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LABOR NEWSLETTER
// Angola

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PODCAST

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

Episode 696: Celebrating Fifty Years of Independent Labor and Employment Laws in Angola

OPINION

ANGOLA – FIFTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENT LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS

The Republic of Angola turned fifty years of independence last 11 November 2025. This is the perfect time to analyse the evolution of the Labor and employment laws of the country and the challenges that Angola faced and currently faces as an independent nation.

The best way to start is to consider that Angola's Labor history is deeply marked by its colonial past. Under Portuguese rule, forced Labor and exploitative practices were widespread, with the colonial administration imposing compulsory work on the local population for plantations, infrastructure, and resource extraction. The abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century did not end coercive Labor; instead, it evolved into contract Labor systems, often under harsh conditions and with limited rights for Angolan employees. Wage Labor expanded under colonialism, but most Angolans remained in subsistence agriculture or informal work, with formal employment largely reserved for settlers and a small urban elite. During this period, the Labor and employment laws were marked by the indigenous regulations ("Estatuto do Indigenato"), that was repealed by the Portuguese colonial rulers in 1961 while the fight for independence was already ongoing.

Following independence in 1975, Angola adopted a socialist-oriented legal framework. The first General Labor Law of 1981 reflected the new government's priorities: state control of the economy, strong union involvement, and broad employee protections. However, the law's practical application was limited by ongoing civil conflict and economic instability. The focus was on employment in state enterprises, with limited regulation of the informal sector, which remained the main source of livelihood for most Angolans.

With the end of the civil war in the horizon in the beginning of the new century and a shift towards a market economy, Angola began modernizing its Labor and employment laws to attract investment and align with international standards. The second General Labor Law was then approved in 2000 by Law No. 2/00, of 11 February 2000 and subsequent reforms sought to balance employee protections with employer flexibility. The General Labor Law of 2000 and the derivative legislation that followed expanded the scope of employment relationships, clarified the rights and obligations of both parties, and introduced new categories such as apprentices and trainees. However, the informal sector remained significant, and enforcement challenges persisted.

The Angolan government decided then in 2015 that a fundamental change to the Labor and employment laws matrix was needed. It was in this context that the third General Labor Law was enacted by Law No. 7/15, of 15 June 2015, which marked a significant step towards a more flexible and business-friendly Labor regime. Key features included:

- Clear distinction in employment standards depending on the type and size of the employer, with Large Companies being subject to high remuneration costs than Micro. Small or Medium Companies;
- Greater flexibility for fixed-term contracts with very long durations up to 10 years in specific circumstances.
- Simplified procedures for hiring and termination.
- Introduction of new types of employment contracts.
- Enhanced provisions for occupational health and safety.

This law aimed to stimulate job creation and formalize employment but faced very high criticism for weakening job security. All these critics led to the fourth and current General Labor Law of late 2023 and the additional reforms that are still ongoing. The current General Law approved by Law No. 12/23, of 27 December 2023 repealed the 2015 General Labor law and introduced substantial updates:

- The categorization of companies for remuneration and indemnities purposes was eliminated.
- Employment contracts for an unlimited term became the default, with fixed-term contracts allowed only in exceptional, legally defined circumstances.
- New disciplinary measures were introduced, including temporary demotion and suspension without pay.
- Flexible working arrangements and enhanced parental leave (including paternity leave) were established.
- Personality rights and anti-discrimination provisions were strengthened.

The most recent Labor and employment amendment process is still ongoing, since further reforms addressed specific areas:

- Foreign Employees: Presidential Decree No. 49/25 clarified the regime for non-resident foreign employees, including contract duration, registration requirements, and a 70% national workforce quota.
- Labor Administrative Offenses: Presidential Decree No. 50/25 defined new categories of labor offenses and increased fines for non-compliance.

- Temporary Work: Presidential Decree No. 51/25 regulated temporary work contracts and manpower agencies, aligning them with the rules for fixed-term employment.

- Minimum Wage: The national minimum wage was raised to AOA 100,000/month (effective September 2025), with special provisions for micro-companies.

- Occupational Health and Safety: New regulations mandated comprehensive HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment) services for all employers.

As a final note, we must say that Angola's Labor and employment laws have evolved from colonial exploitation to a modern, regulated framework emphasizing employee protection, local employment, and compliance. The recent reforms (2023–2025) reflect a commitment to international standards and a more balanced employment relationship but also require HR professionals to be vigilant and proactive in adapting to ongoing legal developments.

The key point in our view is that the moto for the official celebrations of our history as an independent country "Angola 50 Years: Preserving and valuing the achievements reached, building a better future" ("Angola 50 Anos: Preservar e valorizar as conquistas alcançadas, construindo um futuro melhor") could not fit better in our analysis: Angola must know and acknowledge its past, learn from its successes and losses and prepare itself for a bright future. As our national anthem says: Angola Avante!

CASE LAW

INJUNCTION FOR THE SUSPENSION OF DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL (SENTENCE BY THE 2ND SECTION OF THE LABOR CHAMBER OF BELAS DISTRICT COURT, OF 18 SEPTEMBER 2025, CASE NO. 59/2025-W)

The judicial decision under consideration concerns an injunction for the suspension of disciplinary dismissal, requested by an employee holding a management position. The employee alleged the existence of formal defects and the absence of just cause in the disciplinary proceedings that led to their dismissal, also invoking the risk of serious and irreparable harm to themselves and their family. The Court, faced with the issue of the applicable law over time, decided to apply the General Labor Law (Law no. 12/23), since the dismissal occurred during its validity, considering the two-year period for initiating disciplinary proceedings applicable, pursuant to Article 101(2) of the aforementioned law, given the existence of indications of infractions with criminal relevance, thus rejecting the exceptions of prescription and expiry invoked by the employee.

In establishing the facts, it was proven that the employee awarded services to a company that did not meet the required criteria, to the detriment of other qualified competitors, following instructions from the General Director. However, the Court emphasized that, although the employee followed superior instructions, it was expected that they would not do so after verifying that the selected competitor did not meet the necessary requirements, namely proven experience in providing the required services.

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The Court analysed the requirements for precautionary measures and concluded that, although the procedural requirement of *periculum in mora* was present in the abstract, *fumus boni iuris* was not, since there were strong indications of just cause for dismissal.

Regarding the formal defects raised, namely the absence of signatures from two witnesses on the disciplinary summons and the signature of the company representative as a witness on the dismissal notice, the Court considered them harmless, as it was demonstrated that the employee had full knowledge of the facts and exercised their right of defence. As these irregularities did not affect their procedural position, the Court dismissed the injunction for the suspension of disciplinary dismissal, acquitting the employer of the claim, with no costs for the applicant due to legal exemption.

LEGAL NEWS

- **Executive Decree No. 711/25, of 3 October –** Approves the Regulations for the Implementation of the Youth and Good Employment Opportunities Programme – JOBE-Angola. Revokes all legislation contrary to the provisions of this Decree.

- **Presidential Decree No. 193/25, of 17 October –** Amends the annex to the list of exempted countries referred to in Article 3(1) of Presidential Decree No. 189/23, of 29 September, adding the Republic of the Philippines to the group of countries covered by the tourist visa exemption regime in the Republic of Angola.

- **Presidential Decree No. 189/25, of October 15 –** Approves the Increase in the Value of Pensions Granted to Beneficiaries of the Social Protection System for the Personnel of the Ministry of the Interior.

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