

WEST AFRICA EARLY WARNING & EARLY RESPONSE NETWORK

WARN

Policy Brief

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Guinea Bissau

PAIGC, A STABILIZING OR DESTABILIZING AGENT

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018 & 2019 ELECTIONS IN GUINEA-BISSAU?



**WEST AFRICA NETWORK
FOR PEACEBUILDING**

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE

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PAIGC¹, A STABILIZING OR DESTABILIZING AGENT: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2018 AND 2019 ELECTIONS IN GUINEA-BISSAU?

I. BACKGROUND



Location map of Guinea-Bissau
<http://fr.africatime.com/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/phot/articles/2014/avr/carte-guinee-bissau.gif?itok=GLXv1F5r>

Republic of Guinea-Bissau (Africa)

Area: 36,125 sq km

Coastal state wedged between Senegal and Guinea, including the Bijagos archipelago.

Population: 1,647,380

Capital: Bissau

Urbanites: 30%

HDI Rank: 173 of 182

Source: (UN Human Development Reports 2009)



The 2014 presidential and legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau were seen as a major platform for the restoration of constitutional order and the advancement of the social and economic stability in the country, following the 2012 military coup that led to almost two years of transitional rule. However, barely two years after, the current political impasse emerged with consequences for the political and socio-economic stability. The tensions,

which initially started at the intra-party level and primarily between President Mario Jose Vaz and the then Prime Minister and Chair of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) quickly spilled over to the national stage, affecting almost all sectors of the government and economy.

As a matter of fact, the dismissal of former Prime Minister Domingo S. Pereira came barely a week after the PAIGC threatened to withdraw its support for President Vaz. As such, since August 2015 when President Vaz sacked Mr. Pereira, his former Prime

Minister, Guinea-Bissau has been embroiled in a political and institutional crisis. The sacking raised tensions and disputes between the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the National People's Assembly (ANP- Assembleia Nacional Popular), as well as within the ruling PAIGC.

The confrontation led to the paralysis and dissolution of four different governments, resulting in political uncertainty and threats to the democratic future of the country. Consequently, the ANP remained particularly dysfunctional for almost two years.

¹PAIGC-The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde is a political party in Guinea-Bissau, founded in 19 September 1956. Originally formed to peacefully campaign for independence from Portugal, the party turned to armed conflict in the 1960s and was one of the belligerents in the Guinea-Bissau War of Independence. Towards the end of the war, the party established a Marxist one-party state, which remained intact until multi-party democracy was introduced in the early 1990s.

West Africa Early Warning & EARLY RESPONSE Network (WARN)

The West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) is an integral part of the West Africa Preventive Peacebuilding Program co-ordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Through its WARN Program, WANEP is setting the stage for a civil society-based early warning and response network in Africa with emphasis on human security.

WARN covers the entire Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

Since 2002, WANEP entered into an agreement with ECOWAS through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the framework of capacity building in Conflict Prevention. One of the goals of

this agreement is to interface WARN with the ECOWAS Early Warning Systems to optimize early warning conflict prevention in West Africa. In view of this development, WANEP has been operating a liaison office located at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria since April 2003.

In recognition of the role and achievements of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Africa, particularly in West Africa, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at its substantive session of 2006 granted WANEP Special Consultative Status to the UN. WANEP is therefore mandated to designate official representatives to the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna to further its advocacy and outreach strategies for peace and human security.

However, the time has come for the assembly to renew with the preparation of the upcoming legislative elections which are to take place in 2018. Given the uncertainty of the political climate, many strategic partners and concerned citizens raise fundamental questions: Can elections be held in this environment?

What are the possible risks of the stalemate in terms of governance processes and its potential implications for the stability of the country?



The influence of the PAIGC party still permeates Guinea-Bissau's society
http://www.dw.com/image/18657195_401.jpg



A mediation effort of ECOWAS led by President Alpha Condé of the Republic of Guinea
 Source : <http://guineemail.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/accord-de-conakry.jpg>

people saw this appointment as “non-consensual” move and took issue with it. The members of the new cabinet were drawn both from the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) and the PAIGC. By and large, they were all political appointees without a clear mandate from the respective parties.

The participation of the PAIGC members in the new government instigated their suspension by the PAIGC on the grounds of the violation of internal regulations and party statutes. Furthermore, it led to the expulsion of 15 deputies³ (members of parliament) by the PAIGC in 2015 following their refusal to adopt the then government's program.

II RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A mediation effort of ECOWAS led by President Alpha Condé of the Republic of Guinea, including the participation of the representatives of the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), as well as the representatives of Angola, and Senegal, culminated in the signing of an Agreement² on 14 October 2016 in Conakry, Guinea. The move aimed at ending the political crisis in the country.

Despite the agreement, the crisis in Guinea-Bissau never abated. The PAIGC had reacted to the appointment of Prime Minister Embalo accusing the President of violating the spirit of the Conakry Agreement.

For the sake of history, it should be noted that President Vaz appointed a new Prime Minister, Mr. Umaro El Mouktar Cissoko Embalo on 18 November 2016, to head a cabinet comprised of 37 members (24 ministers and 13 Secretaries of State). Some

²Conakry agreement : [https://issafrica.org/pscreport/uploads/Assembly%20AU%206%20\(XXVIII\),%20PSC%20report%20January%202017.pdf](https://issafrica.org/pscreport/uploads/Assembly%20AU%206%20(XXVIII),%20PSC%20report%20January%202017.pdf)

³In October 2017, supporters of 15 MPs, failed to invade PAIGC head-quarters, which ended with blooded confrontation with youth of the party. Consequently, Bissau Regional Court ruled against 15MPs, preventing them of speaking on behalf of PAIGC, use of symbol, properties, flag of the party etc.



National People's Assembly of Guinea-Bissau, the parliament building in Bissau.
<http://www.nationsonline.org/gallery/Guinea-Bissau/National-Assembly-Building-Bissau.jpg>



Domingos Simoes Pereira, the incumbent president of the PAIGC
<http://www.gbissau.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Domingos-Simões-Pereira-Aliança-para-Unidade-e-Coesão-do-PAIGC.jpeg>



Prime Minister Gen. Umar Mokhtar Sissoco Embalo
<http://www.emansion.gov.lr/images/President%20Sirleaf%20and%20Prime%20Minister%20Umaro%20El%20Mokhtar%20Sissoco%20Embalo%20of%20Guinea%20Bissau.JPG>

In the same vein, the party held a "National Convention," ahead of its Congress, a forum in which it will craft its pre-campaign strategies for the legislative elections of March 2018, by initiating among others regional tours across the country.

Similarly, two organizational structures within the party, namely the women (UDEM⁴) and the youth (JAAC⁵) recently renewed their leadership, all in view of the election of the president of the party. By virtue of the Bissau-Guinean legislation, the president of a party that wins the elections can

automatically become the president of the republic.

Domingos Simoes Pereira, the incumbent president of the PAIGC might be re-elected during the party's congress and might possibly become the next prime minister if he successfully reorganizes the leadership of his party.

This will ultimately open avenues for him to run in the 2019 presidential elections away from any legal constraints.

As things stand, the state of affairs in the party is pretty complicated because of the lack of a sincere commitment by its leaders. In addition, President Vaz further complicated the predicament by repeatedly insinuating that he is not a signatory to the Conakry Agreement and as such, cannot be held responsible for its implementation.

On the 25th October 2017, the political landscape gained a new momentum. Under the leadership of PAIGC and with the authorization of its Central Committee, a "United Front" baptized "the collective of Democratic Political Parties" was formed comprising 17 parties, including Nuno Gomes Na Biam, the second best political party in the last presidential run-off and also known to be well-connected in the army circles.

The heightened tension among the political leaders carries a considerable

⁴UDEM: The Democratic Women's Union of Guinea (UDEM)
<http://cea.revues.org/155?lang=fr>

⁵JAAC: African Youth Amílcar Cabral

conflict potential with the risk of escalating into violence, and its scores of demonstrations as seen since March 2017 by citizens demanding either the resignation of President Vaz or his support for the Conakry Agreement as a way out of the crisis.

development of the country by delaying the adoption and implementation of government budgets by the ANP; It contributed to the breakdown of judicial systems and the gradual deterioration of the

If these grievances are not effectively addressed, the seeds for rebellion could trigger a chaotic situation and fuel violence that can create a haven for extremism in the country and region that is already grappling with the menace of violent extremism.



Nuno Gomes Na Biam, second most voted in last presidential run-off.
http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-GT2rpBd_IN4/UuPIYdPynII/AAAAAAAAABIQ/q1rUh_2r1qs/s1600/nuno+nabian.jpg

In the final analysis, the prevailing Political impasse and two-year blockage of the National Assembly constitute major challenges ahead of 2018 legislative elections. The role of the National Assembly is key to legitimate National Electoral Commission members through plenary polling of 2/3 of its 102 MPs.

infrastructure in schools and hospitals. Particularly disturbing is the loss of investors confidence in the political recovery of the country, especially the reluctance of creditors to honour financial pledges made at the Brussels International donor conference in March 2015.

Furthermore, given the fragile state of the country as a result of sustained corruption, coercion impunity, and drug trafficking, there are looming threats of poverty, and possibly a public display of defiance exacting the resignation of President Vaz.

III. IMPACT OF CURRENT DYNAMICS ON THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY

The deadlock in the PAIGC has negatively impacted the socioeconomic

II. SCENARIOS

Best Case:

Independent mediators (such as women groups supported by UNOGBIS, United Nations Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau) have initiated meetings with the different protagonists of the PAIGC and others from the opposition;

The three emblematic leaders (Jose Mario Vaz, Cipriano Cassama and Domingos Simoes Pereira) of the party could agree to dialogue and to respect the Conakry agreement.

Moreover, in this scenario, a Prime Minister is appointed under the agreement, and a new inclusive government is put in place. Fundamental reforms are conducted before the upcoming legislative elections of 2018, which are held in compliance with international standards; PAIGC also elects his new president, and all previous ones are appointed as honorary members of the party.



Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau : An opportunity not to be missed
<https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/styles/16x9-large/s3/guinea-bissau-19mar15.png?itok=FtT8Rq3>

Realistic case:

The PAIGC holds its next congress without reconciling with its 15 MPs. President Vaz appoints new Prime-minister without the consent of PAIGC; The President Jose Mario Vaz dismisses the National Assembly and calls for early elections. The demand for President Vas's resignation intensifies with street protests, and security agencies are deployed to maintain law and order and keep demonstrators in check.

Clashes between demonstrators and security agencies turn violent instigating widespread demonstrations and turmoil; citizens stage a civil uprising, forcing President Vaz out of power, as seen in Burkina Faso; the military naturally seizes power and pledges to organize elections within 90 days. The international community and ECOWAS impose sanctions on the country.

Worst Case 1:

The PAIGC loses his leader and sees a progressive fragmentation of the party; its members join other political parties. The competition for the leading position in the assembly grows intense.

The judiciary is used to persecute and arrest top PAIGC members under corruption allegations. Attacks against the political leaders reach an alarming proportion, chaos sets in.

Most of the PAIGC protagonists are forced to leave the scene. ECOWAS increases its contingent ECOMIG to keep peace and security in Guinea-Bissau.

The PAIGC loses all its senior leaders, the younger members take the reins of the party and set up the different organs of the party; From time on, the PAIGC shares the political cake with other political parties;

Finally, the elections are organized by a transitional government, under the auspices of the international community.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an urgent need

- To put in place an independent mediation commission to reconcile the PAIGC's leaders.

- To encourage President Vaz to dialogue with PAIGC, to unite the party.

Given the perpetual gridlock with the Conakry Agreement, international institutions like ECOWAS/AU/UN should explore alternative options of transforming the impasse, including bilateral engagement with President Vaz and the leadership of PAIGC on reasonable options to transform the impasse.

This is imperative given the fact that the impasse resonates more with internal PAIGC issues and a consensus with the PAIGC leadership could facilitate consensus with other actors.

It is good to encourage all stakeholders in the party to refrain from statements and actions that could escalate tensions and incite violence.

Similarly, it behooves the international community to design "A strong peace infrastructure in Guinea-Bissau ahead of 2018, and 2019 parliamentary and presidential elections respectively (which) will be an important vehicle through which electoral disputes and tensions will be prevented and addressed⁶.

Finally, it is fitting to create the organs of the Electoral Administration and appoint a non-partisan executive office to the National Election Commission is recommended⁷.

⁶<http://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/resolving-protracted-political-crises-guinea-bissau/>

⁷<http://www.panapress.com/L-UE-recommande-une-revision-de-la-loi-electorale-de-la-Guinee-Bissau--13-666198-17-lang4-index.html>
<http://cea.revues.org/155?lang=fr>

IV. CONCLUSION

The longstanding crisis inside PAIGC and its direct and negative impact on the institutions and broad governance of the country have become not only a real challenge but a permanent danger to peace and security.

The implications go beyond the frontiers of the country; they do affect the ECOWAS sub-region and more, especially because of the criminal activities that ensued.

The level of vulnerability and many risks the nation faces represent serious challenges and a reason ECOWAS and international partners like AU, UN, EU, CPLP ought to develop strategies for an effective resolution of the crisis and a roadmap for post-crisis state reforms and development.

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