

PART II



GUINEA-BISSAU

OVERVIEW

In June 1998, a military junta led by former Chief of Staff Ansumane Mané mutinied against the government of President João Bernardo Vieira over allegations of Mané's collaboration with Senegalese rebels of the Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC).¹ The outbreak of civil war prompted the dispatch of about 2,000 Senegalese and 400 Guinean troops to Bissau in support of the government,² followed by the deployment of an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping force between December 1998 and February 1999.³ Fighting resumed in May 1999, however, with the military junta rapidly taking over the government.

A fragile calm returned to the country in late 1999, and presidential elections in January 2000 resulted in a successful transition from military to democratic rule, bringing President Kumba Yala to power. In November 2000, the government made several hundred arrests following another attempted coup by Mané, who was killed later that month by forces loyal

to the government.⁴ The new president was unable to unite the country, and a further military coup in September 2003 ousted Yala and led to the appointment of a transitional government headed by interim President Henrique Pereira Rosa. Parliamentary elections were held in March 2004.⁵ The African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) won the most seats, while former President Yala's party, the Party of Social Renewal (PRS), came second. The next presidential elections are scheduled for 19 June 2005.

Small arms proliferation is an acute problem in Guinea-Bissau, and a threat to the country's fledgling democratic process. Many arms circulating today originated from the country's war of independence against Portugal. Independence fighters kept their weapons as trophies after winning the war in 1974. Based on their number, experts estimate that liberation struggle veterans still possessed approximately 20,000 small arms in early 2004, mainly AK-47 assault rifles, captured NATO firearms, and old hunting rifles.⁶ Again, as many as 10,000 small arms were distributed to civilians during the 1998–99 civil war, primarily Kalashnikov assault

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rifles of Ukrainian and Bulgarian origin, and handguns.⁷ As a result Guinea-Bissau has served as a source of weapons for parts of West Africa, including MFDC rebels in the Casamance region of Senegal.⁸

ARMED GROUPS*Military junta/Mané followers***Origins/composition:**

Members of the national armed forces who mainly made up the military junta were backed by veterans of the liberation struggle and young men recruited to the junta's cause, as well as fighters from the MFDC. The junta numbered 15,000–17,000 combatants during the civil war, but the core of hard-core Mané followers that remained active after 1999 numbered only 100–200.

Leadership:

Ansumane Mané, former Chief of Staff, was killed by government forces in November 2000 after a failed coup attempt.¹¹

Areas of control/activity:

Mané followers were based along the Senegalese border.¹²

Sources of financing/support:

MFDC fighters fought alongside Mané during the civil war.¹³

Status:

Defunct since Mané's death.¹⁴ Deadly clashes on the Senegalese border between the Bissau-Guinean army and armed elements were reported in early 2004, however.¹⁵

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS*Stockpiles***Small arms:**

AK-47 and other Kalashnikov assault rifles, handguns, captured NATO firearms, and old hunting rifles.¹⁶

Light weapons:

Rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs), mortars.¹⁷

*Sources***Domestic:**

Most of the weapons in circulation today were looted from state stockpiles during the liberation struggle or during the 1998–99 civil war.¹⁸

Recovered**DDR:**

It is estimated that approximately 20,000 combatants fought during the civil war. These included 3,000–5,000 supporters of former President Vieira, and 15,000–17,000 fighters supporting the military junta of Ansumane Mané.¹⁹ As of March 2005, 7,182 ex-combatants had participated in the International Organization for Migration (IOM)-supported demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration programme. Of these, 2,406 completed the process and an additional 2,031 were expected to be reintegrated by June 2005. In April 2005, the programme was applying for an extension to December 2005 to reintegrate the remaining ex-combatants.²⁰ Guinea-Bissau's demobilization and reintegration programme, however, does not have a disarmament component.

Other:

The Bissau-Guinean National Commission on Small Arms was elaborating voluntary weapons collection schemes in early 2004.²¹ The United Nations Secretary-General dispatched a fact-finding and project development mission to Guinea-Bissau from 7 to 11 March 2005 to assess levels of small arms proliferation in the country

and design project proposals to mitigate the threat.²²

HUMAN SECURITY ISSUES***CAFF*****Extent of recruitment:**

An estimated 600 children fought during the 1998–99 civil war.²³ There are reports that children 'well under the age of 16' participated.²⁴

Displacement**IDPs:**

The 1998–99 civil war led to the internal displacement of between 300,000 and 350,000 civilians, the majority of whom have now resettled.²⁵ Nevertheless, both the high prevalence of landmines and lack of economic opportunity complicate the resettlement process.²⁶

Refugees abroad:

The 1998–99 civil war forced 13,000 Bissau-Guineans to flee the country.²⁷

Refugees hosted:

Guinea-Bissau hosted about 7,000 refugees at the end of 2002, including some 6,000 from Senegal, and up to 1,000 from other countries, primarily Liberia and Sierra Leone.²⁸ The country hosted 7,551 refugees in 2004.²⁹

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*Other violations or abuses***Killings, rape, and torture:**

Reports, such as those of Amnesty International, suggest that the military junta committed human rights abuses during the civil war, including beatings of prisoners, killings, and looting.³⁰

OUTLOOK

Guinea-Bissau remains in a potentially explosive situation given huge salary arrears inherited from the previous government and continued military influence over the country's politics. On 6 October 2004, 650 soldiers who had participated in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) staged a mutiny and shot dead army Chief of Staff Correia Seabra.³¹ They claimed to be motivated not by political considerations but by grievances over salaries, poor living conditions, and corruption within the military hierarchy.³² At the mutineers' request, Seabra was replaced by General Tagme Na Way, and the UN provided the government with funds to pay the disgruntled soldiers USD 1,028 for each month served with UNMIL (a total of USD 2.2 million).³³

The UN expressed concerns that the mutiny was also motivated by ethnic considerations, with Balantas seeking to control the army.³⁴

The reorganization of the armed forces is high on the new government's agenda. Ongoing ethnic imbalance, non-payment of salaries, and the poor quality of military infrastructure all have the potential to further destabilize the country.³⁵ Na Way began his tenure by appointing 65 new senior officers who better reflected the ethnic and political balance of Bissau itself. Many of the new appointees were officials who were purged during the five years of upheaval in the country.³⁶ Military reforms planned with the assistance of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, which are designed to dramatically reduce the size of the army, closing more than half of the country's 25 military bases, will likely add to the number of disgruntled former fighters, however.³⁷ Given the country's recent history of political unrest, disarmament and weapons collection will be critical elements for achieving peace and security.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**ENDNOTES**

CAFF	Children associated with fighting forces	1	Evans (2004, p. 8).
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration	2	IISS (1998).
		3	Berman and Sams (2000, p. 132).
		4	Amnesty International (2001a).
		5	IRIN (2004a).
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	6	Written correspondence with Robin Edward Poulton, International Consultant and Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 5 May 2004.
IDP	Internally displaced person		
IOM	International Organization for Migration	7	Written correspondence with Robin Edward Poulton, International Consultant and Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 5 May 2004.
MFDC	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance		
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde	8	Ebo (2003, p. 34); Evans (2004, p. 8).
		9	Confidential interview with Bissau-Guinean official, Bissau, March 2004.
		10	Confidential interview with Western official, Bissau, March 2004.
PRS	Party of Social Renewal		
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade launcher	11	Amnesty International (2001b).
		12	Confidential interview with Western official, Bissau, March 2004.
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia	13	Evans (2004, p. 5); MALAO (2003, p. 42).
		14	IRIN (2004d).
		15	IRIN (2004d).
		16	Written correspondence with Robin Edward Poulton, International Consultant and Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 5 May 2004.
		17	Written correspondence with Robin

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- Edward Poulton, International Consultant and Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 5 May 2004.
- 18 Written correspondence with Robin Edward Poulton, International Consultant and Senior Research Fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 5 May 2004; Obasi (2002, p. 64).
- 19 Confidential interview with Bissau-Guinean official, Bissau, March 2004.
- 20 UNSC (2005, para. 21).
- 21 Confidential interview with Bissau-Guinean official, Bissau, March 2004.
- 22 UNSC (2005, para. 20).
- 23 Confidential interview with Bissau-Guinean official, Bissau, March 2004.
- 24 CSC (2004).
- 25 Global IDP Project (2004).
- 26 Global IDP Project (2002, p. 3).
- 27 Amnesty International (1998).
- 28 USCR (2004).
- 29 UNOCHA (2004, p. 9).
- 30 Amnesty International (1998).
- 31 IRIN (2004b).
- 32 UNSC (2004b, para. 7).
- 33 IRIN (2004b).
- 34 UNSC (2004b, paras. 8–9).
- 35 UNSC (2004a).
- 36 IRIN (2004c).
- 37 IRIN (2004c).

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Picture taken 19 September 2003 in Bissau showing Guinea-Bissau's former army chief of staff and interim president, General Verissimo Correia Seabra. Correia Seabra was killed 6 October 2004 during unrest by mutinous soldiers.