

JOURNEY OF MY LIFE: **MEMORIES BY YOUTH FROM ANGOLA**

“During my childhood I was always near my parents. My primary school began with many problems because Huambo Province depended on the trucks that brought the food. And those trucks started to be bombed all the time. So we had problems of hunger in my house. My mom used to fetch leaves for us to eat and she also would go to the market to buy and sell maize.

I was lucky that I was able to postpone my military conscription because I was in high school. But life was very difficult. My parents didn't have anything to eat. I went to live with my older brother.

One of the worst moments, a moment I will always remember, was when I was taken away from school because the town was being attacked. It was on a Saturday. All my family hid together. And the soldiers were outside, waiting for us.

We stayed three days without eating, without leaving the house, we were so scared. And then a plane dropped a bomb on our neighbour's house on that last day, the third day. The soldiers started to panic. Then suddenly the door of our house flew open because of the explosion from the bomb.

We ran out and I ran away by myself. I lost all my family. I couldn't see them; I didn't know where they were. I ran alone. The government soldiers got me and forced me to hold a gun for them. They made me be in the front line, even though I had never been a soldier before. We had to march for over 500 kilometers. I can remember it so much – it was the rainy season. We kept going until we reached a refugee camp. They left me there. I started begging for food around the town nearby. That is what I remember about that time.”

