

Guinea-Bissau Short Brief

I. Activity Summary: Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau

Overview

Strongmen have dominated Guinea-Bissau since its independence from Portugal in 1973, and they built a self-reinforcing system that concentrated political power in the capital, Bissau. This largely leaves the poor hinterland unconnected except as a vehicle for exploitation.

Post-independence, a revolutionary council controlled Guinea-Bissau until 1984. It was not until a decade later that Guinea-Bissau held its first multi-party elections. Four years later, a military coup overthrew the government, leading to civil war. Following the military coup in 1998, both Senegal and Guinea sent troops into Guinea-Bissau. Senegal feared a new strongman might openly support separatists in Senegal's abutting Casamance region. Coups and incomplete presidential terms characterize the national political landscape – no president has ever successfully served a full five-year term.

Recently, Guinea-Bissau has suffered the significant takeover of state institutions by narco-traffickers; illicit transshipment of drugs far outpaces the previous economic driver of growth, cashew nuts.^[i] Guinea-Bissau faces a variety of challenges, including institutional weakness, violent interruptions in the democratic process, an outsized military, aggressive and competing neighbors, and now narcotics. Internal reforms and continued support from ECOWAS and the United Nation (UN) are making incremental progress.

Civil War, ECOWAS & ECOMOG

Civil war broke out in 1998 in a power struggle between the president and military chief of staff. Highlighting the regional nature of many such conflicts in West Africa, the conflict was sparked by the fallout of the Casamance conflict in nearby Senegal. Senegal accused then-President Viera of supporting the rebels, who attempted to place the blame on his Chief of Defense Staff, Ansumane Mane. After Mane was arrested, however, troops loyal to him marched on the capitol and demanded Viera's resignation. The situation escalated as both Guinea and Senegal sent troops to support Viera, stirring up nationalist resentment amongst the population. Eventually, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) managed to broker an agreement (the Abuja Accord) between Mane and Viera stipulating the withdrawal of Senegalese and Guinean forces.

ECOMOG, ECOWAS' peacekeeping arm, further agreed to provide troops to monitor the agreement. Logistical and financial constraints limited this effort – by March 1999, only 600 troops had deployed.^[ii] This weakness would prove costly- as a transitional government installed in February 1999 began arranging for elections later that year, Mane's military faction relaunched an offensive and took over the country in May 1999. ECOMOG forces withdrew, despite the new regimes' request for them to remain, partly in protest over the coup and partly because of an inability to raise sufficient funds to continue the mission.^[iii]

UNOGBIS & Preventative Diplomacy

The United Nations stepped into the breach. In April 1999, right before the coup, the UN Security Council Resolution 1233 had created the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) with a mandate to implement the Abuja Agreement at a modest annual budget of \$19 million, which would prove insufficient to make significant progress on key issues such as disarmament and security sector reform.

After ECOMOG's departure, this office helped supervise parliamentary and presidential elections, which brought President Yala to power. His term would prove to be a time of great instability, characterized by continued tension with a military resistant to civilian control, resentment of other ethnic groups toward Yala's Balantes, and general deterioration of state institutions. Another military coup took place in 2003, followed by unrest within the military and ultimately (with military backing), the election of former president Viera in 2005. Before this election, both the AU (jointly with ECOWAS) and the UN engaged in preventative diplomacy, with the UN sending former Mozambican President Joachim Chissano as special envoy and the AU sending a delegation including its Chairman, the Chairman of ECOWAS, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, and other regional notables.^[iv] These proved to be prudent measures, as several candidates contested the results at various stages and on-the-spot mediation proved important to convincing all sides to accept the result.

Stabilization Attempts

2005 was an important year of change and for peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, as various international institutions tried to stabilize a precarious situation. Numerous coups had made how vital it was to establish meaningful civilian governance of the security forces. In early 2006, based on assessment work by UK advisors, the Prime Minister created an inter-ministerial commit on security sector reform, observed by the UN and ECOWAS. Despite this, little progress would be made for several years, due largely to domestic political gridlock. A basic census of army personnel (which revealed there were more officers than enlisted forces) would not take place until 2008.

Also early in 2006, ECOWAS created an International Contact Group on Guinea Bissau, intended to coordinate and streamline the various interventions of international donors seeking to assist. Through the Contact Group, ECOWAS was able to attract pledges of \$267.51 million to assist the struggling nation (somewhat below its \$538 million target), while the organization gave \$1.5 million directly (and \$2.5 million from Nigeria) to help the government fulfill its immediate obligations.^[v] It was becoming increasingly clear that state weakness was contributing to significant and growing drug trafficking through the country, which Western donors had a strong interest in suppressing. In 2008, UNOGBIS's mandate was expanded to include a focus on narcotics trafficking and organized crime.^[vi] This change in mandate reflected both Guinea-Bissau's descent towards a narco-state and increased international attention on narcotics and organized crime in the region.^[vii]

Enough progress was seemingly made that November 2008 parliamentary elections were fairly successful. ECOWAS took few chances, sending a mission of 45 observers to all parts of the country, preceded by careful observation of voter registration and other preparatory processes as well as regular meetings of the Contact Group with local stakeholders. Others were also watching – the AU, EU, UEMOA, Organization International de la Francophonie (OIF) and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries all sent electoral observer missions.

Signs of Trouble

Successful elections were not enough to counter-balance the remaining tensions between various political and military factions, and President Viera, along with other prominent figures, was assassinated in March of 2009. Several months later, amid preparations for a new presidential election, a candidate and a former Minister of Defense were killed by security services, allegedly while resisting arrest, for purportedly plotting

another coup. The election itself, with last-minute additional financial support from both Nigeria and ECOWAS, proceeded successfully. Meanwhile, the 2009 UNOGBIS mandate was expanded focus to SSR, rule of law, human rights and support for partners working in Guinea-Bissau.^[viii] The next year, UNOGBIS was replaced by the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). UNIOGBIS's mandate found in UNSC Resolution 1987, continued the focus on SSR, and added national reconciliation. Its sections include political affairs, human rights and gender, SSR and public information. The initial budget for 2010 reflected an increase in activities at \$19 million. It included 18 international civilian personnel, 13 local civilians and 1 lone military expert.^[ix]

In April 2010, soldiers kidnapped Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior and Army Chief of Staff Zamora Induta. While the situation was ultimately resolved, the responses of both the military – that it was a matter purely internal to the armed forces – as well as the President, who agreed, were extremely troubling. In June 2010, the leader of kidnapping, Antonio Indjai, was appointed Army Chief. At this point, the EU ended EU Advisory Mission for Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (launched in June 2008) holding it to be an impossible task in the absence of meaningful national commitment. While it lasted, the mission supported the Technical Committee of the UNPBC, providing 15 military and civilian advisors.

As the EU withdrew, Angola, then chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) stepped in to fill the SSR gap bilaterally, entering into an agreement that saw the deployment of the 200-strong technical Angolan Military Mission to Guinea-Bissau (MISSANG) MISSANG assisted with SSR and helped implement the ECOWAS- Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) SSR roadmap.^[x] In December 2011, MISSANG prevented a coup against then President Malam Bacai Sanhá, which deteriorated MISSANG's relationship with the military.^[xi]

International Military Intervention – ECOMIB

In 2012, President Sanha died (of natural causes). After Sanhá's death, an election was held in March, but there was no clear winner. Assassinations of key military and intelligence figures, accusations of vote rigging and a boycott of the runoff election in April, led ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the UN to jump into the crisis. They appointed President Condé of Guinea to mediate. In response, the army imprisoned both the interim president and the former Prime Minister, Carlos Gomes Junior, who was poised to win the election, before staging a coup.

In response to the coup, the UN, AU, and ECOWAS came together, and ECOWAS deployed its standby force to Guinea-Bissau.^[xii] ECOWAS also took the lead in mediation. Six hundred-thirty ECOWAS troops, now named the Economic Community Mission in Bissau (ECOMIB) covered MISSANG's withdrawal, and were supposed to help with the transition to the new (coup-led) government and implementation of the ECOWAS-CPLP SSR roadmap—an obvious failure after two coups. As ECOMIB was preparing to begin joint patrols with Guinea-Bissau's national troops, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2048 to impose sanctions on five coup leaders and to establish the Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee.

ECOWAS then took the lead in the mediation. In a negotiated agreement among the 23 political parties, the coup leaders agreed in the Agreement for Stabilization and Maintenance of Constitutional and Democratic order to cede power to a civilian government until elections could be held within twelve months. The ECOWAS agreement was deeply flawed. The transition government did not include any members of the pre-coup government and created a rift among stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau and within the international community. Partially as a result of this failed mediation process and the unstable interim government, the UN, EU, AU, ECOWAS and the CPLP sent a joint assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau.

Most Recent Elections

Guinea-Bissau held presidential and parliamentary elections on April 13, 2014. Despite fears of another coup, the AU, EU, CPLP and ECOWAS all monitored the elections and found them to be relatively free and fair, with remarkably high voter turnout.^[xiii] Following the elections, the AU made good on its promise and readmitted Guinea-Bissau. The government elected in 2014 had no strong ties to the army.^[xiv] ECOMIB has been able to prevent attacks from the military on the government, and talks have begun to help finance the retirement of many demobilized soldiers.^[xv]

UNIOGBIS's mandate was most recently renewed through UN Security Council Resolution 2203 in February 2015, extending the mandate through February 29, 2016. ECOWAS remains, however, the main SSR implementer in Guinea-Bissau.^[xvi]

II. Key Issues, Dilemmas, and Lessons from Guinea-Bissau

1. Returning to Traditional Roles? IOs as Conveners

Despite a proliferation of actors in Guinea, the roles of these international actors was remarkably traditional. There has been no shift towards robust peacekeeping or a multi-dimensional mission. Instead, good offices and acting as mediators, conveners and coordinators have dominated the roles of regional and international actors in the crisis. UNOGBIS and UNIOGBIS both focused heavily on the UN's role as a convener and its ability to bring together parties and coordinate actions. This more traditional role in providing good offices was successful in continuing dialogue between the Guinea-Bissau government and the opposition in 2011. Now focused on SSR, UNIOGBIS continues to act as an important convener on this issue. In addition to the UN, the AU and ECOWAS also served important roles convening civil society, the government and the opposition.

2. Neighborhood Effects and Moving from Conflict Adjacent to Conflict-Central

UNOGBIS and UNIOGBIS are much lower profile and much smaller than the peacekeeping missions in neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone, and compared to the crises in next door, As Liberia and Sierra Leone cooled, attention has shifted to Guinea-Bissau, but interest from the EU and the United States came only with threats of narcotics trafficking and organized crime. Compared to its neighbor, however, Guinea-Bissau has been neglected, especially when it comes to the international SSR support it needs. The lack of full attention to SSR from international actors allowed the army to play international donors and actors off one another and retain much of their behind-the-scenes power.^[xvii]

3. Consequences of Regional Competition

Regional actors have been eager to take action in Guinea-Bissau. Unfortunately, this seems in large part to be in order forward their own agendas rather than for the good of the host nation – Guinea-Bissau has been characterized as “a battleground for foreign interests”^[xviii], or, more specifically, the site of a turf war between Angola and leading ECOWAS nations, particularly Nigeria. Notably, the ECOWAS response to the 2012 coup installed a transitional government that included neither the very probable winner of the abortive election, nor members of the previous government, both considered close to Angola and likely to forward its interests. This raises the worrying spectre of neighbors encouraging instability in particular nations so as to have an opportunity to use peace agreements, mediation processes, and peace support operations to blunt or reverse political and electoral outcomes they dislike.

4. Fostering and Responding to Narco-States and Non-Traditional Threats

Over the past decade, Guinea-Bissau descended into a narco-state, serving as a key transit point for cocaine heading to Europe from South America. The most senior officials, including presidents and vice

presidents have been implicated in the trade. In 2010 the United States designated Bubo and the head of the Guinea-Bissau Air Force, Ibraima Papa Camara, as “drug kingpins.”^[xix]

The inclusion of countering drug trafficking in UNOGBIS’s mandate illustrates both the extent of narco-trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, and the trend of expanding peace operations mandates beyond traditional peacekeeping and political missions focused on implementation of peace accords. This level of technical support for counter-narcotics and organized crime activities reflects the UN’s current perspective on peace operations and its move towards more expansive mandates.

III. Guinea-Bissau Literature Review

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<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea-bissau/b109-la-reforme-du-secteur-de-la-securite-en-guinee-bissau-une-occasion-a-saisir>

Outlines the security situation in Guinea-Bissau and calls for continued and greater attention on security sector reform.

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[i] Ed Vulliamy, "How a tiny West African country became the world's first narco state," *The Guardian* (March 9, 2008) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/09/drugtrade>.

[ii] Gilles Olakounle Yabi, "The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict: the cases of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau," (Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, September 2010), <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/07448.pdf>, 18

[iii] Secretary General's report presented in compliance with resolution 1233 (1999) of the Security Council on the situation in Guinea Bissau S/1999/741, 1 July 1999

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[iv] Secretary General's Report on the situation in Guinea Bissau and activities of the UN Peace Building Support Office in Guinea Bissau, S/2005/575, 12 September 2005.

[v] Yabi, 23

[vi] United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau, "Mandate," (United Nations, 2008), <http://uniogbis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9875&ctl=Details&mid=12840&ItemID=11762&language=en-US>

[vii] Vulliamy, "How a tiny West African country became the world's first narco state," *The Guardian* (March 9, 2008) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/09/drugstrade>.

[viii] United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau, "Mandates," (United Nations, 2015), <http://uniogbis.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=9875&language=en-US>.

[ix] NYU Center on International Cooperation, "West Africa," 48.

[x] "Analysis: latest coup another setback for Guinea-Bissau," (Dakar-Bissau: IRIN News, April 23, 2010), <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95340/analysis-latest-coup-another-setback-for-guinea-bissau>.

[xi] NYU Center on International Cooperation, "West Africa," in *Global Peace Operations Review 2013* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013), 136, <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/country-and-regional/west-africa/>.

[xii] Albert Dabo and Richard Valdmanis, "Angolan troops to leave Bissau next week – official," (Bissau/Dakar: Reuters, May 31, 2012), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/31/bissau-crisis-angola-idUSL5E8GVBP220120531#KDbzKqwm0l5lqjgZ.97>.

[xiii] Francisco Galamas, "Elections Give Guinea-Bissau a Chance to Emerge From Turmoil," *World Politics Review*, May 7, 2014, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/articles/13763/elections-give-guinea-bissau-a-chance-to-emerge-from-turmoil>.

[xiv] In August 2015, the President dismissed the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Thus far the army has not intervened, but the situation remains tense. While a new Prime Minister was named, a cabinet has not yet been formed. ECOWAS remains actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. From Dabo, Alberto and Alberto Coiate, "Latest attempt to end Guinea-Bissau's political crisis collapses," (Bissau: Reuters) October 12, 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/12/us-bissau-politics-idUSKCN0S61ZL20151012#fdb4J3qVUDdAwOBq.99>.

[xv] "La Reforme Du Secteur de La Securite En Guinee-Bissau: Une Occasion a Saisir."

[xvi] "La Reforme Du Secteur de La Securite En Guinee-Bissau: Une Occasion a Saisir."

[xvii] *Ibid.*, i.

[xviii]

[xix] NYU Center on International Cooperation, "West Africa