
[War destroys forests in Angola](#)

Deforestation has become one of Angola's most important environmental problems, also resulting in freshwater shortages and soil erosion. The long civil war that affected Angola from 1975 to 1991 and the continuous hostilities among rival groups that have persisted since then, have determined not only human and material losses but also brought with them severe consequences on forests. Deforestation is considered one of the major environmental results of this state of violence and devastation.

Between 1992 and 1994 about one million and a half people were displaced because of war. To satisfy their urgent needs for firewood for cooking and heating they cut down extensive areas of forests and tree plantations. Their forced nomadic state and lack of any means of survival and income earnings translates into an accelerated damage to the forests. The loss of the forest cover enhances land erosion. Deforestation affects all of Angola, but it is worse in the war-ravaged central highlands. There the heavy downpours of the rainy season wash out the fertile topsoil from the treeless plains.

Considering that Angola is Africa's second oil producer after Nigeria, the population of this country should have easy access to oil as an alternative to fuelwood. Nevertheless, it is only available for the inhabitants of the capital Luanda, while peasants, who are the majority of the population, are still almost entirely dependent on fuelwood which, coupled with the consequences of war, has led to massive forest loss.

Source: "Environment-Angola: Losing Trees to War", InterPress Service, 22/9/99.