

UNITA'S RELEVANCE TO US INTERESTS IN 2026

UNITA in 2026 is a fundamentally different entity from the Cold War-era insurgency many may remember — or from the movement that returned to war in 1992. It is the largest opposition party in Angola's National Assembly, has demonstrated it can win a majority in the country's capital, and is led by a credible, internationally sophisticated president in Adalberto Costa Júnior.

The case for Washington's engagement to help ensure a truly free and fair election in August 2027 rests on three mutually reinforcing arguments:

The Democracy Argument:

A credible opposition is the essential ingredient of any genuinely democratic partner. The US has invested billions in Angola on the premise of a rules-based, governance-reformed relationship. UNITA's electoral strength — and the integrity of the 2027 process — will determine whether that premise is honored or hollow.

The Governance Argument:

Sustainable US investment in Angola — in the Lobito Corridor, in energy, in mining, in agriculture — requires rule of law, contract enforcement, and transparent procurement that MPLA one-party dominance has historically undermined. UNITA's platform explicitly addresses these conditions. A more competitive political environment, regardless of who wins, produces better governance outcomes for all investors.

The Geopolitical Argument:

A more genuinely democratic Angola is a more reliable Western partner — less susceptible to Russian and Chinese pressure on its political elite, less encumbered by institutional loyalties that pull against Western defense integration, and more capable of anchoring the kind of rules-based economic environment that makes the Lobito Corridor and similar investments durable. UNITA's leadership does not carry the Soviet-era obligations that constrain the MPLA's room for maneuver.

The 2027 elections are the horizon.

UNITA believes it can win outright or force a coalition outcome that ends 52 years of unbroken MPLA rule. Whether or not that result materializes, the trajectory of Angola's democratic development — and the durability of its Western alignment — will be substantially shaped by what happens between now and that vote. Washington's engagement with UNITA now is an investment in that outcome.

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