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**info@oeas.info**

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## **CABINDA WINS FIRST ROUND IN BILLION DOLLAR OIL CASE**

Banjul, The Gambia:

In a long awaited ruling, the African Commission for Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), an organ of the African Union, ruled in favor of the Front for the Liberation of the State of Cabinda (FLEC) and against Angola and has agreed to hear on its merits a case regarding the disposition of resources in one of Africa's richest but strife torn regions. Cabinda exclave's offshore oil fields are among the world's richest while its onshore resources, remain largely undeveloped due to the conflict between Angola and FLEC. Cabinda has asked the African Union's Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to appoint a Special Rapporteur and lend its good offices towards settling the dispute. Angola has not contested the ACHPR jurisdiction.

Cabinda also known as Republic of Kabinda is the former Portuguese Congo was forcibly occupied by Angolan forces in 1975. In one of the longest running conflicts in Africa, FLEC forces have been battling the Angolan army since 1975. The conflict has see-sawed back and forth for over 35 years with neither party able to oust the other. The long simmering dispute made headlines last year when each side accused the other of a fatal attack on the Togolese football team bus en route to the African Cup of Nations.

FLEC leadership has sought a non violent resolution to the conflict and has repeatedly called for an internationally monitored referendum on the status of Cabinda. FLEC's leadership has promised to take all legal measures to defend the economic patrimony of Cabinda. Angola routinely siphons off the vast majority of oil proceeds and returns only a small percentage to Cabinda which suffers from one of Africa's highest rates of unemployment and poverty. Numerous human rights violations have been documented by the UN and Human Rights Watch.

According to Jonathan Levy, FLEC's attorney who filed the ACHPR case in 2006: "It has been said there are times when every one of us must make a stand for human rights and justice, or you never feel clean again; Cabinda today resembles the worst excesses of old fashioned colonialism."

For a copy of the [ACHPR ruling](http://tinyurl.com/Kabinda) see: <http://tinyurl.com/Kabinda>

For more information contact:

[cabinda@oeas.info](mailto:cabinda@oeas.info)

1-202-355-6428