

U.S. to pay for one million homes in Angola

Written by GIN

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(GIN) – Angola, Africa's top oil-exporting country, plans to build about one million homes for its poor people in the next five years with financial support from United States. US ambassador to Angola Dan Mozena was quoted as saying that the US will loan the southern African country \$400 million for the construction of the one million homes.

The Angolan government told the news agency Reuters that the homes, to be built in four years, are expected to cost \$50 billion.

Meanwhile, in the capital city Luanda, hundreds of people forcibly evicted by the authorities from shanty towns - known locally by names such as 'Baghdad' and 'Iraq' - marched to the city centre on Tuesday demanding compensation.

The residents were stopped just short of the National Assembly building and dispersed by armed police officers with dogs.

'Give us back our homes, give us back our homes,' the protesters yelled, before being scattered by baton-yielding policemen in one of the biggest protests since evictions began last week.

S.O.S Habitat, an Angolan non-governmental organization, said more than 15,000 people had been left homeless after the government sweep on Monday.

The government said the land was needed for public interest development projects. The move was also part of a plan to improve living conditions in Luanda by replacing the illegal tin and brick huts with new homes for the poor elsewhere, it said.

"It's one of the biggest forced evictions in recent years and a clear violation of human rights in Angola," Luis Araujo, the head of S.O.S Habitat, told Reuters. More than 5 million people, or one third of Angola's population, live in shanty towns without running water or electricity surrounding Luanda, according to S.O.S Habitat.

Luanda is one of the world's most expensive cities and will be the site of the African Cup of Nations in 2010.