

June 1998: New sanctions imposed by the Security Council on representatives of Unita (Resolution 1173), who are banned from all communication with foreign countries. The sanctions also impose an embargo on diamond trading.

September 1998: Unita's offices in Luanda closed by Government order. A revamped Unita is created and recognized by the Government as its sole negotiating partner. Issa Diallo, United Nations representative, is no longer able to visit Unita-held territories. All humanitarian organizations leave now-inaccessible zones.

December 1998: At the MPLA Congress, President Dos Santos declares war on the "rebel supporters of Savimbi". J. Savimbi is called a "criminal against humanity" by the Luanda Government. Unita simultaneously launches attacks on the towns of Huambo, Kuito and Malange.

End 1998-early 1999: Two United Nations planes are shot down in Huambo Province. Nobody claims responsibility for the attacks. The inquiry is still ongoing.

February 1999: Following a resolution introduced in January by Angola's National Assembly, in which the United Nations is held directly responsible for the breakdown in the Lusaka peace process, the United Nations (at the Government's request) suspends the mission of the UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA), which, according to the Government, had proven "unable to prevent the rearming of Unita". Until May, the United Nations, in vain, issues repeated statements and makes repeated efforts to negotiate access to people in the areas controlled by Unita or humanitarian corridors.

May 1999: The Security Council strengthens measures to monitor the sanctions imposed on Unita (commission of experts appointed to monitor compliance with embargo).The reports of these experts would be made public in May 2000.

September 1999: Following two failed FAA offensives against Unita, the Government launches the offensive known as Operaçao restauro ("Operation Recovery") under which the FAA, in October 1999, seizes Unita's military strongholds in the Planalto region (Huambo and Bie Provinces).

October 1999: The Security Council decrees a new role and mandate for the United Nations in Angola. The United Nations returns, but with a much-reduced mandate.

2000: Unita's military withdrawal continues. The former Unita capital (pre-1991), Jamba, is taken by the FAA on 24 December 1999. The families of senior Unita officials flee to Zambia. Unita announces that it will wage a guerrilla-style war from now on. The FAA regains control of the border with Zambia.

July 2000: Mussagy Jeichande is appointed head of the new United Nations office.

2001: Unita's collapse continues apace, with the loss of major diamond-mining areas in the Lundas (Cuilo, Cambulo, Lubalo, Cachimo…). Many rebels begin to surrender their arms. Unita launches an attack on the last train travelling between Luanda and Dondo (over 500 dead during August) and a commando operation against the power station (Viana) that serves Luanda, which as a result is without electricity for several hours in September. At the end of the year, the Unita military headquarters is surrounded by the FAA and cut off from the rest of its troops.

December 2001: J. Savimbi contacts "San Egidio"[1] in an effort to restart the peace process.

22 February 2002: J. Savimbi is killed at Lucusse (Moxico)

14 March 2002: At the initiative of President Dos Santos, the FAA negotiates a ceasefire and opens talks with Unita military headquarters.

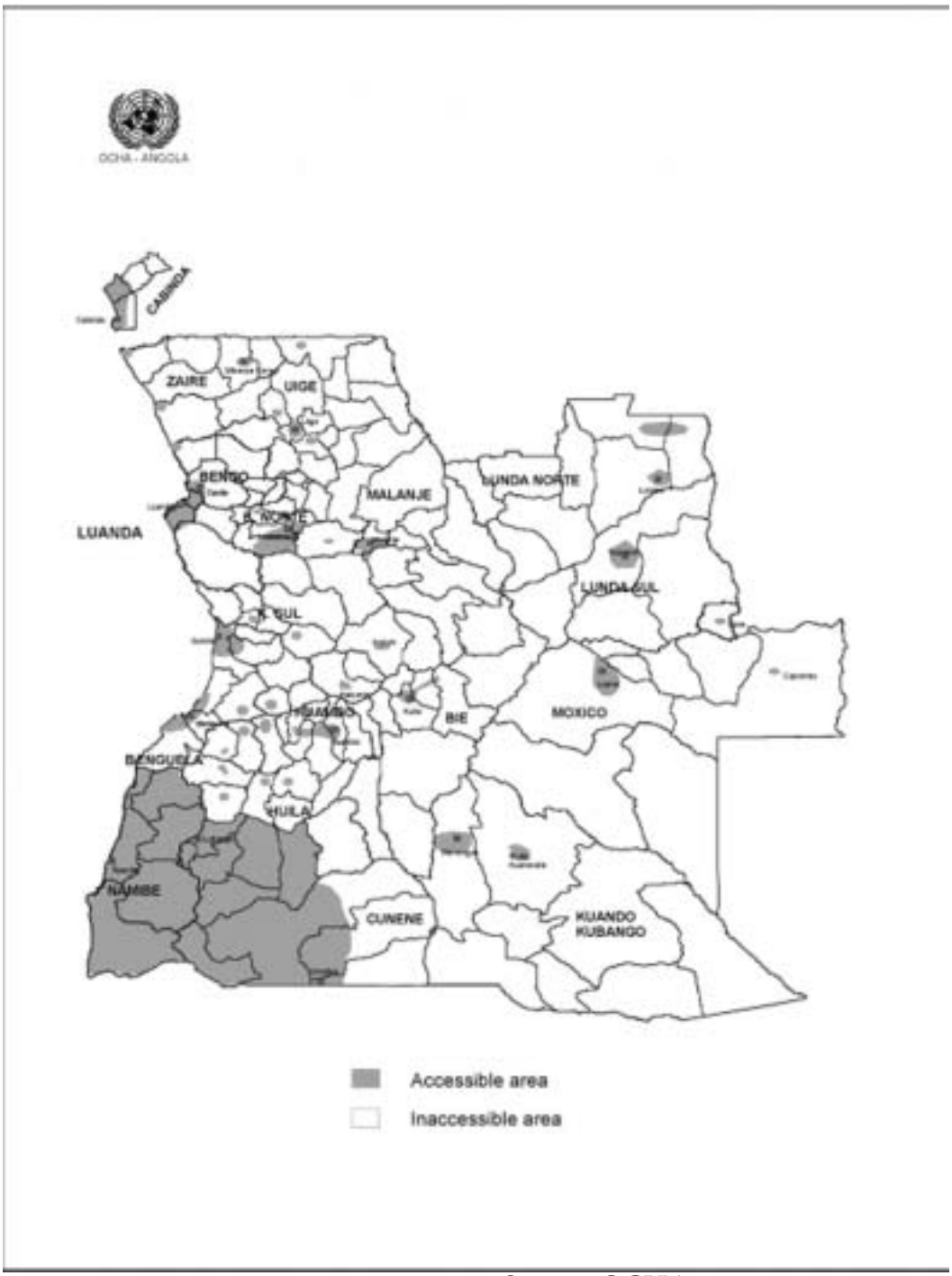
4 April 2002: An agreement is signed between the Government and Unita. The plan provides for the demobilization, before the end of June 2002, and the disarmament, of former Unita troops (5,000 of whom are to be incorporated into the regular army); preparations for elections; and a general amnesty for all crimes committed during the war.

17 May 2002: Security Council Resolution 1412 suspends certain provisions of the previous resolution, which banned Unita representatives from communicating with foreign countries.

[1] Agency of the Vatican's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a frequent mediator for the peace negotiations.

MAP

80 % of Angolan territory inaccessible from 1998 to February 2002



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I – FROM 1998 UNTIL THE CEASEFIRE

The warring parties make use of the civilian population as a weapon in "grey areas"

Since the war resumed in 1998, humanitarian aid organisations had no access to 80% of the territory – excluding large towns held by governmental forces. Thus assistance organisations and outside witnesses were unable to reach the populations living in these Unita-controlled conflict areas (i.e. approximately 20% of the country's inhabitants). The war being waged behind closed doors is extremely violent.

As the war progressed, the populations were divided into three groups: the first one had to hide for endless weeks in the jungle, hoping to escape the recurring acts of retaliation and attacks that one or other of the warring factors carried out against villages; the second group, controlled by Unita, had to follow the increasingly frequent displacements of the rebel movement, which had to retreat when attacked by the Angolan army; and lastly, beginning in 2000, a third group was trapped in government-"secured" areas, but not even the minimum of basic needs were provided for to ensure that people survive in a dignified manner. This physical and moral exhaustion was to last over three years.

A) The first phase of the war: civilians caught in a trap

Up until 1999, Unita held administrative and military control of certain districts considered to be strategic, in particular in the diamantiferous areas and Unita's strongholds in the Planalto provinces. From these places, the movement led bloody offensives against several provincial capitals (Malanga, Huambo and Kuito). It wasn't until late 1999 that the Luandan government was able to regain military control of many districts before continuing the offensive in the direction of the countryside and borders. In inaccessible areas, villagers were attacked by all the warring parties, and took refuge in the forest more and more frequently to escape them or make it to other towns that were not affected by the fighting. As a result, the population of Kaala was to double between the resumption of the war in 1998 and 2000.

a. A population on the run

Since 1998, in this 80% of inaccessible territory, all those we questioned were forced to leave their villages and land to escape these attacks and the risk of capture.

"The troops came, so we went to hide in the mata"

"The UNITAL attacks (…) occurred practically once a week, three or four times a month." These attacks – whether by Unita or the governmental forces – seriously hindered the ability to farm the fields, depriving inhabitants of the resources of their land and thereby contributing in a major way to the decline in health of these people who were constantly fleeing:

"We would stay in the jungle for one, two, three months. We would run away at night, as the attacks often occurred in the morning. We walked a lot, children too, otherwise the enemy (editor's note: Unita) would kill them…"

"We were never permanently settled in a place; sometimes we would stay in one spot for two days, and then we would have to move on again; sometimes we had to move every day."[2]

"We would spend nights in the forest, and then return and start all over again."

When they were able to flee before an attack, they would return to empty fields, the crops – as well their personal belongings – having been plundered by the warring parties*: "We were constantly being attacked by soldiers who stole our livestock, corn, clothing, everything. This was the case especially in 2001, but before that as well to a certain extent. They would arrive – I don't know if it was Unita or the government who attacked and stole from us – and we would escape to the forest. They would steal everything and we would return when they were gone, after they had taken everything."*

This young, 24-year-old woman, whom we met in the TFC in Chilembo, told us that once the war resumed and the troops arrived, she hid in the mata with her husband and their four children. *"They entered the houses at night and stole all the inhabitants' possessions, ordering people to obey them and beating them to death if they refused."* Eventually, her husband was wounded during one of these attacks, while they were attempting to escape capture.

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[2] Excerpts from first-hand accounts which appear in full in the appendix.

This elderly man also tells how attacks on villages took place*: "When they (editor's note: Unita forces) attacked small villages, the girls carried weapons and the young boys went to plunder homes, each one accompanied by a soldier, while the others shot at the inhabitants. The young boys who pillaged homes never received any of the spoil; the soldiers took everything. The same thing occurred when the government attacked. We didn't know where to go, whether it was Unita or the government, the end result was the same."*
The most vulnerable – the elderly, disabled, pregnant women and children – were not spared: *"We were constantly fleeing; pregnant women would run carrying burdens on their heads. Children suffered enormously, moaning 'mmm' and 'tatatatata' after the sound of gunfire (editor's note: he holds his head in his hands and moans). Many people died, wounded by bullets and machetes too."*
The attacks took place in an atmosphere of intense fear: *"When the troops attacked, all we did was put things away and flee, put things away and flee… We were afraid because we didn't know what they might do to us… the men… we didn't know what they would do to the women they captured, whether they beat them, punished them."*
"The government's soldiers would enter the village and have shooting contests, using the villagers as targets", tells this older man who could no longer remember how much time he spent in the forest. After leaving his village, every now and then he was able to return to his field and retrieve corn and beans.

"We would stay beneath a tree, without moving"

These episodes of flight were synonymous with incredible insecurity and hunger: the villagers didn't have time to take anything with them to ensure their survival and would remain outside for several days without shelter – even during the rainy season – or food. Henceforth, having enough to eat each day became a thing of the past:
"The rain would fall on you, homeless… But when we ran away, there was no time to bring anything (…). While we were fleeing, we would go for two, four days without eating. We couldn't light fires because the enemy would see us (editor's note: governmental troops. Those questioned use the terms employed by the armies that controlled them). We would stay beneath a tree in the rain, without moving. And that's how disease began to strike."
"When the attacks were at their worst, we stayed beneath trees, folding our arms, waiting it out. We would go for up to a week without eating, adults and children alike."

Surviving on what we could find in the forest: "*Too much suffering*"

The villagers' resources, already terribly decimated by the war and the attacks, were affected even more when they were forced to pay the revolutionary tax on their crops: *"In Galangue, they grow beans, cassava and corn; they were required to give 100 kilos of corn to Unita after each harvest."* This "contribution to the war effort" was nothing new, but the weight on the populations was growing increasingly heavy.

For three years there had been a shortage of soap and salt, and this was becoming more and more serious throughout the duration of the war, when there was less and less trade with the rest of the world. *"At first, life in the jungle was easy, because people had salt, soap, clothing – a little bit of everything – at the borders. But when the borders were closed, life became more difficult for everyone, conditions allowed just bare survival."*
"We had nothing to ensure the children's health: no salt, no soap, no clothing, and no food."
The people ate what the troops left them and the few ingredients they managed to find in the forest: some fruit, leaves from trees, honey, caterpillars at times, mushrooms… *"We found honey and mushrooms in the forest to eat, that's all, that's what saved us. We traded honey for flour, and my husband worked in the fields of local inhabitants for flour; as for me, I took care of the children."*
"*Since there was nothing to eat, they would make flour from sweet potatoes, and that made the children sick, they would get bloated. Elderly people got sick as well."*

No access to health care: "*People started doing very badly"*

This food shortage situation coupled with a total lack of health care structure invariably led to dramatic consequences for the exhausted populations.
"When we fled the base (Unita), many people were already sick, there was no medication, and then people began getting worse and worse and dying."
"We had a little to eat, but I was often sick, and so were my children, they had a fever, diarrhoea: that's how they died. They were ages four and three, and the last one to die this year was just a month old."

b. Civilians seen as "useful objects"

Civilians were captured to serve as soldiers or labourers for the warring factions, especially Unita. Entire villages and groups of people brought by force with the troops were used as human shields and slaves. The capture of civilians, which hadn't yet begun in 1998, became very common practise: many witnesses, among the people questioned, had been captured when they were very young during previous episodes of the war. Men – and young boys – were most often recruited to serve with the troops, whereas women were used to carry weapons and act as field labourers.

A. "had been recruited several times by Unita along with other young men but was able to escape each time. When he was caught again, they would beat him. When he was recruited, he was forced to fight with the troops. They also captured women to serve the troops' leaders."

Forced recruitment and child soldiers: *"We trained with the soldiers"*

Many first-hand accounts make reference to the capture of children. Young children were most often captured in attacks on towns and villages to serve as "apprentice-soldiers". Later on, after going through training and ideological indoctrination, they would become *fighters "We trained with the soldiers to enter villages at night (…). Afterwards, we were given rewards, such as ripped trousers. A pair of trousers found in the forest was always useful."*

"When they attacked the small villages, the girls carried weapons, and the young boys would plunder the houses, each one accompanied by a soldier, while the others shot at the inhabitants."

Sexual abuse*: "I was a prisoner and my punishment was to do everything"*

The youngest women, especially adolescents, were treated in an extremely degrading manner: they were often married to soldiers, sometimes raped and more often than not treated as the soldiers' slaves.

"In 1990, she was abducted at the age of ten and taken to Unita's 'base 50'. She was assigned to serve a Unita chief as his housekeeper and also used to transport harvests from the field to the military base. She had two children when she was 13 and 15, and then married a Unita soldier in 1998, who joined a combat unit in the province of Bié in 1999. She hasn't heard from him since then."

"When the soldiers (editor's note: the government's soldiers) surrounded a village, they would take the girls with them. Some returned, others didn't: they stayed with the group, with the soldiers. The same thing happened with Unita's soldiers: they even abducted girls younger than ten."

"I was raped several times, I was forced to sleep with soldiers, otherwise they would have killed me. I had to do everything they wanted. I would go and get corn, I did all kinds of work for the leaders, I was held prisoner and my punishment was to do everything. There were 30 of us resigned to the same fate."

"S. was abducted at a very young age – she can't even remember how old she was, but it must have been when she was six or seven – by Unita troops. She was used as a forced labourer at the Unita base: she prepared corn flour, manioc meal, did the cooking, washed the laundry, carried bags when they were attacked and had to retreat. She was given food, but no clothing. So to buy clothes, she had to farm civilians' land in addition to her other tasks, when they stayed in one place."

Slavery and human shields: "*They took our clothing so that we couldn't escape"*

Unita's military bases used surrounding villages for their food supplies and to protect the troops against their adversary's offensives: "*In Camoigna, each family was forced to give 100 kg of corn from each harvest to Unita. Widows only had to give 50 kg or goats or chickens. Those who didn't own land had to pay too, by working in the fields of those who did, thereby receiving corn to pay Unita."*

"And then in December 1991, when the governmental troops attacked, I fled. I waited until the guards surrounding the village fell asleep and then I crossed the lines, as far as the Cunene river, which I crossed by canoe (editor's note: while speaking, he sketches an initial circle representing the Unita base, then a second, larger one representing the area where the civilians lived. A third circle represents the soldiers' rounds, including x's for surveillance areas)." The inhabitants of these villages were held captive: *"She would have liked to leave the Unita base – after the death of her husband – but she was not given authorisation to do so and therefore had no choice but to resign herself to not attempting to escape as she was very frightened of possible retaliation. Everyone who tried to leave the base disappeared."*

These captive populations were forced to work in chains so they couldn't escape, beaten so they would submit to total obedience*. "Unita attacked us on a weekly basis from the jungle: they took our food. They mistreated people and forced them to work."*

"*During the daytime they were allowed to move freely, but at night they were tied up so they wouldn't run away (she shows the chains that gripped her wrists and ankles)." "They took our clothes so we couldn't escape."*

Violence and retaliation*: "We were given up to 500 lashes of the whip"*

Refusing to serve the Unita troops or attempting to pilfer the fruits of one's own harvest were acts of disobedience that were severely punished. Here's what one man from Bunjei had to say: *"One day, an old man went to get cassava from the fields. They let him go. When he returned, they stopped him, took his harvest and told him: 'we won't kill you, because you're old.' Then they cut off his ear. They made him eat his ear, telling him it was bread."*

Another man tells how three men he knew were publicly executed in 1999 for attempting to escape from Unita's training camp. *"In the jungle, when we didn't follow orders, we were whipped. Men would hold us up to keep us in place… We were given up to 500 lashes of the whip… some people died."*

The intensification of the violent practises aimed at controlling the population has been noticeable since the resumption of war in 1998 in comparison to previous episodes in the ongoing war in Angola. In particular, many witnesses talk about public executions and torture. This 27-year-old man we met in Bunjei spoke of three men he knew who were publicly executed for attempting to escape from Unita's training camp. Violence against civilians really intensified during the second phase of the war, a terror strategy that illustrates just how much civilians have been a central issue in this war.

B) Second phase of the war: exacerbation of the terror

In February 1999, the government secured the departure of the UN mission in Angola on the grounds that it was unable to prevent Unita from rearming itself. In September 1999, the government launched its third major offensive against Unita which was supposed to end the fighting "rapidly". But two and a half years would be necessary to get Unita to capitulate and sign a cease-fire agreement and, during this period, the civilian populations were not spared.

For a suffocated Unita, the situation now entailed drawing on its resources, i.e. a population that has been subdued in all ways, including through very violent methods. For the government, it involved isolating Unita as completely as possible by cutting it off from all external aid, forcing the populations into the areas controlled by the Angolan army, and destroying the possessions of civilians in hiding.

During these two years, Unita did nothing to facilitate the arrival of aid organisations in the areas under its control and rejected Doctors Without Borders's (MSF) proposals of intervention. According to declarations of Jonas Savimbi himself, the situation was decent in the "grey areas" which were lacking only in a few medications at the most… Meanwhile, the insecurity of its military positions had become a strategy of more and more complete isolation. During their successive attempts to flee, the populations that were still under Unita control had lost all or part of their personal belongings and had moved around too often to be able to harvest crops or even farm. As for the government's troops, they practised an extensive scorched earth policy and used force to displace the inhabitants of the villages in great numbers.

These "new" displaced persons, living in isolated areas, far from towns and outside the "security perimeter", restricting humanitarian intervention, were unable to receive assistance from the government. Trapped in districts and unable to feed the excessive volume of new inhabitants, the least vulnerable were able to survive only by means of arrangements that were costly to their dignity and dangerous for their lives. As a result, malnutrition took a terrible toll, particularly among children under the age of five.

a. The government's major offensives, Unita's withdrawal and the endlessly displaced populations

Beginning in late 1999, the governmental army's victories forced Unita to withdraw to a significant degree. Initially the latter attempted a strategic reorganisation in the most enclosed areas, forcing part of the population to flee with them.

Yet again, the attacks forced people to flee constantly and exacerbated families' poverty. But this time, the villages' inhabitants – who had become central to the conflict – were running an increased risk of being captured by Unita, who forced them to follow them to their bases in the jungle, or else by the government, who emptied the villages and forcefully displaced the inhabitants to areas under their control.

"They knew no rest"

"There was no rest in Camoigna; we were constantly under attack by the troops (editor's note: governmental), we had no salt, nothing to eat, no more land. We ate nothing but sweet potatoes. When the suffering became unbearable, we – everyone in the village – decided to leave Camoigna at night."

"We planted crops but couldn't harvest them because we were constantly being attacked, constantly moving; we had to keep changing places."

D. lost his father, who was killed because he was unable to run away: *"Unita would come all the time (…), they would kill people who couldn't run away. They would steal the animals, then our food, then clothing, kitchen utensils, everything."*
"In Bimbé, we had no trouble living until the government recovered the district. So along with my family, I sought refuge in an adjacent village to follow Unita. Attacks on the village intensified in June, July and August 2001. Governmental forces killed my husband and captured my sons, who were sent to Bimbé. When the village was reconquered a month later, I was captured too and reunited with my children in Bimbé."
First-hand accounts gathered enable us to « visualise » these endless movements: as many as four changes of base or village in under three years. As a result, inhabitants lost their personal belongings and suffered physical hardship, it became impossible to farm or eat properly, nor was it possible to think about the future*: "In the places we arrived, we would build huts with materials we found right there. When we were able to, when there was a lull in the fighting, we could grow sweet potatoes."*
"When they arrived near Zambia (in the region of Lumbala), they had escaped the armed forces and stayed at a Unita base in the middle of the forest for two years. There was nothing there. They were surrounded by Unita soldiers who stood guard over them, stopping them from leaving."
"When the Unita troops were forced to leave, they went to the village to make the civilians follow them. At that point they went in two directions. Some people chose the direction of the river but were followed by the FAA – since they had left traces behind them – who then shelled those who couldn't swim and were unable to cross the river. The others – he was in this group – fled to the mountains to hide, then returned to the village a few days later."

"They murdered people, saying we were traitors"

Subsequently, the withdrawal, more or less organised, turned into a defeat that was to lead to Unita's capitulation a few months later. The movements of the civilians in flight – who, depending on where they lived were considered by attacking forces to be partisans of the enemy – were rushed and subject to attacks and retaliations from both sides.
This young, 18-year-old woman repeated the words "*muyto sofrimiento*" when the subject of her survival of these years came up: *"There were rumours that the government was going to attack us, so we fled into the fields. If we were captured by the governmental forces, they would beat us or kill us, because fleeing the village meant being on Unita's side. But if we stayed in the village, we would be captured by Unita's soldiers, and they would kill us, saying we were traitors."*
"Unita left the slow ones behind, many people were abandoned and died. Sometimes Unita even killed people to ensure that they wouldn't betray them, so they wouldn't give away the direction the group was headed in case the FAA caught them."
"By 2001, the whole situation worsened. The offensive had begun. Soldiers (Unita) had no more ammunition, so everyone had to flee; women were ordered to hide. We walked for a day – sick people walked for a day and a half – to reach the village of Lachimba. There, we were captured by the FAA."

Free-for-all looting*: "At first, they took cattle, then corn, then clothing, and then kitchen utensils."*

First-hand accounts testify to the increase in the number of atrocities as of 2000 from both sides, at a time when the troops no longer received what they needed to wage war from their respective headquarters. The large amount of corruption pervading the Angolan armed forces more often than not meant that a base soldier did not receive a decent wage which would have prevented abuse in the field. Moreover, Unita, during its successive retreats, was no longer in a position to offer its fighters anything to live on. As a result, troops were paid "by the animal", and pillaged the possessions of civilians, whom they controlled by means of terror.
This 36-year-old man was recruited by Unita in 1980, during an attack on his village. He was 14 at the time. He then followed the troops, roaming around with them until the end of the war. He tells how Unita's increasingly obvious isolation pushed them to draw heavily on the resources it had in the populations: *"After the sanctions against Unita began, things changed and the crisis started. We really became guerrillas. The party didn't give our army anything anymore. We only had ourselves to count on, and the strength of the leader in the region…"*
Beating a retreat because of the pressure of governmental attacks, Unita lost its ability to maintain military control over villages which had previously been under its influence. Even so, the Angolan armed forces didn't establish a permanent presence, and these villages were subject to aggressive interventions resembling collective punishment from both sides of the conflict who were in the immediate area.
"After Unita's armed forces fled, the village would never again know peace and tranquillity. The FAA came regularly to flex its muscles and pillage and rape. They burned down houses too. The villagers were forced to

hand over their harvests to the government's soldiers and transport it to an FAA base. As for Unita, they continued coming to the village to steal, especially salt, and they burned down certain houses at night."
Practically all of the fist-hand accounts gathered describe this inability to eat properly because of the constant comings and goings of the warring parties and the polar opposite movements of the civilians, who were forced to hide to avoid being assaulted, captured or even killed. A., age 45, explains that he produced almost nothing in 2001 "*because of the war, having to hide all the time".* M., age 26, adds that *"with the incessant attacks, we couldn't stay in one place, we slept wherever we could in the forest, we ate what we found."* J., age 51, explains with even more clarity his diet in 2001: *"I lived in a village less than a one-day walk from Catata. There were many people, and everyone was hungry. In the forest, we would find green bananas, grate them, dry them, and make flour out of them. We haven't had any corn since 2001. That year, nobody could farm because of the constant Unita attacks, they stole everything we had: plates, blankets, clothing, farming equipment. Before 2001, they didn't take everything; they left us certain things. Since 2001, we've only had bananas and mushrooms to eat."*

b. A captive population stripped of its possessions

The "revolutionary tax" paid initially on families' harvests led to a switchover to a systematic "predation" of these harvests and the livestock, not leaving families with enough resources for daily survival. Witnesses related the increasing impact this practise had on their meagre harvests. Personal belongings – clothing, farming equipment, kitchen utensils – were taken as well, depriving already extremely weakened populations, who were already terribly weak because of constant displacement, forced labour and bad treatment, of still more basics for survival.

Systematic pillaging of civilians' belongings: *"Not even the clothes on their backs"*
Families of former Unita fighters tell how the men would bring back clothing as spoils following combat: *"The men brought back clothing from combat… This was how they supported their families."*
"If Unita attacked, they would steal everything, including clothing, which they took to sell at markets. Then – those who could afford to do so by trading a little of their harvest – they were able to buy clothes, sometimes buying back their own…"
Indeed, inhabitants had their belongings stolen to the point where *"they didn't even have the clothes on their backs"*, according to M., age 30, and E., age 54, who recalls with emotion the story of one of her married daughters: *"The troops took everything (from her and her husband), beat them, they even stole their clothing, everything, and they had to carry their naked children using rope cut from trees since they had absolutely nothing left. And they walked like that all the way to Chipindo."*
This 73-year-old health care worker had all of his belongings taken from him by both sides – by governmental forces first: *"I had five pairs of trousers and five shirts and three pairs of shoes; my wife had dresses. Now we only have the clothes on our backs."* He continued by telling what happened to him in September 2001 when he was stopped by Unita soldiers as he returned from the field: they captured him, tied him up, placed a rope around his neck, tightening it beneath his throat. Then they placed a rod in his mouth, breaking one of his teeth. They wanted to know where he had hidden a herd of three cows. He talked and they left him lying on the ground.
Since there has been no investigation into the mortality rate, it is difficult to know the number of deaths due to disease and malnutrition. But, contrary to declarations from the parties involved in the conflict, the situation that reigned during these years of war was – if we are to believe the fist-hand accounts we gathered – tragic.

c. The government's systematic scorched-earth policy

In order to deprive Unita of resources taken from the population placed under its control, the government – having firmly decided to put an end to the rebel movement – undertook violent counter-offensives in 2001 during which inhabitants were evacuated, the houses and villages burned, and their property and crops devastated.

"They burned the houses, the harvest, the corn, the potatoes, everything."
"We fled because the FAA attacked us and burned our houses."
Most family heads with whom we spoke told us that, during the attacks, their houses were burned, along with the rest of their village. *"In Jamba, in January, the military attacked, during the day, they shot but didn't kill anyone. They brought them to Chipindo, after beating them and stealing their clothes, but since they were from Bunjei, they preferred to go to Bunjei and the troops accompanied them, on foot, without violence, they were treated well."*
The phase of military offensives won by the government troops, which led to Unita's surrender, were spread between the second half of 2001 and the start of 2002, until the February accord and the signing of the cease-

fire agreement in Luanda on April 4, 2002, laying out in particular the terms of the expected demobilization of the rebel soldiers.
This 22-year old woman had to flee Bimbé, which was attacked by government forces: *"She followed Unita to the village of Chituku, which would also be captured by the FAA in 2001. Government troops burned all the houses, seized all of the animals and stole the food and forced the civilians to go to the commune of Bimbé. It was in the village of Chipuli (Bimbé commune) that she would learn that she had to go to the aquartelamento zone after the ceasefire."*
The "evacuations" of civilians from the "liberated" zones (as they were called by the government) took place on different dates but followed similar patterns: the villages were attacked and surrounded and then burned, the population was grouped together to be evacuated to the zones already conquered by the governmental forces:
"Beginning in June 2001, the military began to attack and go in search of people in the forest, and a lot of people began to arrive. All the people who walked for up to eight days from Chipindo, where the solders went looking for them."
"In December 2001, according to this soba from Chingonje, the government troops attacked the village, they took everything, even the bread knives. They burned all the houses." Around 50 people died in the "confusion," including at least two of his children, aged 2 and 1 year old.

Forced displacements

Not all of the population displacements were forced: certain groups chose to join the gathering sites with the troops. But they had no other choice, since their houses had been burned, their resources exhausted and since the orders had been given…:
"A. arrived in Bunjei last December 21, after having been robbed of all of his property in Tingili. They chose to leave, after the village's other inhabitants had left. They knew that the government had set up an administration and a camp here: FAA soldiers who "were looking for" the enemies in the forest told them to come here, near the village where they had taken refuge in 1999, following rumors that their village would be attacked."
J., a young mother of four children, left for Bunjei with the people from her village: *"the government went to look for them to bring them to Bunjei. She had no time to take anything with her before she left, she didn't have time to collect her things that she had hidden in a corner of the mata, when the government soldiers came, but, in any event, she didn't own much any more. She motioned to the blue fabric she used as her skirt: that is the only piece of clothing that she still owns."*
"Then the military arrived in December 2001, they surrounded us, but they didn't kill anyone, they explained to us that we had to follow them to Chipindo or Matala. We were happy to follow them. We walked for three days to Chipindo, they even gave us food on the way. We left with nothing, a group of around thirty people. They burned our houses."
Some of them took advantage of the confusion generated by the government attack to flee alone: *"And then one day, in June 2001, there was great confusion because the military attacked and Unita wanted to flee elsewhere. In the confusion, I managed to flee with my three children."*

"Many, many deaths"

Other accounts mention murders of civilians who refused to obey the orders: *"If you tried to escape, Unita and even the government troops would kill you. (…) Murders and rapes were widespread."*
These three young women from Vector (Huambo province) report that "*when the government troops arrived, they would tell them not to stay on Unita's side under pain of death: 'you must come with us, otherwise we will kill you.' We had to flee from the opposite side to the attacking side."*
"In October 2001, one morning, when my wife was pregnant, they arrived and she could not flee quickly enough. I was able to flee with the four children, but she was caught by the soldiers and they shot her to death."
This family, which arrived in Bunjei from Chipindo, had to leave Sachagombé in August 2001 after it had been "*taken by the government during 'chaos' in which there were many, many deaths."*
This young mother talks about the violence of these recent offensives: *"A few months ago – she no longer knows when because she ran too much, fled too much – the government soldiers came and captured them. They brought them to Chitembo. They killed many, many people. And they raped her."*

The civilians survived, between the resumption of the war in 1998 and the victorious offensives of the government forces, under particularly inhumane conditions. They lost the ability to guarantee their survival and were subjected to all sorts of violence. Rare are those witnesses who do not mention at least one member of their immediate family (wife, husband or children) who died from the violence, hunger or disease. But the cease-fire or the people's arrival in zones under governmental control, far from marking the end of their

nightmare, meant their total abandonment, left without any assistance. In still-isolated zones that are quickly becoming sick homes or that are emerging from Unita's last strongholds after the truce, the mortality rate due to malnutrition and diseases is reaching fever pitch. As this 49-year old man says, *"peace is going to come, maybe, the situation is going to get better, maybe, but I'm not going to get better."*

II – SINCE THE CEASEFIRE

The war zones gradually open up, revealing a population in danger of dying

Thanks to the February truce, previously inaccessible areas have gradually been opened to outside observers. Waves of civilians are arriving in the government safe areas that were taken back from Unita in 1999. Already on the brink of starvation, the communities receiving the civilians can no longer absorb additional arrivals. They have not received food or medical aid for months, further aggravating the malnutrition that set in during the war years. Used as weapons during the war, civilians are no longer stakes in a conflict.

Once access was secure and the first humanitarian teams arrived, the urgency of the need was clearly visible. In March, Médecins Sans Frontières observed severely malnourished people (children and adults) delivered to the Kaala hospital by truck drivers. Close to death, these people had come from Bunjei. The teams tried to get there and at the end of the month received authorization from a local police commander. The situation they encountered was drastic so the teams set up emergency assistance. The most severe cases were hospitalized, those requiring nutritional treatment were referred to the Kaala hospital and nutritional monitoring and food distribution were established for all children under 10 years of age. Other exploratory missions were undertaken elsewhere in 11 provinces. All resulted in the opening of an emergency mission.

Despite the extreme urgency, UN agencies' first general food distributions to these families did not take place until May 4 in Bunjei. UN agency evaluations in 35 other zones did not begin until April.

Even with the beginning of the rainy season and the issuance of instructions to return home, food distributions remain selective and erratic. Given the dimensions of the crisis, the mobilization remains inadequate.

A) The Various Groupings and Emergency Response

Civilians captured by government troops were taken to Bunjei, Chipindo, Chilembo and San Miguel. Many of the regroupment areas are located a few hours' or days' walk from villages and, in particular, several hours by car from the major cities and resupplying areas. These are the sites that the humanitarian aid teams discovered first, before quartering areas for former Unita soldiers and their families were set up beginning in April. As of late September, the country was not yet completely accessible for logistical and security reasons (destroyed bridges, mined roads, etc.). The number of civilians in need of emergency aid remains unknown.

a. Forced regroupment areas: death sites under army control

Set up between the end of 2001 and the end of the first quarter of 2002, these forced regroupment areas became veritable death sites. After living through three years of war, the people who were settled there had lost nearly all their personal belongings. They found themselves in supervised camps where they remained without aid for several months, except for several short-lived government distributions. The regroupment camps organized by the FAA were the first emergency response the MSF teams confronted. Malnutrition and mortality rates were the most drastic in these camps.

"In Bunjei, there were only birds and trees left"

"*Bunjei used to be a garden," says one witness. "Fruit grew on its own. The people who lived there spent six months of the year there, gathering and selling fruit. Then they were rich enough to travel the country for the other six months of the year."*

Located 110 km south of Kaala in Huambo province, Bunjei was retaken by the FAA on March 16, 2001. But the displaced persons brought by government troops began settling there between November 2001 (the date when road access was secured) and March 2002. Today they number approximately 16,000 and are installed a few hundred yards from the old village, with its mined and/or destroyed houses. Between the date

of their arrival in Bunjei and the first general food distribution on May 4, 2002, the displaced persons—lacking farm tools, cooking utensils and pots and pans--received barely any aid.

"I suffered a lot in Bunjei," said a 26 year-old woman. Her three children were admitted to the MSF feeding center in Kaala for severe malnutrition. *"I had no hut and we slept outside in the rain. We were hungry."* Another mother told her story. *"It was impossible to eat in Bunjei,"* she said. "*The food was very far away and I couldn't go get it because I had to take care of the children. I ate only mushrooms. So did the children, even the little one. I made them juice from the mushrooms. I didn't get any help--not from the other displaced persons or from the soldiers."*

The displaced persons welcomed the new sense of safety in the area but hunger quickly became a major problem. "*There was nothing to eat in Bunjei and no clothing or salt. But we were treated well. They (ed. note: the FAA) protected us from the Unita when we went to the fields."*

At the beginning, families were able to search for food in surrounding fields. Government troops accompanied them and took their share. "*Before, they used to look for food but after two or three days of walking, they found only sweet potatoes. After they dried them, everyone had to give a portion to the soldiers to thank them for coming with the people."*

But given the numbers of people who depended on them, the abandoned fields were soon depleted or their owners returned. The latter were also destitute and refused to let the displaced persons enter their fields. The displaced persons then sought out other survival strategies. In Chilembo, for example, they gathered caterpillars in the surrounding forest and cut wood to make coal that they sold to "the city people."

Unlike Bunjei, which is quite far from the first large town, Chilembo is located 1_ hours by road from Huambo and offers easier access. The displaced persons were able to barter in town, exchanging wood or caterpillars gathered in the forest for food.

In Bunjei and Chipindo, the situation was even more harsh. Although assured from the start that they would finally be able to "sleep peacefully," suffering quickly set in and many displaced persons died of hunger. *"We were all right in the forest. We could eat though we weren't safe. The problems came in Chipindo. We slept well there and didn't have any troubles, but we had nothing to eat."* They had to go further and further, often walking up to several days to find enough to eat. *"We went to look for sweet potatoes in our village. The soldiers went with us. We walked three days to get there, stayed three days and then walked three more to reach Chipindo. We stayed there two days and left again. We went with the whole group of about 30 people. I would go one time and my husband would go the next. We didn't take the children because that way we could carry more sweet potatoes on the way back."* Single mothers faced a very difficult situation. They had to leave their children in a neighbor's care so that they could walk for a day or two in search of food for their families.

"We ate only sweet potatoes from September to April. I left my children with my mother in Chipindo and went looking for potatoes. In March 2002, we got a little help–a glass, a plate, a spoon, 2 kilos of corn, one of flour and a spoonful of salt."

A Measles Epidemic

During the period February–March, a measles epidemic broke out and decimated the children. The disease is extremely deadly among that age group. These populations, already suffering from severe malnutrition, had been deprived of access to health care. The children had not been vaccinated during the years of war and flight. No vaccination campaigns had been launched since 1997 after humanitarian teams left when war broke out again:

"When they arrived in Bunjei, they had nothing left because the armed forces and Unita had stolen everything. They didn't get any help in Bunjei. They didn't ask for anything and they got nothing. In March, there was a measles vaccination. The government put them there and 'they were didn't have to worry. They could sleep peacefully.' But they didn't have anything to eat and three of their children died of anemia, edema and diarrhea."

"We were there for three weeks when people started getting sick. When we arrived there were lots of people and by the end of January, everyone had started dying because of illness."

Aid Gets Underway

Some displaced persons tried to escape certain death or save their children by asking truck drivers to take them to the hospital in the nearest large city. In March 2002, Médecins Sans Frontières began observing severely malnourished people from Bunjei arrive at the Kaala feeding center. The exploratory missions that were sent immediately to these zones to evaluate the situation revealed catastrophic malnutrition and mortality rates (see next chapter). Confronted with omnipresent famine and death among the displaced population near the ruined village, the teams spoke of it as a "ghost town." Calculating the extent of the tragedy by counting

fresh graves, the teams identified high numbers of severely malnourished children, and sometimes adults, who were transferred on an emergency basis to the Kaala nutrition center.
The decision was quickly made to set up a decentralized medical unit in Bunjei to stabilize the most severe cases before transferring them to Kaala. A supplemental feeding center was also set up quickly to feed moderately malnourished children under 10 years of age (height-weight ratio of more than 70 percent).
After several general food distributions that began in early May, food provisioning ended in Bunjei.
Many other civilian regroupment areas have not yet received food while others have experienced irregular distributions. With the arrival of the rainy season and the return home of what are likely to be large numbers of displaced persons, these already meager distributions will be even more difficult.

b. Demobilization of former Unita soldiers and the quartering areas

This daily suffering in the civilian regroupment areas can be compared to the harshness of the first weeks in the quartering areas of the former Unita soldiers, where since April 2002, a majority of civilians have been present. The soldier received the order to regroup in these zones, located some distance from the large cities, with their families and the civilians who were still under their control.
The observers expected that the arriving troops would be disorganized, tattered and leaderless. Instead, they found groups of disciplined soldiers who set up camps with clearly-defined boundaries where order reigned behind freshly-painted barriers.
Some 75,000-80,000 Unita soldiers are gathered in 38 such areas throughout the country. Those–the vast majority–who did not join the Angolan army (5,000 former Unita soldiers prior to the admission deadline of August 10, 2002) were supposed to benefit from reintegration into civilian life. That process has yet to be defined.
"There was the ceasefire and we got the order to go to Galangue. In Galangue, many people were dying of hunger and illness but we had to stay there. Those were the orders…"
D., 25, arrived in the Sambo quartering area in April 2002. *"She said she did not receive enough food in the camp to feed her family (three children). To make up for this shortfall, she went to her home village once to find sweet potatoes (two days on foot). She tries to work with the distribution system by borrowing food which she returns when her turn comes and she gets something."*
In total, 300,000 family members of former soldiers are estimated to have accompanied them to these quartering areas.
Certain social categories are at a particular disadvantage in the distribution system organized in the camp by soldiers. An observer from Chiteta, in Bailundo region, reports, *"There is a special place for the widows but she couldn't build a house so she lives outside with other widows. They formed a circle protected from the wind by branches. She says that the families receive 4 kg fouba once a week but the widows only receive a cup of fouba and a half-liter of oil. She has three dependent children."*
The quartering areas may appear to be better and more regularly supplied, particularly with food, than the displaced persons' areas. However, the situation there remains precarious and daily life uncertain for the most vulnerable civilians, like the widows in the Chiteta camp (Bailundo region). Former soldiers receive priority for food distribution and quartering areas are treated more favorably compared to those that house only civilians.

B) The extent of the crisis

Available mortality and malnutrition data from the nutritional and mortality investigation, hospital activity reports and rapid evaluations confirm accounts from these populations. The figures and rates differ according to population. The populations regrouped since the end of September 2001 have experienced horrifying rates of mortality and severe malnutrition. The persons in the quartering camps reflect, in part, the situation of the "grey zone" populations. Their mortality and malnutrition rates depend on the level of military activity and strategies for using civilians during the final phase of the war.

a. Regroupment camps: the examples of Chipindo and Bunjei

At the end of March 2002, the Bunjei camp was evaluated during one of the first exploratory missions there (see also preceding chapter). The camp population was estimated at around 12,500 people, most brought there by government forces since October-November 2001. "The teams counted 1,021 graves dug between October 2001 and March 2002 in three cemeteries. According to the local administration, 454 graves were dug between January and March 2002. The crude mortality rate is estimated at 5.5 per 10,000 people per day over five months. The primary causes of death are malnutrition and illness (malaria, diarrhea and respiratory infections). A measles epidemic in February and March also led to numerous deaths among the child population. A rapid nutrition assessment of children younger than 5 years of age was conducted during this evaluation and showed a 9 percent rate of severe malnutrition and a 27 percent rate of moderate malnutrition.

The global malnutrition rate was 36 percent. Further, since the end of January, the Kaala nutrition center has already recorded 513 admissions. Of those, 37 percent were children more than 5 years of age who came principally from Bunjei.
These rapid assessment data are corroborated by a study conducted by Epicentre[3] in June 2002 in Bunjei, which revealed a crude mortality rate for the period January 1– June 22, 2002 of 3.7 people per 10,000 per day and a mortality rate for those younger than 5 years of age of 9.9 per 10,000 per day. The percentage of death due to malnutrition is 41.1 percent and 15.2 percent due to measles.
A preliminary evaluation was conducted in April 2002 in Chipindo, northern Huila province. The population was estimated at 14,000. According to the local administration 3, 975 deaths were recorded between September 2001 and April 21, 2002. A visit to the cemetery appears to confirm these statistics. A registry was established one month ago, showing a crude mortality rate estimated at 4.5 per 10,000 people per day. For children younger than 5, it is estimated at 6.1 per 10,000 per day. A rapid nutrition assessment revealed a global rate of malnutrition estimated at 30 percent and a 15 percent rate of severe malnutrition.
These data, measuring the significance of mortality and malnutrition, reveal the existence of famine.

b. Grey zones: examples of quartering camps and areas of recently-arrived displaced persons

Given the speed with which Unita forces and their families have been quartered, one could expect that the situation of this population would correspond to that of civilian populations in grey zones. Indeed, upon their arrival, the status of the populations in these camps is judged to be critical. However, in most of the quartering camps, no major decline in health status has been observed.
In May 2002, the first exploration was carried out in the Bailundo region in northern Huambo province. The rapid nutrition assessments conducted at different sites revealed comparable statistics in pockets of displaced persons and the quartering camps. During the evaluation, MUAC (mid-upper arm circumference) measurements were taken on 1,630 children less than 5 years of age. Of that number, 157 were suffering from severe malnutrition (red MUAC or edema) and 424 from moderate malnutrition.
In June 2002, Epicentre conducted a retrospective nutrition and mortality study in the Chiteta quartering camp north of Bailundo. The crude mortality rate from January 1-June 12, 2002 was 2.3 per 10,000 per day and 5.7 per 10,000 per day for children under 5 years of age. The principal cause of death was malnutrition (43 percent). Deaths linked directly to war represented 7.7 percent. From a nutritional perspective, the global malnutrition rate was 18.2 percent, with severe malnutrition at 5.9 percent.
Over a 12-week period, 2,204 severely malnourished children were admitted into the intensive nutrition center that MSF opened in Bailundo in early June.

In Chitembo, Bie province

In April 2002, an evaluation was conducted at a site for newly arrived displaced persons near Chitembo (population estimated at 3,000 people). Of 575 children below 5 years of age, 27 were found to have malnutrition edema and 22 had a red MUAC. In total, 45 children (7.8 percent) were referred to an intensive nutrition center. A retrospective mortality study with interviews of 355 families showed a crude mortality rate from January–March 2002 of 5.1 per 10,000 per day and of 5.5 per 10,000 per day among children younger than 5 years of age.

Cuando Cubango province

In Cuando Cubango province, a nutrition study among children younger than 5 years of age was conducted in June in the hard-to-reach city of Mavinga. It revealed a severe malnutrition rate of 5.6 percent and a global malnutrition rate of 12.4. In the Matungo quartering camp, located further north, the severe malnutrition rate was 8.9 percent, with a global malnutrition rate of 24.4 percent.

These examples show the breadth of the war's impact on this population. In most of the newly accessible areas, early evaluations revealed the same health situation with significant rates of severe malnutrition, all much higher than emergency thresholds. The statistics confirm that the civilian regroupment areas were death sites.
Since the beginning of 2002, more than 16,000 children suffering from severe malnutrition were admitted into MSF's 44 nutrition centers in 11 of Angola's 18 provinces.

[3] A group of epidemiological and public health experts.

c. The current and future food situation

Given the urgency of the situation, the response is as late in coming as it is inadequate. In the quartering areas where former Unita soldiers are grouped, general food distributions were conducted fairly quickly, although the rations are insufficient and civilian families less well supplied than the soldiers'.

Irregular and inadequate supplies

Some areas, like Bunjei, received several general food distributions but there is no guarantee that distributions will continue on a regular basis. In early September, for example, general distributions in Mavinga were halted when a mined area was discovered on the landing strip.

Last June 26, the World Food Program (WFP) sounded an alarm. "Food supplies are declining at the very moment when growing numbers of starving people are in desperate need." The WFP considers the aid pledged by donor countries as still too "sporadic." Hundreds of millions of dollars are needed to provide food aid to four million Angolans in the next 18 months and have yet to be raised. Further, although donated supplies have arrived in the country, they have not reached the displaced persons because there are no aid agencies to take responsibility for their transport and distribution.

OCHA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has launched an appeal on behalf of these four million Angolans, among them 70,000 children affected by famine in the former Unita-controlled regions. They believe their warnings—like UNICEF's, which estimates that "one child dies of hunger every three minutes in Angola"—remain unheard by donors, who have released only one-quarter of the necessary funds. One-third of the population has been displaced by the war, one million people rely on humanitarian aid and 600,000 are near death.

During a June 11 press conference in Luanda, Morten Rostrup, MSF's international president, shared his distress over such indifference. "Millions of Angolans are already dead of hunger," he said, "and unless the Angolan government and the UN significantly increase their efforts to respond to the needs of the country's civilians, hundreds of thousands more are at risk of dying."

An Uncertain Future

Most people interviewed in both the civilian regroupment areas and the quartering areas say they want to return to their commune or village to begin working their lands.

The aquartelementos currently house more than 80,000 Unita soldiers, their families and civilians forced to accompany the soldiers. After September of this year, the wives or widows of these soldiers anticipate that they will be resettled in their husband's home commune (or their own) in order to begin (or resume) farming. In most cases, however, this appears to be more wishful thinking than a genuine prospect already underway. Given that the best planting season is between September and November, it seems important to honor that date (September). These populations still need to obtain seedlings and supplies.

Z., the widow of a Unita soldier who lives in the Sambo quartering area, lost six of her seven children. The last three died between 2000 and 2002. Her only surviving son is currently being treated at the camp hospital. *"After her son recovers, she will stay in the camp. She will leave only when the others go home. She hopes to go back to her land to plant and thinks this is the right time but, unfortunately, there is no seed."*

Government instructions are to return the "displaced" civilian populations (those the FAA displaced by force in the secure areas or those who came voluntarily after escaping Unita) to their place of origin, but the problem of supplies and seed remains. Seed, tools and food aid are critical for those who lost everything in the war and can no longer survive on their own. Even if it seems that the government does want these displaced persons to return before autumn, no one has proposed a plan guaranteeing the minimum required to assure their future. *"We're going to start everything all over again – rebuild houses, work the fields. We need help and seeds. But we don't know if the government will help us with all that. But even if they don't give us anything, we'll go back because now there is peace and we have our strength back."*

CONCLUSION

The statements of the displaced persons and escapees, as well as the health statistics gathered in the field since March 2002 by MSF teams and other NGOs, attest to the violence of the government's and Unita's wartime strategies and to their consequences for the trapped civilians. The warring parties bear immense responsibility but other evidence suggests that the "international community" – UN agencies, UN Security Council countries – and its most active representatives in Angola (the U.N. and the European Troika countries) took an extremely passive stance in the face of the tragedy playing out in the Angolan provinces. Furthermore, since the ceasefire neither the Angolan government nor the humanitarian actors have responded to the needs of populations that were prisoners of the war.

The resumption of fighting in 1998 coincided almost immediately with the internment of hundreds of thousands of Angolans who, until then, had been under Unita's political control. At no time did the Luandan government and the rebels support or permit aid to arrive in the new grey zones. For the most part, the UN and the aid organizations participated in this humanitarian embargo. The principle of the right of aid to pass freely, affirmed by the Geneva Conventions, was not defended vigorously before the belligerents and the UN showed a questionable willingness to broach the subject with its Angolan contacts. Finally, in the weeks following the end of fighting, the civilian regroupment areas, organized by the national army during the war, and the quartering areas for former Unita soldiers and their families received insignificant levels of aid relative to their need from either the government or the humanitarian agencies. That lifeless response, including that of UN agencies, suggests that negotiations underway regarding the UN's role in the peace process took precedence over necessary discussions regarding aid to endangered populations.

Later, with the peace process underway, one might legitimately ask how those same actors in control in Angola intend to treat the populations they treated so brutally previously. The first signs are not encouraging. The populations that have recently moved out of the combat zones still face extremely precarious food and health conditions, which will require a massive medium-term intervention. They will remain totally dependent on aid for as long as they are unable to rely on the coming harvests, if seeds are distributed in time in early 2003.

In the provinces where MSF still faces abnormally high rates of malnutrition, the World Food Program acknowledges that it has neither the human nor logistical means to carry out all the operations required to provide comprehensive treatment of the fragile populations. It is important that MSF allow the humanitarian agencies to intervene massively to move conclusively beyond a major crisis. There is also an eagerness to return the four million displaced persons to their homes without offering a minimum of assurances regarding their resettlement. Most of the areas where the former displaced persons will be received are far from major roads and are accessible only by roads that have not yet been de-mined. Further, none of the public services required to receive them (water, health and education) can be made ready quickly, even if the humanitarian agencies are once again called upon for help.

Despite the hopes raised by the peace process, MSF remains deeply concerned about this population, which has yet to receive any promises for its future. *"The government has known for two years whether or not it will help us,"* says a 57 year-old man. *"They promise food, blankets, picks and tools. We need metal to build houses, too. We can't go back the way we left, driven out by force."* Indeed, that is the least we would hope for them.

ANNEXES

Interviewing methodology

- Aims

- To assess the impact of the past years on civilian populations who lived in inaccessible areas
- To understand the events that led these populations in such dire straights at the end of the conflict
- To understand the problems they encountered, their actual survival conditions and, finally, their projects for the future.

- Methodology

- Testimonies were collected in Huambo, Huila, Kuando-Kubango et Lunda Sul provinces from May 2002 to July 2002, in the towns, cities and villages where MSF was working. Therefore this work does not reflect the whole of the situation in Angola, nor all areas where fighting took place between 1998 and 2002.
- Interviews were semi-open, following an interview grid, which means that all questions were systematically asked, though different themes were also welcome.
- Interviews took place in medical structures, quartering areas, displaced people camps, and at people's homes. Each interview would last between 45 to 90 minutes.
- Most interviews were one-to-one interviews, often with the intermediary of a translator (obundu/portuguese ou portuguese/french). However, in quartering areas, and despite our insistent demands, we could not avoid the presence of a Unita representative during the interviews.
- Interviewees were not selected according to random sampling methodologies. We interviewed people who were available and willing to speak with us, though we tried to ensure an age/gender representation.
- Interviewees are heads of household (mother or father) and we only took into account events that happened to their nuclear family.
- All interviewees were aware of the aim of these interviews and of the possible use that would be made of them. They were also ensured of confidentiality: no names are mentioned.
- Transcriptions of interviews were based on notes taken during interviews or on recordings (this was possible in about 25% of cases).
- Total interviews : 148 + 10 families/couples. Women : 94, men: 54, family/couple (2 interviewees) : 10. Age repartition : 9-17 : 11 (7,15%), 18-30 : 51 (34,5%), 31-45 : 48 (32,5%), 46 et + : 29 (19,5%), age not mentioned : 10 (0,7%). Family/Couple : 10.

Gross results – Quantitative processing

- 65% of all interviewees declare the death of one or more nuclear family members from November 1998 to « the cessation of hostilities » (which varies from one place to the next)
- 33% declare that nuclear family members have died since they were displaced – after the end of the war.
- 93% of all interviewees declare having suffered from violence or exaction since 1998. There are two main categories of exactions :

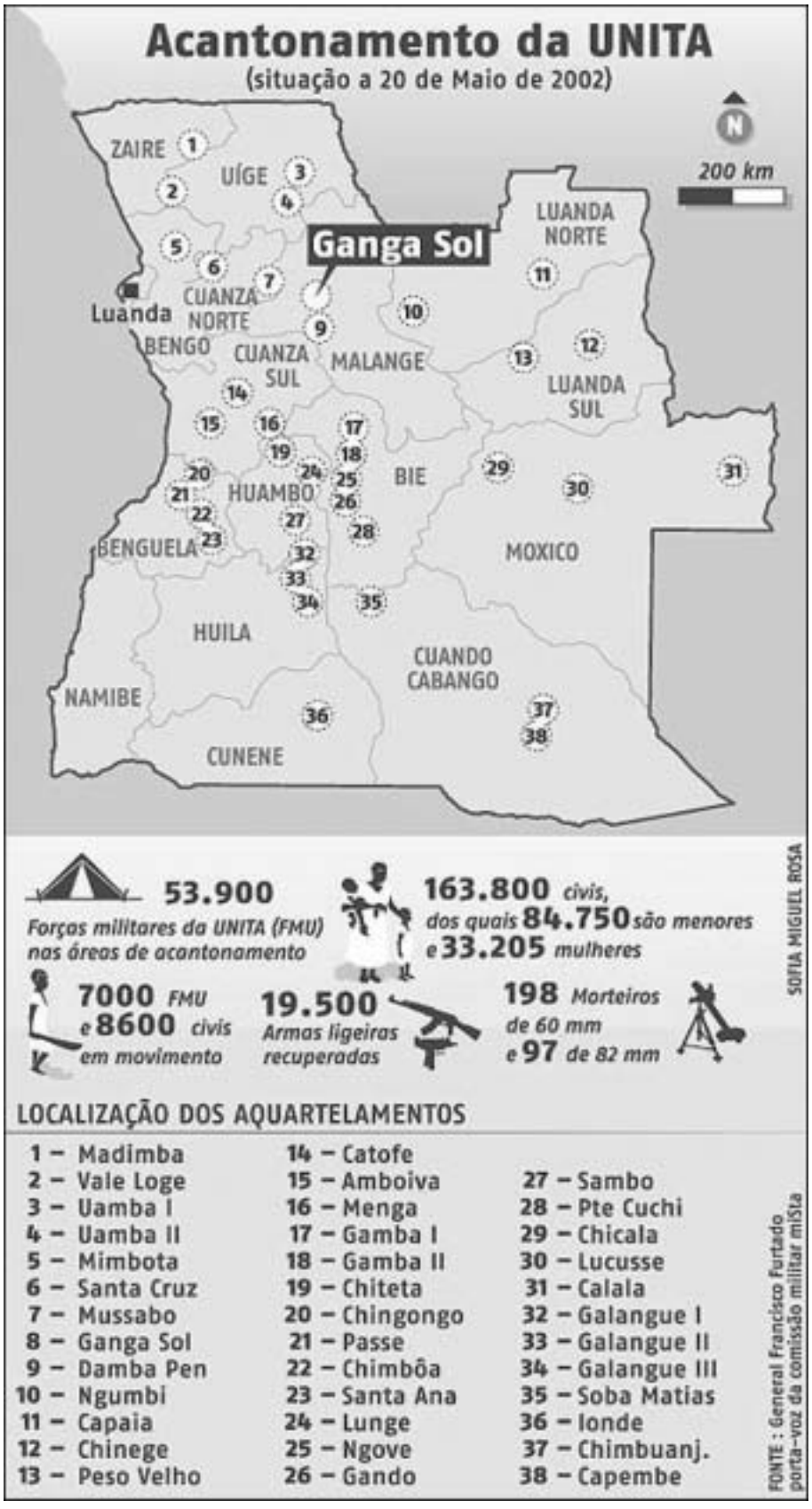
- physical violence (murders, torture, rapes, beatings) : 85% of all interviews.
- Forced work, slavery, jailing : 49% of all interviews.

- 70% of all interviewees declare having been forcefully displaced by the FAA
  - 56% of all interviewees declare that their houses were burnt down.

Angola : a chronology

- 1975 : Independence. First national unity government (MPLA, the FNLA and Unita) since the beginning of the civil war, with an intervention of other countries USA, Cuba, South Africa and USSR)
- 1979 : Eduardo Dos Santos is chosen by MPLA to become the new president after the death of Agostinho Neto
- 1988 : Beginning of peace talks between MPLA, Unita, South Africa and Cuba.
- 1991 : Peace Agreement signed in Lisboa
- 1992 : Presidential and legislative elections. Dos Santos wins the first round with more than 49% of votes. Jonas Savimbi contests the results. The second round will never take place as fighting resumes between MPLA and Unita.
- 1994 : After a military defeat, the Unita agrees to negotiations. Lusaka Peace Agreement.
- 1995 : A vice-president position is offered to Savimbi
- 1997 : Agreement between Unita and Luanda authorities to form a National unity and reconciliation government.
- 1998-2002 : Total war between the government in Luanda and Unita
- Avril 2002 : Signature of a peace agreement.

Quartering Areas (source L'Expresso – Lisboa)



Médecins Sans Frontières programs in Angola

(July 2002)

- MSF is present in 10 provinces : Bié, Moxico, Huila, Huambo, Malange, Lunda (Norte et Sul), Kuando-Kubango, Uige, Zaire
- Estimated population having access to MSF structures : 1,5 million
- Estimated number of displaced people having access to MSF structures : 570 000
- Angolans working with MSF : 2260
- MSF expatriate volunteers: 174

Bié Province :

- Kamacupa : 1 TFC[4] with 150 patients + 2 SFC[5] with 2 400 patients + health center
- Kuito : 4 TFC with 526 patients + 2 SFC with 2 100 patients
- Chitembo, Cuemba as well as Gamba and M'Dele quartering areas: 75 patients were referred to Kuito TFC.

Province de Huambo :

- Bailundo : 1 TFC avec 650 patients
- Kaala : 2 TFC with 450 patients (contre 1 200 en avril dernier) + hôpital + 4 postes de santé + programme de prise en charge de patients tuberculeux
- Chilembo : 1 SFC with 160 patients + consultations équipe mobile
- Sambo : 1 SFC with 227 patients + consultations équipe mobile
- Cantonnements de Chiteta, Menga et Lunge : patients référés dans le TFC de Bailundo + « blanket feeding »[6] tous les 10 jours.
- Alto Hama, Vila Franca, Kapemba, Bimbé, Luvemba, Mongo : blanket feeding + patients référés dans le TFC de Bailundo
- Chilembo et cantonnement de Sambo : 316 patients référés dans le TFC de Kaala et de Huambo.
- 600 tonnes de vivres acheminées chaque mois pour la province de Huambo et le programme de Bunjei (province de Huila).

Huila Province :

- Bunjei : 1 SFC with 1174 children and 354 adults, severely malnourished patients referred to Kaala TFC + healths centers (50 admissions/week) + « blanket feeding » every 10 days
- Chipindo : 1 TFC with 244 patients + 1 SFC with 718 patients
- Matala : 1 TFC with 180 patients + 3 SFC (couvrent 3 camps de déplacés) with 590 patients
- Dongo : ouverture d'un TFC

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[4] Therapeutic Feeding Centre for severely malnourished patients (weight-height ratio below 70%).
[5] Supplementary Feeding Centre, for severely malnourished patients (weight-height ratio between 70% and 80%).
[6] Food Distribution for populations at risk (ie: children under 5 years old or under 10 years old). The ration covers the child's needs as well as some of the family's.

- Quartering areas Galange I, II, III : severely malnourished patients referred to Chipindo TFC.

Kuando-Kubango Province:
- Mavinga : 1 TFC with 200 patients + « blanket feeding » + measles vaccination
- Menongue : 1 TFC with 50 patients
- Quartering areas Soba Matias : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Ménongue + SFC with 347 beneficiaries + « blanket feeding » for women.

Lunda Norte Province:
- Quartering area Xa Mutebe : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Malange + « blanket feeding » every 15 days
- Quartering area Capaia : measles vaccination.

Lunda Sul Province :
- Saurimo : 1 TFC with 43 patients + measles vaccination in transit camps
- Quartering area Pezho Vehlo et Chinege : 35 severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Saurimo + measles vaccination.

Malangue Province:
- Malangue : 4 TFC with 248 patients
- Cangandala : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Malange + health center + mobile team for consultations (600/week)
- Quartering area Damba et Ngangassol : 30 severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Malangue + « blanket feeding ».

Moxico Province:
- QuarQuar- Luéna : 2 TFC with 113 patients + 1 SFC + 1 mobile SFC with 828 patients
- Cazombo et Quartering area in Calala and Kammuzanguissa : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Luéna + health center (with laboratory et surgery room) + measles vaccination
- Quartering area in Chicala and Lucusse : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Luéna.

Uige Province:
- Quar Uige : 1 TFC with 62 patients + 3 SFC with 438 patients
- Quartering area in Uamba : 1 TFC in Sanza Pombo with 250 patients
- Quartering area in Valle de Loge : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in Uige.

Zaire Province :
- Quar- M'Banza Congo : 1 TFC
- Quartering area in Madimba : severely malnourished patients referred to TFC in M'Banza Congo + 1 SFC with 177 patients.

Testimonies

I - INTERVIEWS AT THE CAALA TFC FROM 2 TO 5 MAY

To ensure confidentiality, all names have been changed.

S., a young woman from Chipindo

She doesn't know how old she is, but is fairly young, about 17-18. She wears dirty, torn clothing like most of the displaced persons here, and keeps her eyes lowered. In the full 90 minute interview she never once looked me in the eye. She speaks no Portuguese, only Umbundu. He had just arrived from Chipindo (brought in by the MSF exploratory team on Sunday 29 April). She has a 4-year old daughter, her only child, admitted to TFC 1 in phase 1 (intensive).

S. was taken away when she was very young – she doesn't know at what age – but no doubt at around 6-7 years old, by the Unita troops. She cannot remember her parents, or what happened when she was kidnapped. She just knows that at the beginning she was alone and that other girls then arrived. She remembers that she was originally from Cusse, not far from Caconda, a province of Uila, and that that's where she was kidnapped.

She was used as forced labour in the Unita base: preparing maize meal, manioc, cooking, washing the laundry, carrying baggage when they were attacked and had to retreat. She stayed in a fixed base for a certain time (she doesn't know where exactly, but somewhere in the Caconda region), and they then had to flee repeatedly for 3 or 4 years. She was fed, but received no clothing. So in order to buy clothes, she had to work more and more on privately owned land whenever they stayed in the same place for a time.

She married a soldier at a very young age "before she had breasts", and had a single child with him. This girl is 4 years old and is now in the TFC phase 1. Her husband then left her for someone else but came to see her from time to time anyway. She had no other men.

She reached Chipindo in September 2001, brought in by the armed forces with a group of about 20 others. At the time, they were in the mountain forests 2 days walk from Chipindo. She was only with civilians and they worked the land to survive. They had only maize, no salt, no soap, no clothes; the Unita base was further away but the soldiers sometimes came (especially her ex-husband). The armed forces arrived and took them away with them, with no violence or fighting. They reached Chipindo unhindered, after 2 days walking.

At the beginning they slept under a Mulembeira tree. The armed forces asked them if they had any family, and those that did could go and join them. She stayed and found a hut with the others. There were already large numbers of refugees. They were never given anything to eat and went out to find wild sweet potatoes. At first, they were accompanied by the soldiers, to whom they each gave a dish of sweet potatoes on returning. Since February, there were allowed to go on their own and the soldiers took nothing. Many died of hunger, with oedemas, even the elderly.

She stayed in a hut with another women, who had seen 4 of her children die, although the other 4 are still alive in Chipindo, but "they have no health problems" (!).

After searching for food, she always came back to Chipindo because there "things were calm, whereas elsewhere they were bothered" by soldiers from both sides. They went out in groups of 5-7 people, on 2-day marches and returned looking for peace and quiet.

However, since April, many have gone back to their homes and no-one is stopping them, she believes. She feels that Chipindo was safe enough but that there were

only sweet potatoes to eat, when they went looking for them, and that's all. She stayed put because she had no transport.
In the future, she will return to Cusse to try to find her family. For his part, her husband reached Chipindo in early April, but is with another woman.

R., aged 37, originally from Calei

She is at the TFC with 1 boy and 2 girls aged 10, 6 and 3, the child with her husband is 12 years old and she has 3 other sons aged 18, 15 and 14 in Luanda.

She was born in Calei (1 day's walk from Bunjei) and was captured at the age of 10 by the armed forces, who took her away to Lubango. There she was placed in a crèche, where she was found and taken in by her grandmother.
She was married at 15 in Lubango, where she stayed until 1997. She left and returned to Calei to present her family to her parents. When they reached Calei, Unita knew that there were people from the city here and took them away, with four of her children and her husband. They were taken to a Unita base 3 days march from Bunjei, and her husband was imprisoned for two years. He almost died of hunger because she was not allowed to give him food. She had to work for the soldiers: she prepared food for them, and looked after their belongings. She said she was also forced to sleep with the soldiers.
She had to work in the fields around the base. She stayed there a prisoner for 4 years, unable to leave the base where they were always closely guarded.
The armed forces then attacked and she, her husband and 4 children managed to escape. They walked for 2 days as far as Chipindo, in December 2001.
Since April, people have been leaving Chipindo and going home.
Before, they hunted for food accompanied by the troops but after walking for 2 to 3 days they could only find sweet potatoes which they dried. They each had to give a dish to the soldiers to thank them for accompanying them.
She reached the TFC 10 days ago, from Bunjei. She came from Chipindo on foot with her husband and 4 children to Bunjei when they learned that help could be found there (the MSF centre) and was transported to Caala by MSF. However, her husband and one son returned to Chipindo because someone had told them that sick children were being looked after in Bunjei.
In Chipindo, people are free to come and go as they please, but on the roads there are "bandits who demand clothing or something else, otherwise they steal the clothes and mistreat the people". She will return to Chipindo and then Huila, and would then like to go to Luanda.

A. and C. at the Intensive Feeding Centre. He is aged 45, she about 36 (doesn't really know).

They arrived here 4 days ago, brought from Bunjei by MSF, with a 5-month old baby born in Galangue and in an extremely weakened state. Two of their children died in Bunjei in March, another one aged 5 is here with them and is not too bad. They have another two children aged 9 and 15 who stayed in Bunjei. They reached Bunjei in January, from Galangue.
In Galangue, during 2001, they could no longer sleep in their house because of the attacks. Since then, their house has been burned by the armed forces and they had to constantly flee, sleeping near the water, in high humidity, plagued by mosquitoes. This is how it has been for 8 years, because the "armed forces were attacking people and Unita took them into the forest to hide".

There was an attack in January and they did not all have the time to escape. Ce was captured by the armed forces with three of their children, while Alberto stayed with another three, and found himself alone, Unita having fled and all the others had been taken away by the armed forces. The woman and the others were taken away to Chipindo, without violence. She only stayed there 4 days, because once he found himself alone, her husband had gone to Bunjei, and managed to pass a message to his wife (he know that she had been taken to Chipindo), and was able to join her, taken there by the armed forces.
They said that they did not leave Galangue earlier, despite the hardship, because they were afraid to flee: Unita told them that anyone who fled would be killed (by the armed forces). In Galangue, they grew beans, manioc, maize, and had to give 100 kilos of maize to Unita at each harvest.
Until 2000, the harvests were good, but in 2001, they produced almost nothing "because of the war, having to hide all the time". They could not look after their land and only had manioc and sweet potatoes to eat. When they reached Bunjei, they had nothing left, as everything had been stolen by the armed forces and Unita. They received no help in Bunjei: they asked for nothing and received nothing. In March, they received a measles vaccination.
The government had put them there and they were "unmolested and able to sleep in peace". But there was nothing to eat and three of their children died of anaemia, oedemas and diarrhoea.
They want to go back to Bunjei, afterwards "it's the government who will decide where they go". They would like to return to Galangue, but only if a lot of them go back and with the authorisation of the government. No orders, no return. Most of the people in Bunjei come from Galangue. Since they have been in Bunjei, they have not been attacked and have heard of no violence, but before there was talk of it. They have nothing left and don't know how to get out of their predicament without money.

Woman with 2 orphans at the IFC

She lives in the Cantao refugee camps (suburbs of Caala). She arrived on Monday with two orphans (she herself has 7 children), her husband had brought from Elanda (near Catata).The two children (aged 6 and 5) lived with their 12-year old sister since 2000. Their father died in an attack in 1998, and the two mothers (the children have different mothers) died in 2000, one from a headache (!) and the other from hepatitis.
The woman who accompanied the children left Catata in January 2002 because of the fighting and was brought to Cantao by the armed forces last January.
Since 1998, this region controlled by Unita, has seen nothing but war. Their house was burned by the armed forces in November 2001, after which they lived in a hut in the forest. They suffered no physical violence, but a constant level of theft.
She claims that there are still people in Catata, many with swollen feet. One of the children is suffering from severe malnutrition at the IFC, while the other only moderate malnutrition. In Cantao, they lived by selling wood to buy food. They want to go back to Catata.

C. Interviewed at home, in the presence of her mother (my interpreter). Age 23.

She was born in Caala, attended school until the age of 15 and has 3 brothers and 4 sisters. Life in Caala was good. In 1994, on the way back from Nngove where she had gone with her mother to look for maize in their grandmother's plantation, they were stopped on the road by Unita troops. Her mother was beaten and they stole all her clothes, and C. was taken away by the soldiers with fifteen other girls with whom they were travelling.

They were taken away on foot to a Unita base near BIMBE, where they stayed from 1994 to 1996, with very little to eat. All the girls were put into forced marriages. She was married to a soldier (working in logistics) originally from Huambo, who stayed with her the whole time. She was not raped by other men, but girls who were with her were abandoned by their "husbands" and "and it was far harder for them". In Bimbe, they did all the work for the troops: preparing the food, washing, etc. But they were not allowed to eat what they prepared, only the manioc leaves.

In 1997, she left with her husband for Andulo, where she stayed until 1999. Life was even harder than in Bimbe because of the constant attacks.

In 1999, they had to flee Andulo with Unita, as far as Moxico province. After a while there was nothing left to eat, no more salt – at the beginning they exchanged salt and clothes they had brought with them – and then nothing. They moved on without stopping for a week, and then rested for a day, before leaving again with the armed forces on their heels. They walked for more than two months with the armed forces behind them, shelling them, and they reached east of Moxico, near Zambia. They were with an enormous Unita group, five commanders, each with between 200 and 3000 men, with the civilians in the middle, unable to flee. Those who tried, were killed by the soldiers.

When they neared Zambia (in the Lumbala region), they escaped the pursuing armed forces and stayed for two years in a Unita base in the middle of the forest. They had nothing. They were encircled by Unita guards to prevent people from leaving. There were more than 1000 of them here, kept prisoner.

"To eat, there was honey and mushrooms in the forest, that's all, and that's what saved us. We exchanged the honey for flour, and my husband worked in the fields for the local people to obtain flour. I looked after the children." From 2001, surveillance was relaxed and some were able to escape to Menonge (we were not far from there) while others surrendered to the MPLA. In the end, we did not even have clothes to cover ourselves.

In 2001, attacks from the armed forces were also frequent and they took away anyone who stayed.

I was captured on 17 December 2001, with my children. My husband had gone looking for honey in the forest when they arrived, and I have had no news since then. After the attack, we advanced to the Rio Matemo. Once there, the troop leader said that we must wait for my husband. He sent the soba to find him to tell him that nothing would happen to him, but the soba was unable to convince him because as he was Unita, he was afraid they would kill him.

They took us all away with them, plus the children and helped us to move on. I had had no clothes for months and they gave me clothing and food.

We went to Mupeco (Menonge province), after walking for 4 days.

Then a truck took us to Menonge which we reached on 26 December 2001. There we were put in a refugee camp where we were given blankets, cooking utensils, clothes and food. I was given a hut for myself and my children.

I then asked to go into town to try to contact my parents. My children were ill, with diarrhoea and vomiting.
In Menonge, I sat under a tree. A woman told me where the people from Huambo were living and I found some people that I knew. I stayed there for two weeks and my children were cared for in the hospital. I met a nun that I had known in Caala, where we had studied together. She sent a message to my parents and in February my mother came to get me, via Luanda, with the MSF plane. The children were still sick, especially the 2-year old, who weighed only 5kg (Ed.: she has 3 children). Since 1999, I have suffered a lot from hunger and a lack of everything.

D. – woman aged 35-40, does not know her age with a 7-year old daughter, reached the TFC on 29/04 from Chipindo.

"I was very hungry as there were only sweet potatoes to eat. We made meal with them. There was no salt and no clothes. People were swelling up and dying with oedemas. Small wounds got bigger and people were dying, many of them, 30 every day, sometimes 50, children but also adults.
I was brought to Chipindo on 1 January 2002 by the armed forces, with my husband and 6 children. One died in Chipindo in March from oedemas, hunger and diarrhoea.
Before Chipindo, we were in the forest, where we had been taken by Unita. I am originally from Chiconguele (3 days walk from Chipindo). There, everything was fine, with food, animals, cows and land to cultivate. Unita bothered us a little, they stole the maize and if we failed to given it to them, they killed us. But I saw no-one killed by Unita, I just heard about it. Except in December 2001: one of my cousins was killed with his wife and children because he wanted to leave for Chipindo. They left only two children alive and killed the father, mother and two elder children. In Chiconguela, they killed still more people.
The Unita attacks began in 1995. They came nearly once a week, 3 or 4 times a month. At the beginning they took the cows, then the maize, then the clothes, then the cooking utensils. They took no-one away, as we were in any case under their control. As of 2001, some people left, for Matala or Chipindo. I stayed because I was afraid and because there was food. Then the armed forces arrived in December 2001 and we were encircled, but they killed no-one and explained that we had to follow them to Chipindo or Matala. We were perfectly happy to follow them. We walked for three days to Chipindo, and they even gave us food along the way. There was a group of about thirty of us. We left with nothing and they burned our houses. I was with my husband and 4 children and I reached Chipindo on 1st January 2002. On arriving, those who had family had to go and stay with them, in Lubango, Matala or elsewhere. The military took them. We others were with the sobas and my husband built a hut for our family.
We had been there for 3 weeks when the sickness began. When we arrived there were a lot of people and by late January many were dying of the sickness. (Ed.: She received a little fuba 3 times after her arrival, but she doesn't know from whom).
As there was nothing to eat, they made meal with the sweet potatoes and that made the children sick, and they swelled up. The elderly also fell ill. We went to look for sweet potatoes back where we had come from, accompanied by the soldiers. It took us 3 days walking to get there, we stayed for three days and then took a further three days to return to Chipindo. We stayed in Chipindo for two days and then started over again. Our whole group of about thirty went. Once, I went, and the next time it was my husband. We didn't take the children so that we could carry

more sweet potatoes on the way back. The soldiers also collected sweet potatoes for themselves, while those that we carried were for us, except for one dish which we gave them to thank them for accompanying us.
My son died a month later, in February. He was 3 years old. Now I'm here (in the TFC) with 3 children (2 girls aged 7 and 5 and 1 boy aged 3). In Chipindo, I left 2 boys of 10 and 8. The youngest has been sick since the end of March, and the other 2 also (they are in phase 1).
MSF brought me out of Chipindo. Here we are well looked after. When the little ones are better I will go back to Chipindo, and then try to go to Matala because I learned that my brother is there. I don't want to go back to Chiconguela."

E., woman aged 41. TFC arrived from Chipindo on 30/04, with an 8-month girl.

"Since the war, we had no fuba, no salt, no clothes, we had suffered much and were short of everything. The 8-month old had to eat sweet potato meal. She's not my daughter, she's my orphaned grand-daughter. I am the mother of her father. But she's been with me for 2 months because her mother died of illness (diarrhoea) 2 months ago in Chipindo. We come from Camoigna, which is where the baby was born. It's one day's walk south of Chipindo. The baby's mother died in February, she had 2 children, the 2 year-old died of measles in Chipindo in December.
We left Camoigna on 25 June 2001, and were constantly attacked by soldiers who stole livestock, maize, clothing, everything. This was mainly in 2001, but also a little before.
When they attacked – I don't know if it was Unita or the government – we fled into the forest. They stole everything and we came back once they had left. About three or four times a month we spent the night in the forest and then came back, and it all started again. In June 2001, someone attacked, I don't know who, and burned our houses. In Camoigna, there was disease, measles, but nothing fatal, and we had enough food.
As the house had been burned down, we decided to leave and fled with my whole family. The others stayed, but came later, one by one. We had no problems on the way. We didn't leave earlier because we thought the situation would improve. We were also stopped from leaving and those who tried were killed or captured.
We escaped during the night. We hid but met no-one. We went to Chipindo because we it was familiar to us. On arriving, we built a hut and had taken a little maize with us.
We then went back home with the troops to harvest the maize, until November 2001. Afterwards, there was nothing left, just sweet potatoes, but it was raining and we brought them back soaking wet and had to try to dry them in Chipindo. My husband and son went looking for them. Every day, people arrived in Chipindo, either alone or accompanied by troops. They all went looking for food in their aldeia or elsewhere, accompanied by the soldiers.
When the soldiers surrounded a village, they took the girls with them. They were taken away by the government soldiers. Some came back, others not: they stayed in the camp with the soldiers. The same happened with the Unita soldiers: they even took away girls aged 10 or less.
One of my daughters managed to escape only in October 2001, even though she had been captured by Unita in 2000. She prepared meal for them, but she was not allowed to eat any. I don't know if she was raped.

The doctors found me in Chipindo (Ed.: MSF), and took me with them because of the sick baby.
Everyone from Camoigna is now in Chipindo, there's nobody left there. Many are dead. Later on I want to go back to Chipindo to find my husband and children. I have four of them: two with their own family and two still with me.
One of my sons had four sons of his own, two died in Camoigna of measles and two others are with him in Chipindo, they are well. Afterwards I will go home to Camoigna, if we are allowed to. We are registered at Chipindo, but have received no aid for the time being."

D., 35, from Chipindo

She speaks without stopping, without looking at us, a remote look in her eyes. She came from Chitata, 6 hours walk from Chipindo.
"In the forest, we were OK but uneasy; there was food, but the problems started in Chipindo: there we slept well, there was no trouble, but we had nothing to eat. Chitata is a large aldeia, we cultivated the land and even had 4 cows, so did the others. She had four children, her husband worked in the Chipindo administration. In Chipindo, there are no more natives, only refugees. A commander brings everyone out of the forest back to Chipindo. I came alone with my husband and children because of the war. We were not brought here."
In Chitata, Unita attacked unrelentingly, the soldiers killed those who stayed. One day, on their way back after fleeing the previous day, she saw members of her family killed. Her father had been killed like that by Unita. That was in 1996, they left Chitata and went into their field. On the way they met some soldiers who shot him dead.
"We were able to escape. Unita came all the time, sometimes in the morning, sometimes the evening. They killed all those who could not flee. They stole the animals and then the food, then the clothes, then the cooking utensils, everything. The boys were killed, because they said they were members of the MPLA, the girls also because they said that they were members of JOTA (MPLA youth movements), so they killed them too. The children and elderly were taken away with them.
I had four children. Two are dead, one in the forest in Chitata, in June 2001, he was 15 and fell sick and then died. The other died in Chipindo in August 2001, he was 3 and died of sickness with a swollen stomach. We left for Chipindo in June 2001, after the death of my son.
In June 2000, the government troops attacked our village and stole all the cows. Unita then accused my husband of informing the MPLA so that they could come and steal the cattle, so they wanted to kill him. He found out beforehand and ran away to Chipindo. I was put in prison in June 2000, and afterwards was kept under constant surveillance. I was raped several times and was forced to sleep with the soldiers otherwise they would have killed me. I was obliged to do whatever they wanted. I went to find maize, I did all the work for the chiefs, I was a prisoner and my punishment was to do everything. It was the same for the women whose husbands had left. 30 of us women suffered the same fate. We ate only the leaves that we cooked. This is when my first son died. When I went to look for maize, the soldiers kept my children hostage to ensure that I would come back. They however were not mistreated.
I did not leave with my husband because when it happened, my son was already ill and could no longer walk. Then one day, in June 2001, everything was in confusion because the armed forces had attacked and Unita wanted to flee. In the agitation, I

managed to escape with my three children, alone. I walked with them to Chipindo, where I found my husband who had obtained this job with the administration (he keeps the registry of deaths).
Life in Chipindo was very hard. My 3-year old daughter fell ill and died two weeks later. At the time people were not yet dying in large numbers, because there was still maize to be had.
As of September, there was no more maize, only sweet potatoes. She was well, her husband was working, although he was never paid. This carried on until Monday, when the doctors arrived and took me and my 10-year old daughter and 8-year old son. I will go back to Chipindo when my children are cured and we will restart our lives."

F., 32 years old, from Chipindo.

"Things were very difficult in Chipindo, we didn't have anything to eat or to wear; sweet potatoes were the only thing we had to eat.
I was born in Huambo then, when I was twelve years old, I went and lived with an aunt in Lubango. When my aunt died, I stayed with one of my older sisters in Lubango. Our lives were good and I was going to school.
I left Lubango in 1992 because there was peace. I went to do some trading in Cinquenta (Editor's Note: it's a marketplace not far from Lubango). And that's where UNITA captured me and put me in prison. At the time, I was married with two children (who are now 17 and 12 years old) and my husband was in Matala. I was on a military base until January 4, 2002 when there was an attack and a lot of people were killed. It was a base located near Galangue.
Now, I have four children: two in Chipindo and two here, the 17 year-old and the 12 year-old are in Chipindo, and the 7 year-old and year and a half year old are here with me. Two other children died in Matala before we were captured.
On the base, we suffered a lot; there was not enough food, we had no house, no soap and no clothes. My children and I were beaten. I spent seven days in prison without any food and eight years in the forest. I must go back and get my sons, then I want to go back to Lubango".
Editor's Note: Very confusing account, it was very obvious that she is suffering from psychological trauma. It was impossible to organize her thoughts or what her life has been like in the last couple of months; therefore we stopped the interview.

A., 42 year-old woman, arrived from Chipindo on 4/29

She has a blank look, and a four year old daughter at the TFC. "I was born in Chipindo. I no longer have a husband, he died during the war in October 2001; he was killed in the forest. In 1975, UNITA took me from Chipindo to Hocke (near Lubango). I was ten years old: they took my mother and I and they killed my father. They also took my three brothers. There, I met my husband and we had three children, one of whom died in Hocke.

In 1992, we came back from Hocke to a village (Aldeia) near Chipindo; we were still with UNITA. We lived in the forest from 1992 to 2001. We didn't have soap, salt or clothes. At first, we received cattle and chickens from UNITA, which we had to take care of for them. We also had to make flour for them. We gave almost everything to UNITA; we only kept a little for ourselves. We lived on what we planted, we had to change villages several time - but we were getting by.

In March 2001 we had nothing; everything was stolen from us. So, we left alone during the night for Chipindo. At this time, there was nothing in Chipindo, not one single house, so we built huts. There was one group of people before us who came from Sangeve. In my group, there were about 110 people. There was already a government military base there; they took us to get something to eat in the area. You could find all sorts of food in the surrounding area; we went back and forth during the day.
Starting in June 2001, army forces started to attack and then go and look for people in the forest. A lot of people started to arrive: everyone who was within eight days of walking from Chipindo, which was the area where the soldiers were looking for people. When they arrived, those who had family were sent home to Jamba, Covengo, Mataca, and Lubango. The soldiers took them there.
Food started to really become scarce starting in January 2002. Before January, there were a few deaths, but afterwards, there were a lot of people who died because there was no more food and there was an outbreak of measles and edema.
Yes, there was violence and rapes (Editor's Note: she's laughing). But we couldn't talk about it. They were government troops; they even took children in Chipindo. But they only raped those who they captured in the bush, not those who came voluntarily, not her, because she came on her own. When there was peace, there was an order from the government to stop the violence. Now, I'm going to go back to Chipindo".

M., 26 year-old female from Bungei with 3 children at the TFC.

“I was born in Bela Vista. In 1987 my aunt took me to Bailundo. Then, in 1988 we went from Bailundo to Jamga (going through Licua on foot, then by UNITA car). She was with her aunt, and a lot of other people. They stayed in Jamga until 1990; things were going more or less pretty well. Then starting in 1990, there were problems in Jamga (fighting) and we left for Base 49, where we arrived in 1991. There, there was no peace; there were always attacks. So, in 1992, we left for Base 17. Then, there was peace and we went to Jamba, near Matala. We were with a lot of people, civilians; and everyone began to get on with their lives. We planted everything. It was there that I got married and life was normal. I had two children. In 1994, the war started again and we had to flee Jamba into the bush, with my two children. One of them died from bloody diarrhoea. But there was food and life was pretty peaceful.
Then, I went back to Base 49 in 1996 with my husband and three children. After that there was constant war: we would plant, there would be attacks, we would harvest. Retreat and return - it was war. It was like that until 1997.
In 1998, we were at the Cope base. The war was still going on, with non-stop attacks, we didn't have a permanent place to stay; we slept here and there, in the bush, we ate what we found. It was like that until 2001: we didn't have any more flour and the only thing we had to eat was fruit from the bush and mushrooms. It was there that I lost my husband, there was mass confusion and he fled in one direction, and I fled in the other with the children (her children are 9, 5 and 2 years-old).
My husband died on December 5, 2001, killed by the MPLA. They killed him during fighting, and I buried him myself. So, I was left alone with my children and people that I didn't know. All this happened when we decided to go to Bunjei; we were

attacked along the road and he died. So, I continued alone to Bunjei where I arrived on December 27th.
In Bunjei, I suffered a lot, I didn't have a hut, we slept outside in the rain; we were hungry. It was like that until April when the MSF doctors found me and brought me here because of the children who were sick. It was impossible to find anything to eat in Bunjei, the food was very far away and I couldn't go and get any because I had to watch the children. The only food my children and I had to eat was mushrooms, even the youngest child: I made him mushroom juice. I didn't get any help from either the other displaced people or the soldiers. Two of my three children were very sick with diarrhea also. Now, it's ok. I don't want to go back to Bunjei, I don't have any family there, I would like to go to Bailundo or Bela Vista, but I don't have the money to go there. Here, they don't give me enough to eat: one meal for three people and the baby gets milk. Someone stole the blanket that was given to her second son when they arrived: one day when the baby got sick again, I left the blanket in the Jango (TFC room) and now I don't have a blanket anymore for the four of us. I only get one meal because the child was discharged (Editor's Note: recovered, he left the feeding center) and I receive nothing for him. Also, I've been sick for 2 days, headache and diarrhea, and I haven't been able to see a doctor."

A., 46 year-old male from Bunjei with one 7 year-old child.

"I was born in Tiyoya (near Bunjei). I am a catechist from the Caruanga Central Mission. I finished ninth grade in Bunjei, then I did my catechist training at the Sangece Catholic Mission (next to Chipindo). From 1975 until now, life has been very bad.
I arrived here on April 15th, with the MSF truck, with my very sick 7-year-old son. I have six other children (older) who stayed with their mother in Bunjei. The child was all swollen when I arrived; now, he is almost recovered. The other ones are doing well, but they no longer have anything to wear or eat. I lost two children in July 2001 to diarrhea and one other child a long time ago.
I arrived in Bunjei on April 10th, from the Dango forest, seven days on foot from Bunjei. I had been there since June 2001. The war has caused nothing but suffering.
On June 7, 2001, UNITA took me to a village called Essita, next to Bunjei. We were attacked by UNITA and they took my wife, my children and I into the bush.
We spent a year in Essita, we cultivated the land, but the army forces stole all of our food. Before, I was in Tiyoya. There, life was good, until 1995, everything was destroyed in an attack by army forces that came from Ngove at 1:30 in the morning. The troops came and we went and hid in the bush. They stole everything, livestock, clothes, everything. They came all the time. With UNITA, it was the same thing; we had to give them 50kg of corn a year, plus 1 kg every week. There was no salt. But there was no physical violence either; only those who damaged things were beaten. There were guards to keep us from leaving for government- controlled areas. If we tried they would kill us.
On June 7, 2001, we all left Essita; we had to move all the time. We were attacked once, sometimes twice, a week. Then, the government took control of the entire area, and we left for the Dongo forest, and there, the attacks became even worse. That lasted until April 6, 2002, and they stopped attacking us because there was an official cease-fire. We all left the bush; those who came from Bunjei went to Bunjei, those from Chipindo went back to Chipindo, etc.

In the Dong forest, mushrooms were our only food. A lot of people died of starvation or injuries; we all had scabies. Upon arriving in Bunjei, some friends that I found lent me a house. And a health worker saw us and transferred me here".

E., 54 year-old female from Bunjei, with her three and a half year old grandson (her daughter's son).

Her daughter is a widow, she has seven children and she stayed in Bunjei to take of the other six.
E. has three children of her own, with their own families. One is in Tombua, another in the forest, and the youngest is in Bunjei. She hasn't had any news from her child in Tombua for a very long time.
She was with her daughter who is in the bush when the troops attacked them. The daughter (24 years old) fled with her children and husband. The troops took everything from them, beat them, they even stole their clothes, everything, they had to carry their children naked using vines cut from the trees because they were left with nothing. They walked like that to Chipindo.
They were attacked in January while they were in Jamba Caluquesso (near Covango, two days from Bunjei). They had been there for three years, before they were in Ngove. They left Ngove, captured by UNITA.
In Jamba, they suffered a lot; there was nothing to eat. They went several days without eating, the children were always sick, but none of them died. They were not beaten by UNITA. Her daughter's husband died in the war, a long time ago, after the birth of his youngest child.
In Jamba, they were constantly attacked. In January, army forces attacked during the day. They shot off their guns, but didn't kill anybody. They took them to Chipindo, after beating them and stealing their clothes. However, since they were from Bunjei, they preferred to go to Bunjei, and so the troops went with them on foot, without any violence. They were well treated.
They only stayed in Chipindo for four days, there was nothing to eat, but it was calm.
They arrived in Bunjei at the end of January, and in March she received 1 kg of corn flour per adult. Not everyone got flour; it was the beginning of March. They gave the food to the village leaders, who redistributed it to some people. Before, they ate sweet potato leaves, which people went and got by walking for two days. She arrived here April 17th, with the MSF truck.
They are well treated here, they have soap, milk, food; the children are recovering.
In Bunjei, there is no violence.

A., 39 year-old female, with two children.

"We suffered a lot in the forest, without salt, food or clothing.
I am from Cafufu (north of Luanda). I have four children, my husband died in March 2001, in Sector No.1. In 1977, my husband was a domestic trade delegate. Then there was an attack by UNITA and we were captured. I was fourteen years old at the time and I was pregnant. They took us to Luena and put us in prison. I was always guarded by soldiers. After six months, I had a little more freedom. Then we were in Munengwe, near Luena. At this time (1978), we stayed in the bush for twelve years, the only thing we had to eat were fruits from the forest.

In 1990, we tried to return to Cafafu, but there really wasn't peace and, on the way, we were stopped by other UNITA troops that wouldn't let us go any further; we had to stay with them. They took us to a base. We planted crops, but we couldn't harvest because we were always being attacked, we were always on the move. We had to change locations all the time. In 1990, I had three children, but one died from an illness.
My husband died in May 2001, following an attack by army forces: he took a bullet in the leg. I was able to bring him to the base, but he had lost a lot of blood and he died the next day because there wasn't a doctor or medicine. I had to keep following the UNITA group. We ate dried bananas and made flour from them.
In December 2001, the leader of the army forces from Chipindo sent troops into the bush and I was captured by them and brought back to Chipindo. There, the troops gave 4 kg of flour to those who were not with UNITA. I stayed in Chipindo for a month and then I left for Bunjei, with the troops, because there were still UNITA-controlled areas and we didn't have the right to leave alone. I left in January 2002 because the children were sick.
We got to the medical station, but it was too late: they had edemata. So, an MSF car came and got us in Bunjei and brought us here at the end of March.
I came with two sick children: the other one is in Cantao (Editor's Note: a Caala displaced person camp) at a friend's place who came and got him here. Now, one of the children is doing well, he was discharged, the other is still being treated. I'm well treated here.
Now I would like to return to Cafufu, since I don't have any family in Bunjei, but I don't have the money for the trip. I think I will go to Ngove, where I know someone".
Editor's Note: Since her second child was discharged, she only receives one ration of food for the both of them.

M., Female who doesn't know her age (we think she is in her early twenties).

She came from Chipindo with two children ages six and two. She also had twin boys, but they died in 2000 at age three.
"I was born in Camoigna (village next to Chipindo) and I continued to live there, at least in the surrounding areas anyway, because we always had to flee into the bush because of the attacks
My husband left me for another woman; now I'm alone with the children (all from the same husband). He left two years ago, after the last baby was born.
In Camoigna, there was never a moment's peace; we were always being attacked by the troops. There was no salt, no clothes, no food; we lost our property. Sweet potatoes were the only food we had. When things became unbearable, everyone from the village left Camoigna on our own during the night. It was July 2001. The twins were already dead (hepatitis). A lot of people died during this time in Camoigna (in 2000).
In Camoigna, each family had to give 100 kg of corn per year to UNITA. Widows only had to give 50 kg, or baby goats or chickens. Those who didn't have land also had to pay, by working on other people's land in return for corn, which they had to give to UNITA.
They made the young boys and girls sing and dance all day to show that they were happy, in youth groups. The children were forced to do this; those who didn't want to were beaten or imprisoned. In the beginning, they took the oldest girls, to sleep with them in their camp. After awhile, the same thing happened to the younger girls

8 years and older; they took them to "educate" them. We didn't come to Chipindo earlier because we were being watched, so we couldn't leave. We were also hopeful because the UNITA soldiers told us all the time that they were going to win the war soon and take back the cities.
When we arrived in Chipindo, there was nothing to eat, we went back to Camoigna often, but the UNITA attacked us. The army forces went with us.
Starting in August 2001, there was no more corn in Camoigna, only sweet potatoes, and since there were so many people, we ran out of food.
From September to April, we ate nothing but sweet potatoes. I was the one that went to get them; I left the children with my mother in Chipindo. In March 2002, we received a little bit of help, a glass, a plate, a spoon and 2 kg of corn, 1 kg of flour and 1 teaspoon of salt.
Then military trucks brought me back to Bunjei. There were vendors on the trucks whom the soldiers had brought to sell salt, fish and clothes in Chipindo: when they left, I left with them. There were only two of us (me and another girl) who left with our sick children. I paid 200 kwanza to be brought out of Chipindo. It was my brother, who was a soldier, who paid for me. When we arrived in Bunjei, they dropped me off at the MSF hospital and the next day, the MSF truck brought me to Caala to the TFC. I didn't know that there was help in Bunjei when I left Chipindo, I saw that there were doctors to take care of my children when I arrived".

30 year old female, with an 18-month-old child (I forgot to ask her her name).

"We suffered a lot. There was nothing to keep the children healthy, no salt, no soap, no clothes, nothing to eat. We were never in the same place, sometimes we stayed two days in the same place, and then we had to move again, sometimes we had to move everyday, we would go 10 km away, and then come back.
One day, we chose sides: we couldn't continue to be attacked by UNITA and the MPLA, so we chose to go the government side in Bunjei. But there was nothing to eat there either. There was a woman who was selling salt and other things, but we didn't have any money, so we didn't buy anything. In the beginning, we would go and get cassava and sweet potatoes, then there was no more cassava, then we ran out of everything; and then people started getting sick.
I have three children, two here and a fourteen year-old daughter who stayed in Bunjei. I was born in Chipeta (Bié province)
When I was ten, I was taken to a military base. My father was killed at war and my mother died from illness, that's what I was told because I didn't know them. My oldest brother raised me. When I was ten, while going to a field to cultivate the land with my brother, UNITA attacked us and brought me to a base. Since then, I've gone from base to base, all the time. We were on bases and everywhere else, in the bush - it was war.
In the beginning, I was little, so I didn't really have anything special to do. There were a lot of children and the oldest ones took care of us. They had made a Jango (room) for the children; there was no mother to take care of us, only older children. After, I had to clean houses, do the laundry, cook, and make flour, everything.
At fifteen, I married a soldier, I had a child right away and we had a hut for ourselves. We went to Mavinda, then Bié, then Andulo, always on military bases. We changed bases every two months. We also went to villages, and each house had to give us corn or something else. I went with the soldiers and I carried the food on the way back, I carried what we got from people.

From Andulo, we went to Bailundo; then in 1992 we went to Base 21, which was a regroupment camp for soldiers when there was peace. We stayed there until 1994. And then the war started again, I was in Uila, on the Cope base. I was still with my husband. I had five children at the time in 1994. After, it was war and we were on different bases all the time. Until 2000 when my husband was killed in a fight with army forces. So, the leader of our troops killed two of my children, who were 4 and 5, in front of me. It was to gain strength; by killing the children he would get their power…. He killed them in front of me, with one bullet. It was in Matombé. When my husband died, I was pregnant with our youngest child.
So, I left the base and I was in a village in Chissende (Uila), I fled with the three remaining children. That was at the end of 2000. The people in the village welcomed me, I worked for them in the fields and they gave me food in exchange. I still didn't have any salt, soap or clothes, but everything was going ok. The UNITA troops didn't cause too much trouble because we worked a lot and each family gave 100 kg of corn. Those who couldn't give were killed, because they were considered useless. I saw three people get killed for that. The farmers gave me 5 kg for each day that I worked, and I only had to give 50 kg of corn to UNITA because I was a widow. The MPLA attacked us often: they arrived, we fled, they stole everything they could, and then we would return when they left. It was like that all during 2001.
Then, things became confusing; we were running from the MPLA and UNITA, who attacked us constantly. We decided together to abandon UNITA and the whole village left for an area controlled by the MPLA. There was an attack, we decided to surrender to the troops, and we left with them. It was in June 2001, we went to Bunjei. There, we went out to find something to eat, we walked for three days, and then came back. I was with my three children (11, 6 and 18 months)
In Bunjei, there was nothing to eat, no clothes and no salt. But we were well treated. They defended us against UNITA when we went to the fields.
I came here a month and a half ago, with the MSF truck, with only my youngest child, who was sick. I left the two other children in Bunjei; but then doctors brought the six year old here because he became sick too. I was in intensive care, and I saw him arrive. Now, he's recovered, with me. The youngest is doing better, he weighed 2 kg when he arrived, now he weighs 6 kg, he will leave soon. I left the other children so that they could watch the house.
Now, here, I don't receive any food for the child who was discharged. Someone told me that we would be given something to eat when we all left. The little one, he receives milk four times a day and plumpy nut two times a day. I get pirao and beans two times a day, but I have to share with my six year-old son. We also get a piece of soap two times a week. There is enough water and toilets, so it's ok.
I'm going to return to Bunjei and then I want to return to Bié because it's my home.

E., 47 years old, with a son in intensive care and another with his wife in Phase 2.

"I was born in Chicuma (Benguela province). I had ten children; six are still living. I have two sick children here, two others who aren't sick, and two others who stayed in Bunjei
I arrived here two weeks ago with my wife and my four children. The one in intensive care is six years old, the other sick one is five, the two others here are ten and two years old, and in Bunjei, I have a 15 year-old daughter who already has a baby and my other child is eleven. My father was a farmer, and so am I. In 1975, I

left Chicuma, because there was no corn, so I came to Kipungo (Uila) with my entire family to find land. And we found a good piece of land.
Starting in 1993, the situation started to become very difficult. We left Kipungo in 1993 for the country, we abandoned our property because of the war and we started off along the road because it was safer elsewhere. The government troops brought us back to Kipungo in 1994 or 1995. There we had large fields with tractors and we worked there. And it was there that UNITA attacked us and brought us into the bush. They didn't beat us, but they forced us to go to Kussesse (Uila) in 2000. From 1995 to 2000, we cultivated the land and we didn't have any problems. After, in Kussesse, we suffered from hunger and disease (measles). There was no salt or soap. In Kussesse, normal daily activities had stopped, there were constant attacks; people died everyday.
It was like that until 2002. In 2001 and 2002, we moved around all the time in the bush. We moved towards Bunjei where we arrived in the beginning of 2002. In Bunjei, I made charcoal, and I sold it to the soldiers to buy food and clothes. In Bunjei, we were able to buy corn at the beginning of the year. When we arrived, the children were doing well, then their feet started to swell. So, I went to see the medicine man who told me to put banana leaves and avocado on their feet. The swelling went down at first, but then their feet swelled back up again. That's why I didn't go to the hospital in Bunjei right away, I was waiting for the traditional medicine to work. Now, I would like to go to Lubango or Kipango to find my family. When I came to Bunjei, there were still a lot of people in the bush. People who are sick are coming to Bunjei; the others stay in the bush. But those who are already in Bunjei are waiting until all of the UNITA troops are regrouped into cartels to return to their village.
Here at the TFC, they take good care of us, no problem".

J., 51-year-old man from Catata

“I was born near Catata. My wife died in the war in October 2001. She left me with four children, ages 14, 11, 7 and 3. It’s the seven-year-old that’s sick. Two of the others are here with me and the other one (the 11-year-old) stayed with her uncle in Catata. She hasn’t been sick that long. We arrived here on 29 April. A military truck brought me here, for free. There are still a lot of people in Catata; I don’t know how many, but they are scattered throughout the villages, not all in one group. I live in a village less than a one-day walk from Catata. I was there all by myself. Other families are scattered even more. There are a lot of people and they’re all hungry. There are green bananas in the bush; we grate them, dry them and make flour. There hasn’t been any corn since 2001.
In 2001, no one could grow anything because there were non-stop attacks by UNITA, constantly; they stole everything – dishes, blankets, clothes, farm equipment. Before 2001, they didn’t take everything; they left some things. Since 2001, we’ve lived on bananas and mushrooms.
One morning in October 2001, when my wife was pregnant, they came and she wasn’t able to run away fast enough. I fled with the four children but she was caught by the soldiers and they shot her dead. I didn’t leave because I didn’t have any hope anymore without my wife and where would I go? But those who wanted to could leave; many went to Caala. But there was still nothing to eat, and my daughter got sick in April, so I took her to the Catata health post. But they couldn’t care for her, so I came here on a military truck.

Afterward I'm going to return to Catata. I've had ten children; six died from disease, but that was a long time ago. Here I have two children who are not registered; they only give me something to eat and we have to share the ration among the three of us."

Bunjei – Discussions by the campfire with an MSF camp guard

"We listen to the radio at night because there isn't much to do; we listen to music, the news. We also listen to the hours that pass so we don't think about all this suffering, the suffering we went through.

In January, February, at this time of night, people cried. Throughout Bunjei, all you heard was crying. Crying for children, women, old people who had died that day.

And all of us, each one of us, when we heard the crying at night, we said to ourselves, 'Maybe tomorrow they will be crying for us.'

We never knew if we'd be here the next day to see the sun rise. Because we had nothing. When the women mourned their dead sons, they also cried because of their solitude. Because they were alone; they couldn't move forward or go back. They couldn't go right or left or even return to the earth. They said to themselves, 'What's going to become of me?'

Mothers didn't have the strength to carry their dead children or the strength to dig their graves. Because at that time everyone had to dig the graves of their dead. No one had the strength to help others.

Today the women are like men; they don't bear children because they no longer have the strength to make love.

When we left Bunjei to get some manioc to eat, UNITA let us pass. But when we came back, with one or two kilos of manioc, they cut off our heads with a machete. When we saw that someone hadn't come back after being gone for one or two days, we knew that he was dead. There were some people who were strong enough to bring back their dead so they wouldn't be left in the mata [the bush]. And some people who didn't have the strength.

Sometimes we ate manioc fuba [flour made from manioc] – without salt or oil – when it was available. Sometimes we also found sweet potatoes and then we could eat for a day. But the next day was worse; people had bloody diarrhea that didn't go away and they died.

I'm 48 years old and I lost six children when I was in the mata. Only one of my children is alive today (Note: he is severely malnourished and is with his mother in Caala).

In the mata, we could only keep our children till the age of 2. After that, they belonged to UNITA. They became slaves of the commanders and soldiers. Because when UNITA soldiers came to attack villages they made the children go first. They opened the road that way; if there were mines, bombs, animals, snakes, the children paved the way.

Sometimes people from Northern UNITA came here to take away children. We knew there was no hope of ever seeing them again. Parents couldn't say anything; if they did, they were seen as undisciplined, as agitators. And they cut off agitators' heads. In the mata, they didn't like killing people with bullets because that meant wasting bullets. They preferred using machetes and knives.

One day, an old man went to get manioc in the fields. They let him go. When he came back, they arrested him, took what he had gathered and said to him, "We're not going to kill you because you're old." Then they cut off his ear and made him eat it, telling him it was bread.

They placed mines along the river so that no one could go get water without them [the UNITA soldiers].
If someone found a path to the river and came back without stepping on a mine, the soldiers saw the footsteps the next day. They didn't erase them, but they put mines on the new path.
Girls of 12-13 were forced to join JURA (Juventud Unita Revolution, Angola). Having girls helped mobilize young men, too. The girls carried arms. When they attacked small villages, the girls carried the arms and the young boys looted the houses, each accompanied by a soldier while the other soldiers were shooting at the people.
The young boys who looted didn't receive any of the booty. The soldiers took everything. When the government attacked, it was the same thing. We didn't know where to go; both sides were the same.
Today, we prefer being here where we can sleep in peace. If the disarmament of soldiers really takes place, then maybe the people will finally be free.
There are still a lot of people in the mata who are going to come here.
There are even UNITA soldiers in this village. They haven't done much harm; it won't serve any useful purpose for them to surrender. All they did was obey orders and people know it.
But a few weeks ago, a young man of 22 arrived here to surrender to the government. He was almost killed by the people here because he was one of UNITA's monsters. The soldiers saved his life. He had no respect for life; he could kill five to six people at a time, with a machete. Why he did that, no one knows. He also wanted to kill his father. How does someone become like that – to the point of wanting to kill your own father, who's like a god to you? Men have really gone mad."
It's 4:30 a.m. The women begin to pound the grain. It's Sunday. Traditionally, Angolan women beat the grain together. They find a large flat stone and pound the grain all day while singing and talking. By evening, the fuba is dry after sitting on the hot stone. But here in Bunjei, explains the guard, "These traditions have long been forgotten. We haven't had corn to make fuba for a long time."
He continues:
"Today you see a woman with a young child in her arms and she looks so old, so worn out that she seems like the child's grandmother. She's actually 18 years old and she's the mother, but she's been ravaged by suffering. That is not normal.
Now they're asking us to forget all that. Maybe the children will be able to. But we, the old people, we are old enough to have grandchildren and we don't even have sons to give us any.
We've seen hundreds of people massacred and for a long time we couldn't talk about it. We've spent years hovering between life and death. Is it now possible to live with people who've done that? We won't be able to forget.
The white people (MSF) have really done a good job because at this time a little more than a month ago all you heard was crying and more crying.
I arrived here in November, brought by the government. (Note: his village was burned by the FAA, the Angolan Armed Forces). I don't know if one day we'll have everything we had before. We'll have to start over from scratch. Again.
The house that you see over there (he points to the ruins of a house which is the only vestige of a long-ago past, with its window and door fragment) belonged to a man who had about 100 head of cattle and a lot of land. Today he lives in a hut, like everyone in Bunjei.
Before Bunjei, there was an orchard where fruit grew without anyone having to take care of it. The people who lived there spent six months out of the year gathering the

fruit and selling it. Then they were rich enough to travel throughout the country for the other six months of the year."
Dawn begins to break and the sky grows light. The guard stretches slowly and says, "Today I'm going to Huambo and I'll come back for my night guard duty in two days."
To get to Huambo, he will have to walk to Caala and take a taxi. The walk takes about a day.
"We've walked so much for so many years that it's no big deal to walk an entire day."

II – TESTIMONIES GATHERED IN BUNJEI

A., originally from Chipese, doesn't know her age

A. doesn't know her age but she's probably old. She wears a torn t-shirt, a worn-out blue skirt, a colourful scarf and a crude metal chain around her neck, similar to those I will see on many other women. She isn't wearing shoes, like all the other women I meet. She is thin but appears solid. She looks like many other people in the camp. And like many others, her story is confused, discreet, often contradictory. We therefore have to confirm each piece of information.
A. has a husband and four children, aged 7-8 to 20 years.
She arrived in Bunjei from Chipese in August 2001 after a day's walk with the rest of her village. She was ordered to do so by the government "because of the danger" (she can't estimate how many people walked with her).
She had to leave quickly and didn't have enough time to take her belongings. In any case, she had very little to her name because the "enemy" (Note: UNITA) had stolen her possessions.
Nor was she able to take the harvest from her field, which had not been planted for a long time. (She gestures dramatically and desperately when asked this question).
It had been a long time since she had had any real crops since she had been fleeing from one place to another, from one part of the mata to another since the resumption of the war in 1998.
Since her arrival here, she has been able to return to her field a few times to gather manioc, accompanied by soldiers of the government army, but there is no longer any manioc in her field.
She has no other resources, but has twice benefited from a small food distribution by the government (Note: given the date of her arrival, it appears that three small distributions have taken place since then, but…). The government distributed corn, she says. "Life is hard here," just like during the war, she insists.
Many people died from 1998 until the truce. They died violent deaths (shooting) or from disease or hunger, but she doesn't know how many.
She lost a child, who was recruited as a soldier by UNITA.
They had to constantly flee the enemy, UNITA, who killed so many people, by hiding in the bush.
What does she want to do now? (silence) When the government gives her permission to go home, they will leave for Chipese, but right now she's afraid to return.
Her house? (she smiles: our question is obviously naïve) No, it's not there anymore; it was burned "by the enemy."

S., 40, originally from Bunjei

S. has a headache: when we meet her, she is sitting in front of her hut, her head between her hands. She gestures and talks slowly. Visibly worn down and very thin, she wears a red t-shirt and a necklace of brightly coloured pearls.
The interview is brief because S. is not in any condition to answer questions.
Her husband, A, works at the MSF centre. They are here with three children, ages 16, 11 and X years (Note: word is incomprehensible).
She had nine children (the oldest was 28). Six of the children died, two of them four years ago:

a. one from cholera at 8 years of age
b. the other from edema at the age of 7

The others died two years ago from hunger and disease (one was 4 but she doesn't remember the ages of the others).
They lived in Bunjei before the war. Her husband was a nurse and worked at the old mission (Note: a Protestant mission was located several cables' length away from Bunjei's current location. It was near the old village that is now abandoned, and had a health post.)
During the war, they fled into the bush along with the other people in their village, escaping the constant attacks.

G., 28, originally from Chivanda

In the shadow of a tree, G. is having her hair done by a neighbour. During the interview, she nurses her baby. She seems to be in good health, as does her baby, who isn't wearing a blue, pink or green bracelet from the MSF feeding centre – a rare occurrence. Her other daughter, age 3, delouses her little sister while she nurses.
G. is the wife of an involuntary UNITA soldier.
They have four children, ages 9, 6, 3 and less than one year.
She comes from Chivanda, a three-hour walk from here, like the residents of the surrounding huts.
They decided to come here of their own free will because that knew that the government was organizing a camp (Note: we don't know if their "voluntary" arrival in Bunjei was done out of fear of reprisals or retaliation by those who belonged to UNITA or were considered UNITA henchmen, voluntary or not. See other stories below).
They left Chivanda in 1999 "because of the war" after a UNITA attack against their village. They left with a group of villagers to live in the mata, fleeing because of rumours that one warring party or another would attack.
They went to look for food in their field when it was safe and the crops hadn't all been stolen.
Her husband was captured in the mata and forced to join UNITA.
When recalling this period, she keeps saying, "a lot of suffering". In the areas under UNITA control, they had nothing: no salt, soap, food or tools for working the land. Looking embarrassed, she said she had lost everything she owned. The entire village was burned down (by government forces).
She hasn't seen her husband since last August and doesn't know if he's still alive. Since her arrival here, she lives on manioc that she gathers from the surrounding fields (Note: everyone "steals" from the fields of local residents). She hopes to

return to Chivanda, but she's waiting for government permission to leave. She doesn't know when permission will come.

M., originally from Chitawa (near Sakalombo, about a two-hour walk), doesn't know her age (she's a young woman)

The young woman is pounding corn for the people living in the neighbouring hut.
Manioc is spread out on a cloth lying on the ground, giving off a heavy odour and attracting a huge swarm of flies.
She's wearing a bright yellow t-shirt over a colourful grass skirt.
A pretty little girl wearing a colourful skirt and bunches is sitting next to her.
M. arrived in Bunjei in December 2001 with nearly her entire village. She doesn't remember the exact date she left Chitawa. She first went to Chingenjo, which is far from here, "a day's walk from Chitawa", she says. She fled "because of the enemy."
"Fear," she repeats, and her solid smile disappears.
When the war began, they were able to stay in Chitawa for a while, then had to flee to the mata. She survived there as best she could, often on the run, sometimes gathering crops and eating leaves and fruit found in the bush.
She doesn't know when she was captured by UNITA, but she definitely came under their control.
Her husband was a UNITA soldier until June 2001, the date he died, killed by government forces. This occurred shortly after the death of their eldest child, 7, who suffered from "headaches."
How does she survive with her little F, aged 5? In answer to this question, M's story becomes vague. She says she asks the residents of Chipese for corn and beans and exchanges salt for manioc from the people of her village, who lived with her in the forest. It is unclear how she obtained the salt she barters.
Her future? Yes, she wants to return to Chitawa, even if her house is in ruins, but she's waiting for orders from the government.

A., 62, originally from Tingili (a one-hour walk)

A., who has salt-and-pepper hair and is dressed in a striped shirt and brown trousers, is cutting logs into thin pieces. He's making a mat for his family.
The area in which we find ourselves seems almost like a senior citizens club.
A. arrived in Bunjei on 21 December 2001, after all his possessions were stolen in Tingili. They decided to leave after all the other village residents had left.
He knew that the government had set up an administration and camp here. FAA soldiers who were "searching for" enemies in the forest told them to come here, in the vicinity of a village where they had taken refuge in 1999, following rumours of an attack on their village. (Note: it is clear that when people say they left of their own free will, there was actually strong governmental pressure.)
He has four children, ages 18, 14, 7 and 2, who are in good health with the exception of one child who has a headache
His wife suffers from chest pains (Note: TB?)
Since he arrived here, he has been surviving by gathering manioc in the nearby fields. He received aid from the government just once, in March: 5 kg of corn, sugar, fish and soap. Like the others, he talks about the suffering experienced in the mata, the shortages and the need to be constantly on the run.

Yes, he wants to return to Tingili, but he's waiting for permission from the government.

M. doesn't know his age (he seems to be very old), originally from Bumba (a three- to four-hour walk, he explains, showing the path of the sun in the sky)

M. and his wife arrived here alone in December, because his children – already married – are with their own families.
He escaped at night because of "the war and the suffering". He was tired from lack of sleep. They first left their village to take refuge in the mata with some of the people from their village. They decided to come here "because the enemy – UNITA – was killing a lot of people, but the government soldiers [were also killing a lot of people]."
Yes, he saw people he knew being killed by the soldiers. "The government soldiers came to the village and shot rounds of bullets at the people of the village. Many people were killed like that."
How much time did he remain in the forest? He reflects; he thinks he stayed a year but apologizes for having largely lost the concept of time.
After abandoning his village, he could occasionally return to his field to gather some corn and beans. If not, he ate whatever he could find in the nearby fields or in the bush. No, he didn't eat every day, he answers with a smile.
Since he came to Bunjei, he survives by gathering wood in the forest to barter for beans.
He had 16 children. Only two are alive today. The others died from disease. When everyone returns to the village, he will also go to work his land. But he's waiting for assistance from the government or World Food Programme to return to the village. Yes, he's sure he'll get help; it was promised to him.

J., woman from Ndala, Samboto region, does not know her age.

Her one year-old daughter wears a blue bracelet from the supplemental feeding center (SFC).
After walking for four hours (ed. note: she points to the sun's course in the sky), J arrived in Bunjei in May 2001 with her husband and their four children (15, 13, and 4 years old, and a baby who died in April 2002). The government brought them to Bunjei, along with the rest of the village population. The soldiers came before she had time to pack anything or collect what she had hidden in the mata (bush), but she didn't have much anyway. Gesturing, she points to the blue fabric she wears as a garment. It's the only clothing she owns. She acquired what she has today by small-scale barter, gathering corn from nearby fields and cutting wood.
One of her children goes to the fields regularly to gather corn. He's in Ndala right now, trying to collect the rest of their harvest and find out if it's possible to return. She's received government aid three times--distributions of one, three and four kilos of corn. She has family in Huambo and visits them from time to time. Last week, her husband died after an operation in the Huambo hospital. He had been shot in the leg.
She lost a child here, too. Before the war, they farmed in Ndala but Unita soldiers took control of their village and people took refuge in the mata, where the government picked them up.

They built a shelter in the mata and farmed their land, when weather and security permitted, but they had to flee constant attacks. The assaults were so numerous she can't even count them. They fled several times following rumors of attack, , sometimes as far as the 25 kilometer marker (ed. note: there is a crossroads 25 km from Kaala along the road from Cuima). When they returned, they found many dead bodies, particularly people from their village, but she can't say how many.
She lost children to illness and starvation during the war, but we can't determine how many. Life was difficult before, but it will be even more so now that she is alone. When a woman is alone, "that means suffering." She does not want to go back to Ndala but would like to join her family in Huambo.

H., 25 year-old woman from Senguenge, Ngove area

Her little girl wears a bracelet from the SFC around her wrist.
She has two children, 8 years and 6 months. While she was in the forest, two died of illness and a third died here in September 2001. They were 18, 10 and 7. She arrived in May 2001 after government forces retrieved her from the forest, where she stayed during the war. She is originally from Senguenge, but left there when she was 10. She was cooking gruel in her village when Unita forces captured her during an attack. She tells the story with a vague smile.
She followed the troops and married at 17. That was even worse because her husband drank and beat her. Since they arrived here, her husband found another woman in Ngove. Formerly a Unita soldier, he has since joined the government army and now she is alone. She bought her shack from someone who has since left for Ngove. To survive, she cuts wood to sell or looks for corn in the fields, two days' walk from here. She stays there for a week and leaves her children in the care of neighbors while she is away. But she has to go further and further because there is less and less food in the fields here. She has received government aid four times (ed. note: the same amounts as the woman in the preceding account). After being captured, she ended up in Jamba and then went somewhere else after the Bisse agreements. She followed along with the troops and had to carry weapons. Soldiers enslaved her, she explains, gesturing to show imaginary chains that no longer bind her feet. They gave her boiled corn—animal feed—to eat. She doesn't know exactly what became of her family, but she retains a strong memory of her village. She smiles when she talks about it. Last August, she saw people from her village in Huambo. They gave her news of her family. She wants to return there but is waiting for government authorization.

T., a woman of about 50 (she doesn't know her exact age), from Ngongo, about 1_ hours' walk from Bunjei

Last April, T. came to Bunjei with two children, 15 and 4. Six of her children died of illness during the war. Her husband was killed by gunfire in the confusion as people fled a Unita attack on her village. She hesitates to give the details of his death. After that first attack on her village, she fled into the mata. Sick with fear and under uncertain safety conditions, she returned to the village briefly to farm her land. But along with other villagers, she ended up here after a second attack by government troops last August (ed. note: After the Unita attack, she fled into the forest where she remained under Unita control. Then the government attacked and gathered the people to bring them here.). She remained in Njongolo from October to April. She left with nothing—her sons in Njongolo have given her everything she

owns today. To survive, they look for manioc in fields the local residents have abandoned, a few days' walk from here. They must go further and further. She is registered for food distributions. She wants to go home to Ngongo but is waiting for government authorization to return. Her house there was burned, like the rest of the village.

A., 27 year-old man from Bunjei

A. left Bunjei in 1999 for the mata and returned in February 2002. For two years in the mata, he was constantly on the move. He ranged as far as Rio Mbala, 6 hours by road from here. He has only one child, 4 years old. His other son was two years old when he died here last March of malaria. To survive, he worked in the field or gathered what he could find to eat in the bush. When the government retook Ngove, he hid in the forest with others, fearing future attacks, before coming here. Government troops attacked them in the bush and brought them here. They came voluntarily, he says, afraid that they might otherwise be suspected of being Unita supporters. They feared government reprisals against those who stayed in the Unita zone, but when they arrived here they realized that was not the case. While living under Unita control they experienced a few periods of relative calm, when they could farm their fields. He was recruited several times by Unita along with other young men but managed to flee each time. When he was caught, they beat him. When he was recruited, he had to fight along with the troops. He also captured women to serve the troop commanders (ed. note: he implied "to serve" in every sense of the word). They had nothing—no soap, no salt, no clothing. Yes, he saw people killed. In 1999, three men he knew were executed in front of everyone for trying to flee the training camp. Since the war ended, they haven't had any more crops from their field. To survive, they must walk for two days to find corn. The 30 stalks of corn on the ground will feed his family for three days. The next harvest will be in December.

A., 73 year-old man from Bunjei, MSF health promoter

A. was born in 1929. He has a wife and 10 children. One of his sons is a mechanic in Namibia. Three others are here in Bunjei. They are married and have their own families. He doesn't know how many grandchildren he has because he has not seen some of his children for a long time. In 1955-56, before the war, he took nursing classes and then worked as a nurse in the Protestant mission hospital before joining Unita to work as a nurse. In November 1998, he was working for MSF when the employees' Food for Work program was looted and the team had to leave the region. The war had resumed.

Following a government attack he settled in Seke, one day's walk from here, with 48 families (around 300 people), while the rest of Bunjei's 4,000 inhabitants fled into the mata. He remained there for the entire war, fleeing attacks and returning. To survive, the villagers were able to farm a small field. Their harvests were often looted, he says, and "hunger was always with us." There was no "revolutionary tax" to pay on his harvests. He managed to put up with the attacks and subsequent flights. "Both sides looted," he says. "The unlucky ones were killed." He mentions a raid on his herd of seven cows. During the worst government attacks, he says, "They looted everything. I had five pairs of pants, five shirts and three pairs of shoes. My wife had dresses. Now we have only the clothes on our back." A was able to keep one pair of shoes, a sign of wealth in the camp. "There was no forced

recruitment, but some young people decided to follow them." They didn't have much to eat, only fuba (gruel) and sweet potato leaves. They had no salt or soap, but managed somehow. The Unita soldiers protected them. In 2001, while returning from his field where he had planted sweet potatoes, he was arrested by Unita soldiers from Chilembo. They captured him, tied him up, put a rope around his neck, tightened it around his throat and placed a club in his mouth, breaking one of his teeth. They wanted to know where he'd hidden a herd of three cows. He told them. They left him lying on the ground and he escaped. The region only came under government control last February. Some people were brought here by government troops, while others arrived on their own out of fear of reprisals. Since his name was on the "lists," he knew that he was being sought. He decided to come here with his family last April. Between September and April, they remained in Seke because, he says, "his wife had a sickness in her legs."

D., 32 year-old man from Bumbula

Bumbula is about 1_ hours' walk from Bunjei. Around 60 families from the village settled here with their soba (tribal chief). D. has a wife and three children, ages 2, 5 and 10. His parents also live in the camp. He arrived on June 5, 2001 from Bumbula, but not with the entire village. They were among the first to leave as the situation began to worsen. Those who stayed were captured by Unita and fled when they were released. Some died as they fled. He had a cousin who died that way. They arrived later, between December 2001 and January 2002.

They farmed during the war. Unita demanded 200 kg per family. They had no salt or soap and had to make clothes from tree bark. "If Unita attacked, they looted everything, including clothes that they then sold in the markets." People who made some money selling their harvest could buy clothes—sometimes, even buy back their own. "There was a lot of suffering during the war. People died of diarrhea, worms, lack of salt and food." He didn't eat every day (ed note: He laughs at the strange question.), but he was used to it. He was born with the war. His village was not attacked by government troops but others were, so they became frightened and decided to flee. "With the Protestant mission there, Bunjei was always a reference center so it was a safe place." Under FAA escort, they looked for food in their fields. Before MSF arrived in March 2002, "Lots of people were sick and died," he says. "Now the children come back from Kaala and they are better." To survive, he goes alone to look for food in abandoned fields a day or two away by foot. He stays there for four or five days and then returns.

F., 62 year-old man from Caluejo, near Samboto (Huambo province)

Wearing a heavy wool sweater and a straw hat, F sits on a stool in front of a hut that has no garden plot. He points to an old, sick man in a neighboring hut whom we will transfer to the MSF hospital.

F has a wife and six children (ages 40, 30, 20, 18, 17 and 13). Two are here and two are in Chilembo. He is also with his nephews. They arrived in Bunjei January 20, 2002 after a battle between Unita and the FAA in their village. The village was destroyed. Seven civilians were killed, including a man, two young people, and four women. The others came here. They left the bush for Bunjei because they knew it was a safe area for civilians. .

During the war, their village was under government control but the combatants fought over the area. There were Unita bases all around the village and battles

were frequent, with the government launching attacks. They had nothing—no salt, blankets, soap or clothing. Before the war, he farmed. Here there aren't any seeds to plant even a little kitchen garden. Since he arrived, no one in his family has died. Everyone is well. They survive thanks to government aid and especially by searching for food in the surrounding fields. They have to go further and further. They walk a full day and then remain for a week. They will not wait for government permission to return. They've had enough of the suffering here. Everyone from the village agrees, so they will leave in May with 127 other families and their soba to get the land ready for planting. And what about seeds? The government promised to help them. They certainly need help, but "we'll see," he says. When asked if he thinks the war is over this time, he laughs. He has his doubts.

V., 20 year-old woman from Munbondi

Munbondi is about two hours' walk from here. V. has two 2 children, a 3 year-old girl she holds in her arms who wears a blue bracelet from the SFC and a 7 year-old who was treated in the therapeutic feeding center (TFC) in Kaala. Her husband and the older child have since gone back.

She lost a 3 year-old child last January shortly before arriving in Bunjei. They had been living in the mata since November 1998, surviving on sweet potatoes and beans. Unita attacked several times, taking people with them into the bush. The entire village was under Unita control. They used people, recruiting the men as soldiers or to work the soldiers' fields. The wives of the recruits worked for their husbands. Civilians' wives worked for everyone. They were often whipped or beaten, as she was. Today her husband is going to look for wood to sell in the market. He has been in Ngove since the day before yesterday. They have not received aid. She doesn't want to return to Munbondi but would rather live with her mother in Kaala. She will leave "right away."

A., 25 year-old woman from Kaala

A. is a plump and lively woman, in visible good health. Her youngest child looks like her. She sits on the ground on a sheet of plastic, undoing some yellow crochet work. Lively music wafts from a neighboring hut, occupied by soldiers. The children move timidly to the rhythm.

In 1998, she left Kaala, where she is from. She and her husband had a business at the market between Kaala and Cuima (ed. note: 25 km south of Kaala at a highway intersection). The market was located on the front line and people came from the bush. Her husband died during an Unita attack. The soldiers looted everything and took A with them to the Bopa Uila base, along with a around 100 other people. She spent all this time at that base. She had to come back to Kaala for her other children, who had been left in a soldier's care. They had to work for Unita, and earned 3 kg of fuba every month. During the day, they were free to move about but at night they were tied up to prevent them from fleeing (ed. note: she indicates her wrists and ankles). She arrived in November 2001, when the government retook control of the area. Since her arrival, "it's been hard for a woman alone." Like the others, she looks for wood in the forest and sells it at the market. Her children (ages 2, 4 and 6) are well but the youngest has "cerebral malaria." The child looks quite healthy. When she sees our surprised expression, she explains: "When the moon is full." She wants to return to Kaala where she has family (her mother), but she has no money.

E., 32 year-old woman from Ucuma (near Kaala)

E. lives in a far-off hut near the edge of the camp in an area visibly worse off and bleaker than elsewhere. Smiling, she has a gentle, but worn-out, air. She is very thin and weary. Her little girl looks smaller than her seven years. He reddish hair, pulled into a bun, and the blue bracelet on her wrist signal her malnourished condition.

In 1986, E was captured by Unita troops when she was 18. She remained hidden in the bush until her older son, 15, came to find her and bring her here. They fled because they could not bear the constant attacks. They government told them to leave. She has three children, ages 15, 9 and 7.

The Unita soldiers kept constant watch over the civilians settled next to the base. In 1993, her first husband left for Lubango (she was "married" to a Unita soldier after her kidnapping). Then her second husband, a nurse for the troops, left for the same place. Now she is alone. "It's better like that." Her three children are from her first marriage. She didn't have any children with her second husband because "he wouldn't have taken care of them."

During the peace process years, she was able to begin farming a small field, which allowed her to survive and to sell a little. But since 1998, she has had to move constantly at the whim of the attacks. Each time, she has tried to start up her business again.

Since she arrived, she has gone to look for food in the nearby fields. But there is less and less to eat, and her children's health is suffering. Her little girl was hospitalized for three weeks in MSF's TFC in Kaala. She left on her own with the child, going first to Ngove and then to Kaala. She came back a week ago.

She would like to return to Ucuma but is waiting for government authorization.

A broken family of few survivors

The four-year-old boy doesn't speak because of the pain from his distended belly (obstructive urolithasis); he just keeps moaning the same words, "oh my god, oh my god". He was brought here by F., his grandmother, from Cambougan, a day's walk from Bunjei, to get medical treatment. F. is a very dignified elderly lady, about 65 years old. She sits up very straight, draped in her red loincloth, decorated with green diadems. She had 6 children, four of whom died in the war, all of her sons. Only her daughter is still alive. Her sons began dying in the "first war", the war in 1992.

Since 1998 and the "second war", they haven't stopped moving around, fleeing in the woods (*mata*). Today, the entire village of Cambongan lives in Bunjei, "This is the war, the one that destroyed Unita, which forced us to come to Bunjei."

"In Cambongan, I had a big house. The government burned it down this year to bring us here along with all the villagers." They arrived in Bunjei where "the corn hadn't been born yet", around October time. She also had sizeable fields "that haven't been farmed since 1998", and people who worked there.

Since 1998, she has lost two sons to the war. She refuses to say more than that. She has also lost two grandsons to illness (diarrhoea and stomach aches); she can't remember how old they were, but she knows they were under 10. Her husband died of illness while they were in the woods.

She is alone in Bunjei with her daughter and her daughter's two remaining children: this little 4-year-old and 3-year-old. The boy will go to Caala this afternoon to receive treatment at the hospital. F. will go with him because his mother "has the strength to work; I don't". She does not answer the question regarding her

daughter's profession; she is silent and turns her head away. She apparently lives in the area for "soldiers' wives".
After, when her grandson is better, she wants to farm the land. Here in Bunjei, she hopes that the government will give her a plot of land to farm – but no promises of this type have been made. "It's only a hope; I haven't heard anything."
She'd like to go home, but It is unthinkable until the government gives the order. When she is pressed to explain why, she stands up and moves away, putting an end to the interview.

All the children die

This family came from Chipindo the day before the interview (4-5 May). A tall white man went for a consultation in Chipindo but wasn't given any medicine for his sick children. "And so I decided to come here", explained the father. "I just came with my family, no one else made the trip with us."
F. comes from the Chipindo region. He was born during the colonial period, but does not know how old he is (around 50 years old). He had a house, which he had built himself, with one bedroom and a living room. In 1991the government said that all the people who came from the region of Chipindo had to go back there, because there was peace. He "sold" his house, but when we ask him about the price, he bursts out laughing and doesn't answer.
His father died of anaemia in 1992."There were a lot of people in Chipindo and a kind of hospital, but no drugs. In January, there were over 50 deaths per day. Throughout the village, all you could hear was the sound of people crying. And it's a big village.
Hunger is a part of everyday life in Chipindo. In January, February and March, people didn't have anything to eat for days on end. Sometimes they were able to leave the village to dig up a few sweet potatoes, but sweet potatoes aren't nourishing and people became anaemic and died."
People don't leave Chipindo. They know that MSF has been in Bunjei for some time now, but simply aren't strong enough to make the trip. They aren't strong enough to carry the sick people, and so they die.
They came to Chipindo in August, from a village called Sachagombe (the woods), a two-day walk from Chipindo. Sachagombé. He went there in 1997, and ever since has been trying to flee the village, and then goes returns, over and over again, according to rumours of attacks by the FAA (Angolan Armed Forces) and Unita's mood. They were finally brought by force to Chipindo after they were captured by the government during a 'confusion' in which there were "many, many deaths".
In the past two years, he has lost seven children to "the war". He says that they all died of anaemia and starvation, because there was nothing to eat in Chipindo. "The oldest child died when he was 14 – he didn't even have time to get married.
"All the children die. There is no blood left to give them life. Even if we give them blood, it won't help them live. Traditional medicine won't help either. Only drugs can save them, which is why, when I saw that there wouldn't be any drugs in Chipindo, I ran like a crazy person.
From 2 January of this year up until now, four of his children have died of starvation; they were all under the age of 14. Three more of his kids died the last year. His daughter died in April and the others died in August, the month they arrived in Chipindo.

In Chipindo, he lived in a hut. He had a field which he farmed. “But I never saw the harvest. When it was time for the harvest, the government’s soldiers came and took everything. They didn’t give us anything.“.
Today two of his children, aged 8 and 9, are alive. He is here with his wife and one of his children, who is very ill (severe malnutrition, is leaving for Caala).
He is now planning to take care of his family’s health. He intends to accompany his wife and sick child to Caala, then return to Chipindo where his other child is waiting. As soon as his wife and child are better, he’ll go back for them, and bring them back to Chipindo. Then he will continue to farm the field the government gave him. We ask him why he bothers to farm the field if, just like the two previous times, the soldiers always take everything. He responds by saying that once his family is healthy again, they’ll be able to work more, and so there will be enough for the soldiers and for his family as well. This way, he will also be able to have a little money, which will allow him to “decide what to do next“.
F will not return to his home village of Sachagombé until it has been authorized. His house there no longer exists; the government burned it down. “It’s not safe to go there yet. And I won’t go back until the order has been given, even though I own extensive, fertile fields there. I’ve been living with this war since I was a boy.“
When we ask if he was ever a Unita soldier himself, he looks all around and says “no, never, never” gesturing with his hands and lowering his voice. “I am very happy to be on the government’s side, very happy, I’ve been wanting to go there for a long time, but I couldn’t.“ The fear can be seen clearly in his face.

A. and J.

A., 49, and J., 40, are brother and sister. They have never been apart. The two were born in Satolo, in Uila province 25 km from Bunjei.
“It’s the war that made us leave there. We got here on January 28.”
A. is blind and is missing the thumb and index finger on his right hand. Later, he tells us he lost them during the 1992 Lusaka “peace.” He served in the joint army, which united UNITA and FAA forces. One of the army’s missions was to clear mines, including those riddling a stone quarry near Caala. To detect the mines, A. was using a detector that penetrates the ground to determine the presence of mines. One exploded. He lost two fingers as well as his sight from sand blown into his eyes by the force of the explosion.
They come every day to bring food to their 82 year-old mother who is hospitalized with diarrhea. There were six children in their family but four died (as adults) prior to 1985 from illness.
Beginning in 1992, when the government burned down their house, they spent ten years in the mata (the bush). In January 2002, they arrived in Bunjei.
To survive in the mata, they stole food out of the fields. Because of A.’s blindness, J. carried out the thefts. Their mother was with them. “During those 10 years we couldn’t go back to our house or our village because the government and UNITA were at war. We were caught between them. We had to flee, we were always fleeing, and we had to be very careful about where we were.”
J. holds her wide-eyed, three-year son on her lap. When they were in the mata, he was so ill and hungry that “his head fell back, he had no more energy,” she says. “He’s better now but he suffered so much that he thinks he’s just a little baby. He is so sick, he doesn’t act like a 3 year-old.”
“I saw lots of dead people,” she says. “I saw many bodies with their heads cut off, too. They were killing people with machetes and bullets.”

J.'s husband left some time ago. She doesn't know where he went. Five of her children died in the mata, four between 1992 and 1998 and one after 1998. The latter was 3 when he died in Canpolé, 18 hours' walk from here. He had worms. She has only two children left, the 3 year-old and a 12 year-old.
A. also lost children. Three, ages 16, 8 and 4, starved to death (before 1998). They died "from the war." His wife is in Bunjei with them. She is healthy.
What will they do after the war? "I don't want to go back to my village," A. says. "I can't work. I'm blind. Even if there's peace, there is nothing I can do in our fields. I'm waiting for the government to help me. Even if the government tells me to go back, there's nothing there anymore. I wouldn't go. The government has to help us." Cradling his head in his hands, A. says, "Maybe peace will come, maybe things will get better, but I'm not going to get better."

Two sisters and their "cousin." They have the misfortune of being too pretty for this time and place.

The three were born in Canjole, a day's walk from here. They came last week from Chipindo, where they had been since January, to find medicine. Since 1998, they have been in flight between Cajole and Chipindo. They want to go to Caala and never go back to Chipindo. They left Chipindo alone. "Things are very hard in there, " F. says. "There's nothing there. Little by little, people are beginning to come out of the mata. They're going to Chipindo and Bunjei so there's no point in staying here. Not now. We've suffered too much."
F. is the older sister and the only one to speak. Her younger sister, F., and cousin, G., are with her. F. doesn't let the others talk. She doesn't know how old she is (not more than 18), but she has two children, ages 4 and 5. They are moderately malnourished. Her husband is 30. "That's very old," she says. He stayed in Chipindo. She is not going back to find him but he will come here, or to Caala, to find her when she sends him a message that the time is right. Apparently, this is not the "right time," but when asked what that means, she laughs and avoids the question.
G., 16, is stunning. She carries her 1_ year-old son on her back. Her "husband" is 20. They married in the mata, when she was taken from her home and village at 13. "The war brought death, people were taken away, our things were stolen," she says, looking off in the distance. Then she laughs heartily, her head back, as if trying to banish memories. "I wouldn't go back there. I'm afraid. It's not safe. Even if I have land there, I wouldn't go. Lots of people I know are dead – my father, my grandparents, my cousins. The soldiers killed them. Some got sick and died. Many were killed by machetes. Ugly things happened in the war; people died, got sick, didn't eat for months. Things will get better with peace … maybe."
F. wants to go to school in Caala. What will she study? Everything!
(Editor's note: this was a very strange interview. Depressed and withdrawn, G. had barely anything to say about the war. They give the impression of wanting to flee together. Flee their husbands, too? I don't know. They were neither especially thin nor poorly dressed.)

E. is extremely thin. Her 1_ year-old son is seriously malnourished and looks strangely like a newborn with teeth.

She doesn't know her age and cannot remember her parents or where she was born. E. was kidnapped by Unita when she was little and lived with the soldiers in the mata. She is in great pain. All her joints hurt and she has difficulty standing. Her legs are covered with painful sores.

She tells us the soldiers raped her. She married one of them, the father of her child. Several months ago government soldiers came and captured them. She doesn't know how long ago that was because she has been in flight for so long. The soldiers took them to Chitembo. They killed "many, many people." And they raped her.

What will she do next? She doesn't answer. She is waiting for the bus to Caala, trying to save her child.

B., 55, and his wife, E., around 40.

They arrived in Bunjei on Wednesday, May 1, 2002, with their five children. Four of the five are ill. They entered the city today and went directly to the health center.

Before, they had been living in the mata. Government soldiers took them by force to Chitembo. Originally from Chingenjo, they stayed in the mata on the outskirts, of the village, until the government attacked in 2001 during harvest time.

They walked for five days to reach Chitembo. "We've walked a long way." To survive en route, they found food in the fields and gathered wheat, sweet potatoes and cassava. When they speak about that time, they lower their eyes and voices because although the landowners had fled, their actions still qualify as "stealing."

They are afraid to talk about themselves. They had nine children. Five are with them and two (girls, born in 1980 and 1983) remained on the road to Chindove because they were tired. Two other children died of hunger after 1998.

Back in his village, B. had been able to grow enough food to feed his family. But as soon as it was time to harvest, Unita attacked and pillaged everything, including fields and houses. To survive in Chitembo, they harvested neighboring fields, accompanied by soldiers. Since peace has come, they've gone to the fields in a group without the soldiers.

He doesn't want to go back home. "I'd never go back there," B. says. "The enemy is still there." He's waiting for a government order to return. For now, he knows that if he goes back he will be killed or robbed. "The bandits are still there." Is he referring to the Unita soldiers? He gives a frightened laugh and doesn't answer. "I'm just waiting for the government's order."

M., 22

"Yes, I know many, many people who died, my family, my neighbors. They were killed by Unita."

She comes from Matala, in the south, near Cunene. After the 1992 peace accords were signed, she and her stepfather came to Bunjei to visit relatives. They thought peace would hold and hoped to find more fertile land. When war broke out again, they were trapped and she hasn't seen her family since. She found a 'husband' here. In 1997, the government expelled them from Bunjei and they had to flee into the mata.

One day when they were in the village, they heard the sound of tanks approaching. Everyone fled their houses and set off running, without taking any possessions. They ran far enough that they couldn't hear machine guns any longer. They could still hear the sound of bombs and tanks firing and they saw thick black smoke. They left for the Samboto camp. "It usually takes two days to get there but we were so frightened we made it in one."

There was nothing left "but birds and trees" in Bunjei They went back there on January 8. War continued from 1997 until January. They ate their meals in the Samboto houses but didn't sleep there. At night they went to the river to avoid being killed in nighttime attacks by government soldiers. Unita soldiers were with them, but they had no weapons or belongings. "So they became regular people like us."

In Samboto, they farmed to feed themselves but government soldiers seized the harvests, leaving them with nothing and shooting people to frighten them into fleeing. They came back to Bunjei because "we'd had enough of war," M. says. I wasn't made to flee, I don't know how to do it. Many people died; killed, killed in the war. They used guns and knives; they killed anybody and everybody. I saw government soldiers cut people up into little bits as if they were chickens, and then burn them. It's only gotten worse since 2001."

During a government attack, the FAA shot her father, two uncles and a cousin point blank. They hadn't been able to flee quickly enough. In September, 2001, her first son, 4, died of starvation in the mata while they were fleeing.

"When the FAA wanted to attack a village, five or six of them would come wearing plain clothes," she says. "They would hang around the camps and everyone thought they lived there. Then a big army would come." Her former home in Bunjei is destroyed, as is the entire village. It was all burned by the government. Now she wants to leave and go to Lubango. She doesn't want to stay here.

Y., Caala (interview, May 1)

Y. is 30. She was born in Bunjei but beginning at age 10, she spent 10 years in Lubango at school. In 1992, taking advantage of the peace accords, she came back to visit her parents in Bunjei. When the war resumed, she was trapped there. Unita had cut off the road and she could not get back.

She had five children by a soldier in the Unita zone. They weren't married, she says. He captured her. Later he abandoned her "when the two first children died of hunger and diarrhea in the mata." They were always fleeing and during a government attack he left and never came back. Just over two months ago (she doesn't remember exactly when), Unita soldiers in search of food attacked the village where she and her children were. She couldn't run very fast with her three of them. Her older daughter, 10, was killed, shot in the stomach. She was shot in the jaw. (It is swollen and speaking is painful.) Seven people died. Apparently, her 'husband' was one of the attackers.

Afterwards she was in Bunjei with the tropa, the government army. (I didn't understand how she reached Bunjei. In theory, they went there after the Unita attack?) To find food, she had to go into the fields and cut cassava. But finally she had no more strength and couldn't go anymore. About three weeks ago she went to Caala to seek medical care for her 4 year-old son, who was severely malnourished and had edema. He died there. She came back to Bunjei with this child, Samuel, 4, who was healthy. But after a few days in Bunjei he, too, became ill so she went back to Caala.

What will she do next? “I’m not thinking about that now,” she says. “I want to take care of my last child and then go to the hospital in Huambo so they can treat the wound to my jaw.”

She has no plans for the future, she does not believe in peace

R. is 24, she was born in Kalutembe. She was taken by a Unita “logistico” in 1995. She had no news of her family after that, until somebody recognised her in Bunjei and told her that her father had died and that her mother lived in Lubango.
R. arrived in Kaala mid-April with her 3 children (2 with severe malnutrition, with oedemas.) Her ‘husband’ abandoned her a long time ago. She came from Bunjei, where the government’s army brought her by force on October 20, 2000. Just after she arrived in Bunjei one of her children (2 years old) died of diarrhoea. Before Bunjei, they were in Chigunju, in the mata.
They were regularly attacked either by Unita or the government. “The government troops came. The first day, they did nothing. They stayed in town. We were scared as we didn’t know what they were going to do. The second day they captured some people. We were scared; we fled towards the river (rio couvango), in the mata.
She fled with her ‘ogra’ (her husband’s second wife). The ogra is here with her. Three of her four children have died since September 2001. In February 2002 she lost a child aged one year and two months, he died because he was too thin. In Bunjei, she had nothing to eat, because the government’s soldiers took her farming tools. She has no plans for the future, she does not believe in peace. “All I want is to save my children”

Each family knows about its own losses

A. is 43 years old and his wife P. is 30. They come from the village of Chingenjo, which they left in October 2001 after a clash between government forces and Unita. As a result of this turmoil, they were captured by government forces and the family was separated. The mother and two children were taken to Bunjei and the father and other children to Chitembo. It was only at the beginning of this year that they were reunited.
A. does not know exactly how many deaths resulted from the battle, as “each family knows about its own losses”. But he does know that there were many deaths. He has lost three children since 1998 (in two weeks in the bush). He says, “At first they were hungry, but there was nothing to eat. Then they got diarrhoea and died”.
He stole food from fields in order to survive. In the past he worked as a carpenter or a shoemaker and made a good living, especially as he also cultivated his land. But his crops were plundered and he has not had any harvest since 2000. Nowadays, his only concern is to save his two surviving children and his wife, who is suffering from malnutrition.
Then he wants to continue his trade. It is out of the question for him to return to his village. “I won’t go back even though the government says it is safe. I know the place and, like everyone else, I know that Unita soldiers are still there. If the government wants to force us to go live somewhere else, they should help us by giving us land, tools, food, etc.” Like here in Bunjei? He laughed and said, “Yes, like here”.

Killed at point-blank range in front of his grandmother

It took them more than 20 hours on foot to arrive here in Bunjei to get treatment for their children. They left two of their children in their home in Chisito to look after the few things they own – some cooking pots, linen, clothes and of course, their home. They have come here with their two young boys who are very ill. The father did not leave his 14 year-old son with his small daughters to look after their home because he needed him to carry the sick children, aged 2 and 7.

The father, D., is 40 years old. He was born in Chicanjo, north of Bunjei. They stayed there (under Unita control) until January 2001 when they left for Lubango to join some family members. They were stopped because of the war and arrested in Chipindo. Three of their children have died since 1998. In 1999, their 4 year-old boy was killed by a bullet during a clash. His grandmother, who lived alone in Manonga, had asked the boy's father to bring him to keep her company, since life was very hard in the bush. "I took my son to her and two weeks later he was dead – killed at point-blank range in front of his grandmother."

The father indicated Unita's strategy by drawing on the red soil. A small circle represented the government base and another concentric circle represented the population, with Unita surrounding and attacking them. Nine other people were killed. When he was asked if he knew whether any people were still there, he waved his hands in a frightened manner to indicate that everyone had scattered in all directions.

His six year-old child died in Chicanjo from "tiny insects that attacked his intestines" and another died from malaria in 2001. All the inhabitants of Chicanjo are here in Bunjei. They "decided" to come because the government "called" them. He is a musician by trade. He plays the viola. But to earn a living he also had 20 cows, all of which were stolen by Unita in 2001, together with land.

Now he is going to collect the children he left in Chisito, then he is going to Lubango to see if he can earn enough to live there. If he can, he will never return to his village. The only reason he is in Bunjei is to get treatment for his children. He will never stay here. There is too much suffering.

The war isn't over

V. is a Soba. You can tell by his hat, a beautiful affair made of straw woven in a pine cone pattern. He was born in Chingonje. In December 2001, government troops attacked the village, taking everything, even bread knives. They burned all the houses. About fifty people died in the "confusion," among them at least two of his children, ages one and two.

It's hard for V. to talk about these events. He gets mixed up about dates, places, and figures. Since 1998 he has lost one wife (out of three) and seven children (all of them under the age of six). The wife died in 1999, from tuberculosis.

After the attack on Chinconge they were sent to Jamba. The other half of the population was sent to Bunjei. The village population was divided like that (with seven families being split up) because two different companies of government forces were taking part in the attack, and each company took its prisoners to its own base.

Once they arrived in Jamba, they stayed put. Now V. has walked for a week, with two stops along the way, coming here because his children are sick. He asked the soba of Jamba for permission to come here. He says he was free to leave, but all the same he needed to ask permission, the culture calls for it.

He would like to go back to his home village but is waiting until the government gives him permission. He knows the war isn't over. But when it is, the government will tell him. "Since 2001, it's the government that's given me everything I have."

I'll always suffer, since I'm alone

A. is quite tall, and very, very thin. He is an orphan. He was sick, so he came to Bunjei for medical care. He walked five days and nights to reach the hospital. He is from Sec, near Bailundo. "Five days of walking, that's more than it usually takes. It's because I'm sick. If you're healthy, It's a two-day walk. The nurses and doctors here are the first people who've helped me since I left."

He has leg ulcers, symptoms of pleurisy, pains in his stomach and arms.

All A. knows about his life history is what the UNITA soldiers have told him. He was abducted when his village was attacked. He was quite young. From what the soldiers have told him he's supposedly twenty-two (which is hard to believe; he's more like 16–18).

He attended school in the mata for two years. He arrived at Bunjei in rags; his clothes had more holes than fabric. You can't get him to talk about his life in the mata; he stares into space and his lips start to tremble. He says the soldiers never asked him for anything in exchange for the food he was given, that there was never any violence, and that he never went outside the village of Sake.

To live, he traded, he tells us. Later he says that he did farm work in exchange for food. He knows his numbers, can read a little, but fishing and tilling the fields are what he knows best. "I must have been between eleven and thirteen when things started getting better for me. I could eat more because I was able to work for farmers, in their fields." Before that, he tells us, he did "nothing." "I wasn't old enough to work, so I didn't eat."

It seems that the UNITA soldiers left him behind in Sake, three years ago. When I ask him what is the first thing he remembers, he replies: "The suffering. Everyone suffered a lot. And the loneliness. I'm alone, I don't know anyone."

Above all, he doesn't want to go back to where he came from, but he doesn't know what to do. "I'll always suffer, since I'm alone and I don't know anybody. Now I'm sick and I can't work."

We're waiting for the government to do something to help us

R. and her husband reached Bunjei the first of February. Government soldiers led them out of Capoca, which is on the other side of the Bali River (in the opposite direction from the Cunene River). They walked for three days.

They had arrived in Capoca a month earlier, coming from UNITA military base no. 49. She is twenty-nine and she lived at base 49 for four years. She had seven children, but since 1997 four of them have died from diarrhoea and various illnesses, two of the deaths occurring in April 2002. She was born in Chitengue. Before living at base 49, she lived at base 19, and at another base before that, but she doesn't recall the number.

At the age of fifteen, she was abducted from the Fatima quarter in Huambo. She was forced to leave; she didn't want to go. Both she and her mother were abducted. And many other women. The day it happened, her father was in Matala with her three brothers, where they were trading. She has had no news of them since. "I don't know if they are alive or not."

Her husband is here with her. Also her mother, who is in the hospital being treated for diarrhoea. They would steal and loot to survive in the mata.
"It's better here, it's easier. We sleep peacefully and we go out occasionally to find food. There we did not sleep peacefully. We were constantly on the run and there was much suffering, lots of rain." But there was not enough food, and no clothing. Her husband was a UNITA soldier. In 2000 he was shot in the stomach during a battle and was taken to the UNITA hospital in Cacuchi. Now her husband wants to go back to his birthplace, the province of Bie, but he can't afford to, so he is waiting until he can get some money together.
"We're waiting for the government to do something to help us."

The flight was too much for him

L. is 26. She was quite young when she was abducted by UNITA. She doesn't remember exactly how old she was. Because of the suffering, she married very early. She does remember that she was born in Ganguela.
She arrived in Bunjei yesterday with her brother-in-law and sister, who left immediately to take their children to Caala for treatment at the therapeutic feeding centre (one of the children had died just before they reached Bunjei). She was in Guanguela in 2001 when the government attacked. They fled, then they were captured by the FAA and taken to Chipindo. They stayed there a year.
She had four children; three died, one of them in Losongo, before they were captured by the FAA. He was nine months old. Another child, a four-month-old baby, died in her arms while she was fleeing the FAA attack. "He wasn't very big and he was quite frail. The flight was too much for him." In Chipindo, the third child died, of starvation. During the attack government soldiers killed and wounded many; she lost her husband's uncles and her cousin. Her husband wasn't with her at the time. He had been wounded and was at base 50. Now he has recovered and he is at another UNITA military base (the Copé base). It was he who wrote and told her to come here. She's going to wait for him. Then they will go to Cuima and farm.

All I have now is these two stalks of sugar cane, the scarf on my head, and the pagne I'm wearing

V. is probably around twenty. At the age of five she was abducted by UNITA, and she married very young. She arrived in Bunjei a week ago. She walked three days to get here from Chilongua. Her parents went there to fetch her. Not long ago some traders had passed through her village. They recognized her, and they told her parents, who had been looking for her for many years.
A year ago, she had three children. Two died as a result of the war and hunger. When the family arrived here in Bunjei, her father died. Her mother is sick, and V. is very frightened. Her four-year-old son, B., has a bad case of rickets. Her husband left her 3 years ago; he's probably somewhere in Caala, but she doesn't know where. It's not the first time he's deserted her. He did the same thing five years ago; he was gone for three months, just like that.
She has nothing left. "In the village, I hid all my things in a hole in the ground, my cooking pots, my clothes, my tools. I went out to look for manioc and while I was gone everything was stolen. All I have now is these two stalks of sugar cane, the scarf on my head, and the pagne I'm wearing." When asked what she will do later she doesn't have an answer.

B., 29, interviewed at the therapeutic feeding center (TFC).

We were looking for people from Vector, which we had been told was an especially high-risk zone with a scattered Unita presence. The medical aide at the feeding center had drawn up a list and called a woman from the roster of names. Obedient and intimidated, B. came slowly to meet us. From time to time, she put her hand on the head of the baby she held against her breast.

Originally from the Vector district, B. arrived in Chilembo last November with her two children after walking for two days in the rain. She tells us she had left willingly because there was nothing left to live on and no one remaining in the village. Previously, she and her husband had farmed a lavra, a plot of arable land, though they were under constant attack by one or another of the armed forces. We found it difficult to follow her story. She first said that her husband arrived in December, then that he had come with her in November. Her account was confused by emotional shock and the suffering she has experienced.

One terrible event clouded her account, and she kept coming back to it. Her husband had disappeared. He left for Lubango with his other wife and their two children and had never returned. That was the final blow.

She was here for five days without finding anything for herself and her children to eat. After two weeks in Chilembo, her 5 year-old son died. Her 2 year-old son is in the first phase of nutritional therapy.

How is she surviving? The generosity of local people, she says. She shares her sister's hut but the other woman is equally badly-off and cares for four children, including her dead brother's two orphaned children. All B. has left is a filthy, torn dress and a child she wants to save.

What will she do next? She does not want to go back to Vector. There is too much suffering there. She no longer has a house or husband and, in all likelihood, any land to farm. She wants to stay here, hoping to find someone who will help her – and why not? – start a small business. How? She stares into the distance with an empty expression. She doesn't want to talk anymore. Her plans for the future reach only as far as the door of the feeding center. She is 29.

M., 21, interviewed at the TFC

M. left Vector with the tropa, the government army, at the beginning of December. No one really forced her, she says, but later she explains that her house had been burned (ed. note: probably by the FAA). She had nothing left. Unita "confiscated" her entire harvest. That had been happening daily since 1998, so that episode was not the first. M. is alone with her 2 year-old. Her husband died last September of "chest pains." Seven months ago her baby died of "diarrhea and fever."So no, she doesn't want to go back to Vector, where she suffered so much and where her husband died. She wants to stay here, where she has a sister who helps her a little. To survive, she had been stealing cassava from the nearby hillside fields, but since the residents have returned it's become too risky.

C., interviewed at the TFC.

C. arrived last December 25 from Kachitete, in the Vector district, where "the tropa came" to take her and the other residents away. She wasn't really taken by force.

She was ordered to leave with the army, so she did. They “suffered so much” there. There was no salt, no soap, and then the war, and the Unita soldiers who attacked at night. You couldn’t sleep peacefully any more. They had to lie in wait for the attacks and then take refuge in the mata while the troups pillaged their belongings. They took the cassava from the larva that she farmed with her husband as well as their clothes and everything else, too.

As the questions continue, she finally explains, in a thin, low voice, what was even worse than the losses and state of permanent insecurity. The women were required to give corn or cassava to the Unita chiefs. The men were carried off with the army. She was taken as a weapons carrier at the rear of the Unita army. No one could resist or refuse. She saw a woman who refused to carry weapons because she was already carrying her baby on her back. They killed the baby. “Now you can carry the guns.” (Ed. note : we could not pursue the discussion about the violence which residents were subjected to. From allusions and silences, we had the impression that she had seen or experienced things much worse than forced labor. The TFC interview setting made it impossible to pursue such questions.)

She left with her husband and two children, including the 5 year-old, cared for by the grandmother in the camp, (ed. note: while the husband was away harvesting in his larva), and her 13 month-old daughter, under treatment at the TFC. She left without any possessions. Unita had stolen the harvest and the FAA had burned down her house. Since arriving, they have survived by gleaning what they could from locals’ fields in the hills. They’ve often gone days without eating.

She doesn’t know when she will return to Kachitete, where she is not sure of recovering her fields. In any event, she doesn’t want to go back. “MSF is here, so I want to stay,” she says. Stunned by her experiences, the young woman finds some respite at the TFC. Her little girl is getting better and she doesn’t have to fight so hard -- just enough to guarantee her daily survival. After years of horror, she has found some peace. But MSF won’t be here for long. When MSF leaves, she will, too. Then, too, the government hasn’t yet given permission to leave. And, she says, “It’s not a good idea to disobey orders.”

Family members interviewed in the camp: B., 23, C., 19, F., 18

We met this family in the ‘camp’ when we were looking for people from the Vector district. We were directed to huts located behind a few corn and tobacco plants. The kitchen gardens may be very basic but they do provide food for those who cultivate them. These two huts don’t have gardens. A brother and two sisters live here with their wife and husbands (respectively !), a niece and three children. Two of the women are pregnant, including the young niece who, throughout the interview, patiently unraveled a crocheted square of colored yarn. B., C. and their brother are from Kachitete, in the Vector region.

They arrived in Chilembo on December 20 with government soldiers who “had come to find them.” They were forced to leave but were willing to go because they had already planned to go. “There was too much suffering.” They had no salt or clothing and had to stay on the move to flee attacks and the army. When government troops arrived, the soldiers told them they would be killed if they stayed with the Unita forces. “If you don’t come with us, they’ll kill you.” They had to flee the opposition forces and join the assailants, so they took shelter in the mata, waiting for the troops to leave.

They say they were not subjected to other kinds of violence, but laugh bitterly when the subject is broached. “If you have a husband, you’re fine. But a single woman

has problems. She'll be taken by the tropa (Unita) and must live with the army. Then the soldiers'use' her."
They rape her? "Yes, many soldiers will rape her. When a woman is abused like that, she can't talk about it, she can't say anything, otherwise …" Yes, they know this has happened to many women carried off by soldiers in all the Unita bases. When they leave the bases at night, they recount what happened there. But, no, they don't know any women from their village who have had this experience. (Awkward silence.)
B. lost two of her three children. Her 3 year-old died "of diarrhea and edema" in February 2000 and she miscarried the other. F. lost one child but can't remember when it happened.
They left empty-handed. Their crops had been stolen and their house burned. They've picked up a few tools here and there since their arrival.
To survive since reaching Chilembo, they sell charcoal or go to the fields to find sweet potatoes. They are lucky to have husbands to gather wood and burn it to make charcoal to sell to people from Huambo. But "this isn't a good time to go there because the owners catch us and steal our clothes."
Now they don't want to go back to Kachitete even if it is time to prepare the soil for the next harvest. They are waiting for the government order and want to remain here given that they "are not sure that everything is all right there and that the 'banditos' are all gone."

T., 24, interviewed at the Chilembo TFC.

T. has a child being treated at the TFC in Chilembo. Very frail, she is wrapped in a coarse, grayish cloth in which she has swathed the baby she holds next to her breast. A relative living in Huambo gave her the cloth. Throughout the interview, she repeats the words "too much suffering" to explain all her decisions.
T. arrived in November with her husband and their four children (6, 4, 3 and 2) after having fled without being able to take any possessions. Unita had stolen the last crops and had also burned her house. (?) She thinks some residents stayed in the village after she left. She left only with her family, but her experience was the same as everyone else in the village.
The war began in November 1998. They hid in the mata when the troops arrived. The soldiers entered houses at night and stole all the residents' possessions, instructed people to follow orders and beat them to death if they refused. T. was never beaten, but her husband was. The soldiers tried several times to make them come with them to the bases and hit them to force them to follow. One day, in the confusion, her husband was beaten and also shot in the leg. The wound became infected and he had to have his leg amputated. After that he wasn't fit to join the soldiers. Lacking access to medical care, he was treated with traditional medicine in the village. In 1998, her 5 year-old child died of diarrhea.
Here she is surviving, barely, with her family. Her husband, an amputee, cannot cut wood so they manage with a bit of help from their family in Huambo. They don't have enough food and often days go by without eating.
What is her future? First of all, she wants her child to get better. She does not want to leave. Even if their fields are still there, their house was burned and her village is a reminder of too much suffering. (She laughs.) She doesn't know how she will manage to survive, but maybe they will find land to farm here.

D. and R.

Calmly beautiful despite hunger and fatigue, the young woman rocks an 8 month-old baby wearing a blue MSF bracelet. Moderately malnourished children receiving food rations wear this sky-blue band. Severely malnourished children who must be hospitalized wear a red one. Not much separates the two groups. Every day, in spite of the feeding program, the condition of three or four moderately malnourished children worsens and they fall into the severely malnourished category.

Unlike many women we've met, R. knows her age, 18. The others tell us that their husbands knew how old they were. Her husband, D., is 22. He tells us this is their first child. They arrived in Chilembo in December. R. is from Eiuma and D. is from Chalelua. They left because government troops had encircled and attacked the village, but Unita "didn't have any more soldiers" to fight them. Following the assaults, they left along with most of the villagers and their Soba (village chief). The Unita base was far away and surveillance had loosened, so they left at night headed somewhere like Chipindo, where government troops were in a position of strength.

They barely speak of life in the mata since 1998, repeating only that there was "muyto sofrimiento," great suffering. "There were rumors of government attacks so the people fled into the fields. If the government took you prisoner, they would beat or kill you. Because if you fled that meant you had supported Unita. If you stayed in the village, the Unita soldiers would capture you and they would kill you, saying you were a traitor."

Along with 30 village youth, D. was captured by Unita. R. says he was beaten. D. laughs and looks away. "R. managed to flee," he says, after a silence. "She was lucky because otherwise she would've been beaten." The same night he was captured, he was able to break away alone.

R. and D. arrived in Chilembo with nothing but the rags covering them. (CF PHOTO !) Unita had plundered everything: clothes, crops, seeds, cooking utensils and farm tools. When they got to Chilembo, D. was able to go harvest his crops, first with government troops and later, after the ceasefire was signed, with other displaced persons.

"We were able to gather cassava, sweet potatoes and corn, but since the end of the harvest there hasn't been anything left to eat," D. says. As he talks, he pulls a blade of grass from the ground, mechanically removes the dirt and eats it. Now they survive on caterpillars. "My wife cooks them very well, and then we trade them for fuba (corn or cassava flour which is the base of the Angolan diet)," he says.

"We have relatives in Huambo," R. explains. "We visited them in January but they have lots of children and nothing to eat. We can't stay there. I'd rather stay here and wait for permission from the regional authorities to go back to my village...This is the time to sow in the nakashe (small riverfront plots). I want to go but the government hasn't issued the order. We're waiting for the order."

V., 25, originally from Vector

V. is a very tall woman, thin and tired. Her son lies in her lap. She sits upright, her gaze fixed on the roofs of the straw huts that stretch out to the horizon. Her little boy moans, "Mama, Mama," as he lifts his shirt to uncover his back, which is swollen with scabies. As she answers our questions, she scratches him with a regular motion.

V., 25, was born in the Vector district. Government forces came to her village looking for people to carry off. They reached Chilembo several days later without incident along the way. The village's entire population left with the tropa. When she left her village and her lands, she brought her 15 year-old sister and 5 year-old son with her. She lost her first child, then one year old, in 1995. Her 15 year-old sister is very small for her age. "Children don't grow here because of the suffering," she explains.

Her husband was with Unita until late 1995-early 1996. He left Unita during the demilitarization and following a similar process, joined the FAA. She hasn't seen him since.

She tells us her son is healthy. He was vaccinated here in January against the measles.

She left with nothing. She uses a little machete, which she found in the lavras, the fields, to work the land around her hut.

She was in her village when they heard rumor of attack by government forces. Unable to grab any belongings, they fled into their fields. When they got there, they gathered food. Government forces encircled them and told them to harvest everything. V. swept all the food she'd collected into a piece of fabric and set it on her head. "We grabbed everything quickly and left right away." There were a lot of people with her but she doesn't know exactly how many.

"When we were in the mata, we suffered a lot," she says. "Now I sleep well. You never sleep soundly in the mata because you've got to get up and run if Unita gets word of a government attack."

It's been like that ever since 1998, when Unita retook the area and she went into the mata with the others. "There aren't many problems here, "she says. "In the mata we managed to eat." As a single woman without a husband, her harvest was taxed in corn. But other families, with men, had to turn over chickens and other foodstuffs.

Like the other displaced persons from Chilembo, V. is waiting for government authorization to go home and return to their fields. But even when the government gives permission, she won't be in a hurry to go back to the Vector region. One day, when it's safe, she'll return because she was born there. "For now, I'm not eager to go back," she says. "There's nothing to eat here but at least you can sleep at night."

V. can leave with others in a group to go work her fields and return. Before the ceasefire was signed, soldiers accompanied them but now the displaced persons go alone.

"I was born the year they started dancing the Swingy"

M. sits on the ground in front of her hut. She sorts and prepares caterpillars she collected in the trees surrounding the displaced persons' camp. One by one, she takes the chiculunda and the lambalala, breaks their shells against a clay pot, and tosses them into a battered white cast iron cooking pot. They must simmer for four hours on the charcoal fire in the hut before they are ready to eat. A pot is already boiling at the neighbor's hut. It smells like grilled chestnuts.

M. laughs when we ask her age. Her hair may be graying, but it's not that the question annoys her. Rather, she's just not sure. Then her face lights up. "I was born in the year of Swingy." Swingy, she explains, is a dance.

Another woman is seated nearby. She carries a nursing baby and gives him the breast when he begins to whimper. She is completely exhausted and can barely lift her head to greet us.

I. doesn't know how old she is, but assures us that her husband does. He is being treated at the MSF hospital in Chilembo. I. speaks less than M., his first wife.
The family comes from Njunji, in the Vector region. They arrived last December (2001), when government forces came to the village to take the entire population to Chilembo, an MPLA stronghold. Today Chilembo is laid out on a hill on which the government army has taken up positions. A few huts and two or three stone houses ringed by sandbags are scattered on the hilltop. They dominate a sea of huts reaching further than the eye can see.
M.'s village was in a Unita zone. When the government forces arrived to take the villagers away, she had just hung out her washing. The soldiers stole everything, even the clothes. They didn't have any problems on the road from Njungi to Chilembo, M. says. The soldiers didn't beat anyone during the daylong walk. She left with her husband, their four children (one of whom is being treated at the TFC), and her husband's second wife and newborn baby. "Life is better here," she says. "The only problem is hunger."
In the mata, the Unita zones where the population had been held hostage as the soldiers' slaves since 1998, she was able to farm her field and, more or less, feed her family. Between 1998 and 2000, she lost five children, including two to malnutrition. But hunger in the mata is different than hunger in Chilembo, where there is nothing to eat but caterpillars in April and May. She has no fields in Chilembo, no seeds and not even any farm tools.
One of the first words learned here is "fom, fom," for the French faim, or hunger. Between 1998 and 2000, Indiria lost four children to fever and septicemia. The youngest one she's nursing is the only one with her. Her two other children are still in the mata with relatives.
When they arrived in Chilembo in December, they had only mangoes to eat. Later, accompanied by government forces, she was able to harvest her fields in Njungi. They had to leave very early in the morning, walk all day, harvest at night, and then turn around without sleeping or resting, to limit their stay and avoid the risk of Unita attack. The reason: those who left Unita zones were considered traitors and executed.
The government troops accompanying them to the fields imposed a tax of two cassava and two sweet potatoes per family member. Now the harvest is over and there's no point in returning, unless it's to prepare the soil for the May-June planting. But without seeds and government authorization, the risk is too great.
Although they have nothing to eat here, they are waiting for the government order to go back home and to their fields. "It's not good to disobey the government." Provincial authorities have also promised to give seeds and food to displaced people when they receive authorization to return. But above all, these deeply wounded people refuse to relive the nightmares they experienced. Better hunger and death than "too much suffering, too much suffering."

J., "Here or there, it's all the same… Here there's hunger and there, terror."

J.'s torn, stained, green shirt hangs loosely on him. He works the patch of land in front of his hut with a spade he fashioned when he got to Chilembo. He left everything behind when he fled Visonga, in the Vector region.
"We got here last December …things were very confused … the government troops attacked the village and there was a confrontation with the Unita soldiers. We all fled into the lavras, the fields … everyone scattered in the confusion. None of the villagers died in the battle but afterwards, in the fields, there were clandestine

executions. If you met up with Unita, they accused you of being with the government and they killed you. If you met government soldiers, they accused you of being with Unita and they killed you."

He sits beside the door to his hut to talk with us. Holding his head between his hands, his words spill out uninterrupted. His wife is seated a bit further away, her hands resting on her outstretched legs. She stares off into the distance. Their two little girls are seated inside the hut around a charcoal fire on which a few sunflower seeds are cooking. Taking turns, each child takes a seed and eats it slowly.

Continuing his story, J. says, "They divided the rest of us into two groups. One went to Cruceros and we stayed in the mata." He tells us that many of them died of hunger or illness. They had to move constantly. "As soon as there were rumors of government attacks, we had to take our things and leave," he says. "Always fleeing, fleeing."

After 1998, J.'s 12 year-old child died from edema and malaria. Apparently his brothers, members of the civil defense here, carried out an 'operation' to get him out of the mata and to Chilembo. When he left the Visonga area in December, almost no one was left after government troops came through and rounded up some 30 people for the trip to Chilembo.

To survive in Vector, like everyone else, J. began by going to harvest his lands accompanied by government soldiers and later, after the peace accords, in a group of displaced persons. But the harvest is finished. Now he makes charcoal by cutting and burning wood and selling it to merchants who come from Huambo. "They are very demanding," he says. "The charcoal must be very good quality and well-prepared, otherwise they won't buy any and we go to bed hungry." A bag of charcoal sells for between 30 and 40 kwanzas (.9 – 1.2 euros). With that money, he buys cabbage seeds to grow food and tobacco, which he dries and sells.

Would he rather live here or there? J. smiles, then hesitates for a long moment as he stares off into the distance. "Here or there, it's all the same," he says. "Here, there's hunger and there, terror." Of course he wants to return to his fields and rebuild his house, which was burned like the rest of the village. But he says he must wait for government permission.

It is difficult to know what keeps J. here, in Chilembo, while his children and wife die of hunger. He has fields at home and local residents won't let him work their lavras to feed his family. He only repeats, "I've got to have the order to leave. As long as the government doesn't give permission, I won't leave."

Perhaps he's waiting for the local administrator to fulfill the government's promise to give them seeds, tools, clothing and food when permission to leave has been granted. Maybe it's distrust. "I feel free to leave," he says. "I'm not afraid … But I don't have confidence. I'm not sure what the government would do if I left one day and didn't come back."

G., guitarist and soldier.

G., 27, is from Chiwaya. His wife is 20. They arrived in December from Chilendo, where they managed to survive by harvesting nearby fields with the troops. But in the last several weeks, they haven't been able to go to the fields. The landowners have returned and "if they catch us they will kill us."

So G. cuts wood and makes coal, which he sells to merchants from Huambo. "The ones who have the hardest time are the single women and the old people," he says. "They aren't strong enough to cut wood and that's the only way to survive

here." He has been playing guitar and singing since 1992. He built his own guitar, carved from thick wood with iron frets and white wooden clefs.
In the course of our conversation, he tells us that he was in the Unita until he fled the village last December. "I was in charge of five men," he says. "Then in December I ran away. I waited until the guards surrounding the village were asleep and then I crossed the line, going as far as the Cunene River. I crossed in a canoe. We were safe on the other side, my wife, my two children and me."
As he speaks he traces his escape route in the red, damp dirt. The first circle represents the Unita base. A slightly larger concentric circle shows the area where the villagers live. The third circle shows the soldiers' rounds, with crosses marking surveillance stations.
He wants to return to Chiwaya and farm his lands but he is waiting for the government order. Asked why he's waiting when this is planting season, he laughs. "Until now, Unita killed people who came back after fleeing," he says. "To them, I'm a deserter. They'll kill me for sure." He mimics hitting someone, hard.

T, 20 year-old woman with a 1 year-old baby

She first met MSF in Matala in 1992..She arrived with the first MSF truck coming from Galangue.
"There was a lot of illness in Galangue—tuberculosis, anemia, measles. When I arrived after the ceasefire in April, there were already lots of people there. They were arriving from all the Unita bases in the surrounding areas. They were already ill and their feet were swollen. A lot of people were sick and there were many deaths. It wasn't like that before on the base, but now that we are all together, people are dying every day. Ten people die every day; sometimes 20. Not a day goes by without us hearing women crying over a child they have lost. Children die every day.
There is nothing to eat! Once the government gave us a kilo of rice and a spoonful each of salt and oil. That's all. Now we eat sweet potatoes that we find on the old abandoned plantations nearby, but they aren't good, they're just roots. They weren't planted and tended.
I came from an Unita base near Samboto.I was born in Caluquembe in Huila province. My mother was a nurse and my father was the church deacon. I am 20. I stayed in Caluquembe until 1997 when I was 15. Life was good there. Everything was fine. Yes, there was war but our land was good so we didn't suffer too much then. I got married in Caluquembe when I was 15. My husband, who was 17, was sent to the Unita base in Samboto. He was a soldier. In the beginning at the base, it was all right. Then the government launched a major offensive and we lost everything. We were left with nothing at all—no clothes, no blankets, nothing. I saw Savimbi several times. Sometimes he was a young man, sometimes an adult, sometimes an old person. He used magic to change the way he looked.
The last MPLA attack took place after Savimbi died. The soldiers led a major attack and lots of people died; especially soldiers but also civilians, because there were civilians with us. They farmed to feed us. I managed to flee with my husband, father, mother and son. We were all at the base with my parents. My mother was a nurse and my father farmed. I also have three brothers. One is older than I and the other two are younger. Just the older one had a baby but he died. They are all in Galangue. I have only one child, who is a year old. I had another but I miscarried. This one was born on the base. When we fled the base, there were already too many sick people and no medicine, so people became very ill and began to die.

We ate only manioc. We didn't have time to make flour with the manioc because the troops from Bunjei were always after us, so we just ate the manioc without cooking it.
Then the peace came. We heard that Savimbi and Bemba were dead, so the two sides could talk with each other. We came out of the forest to go to Galangue, a regroupment area for Unita soldiers. We are waiting for the government to give us food and seeds. For now, only the soldiers get a little bit to eat while the civilians get nothing. Some soldiers are trying to get in touch with their families and relatives to get some help. There is an Unita central command post in Galangue and they give the orders. There's an MPLA leader, too. They run things together—one Unita and one MPLA. Later, I want to go back to Caluquembe. I'll do anything! My husband was wounded in the leg by a bullet during the war. He doesn't get around very well any more. We'll see. I already came to Bunjei last week to buy salt and I saw the doctors in your hospital. They wanted to send me to Kaala right away with the baby but I ran off to tell my husband. When you get to Galangue, I'll go to Bunjei to take care of my baby."

D., 20 year-old woman from Chipindo with 3 children

D. is dressed in tatters and uses crutches. She has no left foot.
"I was born in Chipindo. In the morning I would go to the fields and in the afternoon I went to school. One day when I was 12, I stepped on a mine as I was crossing the fields to go to school. I think Unita put the mine there because the MPLA controlled Chipindo. Before, life was good, except for the mines. After I stepped on the mine, I was in the Caluquembe hospital. It was a mission and there was a hospital. That's where I was treated. My father came to see me. He wanted me to come back to Chipindo, but I didn't want to go. I was afraid. That's where I lost my foot. Later, a crocodile killed my father when he was crossing a river. My mother died a long time ago, I don't know when. After Caluquembe, I went to Lubango with my brother to our relatives. I had been given some clothes and food when I left Caluquembe. Then I went to Hocke but I always came back to Lubango for treatment and to buy medicine. I have five brothers and sisters. One of my sisters died and I take care of her three children. She died of diarrhea in March. She shared her husband with another women. When my sister died, her husband gave me the children so I would take care of them and he left with his other wife. She didn't want children. I got married in Hocke. Life was good and because of my leg, I got aid from social services. Later we left for Chipindo because there was a lot of fighting in Hocke. Since my husband was a MPLA soldier, we were afraid he would be denounced to Unita because everyone knew him in Hocke. We wanted to go somewhere where no one knew he was a government soldier. We arrived in Chipindo in 1995.
One day, there was an Unita attack. Everyone who could flee did. But I couldn't go very quickly because of my leg and I had the little ones with me. I would have carried them but that was impossible. So my husband decided to stay with me and not abandon us. Then Unita arrived and they began beating my husband. I yelled, "Don't kill my husband! Who will take care of me and the children if you kill him?" Then they beat me too. I still have the marks on my hand. They stole our meat, cooking utensils and clothing and they burned our house and even our food supplies. At that time, we had enough food. There was food everywhere! And then they decided to take us with them—my husband, my three children and me. They took us into the forest to a military base.

We suffered a lot there. We had didn't have any more salt, only badly-cooked manioc flour. We didn't have any clothes, either. To dress and carry the children we used tree vines. It was horrible. Some people still had a few tattered clothes but we didn't have anything left. This is how we managed to eat: the soldiers would say, 'Hoje as pessoas vao no M M,' which means, 'Today we're going to the fields to steal people's harvest.' My husband went with them. That's how we got food to eat! But the children didn't have enough to eat. They weren't used to it. They were under a lot of stress and they couldn't take any more suffering. I had three sons, 10, 4 and 3, and I haven't lost a single one. They are all alive.
Until 2002, we had to keep moving. The MPLA attacked and so did Unita. Everyone had to move ahead or retreat with the Unita troops. They said, 'We'll kill the people who don't move forward to keep them from staying in the government zones.'
I arrived in Galangue on April 15 with the Unita army. There were already lots of people there and more arrived every day. I knew there was help in Bunjei but with my leg it was hard to go there. We had heard about it from people who came from Bunjei.
When my son is better, I'll go back to Galangue. Then I need to go back to Caluquembe to get a shoe for my foot. They made me one before."

B., 19 year-old woman with a 3 year-old child

"I arrived here Saturday straight from Galangue on the MSF truck. I was in the Galangue hospital (ed. Note: an Unita hospital) and your doctors found me there. There are nurses in the army but no medicine. I was in the hospital for three days because my son has edema. I arrived in Galangue at the end of April with my son, my little sister and my husband.
Things are all right in Galangue, but everyone is sick. All the children are swollen and the others begin to swell after three or four days. My son became ill on the road to Galangue. When we arrived, we were given a little to eat. My husband received 4 kg of fuba (gruel). My son and I each received three, too. They are usually supposed to give us additional rations. The Unita soldiers are the ones who give us food. I stayed in Galangue because I didn't know there was help in Bunjei, otherwise I would've gone there. We came to Galangue because we received the order to go. We came from the base in Nielle, a three days' walk from Galangue."
When asked what her life was like there, she turns away and refuses to speak. She only says that she was there for one year. After that, she hardly speaks.
She was born in Lino, near Chipindo. Her parents were peasants. She has only one sister and her parents should still be in Chipindo. She worked in the fields and never went to school. She got married in Chipindo but does not remember when. She and her husband went to the base in Nielle, where her three children were born. Two are dead. She does not want to speak about her suffering.
We ended the interview.

L., 23 year-old woman with a 6 year-old son

"This is my only surviving child. Three died, in 1998, 2000 and the last one this year. They died of diarrhea and fever. I was born in Caluquembe near Lubango. My parents were peasants and I have four brothers and sisters. When I was young, life was lovely. But I've forgotten all about that. I went to school when I was little and I stayed in Caluquembe until I was 17. That's where I got married, but my children were born in Huambo province. I left Caluquembe with my husband because he is

an Unita soldier and we went to military bases. We went first to Vila Nova and then to the base in zone 1. We stayed in the zone 1 base. Life was normal there but people were ill. There was the war, too. The MPLA attacked and we had to retreat. Later we came back. That began in November 2001 and occurred around twice a month until March 2002. Before, life was more or less decent. We had a little to eat but I was sick a lot and the children were, too. They had fevers and diarrhea. That's how they died. They were 4, 3 and the youngest who died this year was only 1 month old. When we were attacked, the troops stole everything we weren't able to carry away, but they never burned our houses. Other than the war and the sickness, I've never experienced violence.
To eat, we made corn pirao and we farmed the land around the base. Later, there wasn't anything to eat but sweet potatoes and manioc. That's when people started to swell up and die, especially the children and the old people. Then the ceasefire came and we received the order to go to Galangue.
In Galangue, many people died from hunger and sickness but we had to stay there. Those were the orders. In Galangue we heard that there was aid in Bunjei but I was sick and I couldn't walk all that way. My son had edema but it's not so bad since we've arrived here. He drinks a lot of milk. The trip by truck went fine. They take good care of us here. Everything is fine. We get along with the other displaced persons. Later I'm thinking of going back to Lubango, to my parents' house."

IV – INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN THE BAILUNDO REGION

34 year-old woman, widow of an Unita soldier, she does not live in a Quartering and Family Area

She has six children; two are in the MSF therapeutic feeding center (TFC). The other four are in town today. They do not have a place to live because they don't have money to rent a room in a house. The oldest is 17, but she looks more like a child of 13 or 14. She has to take care of her younger brothers and sisters. The day after our interview, one child is to be released from the TFC, so the mother will receive a family food ration (24kg of fuba, 8 kg of beans, 4 liters of oil and _ kg of salt), which she will give to her children who live outside the center.
During the ceasefire, she wanted like to return to her village in Chiumbu, Bella Vista commune, with her children (her husband is dead). Along the way, she passed through Bailundo. Given the two children's poor health, she decided to go to the "MSF hospital."
Note 1: after the ceasefire in March/April 2002, the government systematically instructed the 'displaced" population to return to their towns and villages.
In 1978, when she was 10 (she says she was 8, but this does not correspond with the age she reports today), she was captured by the Unita army in Bella Vista commune. Later (she does not know when) she married a member of the Unita administration responsible for collecting taxes from the population. Since then, she has criss-crossed the country (Huambo, Bié, Cuando Cubango) with her husband, who worked as a tax collector throughout that period.
Note 2: Unita collected monthly taxes from the people living under its control. The tax consisted of 100 kg of milho (corn) per couple and 50 kg per widow. It was possible (under certain conditions?) to substitute an equivalent commodity (for example, 100 kg of milho = 2 chickens)
In 1995, the couple settled in Calusinga (Huambo province), which was attacked in September 1999. They had to flee to Chitengombé and then to Demba. She was

captured in that village by FAA troops and sent to Bimbé. Her husband managed to flee with the Unita army.
After some time in Bimbé, the sobas (ed. Note: village chiefs) instructed the "displaced" civilians to return to the nearby villages to farm. She went to Casaréa, a "mixed" village (ed. Note: Unita soldiers hid by blending into the civilian population.) The government was aware of the Unita presence and decided to attack. To prevent the FAA from seizing the village, Unita forces decided to burn all the houses and told the population to leave. On August 23, 2001 (she recalls this date perfectly), her husband was killed during fighting in Casaréa between the FAA and Unita. She returned to Calusinga (by then under government control) and stayed there until the ceasefire.
Note 3: After the ceasefire, the Unita administration and the government instructed the widows of Unita soldiers to "also" go to the Quartering and Family Areas. In this woman's case, it appears she was not considered a "soldier's wife." Her husband was 47 when he died and according to her, "did not carry weapons."

22 year-old woman, wife/widow (?) of an Unita soldier, living in a Quartering and Family Area

She has three children. Two (ages 9 and 7) are not in the TFC, but living on their own with no resources. Her son treated in the TFC is 2.
In 1990, when she was 10 years old, she was captured by Unita and taken to Base 50 (Chipuli), "on the Benguéla road."
Note 4: Unita regularly carried off young, pre-pubescent girls and put them to work for Unita military leaders and administrators.
She was assigned to work for an Unita leader (cleaning house and carrying crops from the fields to the Unita base house. She does not mention having been mistreated.She had two children in 1993 and 1995 and does not say by whom.)
In 1992, she followed him to Bimbé. In 1998 she married an Unita soldier with whom she lived only a short time because he had to return to Bié province in 1999 to fight with a unit. Nonetheless, her last child was born from this marriage. Bimbé was attacked that year and taken by the FAA. She followed Unita to the village of Chituku, which was also captured by the FAA in 2001. Government troops burned all the houses, seized all the animals, stole food and forced the civilian population to go to Bimbé commune. She was in the village of Chipuli (Bimbé commune) when she learned that as a soldier's wife, she had to go to the Quartering and Family Area after the ceasefire although she still has no news of her husband.

35 year-old woman

Widow of a member of the Unita administration, she does not live in a Quartering and Family Area
She has 6 children; 2 are in the TFC.
She is originally from Caconda (Huila province). Her first husband died after being forcibly recruited by the FAA. She went Huambo, where in 1985 she married her second husband, originally from Sambo. In 1987 the couple went to Bimbé. Her husband had been an Unita "collaborator." He worked for the government administration but spied for Unita. One day, he learned his identity had been uncovered and he had to flee for Bimbé. He didn't have any problems living there until 1999, when the FAA retook the commune. He and a group of others took

refuge in a nearby village to follow Unita. In June, July and August 2001, FAA attacks against the village intensified. Her husband was killed and the FAA captured her sons. They were sent to Bimbé commune where they were able to get food. She stayed alone for another month in the village, which was then taken by the FAA. She was captured and met up with her children in Bimbé. She works collecting wood (lenha) to feed her children.
During the ceasefire, under government orders she had to leave Bimbé (she wanted to go to her own village –Caconda—but it was too far). Instead she went to the village of Caculo, a day's walk from Bimbé, but there was nothing to eat except green bananas prepared as gruel. She will return there after her children leave the TFC, hoping she will have seeds to plant.

48 year-old woman

Presumed widow of an Unita soldier. She is not living in a Quartering and Family Area.
She had seven children. Four died and three are in the TFC (one is severely malnourished and the two others are there with the first).
She had two children by her first husband (one died). They were living in Balombo (Benguéla province) before he left "to join Unita" in 1993. She had two children by her second husband (both died) and he was forcibly recruited into the FAA army in 1995. She returned to Balombo and married a third man, an Unita soldier. They went to the Unita base in Chissaca, near Menga in Huambo province. She had three children by him (one died). In 1999, her husband disappeared from the Chissaca base. She does not know why (did he join another battallion? Was he imprisoned? Did he die?).
At that time she wanted to leave the Unita base but did not receive authorization from the administration. Very frightened of possible reprisals, she had to decide not to try to escape. Everyone who tried to leave the base disappeared.
Beginning in 2001, the FAA attacked the base several times and the situation became increasingly difficult. During the last months, people had to resort to eating plant leaves. Every week, groups flanked by Unita soldiers left to "loot" fields in the government zone, but single women did not receive any food.
In January 2002, the FAA took Chissaca and she had to flee into the bush with the others (civilians and Unita soldiers). After several days, some civilians returned to Chissaca because they could not survive without shelter during the rainy season. But there was nothing left in Chissaca (houses were burned, but she does not say by whom.) With FAA "help," the civilians were transferred to Vila Franca commune. She had a nephew living in Vila Franca but he refused to help her so she had to work to feed her children (gathering wood, lenha). However, while working she hurt her feed (deep punctures in her left foot) and had to stop. Life quickly became unbearable.

37 year-old woman

Widow of an Unita soldier, she lives in a Quartering and Family Area.
She had five children. Two died, one is in the TFC and the two others are in Chiteta.
She married her husband, an Unita soldier, in 1986 and lived in Balumbo commune (Benguéla province). In 1993 the couple had to go to Bimbé, where the husband was "transferred" by 'Unita. In January 1995, after the Lusaka peace

accords, they went to a Quartering and Family Area in Vila Nova and stayed in the camp for a year before returning to Bimbé to resume farming.
In 1999, when fighting resumed around Bimbé, her husband did not take up arms again because he was wounded in 1998 on his way to Chingongo (one day's walk from Balombo) to buy fish and salt. The FAA attacked the village of Chingongo at the moment her husband happened to be there. Unita members came to take him to the evangelical mission (Unita military hospital in Baïlundo, Chilumé mission), where he stayed for seven months.
Note 8: her husband appears to have been an important Unita soldier to be repatriated for medical reasons to an Unita military hospital in Bailundo. He must have gone to Chingongo in 1998 for reasons other than to buy fish and salt (or in large quantities to supply the nearby Unita bases).
In 1999, when the FAA took Bimbé, the couple had to withdraw with the Unita forces to the Capali base (near Caculolo, two days' walk). The FAA attack took them by surprise and they had to leave all their belongings behind. In Capali, they began by working in the villagers' fields before obtaining their own field in 2000, where they planted milho (corn) and beans.
In October 2001, the FAA attacked Capali and her husband was killed. During a second assault, she was captured by the FAA but says she was not raped because she was pregnant. She was transferred to a village near Bimbé (Capandongongo)
In May 2002, the government announced that people could travel freely. Lacking the money to return to her own commune (Balombo) she decided, as the widow of an Unita soldier, to go to the Chiteta Quartering and Family Area. She says that no one suggested (or required) that she go, but that "like everyone who suffered during the war, she went to the camp." There is a special area for widows but she was not able to build a house so she lived outside with other widows, within a circle protected from the wind by branches. She says that families received 4 kg of fuba every week but widows were given only one cup of fuba and a half-liter of oil.
She would like to return to Balombo when she leaves the camp but she has no money.

20 year-old woman

Widow of an Unita soldier, she lives in a Quartering and Family Area.Quartering and Family Area
She has a 3 year-old child.
Today, she lives in the Lunge Quartering and Family Area but she used to live in a village next to the Unita base in Chimanon (Lubangandja commune) where her husband "worked" as a soldier.
In November 2001, the FAA attacked the Chimanon base and destroyed it. Her husband was captured, imprisoned in Baïlundo for one month and then summarily executed along the Culenlé River. (ed. Note: Witnesses close to the FAA told her the story.)
After her husband's death, she went to her in-laws in Vila Nova. Now she is in the Quartering and Family Area because, according to her, "all the women who used to be married to Unita soldiers must come to a Quartering and Family Area." (ed. Note: Is this based on the notion that the women remain connected to their husbands or is it a requirement?)
When she leaves the camp, she does not want to go back to live with her in-laws. She wants to be free from family supervision. In Lunge, the Unita army built her a house but she knows that not all widows have benefited similarly.

27 year-old woman

A soldier's wife, she lives in a Quartering and Family AreaQuartering and Family Area.
She had five children. Three are living (a pair of twins and one child in the TFC) and two died (at one year and at six months of age. They had headaches, she said.)
In 1996, she married an Unita soldier from Lamdiumbali commune.
They lived on an Unita base in the Vila Franca commune during the ceasefire.
She says the situation was comfortable, with adequate food, a hospital and nurses. However, she acknowledges that her child, now in the TFC, first suffered from edema in January 2002.
They came to the Quartering and Family Area camp during the peace process. She does not know what they will do next.
Note 6: this was the first interview with the wife of an Unita soldier who was still alive and active in the military. From all indications, these people say little (most answers are in the form of 'yes' or 'no") and do not complain about previous living conditions (except in the Quartering and Family Areas). We had to systematically repeat or pursue our questions to get more detail. They sometimes refuse to leave their tent (are they being supervised or monitored?) to talk where it is quieter.

27 year-old man

He is an Unita soldier living in a Quartering and Family AreaQuartering and Family Area.
Originally from Longondjo, he has five children. His wife died on May 19, 2002. She had chest pains, a cough and stomach pains. He was already in the Finge Quartering and Family Area but did not want to come with his wife to the Bailundo hospital because he was afraid the government would suspect him of being a "Unita soldier." Later he took his child to MSF's TFC because the authorities had asked people to assemble the sick children for medical check-ups by our teams (reassuring).
Before he arrived in Finge, he was in an Unita base in Cambuengo and had to walk three days with his ill wife to reach the Quartering and Family Area. (He was sick, too, but has recovered his health since June.)
He was captured by Unita in Longondjo in the early 1990s and was sent to Bié province for military training. He remained in Andulo for a period and returned to Cambuengo in 1998 to fight. The situation was fairly difficult at the Unita base although when Unita forces withdrew in the face of FAA advances, they always managed to take supplies to live on later. He mentions trading clothing for food but in recent months, there has not been enough food at the base to feed all the families.
When his child recovers, he wants to return to the Quartering and Family Area to request authorization to hold his wife's funeral in Mungo, where she was born. Then he would go back to the Quartering and Family Area to obtain permission to leave the camp before September 2002 to return to Longondgo to farm. He expects he has a good chance of being "freed" before September because he knows three people who received final authorization to leave. Further, he already served in the "army" (Unita) for 10 years. According to him, that is long enough to obtain authorization to leave.

Woman around 25 (does not know her age)

Woman married to an Unita soldier, living in a Quartering and Family AreaQuartering and Family Area.
She has to sons, 3 and 5 years
She was born in Galanga (Londuimbali commune) and is now in theMenga Quartering and Family AreaQuartering and Family Area. She doesn't know how old her husband is. They were married in 1991.
After their wedding they lived in Chingella (Vila Franca commune) where they had a plot of land to grow beans and corn. Medical care was provided in a hospital with many nurses.
In 1997, because of the war, she had to leave for Catiétié (Kwanza Sul, in her husband's commune, to live with her in-laws) when Unita sent her husband on a military mission to a location unknown to her. As she was on her way out of Chingella after a FAA attack, she says she lost everything and was able to leave only with what she could carry on her head (food). She managed to grow corn, sweet potatoes and beans in Catiétié but there was no salt. They had no clothes.
Note 10 : she says she left Chingella in 1997 but there was no fighting at that time so it is possible the year was 1999 or even 2000.
In April 2002, she learned that she had to go to a Quartering and Family Area and found her husband there. Her child was already very ill before they reached the camp. ("His feet and eyes had started to swell.")
She does not know when she will be able to leave the Menga Quartering and Family Area. She is thinking of returning to Chingella with her husband to farm if they can find seeds.

34 year-old woman

Woman married to an Unita soldier, lives in a Quartering and Family Area
She has six children. The oldest is 17.
She is now in Chiteta 2 camp with her husband, but he reportedly has another wife so she wants to remain in Bailundo after her two last children leave the TFC. Her husband is supposed to be the Unita health administrator in Chiteta.
Between 1985 and 1994, the couple lived in Andulo before going to Mungo, then to Bailundo in 1995 and, finally, to Bimbé in 1999 (after the fall of Bailundo). Along with 50 other women, she was captured there by FAA troops while the village was being taken. She says she lived in the street although other women were able to find housing by marrying a man among the FAA troops.
Note: This was a difficult interview. This person seems emotionally unstable (and physically weak).

30 year-old woman

Wife of a member of the Unita administration, lives in a Quartering and Family Area
She had five children. Three died and two are still living (10 months and 3 years)
The first child died in 1993. "He was sick when he was born." The second died at 2 years in 1995 while she was on the Unita base in Cumbira (Londuimbali commune). She didn't have money to buy "hospital medicine" so she had to get "umbundu medicine (traditional plant medicines). The third died in 1998, while they were still in Cumbira. He was ill with fever and he gained weight. Once again, she was not able to obtain "hospital medicine." When the FAA retook the Unita base, the

couple left for the Unita base in Gungé (Kwanza Sul, three days' walk from Cumbira).
Her husband was an Unita soldier but she says he didn't carry weapons. He was responsible for the party's youth group but she was unsure about his position. She farms a bit of land (corn, beans).
Beginning in 2001, the FAA frequently attacked the Gungé base and then withdrew. During the attacks, she lost some of her possessions, stolen by the FAA. In 2002, the FAA burned her house. With her husband, they left the base to take refuge in a cave in the mountains. It was only after the ceasefire that they were able to leave their hiding place and go to Gungé, which was completely destroyed during that time.
In May 2002, they went to the Menga Quartering and Family Area. Her husband stayed in the camp with one of the children and she accompanied the other to the TFC.
After their stay in the Quartering and Family Area, she would like to go back to her birthplace, the village of Cumbira, where she still has relatives. She received a message from them saying she could return there with her husband to help them farm. But she does not know when.

40 year-old man

Civilian man, not living in a Quartering and Family Area.
He has five children. One died in 2001. He attributes the death to bad food (the method of preparing potatoes).
He was born in Kandandi (8km from Alto Hama) and has always lived there.
Until 1999, Unita controlled the village and respected the residents, considering them intellectuals. There were no food shortages (he had a field) but he complains that it was difficult to get adequate health care at that time. "Sometimes we had to wait in line, almost on the brink of dying, before buying medicine." Today, new nurses have arrived and there is an ambulance to go to the hospital in Huambo. However, the nurse who makes visits sells the required medicines privately (two chloroquine tablets for 1 kg of corn).
Many people died during the 1999 FAA attack on Kandandi. When the Unita forces fled, they came through the village and forced the civilians to follow them. They went in two directions. Some went towards the river, but the FAA tracked them, following the traces they left behind. The FAA shelled the people who couldn't cross the river because they didn't know how to swim. The other group headed to the mountains to hide in caves. (He joined that one because, not being able to swim, he knew he should not go towards the river.) Several days later, they returned to Kandandi without the Unita army, which had fled further. During their absence, the FAA had partly burned the village. He places the number of deaths during the fighting at 20-30 per day. In 2001, the FAA still did not have complete control of Kandandi, which was attacked regularly. The village subas (chiefs) decided to visit the government authorities to tell them that the attacking FAA forces came from Alto Hama, an irregular situation because Kandandai falls under Bailundo's administration. The FAA attacks on Kandandaï stopped.
Note 7: this man's comments can be interpreted to mean that by appealing to the authorities, the sobas demonstrated their allegiance toward the government authorities, leading to an end to violence against the Kandandaï population which was then considered to have been "conquered."

Even so, Unita soldiers continued to come regularly to Kandandaï to kidnap men and women during 2001 and loot the harvests.
After his daughter leaves the TFC, he hopes to return to Kandandai to resume farming but he does not know where to find seed. The situation is currently very difficult because there are only green bananas to eat, which make people sick.

Z., a 37 year-old man

Civilian man, not living in a Quartering and Family Area
He has seven children. One died of measles on May 30, 2002..
He lives in Caïmba (18 km from Baïlundo) where many children were affected by measles. According to him, 16 died in April and May and four died since the beginning of June (interview conducted on June 26). People do not have transportation to the Bailundo hospital to be vaccinated. The nurse on site gathers the information but must be paid in advance to buy medicine in Bailundo (one multivitamin tablet costs 3 Angolan kwanza).7
Caïmba was under government control until 1992, when the population began to return after peace was declared.Several months later, when the war resumed, Unita seized the village and held it until 1999.
In 1999, when the FAA retook Bailundo, the situation in Caïmba became complicated. The population had to flee into the bush with the Unita army. They stayed up to 20 days. During that flight, a conflict broke out among Unita soldiers. Some were ready to allow the civilians to return home, while others wanted to keep them with the troops. But with the threat of the FAA on their trail, the Unita leaders preferred to release the civilians so as not to hamper their flight. The population decided to return to Caïmba.
After this event, village life was no longer calm. The FAA came regularly to Caïmba to enforce their control. The army burned houses, pillaged and raped (women had to hide when the FAA arrived). The villagers had to turn over their harvest to the government soldiers and transport the food to a secure FAA base (several hours' walk). Z knows someone who died of exhaustion while transporting food for the FAA. Unita continued to come into the village to steal (especially salt), and also burn houses, during the night.
Sweet potatoes were the only food left in the village. Security for Caïmba's residents did not improve until April 2002. Z's family had no belongings left ("only the clothes on our backs."). His wife remained in the village with their five children and he came to the TFC with his daughter.

30 year-old man

Former member of the Unita administration, does not live in a Quartering and Family Area.
He has four children. His "first wife" died in May 2002 of anemia.
In 1995, he was working for Unita, in charge of the youth in Luvili village (one day's walk from Alto Hama) but in 1999 he went to Huambo where he later found a "second wife." He left his first wife in Luvili because she did not want to leave her family. He seems to have taken advantage of the peace of 1995-96 to leave Luvili. Under the peace accord, Unita was going to give the village back to the

[7] 1 euro = 46.4 kwanzas. The US dollar exchange rate is close to that.

government. In Huambo, he says he enlisted voluntarily in the FAA and, reportedly, fought Unita.
In 2002, when he learned that his first wife was ill he returned to Luvili stay with his children, but there was nothing left to eat in the village except green bananas.

43 year-old woman (outside the TFC)

Widow of a Portuguese man who has always lived in Baïlundo
In 1976, she married a Portuguese man who remained in Angola after independence. She would have liked to go to Huambo to study but she had to stay in Baïlundo to raise her children.
In December 1998, when the war had started again, her husband was imprisoned because he was white and suspected of wanting to flee to Huambo. The soubas, priests and the population revolted against his imprisonment and won his freedom after two weeks. Although he wasn't mistreated in prison, he was weakened when he came out. After that, his health worsened. He decided to go to the hospital, which at that time had no more medicine. Anticipating a possible withdrawal, Unita had already begun to gather up supplies.
On September 15, 1999, the Unita soldiers and the Bailundo population began leaving, heading towards nearby villages. The city was nearly empty by September 20. Only a few Unita troops awaited the FAA at the entrance to the city. She left with her family for Chiteta to find refuge. On October 16, her weakened husband could no longer walk. They decided to go back to Baïlundo, now in FAA hands. Her husband died on October 19. Her house was occupied by FAA troops and with her family she had to stay in her husband's store, which his second wife had run.
When the FAA entered the city, they stole widely and raped many women, especially in the surrounding areas where the poorest people were staying.
Unita forces tried to attack Bailundo four times (three times in 1999 and once in 2001), without success.
People had to go far from the city to find food in the fields of the surrounding villages or buy food (very expensive) at the central market. She had to sell all the family's clothes to survive.

35 year-old woman

Widow of a civilian, not living in a Quartering and Family Area.
She had six children, three of whom died. Two of the remaining three are in the TFC.
Beginning in 1985, she lived in Njengo (Alto Hama commune), which was under Unita control. Her husband was a teacher but he was not being paid so he farmed.
In 2001 the FAA attacked, burning the village and forcing the population to go to Luvemba commune (one day's walk). She lost all her property.
Food was scarce in Luvemba. Many people from villages retaken by the FAA had gathered there. The only food available nearby were green bananas. After drying and cooking them, they produce a kind of fuba (a gruel of low nutritional value). Her husband often went to the fields of his former village (Njengo) to look for food. During one of his "clandestine" visits, he was killed by Unita troops.
After the ceasefire the government ordered her, as a "displaced person," to return to her village. She decided to go to the village of Djijemba (an hour's walk from Bimbé), her husband's birthplace. There was nothing to eat in Djijemba except

green bananas. In spite of everything, after her child recovers, she will return there to help her in-laws farm, if they obtain seeds.

17 year-old woman

Orphan, adolescent, not living in a Quartering and Family Area
This malnourished adolescent is an orphan. (She was probably admitted to the MSF center because of her family situation. Normally, MSF sends malnourished adults to the Bailundo hospital, which is supposed to give them food.)
She was living with her parents in Gabéla (Kwanza Sul) when her father died in 1990. With her mother, she went to Huambo to "look for work" but the FAA retook the city in 1994 and they decided to flee to Luvemba, then under Unita control. In 1999, when the government retook the commune, they decided (were able?) to stay in Luvemba. The fields near the town could not feed the entire population, particularly those people displaced by the FAA. At night, people would go to the village fields under Unita control to "loot" them with the help of government forces. In 2001, her mother died for lack of medical care (headache and stomach pains) in Luvemba. The food situation became harder and harder. No one could farm any longer because of fighting in the surrounding areas.
In February 2002, she learned of the peace settlement when she heard the celebrations in the FAA building (very noisy). She was then living with her brother-in-law, who didn't want her to stay with him any longer (not enough food to go around). She expects to return to Luvemba but doesn't know where to go.

20 year-old woman

Married woman, not living in a Quartering and Family Area
She has three children. One is in the TFC, one died in June 2002 (she says he had edema), and one is in Luanda with her father-in-law, who came for the children after the ceasefire to save them from famine (it seems he was too late because one of the children had already died of hunger).
Until 2001, she lived in Catucou (Vila Franca commune, her husband's birthplace), under Unita control. Her husband was a farmer. When the FAA threatened the village, Unita troops forced forced them to leave the village and burned it. They went to Chimbiongolé, three days' walk (with a river crossing by canoe), but there was no food there. Her husband had to go back to the fields in Catucou once to stock up. After the ceasefire, the couple returned to Catucou because Unita allowed the population to move freely, but the fields had not been maintained. There was nothing left to eat except green bananas. They had to rebuild their house.

41 year-old man

Civilian man, married, not living in a Quartering and Family Area.
He comes from Lombondgé (Alto Hama commune), has six children and a wife
In 1986, Unita attacked his village and forced the population to come to Luvemba commune. The first year was extremely difficult because he was a "guest" there and had to work for other people to survive. The second year, he obtained a field where he could farm. In 1992, Unita ordered part of the Luvemba population to leave the commune for a base in the bush--Missassa base-–(one day's walk). He

was again able to farm a field that was given to him. In 1995, many people arrived at the Missassa base after Unita forces pulled back after losing the city of Huambo. In 2001, the war reached the area surrounding the base. It was no possible longer to farm. Then the FAA seized Missassa. The Unita soldiers fled and the government issued the order to go to Lombondgé. He was able to leave Missassa with 120 kg of milho (corn).
He found his family in Lombondgé. He had been separated from them since being forced to leave with Unita in 1986 but he had no more land to farm. His wife stayed in Lombondgé with the other children and he came alone with one child to the TFC.

Woman, says she was born in 1992, appears to be between 30 and 35

Widow of a civilian, not living in a Quartering and Family Area
She had three children; one has died
She is originally from Menga commune and always lived there with her husband, who died in 2001.
Unita controlled the commune. Until 1999 there were no specific health or food problems. She and her husband had field and harvested manio, gigumba, and corn. There were nurses (the price of a visit was one chicken) and they could buy medicine at the man square. However, twice a month she had to go to the Unita base in Mucumbué (two days' walk for the round trip) to deliver 15 kg of corn (the Unita tax).
In 2000, when war broke out in the area around the commune, food became harder to find. Her husband had to travel long distances (two days' walk) to gather food in fields that did not belong to him. At the same time, the fields close to Menga were systematically looted by Unita forcs who took the "fresh corn."
In 2001, the FAA army killed her husband as he was trying to flee after being arrested (so they could steal the food he was carrying). The people who had gone with her husband to "gather food from fields that did not belong to them" reported the event to her. After her husband died, she has had to survive on green bananas found near Menga. She says many people have died in the fighting and from hunger in Menga.
In the future, once her children have been released from the TFC, she hopes to go back for her two children who are staying with neighbors in Menga. She wants to find her relatives in Bailundo and live with them.

V – INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN SAURIMO (LUNDA SUD PROVINCE) FROM JUNE 6-17, 2002

NUTRITION CENTER:
MSF's therapeutic feeding center (TFC) was opened on May 28, 2002 in an area near the hospital. As of this time, it has accepted around 100 children, most from the Peso Quartering and Family Area and, in lesser numbers, from the Quartering and Family Areas of Chinege and Capaia, as well as from nearby transit and displaced persons camps.

R., 54 year-old man from Xassengue

R., 54, Ovimbundu, comes from the Xassengue region. For the last two years, he has been living in a displaced persons camp in Cacolo with his wife and seven children (6 months, 5, 8, 15, 13 and 14 years and a niece). He has come with his

5year-old son who was identified by the MSF team during an exploratory visit to Cacolo and was brought to the TFC on June 5. He is in the Phase I tent. He watches over his sleeping child, regularly brushing away flies with his hand.
"Life is hard in Cacolo. We live in huts. We get no aid, nothing from the government. We work in the fields to try to earn 50 kwanza/day. There are lots of illnesses. People eat bark, flour from roots and sweet potato leaves without salt or oil. That's why everyone suffers from anemia, especially the children. And there is no medicine in Cacolo. Lots of displaced people have died. My sister died and left me a niece. Now things are a bit more normal. Every month, one, two or three people die but before, eight people were dying in one day. Before Cacolo, I was in Xassengue and life was even harder because Unita was there. They attacked us from the bush every week. They carried off food. They abused people and forced them to work. People had had enough. They wanted to get away from all that. I know that some fled with the FAA soldiers. When the Unita soldiers burned their houses, the government came to take them to Cacolo. I left with my entire family in February 2000 after an attack. It was a long way to Cacolo. We walked for three days--110 km on foot. We took a little bit of food. Now I want to go back home. We've already spoken with the government about going back in July. The government agreed but the situation isn't clear. They haven't done anything. There's nothing left at home. Unita destroyed the houses and even the fields. We'll have to start all over – rebuild the houses, work the land. We need help, we need seeds. But we don't know if the government will help us with all that. But even if they don't give us anything, we'll go back because now there's peace and we have our strength back. And here, in this area, you can't grow anything. The "chiefs" here don't know us. They say, "You're 'Moukwakiza,' ("strangers" in Kioko, the Tchokwé language). They tell us, 'You should go back where you come from.'"

E., 30 year-old man from Huambo

He has one wife and three children (2, 5, and 6). They have been in transit camps since the end of April. He came to the TFC on June 4 with his 5 year-old son. He approached me on his own to talk.
"On April 23, 2002, I was taken out of the bush to Suarimo by helicopter along with my family and other people. They took me to the military hospital because I had a muscle illness. I don't know who took us–FAA or Unita soldiers. I only know they were pilots. After my operation, we were in the transit camp. From there, I was sent here with the child. I am from Huambo. In the party …you know, you have to belong to that, to register to vote. I left Huambo in 1992 with hopes for our party, but suffering a bit just the same. From there, I took an airplane to the border with Zaire where our commando units were. From there, we went to Malanje and then into the Cuango area. That's where we fought until the ceasefire. Life in the bush was easy in the beginning because people at the border have salt, soap and clothing–a little bit of everything. But when the borders were closed, life became hard for everyone and conditions were harsh. They were wartime conditions. The men were fighting and the women were farming corn, sweet potatoes and beans. The men went to war and came home with a house and food all ready. We moved around a lot. Lots of people died, too. My children were sick during the war but fortunately none died. But after the terrible death of Savimbi--no one expected that, it was a big surprise--life became even more complicated. In the Xassengue base, where the "Dragon" commandos were, we were never attacked. Sometimes there were little skirmishes with the FAA but we responded. Some areas took more attacks than we

did. The enemy came there only once when Unita left. Now the killing time is over. They've put down their weapons and we have, too. Our leaders talked it over and agreed that there is too much suffering. It's enough. We are all the same, we are all brothers, all Angolans. The people in the bush are all going to come out and come here. There aren't many people there anymore, Unita or not. Morale is high. People are thinking about the future. They want to work and forget the past. When my child is better, we'll go back to the transit camp and then to the Quartering and Family Area in Peso. I heard there's not enough food there. But since those are the orders, the law, we have to go there until the situation improves. After Peso, I'll go back to my family in Huambo. I'll buy a house there because with the demobilization, the troops will get work and medicine. The government says it will help us but we don't know for certain."

E., 25 year-old woman originally from Mosamete.

She has only one surviving child. Her other two died of malaria, but she doesn't remember the date. She is seated near the cooking area, her child in her arms. Intimidated, she doesn't speak much.

"I was going to the field with my sister when the car was attacked by UNITA. I was captured when I was a child. I was 8. Life in the bush was really hard. At the beginning, I worked in a house, cleaning. We farmed, too, manioc and corn. We fled because the FAA attacked us and burned our houses. We were constantly on the move—three days here, four days there. We couldn't farm. We didn't have anything to eat. There was no oil, no clothes, no heat and no blankets. We ate leaves, roots and insects (a kind of large flying ant). Lots of people died. I left by car from Casolo to Dala. I arrived at the military hospital in Saurimo in April. And then from the military hospital I was in Luari. They sent me here with my child. When my child is better I'll go back to Peso, where my husband is now. Afterwards, with the demobilization, everyone will go back home. I'll go back to Mosamete with my children. My husband will go back home to Huambo (she laughs). I'll find my family. I don't think everything was destroyed because not many people passed through there."

I, 23 year-old women with two children (9 months and 3 years).

She comes from Milando, Xassengue. Her 4 year-old child died of malnutrition a few months ago. She came with her family to the Peso Quartering and Family Area on May 2. From there, she was sent to the transit center on May 3 because her two children were malnourished. She has been in the TFC with her two children for one month. Seated near the laundry area, her infant in her arms, she looks down and says little during the interview.

"In the beginning, life was easier in the bush. It got harder in 1999. We went from base to base. We stayed for maybe one year. We farmed the fields and we had houses. But later we left when the FAA attacked us. They burned the houses, the crops, the corn, the potatoes—everything. When we knew they'd signed the peace, we decided to leave on our own. Later, when my children are better, I'll go back to the transit camp and then to the Peso Quartering and Family Area. My husband has work there as a soldier. I don't know if the war is really over. I can't say anything about that because I'm a woman. I only follow the men."

M., 25 year-old woman, Tchokwé.

She has two children. One had to come to the TFC. She was sent from Peso, where her husband and other child remain. Two of her children, ages 1 year and a few months, died of malaria near the Congolese frontier about two or three years ago.

"UNITA came to work in my village and in others. They talked with the men. We don't know what they said. Sometimes they took women and brought them back at night. I joined UNITA in 1992. At that time, my husband was in Luanda. They captured me by force along with some other people but then we were separated. I don't know how many soldiers arrived and when. I don't know what they did to my village. Later, they kept me and they started oppressing us. (She does not want to provide more details.) First we were in Huambo. Life wasn't so bad in the beginning. We had oil and rice to eat. We hunted and fished; we had clothes and soap. Things weren't bad. In 1994, I married a man from Billé. Later, from 1995 to 1998, we were near the Congolese border. That's where two of my children died of malaria. There wasn't any medicine. Then the crisis came in 1999. When the troops attacked, all we did was to flee, flee. The women, had to flee quickly, too. We were afraid because we didn't know what the men would do to us. We didn't know what they did to the women they captured--if they beat them or punished them. We never found those women. They could be dead today. I don't know. I arrived in Peso in May in the FAA car. Afterwards they brought me here with my child. They found us near a village. We were walking by. When my child is better, I'll go back to Peso. I don't know what I'll do afterwards. I don't know if I want to go back home. I don't know if I still have family there."

L., a 42 year-old woman originally from Billé.

She has 10 children but is caring for only four of them. The other six are with their respective fathers. She arrived at the TFC on June 4 with two of her children (3 and 5). The older one was hospitalised. The other two, 9 and 17, remained alone in the transit camp.

"Before coming here, I was in the transit camp. My husband came out of the bush first with three of my children. I don't know where he is now—in Luando or Huambo. I don't know how my other three children are. I haven't had any news from them yet. They stayed with my first husband. We separated because he abused me. I wonder if they are still alive. I joined UNITA in 1976 because I supported them. I was 16. I was young when the movements started. As a young person, I didn't know much about politics. It was a youthful dream. Everyone joined a movement. Some joined UNITA and others went with the government. Lots of people from Billé joined UNITA. My two sisters were captured along with some other people when they had gone out for a walk. They fell into an ambush. I followed them as a member of the movement. I came back to take a nursing class but the people who returned to the bases didn't come out. My sisters and I found each other 10 years ago but then we were separated again. They might be refugees in Zambia. When the war started, we pulled back to hide in the bush until 1992 (Lusaka treaty). And then in 1992, we started pulling back more, especially starting in 1999. Life began to get harder then. We were attacked day and night. We were constantly fleeing. We were in the rain and always hungry. We ate bombos that we found in the abandoned fields. Some people died. Others were captured and taken to the provinces. Women's spirits are better now because the peace was signed and they have hopes of finding their

families. I don't really want to go back to Billé. At first I'll stay where I find work. Later maybe I'll think about going back to Billé. I left my home a long time ago. I don't know anything about my family or where I can stay. As for my other children, I don't know how to find them."

F, 36 year-old originally from Huambo.

He has four children (one month, 2, 8 and 10 years). He is at the TFC with two of the children and his wife. The other two children stayed in Luau with his wife's family.

"I was in the area north of Luanda area and from there I came to Peso on foot after three days' walk. Because my child was sick, I came to the hospital here at the beginning of June. I joined UNITA in 1980. I was captured, along with other people from my village, my younger brothers and my uncles. We were separated by age. Since I was 14 at the time, they took me to the Najamba base to study a little bit. But I didn't stay there for very long. I studied for only two years and when I was 17, I was sent to the training camps north of Luanda. I left there in 1987 to return to the province. Life was better until 1992. There were free zones that UNITA had won. Beginning in 1992, things began to get worse. After sanctions began against UNITA, things changed and the crisis started. We really became guerrilla fighters. Our army didn't get anything more from the party. We depended only on ourselves and on the strength of the chief in the region. We depended on the people for food. We ate fish, meat and the bombo harvest that people had abandoned. We fled government attacks but no one was ever captured. I have a brother who died in the war in 2001. We were people who wanted to fight but there wasn't time. We didn't trust the government either. The first message came on December 17, 2001. Doctor Savimbi gave a speech to the nation in favor of peace. And then on February 22, we learned about his death. After that, the two headquarters began to meet to begin that phase. The activists (that is, UNITA) complained about the war. They wanted to know when it was going to end. When we learned of the ceasefire, everyone was very happy. We're fine with the others, they welcomed us and we live well. The children are treated well and the ones who are ill go to the hospital. Now I want to go back home and find my family. But to go back I need to be demobilized (that is, join the 5,000 UNITA soldiers the government wants to integrate into the FAA)."»

TRANSIT CAMPS

The camp opened on April 24, 2002. Around a thousand people, including families, live here in straw huts. The government sends UNITA people with health problems here to be treated at the Saurimo military hospital or at the MSF TFC. Most of the patients come from the Peso and Chinege quartering areas. Those who've come out of the bush are transported directly to the camp before being transferred to the quartering areas. The camp includes a minority of Congolese who enlisted in UNITA.

D., 39 year-old man with a 2 year-old daughter.

His other child, 3, died of malnutrition. His wife died of malaria three days after they reached the transit camp. He shares his hut with several of the neighbors' children. He came looking for me to show me his daughter and we began talking in his hut.

"We arrived at the transit camp on April 27. Life in the camp is not easy. We don't have food or oil. When I arrived, we received rice and fuba but we haven't received

anything since then. To vary our diet, we trade fuba for vegetables. A neighbor prepares the meals. I give her the ingredients and she cooks them for my daughter and me. Before arriving here, we were in Lubalo. We walked for two weeks to get here and we had nothing along the way. The local people gave us a little bombo. Sometimes they took pity on the children. We went to the quartering area but my wife was sick so they brought us here because she didn't have the energy to work and do domestic tasks. No one was forced to belong to UNITA. UNITA doesn't oppress people. Everyone is free to do what he wants. In the bush, there were temporary shelters where we stayed for a month or longer. We moved around. In 2000, we stayed in one place for a year and in 2001, six months. When we arrived somewhere, we built huts with the materials we found there. When the situation allowed—during periods of calm--we could grow potatoes. Otherwise we didn't have food, clothing or medicine. It was a disaster. We were cut off from the cities and the NGOs. We left when the enemy arrived. We were attacked and some people were captured. Here in the camp, I found people who were captured by the FAA. That went on for years. I was a radio operator in UNITA. They trained me. Now I want to adapt to the current situation. I would like to work in telecommunications because I know about computers, too. I am confident that the war is over. Neither UNITA nor the FAA is in a position to go to war. Everything came from the understanding between the soldiers. They decided to make peace. I don't want war anymore. I want to be a regular citizen. They say that Unita doesn't exist in the bush any longer The bush is empty. I answer to Benerals Sousa and Mosengo. I am authorized to contact my family. I have relatives in Luanda. I want to reach them so I can leave my daughter with them because their living conditions are better. I want to ask the MINARS (Ministry of Social Affairs and Reintegration) to help me. I'm going to try to find work in Saurimo with the diamond cartel, but if my general tells me to go to the quartering area, I'll go."

D., 26 year-old woman originally from Malanje.

She has four children (8 months, 3, 5 and 8 years). None died during the war. She speaks Tchokwé and Ovimbundu, her husband's language and that of many Unita soldiers.

"Before, I was in Cuilo. I arrived in Saurimo in September 2001 by car after the FAA had captured me along with my children. They captured us very early in the morning. We were sitting down when they arrived. They burned the houses. Two people died in the shooting—a girl and a man. The FAA sent me here because of my illness. I was weak and I had just given birth in Cuilo. My husband was sent to Capaia. I stayed in the hospital for seven months and then they sent me to the camp here. I spent 15 years in the bush. I was captured in 1986 along with some other women. I was 10 when UNITA attacked our village, Campo Sunjinje. After that I worked in someone's house washing dishes. I got married in 1991. (She laughs) My husband is from Huambo. We stayed in the bush for a year or two but we left when the war started. The last few months, we would stay in one place for one, two or three months, sometimes for just three days. We fled at night because the attacks were often in the morning. We walked a lot. The children had to walk, too, or the enemy would kill them. Sometimes we'd go a week without eating or we'd eat only sweet potato leaves. When we came to villages we took kisaka (sweet potato leaves) to eat. We traded clothing for bombo. The men brought the clothing back from the battles. That was how they supported their families. We women farmed and took care of the children." 'Catoca, Catoca!!!' The car from Catoca, the diamond

mining company, has arrived in the camp with the daily children's milk distribution. A screaming crowd of adults and children rushes to greet the car. Its arrival marked the end of the interview.

M., 30 year-old woman.

She is originally from Bié and has three surviving children. Three others died during their final months in the bush.

"I was captured with my brother and an aunt in 1982. I was 10 when they (UNITA) attacked our village and gathered up all the people there. I got married in 1987. It was my husband who decided to get married. He is from Guandoulo. He was also very young when he joined UNITA. He was captured along with other people from his village. I had three children who died in the bush—two for lack of food and one who was premature. He was born at six months and only lived for 13 days. He died because of the conditions. We had to flee with him in the rain--a child who hadn't even finished out his nine months. It was terrible. The last months in the bush were very bad. We were always running and eating what we could scratch out of the soil, like sweet potato leaves. Luckily we got some honey. We didn't even have any clothes. We had only our skin for clothes. We were captured one night at 5 p.m. They (the FAA) didn't kill anyone but they took everyone away. We walked for three days. They gave use rice and fuba. I arrived in Quimbundé in February with two of my children. They gave us a little food there but no clothing. They put us in a big house with lots of people. The others were with their husbands. My husband was sick so they transferred him here with one of my children. I arrived in Saurimo on June 7 to look for my husband. I'm waiting for him to get better and then we'll see."

A., 10 year-old orphaned girl, here with her older sister who is around 15

The girl is very thin and suffers from malnutrition. When I stop to talk to her, the women nearby bemoan her situation, telling me, "It's awful to see this, children abandoned, all alone."

"I arrived on June 3. In the bush, we ate sweet potato leaves and fish. I left Chinege with my sister for the Luari hospital because my legs and eyes were swollen. Now we want to go back to Chinege to find our brother. Our mother died in the bush in 1995, in Luau. She was ill but I don't know what her illness was. We don't know where our father is. When we left to come here, we didn't eat for three days. No one gives food to children who are all alone. Later they gave us fuba here." In the meantime, the older sister joined us, saying. "She didn't want any fuba or beans. She doesn't want to eat anything here. But she's OK. She's just like that. She's fat." The older sister does not want to acknowledge the child's fragile health. She's not pleased that her younger sister might have to go to the hospital again. She wants to return to Peso and "be done with these doctors."

I., 39 year-old woman originally from Bié.

She is a widow with two children. Her two other children died in 1999 and in 2001. On May 3, she arrived by car from Chinege at the transit camp to go to the hospital.

"UNITA captured me in 1978 when I was 12. I got married in 1985. My husband was from Bailundo, Huambo. He died of malaria in 1992 when we were in the Quintala base. When my husband died, no one wanted to have anything to do with me

anymore. Who would give us food then? No one! We ate a little manioc. We had no clothes. Only women with husbands had clothes. Those without a man had to work in the villages so they could clothe and feed their children. When the attacks were heavy, we stayed under the trees with our arms crossed, waiting. Unless someone knew you and gave you something for the children, you'd go for as long as a week without eating--both adults and children. I spent only three days in Chinege before coming here. There were lots of mosquitoes there and they bring problems. People died even during the day. Chinege is no good. There are lots of people, lots of soldiers with their wives and children. But I have no husband any more, so what am I going to do in Chinege? When I feel better, I'll go look for a place to stay. I could look for my family in Dundo and Lucapa but I don't want to go backwards. It's better to stay here. But it's better to find the family because if I die the children can stay with them instead of being abandoned. We suffered terribly in the bush. I'm still suffering today. I get dizzy and my heart beats fast. I don't have the strength to work now. How am I going to work? Who will take care of my children? I haven't eaten anything today. My children have lost their appetite. I'm worried about them. It's hard for widows here. There are a lot of us."

M. A., 50 year-old woman originally from Huambo.

She is a widow with nine children and arrived in the transit camp on May 27. She has just found some of her children, lost during the end of their time in the bush.

"I have five children in Huambo, the older ones. They are there with my family. My husband and I left with the younger ones to trade food—beans--in the Malanje region. UNITA captured us there in 1998. My husband was killed in the bush on November 9, 2001, while we were fleeing. The big offensive started when they asked president (Savimbi) to come to Luanda to reach a peace agreement but he didn't want to. That's when people came out of the bush. When the offensive reached us, I got lost and separated from my children. They were lost, alone, without food or fire to stay warm until the FAA brought us out of the bush. Then they brought me to Chicapa, and from there I was transferred to the hospital. We suffered in the bush. We couldn't do anything because we didn't know the area. And if you tried to escape, UNITA and even the government troops would kill you. So you had to flee. You couldn't stay very long in the same place because the offensive wasn't far away. If you were trapped in the offensive, it was just shooting, shooting, shooting. If you didn't flee you would die. Or you would die fleeing or you would die at a base. Wherever we went, we were hungry. We didn't have time to cook. The rain was falling on us and we had no shelter. We suffered the whole time. We had no clothing and no blankets. We had nothing. Sometimes, when things calmed down, there was time to grow corn, beans, potatoes and cabbage. We had goats, chickens and pigs. But when we fled there wasn't time to grab anything. The FAA took it all—the food and the clothes. When we returned to the base, there was nothing left. When we fled we would go two or three days without food. You couldn't make a fire because the enemy would spot us. We stayed out in the rain, without moving, under a tree. That's how the sickness started, the anemia. Maybe we'd find some wild fruit, some water. That's why I didn't have the strength to walk any further, why I got lost and lost my children. Even my toenails fell off. My feet were wounded and I couldn't walk anymore. I cried day and night, until the FAA found me and brought me to Chicapa. UNITA left the slow ones behind. Lots of people were abandoned and they died. Sometimes, UNITA killed them so that if the FAA trapped them, they couldn't betray UNITA and reveal where the group had gone. The FAA

treated me well. They gave us food and when I got better I went to talk with the government commander to tell him that I wanted to find my children. When I got here I found my youngest daughter. She arrived here all alone. And two of the other children. One is in the Ivatengo camps. Now I have to get better, especially because my home, Huambo, is far away. I'm sick to my stomach, my chest hurts and so does my head. As soon as the children and I are better, I'm going back there. I have family and my other children are there, too (she laughs). I've only eaten once since I arrived here. And there's been no water since yesterday. The cistern is empty." The cistern will be refilled in the afternoon.

R., 10 year-old girl, daughter of M.

She listened carefully as her mother answered questions and wanted to speak, too. During an attack on January 25, she was lost in the bush with her brothers and arrived alone at the transit camp. Her mother remained at her side during the interview and helped her with her answers.

"We suffered when we lived in the bush. When I arrived here, I was sick. I was anemic and all swollen. I walked a lot. It was daytime when they attacked us. After that, we just ran and left all our things. My mother wasn't there for the attack. I was with my brother. Then he left to look for food. Later they said his base was Saurimo. I came alone. I didn't have anything to eat. No one gave me anything. I didn't have any plates or pans." Her mother adds, "And no mother either." The little girl continues. "I stayed behind in Mana Quimbungo. I was alone at night and I had a fever. The army men brought me in the car. When I arrived here, they gave me something to eat and a woman from the camp brought me to the hospital. When I saw my mother, I was happy. I cried. Now I'm eating well. I don't think any more. (She laughs.) Afterwards, I want to study in Huambo. I want to be a doctor." (She laughs.) The mother continues, "When we go back to Huambo, we'll start farming and earn a little money to buy books."

R., 34 year-old man from Moxico.

He is Tchokwé. He has five children. He lost two children in 1999 when they were fatally wounded by machete blows during an attack. He arrived at the transit camp on May 25 with his family. He lives in a tent at the edge of the camp because all the huts are occupied.

"In 1984, when I left to visit my in-laws with my wife and my children, we were captured by UNITA. I studied trades so when I was with UNITA I made shovels for digging diamonds and cutlery, too. That was my job in 1999 and 2000 when we were in Alto Chicapa. I worked at the forge. Everyone had a job. My wife worked in the fields and fished. Others were miners. People who had their own stones (diamonds) could trade them, but you couldn't touch what belonged to the state. The diamonds were sent directly to President Savimbi and we got half the money. With that we bought sugar, salt, fish, rice, bread, weapons and shoes. We traded with the Congolese at the borders. But lately everything has been shut tight. The Congolese had their own routes and came over secretly. Everything got harder beginning in 2001, when the offensive began. The soldiers had no more weapons. We had to flee and order the women to hide. Lately, we haven't been able to farm. We were eating leaves and fuba from bombo. We traded everything we had—clothing, iron for forging and making pots. The people who were afraid and could get out took refuge in Congo, in a village for Angolan refugees. But I'm

Angolan, so let them kill me. I'd rather die here in Angola. There's a village in Lachimba, past the Luxico river. We walked for a day to get there. The people who were sick walked for 1_ days. That's where the FAA captured us. Afterwards they took us by car to Capaia. From Capaia, I was taken to Lucapa and then to Saurimo because I was sick. I came with my whole family so they could monitor all of us because I have tuberculosis. Since I worked a lot in Moxico and I studied, too, up to the 7th year, I know how to fix watches, I've built houses, I can work iron and I'm the best in engineering. If I get better, we'll see what the government will do, if they'll give us work we know how to do. If they tell me to go back home, I'll go. If they tell me to stay, I'll stay. We're all neighbors; we're neighbors of the people in Saurimo and in Lucapa. I'll go wherever they tell me to go. I'm waiting for the orders. Now the war is over. War is hurtful. Before, we wouldn't accept anything the enemy said but now all we want is peace. It was a fight between brothers. Our superiors have analyzed the situation. They've explained that we should leave things alone now. We're here. We're brothers and they're taking good care of us. They share their food with us. The government is doing its job well but there are problems in the camps. Before, in UNITA, there wasn't any tribalism. We were all together. Now, it's Ovimbundu, Tchokwé, and we aren't worth anything. The Ovimbundu help each other, like when they distribute clothing. I didn't get much. I had to trade a pot they gave me here to get these sneakers. Things could explode here."

Q., 28 year-old man from Bengale,

He is blind, prematurely aged, and moves with the use of a cane. He has four children (10 months, 6, 9 and 12 years). His 5 year-old daughter was killed during an attack. His comments offer a glimpse into the trade and barter system that exists in the camp because food is limited.

"Life in the bush was good when we were fighting for the revolution. But when the ceasefire came, we headed out on the road. I arrived in Capaia in the beginning of May in an FAA car. The government sent me here for treatment. When I arrived, I received 10 kg of fuba and 6 kg of rice for a month. I haven't received anything else. Only the most recent arrivals received food. You come here for treatment but you die of hunger. The children are losing their strength. To vary the meals, we trade fuba for tomatoes, dried fish and coal. The city people come to the roadside to sell them. Blankets cost for 200 kwanza (around US $4). They sell the blue tents, too. The young people from Saurimo come to buy them to use them in the markets. Some go to work in the city, too. The men carry loads and women wash clothes and carry water. They receive fuba or money for the work: 5 batches of fuba for 20 kwanza (around US$ 0.4)."

A., 47 year-old woman, Congolese.

She built a little stand near her tent to sell fish that she bought in the Saurimo market. The interview was conducted in French.

"In 1995, I came here to Angola to make my way. I came with my husband. We met on the road from Congo and began working together. He is in Peso now. We went from Congo to Luanda and from there to Saurimo. I brought things, sandals, to sell to UNITA. In Saurimo, I bought things and went to Cacolo. There I made bread, beignets too. I had a little restaurant. Later, in 1997, UNITA attacked us in Cacolo. They attacked all night until morning. They trapped some Senegalese and Congolese. The others fled. They were there to mine diamonds in Chamoquelenge

and to sell fabric and shoes to eat. UNITA took us into the bush. There were Congolese in all the bases. We said we didn't want to go into the bush but we couldn't leave. If you tried to leave, they would catch you and kill you. They took our clothes so we couldn't escape. We stayed there until God helped us leave. I prayed a lot. My God, what will I do? We didn't have any clothes, blankets or soap. We ate things you shouldn't eat, without oil or salt. We were hungry. We gathered honey and sometimes we fished. My husband made fishhooks. We went to the fields and found manioc. We were only able to put them in the sun to dry. There wasn't time to put soak them in water because the FAA was attacking. We ate them like that, but they have acid and it made me throw up and gave me diarrhea. Before, I was healthy and fat. I got very thin there. We were always fleeing. The pregnant women ran with their loads on their heads. The children suffered a lot. They moaned, "mmmmm," and then there was the firing, 'tatatatata.´. (She puts her head in her hands and cries.) Lots of people died from bullet and machete wounds. We reached Peso on foot in the beginning of May after three days' walk. From Peso, a truck brought me here because I was ill. When I get better I'm going to find my husband in Peso. But I'm not going to stay there. There is nothing to eat. They say they're going to give us a little piece of paper so we can leave. It's like an identity card. The Congolese here have nothing, no papers."

L., 35 year-old Congolese man. The interview was conducted in French.

"I came to in Angola in 1997 with a friend. We crossed the frontier at night. When the war started to heat up, my friend became frightened and went back to Congo. That same year, when I was a merchant, I went into the forest with UNITA. I was a diamond worker and worked in the quarries. The arrangement was 50 percent for me and 50 percent for the government. I was captured in Chamoteba. A Congolese woman betrayed me. She told me, "Come my son, stay with me." Her husband was with UNITA and they captured me. I couldn't move or they would have killed me. We suffered a lot. We lived in the forests, sleeping in the rain like animals. You sleep but the enemy is nearby. We had to flee. "Grab your things, hurry, get going," they said. We had no food and there was no oil. We ate mushrooms when they were in season. We hunted little birds. We also ate honey and manioc. We peeled them quickly and put them out to dry in the sun. The soldiers were trained to go into the villages at night. I had some friends who died going to look for manioc. Afterwards they would give us something as a reward, like pants with holes in them. Pants with holes are always useful in the forest.. I became a soldier. I'm a man and I can't do what the women do. Towards the end, the FAA shot into the air to call us out. They left little pieces of paper in the manioc fields telling us to come out of the bush. We wanted to come out but we were afraid. When they've had a lot to drink, the Angolans in UNITA will kill you. There were UNITA people who were friends or family of the enemy and they met up in the city to help each other. They disguised themselves to go into the city, like spies. We walked a long way before reaching Peso. They set up a little camp there for the Congolese. Afterwards I came to the camp here to look for a friend. Here life is a little like it was in the forest. The camp general sometimes holds meetings in the morning. (There are no government troops in the transit camps, unlike in the quartering areas.) He says we shouldn't think that UNITA is dead. Savimbi may be dead but not UNITA. Anyone who betrays UNITA will be punished. In the bush, if you didn't obey orders they whipped you. Men held you down to keep you from moving. They would whip you as many as 500 times. Some died from the beatings. People want to come to Peso because there

is food. They give you four cups of rice per person per week, a can of corned-beef, sardines and milk for five people. When the food arrives, the UNITA chiefs keep it for themselves and their families. Even the FAA soldiers steal the food. Afterwards I don't want to go back to Peso. Life in Peso is harder for the Congolese. We have to cut the wood to build the chiefs' houses, not the Angolans. I'm a diamond dealer. I'd like to work to earn money before going back. I left two children there. I can't wait so I'm going to sit along the road here in case a quarry struck stops to look for workers."

DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS

CALUAMBO

The camp opened three years ago. It is about 8 km from Saurimo. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), around 3,000 people live here in straw huts. Most are from the north of Luanda. The surrounding land is partially cultivated.

C., 37 year-old man living with his wife and four children.

He is originally from Lubalo province. He is cutting a neighbor's hair while his wife works in the fields of neighboring villages.

"We arrived at the camp on April 3, 2000. I come from northern Lunda in Lubalo province. We came on foot. We walked for three days without being attacked. We had taken a little bit of food to eat, some bombo, and in the villages people gave us manioc and we made funge (cornmeal porridge). Unita troops attacked us during the day, at 10 o'clock in the morning. They destroyed our village and burned our houses. They took our crops and ate them. No one was killed or captured. All my family and the people from my village are here. When we went back to the province, the government sent us to this camp and began to help us. We built our houses and we also got food from the World Food Program. I heard on the radio that the war is over and everyone is to go back home. We are grateful that the war is over and that we are to return to our land. That's what we want. Now we're waiting for a signal from the government to go back. We need them to help us with transportation and to give us things. The problem is returning with nothing. We need picks and blankets. We will suffer there because Brother Unita (!) carried everything away. But we don't know yet if the government will help us. There are people who've already gone back on foot. Their villages are closer. They left because the WFP hasn't given out food for months. The administrators were the first to arrive and the soba went next. Ours went ahead to organize our arrival and start building houses. We're going to have the life we had there before – fields and fishing. Thanks to the NGOs, there are also people taking back what they learned about education and medicine. We'd like our children to continue their education in our villages."

Soba S. from Luangue province, 57

" We arrived here in 2000 from Luangue commune, Lubalo province. We were attacked by UNITA at four o'clock in the morning. People were massacred there, near Peso. UNITA killed everyone; children, too. Oh, I don't know how many people died! In my village, 88 people were killed by gunfire. Others were captured. They burned the rest and carried off our crops. We suffered terribly coming here on foot along the road. Everyone from the surrounding villages was fleeing, too. No one

waited for anyone else. We slept in Mana Quimbundo and the next day we reached Saurimo. We were famished and we didn't have any water, either. We still haven't found the people who were captured. They may still be in the bush. We don't really know if there are people in the bush. Only the government knows. But what will the people in the bush do? They are ill, they have no food and they are suffering. We have been well received by the governor of south Lunda. The WFP and the Lutherans (church-based NGO) have helped us, too. We received blankets, pots and pans, but no beds. They gave us machetes and picks, too. The problem is the land. We dig but nothing grows. The manioc is no good. This land is weak and worn out. The ones who are strong enough are going to work in the fields of the neighboring villages. The WFP should give us something this month. UNITA already received food. They say that the WFP has started helping UNITA. I heard that on the radio. Life here isn't like village life. Here we are on someone else's land. The one who owns the land gives the orders. The sobas' hands are tied. Everything is disorganized. Everyone is waiting for the government's instructions. The administrators will go back first and then the sobas will go (he laughs). There's nothing to eat where we're going. UNITA took everything—the goats and the chickens. They took everything and left us nothing. They even took the metal from our houses. We will need two or three years to get back on our feet. The young people should not come back yet because they haven't taken their exams and the teachers are here. We can leave with the mothers. The young people will come back after they've taken their exams. In the meantime, we will get the school ready. And the UNITA should leave the bush. If we come back with the young people, they'll take them away. The government knows if will help us for two years. They promised us food, blankets, picks and tools. We need metal to build houses, too. We can't go back the way we left, driven out by force. We came on foot and we expect the government to take us back by car."

F., 14 year-old boy.

He approached me while I was talking with the soba. After observing us for a long time, he joined the conversation. His opinions differ from the soba's.

"I don't want to go back. I want to stay here. Back there, we don't feel safe, there is witchcraft. The forces of evil are going to kill us (he uses the word feticeiros, or sorcerer)." The soba laughs. "You think there isn't witchcraft here?" The young man continues. "They're bandits. They've been killing people until now. People are still dying. I don't know if the UNITA people are killing them or if people are dying because they're hungry. It could be anybody. Maybe they're only using the name UNITA. It's true that some are from UNITA. They say that the other day, a UNITA man left the Peso quartering area to steal manioc and he killed the owner of the field, who surprised him. Before he killed the man, he said to him, 'What? Have you already forgotten who UNITA is? What we're capable of doing?' The soba responds. "If we see bandits, we'll capture them with our knives. And the government will know to arrest them." The young man laughs. "There are no patrols there. The police only stay on the roads to check the people who pass by. The war may be over, but the bandits are still there. And there are no schools or hospitals. We're going to fall behind in our studies. We'll become stupid. Lots of young people want to stay and some parents want to stay, too. If we go back, we'll regret it. We don't know if the government will let us stay. We don't have that information."

LUARI

The Luari camp, the oldest in the region, opened in 1997. Most of the houses are now made of brick. According to MSF estimates, the camp includes 6,000 inhabitants, most of whom come from Muconda province. It is located 11 km from Saurimo.

Deputy director of the camp.

The interview was conducted in Kioko, thanks to interpretation by the MSF hospital guard.

"We arrived here from Chiguenba, Muconda province in 1998. We fled after an attack in broad daylight. That wasn't the first time UNITA attacked us. We took refuge in the bush and they came back again and again. The last time was the worst. The village was burned and many people died or were captured. We walked for two days--105 km--before arriving here. The government assigned us to this camp and until 2000 the WFP was giving us food. Since we heard about the peace, we've had our doubts. In 1992, there were peace accords and the war started again. So what will prevent it from starting again this time? The people are going back but they're suspicious. There are even some who don't want to go back. Weapons are still circulating in Chinege. We have nothing to take back with us. There's no protection on the road. We need transportation, food and infrastructure to return. There are people who've already gone back in private cars because they're not getting any more food from the WFP and they're suffering terribly. The car is very expensive. It costs 600-800 kwanza (US$15-20). I have a sister who was captured by UNITA. If she returns with two or three children, they will be my nephews. Her husband will be my brother-in-law. The people of UNITA are our brothers. The war is over."

Soba of Chiluage commune, Muconda province.

He arrived by bicycle a few days ago from the displaced persons camps in Congo. He was there with the people from his commune. He came to Luari to find other displaced people from Chiluage. The interview was conducted in Kioko, thanks to interpretation by the MSF hospital guard

"My town is 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from the Kasai River on the border with Congo. Nobody from the township office was taken away during the attacks. Some people fled for Congo while others came here, crossing wooden and rope bridges. The first ones arrived in 1998. I took refuge in Congo. There were more than 2,000 people from my commune there. When I learned other people from the village were here—398 in total—I came to find them. I passed through Luau and Moxico by bicycle. We want to go home. The war made us flee, but if the war is over, why should we stay here? We are not from here. We want to return to our land. We are waiting for government orders to do that. The administrators said that the ones who left may be gone, but those who are still here have to wait for the government to organize transportation to take them back. The problem is that the bridges are destroyed. We have two big rivers to cross—the Luembe and the Luia. When the government fixes the bridges, we will be able to go back by car. We'll need pots, medicine, food and schools for the children but we don't know if the government is going to help us. We also aren't sure whether this is really the end of the war. If it starts up again, this time we will take refuge in Congo. People have things there; they have radios and bicycles. This is already the fourth time we've fled. But with or without doubts, we're going back home. When the other displaced persons in

Congo find out that we've already gone back, they're going to come back, too. We'll all be together there, the people who were captured, too. We're family. The others, that's all war business. No one knows anything about war; we don't know whom they're going to take. Maybe they'll take my son, maybe yours. The people who knew about the war, they were the guerrillas. We are a family. Now that's all finished. We're brothers. We're all Angolans."

The Soba and several people who joined us continued to speak in Kioko. No one interpreted for me, but the local MSF staff translated this passage from the recording: "Unita punished us harshly. And now they're getting major support from the government. And us, the poor people, we're still suffering."