

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Angola Monthly Briefing November 2024

Angola Summary 26 November 2024

President João Lourenço (2017-present) dismisses interior minister Eugénio César Laborinho and other high-ranking officials, highlighting ongoing government efforts to address allegations of corruption and abuse of office, while consolidating power through key political appointments. The United Kingdom (UK) government imposes sanctions on Isabel dos Santos and Swiss prosecutors accuse global commodities trader Trafigura of channelling bribes to an Angolan official through a network of former employees. These efforts mark a decisive effort to combat global corruption and restrict the financial influence of individuals and corporations accused of exploiting Angola's resources for personal gain. The 23 November protests in Luanda, organised by opposition parties and civil society, reflect deepening public dissatisfaction with socio-economic hardships and perceived inequality under Lourenço's government.

Lourenço dismisses interior minister and restructures security leadership

President **João Lourenço** (2017-present) dismissed **Eugénio César Laborinho** from his position as interior minister on 31 October, alongside secretary of state for the interior **José Paulino Cunha da Silva** and secretary of state for technical assurance, **Carlos Armando Albino** were also dismissed.¹ While justification for Laborinho's dismissal has been linked to his handling of the ongoing issue of fuel smuggling to the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, his tenure was marred by controversies including alleged connections to drug trafficking and criticism over his handling of police brutality.² It is likely that Laborinho's presidential ambitions for the 2027 elections also played a role in his removal from office.³

Lourenço appointed **Manuel Homem** and Laborinho's replacement. Homen is a close ally of the president, a former **Luanda** governor, and former information and communication technologies minister.⁴ **Arnaldo Manuel Carlos** assumed the role secretary of state for the interior and **Cristino Mário Ndeitunga** took over as secretary of state for technical assurance. Other key appointments announced on 31 October included **Francisco Monteiro Ribas da Silva**'s promotion to Commander General of the national police, **Luís Nunes** as the Luanda governor, and **Manuel Nunes Júnior** as the **Benguela** governor.⁵

The dismissal of Laborinho and his associates comes amidst accusations and controversies including those of police brutality. In 2020 Laborinho justified intimidation and violence by police against protesters by stating "the police are not here to distribute chocolates and sweets."⁶ Angolan activist and whistleblower **Gelson Emanuel Quintas** (popularly known as **Man Genas**) implicated Laborinho in his 2023 accusations that senior figures in the national police and **Serviço de Investigação Criminal (SIC)** (criminal investigative services) were allegedly involved in drug trafficking.⁷ In his **State of the Nation** speech on 15 October, Lourenço accused politicians and parliamentarians of being linked to crimes of fuel smuggling and vandalism of public property.⁸ Although evidence

¹ [Jornal o Guardião](#), 31 Oct 2024

² [RTP Noticias](#), 31 Oct 2024

³ [Africa Intelligence](#), 18 Nov 2024

⁴ [Prensa Latina](#), 8 Nov 2024

⁵ [Prensa Latina](#), 8 Nov 2024

⁶ [Amnesty International](#), 9 Oct 2020

⁷ [Observador](#), 31 Oct 2024

⁸ [RTP Noticias](#), 31 Oct 2024

supporting Laborinho's involvement in these claims are not proven, they have provided a pretext for Lourenço's reshuffling.

Laborinho's removal could also be tied to longstanding tensions between the interior ministry and the **Serviço de Inteligência e Segurança de Estado (SINSE)** (state intelligence and security services), particularly over control of migration and border security functions.⁹ On 25 October Lourenço announced changes in the senior positions of the SIC and the **Serviço de Migração e Estrangeiros (SME)** (migration and foreigners service).¹⁰ **João António da Costa Dias** was removed as SME general director and **José Coimbra Baptista Júnior** was dismissed as deputy head of the state information and security service. **António Paulo Bendje** was relieved of his duties as SIC general director and **Fernando Manuel Bambi Receado** left his post as SIC deputy director. Additionally, **Luciano Tânio Jorge Custódio Mateus da Silva** was dismissed from his position as director of the **Corpo Especial de Segurança para Minerais Estratégicos (CESME)** (special security corps for strategic minerals).¹¹ The president announced the appointments of **Luciano Tânio Jorge Custódio Mateus da Silva** as the new SIC general director and **José Coimbra Baptista Júnior** as SME general director.¹²

Although these changes can be explained as government attempts to strengthen institutional efficiency in addressing critical crime and border control issues, they also signify a broader consolidation of power by Lourenço. In addition to leadership changes, the government also introduced institutional reforms through which the general command of national police has been granted financial autonomy, significantly increasing its budget and separating it from the interior ministry.¹³ This increased focus on internal security reflects Lourenço's efforts to address challenges of smuggling, vandalism, and corruption but raises questions over the potential securitisation of the country while the national police continue to face allegations of corruption and misconduct.

UK sanctions Isabel dos Santos amid crackdown on global corruption

United Kingdom (UK) foreign secretary **David Lammy** announced on 21 November that the British government had imposed sanctions on Angolan billionaire **Isabel dos Santos** alongside her associate **Paula Oliveira** and former **Sonangol** financial director **Sarju Raikundalia**.¹⁴ Isabel dos Santos is the daughter of former president **José Eduardo dos Santos** (29179-2017). These sanctions, which include asset freezes and travel bans, aim to restrict the financial and political influence of individuals accused of exploiting public resources for personal gain.

On 30 September, Isabel dos Santos lost an appeal to lift a £580m (\$778m) asset freeze linked to a legal dispute with Angolan telecom company **Unitel** over allegations of misappropriating funds (*see ARC Briefing Angola Oct 2024*). The UK government's intensification of action against Isabel dos Santos underscores the new UK **Labour** government's commitment to addressing their key election promise of combatting "dirty money"¹⁵ and complements the broader anti-corruption initiative led by the **International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC)**.¹⁶ The effect of these sanctions extend beyond Isabel dos Santos and her circle and send a strong message to global corporations involved in Angola's resource sectors about being complicit in corrupt activities.

Isabel dos Santos is a polarising figure in Angola. She was Africa's first female billionaire due to her leadership of state-owned enterprises such as Sonangol and **Unitel** during her father's rule. However, the UK government accused dos Santos of misappropriating over £350m (\$444.64m) from Angolan state enterprises for personal gain which deprived the nation of critical development resources. Isabel

⁹ [Radio Angola](#), 1 Nov 2024

¹⁰ [Prensa Latina](#), 8 Nov 2024

¹¹ [Jornal o Guardião](#), 28 Oct 2024

¹² [Radio Nacional de Angola](#), 25 Oct 2024

¹³ [Expansão](#), 19 Nov 2024

¹⁴ [Jornal o Guardião](#), 21 Nov 2024

¹⁵ [Reuters](#), 21 Nov 2024

¹⁶ [Jornal o Guardião](#), 21 Nov 2024

dos Santos has dismissed the “*incorrect and unjustified*” sanctions as politically motivated and accused the Angolan government of fabricating evidence and mounting a vendetta against her family:

“No court has found me guilty of corruption or bribery. This is yet another step in Angola’s politically motivated campaign of persecution against me and my family.”¹⁷

She has expressed intentions to appeal the sanction decision and emphasised that she has not been given an opportunity to defend herself in court.¹⁸

The sanctions on Isabel dos Santos also highlight the complexity of global corruption involving multinational corporations in Angola. On 18 November, a **Swiss** court accused commodity trading giant **Trafigura Beheer BV** of funnelling over \$5m in bribes to Angolan official **Paulo Gouveia Junior** (known as ‘Mr. Non-Compliant’), in exchange for lucrative government contracts between 2009 to 2011.¹⁹ The trial, which is scheduled to begin on 2 December in Switzerland’s central criminal court in **Bellinzona**, names former Trafigura CEO **Mike Wainwright** as a key participant.²⁰ If convicted, Trafigura faces a maximum fine of CHF 5m (\$5.6m) plus repayment of the illicit profit earned between 2009-2011 of \$144m.²¹ While Trafigura has denied the allegations and plans to contest them in court, the case is representative of the complicated relationship between Angola’s resource wealth and international financial misconduct.

The sanctions further come amid increasing scrutiny of Angola’s political and economic landscape. Since Lourenço’s rise to power in 2017, he has sought to distance his administration from the dos Santos era and has launched investigations into corruption and reclaiming stolen assets. However, critics argue that these measures lack transparency and could be perceived as targeting figures like Isabel dos Santos whilst overlooking other entrenched systemic corruption rooted within Angola’s political structures.²²

Angolans protest poverty and MPLA governance in largest demonstration since 2022

Approximately 4,000 Angolans participated in a protest against the country’s socio-economic conditions, the highest turn out to a demonstration reported since the disputed 2022 elections.²³ Organised by opposition **União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA)**, the protests were directed at the ruling **Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola** and Lourenço, urging them to immediately address issues of hunger and systemic poverty that impact millions of citizens. Participants marched from **Santa Ana Cemetery** to **Largo das Escolas** in Luanda and the crowd included members of civil society and other opposition groups, such as the **Frente Patriótica Unida (FPU)**. The peaceful march was closely monitored by a strong police presence and occurred without incidents.²⁴

The protests were a direct response to worsening living conditions in Angola, where according to the **World Bank**, poverty affects nearly 33% of the population.²⁵ The country has faced persistent droughts in its southern regions, exacerbating food insecurity and leaving millions struggling to survive. Despite being a resource rich country and the African continent’s second largest oil producer, there has been growing dissatisfaction among Angolans, particularly the youth, who have been hardest hit by the country’s economic challenges. In 2023, youth unemployment surpassed 58% and due to limited economic opportunities, informal work is the primary source of income of many families which contributes to their economic instability and vulnerability.²⁶ At the 23 November

¹⁷ [Jornal o Guardiao](#), 21 Nov 2024

¹⁸ [Africa News](#), 22 Nov 2024

¹⁹ [Bloomberg](#), 18 Nov 2024

²⁰ [Financial Times](#), 19 Nov 2024

²¹ [Bloomberg](#), 18 Nov 2024

²² [The Africa Report](#), 12 May 2021; [Africa News](#), 22 Nov 2024

²³ [France 24](#), 23 Nov 2024

²⁴ [Lusa](#), 23 Nov 2024

²⁵ [The World Bank](#), 11 Nov 2024

²⁶ [The World Bank](#), Apr 2024

protest, protesters carried banners stating “*Lourenço leave,*” “*People are dying of hunger,*” and “*The government is a dictatorship*”²⁷ and highlighted widespread frustration with governance under MPLA.²⁸

UNITA’s leader **Adalberto Costa Júnior** appealed to the demonstrators by calling for a “truly” democratic Angola and called on the public to play a role in changing the nation: “*It is participatory democracy that has led developed countries to become developed.*”²⁹ He criticised the recently proposed state budget for overlooking the pressing issues of unemployment, hunger, and economic exclusion.³⁰

The protests also came on the heels of Lourenço’s participation in the **G20 Summit in Brazil**, where he described hunger as “*a scourge*” of both developed and developing countries and highlighted his government’s initiatives to address food insecurity through agricultural diversification.³¹ However, Luanda-based political analyst and UNITA member of parliament (MP) **Olívio N’Kilumbu**, stated:

*“The picture painted by the President of the Republic at the G20 meeting does not reflect the reality of the country.”*³²

He claimed that the government was using poverty as a political tool to maintain power.

Despite the peaceful nature of the Luanda march, the overall climate for protests in Angola complicated. Security forces have a history of responding to demonstrations with disproportionate violence. In 2023, eight people were killed during cost-of-living protests in **Huambo Province** and there are frequent arrests and censorship.³³ New legislation such as the recently passed **Law on Crimes of Vandalism of Public Goods and Services** enforces harsh penalties of up to 25 years in prison for those involved in protests that result in property damage.

Bangula Quemba, a legal expert and professor in Luanda argued that such laws are intended to deter dissent and prevent citizens from participating in demonstrations.³⁴ As Angolan citizens draw inspiration from recent anti-government protests in **Kenya** and **Mozambique**, it is likely that Lourenço and his administration understand the potential international condemnation that has resulted from violent security reactions against demonstrators. Although this protest occurred without such clashes, the government’s overall heavy-handed approach to dissent could further motivate disillusioned youth and fuel further political unrest.

Planner

2020-2025 **(Angola) World Bank** to provide funding to increase economic diversification for five years;

2024 **(Angola)** First phase of the construction of the **Barra do Dande Ocean Terminal** to be completed;

2024 **(Angola)** Angola to create two new provinces and a further 417 municipalities during this year;

2024 **(Angola)** Angola to begin exporting green hydrogen energy to Germany;

2024 **(Angola)** Completion of Angola’s sole purpose-built gold refinery at **Viana** is expected;

5 Dec 2024 **Luanda (Angola) United States** President **Joe Biden** to visit Angola

Dec 2024 **Cabinda (Angola)** Completion of the deep-water port **Porto do Caio** is expected;

²⁷ [France 24](#), 23 Nov 2024

²⁸ [France 24](#), 23 Nov 2024

²⁹ [Observador](#), 22 Nov 2024

³⁰ [Observador](#), 22 Nov 2024

³¹ [DW](#), 22 Nov 2024

³² [DW](#), 22 Nov 2024

³³ [Freedom House](#), 2024 Angola Report

³⁴ [DW](#), 11 Sep 2024

Jan 2025 **Houston (United States) Angola** launches the next round of licensing oil and gas concessions, inviting exploration and production companies in the United States;

23-27 Jun 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** Angola to host the **United States-Africa Business Summit**;

2023-2026 **(Angola) Programa de Privatizações (PROPRIV)** (privatisation programme) extended to manage government divestment of 138 companies;

Chronology

22 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Stock Titan. United States**-headquartered **KBR** signs an agreement with Angola's **AMUFERT** to develop a new ammonia plant in **Soyo (Zaire Province)**. The contract includes technology licensing, engineering design, equipment, and catalyst solutions for a 2,300 metric tons per day facility;

19 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Lusa. Banco Nacional de Angola** (central bank) leaves the key rate at 19.5%, citing concerns over high inflation, which eased slightly to 29.2% in October;

19 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Aviation Week**. State-owned airline **TAAG** expects to begin the modernisation of its long-haul fleet in February 2025 on arrival of its first **Boeing 787-9**;

18 Nov 2024 **Windhoek (Namibia) Jornal o Guardian**. Angola and **Namibia** sign an agreement to build a dam in the **Cunene River basin**, a natural border between the countries, at a cost of \$1.51 billion;

17 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Lusa**. Health ministry reports Angola's first mpox case in Luanda;

15 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Jornal o Guardian**. Economic coordination minister **José de Lima Massano** says that Angola is developing measures to remove itself from the **Financial Action Task Force's (FATF)** 'grey list' of enhanced monitoring, ensuring that the 17 outstanding deficiencies are addressed;

9 Nov 2024 **Sochi (Russia) Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. Foreign affairs minister **Tete António**, meets with **Russian** foreign minister **Sergei Lavrov** during the **Russia-Africa Partnership Forum** in **Sochi**. Lavrov and Angola's telecommunications, information technologies and social communication minister **Mario Augusto da Silva Oliveira** also sign an agreement on cooperation in communications and information technologies.

9 Nov 2024 **Cairo (Egypt) Egypt Today**. Military production minister **Mohamed Salah Eldin Mostafa** discusses cooperation with Angola's national defence minister, **João Ernesto dos Santos**;

5 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) African Mining Market. United States (US)**-headquartered **Chevron** says that Angola's \$300m **Sanha Lean Gas Connection Project** is set to begin production in December;

5 Nov 2024 **Kinshasa (DRC) Africanews**. Local media report that **M23** rebels seized the strategic town of **Kamandi Gîte** near **Beni** as talks between DRC and **Rwanda** – mediated by **Angola** – continue;

1 Nov 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Reuters**. Angola's government anticipates a budget deficit of 1.65% of gross domestic product in 2025, slightly higher than this year's projected 1.46% deficit, based on a \$70 a barrel oil price;

30 Oct 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Aviation Week**. State-owned airline **TAAG** announces it will be transitioning commercial flights to a new \$3.8 billion airport **New Luanda International Airport (NBJ)** starting on 10 November;

29 Oct 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Finimiza. United Kingdom**-headquartered **Gemcorp** and Angola state-owned oil company **Sonangol** have announced that the **Cabinda Refinery** is set to begin production in April 2025 with initial capacity of 30,000 barrels per day;

29 Oct 2024 **Luanda (Angola) Energy Capital Power. United Kingdom**-headquartered **Sequa** has received government approval to acquire a 10% stake in Angola's Block 15/06, a 40% stake in Block 23 and a 35% stake in Block 27;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

ARC's core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for a routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistleblower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

www.africariskconsulting.com

About ARC Briefing:

ARC Briefing is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

ARC Briefing is an information service keeping you:

- Up to date with Country Chronologies of business-critical events
- In the know via Country Briefings on political, economic, business and operating trends. Written in-country, ARC experts analyse and comment
- Ahead with Country Planner which details future elections, budgets, regulatory changes etc.

www.africariskconsulting.com

Getting in touch

Please contact us by email info@africariskconsulting.com or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

Follow us on Twitter: [@ARCBriefing](https://twitter.com/ARCBriefing)

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) Pty Ltd expressly forbids the collection of information and content from ARC Briefing as data to train generative artificial intelligence models.

© Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)