

Peacebuilding In Guinea-Bissau: A Critical Approach

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world. A decade of political and military instability has worsened domestic social and economic problems. The root causes of this instability are a product of historical violence associated with state building dynamics and their collapse. International actors have failed to prevent pervasive conflict and violence but they have attempted to contain the worst case scenario, namely, massive war. Multilateral and bilateral partners are developing peacebuilding strategies mostly centred on sequential action in Guinea-Bissau (security first, then development). Consequently, peacebuilding policies appear to give rise to a simulation of peace rather than tangible and sustainable peacebuilding results. It would be highly advisable to undertake peacebuilding strategies with a different focus, including some of the following:

1. Investment in long-term and coordinated development strategies particularly concerning: a) employment, education and professional training; b) rural and agricultural development, social economy and diversification of revenue sources besides cashew and fisheries; c) improving public services through the promotion of horizontal domestic partnerships rather than the existing hierarchical and uncoordinated structures, including the participation of migrant associations; d) supporting youth programmes that prevent involvement in violence and illegal activities.

2. Demand for short-term governance changes through: a) support for civil society initiatives and judicial actors who advocate for greater transparency and control of investment, resource exploitation and supervision of the environmental, economic and social impacts; b) strengthening of mechanisms of judicial punishment and instruments against corruption; c) clear political conditionality supported by a strong, long-term international mandate.

3. Conducting in-depth research on: a) different scales of violence and how violence is embedded in society ; b) informal agendas; c) the alliance between formal and informal justice in order to protect human rights more effectively; d) small arms and light weapons: how many there are, how they are used and by whom.

4. Improving Security Sector Reform (SSR) through: a) better research and analysis; b) promoting the involvement of civil society in monitoring SSR.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Guinea-Bissau is intertwined with the armed conflicts that took place in the country as well as the underdevelopment and progressive demise of Guinean state structures. The war was not followed by peace, but rather by a ten-year period of chronic instability (Annex 1). The events that took place in 2009⁵ are yet another part of this evolution. This paper argues that unless strong political conditionality and intervention takes place, and unless there is a consistent change in local governance, sustainable peace and development will remain at the simulation level. Along with domestic changes, international initiatives towards peacebuilding could play a positive role in this scenario shift. However, the most probable scenario suggests that this will not occur, since the responses of international actors and real local dynamics are disconnected. This means that, by phasing its intervention and focusing on the security level, the international community is assuming ownership of policies such as Security Sector Reform and the Plan Against Drug Trafficking, which may be counter-productive. Meanwhile, the structural dimensions of the economic and social crisis have yet to be addressed.

I. THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND STATE COLLAPSE IN GUINEA-BISSAU: A "NEVER ENDING" STORY?

On June 7th 1998, a military *Junta*, commanded by General Ansumane Mane, former Chief of Staff, initiated military operations in order to overthrow President João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. The latter had been ruling since 1980, when he achieved control of the state, also through a military coup. The armed conflict which took place in Guinea-Bissau between June 1998 and May 1999 had its immediate roots in the "dark history" of arms trafficking to the Casamance separatist movement. General Ansumane Mane reacted with military force to the accusation of involvement in the arms sale to the Casamance rebels, and to his dismissal from the Military Staff ordered by the President Nino Vieira. Allegedly, this dismissal served to cover up President's Vieira own participation in the arms traffic. He used it as a means to clear his reputation vis-à-vis neighbouring Senegal, which had just accepted him, together with France, in the Franc Zone. The crisis has, from the start, assumed international contours, when Senegalese, Guinean – and some witnesses also say French - troops intervened to support President Vieira. These external interventions decisively contributed to perpetuating the conflict by nurturing a declining regime with military resources. It would end with the so-called "war of the 7th of May" in 1999, resulting in the President's withdrawal. This war was followed by a transition period, until the holding of elections in 2000 and 2001. From 2001 to 2003, the country spiralled downward into economic crisis and governance chaos due to mismanagement by President Kumba Iala. Since then, however, there has been little oppor-

⁵ On March 1st and 2nd 2009 both the Chief of Staff, Tagma na Waie, and the President, Nino Vieira, were murdered.

tunity to promote stability in the country. The country's future became even less clear when, in 2005, Nino Vieira returned to the country and won the Presidential elections

1.1. Causes and consequences of political and military violence in Guinea-Bissau

The causes of current instability are a result of the inability to confront different tendencies that have marked the history of Guinea-Bissau over the last decades.

- a) The militarisation and personalisation of the state during the last four decades have embedded the acceptance of certain models of hierarchic behaviour, centred on the leader. These include methods such as the elimination of rivals and fomenting schemes of vengeance. Guinea-Bissau has not yet emerged from the fight for liberation that conferred, until recently, a historical legitimacy on the military to decide the destiny of the nation.
- b) The normalisation of violence at the state level creates an atmosphere of impunity. Violent conflict and murders are fomented due to the non-functioning of the formal justice system and the inexistence of any type of punishment of the perpetrators, who are often formally unidentified, but almost always publicly known.⁶ There is no type of political control over the military or certain groups within the police force.⁷
- c) Informalisation of the State, patronage and corruption were not fully reversed with the multi-party electoral system, which is still based on alliances among ethnic, religious and local leaders. The perception of corruption in Guinea-Bissau is the worst in all Portuguese-speaking countries (Annex 1). However, its prevalence is explained by the virtual inexistence of other means of survival. Access to public, civilian or military posts is, in itself, a survival strategy. The tendency for the 'ethnicisation' of political and military posts has accentuated since 2000 with the PRS⁸ government and Kumba Ialá's presidency.
- d) The dependency on development aid promoted a government geared by and toward the outside, centred on the demands of donors and international partners, and fulfilling only part of the population's needs, namely, the urban population. This has accentuated the need to gain access to the State in order to obtain development aid resources and has

6 This situation is further exacerbated by the Amnesty Law of 2007, which probably refers to the longest time period of any amnesty law in the world, namely, political crimes from 1974 to 2004.

7 Evidence for this is the 2008 invasion of the headquarters of the Investigative Police (PJ) by the Rapid Intervention Police (PIR), resulting in the death of an inmate and the pursuit of the PJ Director, without any political or legal consequences.

8 The political party, Partido de Renovação Social (PRS) is often considered an ethnic-based party, mostly constituted by the Balanta ethnic group. Its leader, Kumba Ialá, became known as the President that promoted the "balantisation" of the State, namely in the Armed Forces.

further promoted patronage.

e) Finally, the incapacity of international partners to analyse correctly and intervene effectively, complemented by some manipulation of their needs by the recipients themselves, is clearly evident in the attempt to implement “post-conflict” programmes almost ten years after armed conflict has ceased.

However, new evidence seems to intersect these old tendencies, with special relevance to the role of transnational fluxes. The process that led to the murders in March 2009 was initiated in 2004, when João Bernardo Vieira returned to Guinea-Bissau, without the permission of the national authorities. He arrived in a helicopter provided by the Republic of Guinea, after having been in exile in Portugal since the end of the armed conflict. He was then elected in 2005. It is hard to understand his return unless one considers the complicity of the “international community”, who believed that only Vieira could contain the military. However, since 2004, this assumption has been proven false. In 2005, Vieira established a fragile alliance with the Chief of Staff, Tagma Na Waie, who in fact controlled the military, and was only able to survive politically and physically through this alliance.

Vieira’s first decision was to fire the democratically elected and relatively efficient PAIGC government. His decision was based on personal rivalries he had with the then and current Prime-Minister, Carlos Gomes, Jr. With a government of his making, Vieira took over all the state structures of what would later be called the first African “narco-state.”⁹ Several witnesses have identified the emergence of drug trafficking with the beginning of Vieira’s governance, in 2005. Some actually argue that Vieira himself made the necessary contacts with the drug cartels in South America.

The connection between the military and the drug cartels has become clear, but it is also important not to forget the connections with politicians, including those of Aristides Gomes’ government and Presidency. Printed news and blogs suggest that the events that took place in March were actually a payback due to the debts accrued by Guinean elements to the drug cartels. This theory suggests the existence of still more unexploded bombs directed at other civil and military officials involved in drug traffic, as well as the existence of a list of debts to be collected, that includes military staff and politicians. It would appear that development aid was replaced by drug trafficking as a means of enrichment for those controlling the State. In addition, other theories have emerged. One states that President Vieira had planned to kill his old-time enemy, Tagme Na Waie. In turn, Tagme’s followers would have assassinated the President in an act of vengeance. Another theory claims that the new Chief of Staff, Zamura Induta was involved in both deaths, with the aim of taking over military leadership. In any case, whatever the truth of the matter, all these theories involve a relationship with drug trafficking.¹⁰

9 IRIN news, February 7, 2007.

10 All these theories remain unproved, and are mainly fed by rumours, a well-known strategy of misinformation. Investigations into the case are almost inexistent and we can assume that clarification and judicial proceedings will never take place, as usual in Guinean history.

1.2. The current situation: what's at stake?

Governance: a government is formally in power, but clearly does not have control over the military. Military groups have been threatening and attacking journalists and political figures, with no political or judicial sanctions. Additionally, the relationship between political and military leaderships is unclear. The upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for June, may change this context. Nevertheless, well-intentioned politicians will be unable to do their jobs, if a strong long-term international engagement and pressure does not take place. Otherwise, the possibility of military intervention in political affairs will remain.

Economy and society: The current situation has produced extremely serious consequences. Although the authorities officially deny the existence of an ongoing armed conflict, the economic, political and institutional violence that is taking place structurally and directly has reached alarming levels. This instability has led to the impossibility of a coherent national development policy. The gradual deterioration of living conditions and increasing vulnerability regarding food insecurity, due to price swings in food and fossil fuels on world markets, have added to the “dis-infrastructuring” of the State, resulting in the expansion of the informal economy that fails to guarantee stability or self-sufficiency. The survival of a large number of families depends on cashew revenues¹¹ and emigrants’ remittances¹², surpassing by far the amount provided by international development aid and the redistribution carried out by social organisations. Lack of opportunities and economic stagnation has led to youth emigration and serious “brain drain” dynamics. Lack of employment and the potential increase in inequali-

11 Guinea-Bissau is one of the world’s poorest countries, remaining an economy with essentially colonial characteristics in that it depends on one single export product, currently the cashew nut.

12 According to the World Bank, emigrants’ remittances represented 2 million USD in 2000 and 29 million USD in 2007. In 2006, Guinea-Bissau was one of the “top 10” countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of emigrants’ remittances to GDP. However, according to a study by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Guinea-Bissau is the country with the highest percentage of emigrants’ remittances, around 48% in 2006, i.e., 148 million USD. For that same year, the total development aid provided by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (DAC-OECD), 2007, members to Guinea-Bissau was 80 million USD. Data available at:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Top10.pdf>

<http://thenextwavefutures.wordpress.com/2007/12/08/scale-of-global-remittances/>
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/44/1881312.gif>

ties, due to new illegal sources of income, may result in an increase in criminality and domestic violence. This also creates obstacles and disincentives to both domestic and international investment, with the exception of extraction activities.

Drugs trade: Accurate figures on the drug trade are hard to ascertain, and it is also difficult to find out who is involved. Official data is based only on seizures made by the Guinean police. In 2006, 674 kg of cocaine were seized in Guinea Bissau (2nd largest seizure in West Africa). In 2007, 635 kg were seized (3rd largest in West Africa).¹³ Reports from UNDOC, in 2007, suggested “the scaling up of Latin American drug traffickers’ activities and the use of Guinea Bissau as a cocaine stockpiling centre, with illicit drug trafficking taking place both by sea and air.” Reports also stated that “Nigerian organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking have increasingly used Guinea Bissau as a source country and departure point for individuals used as “drug mules.”¹⁴ According to the IMF, the national budget of Guinea-Bissau in 2006 was equal to slightly more than the wholesale value of two and an half tons of cocaine.¹⁵ There is no available data on the continuing presence of Latin American drug traffickers in Guinea-Bissau since late 2008. The international attention granted to this problem may have prevented the use of the territory by these actors. But this fact in itself is not so reassuring. Although these activities may have already ceased, or will cease due to the debts accrued, other intermediaries, such as Nigerian criminal networks, may still continue the market initiated by South American cartels. Criminality and organised crime have tended to increase, especially since the introduction of drug trafficking in the domestic market.

In view of this situation, what challenges does Guinea-Bissau face for the future? Can the country linger for ever in a situation of “no war, no peace”? Is there a risk of a new armed conflict or is there a window of opportunity for peaceful change? What can bring about stability, peace and development? Currently, there are multiple possible scenarios whereby the existing situation can evolve in different directions, for better or for worse.

Scenario 1: Indefinite maintenance of instability without, however, the risk of military and political violence contaminating the population at large. Despite some attempts at ethnic instrumentalisation, community coexistence seems essentially peaceful. There are no expectations that a military coup might change the country’s situation, as opposed to the 1998 war, which led to popular support for the *Junta Militar*.¹⁶ There is

13 UNDOC, “Cocaine trafficking in West Africa: The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau),” December 2007.

14 Government of Guinea Bissau, “Combating and preventing drug trafficking to and from Guinea Bissau: promoting the rule of law and the effective administration of justice 2007-2010,” Operational plan prepared with the technical assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the International Conference on Drug in Guinea Bissau, hosted by the Government of Portugal in Lisbon, 19 December, November 2007

15 UNDOC, “Cocaine trafficking in West Africa: The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau),” December 2007.

16 The military group opposed to Vieira’s rule.

also no foreign support, especially after the disappearance of Vieira's long term ally, Lansana Conte, in neighbouring Republic of Guinea. The only possibility of support would be drug trafficking, which could finance a war, but this is not common procedure. Drug traffic networks benefit more from clandestine and secret contexts. However, this chronic instability would involve maintaining an unsustainable economic situation for the population in general.

Scenario 2: The incapacity to solve political instability and the economic crisis may be manipulated by political leaders in the forthcoming presidential election, leading to the spread of violent conflict through society. Two elements are crucial for this scenario, the return of Kumba Ialá and Bubo Na Tchuto,¹⁷ two balanta leaders: the former, a deposed ex-President; the latter, a persecuted Navy Commander and a refugee in Gambia, after being accused of preparing a coup and suspected of drug trafficking.

Scenario 3: The potential spread of cocaine and its derivatives into the local market, would give rise to criminal pockets associated with its dealing. In the medium-term, drug dealing would create the risk of Guinea-Bissau witnessing a move from the criminalisation of the State to the criminalisation of society, or certain groups within society. This process would result in social disintegration and destroy the only guarantee of survival left to the large majority of the population, namely, social cohesion.

Scenario 4: Finally, the potential disappearance of international drug trafficking and greater control or replacement of those involved, as well as a government that truly promoted development, would confer stronger legitimacy to the new government. This should be accompanied by solid and informed international development aid, thus resulting in a positive process of change for the country. This will only happen with a strong commitment from the international community, putting in place a long-term framework that prevents the military from acting on behalf of the political leadership, and engaging the domestic political will to achieve this.

These scenarios are not mutually exclusive. For instance, scenario 1 and 3 could easily coexist, as well as scenarios 2 and 3. Unfortunately, the first scenario, probably associated with the third one, seems, at the moment, the most probable. What are then the decisive factors that may determine each of these scenarios?

The military factor

Since independence, the military have maintained an excessive power in politics, mainly through constant threats rather than through the actual definition of an alternative political agenda. Unquestionably, tensions between the military and political spheres, and within the military arena, have decisively determined the country's lack of stability. These tensions have been accentuated by political manipulation of group rivalries, namely ethnic, and by struggles for access to legal and illegal resources. The military's worsening social image and widespread mistrust of the population towards them has been intensified by the association of the military with drug trafficking. Despite this, the

17 His relations with Vieira's murderers are still unclear.

military institution still exerts some attraction among the youth, mainly rural, ensuring not only a salary but also basic food and housing as well as status and authority. Furthermore, ethnic loyalties may gain prominence in the future and influence the functioning of the military institution, as well as its potential participation in a civil war or small private wars. Currently, a branch of the military based on ethnic loyalties is gaining the upper hand in the government. Intimidation of journalists and politicians by the military appears to get worse every day.

The political factor

The recent parliamentary elections in Guinea-Bissau were considered successful given the peaceful climate in which they took place. Despite uncertainties regarding the exact events that occurred on March 1st and 2nd, there is little doubt about their social effects: the fear, disbelief and anger they caused seemed to send the message “don’t be hopeful, nothing will change”. The population of Guinea-Bissau could have chosen war as a reaction to these events. In fact, given that public officials’ salaries have been frozen for five months now, it is surprising that violent demonstrations and protests have not yet taken place. Elsewhere, in the same circumstances, the situation would not be as peaceful. In reality, Guineans expect little or nothing from their government and military. However, they know that war would not resolve the stalemate that the country has faced since 1998, unless the situation reaches a point where they have nothing left to lose. The question is whether the new government and the future President will manage to control the military, something that has not happened since 1998. This would also entail that the impunity cycle must come to an end and that criminals must be brought to justice.

The development factor

The idea of a sequential intervention that seems to drive current thought and practice of peacebuilding, according to which military and political stability is a sine qua non requisite for everything else – i.e. development – appears to be increasingly fraught and risks jeopardising the potential of a complex and multidimensional approach to the fundamental causes of insecurity. These include the issues of unemployment, education and training, and investment in productive areas, as well as the need for rapid improvements in the country’s real economy and not only in fiscal matters. People are so concentrated on daily survival that they are unable to organise and make political demands. Also, due to the low level of education, mostly in the rural areas, and the long absence of the state, people do not see themselves as citizens. This citizenship-feeling can only be achieved when the state contributes to their survival and develops basic economic and social conditions. This is a challenge that the new government has to face, proving that it is committed to delivering short-term improvements in people’s daily living conditions. One of the key issues to be addressed is how the government intends to develop strategies so that all sectors of the population can benefit from the country’s natural resources, namely fisheries, agriculture and (potentially) oil.

The international response factor

International cooperation has proved to be ineffective, irregular, ill-informed and uncoordinated, having little or no impact in all the dynamics identified and, too often, directly contributing to their perpetuation. Instead of a loose economic and politi-

cal conditionality, without any satisfactory results, a strong pragmatic conditionality would clearly be more effective, based on concrete governance results targeting the population's well-being and the country's development. Recent events may contribute to acknowledging the need for coordination and long-term planning and intervention, by revealing the ineffectiveness of previous strategies. The majority of the population cannot be sanctioned for the elites' conflicts. Solutions must be envisioned to act outside the state's sphere, as long as it continues refusing to address people's needs. It is not possible to wait any longer for the resolution of the political and military issue in order to help the population of Guinea-Bissau. The current situation is so chaotic that it is extremely difficult to think of short-term solutions, whether to the political-military instability, the restoration of a legitimate authority or economic development. No actor or institution is capable of targeting the root causes of this chaos because it benefits several groups and personalities. The challenge is consequently of a long-term nature and demands real coordination by international partners.

II. THE PEACEBUILDING "COMPLEX": SIMULATING PEACE

After the end of the 1998/99 war, the development aid provided to Guinea-Bissau was in the hands of a restricted group of donors, such as the European Union, Portugal, France, Cuba and the United Nations. It was not so much its post-war condition that called the attention of the international community, although this did help. In fact, especially after 2006, more donors got involved, such as Brazil, Spain and Angola, and international intervention became stronger due to the country's visibility associated with international drug trafficking and migration from the West African coast to Europe.

At some moments, international actors have played a role in short-term conflict prevention. However, the formulation of chaos control policies in a context of an inactive state has mostly justified the absence of significant long-term policies. At present, policies aimed at peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau have been either irrelevant or not necessarily able to prevent a renewed conflict, nor the proliferation of loci of social, economic and political violence.

2.1. The peacebuilding framework

In the last five years, the dominant approach by international actors toward Guinea-Bissau has been based on the identification of certain core problems, such as corruption, drug trafficking, military conflicts, and state (in)capacity.¹⁸ Peacebuilding strategies and initiatives focus essentially on state building measures, at least at the level of intentions. The mainstream approach identifies the security/development nexus as the guiding principle. In reality, actors have been focusing only on the security part of this nexus. The core policies put forward to prevent further violent conflicts and to consolidate peace have been the following:

18 China, Cuba and Brazil are not included in this trend, since they have adopted a different approach to development aid, promoting South-South relations, avoiding conditionality, and allegedly allowing the recipients to define their core problems themselves.

a) Elections: Guinea-Bissau does not have the capacity to organise elections without strong foreign support. Elections have essentially been a demand made by the international community and the Guinean elites in order to create an image of legitimacy. These have, however, proved to be ineffective in producing stable governments and presidents actually interested in serving the country.

b) Institutional capacity building: as Guinea-Bissau is considered to be a ‘failed state’, it is assumed that there is a human resource problem and that the institutions are not able to fulfil minimal State functions. This has led to the situation where each Guinean ministry has its own international consultant, particularly in the financial and justice sectors. However, unless the rulers show that they genuinely have the will to set an example and define coherent strategies for the country, rather than for themselves, any kind of positive impact of this strategy will be undermined.

c) Security and defence reform: The project to re-structure and modernise the defence and security sector is the new *ex libris* of peace consolidation in Guinea-Bissau. The reform is ambitious and has long-term objectives,¹⁹ but the ESDP²⁰ Mission in place has only a one-year mandate, although it has requested to stay one more year. It is the first ESDP mission to encompass a holistic approach, including justice, according to its Head of Mission. While the need for urgent reform is consensual, both nationally and internationally, disagreement arises on two scores: on the one hand, the capability to conduct such reform and its feasibility and, on the other, the real political will of some groups in supporting it. If some believe it to be possible, once adequate resources are made available, others question its potential scope and repercussions since it would clearly repel some military leaders and offer no substantial alternatives to the resources obtainable through corruption and drug trafficking.

d) Justice and the Plan against Drugs: The UN, through its Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in collaboration with the Guinean authorities, drafted the Operational Plan to Fight Against Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. This is a three-year plan (2008-2010) and it is divided in three phases. The first phase consists of installing a UNODC consultant in Guinea-Bissau. The second phase aims at supporting the restructuring and functioning of the Ministry of Justice, in relation to three pillars: investigation, through its Investigative Police; trial, through a functioning legal system; and the implementation of sentences, through an effective prison system. The third phase seeks to address the structural problems identified, both at the level of implementing justice and of rule of law.

The peacebuilding strategies of different actors have been organised in bilateral and

19 It is based on a number of essential strategies: downsizing of military personnel; integration of some military into the civilian police; modernisation of the army and police forces; the assurance of dignifying reforms to former combatants; training of youth on the role of armed and security forces according to a modern perspective.

20 European Security and Defense Policy.

multilateral frameworks. These frameworks are supposed to be complementary and to create a network of initiatives and results. The following tables identify the most relevant multilateral frameworks and intervention areas, differentiating those acting within a specific peacebuilding mandate and those concerned with development cooperation and political monitoring but which have been working in collaboration with mandated institutions in order to define peacebuilding strategies.

Institutions with a specific peacebuilding mandate:

<i>Institution/actor</i>	<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Intervention areas</i>
<i>UNOGBIS – UN Peacebuilding Office for GB</i>	<i>To formulate a peacebuilding strategy that was a reference for the entire UN system, national actors, regional and international partners, international financial institutions and civil society. Should be mainly a coordination mechanism for the actions of other actors and a UN political accountability mechanism for the evolution of the situation</i>	<i>Political monitoring Training – police, military, civil society</i>
<i>Peacebuilding Fund- UN's Peacebuilding Commission</i>	<i>To establish a strategic framework with the contribution of the main international actors, including short-term actions</i>	<i>Reform of public administration; consolidation of Rule of Law and Security Sector Reforms; promotion of professional technical training and youth employment; support for vulnerable populations</i>
<i>ESDP Mission</i>	<i>To provide local authorities with advice and assistance on SSR in order to contribute to creating the conditions for implementation of the National SSR Strategy. To facilitate the subsequent mobilisation of, and engagement by, donors.</i>	<i>Security, Defence, Justice - Development and articulation of capacity-building needs, including training and equipment.</i>

Institutions dealing with development cooperation and political monitoring:

<i>Institution/actor</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Intervention areas</i>
<i>International Contact Group A</i>	<i>To encourage political dialogue and to support the Guinean government in mobilising financial international assistance.</i>	<i>Financing and international agenda setting UN Agencies</i>
<i>UN Agencies B</i>	<i>To implement programmes/projects that support social and economic development.</i>	<i>Poverty reduction, governance, health</i>
<i>EU delegation</i>	<i>To represent the EU and monitor bilateral relations. Put in place different technical and financial cooperation instruments and coordinate with other donors</i>	<i>Infrastructure Rule of Law Civil Society</i>
<i>CPLP C</i>	<i>To monitor the political situation and mobilise financial support. Technical cooperation</i>	<i>Agenda setting Education, training, agriculture, health</i>
<i>ECOWAS D</i>	<i>To monitor the political situation and mobilise financial support. Technical cooperation</i>	<i>Agenda setting</i>

A Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Spain, France, Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Portugal, Senegal, IMF, UN, EU, World Bank, CPLP, ECOWAS, UEMOA.

B UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, WB, IMF.

C Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries). Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome e Principe, East-Timor.

D Economic Community of West African States Benin. Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Thus, several questions concerning institutional architecture and approaches must be raised, and will be further developed in section 3:

From an approach point of view:

There are challenges regarding priority setting since few initiatives focus on real social and economic development. International institutions and partners cannot create devel-

opment, but they can facilitate it. This task becomes harder to implement in a context where unwillingness of state and domestic governance structures to promote development prevails. On the other hand, the obvious inability of international actors to work beyond the state sphere is also a major factor. This issue should be solved by looking at best practices implemented in other cases. There should be an effort to understand better how to promote development through civil society organizations, social movements, and local productive units (until now concentrated in rural society). Besides, even when the problems are correctly identified – the need for SSR and the prevention of corruption associated with drug trafficking – they are not appropriately addressed, mainly because of misunderstandings regarding when and how to execute these policies and the fact that local ownership is not assured.

From an operational point of view:

Firstly, effective coordination and implementation are lacking. Each partner still has its own interests and needs to publicize its own initiatives. The idea of aid as a market,²¹ in which each actor (donors and recipients) tries to find its niche, seems to overcome attempts at policy coordination. This generates a multiplicity of overlapping policies and strategies, even when at the discourse level, there is coordination between donors. Furthermore, local authorities have also managed to sidestep the few coordinated and coherent policies, through “unconventional” donors such as China or Libya, who are not interested in coordination or political conditionality. Regarding implementation, programmes rarely move from discourse to practice. Aid has been channelled mostly on an emergency basis, aimed at, for example, the payment of salaries in order to mediate political and military conflicts. The inability to go further in terms of the peacebuilding mission and to make aid more effective is due to many factors: low budgets, unclear mandates and insufficient knowledge of the country (culture, politics) are most frequently pointed to.

The integration of Guinea Bissau in the framework of the UN Peacebuilding Commission should improve at least some of the operational problems noted above, especially the burden of financial support and its coordination. But this is not enough. Core problems remain related to bureaucratically driven policies, priority setting, and domestic ownership. The latter, in most cases, is disconnected from peacebuilding purposes. In general terms, the Peacebuilding Commission reproduces the same problems that individual donors and the previous framework presented. Although it has introduced some important changes, namely the creation of a project specifically dealing with youth training and employment,²² it still fails to clearly address essential areas such as

21 Regarding the intervention of external actors in Guinea-Bissau, Mamadu Jao states that “... their action does not differ from the free market logic. It’s with that mercantile logic with goals of various orders (political, economical, financial, professional, geo-strategic, etc.) that we can comprehend the attitudes and behaviours of the members of this vast world of actors (Mamdu Jao, *Oficina do Ces*, 2006: 16).”

22 [http://www.unpbf.org/docs/PBF_Guinea_Bissau_Priority_Plan_\(English_24Jun2008\).pdf](http://www.unpbf.org/docs/PBF_Guinea_Bissau_Priority_Plan_(English_24Jun2008).pdf)

development of productive sectors. It will not achieve different results unless long-term governance changes are assured and these changes require a strong financial and political commitment. But above all, these changes require coherent and far-sighted analysis and understanding of the political domestic pre-conditions for policy implementation.

2.2. The case of Portugal ²³

Portugal is probably the most consistent partner of Guinea-Bissau and the most important in bilateral terms. For historical and foreign policy reasons, Portugal does not suffer from the syndrome of the “bad student”, which led other European countries to gradually withdraw from Guinea-Bissau. Although it is a former colonial power, Portugal’s presence has been welcomed by the Guinean society.

In addition, although Portugal does not have a specific institutional peacebuilding strategy, it has developed efforts to help Guinea-Bissau overcome this period of economic and social decline and political instability, namely as an important mediator and peacemaker, in collaboration with CPLP, as well as in the demobilisation and political process immediately after the end of the violent conflict. Moreover, since 2005, human security promotion, particularly in fragile and post-armed-conflict states was included as a priority in Portuguese Official Development Aid (ODA) policy.

Portuguese ODA has focused essentially on the support of basic social sectors such as health and education and in institutional capacity building geared toward public administration and the legal sectors. To this effect, it provided around 72,480,861 euros between 2000 and 2006, in addition to support for the elections.²⁴ In 2007, it maintained the traditional core areas: education, health and socio-community development (74% of the budget for Guinea-Bissau between 2008 and 2010),²⁵ although it also reinforced the justice and security components. Portugal believes its ODA has an added-value because of linguistic proximity and the knowledge of Guinean civilian and military public administration, a legacy of the colonial period. This knowledge provides Portugal with a potential advantage concerning the definition and implementation of good governance policies.²⁶

The focus on the security and justice sectors – in connection with the fight against drug trafficking – is related to the dominant perspective in peacebuilding, shared by Portugal, which considers these as priorities. This perspective is visible in the weak support given

23 Information collected from the Portuguese Official Development Aid (ODA) programs with Guinea-Bissau, and in fieldwork in the country, as well as in interviews conducted between 2006 and 2009 with several Portuguese ODA actors.

24 www.ipad.mne.gov.pt

25 www.ipad.mne.gov.pt

26 61% of 2007 Portuguese ODA was directed toward Portuguese-speaking countries www.ipad.mne.gov.pt

by Portugal to initiatives associated with the promotion of community development.²⁷ The prominence afforded by Portuguese ODA to security and justice is clearly visible in the role it has played in the mobilisation of the international community, through the organisation of the ‘International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau’ (December 2007).²⁸ Furthermore, Portugal has also been an active participant in Security Sector Reform, having played a crucial role in the establishment of an ESDP mission for Guinea-Bissau in 2008 as well as in the organisation of several donors’ roundtables, namely in 2006²⁹ and the meeting planned for 2009, with the help of the CPLP.

Portuguese ODA comprises several positive elements that enhance the peacebuilding strategy in Guinea-Bissau. The first is related to the permanency and regularity of its surveillance of the Guinean context, positioning this recently forgotten country in the international agenda, both at United Nations and European Union levels. The second has to do with the level of accumulated knowledge on the Guinean political, social and economic reality, not only at governmental level but also at the academic and civil society levels. This is further strengthened by the Portuguese tradition in training both justice and military personnel. The third element is that Portuguese ODA, complemented by Portuguese NGOs, focuses on basic needs thus contributing to the maintenance of minimum conditions for social and economic stability. This has only caught the attention of other donors since 2006 due to the emergence of drug trafficking.

Elements of Portuguese ODA in need of urgent strengthening and/or re-focusing are, among others; the connection between actors in the field and policy decision-makers, namely more in-depth social and economic analysis and the involvement of Guinean civil society in the definition of their priorities; and greater focus on social and economic development, namely, rural development.

2.3. The case of Brazil ³⁰

27 Apart from the work of some NGOs and some programmes promoted by the Ministry of Work and Social Security.

28 Donors contributed 6.7 million USD for 2008, and of these, Portugal contributed 3 million (Portuguese Cooperation Plan with GB, 2008-2010).

29 The Geneva Donors’ Roundtable, seen by many as the most decisive one since the end of the armed conflict, resulted in an agreed amount of 262.1 million USD, quite inferior to the requested amount of 538 million. The policies submitted to financing were reform of the security and defence sector and DENARP (National Strategy Document of Poverty Reduction).

30 Most of the information is based on an interview with the Counselor-Minister João Alberto Quintaes of the Brazilian Embassy in Guinea-Bissau, conducted on March 24, 2009.

Brazilian ODA to Guinea-Bissau started with the independence of the African state, gaining increasing importance in the Brazilian ODA framework of African countries and in the CPLP framework. The relative importance of Guinea-Bissau to Brazilian ODA is explained by the fact that it is a Portuguese-speaking country and by the similarities of the legislative and executive governing branches, which constitutes an incentive for cooperation at the level of institutional capacity building. This has enabled Brazil, for instance, to go beyond the framework of ‘failed states,’ arguing for the principle that “each case is a case” and the need to understand the specific local realities.

Aid has essentially been geared toward education, socio-economic development, public personnel capacity building and the improvement of the State’s sovereign functions. This strategy has maintained the same pattern of intervention – aid to the areas of education,³¹ health and small projects in the economic arena,³² until eight to ten years ago, when it started to integrate the security area. Under this new approach, different projects have been implemented, such as training the Guinean Investigative Police force in Brazil³³ or the military courts’ reform. New projects are being prepared, in collaboration with other partners, including the construction of a prison (practically inexistent in Guinea-Bissau) and the establishment of a National Police Academy by the CPLP (in collaboration with Portugal and Angola), which is still in the planning phase.

Despite this new investment in security, Brazil maintains a peacebuilding strategy distinct from its European partners, by not prioritizing its intervention solely around security and defence or the fight against drug trafficking. Brazil argues that the best peacebuilding strategy is not in the creation of conditions for the Armed Forces and Police, but rather the creation of structural economic and social development activities, which may preclude violence from (re-)emerging, similar to the approach followed by Brazil in Haiti. This means a long-term strategy based on the promotion of conditions favouring autonomous development through technology transfer, without imposing a strong conditionality. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between the amount and level of intervention in Haiti and Guinea-Bissau. Consequently, this strategy can only be successfully implemented in articulation with other countries and strategies. Brazil does not participate directly in the activities against drug trafficking, except for its support of the prison construction, which is seen as a means to dissuade criminality.

Although the financial amount disbursed by Brazil is less relevant than that from other partners (around 1.5 million euros in 2007-2008), Brazil has the potential to play a decisive role in Guinea-Bissau. On the one hand, Brazil is the coordinator of the Peacebuilding Commission initiative for Guinea-Bissau, playing a leading role in the United

31 Examples include Portuguese language courses and fellowships to Guinean students.

32 Such as small processing units of cashew nuts or the first project to be financed by the IBAS Fund, sponsored by India, Brazil and South Africa, on agriculture, agro-industry and cattle-rearing.

33 To date, 80 officers have received training in Brazil.

Nations approach to the country. Brazil is also a crucial CPLP member, along with Portugal and Angola. On the other hand, Brazil presents itself increasingly as a model development country with a multicultural society, which informs its perceptions of the Guinean society, augmenting its cultural influence in detriment to countries such as Portugal.

Because it is an emerging developing country, and because it has know-how and experience in agricultural-based economic structures, in addition to other peacebuilding experiences, such as Haiti, Brazil's intervention and the type of partnerships it develops are welcomed in Guinea-Bissau and may become a positive influence in the country's development if reinforced financially and applied to other areas of intervention.

III. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PEACEBUILDING IN GUINEA-BISSAU

At present, policies aimed at peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau have proved to be either irrelevant or unable to prevent long-term instability. The absence of relevant long-term policies is usually justified by domestic bad governance and the state's fragility. But this is only one side of the picture and other causes are outlined here.

a) Development aid coordination continues to be more discursive than real. Given that coordination is a recent trend which has scarcely been implemented, opportunities to assess results are few. Coordination works apparently in political terms, following the same themes and priorities, but not necessarily in practical terms.

b) Investment and conditionality are very low. Although discourse reflects these concerns, investment is relatively low for a UN peacebuilding mission (UNOGBIS). The incapacity to go beyond the peacebuilding mission and to make it more effective is due to several factors. According to some UN officials, this is a problem of capacity. First, "there is no budget to do peacebuilding." Without staff specialised in violent conflict prevention, UNOGBIS activities, according to the former representative of the UN Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, João Honwana, only "avoided the worst." In fact, there is an urgent need for people who have a deep knowledge of the country, rather than human resources specialised in conflict prevention.

c) International actors are ill-informed. Still according to this same source, foreign actors have enormous difficulties in understanding the reality in which they are intervening and they feel manipulated by a power they are unable to identify: "no alliance lasts very long." Besides not understanding and not being able to deal with this shifting reality, aid actors suffer from a chronic lack of analysis and action capacity as well as of evaluation processes, within a paradigm that does not allow self-criticism. Furthermore, in a society where informal, spiritual and magic practices and beliefs are present in every dimension of life, including the political sphere, it must be acknowledged that

attention to formal dynamics promoted by desk studies are not necessarily the best way to plan interventions.

d) The general amnesty contributes to a sense of impunity. Post-war policies based on general amnesty and merely technical security reforms contribute to a culture of impunity, hampering respect for human rights and the valorisation of justice, in contrast to plans for institutional reforms. Conditionality for aid attribution should start right now by demanding effective investigation of the murders and attacks that characterise Guinean political and military history.

e) There is a disconnect between discourse and practice. Most projects and measures stay mainly at the level of intentions. Thus, in recent years, aid has been directed mainly to emergency situations, such as the payment of salaries or fuel, or non-structured ad hoc budgetary aid. Despite some distancing by donors in terms of major long-term projects, this is “compensated” by the immediate containment of problems and support to social sectors.

f) There is a growing depolitisation of post-war analyses and interventions, reflected by the assumption that the military are the only source of instability and insecurity, and therefore a problem that can be solved by technical efforts and empowerment. Without analysing the issue of power legitimacy and the informal networks which determine the routes of governance and (un)governance, no intervention will ever alter state policies or power structures.

g) The power of informal agendas is not always acknowledged. International partners must recognise that not everyone is pledging for development because instability and underdevelopment always benefit some groups, including those implementing peacebuilding policies. In a small society where everyone is related, local dynamics are not perceptible without long-term and embedded research. Formal speeches for peace and development are many times contradicted by violent and disruptive practices.

h) The need for short term changes should not facilitate easy solutions that only privilege extractive development strategies such as oil, agriculture or fishery quotas that may be harmful to populations and liable to mismanagement by corrupt state structures if not properly analysed through a sustainable development perspective.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau faces enormous challenges both at domestic and international levels, largely because of the focus on SSR and drug trafficking. Intervention

centred on the most visible and immediate causes of conflict tends to forget about the creation of social conditions for sustainable peace.

The first challenge concerns the expectations associated with SSR processes given that security reform cannot be expected to resolve all the country's problems. This reform will not work unless there are economic and social conditions to sustain it and this not only entails real political support, but also short-term changes in public governance that enable improvements in development and livelihood. These changes would involve clear rules and monitoring of state resource management in addition to policies directed at economic development and well-being, such as rural development, infrastructure (water, electricity and sanitation) and social services (education and health). Institutional and bureaucratic change alone will not bring about changes in the power structures and a strong commitment to prevent military interference in political affairs is also needed.

The second challenge consists in looking beyond the military, encompassing ideally the whole community/society. This is particularly important due to the risk of sending a wrong message – namely, that those who resort to violence receive benefits – and failing to avoid the transference of violence to other levels and actors, which is extremely serious. It is particularly important to think of benefits aimed at the community/society as a whole, instead of benefits only targeting those who resort to violence. In this domain, it is particularly important to pay attention to the youth, not as a specific and isolated group, but as an integral part of the society, hitherto powerless to alter the modes of governance put in place.

Finally, the main concern of the international community should not be limited to ensuring, first and foremost, its own security, namely through the containment of migration and drug fluxes, because, by so doing, the security of the Guinean population is not being taken into account, and will not be in the future either. Hence, the security of the Guinean people is not only threatened by eventual military upheavals, but also by internal spill-over effects provoked by illicit economies and lack of economic alternatives, namely the dissemination and legitimisation of violence and illegal activities at the social level. Avoiding social and economic collapse is the main challenge faced by international peacebuilding efforts, and this challenge cannot be addressed by traditional short-term strategies. Investment in long-term and coordinated development strategies is required; strong political will both nationally and internationally towards governance improvements; and a more informed intervention, cognizant of the domestic dynamics in place.

APPENDIX 1 - COUNTRY PROFILE

Geography, population

- Population: (estimated) 1,600,000
- Extension: 36,125 km²
- Capital: Bissau
- Language: Portuguese, Creole and other local languages
- People: Guinean, comprised of over twenty ethnic groups, such as Fula, Mandinga, Manjaco, Balanta, Papel, Mancanhe and mixed race
- Religions: Animist beliefs 50 %; Muslims 45 %, Christians 5 %
- Population growth rate: 3 %
- Urban population: 30 %

Human development indicators

- Human development index: 175/177 (2007/08)
- Life expectancy at birth: 45. 5
- Infant mortality rate: 124/1.000
- Maternal mortality rate: 1100/100,000
- Net Primary enrolment rate: 45 %
- Net Secondary enrolment rate: 9%
- Adult literacy rate (% , m/f), 2000: 54/24
- Percentage of active population in agriculture: 82%
- Percentage of population living with less than 2 USD per day: 64.2% (2005)
- GDP: 0.3 US billions
- GDP per capita: 190 US
- GDP annual growth: -2.6%
- Gini Index: 47
- Population with access to electricity (%): 5 (2000)

Sources: UNDP 2007-08, UNCTAD, UNDP 2006

Main income sources and commercial partners

Percentage shares of GDP, 2003:

- Agriculture: 68.7
- Industry (including manufacturing): 13.3 (9.9)
- Services: 17.9
- Gross capital formation: 13.0
- Gross domestic savings: -1.1
- Exports of goods and services: 29.7
- Imports of goods and services: 43.7
- Agricultural labour force (% of total labour force): 82 (2004)
- Main export sector (% of total exports of goods and services): Cashew nuts 85.4 (2003)
- Main markets for exports of goods (%), 2004: Developing countries 71.6 Main destination: Asia (India) 55.9 (54.1)

- Main sources of imports of goods (%), 2004: Developing countries 54.4 Main origin: Africa (Senegal) 47.5 (45.6)
- Foreign direct investment as % of GDP: 0.5%
- Economy: agriculture: rice, corn, beans, cassava, cashew nuts, peanuts, palm kernels, cotton; timber; fish
- Total ODA US millions 2005: 79.1
- Total ODA per capita US 2005: 49.9
- ODA as % of GDP: 26.3 (2005)

Source: UNCTAD, Statistical Profiles of the Least Developed Countries 2005

Total Bilateral Aid To All Sectors, All Donors, Disbursement (USD millions)

Time Period	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Guinea-Bissau	52.42	80.29	60.09	59.41	145.23	76.38	66.03	82.11	123.22

Source: DAC/OECD

Political and military data and chronology

- Military ratio per 1,000 inhabitants: 2.73
- Sub-region (West Africa) military ratio per 1,000 inhabitants: 1.23
- 41.9% of the military are officers (Peacebuilding Commission)
- Perception of corruption (CPI score 2007): 2.2 (Transparency International)

Chronology

1973 – Unilateral declaration of independence

1974 – Formal independence.

1980 – Coup by Nino Vieira. End of Luís Cabral’s rule. End of state unity with Cape Verde.

1986 – Six military leaders, condemned to death for allegedly planning a coup against Vieira, including Vice-President Paulo Correia.

1994 – First multiparty elections. PAIGC and Vieira win legislative and presidential elections.

1997 – Guinea-Bissau becomes a member of the Franc Zone.

1998/99 – Political-military conflict opposing Vieira to the Military Junta. Vieira exiled in Portugal.

2000 – Kumba Iala elected President.

– Ansumane Mane (leader of the Military Junta) murdered.

2003 – Kumba Iala deposed by Chief of Staff, Veríssimo Seabra.

2004 – Chief of Staff, Veríssimo Seabra, is murdered. Tagma Na Waie is the new Chief of Staff.

– PAIGC wins legislative elections. Carlos Gomes JR is the new Prime Minister.

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