

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Guinea-Bissau

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	6	6	0	Democ:	7	7	0	Autoc:	1	1	0	Durable:		5		Tentative:		Yes		
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Tentative:		Yes																							
SCODE	GNB	CCODE	404	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	2	4	6	3	4																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date	30 September 2005		Begin Date	1 October 2005																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1999																								
Executive(s)	President Malam Bacai Sanhá (PAIGC); directly elected 28 June and 26 July 2009, 37.5% and 63.3% Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior (PAIGC); appointed by the president on 25 December 2008																								
Legislature	Unicameral: People's National Assembly (100 seats; directly elected; most recent elections, 16 November 2008) African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC): 67 Party for Social Renewal (PRS): 28 Other parties: 5																								
Judiciary	Supreme Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)

For much of the past decade Guinea-Bissau has struggled to recover from the collapse of central governance following ex-President João Bernardo Vieira's attempt to remove his chief of staff, General Ansumane Mané, from office in June 1998. Amidst widespread civil violence President Vieira was finally ousted from power by troops loyal to Mané in May 1999. The military junta named National Assembly Speaker Maladan Bacai Sanhá (PAIGC) Interim President and established a timetable for the return of democratic governance. Six candidates competed in the presidential elections held in November 1999.

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

After a second round of balloting in January 2000, Kumba Yala was ultimately declared the victor over Sanha with 72% of the vote. These elections were deemed relatively free and fair by international observers. However, Yala's government proved to be widely unpopular, chronically unstable and, ultimately, short-lived.

President Yala's reign was marred by frequent cabinet changes, poor relations with the media, labor and the military, as well as claims of ethnic favoritism. Like most of the army's top brass, President Yala belonged to the county's dominant Balante tribe. Despite promising to act as a unifier and a healer of the country, Yala's short-term in office was plagued by frequent criticisms that he openly favored his own Balante people. After alienating most of his former allies, President Yala was finally overthrown in a bloodless coup led by General Verussuni Correia Seabra on 14 September 2003. The coup occurred less than two days after the National Election Commission declared that the parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2003 would have to be postponed – for the fifth time – due to irregularities in the voter lists. The National Assembly had been dismissed by President Yala in November 2002 and the endless delays in reconvening parliament had produced a serious budget crisis in the country. Prior to the coup, the country's civil servants and military personnel had been unpaid for several months. The September 2003 coup generated little outcry from either the country's political parties or the international community.

The coup against president Yala gained widespread domestic and international support after the army agreed to rapidly hand over power to a broad-based civilian administration charged with returning the country to democratic governance within eighteen months. Henrique Rosa, a prominent businessman, was appointed president (with Artur Sanha assuming the role as prime minister) by the military on 28 September 2003 after consultation with the main political parties. General Seabra, the army chief of staff who led the coup, has taken on a lower political profile, leaving most decisions to the transitional government. Moreover, prior to the inauguration of President Rosa, the military signed an agreement with the country's main political and civil society groups to set-up a fifty-six member National Transitional Council. The Council served as the country's legislative body until the PAIGC emerged as the dominant party in the legislative elections held on 28 March 2004. International observers declared these elections to be free, fair and transparent.

Guinea-Bissau's return to constitutional rule was completed in July 2005 with the holding of presidential elections, won by Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira, running as an independent. Despite coming in second to Malam Bacai Sanha of the African Independent Party in the first round of voting held on 19 June, Vieira achieved a narrow victory in the second round, held on 24 July, with 52.35% of the vote. Despite fears of armed competition after Sanha's loss, the two rivals have remained conciliatory in the years following the election. On 23 November 2008, mutinous soldiers attacked the presidential palace but were repulsed by forces loyal to President Vieira.

Rivalry between President João Bernardo Vieira and the head of the Armed Forces, Gen. Baptista Tagme Na Wai, resulted in the assassinations of both men on consecutive days, 1-2 March 2009. According to constitutional procedures, the Speaker of the National People's Assembly, Raimundo Pereira, was named acting president until elections could be held. Presidential election was held on 28 June with a run-off election held on 26 July. Malam Bacai Sanhá (PAIGC) was elected over Kumba Yalla (PRS); Yalla immediately recognized Sanhá's victory. While the elections were deemed by international observers to be relatively free and fair, nonetheless, there were incidents of political intimidation and violence. In June 2009 presidential candidates Baciro Dabo and former defense minister Helder Proenca were both killed after allegedly orchestrating a coup plot. Sanah assumed the office of president on 8 September 2009.

Executive Constraints: Near Parity (6)

In the early 2000s, relations between President Yala and the legislative and judicial branches of government were strained. While Parliament passed a new draft constitution in early 2001, the president refused to promulgate it. Although President Yala did not veto the new constitution, he simply sent it back to the Assembly, advocating a stronger role for the president in future drafts. Moreover, in another attempt to flex his political muscle, President Yala removed four judges from the Supreme Court in the fall of 2001, an act that sparked widespread political protests throughout the country. In response to continued discord over the constitution, in November 2002 the president dismissed his prime minister and dissolved the legislature. Opposition parties claimed that President Yala was mounting an institutional coup d'état through his dissolution of the parliament, control of judicial powers and arbitrary arrests and harassment of the news media. Legislative elections, originally scheduled for February 2003, were repeatedly postponed.

The coup that deposed Yala in September 2003 has ushered in a new era of politics in Guinea-Bissau with a higher degree of horizontal accountability within the country. During the final months of 2003 the military, in consultation with the major political parties and civil society, actively paved the way for the return to democratic governance, signified by legislative elections in March 2004 and presidential elections in July 2005. These elections produced a new, largely independent, Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, who was appointed by newly elected President Vieira in November 2005. Gomes resigned after a no-confidence vote in March 2007, the result of reorganization of party alliances within the legislature, and was succeeded by Martinho Kabi. The appointment of Kabi, which was opposed by the president but supported by a majority in Parliament, suggested that the Parliament was developing greater constraints on the executive. In legislative elections held on 16 November 2008, the ruling PAIGC increased its control by winning 67 of 100 seats; the main opposition Social Renewal Party (PRS) won 28 seats. In the wake of these elections, Carlos Gomes, a reformist member of the PAIGC and outspoken critic of President Vieira, assumed the post of prime minister. While the PAIGC continued to dominate the political arena in Guinea-Bissau, as it had done since independence, the increasing fractionalization of the party, in conjunction with semi-presidential nature of the political system in which power is divided between the president and the prime minister, produced deep acrimony between the president and the parliament and paralyzed the functioning of government.

Political Participation: Political Liberalization or Democratic Retrenchment: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)

The multi-party legislative elections of March 2004 were deemed free and fair by international observers. Despite this promising event, politics in Guinea-Bissau continue to be factional in nature. Deep-seated ethnic and political rivalries continue work under the surface in this country. While there has been significant progress since the civil war of 1998 to establish a unified political order, personal and communal rivalries continue to shape and influence politics in this poor West African country. Three distinct factions emerged after the civil war. The PAIGC, originally the country's only legal party, maintains dominance in the system, although the group fractionalized in the 2005 election when its two most powerful members, Sanha and Vieira, duelled for the presidency. Opposition to the PAIGC, in the form of a loose coalition of opposition parties, remains active, but largely fractionalized after it managed to unseat the PAIGC in the 1999 elections. The third major faction has been the most influential in some ways, and consists of the armed forces, which are dominated by the Balanta ethnic group but had split prior to the 2003 coup into camps loyal to President Vieira and the late-General Mane. In an effort to help reunify the country in the wake of the September 2003 coup, General Seabra announced plans to reintegrate forces loyal to ex-President Vieira and the late-General Mane back into the armed forces – although no firm timetable was set.

In October 2004 an army mutiny, sparked by protests over salary arrears, resulted in the death of the chief of the armed forces, General Verissimo Correia Seabra. The mutineers denied that they were trying to overthrow the government. In addition to gaining amnesty (going back to 1980), the mutineers were also permitted to select the new chief of staff of the armed forces. General Tagme Na Wai, a member of the Balanta ethnic group, was selected to replace General Seabra. Seabra was one of the few senior military officers who were not from the Balanta group. The Balanta make up over one-third of the population and constitute a majority of members in the 10,000 member army. Seabra was a member of the Papel ethnic group.

While the institutions of civilian government have persisted in Guinea-Bissau in the aftermath of the 1998-99 civil war, no elected president has been able to fully exert their authority over the leading factions within the military. These factions, emboldened by the power and riches associated with the arrival of the international drug trade to the country in recent years, have increasingly used their coercive capacity to intimidate and overwhelm the institutions of democratic governance in the country. The military, which holds over 25% of the federal budget and has a bloated officer corps, has been the target of international reform efforts but has strongly resisted any efforts to streamline and professionalize its institutional structure and remove its influence from levers of government. The role of the military in the democratic order has also been facilitated by the desire of President Vieira to retain his hold on power. In the wake of his return from exile in 2005 (after fleeing the country during the civil war in the late 1990s), President Vieira found himself unable to exert his full control over the PAIGC, a party that he had led since independence. As deep divisions with the PAIGC emerged over the direction of the party and the role of Vieira in it, President Vieira became increasingly dependent on the military to exert his authority. In particular, he forged a tactical alliance with his long-time political enemy, General Tagme. In return for

giving Gen. Tagme control over the military by making him chief of defense (ultimate control of the armed forces is the sole domain of the chief of defense, not the elected civilian heads of government.), Tagme agreed to protect the president against rivals both from inside the PAIGC and from within the hostile Balanta-dominated military that had driven him from power in 1999. By late 2008, however, the tactical alliance between the two broke down as each sought to exert their control over the other through the use of violence. The rivalry between Vieira and Tagme came to a sudden end as both men were assassinated on consecutive days in early March 2009. Tagme was the third defense minister to be assassinated in Guinea-Bissau since the end of the civil war.

The elected government of Guinea-Bissau experienced another serious challenge on 1 April 2010 when ex-Navy Chief of Staff Bubo Na Tchuto, accompanied by troops loyal to Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army Antonio Indjai arrested Defense Chief of Staff Jose Zamara Induta and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes. Na Tchuto, who had gone into exile after being accused of plotting a coup in 2008 and who has ties to the international drug cartels operating within the country, had been taking refuge in a UN office in the capital city since December 2009. After a brief detention, Prime Minister Gomes was subsequently released and returned to office after a vocal reaction by both domestic civil society groups and the international community. However, in the aftermath, in April 2010 the President appointed Indjai as the new chief of staff of the military and in October 2010 Na Tchuto was reinstated to his post as head of the navy. While President Sanah has publically defended his decision to appoint both men to these positions of power, what remains unclear is how much and what kind of influence these military leaders will exert on civilian leadership and policy decisions. President Sanha was under intense pressure to sack Prime Minister Gomes but, with the support of neighboring African countries, he has been able to resist that demand.