

STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT HOLDEN ROBERTO, LEADER OF THE LIBERATION FRONT OF ANGOLA, MADE IN THE JOINT PRESENCE OF THE MPLA AND FNLA DELEGATIONS, ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR MEETING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS OF 13 DECEMBER 1972.

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Dear compatriots:

We are once again meeting to seek just solutions to the problems which concern the Angolan people as a whole and our liberation movements in particular, at this crucial juncture the nation is passing through.

We must not lose sight of the fact that this juncture demands of us that we approach each of these problems imposed by the present moment with the greatest sincerity and the greatest intellectual honesty, so that all our deliberations take into account, above all, the highest interests of the Angolan people.

There is no doubt that it was not possible for us to deal with a number of questions (or even problems) in detail at the time of the signing of the agreements, which was done with the clearest conscience. The FNLA was insistently asking, for example, for a prior enquiry into the forces at the disposal of each of our movements, but we were told that this would mean delaying the process of unification, the urgency of which was obvious. But the fact which gladdened us and encouraged us to accept these problems was that such questions, or such problems, being as old as the struggle itself, could not constitute stumbling blocks to their implementation. The fundamentals, the basic components of the struggle were quite apparent in them. It is by basing ourselves on these components that we will make our resolutions.

The address of Brother Agostinho Neto, which explained the MPLA's position, aroused in us the greatest interest. We have read it and dissected it, and after a profound analysis we find it necessary, if you will allow us, to put forward a few considerations.

Like you, at no time have we ceased to follow very closely the subtle details of the scheming of Portuguese colonialism and international imperialism in Angola. We are therefore fully aware of what their machinations represent, and when we are told about reforms introduced in Angola, both political and administrative, we consistently feel the absolute need for the intensification of the struggle in every sphere. The growth registered with regard to foreign investments in Angola and the machiavellian intention of NATO to extend its tentacles into the South Atlantic, aimed at consolidating colonial domination in Angola and over the rest of Africa, also have not gone unperceived by us, having thus contributed equally and decisively to the strengthening of our determination.

The imperialist countries and Portugal hope to maintain Angola as a white bastion in Southern Africa. Moreover, they have cherished this desire for centuries. This is the reason why Portuguese colonialism has shown itself and still shows itself as 'white settlement colonialism', and the aggression of which we are the victims is above all racial aggression.

This is proved by the statements of Kaulza de Arriaga, Commander in Chief of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique, who states in Volume XII of the publication 'The Portuguese strategic problem':

'We shall not be in a position to maintain white domination in Angola and Mozambique, which is a national objective, if settlement (white) takes place at a rate equalling and surpassing, at least slightly,

the output of evolved blacks. Otherwise two things will inevitably happen: either we establish apartheid, which would be terrible and we would not withstand (the clashes) with black governments, with all their consequences...'

(dismembering of the overseas provinces, page 21. Earlier he pointed out that settlement could take place with whites from other countries).

Such statements sum up the aims of the Portuguese government and the imperialist coalition.

Fortunately, to these ends Portuguese colonialism, which was firmly opposed to centuries-old fraternity and (why not?) to the interpenetration of the various peoples who constitute the Angola of today, and to the resistance in the face of the permanent aggression manifested after the white occupation of Angola, strengthened the abovementioned interpenetration of the various peoples. We can therefore state objectively that it is in accordance with this process that the Angolan nation is being formed.

The Angolan people's struggle is not and never has been tribal, regional or clan-based. How then can one explain the resounding victories of our people in the course of resistance which has lasted for twelve years and has succeeded in spreading to the four corners of the country, consolidating itself day by day, unless by this spirit of solidarity among the people, by the bonds of fraternity which unite them and by the irrefutable and never denied awakening of the national consciousness of the masses as a whole?

The Angolan people are unanimous. Their objective is the individual and collective freedom which is a gift of God and which will enable them to flourish within the Nation and in the world. And it is for this liberation that they have taken up arms within a nationalist and revolutionary context. If there were divisions, and we need to be convinced of this, the causes for them lie fundamentally in the harmful repercussions of foreign influences among our people.

Twelve years of armed struggle have created among the masses such conviction and have given the struggle such a level that it is not possible to find any other explanation for the previous divisions.

In defining our position in respect of the Portuguese people and their patriotic struggle, we can but emphasise that our action and theirs can, under many circumstances, be combined, and that our struggle can, from many points of view, be looked upon as a common struggle. Moreover, we have never ceased to thank the Portuguese people most profoundly for the moral support they have given us.

Our view is that our external policy should be free and independent, just as our internal policy will be free and independent, and each of our acts taken individually. This freedom must be solely and exclusively determined by the national interest, by the interests of the struggle and by the discipline of the united combat front. Any concept of freedom which, however subtly, tends to jeopardise these interests must be rejected forthwith and without sentiment.

As for the work we have undertaken, we must not today deny what we accepted yesterday of our own free will. We have before us a series of basic principles, therefore a basis, constituted by the agreements we freely signed on 13 December 1972, and which made this fraternal and frank meeting possible. It is on the basis of these same agreements that we must work, since the process of unifying our two movements is laid down in them. To put them in question would be to destroy what has already been done. In

order that all may advance in accordance with the supreme will of the people, we must be consistent with ourselves, which means the immediate implementation of the agreements, undertaking the constitution and establishment of the bodies it advocates, namely, the SCL, the ULC and the FCA.

However difficult the deliberations may be, however long the discussions may be, and how ever numerous the truths stated (so long as they are truths), the FNL has been authorised by the Angolan people to respect these agreements and to make the greatest efforts to ensure that the front becomes a reality.

It was not my intention, in speaking here, either to refute what might be refuted in the statements of Brother Agostinho Neto, or to give my views on the so often brilliant statements in his speech. For this reason, it having been decided that the FNL statement and our drafts will serve as working papers for the commissions which have been set up, I expect from them the best possible suggestions.

I simply appeal most earnestly to all those present not to depart from the spirit of the agreements during the debates, because our people, Africa and the world, before whom we have assumed this serious responsibility, have their eyes on us.

Kinshasa, 28 February 1973.