

PART II



SENEGAL

OVERVIEW

The separatist Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance, MFDC) and the Senegalese government have been struggling since 1982 over the status of Casamance, Senegal's southern region. Originally limited to large MFDC demonstrations, the conflict intensified in the late 1980s as the group began to launch attacks against the Senegalese administration.

A series of ceasefire agreements throughout the 1990s resulted in the political and military division of the MFDC.¹ A peace agreement signed in March 2001 by the newly elected President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and MFDC leader Abbé Augustine Diamacoune Senghor restored relative peace. The 2001 deal was accompanied by the progressive weakening of the MFDC's military wing due to increased military cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal's armed forces on the Bissau-Guinean border (a safe haven for MFDC rebels during the 1990s).² Even though further incidents of fighting were

reported in 2001 and 2002, subsequent relative calm and continuing negotiations with the political leadership of the MFDC raised prospects for peace.³ In 2004 the Senegalese legislature voted unanimously to grant an amnesty to fighters of the MFDC for all crimes related directly to their war efforts.⁴

The latest peace deal, signed by Interior Minister Ousmane Ngom and Abbé Diamacoune in Ziguinchor on 30 December 2004, was primarily a ceasefire agreement that included a pledge by the MFDC to give up armed struggle and a commitment by the government to reintegrate former combatants and rebuild the war-torn region.⁵ A grant of USD 129 million from international donors will supplement government funds to help de-mine and rebuild roads and villages, develop the tourism, timber, and fishing industries, and repatriate refugees.⁶

PART II

ARMED GROUPS*Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC)***Origins/composition:**

The MFDC is motivated by feelings of under-representation and economic underdevelopment among the Casamance population, Senegal's southern region between Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. The Diola is the main ethnic group in Basse-Casamance⁷ and the MFDC,⁸ although other ethnicities also are also represented in the group. The MFDC was estimated to comprise as many as 2,000–4,000 fighters.⁹ Since 1992, the MFDC's military wing has been divided into the Front Sud and the Front Nord, which have further split into a number of additional factions.¹⁰ It remains unclear how many are armed combatants as opposed to refugees, and recent reports suggest only a third of MFDC combatants are mobilized owing to logistical and financial constraints.¹¹

Leadership:

Abbé Diamacoune is the historical and political leader of the MFDC, although he now appears largely disconnected from the movement's military factions.¹² Sidy Badji, the founder of the hardline military

wing of the MFDC, died in May 2003 from natural causes. Kamougué Diatta has succeeded him as leader of the Front Nord,¹³ although his leadership is now in question.¹⁴ Léopold Sagna was the first leader of the Front Sud, which was formed in reaction to Badji's signing of the 1992 Cacheu accord with the Senegalese government. Sagna was close to Diamacoune, and considered a moderate. As a result, more hardline Front Sud leaders have emerged since, including Salif Sadio and Faye Sambou. They have also been joined by Front Nord dissidents, including Ousmane Goudiaby.¹⁵

Areas of control/activity:

MFDC fighters were based along borders with the neighbouring countries: approximately 2,000 MFDC members were located close to or in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, while 1,000 were located on both sides of the border with the Gambia.¹⁶ The political leadership of the MFDC is based in Ziguinchor. The Front Nord has its main base in Diakaye. Outside of Guinea-Bissau, Front Sud fighters have controlled the north-east of Bignogna department around Djibidione and adjacent areas of Sedhiou department since 1997.¹⁷

Sources of financing/support:

Sources of finance include donations from the Diola community in Senegal, armed robberies,¹⁸ and, to a lesser extent, marijuana trafficking.¹⁹ Cash donations were made in the early days of the rebellion. More recently, assistance from the Diola community has been in kind, i.e. support to fighters (food and shelter) from their families in Casamance, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. Fighters also harvest and sell other local commodities: notably cashews (Front Sud), and timber, fuelwood, and charcoal (trafficked to Gambia by the Front Nord).²⁰ Government and military officials in Guinea-Bissau provided weapons to the MFDC until the 1998 civil war in that country.²¹ Since then, Guinea Bissau appears to have sided with the Senegalese government, as demonstrated by the 2000 and 2001 Bissau-Guinean offensives on Sadio's faction, which were led by current Chief of Staff Maj.-Gen. Tagmé Na Way.²²

Status:

The political wing of the MFDC is engaged in negotiations with the Senegalese government. Militarily, the MFDC appears weak given internal divisions and declining resources and foreign support: its actions seem

increasingly limited to groups of armed bandits.²³ The Front Nord is generally pacified and nominally involved in the development of its zone (although in practice this involves unsustainable timber extraction), while the Front Sud is heavily divided.²⁴

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

In the early stages of the Casamance rebellion, the MFDC used rudimentary weapons such as arrows and spears. It obtained more modern arms from caches left behind in Casamance by Bissau-Guinean fighters involved in the liberation struggle, which ended in 1974.²⁵ As the conflict intensified in the late 1980s, rebels started using more sophisticated weapons, starting with hunting rifles but also including AK-47 assault rifles²⁶ and 9 mm weapons.²⁷

Light weapons:

The MFDC began using RPGs and mortars in the early 1990s.²⁸ Sadio's faction obtained 82 mm mortars, B-10 82 mm recoilless guns, and

PART II

DShK-38 12.7 mm heavy machine guns when he fought alongside Mané in Guinea-Bissau's 1998–99 civil war. Sadio, however, did not use these weapons, which the Bissau-Guinean military, led by Maj.-Gen. Tagmé Na Way, recovered during its 2000–01 offensive against Sadio.²⁹

Sources**Domestic:**

MFDC fighters sometimes seized weapons as a result of successful attacks against Senegalese forces.³⁰ Reports suggest the presence of illicit craft production workshops in Senegal. Senegalese craft weapons, however, are unlikely to be sophisticated or to represent a significant supply of weapons for the MFDC.³¹

Foreign:

Military officials from Guinea-Bissau provided weapons to the MFDC prior to 1998. Allegations against Bissau-Guinean military officials over arms smuggling to the MFDC actually sparked the 1998–99 civil war in that country with the MFDC likely to have obtained weapons in Guinea-Bissau during that conflict.³² Some trafficking of arms by Bissau-Guinean soldiers to MFDC fighters may continue but would now be very

limited.³⁴ Mauritania and Gambia have also reportedly served as transshipment points for arms smuggled from Libya and Iraq to the MFDC.³⁵ There are also reports of arms being trafficked from Burkina Faso through Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia.³⁶ During the 1990s, insurgents from Sierra Leone and Liberia, including Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), reportedly smuggled weapons to the MFDC in return for marijuana. In early 2004, active MFDC factions reportedly sent members to Liberia by boat to purchase AK-47s for USD 300, as well as bazookas and RPG-7s. Weapons also appear to be coming in from Guinea.³⁷

Recovered**DDR:**

The 30 December 2004 peace deal calls for the demobilization of MFDC fighters and stockpiling of arms under the control of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the African human rights group, Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme (RADDHO).³⁸ The government pledged to grant an amnesty to demobilized fighters and to reintegrate them on a voluntary basis within paramilitary forces.³⁹

Internal divisions within the MFDC's military wing,⁴⁰ however, will make the disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants a particularly challenging task.⁴¹ Since 2003, the government has offered MFDC members a demobilization package, which had officially reintegrated at least 40–50 fighters into local businesses as of early 2004. Additional unrecorded voluntary demobilization over a longer period could be considerable.⁴²

HUMAN SECURITY ISSUES

CAFF

Extent of recruitment:

There are reports of children as young as 13–15 working with the MFDC.⁴³

Functions:

CAFF reportedly did not serve as front-line combatants, but carried out support operations such as transporting ammunition.⁴⁴

Displacement

IDPs:

At the height of the fighting in 1998, a census by Caritas gave a total of 62,638 IDPs and refugees.⁴⁵ At the

end of 2002, 5,000 people remained internally displaced in Senegal.⁴⁶

Refugees abroad:

In late 2004, according to UNHCR figures, 7,000 refugees were sheltered in Guinea-Bissau and another 500 in the Gambia.⁴⁷

Refugees hosted:

Senegal hosted approximately 45,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2002, including an estimated 40,000 from Mauritania. In 2003, UNHCR reported a refugee population of 22,992 in Senegal, mostly from five countries: Mauritania, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Sierra Leone. In that year 2,266 Africans sought asylum in Senegal.⁴⁸ The number of refugees hosted by Senegal decreased to 20,726 in 2005.⁴⁹

Other violations or abuses

Killings, rape, and torture:

Both Senegalese forces and MFDC rebels abused civilians during the Casamance conflict.⁵⁰ Abuses and violations perpetrated by the MFDC included killings and torture.⁵¹

Other:

Abuses and violations perpetrated by the MFDC included beatings and looting.⁵²

PART II

OUTLOOK

With the political wing of the MFDC and the Senegalese government signing a peace agreement at the end of 2004,⁵³ Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean military authorities co-operating at the border,⁵⁴ and the Casamance population eager to move away from conflict, prospects for peace in Casamance appear reasonable.

The division of the MFDC's military wing into various factions, however, is worrying and may present a challenge to the peace process and to neighbouring countries. This was made particularly clear when in early 2004 clashes at the Senegalese border between the Bissau-Guinean army and alleged armed elements of the MFDC killed 4 soldiers and injured 14.⁵⁵ Furthermore, key provisions of the December 2004 peace deal—including modalities for DDR—were still to be negotiated in 2005, and several factions of the movement have distanced themselves from the accord.⁵⁶

Despite these hurdles, the Casamance peace process appears irreversible given the strong relationship between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, which the 11 November 2004 nomination of Maj.-Gen. Tagmé Na Way,

a long-time MFDC opponent, as the new Bissau-Guinean army chief of staff has further reinforced.⁵⁷

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAFF	Children associated with fighting forces
IDP	Internally displaced person
MFDC	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance,
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
RADDHO	Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

ENDNOTES

- 1 See, for example, Evans (2004).
- 2 IRIN (2004c).
- 3 IRIN (2003).
- 4 AFP (2004c).
- 5 IRIN (2004c).
- 6 IRIN (2004c).
- 7 WANEP and FEWER (2003).
- 8 Written correspondence with Martin

- Evans, Research Associate, University of Leicester, 21 February 2005.
- 9 Evans (2004); IISS (2002).
- 10 Evans (2004).
- 11 Evans (2004, p. 6).
- 12 Evans (2004, p. 16).
- 13 Evans (2004, p. 5).
- 14 Written correspondence with Martin Evans, Research Associate, University of Leicester, 21 February 2005.
- 15 Evans (2004, pp. 5–6).
- 16 Confidential interview with West African diplomat with military experience in Casamance, March 2004.
- 17 Evans (2004, pp. 5–6).
- 18 Evans (2004, p. 11).
- 19 Confidential interview with West African diplomat with military experience in Casamance, March 2004; Evans (2004, p. 10).
- 20 Written correspondence with Martin Evans, Research Associate, University of Leicester, 21 February 2005.
- 21 Evans (2004, p. 8); Global IDP Project (2004).
- 22 Evans (2004, pp. 5–6).
- 23 Confidential interview with Western military official, Dakar, March 2004.
- 24 Evans (2004, p. 4).
- 25 Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 26 Confidential interview with West African diplomat with military experience in Casamance, Bissau, March 2004. See also Evans (2004, p. 8); HRW (2002a).
- 27 MALAO (2003, p. 42).
- 28 Confidential interview with West African diplomat with military experience in Casamance, Bissau, March 2004. See also Evans (2004, p. 8); HRW (2002a).
- 29 Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 30 Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 31 MALAO (2003).
- 32 Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 33 Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 34 Written correspondence with Martin Evans, Research Associate, University of Leicester, 21 February 2005.
- 35 WANEP and FEWER (2003); Evans (2004, p. 8).
- 36 MALAO (2003, p. 42).
- 37 Evans (2004, p. 9).
- 38 IRIN (2004c).
- 39 IRIN (2004c).
- 40 IRIN (2004b).
- 41 Evans (2004).
- 42 Evans (2004, p. 15).
- 43 Evans (2004, p. 7).
- 44 Evans (2004, pp. 5–6).
- 45 Evans (2004, p. 4).
- 46 Global IDP Project (2004).
- 47 IRIN (2004c).
- 48 UNHCR (2003, p. 227).
- 49 UNOCHA (2004, p. 9).
- 50 Amnesty International (1997).
- 51 Amnesty International (1996).
- 52 Amnesty International (1996).
- 53 BBC News (2004a).
- 54 Confidential interview with West African

PART II

- diplomat with military experience in Casamance, Bissau, March 2004.
- 55 IRIN (2004a).
- 56 IRIN (2004c); BBC News (2004b).
- 57 UNSC (2004, para.7).

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UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). 2003. *UNHCR Global Report 2003: West Africa Regional Overview*. Geneva: UNHCR.

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