

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Angola Monthly Briefing November 2025

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#### Angola Summary 25 November 2025

*The Tribunal Supremo (supreme court) delivered its verdict in one of Angola's most important corruption trials on 17 November, acquitting General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias on all charges related to the mismanagement of funds by the China International Fund (CIF), the Chinese-Angola group of companies Dias and General Leopoldino Fragoso do Nascimento managed. However, the court sentences Nascimento to five years and six months in prison. The supreme court withdraws three charges against the former chair of state-owned state owned oil company, Sonangol's board of directors, Isabel dos Santos, but she still faces various other charges including embezzlement, fraud, abuse of power, qualified tax fraud and two counts of money laundering. The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and African Union Commission (AUC), together with the government of Angola, host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit on Infrastructure Development Financing in Africa in Luanda.*

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#### Tribunal Supreme delivers verdict in key corruption trial

Angola's **Tribunal Supremo** (supreme court) delivered its [verdict](#) in one of Angola's most important corruption trials on 17 November. The court acquitted General **Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias**, also known as **Kopelipa**, on various charges, but sentenced General **Leopoldino Fragoso do Nascimento**, also known as **Dino**, to five years and six months in prison, for crimes related to the criminal mismanagement of reconstruction funds by the **China International Fund (CIF)**. Kopelipa and Dino managed the Chinese-Angolan group of companies in Angola.

Kopelipa and Dino were two of the three most powerful men in Angola under former president, **José Eduardo Dos Santos** (1979-2017). The two were put on trial for embezzlement, aggravated fraud, forgery of documents, criminal association, abuse of power, money laundering and influence peddling, in March 2025. Also on trial was the former general director of CIF Angola, **Yiu Haiming**, lawyer **Fernando Gomes dos Santos** and three companies linked to the CIF Group - **CIF Angola**, and China-headquartered companies, **Plansmart International Limited** and **Utter Right International Limited**.

Haiming was sentenced to four years and six months in prison and Gomes dos Santos to three years and six months. CIF, Plansmart and Utter Right International were sentenced to pay \$5m each. According to the prosecution, the Angolan state lost \$1 billion from Chinese [credit](#) lines through contracts and financing concluded with the CIF Group during the infrastructure reconstruction process after the civil war, which ended in 2002. The reconstruction was the whole remit of the defunct **Gabinete de Reconstrução Nacional (GRN)** (national reconstruction office), which Kopelipa managed from 2005 until its closure.

Nonetheless, on 12 October, the public prosecutor's office admitted that it was unable to sustain the charges of embezzlement, aggravated fraud, document forgery, criminal association and abuse of power against Kopelipa due to lack of evidence. Only the charge of influence peddling was retained. The court struck down this final remaining charge and Kopelipa was acquitted of all [crimes](#). The goods seized from Kopelipa will be returned to him.

However, Dino was [sentenced](#) to five years and six months in prison over his role in negotiating and managing contracts for national reconstruction linked to the CIF and state-owned oil company **Sonangol**, receiving one year in prison for forgery of documents, six months in prison for influence peddling and four years in prison for money laundering. The third member of the triumvirate, former

vice president and former president of Sonangol, **Manuel Vicente**, was not a [defendant](#) in this case but was recurrently cited in the prosecution.

Without the full verdict, it is not clear why Kopelipa was acquitted but problems with the legality of the charges appear to be a continuing issue in the attorney general's office and in the courts, compromising major corruption cases. One of the defence lawyers, **Benja Satula**, noted that the court made [procedural](#) errors in relying on preparatory witness statements made to the attorney general's office rather than the witnesses statements in court, which:

*"renders the ruling null, because the witnesses were here, they were heard, questioned, under an adversarial process, and they said what they knew and what they had seen. But the court decided to disregard what the witnesses said."*

### ... as three charges against Isabel dos Santos dropped

The supreme court officially [withdrew](#) three charges against the former chair of Sonangol's board of directors from 2016 to 2017, **Isabel dos Santos**, following a legal challenge from her lawyers. Dos Santos, the eldest daughter of former president dos Santos, had asked though her defence lawyers for a [prehearing](#), known as a contradictory instruction, to determine the validity of the remaining charges.

The supreme court heard the case on 20 November and ruled on the issues. The supreme court stated in its ruling that the case involves four defendants - dos Santos, her friend and business partner, **Paula Oliveira**, former manager **Mário Leite da Silva**, and Sonangol's former CFO, **Sarju Raikundalia**. The latter was also a partner at **PricewaterhouseCoopers Angola (PwC)**, which was indicted as a separate entity.

The court ultimately cleared all the defendants of the [offence](#) of criminal association and the offences of falsifying documents. Some charges of tax fraud were also found to be time-barred. All [charges](#) against consultancy PwC-Angola were dropped, since, at the time of the events, the Angolan colonial **1929 Code of Criminal Procedure** applied and this outdated legislation did not provide for criminal liability for legal entities.

Dos Santos was initially accused of [embezzlement](#), fraud, abuse of power, abuse of trust, document forgery, criminal association, economic participation in business, influence peddling, tax fraud, qualified tax fraud and money laundering. The charges remain substantial but have been reduced to [embezzlement](#), fraud, abuse of power, abuse of trust, economic participation in business, influence peddling, qualified tax fraud and two counts of money laundering

The court case centres around allegations that during dos Santos' [management](#) of Sonangol, she ran a parallel management scheme, signed contracts with companies linked to her, and used these for illegal payments. The [indictment](#) says dos Santos:

*"duly concerted with the defendants Mário Silva, Sarju Raikundalia and Paula Oliveira, meticulously created a plan to vigorously defraud the Angolan state, persuading the Board of Directors to take decisions that benefited them".*

The defendants are alleged to have caused the Angolan state a [loss](#) of more than \$208m involving unduly paid salaries, loss-making sales, tax fraud and fraudulent payments to companies, involving amounts of \$176m, \$44m and \$568,000.

Dos Santos made a statement saying that her defence has filed a 436 page appeal in which she demonstrates the multiple legal and factual [errors](#) of the judge's decision. She claims that the statements she gave in the initial phase of the investigation were not accepted as provided, by the judge. Dos Santos further claims that the case against her is [political](#) in nature. However, the allegations have attracted a degree of international credibility. She is subject to asset freezes in Angola and **Portugal**, and in September 2024, the **London** high court in the **United Kingdom (UK)** upheld an order freezing \$778m of dos Santos' assets as well as a worldwide [freezing](#) order awarded to Angolan

telecoms company **Unitel**. The **United States (US)** sanctioned dos Santos on 8 December 2021 “for her involvement in significant corruption by misappropriating public funds for her personal benefit” and **Interpol** issued an international [arrest](#) warrant – a red notice - for her in 2022, meaning she can be arrested in any Interpol member state.

### **African Union and Angola co-host Africa's largest infrastructure financing summit**

The **African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)**, **African Union Commission (AUC)**, and government of Angola hosted the **3<sup>rd</sup> Summit on Infrastructure Development Financing in Africa** in Luanda from 28 to 31 October. President **João Lourenço** (2017-present), who is also the current AU chairperson, sponsored the event.

Lourenço opened the summit with a speech that focused on the need for Africa to mobilise around \$170 billion to develop transport and infrastructure projects with a view to integrating African markets, [saying](#):

*“Africa must finance its own future by mobilizing our collective resources to build the roads, power grids, and digital networks that will connect our markets, energize our industries, and empower our people”,*

The summit raised a total of \$18 billion across 13 projects, out of the 30 presented during the event. The summit examined four [key](#) areas for investment:

- Transport and corridors: financing integrated cross-border railways, modernizing civil aviation under the **Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)**, and developing strategic trade corridors like the **Lobito Corridor**.
- Energy: accelerating the **African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM)** and promoting green power interconnections to ensure a sustainable energy future.
- Digital transformation: unlocking capital for broadband, data centres, and digital ID systems to bridge the digital divide.
- Water and sanitation: developing innovative financing models for resilient water infrastructure and utilities.

Angola’s Lobito Corridor is a model that has sparked new strategising. The **World Bank**’s director of strategy, **Vickram Cuttaree**, speaking at the panel on the theme ‘Regional Corridors and Africa’s Integration Agenda’, proposed that African states should [institutionalise](#) railway networks to maintain financing commitments for major structural projects and allow railway and regional connectivity projects to move forward independently of political cycles. Cuttaree said it is essential to create [robust](#) institutional mechanisms and governance structures that guarantee the continuity and coherence of public policies, since changes of government can lead to a reduction in political will and discontinuity in the execution of agreements.

Multiple agencies are financing Angola’s water and electricity infrastructure, which were also key areas in the summit’s pan-African agenda. Energy and water minister **João Baptista Borges** said at the summit that in Angola, the World Bank is financing \$3 billion in infrastructure projects in the water and electricity sectors, [including](#):

- The **Bitá** water project, worth over \$1 billion;
- The **PDISA II Project**, which is developing water sector agencies capacity, valued at \$500m, in partnership with the **French Development Agency**;
- Financing for the interconnection of the provinces of **Huíla** and **Cunene**, valued at \$700m, and connection to **Namibia**’s electricity [grid](#), which is to be developed.

Borges also highlighted at the summit that the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** has provided [funding](#) for the following:

- Financing the interconnection between **Huambo** and **Huíla**, with an investment of around \$400m;
- Various projects in the water sector, estimated at \$300m.

Borges said that Angola has started working with the World Bank's **African Finance Corporation (AFC)** on an energy production project and other projects that are of interest to the private sector.

At the end of the conference on 30 October, AU **Heads of State and Government** adopted the **Luanda Declaration**, which [calls](#) for a bold agenda for Africa's financial independence in infrastructure financing. A new continental mechanism anchored by the **Alliance of African Multilateral Financial Institutions (AAMFI)**, which includes the **African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)**, the **Trade Development Bank (TDB)**, AFC, the **Africa Reinsurance Corporation (Africa-Re)**, **African Trade & Investment Development Insurance (ATIDI)** and **Shelter Afrique Development Bank (ShafDB)**, is proposed as a pan-African financing facility.

### Planner

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

2025 **Cabinda (Angola) United Kingdom-based Gemcorp's Cabinda Refinery** to begin production;

Dec 2025 **Cabinda (Angola)** Start of operations at deep-water port **Porto do Caio** is expected;

Jan 2026 **(Angola)** Indicative start date for implementation of Angola's accession to the **SADC Free Trade Area (FTA)**;

2026 **Luanda (Angola)** Privatisation of telecommunications company **UNITEL** and sale of government stakes in **Standard Bank Ltd** expected to take place;

2026 **(Angola)** Government to introduce **World Health Organisation** approved malaria vaccination and anti-malaria education programme;

2026 **Moxico (Angola) Luau Hybrid Photovoltaic Plant** in Moxico, and associated distribution and electrification network, comes on line;

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

### Chronology

23 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola) Jornal de Angola**. **European Council** president **António Costa** and **Spain's** prime minister **Pedro Sánchez** arrive in Luanda to attend the seventh **African Union (AU) European Union (EU) Summit**, marking 25 years of AU-EU partnership and Angola's 50th independence anniversary;

20 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola) Jornal de Angola**. President **João Lourenço** returns to Angola after participating in the **G20 Summit** in **South Africa**, which he attended in his capacity as chairperson of the **African Union (AU)**;

17 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola) Expansao**. **Administração Geral Tributária (AGT)** (general tax administration) is reportedly carrying out inspections and tax raids on companies whose tax affairs are up to date, demanding payment of hundreds of millions of kwanzas in taxes, fines and interest due to a lack of competence, and contributing to Angola's poor business environment;

12 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola) Angola Press Agency**. Secretary of state for mineral resources, **Jânio Victor**, says the government is to implement traceability of domestic diamonds, from extraction to the end consumer, in line with the **Kimberley Process**;

11 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola) Radio France International**. Angola marks 50 years of independence from Portugal;

10 Nov 2025 **Abuja (Nigeria) Angola Press Agency**. Angola and **Nigeria** express readiness to strengthen bilateral relations and leadership in regional multilateral cooperation;

6 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. President **João Lourenço** appoints four new judges - **Evaristo José Solano, João Carlos de Castro Paiva, Carlos Luís Miguel António** and **Fernando de Almeida Gomes** - to the **Tribunal Das Contas** (audit court), which audits expenditure in government contracts;

6 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Health minister **Sílvia Lutucuta** announces Angola will introduce malaria vaccination for children, using **World Health Organization (WHO)** approved vaccines;

6 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. President **João Lourenço** appoints **Norberto Sodrê João** as the new **Tribunal Supremo** (supreme court) chief justice, replacing **Joel Leonardo**, who resigned last August;

5 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *African Arguments*. A **National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project (NGOWP)** study demonstrates through satellite data and fieldwork that Angola's southern provinces of **Cuando, Cubango** and **Moxico** (Leste and Oeste) are the dominant source for the **Zambezi River**, one of the principal sources of water for southern Africa;

4 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Angola begins identification of training needs to implement the **Southern African Development Community Free Trade Area (SDAC FTA)** electronic customs certificate of origin (e-CoO) in preparation for Angola's implementation of membership of the SADC FTA provisions of the SADC **Protocol on Trade**;

4 Nov 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Economic coordination minister, **José de Lima Massano**, says the Angolan fishing and aquaculture sector is expected to double its contribution to the national economy in the next five years, representing 4.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);

30 Oct 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Committee to Protect Journalists*. The **Committee to Protect Journalists** and 37 other media and human rights groups urge the telecommunications, information technologies, and media ministry, to amend the draft law on **Dissemination of False Information on the Internet**, to ensure it aligns with Angola's constitutional protections for freedom of expression and with international human rights treaties, saying the draft law will be a potential weapon against the press if enacted in its current form;

23 Oct 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Water and energy minister, **João Baptista Borges**, says that acts of vandalism and theft of equipment and components of the electrical and water system in Angola cause losses valued at more than \$50m per year, which prevent that funding being spent on expansion of those systems;

22 Oct 2025 **Malange (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Floods destroy least 209 houses across **Malange Province**, displacing about 1,500 people, as a result of heavy rains from 16 to 20 October;

22 Oct 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Government aims to train more than three million people by 2037 under the **Human Capital Development Plan (ACH 23-37)**, an instrument that aims to strengthen education, vocational training, and technical qualification systems, by training in professional training techniques, entrepreneurship skills, and training a further 400,000 teachers;

22 Oct 2025 **Luanda (Angola)** *Angola Press Agency*. Secretary of state for mineral resources, **Jânio Victor**, announces that the **Agencia Nacional dos Recursos Minerais de Angola (ANRM)** (national agency for mineral resources) is again implementing administrative and legal measures to reclaim inoperative and illegal mining concessions.

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