

Human Security and Separatist Movement in Angola: A Study of Cabinda Enclave

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the violations of human security that led to the formations of separatist movement in Cabinda enclave, the region of Angola. is one of the world's longest but least reported conflicts in an oil-rich enclave separated from the rest of the Angola by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Cabindans have been subjected to guerilla warfare for more than four decades, about 30,000 people lost their lives, separatist movement called, Front liberation for the enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) first fought for independence from Portugal. Prior to Angola's independence in 1975, the territory was controlled by Portugal as a separate colony and was physically distinct from the rest of the Angola. At independence; Portugal merges Cabinda with Angola without consulting the people of Cabinda enclave. Many within Cabinda claim that they have a history, identity and culture that are distinct from Angola and should therefore be granted independence. The findings revealed that the Angolan government is unwilling to allow Cabinda to secede from the rest of Angola, mainly due to Cabinda's oil wealth; Angolan Government is still violating human security in the region. This study also recommended that the Angolan government should adopt federal system of government by granting autonomy to Cabinda Province, to address minority versus majority conflict.*

Keywords: Human Security, Separatist Movement, Angola, Cabinda, Enclave.

Introduction

One of the major challenges facing Angola is the violations of human security that led to the formations of separatist movement in the Cabinda enclave the region of Angola, the separatist fought for autonomy or independence from Angola since 1975 to present which serve as a threat to Angola national security. A small section of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) divides the province of Cabinda from the rest of Angola (Currey, 2001). The fact that Angola is a country that practices a unitary system of government (Williams, 2010).The Cabinda enclave is estimated to have 825,000-person populations (Amundsen, 2021). As stated by (Currey, 2001). The People have experienced war for more than 40 years; since 1963, initially, the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) fought for independence from Portuguese authority, but after Angola gained independence on November 11, 1975 (Currey, 2001). According to (Brock, 2005) Its merge Cabinda into its territory despite resistance from Cabindans separatist fighters Cabindans continued their separatist war, at Angolan post-independence, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) appointed its leader, Agostinho Neto, as president of Angola. The rival liberation movement, (UNITA - National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), never recognized the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) rule, and the two parties remained at war for the following twenty-seven years (Currey, 2001).

After the independence of Angola, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), supported by former Zairean ruler Mobutu Sese Seko (now the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC), made an attempt to seize control of Cabinda. But the government of Angola, led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), with military assistance from Cuba, they were able to take over much of Cabinda, including the offshore oilfields. From the time of independence until late 2002, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) fought a low-intensity guerrilla warfare. The FLEC never possessed the personnel or equipment of a conventional army. Additionally, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) occasionally assaulted the province's, government troops stationed there, as well as various economic objectives, including kidnapping foreign workers that are working in oil companies, timber, gold mining, and construction industries (BBC, 2001).

Conceptual Clarification of Terms

The Concept of human security can be traced back to the 1994 publication of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP 1994). The Report defined human security as encompassing seven areas: Economic security is defined as an assured basic income for individuals, typically derived from productive and remunerative work or, as a last resort, from some publicly financed safety net. Food security refers to ensuring that all people have physical and economic access to basic foods at all times. Health security entails ensuring a minimum level of protection against diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. Environmental security is the protection of people from the short- and long-term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and

environmental degradation. Personal security—protecting people from physical violence, whether perpetrated by the state or by other states, as well as from violent individuals and sub-state factors, domestic abuse, and predatory adults. Protecting people from the loss of traditional relationships and values, as well as sectarian and ethnic violence, is what community security is all about. Political security entails ensuring that people live in a society that respects their basic human rights and protecting individuals and groups from government attempts to control ideas and information.

Human Security is defined as follows by the (Commission on Human Security, 2003): Human Security aims to safeguard the vital core of all human lives in ways that promote human freedom and fulfillment. Human security entails safeguarding fundamental liberties that are essential to life. It entails safeguarding people against critical, widespread, and pervasive threats and situations. It entails utilizing processes that capitalize on people's strengths and aspirations. It entails establishing political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that provide people with the foundations for survival, livelihood, and dignity.

The Concept of Separatism as a Concept According to the Cambridge Dictionary (1990). Separatism is defined as "the demand by a specific group or area for separation from the territorial and political sovereignty of the state of which they are a part." It is linked to claims for the right to self-determination and is frequently associated with discrimination against minorities (Cambridge Encyclopedia, 1990). The concept of a separatist movement is highly debated; scholars continue to disagree on what constitutes a separatist movement (Aleksandar, 2015). Because the concept of separatist movement appears to be contested, we begin by expanding Wood's (1981) original definition as follows: separatist movement is a political program based on the demand for a formal withdrawal of a bounded territory from an internationally recognized state with the goal of establishing a new state on that territory that is expected to gain formal recognition by other States and the United Nations.

The Concept of Enclave according to Robinson (1959, 283), an enclave is "a part of a country's territory entirely surrounded by the territory of another country." Raton (1958) defines an enclave as a portion of a state's territory that is completely embedded within the territory of another state. Enclave, on the other hand, refers to a portion of a foreign territory that is embedded within a state's own territory (Katarina, 2012).

Colonial Amalgamation of 1975 and Separatist Movement in post-colonial Angola

The Cabinda province is a geographically isolated territory north of Angola, separated from the mainland by a strip of land that forms part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's northwestern border. The ongoing tensions between Cabinda and Luanda have their roots in Angola's colonial history. The Cabinda people's concerns are based on the assertion that the Angolan mainland and the enclave have somewhat different identities and historical experiences. While Angola was a Portuguese colony for four centuries, the Cabinda province was a protectorate that achieved quasi-independence in 1956. (Ojakorotu, 2011) The reason for the long-standing tensions is that the Cabinda province was eventually absorbed into Angola without consulting the people of the enclaves (Minorities at Risk Project, 2010).

Meanwhile, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union, designated Angola as the thirty-fifth state to be decolonized and Cabinda as the thirty-ninth, recognizing a clear distinction between the two. Portugal drafted a new constitution in 1971 that preserved the distinction between Angola and Cabinda (Brock, 2005). Cabinda's colonial trajectory changed in 1956, when the conservative government of Portugal ceased to be the region's protector, strategically handing over the territory to Angola's administration without prior negotiations with Cabinda's political leadership (Ojakorotu, 2011). Because the Angolan Liberation Movement was invited to the southern Portuguese town of Alvor in 1975 to negotiate independence. However, there were no representatives of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) present, and Cabinda, an ally in the fight for freedom, was offered up as a spoil of war (Brock, 2005).

Thus, the history and primary motivation of Cabinda's reactive militant groups stem from Luanda's quasi-annexation of the province and the desire for autonomy (Voice of Africa, 2010). These organizations included the Freedom Movement for the State of Cabinda (MLEC) in 1960, the Cabindan National Action Committee (CAUNC), and the Mayombé Alliance, also known as ALLIAMA (Voice of Africa, 2010). These three organizations merged in 1963 to form the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), which has since been at the forefront of diplomatic negotiations and militant actions aimed at achieving Cabinda's independence and self-determination. The armed invasion of Cabinda by forces of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) on 11 November 1975 marked the beginning of a long period of intermittent conflict and diplomatic tensions, which remain largely unresolved to this day. From a historical standpoint, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) militancy is rooted in the exclusionary nature of the pre-independence negotiations between Angola and the Portuguese administration (Wells, 2003). In terms of military advances, territory, or diplomacy, the Cabinda separatist movement and armed guerrillas have never achieved notable success. In addition to heavy suppression by an illiberal central government that saw the separatist movement as an existential threat and acted accordingly, the Cabindan independence movement has been weakened by repeated, irregular fragmentation. There are currently at least four factions (Amundsen, 2021).

The Front for the Liberation of Cabinda (Front for the Liberation of Cabinda Enclave (FLEC), but they have now substituted "enclave") is the most active faction on the international scene. This faction, which was founded in the Netherlands in 1996, is a "radical" faction that seeks complete independence. It is a small group of activists, mostly students and Cabinda exiles spread across Europe. They have a 'official website,' which is simply a blog, as well as a Facebook page. They claim to have a government in exile led by President António Lus Lopes, as well as "a Vice-President, a Secretary-General, a Spokesperson, and Representatives in a number of European countries," but no other government or international organization recognizes this 'government.' It is more of a fantasy than a reality (Amundsen, 2021).



Map of Angola Showing location of Cabinda Enclave

(Amundsen, 2021)

Discovery of Crude Oil Triggered Separatist Movement, and Violence against Human Security in Cabinda Region.

Angola is a littoral country in the Gulf of Guinea. The country domain is endowed with a vast wealth of mineral resources such as crude oil, timber, hydrocarbon deposits, and diverse marine and fisheries resources (Ifesinachi; Yarwood; Pigeon; Amling; Ridgway, and Adewu, 2020). The Cabinda enclave contains approximately 60% of Angola's crude oil (TRT WORLD, 2019).

The Angolan civil war and secessionist conflict, in which the role of oil is clear: Cabinda is Angola's most oil-rich province, accounting for 60 to 70% of total current output and nearly all of the country's foreign-exchange oil earnings. While Cabinda's primary concern is the need for access to oil resources, the conflict has been largely motivated by economic nationalism. Through the formation of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), the leading militant group engaged in a secessionist battle with Angola, and the militants in Cabinda, the central government and the international community have responded. The ultimate goal of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) is to gain political autonomy, secession, and access to the province's indigenous oil resources for management and exploitation (Ojatorotu, 2011).

Although the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda's (FLEC) call for secession is based on a history of political exclusion and disenfranchisement, as well as the resulting desire among Cabinda's inhabitants for regional autonomy and self-determination, there are predominant economic motivators that have also propelled the group's militancy. Essentially, Cabinda's people have been strategically denied access to vital oil resources that are indigenous to the province. Following the discovery of oil in Cabinda in 1956 and the start of exploration by the Gulf Oil Company in 1966, the province's geostrategic and financial importance became a deciding factor in negotiations between Portugal and Angola (Ojatorotu, 2011).

Cabinda province is endowed with a variety of valuable natural resources, including coffee, timber, palm oil, and rubber, in addition to abundant and economically strategic oil resources (Corporate Information Center of the National Council of Churches, 1972).The

desire to control these resources is another reason why the central Angolan government rejects all demands for Cabinda independence or self-determination. Cabinda's oil fields now account for a sizable portion of Angola's total oil output. The Angolan government is especially reliant on Cabinda's offshore crude oil, which accounts for approximately 86% of the country's earnings (Global witness, 2003). Furthermore, Cabinda's offshore fields account for up to 60% of Angola's oil exports, a significant portion of Luanda's annual revenue stream that the state cannot allow, despite opposition from the region's people (Ojakorotu, 2011).

Essentially, the long-running conflict between Cabinda and Angola is motivated by the need for much-needed economic gain from valuable oil reserves, as well as access to the socio-economic benefits that can potentially be derived from oil reserves in which the province fundamentally declares ownership. Furthermore, the province remains marginalized by the central Angolan government, and the people of Cabinda do not reap the full benefits of their territory's oil wealth. As a result, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) militancy is motivated by demands for management and access to Cabinda's indigenous oil resources, as well as political autonomy from Luanda and eventual secession from Angola (Ojakorotu, 2011).

With the Cabindan oil fields accounting for a sizable portion of Angola's oil exports, granting autonomy to the province would result in a decrease in national revenue. Alternatively, in Cabinda, the province's inhabitants' multifaceted concerns - including legal-historical claims, universal rights to self-determination, and perceived denial of economic benefits from being a valuable resource-rich region, among other central contentions - have provided impetus for separatists to adopt a 'by any means necessary' line of attack, including voicing their concerns through the actions of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave. The Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), which has splintered into several rival factions over the last 20 years, has primarily used hostage-taking and kidnapping activities to achieve its political goals. A closer examination of their violent activities reveals that the movement initially sought to use violence, primarily in the form of kidnappings and hostage-takings, for both economic (the need to generate revenue) and political purposes (the need to raise awareness and draw international support for their broader independence cause). This was accomplished primarily through the execution of attacks that included the kidnapping of workers from multinational energy, construction, and timber corporations operating in the region (Ojakorotu, 2011).

For example, in 1992, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) launched a violent attack on Chevron oil workers in transit, sparking a brief offensive by government forces against the separatists (Bureau Diplomatic Security Division, 1992). Although the separatists' first attempt failed, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) and its factions continued to use such tactics. More successful attempts followed in the late 1990s, but economic motivations eventually trumped political goals. Workers from a Cabinda-based construction company were kidnapped in 1997 by an extremist faction of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda - Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC). They released the hostages after receiving a \$400,000 ransom payment from the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (Armed Forces of Cabinda) (FLEC-FAC, 1990). Another hostage-taking incident in 1998 netted around \$500,000 in ransom fees. While economically motivated attacks continued, the group used ransom money to fund politically motivated attacks, such as the kidnapping of four workers from Portuguese and French firms in 1999. They hoped to gain international attention for the separatist cause by doing so (Ojakorotu, 2011).

When it kidnapped three Portuguese nationals in Angola in 2000, the group sought international attention. Instead of a ransom, the group put pressure on the Portuguese government to formally acknowledge the Cabinda problem (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2001). A year later, in March 2001, another faction, FLEC-Renovada, kidnapped five Portuguese construction workers (European Parliament, 2001). Despite the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda's (FLEC) efforts to garner broader attention and communicate their political grievances, such attacks, while garnering some international attention, did little to advance the Cabinda cause. For example, in March 2001, the European Parliament issued a joint motion for a resolution condemning the Cabinda hostage-taking as a political tactic (European Parliament, 2001).

The tactical engagements of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) have not involved the kidnapping of government security personnel; instead, the group has typically taken hostages from oil companies and other non-combatant targets. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), inciting the use of hostage-taking methods is also a form of human rights abuse (De Oliveira, 2006). Furthermore, in this context, the use of kidnapping and hostage-taking by the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) has evolved into a critical means of raising funds to launch further attacks aimed at persuading the government to comply with their demands (MacIntre, 2006). In the southern parts of Cabinda province, some new onshore oil wells began production in 2013 and 2014. (Wood, 2020). Investments in Cabinda's new onshore oil fields are viewed as risky, however, due to falling oil prices and Cabindan separatists' stated that they will oppose any new onshore oil installations in the region (Amundsen, 2021).

Government Responses and the Violations of Human Security in Cabinda Region of Angola

According to Gomes (2003), the fighting escalated in early 1993 when the government of Angola deployed some 15,000 troops to Cabinda. In 1997-98, villages that were suspected of supporting the separatists were targeted, causing large-scale displacement of the civilian populations. Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave FLEC-Renovada and Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda - Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC) also increased their attacks against the Armed forces of Angola (FAA). In September 1998, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Torture reported that government forces and the paramilitary group of the Polícia da Intervenção Rápida (PIR - Rapid Intervention Police) committed widespread acts of torture and ill-treatment against persons from whom the government soldiers were trying to obtain information, from civilians in reprisal for armed attacks by separatist groups and those suspected of supporting Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) as well as political opponents (United Nations, 1999).

Following the end of the armed conflict between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the contiguous part of Angola in 2002, the fighting and violations against the civilian population shifted to Cabinda (LPP, 2002). The Armed forces of Angola (FAA) redeployed some 30,000 soldiers to Cabinda in an attempt to defeat the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave FLEC militarily. These troops include an unknown number of Special Forces called commandos caçadores or infantry commandos. Reports compiled by Cabindan human rights activists in 2002 and 2003 alleged that the Armed forces of Angola (FAA) committed widespread violations against captured combatants and the civilians, including the summary execution of suspected members of Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) combatants or supporters; rape and forced marriage of women and girls; arbitrary detention; torture and mistreatment; forced labour; and excessive restrictions on civilian access to agricultural areas, rivers and hunting grounds (Human Right Watch, 2003).

A large number of these violations reportedly took place from October 2002 to mid-2003. The reports attributed a small number of abuses, including hostage-taking and summary executions of suspected government collaborators, by the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) forces. From mid-2003, there has been a decline in the number of violations committed by the Armed forces of Angola (FAA) as the consequences of a reduced level of conflict in the province following the Armed forces of Angola (FAA) destruction of Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) principal bases, including those in the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) combatants also emerged from the forest to claim the demobilization benefits offered by the government; Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) sympathizers, as well as its opponents, acknowledge that the movement has been reduced to small roving bands of guerrillas with light arms, and no permanent logistical bases. The Armed forces of Angola (FAA) regional commander in Cabinda estimated that there are only about seventy to eighty Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC) fighters remaining in Maoimbe forest (Human Right Watch, 2003).

The Maoimbe is a dense forest that limits military operations by the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) against the remaining Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) forces. The regional commander of the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) and others stated that there had been no Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) attacks since early 2004. (Human Right Watch, 2003). Despite the apparent end of major military operations by both sides, Angola's Armed Forces (FAA) have not reduced their 30,000 military forces deployed across Cabinda. The regional commander of the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) told Human Rights Watch that a large number of troops were "needed to defend the enclave from external aggression" and expressed concern about the volatile situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Human Rights Watch 2003).

Various attempts have been made over the years by the Angolan government and the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) to reach a political settlement in Cabinda. All of them have failed. At the same time that the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) increased military operations in Cabinda, the government hinted that a negotiated solution for the province might be considered. President dos Santos described the government's Cabinda strategy as "multi-disciplinary," emphasizing dialogue "with the people and personnel in the region to give better attention to economic and social issues." In January 2003, government representatives met with Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda - Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC) officials in France, and later that year with FLEC-Renovada in Gabon. These overtures, which came in the midst of increased Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) activity in Cabinda, failed to persuade separatists of the government's sincerity (Gomes, 2003).

The Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) factions were also hesitant to lay down their arms until they knew how much autonomy the government was willing to grant the region. The provincial governor, Anbal Rocha, stated in August 2003 that efforts were being made for dialogue on Cabinda's future to begin "as soon as possible," and the majority of these efforts have been behind the scenes (BBC 2004). The leaders of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda - Armed Forces of Cabinda (FLEC-FAC) and the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda, FLEC-

Renovada, announced in September 2004 that their two factions would merge and agreed to form a committee "responsible for dialogue," with representation from "liberation movements, churches, and civil society" (Batila 2004).

The most common abuse committed by the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) is the continued denial of freedom of movement to civilians in rural areas, resulting in their inability to cultivate crops in agricultural areas. Furthermore, the Armed Forces of Angola (FAA) continue to prohibit civilians from going into the forest to hunt or fish in many rural areas, and hunting rifles have been confiscated. According to international human rights law, everyone has the right to freedom of movement. This right may be limited for national security reasons, such as denying access to a military security zone, but only to the extent necessary (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1993). The Human Rights Committee stated in its General Comment that restrictive measures on freedom of movement must be appropriate to achieve their protective function, be the least intrusive instrument among those that may achieve the desired result, and be proportionate to the interest to be protected. Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, which is considered to be reflective of customary humanitarian law, expressly prohibits civilian starvation as a method of combat. It also forbids acts that would destroy or render useless objects necessary for civilian survival, such as agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, and livestock (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1993).

Oil production has a negative impact on the entire sea space surrounding Cabinda province. There is little physical space for fishing, and oil production makes it even more difficult. The fishermen complain that the Cabinda Bay no longer produces fish. Whereas a nightly trip using about 500m of nets would have filled a fishing boat in the 1950s to the 1990s, now trips of up to five nights' duration and much more netting are required to fill the same boat (European Parliament, 2011). The fishermen blame the lack of fish near Cabinda on oil production. One of the main reasons, they say, is the destruction of underwater habitats and spawning grounds. They claim that the use of dispersants, which cause (spilled) oil that floats on the sea's surface to sink to the seafloor, destroys these underwater reefs and rock structures, which are necessary for fish breeding (European Parliament, 2011).

Cabinda has traditionally provided at least half of Angola's oil revenues and is supposed to receive a bonus payment from the central government in recognition of its contribution to the national economy, but Cabindans have always complained that the oil production provides few tangible benefits. Even when history and geography are at the forefront of the 'official' dialogue, economic grievances are at the heart of the secession drive. The petroleum industry provides few job opportunities for Cabindans, and no significant efforts have been made to develop secondary industries in Cabinda based on oil extraction. Furthermore, vehicle fuel must be imported from Luanda, and the cost of living in Cabinda is among the highest in Angola. In addition, rural children in Cabinda and Lunda Norte are the most likely to be absent from school (World Bank, 2020).

According to Human Rights Watch (2020b), plainclothes police officers arbitrarily arrested the President and Vice President of the separatist group Union for the Independence of Cabinda after they displayed the organization's leaflets in the streets of Cabinda. Despite calls for their release, the two men were still detained at Cabinda Province Civil Prison in inhumane conditions as of early December (Human Rights Watch, 2020b). On the 136th anniversary of the Simulambuco agreement (between Portugal and the kings of Cabinda, which separatists regard as proof that the enclave is separate), on 1 February 2021, Angolan police arrested a group of young people who planned to protest outside the Portuguese Embassy in Luanda, Angola's state capital; they were released a few hours later (Novo, 2021; Deutsche, 2021).

The violent crackdown on protests in 2019 and 2020, as well as the arrests made in Luanda, Angola's state capital, in February 2021, indicate that, in contrast to other parts of Angola, where there has been some progress in the right to protest and freedom of expression, the situation in Cabinda remains tense, with irregular protests and arrests. According to Human Rights Watch's (2021a) summary of the human rights situation in Angola for 2020, the country has made some progress in terms of respecting the rights to free expression and peaceful assembly. This progress, however, did not extend to Cabinda, an oil-rich enclave where the crackdown on peaceful protesters and activists has continued (Human Rights Watch, 2021a).



Figure 2: Fishing net destroyed by an oil spill in Cabinda bay
Source: European parliament 2011

Conclusion

In the broader political-economic context of Angola's oil production, the Cabinda region's instability poses potential threats to Luanda's isolated oil resources. Despite the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave's use of militancy, the long-standing impasses between Cabinda and the central government are rooted in fundamental historical, socio-cultural, and economic issues that cannot be ignored (FLEC). While historical and territorial arguments remain important in Cabinda's argument, the most pressing concerns from both perspectives are undeniably economic. Cabinda's on- and offshore oil deposits account for a significant portion of Angola's annual oil revenue, which the government cannot afford to lose, even though the benefits of this growing wealth are not visible to Cabinda's residents.

Recommendations

- The Angolan government should conduct competent and independent investigations into serious human rights violations. Soldiers involved in such violations should be suspended during the investigation and, if necessary, prosecuted under international law.
- Subject to genuine security concerns, ensure civilians' freedom of movement in Cabinda so that they can access their agricultural and hunting areas. By promoting the right to education for girls and providing skills training for girls, especially in rural areas, steps should be taken to address the problems associated with early marriages of girls under the age of eighteen, which include fewer educational and employment opportunities and high maternal mortality rates due to girls having children before they are fully mature.
- The Angolan government should adopt federal system of government as opposed to unitary system of government by granting autonomy to the Cabinda enclave, in order to address minority versus majority conflicts

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