

# The Bissau Monitor ~ June, 2009

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Reporting Period: June 1-30, 2009

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**Overall Trend: *Worsening developments in the security, institutional, and political sectors created an overall deteriorated situation during this reporting period and a resulting high potential for violent conflict stemming from the political and security sectors remains possible.***

## THE GENERAL SITUATION

The general situation in Guinea-Bissau deteriorated during this month.

This June issue of *The Bissau Monitor* is produced after the disclosure of the first round of presidential election results. While the June 28 elections were generally deemed free and fair by international observers, the period covered includes major events like the assassinations of Baciro Dabo and Helder Proença (along with his body guard and his driver) plus the arrests of the Head of State Information Services and an eminent academic and former Prime Minister, M. Faustino Imbali. Moreover, the atmosphere surrounding the elections was not an overly positive one, being described as tense, fearful, and suspicious.

July will therefore be a critical month as the second round of the elections will be held.

## THE SECURITY AND POLITICAL SECTORS

According to many observer missions (EU, AU, ECOWAS, and UEMO) the June 28 elections were well organized, transparent, free, and credible. The official results confirm the necessity of holding a second round, planned for 26 July, between Malam Bacai Sanha (PAIGC) who received 133, 786 votes and Kumba Yala (PRS) who received 99,428 votes of the total 356, 430 votes. The independent candidate Henrique Pereira Rosa obtained 81,751 votes. The abstention rate reached 40%.

While the first round occurred in a peaceful environment, the pre-electoral period (particularly the pre-campaign period) was remarkably violent, with the assassinations the same night (June 5<sup>th</sup>) of Baciro Dabo (former minister of Interior under the reign of Nino Vieira and independent candidate to the 28 June presidential election) and Helder Proença (former minister in the first Government under Nino, in 2005) along with his driver and his body guard; as well as the arrest of a certain number of people, including an academic and former Prime Minister, Faustino Imbali, who was severely beaten and injured.

These assassinations and violent arrests were committed by the Military Police under the pretext of preventing a coup attempt. Two communiqués issued by the State Information Services and the government

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were not credible enough, however, to convince a majority of citizens that these deaths resulted during the process of making arrests in order to avert a coup attempt.

Moreover, after these assassinations rumours of the assassination of General Zamora Induta were circulated, increasing the general level of fear and suspicion among the population. These rumours were later proven false when General Zamora Induta made a series of media appearances later that evening and the next day.

Partially related to these dramatic events and due to the obvious impunity which protected those responsible for them, the electoral campaign was launched in an atmosphere of suspicion and fear. Some of the obvious consequences of this atmosphere have certainly been the noticeable apathy of the citizens during the electoral campaign and the low participation rate.

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR**

The institutional sector saw changes during this reporting period. Unfortunately, the judicial system is still revealing some major weaknesses as evidenced by its inability to complete the investigations into March and June assassinations. Moreover, the fact that the military is undertaking policing functions within the country also reveals that Guinea-Bissau is moving further away from legitimate rule of law because such operations by the military are in violation of national and international laws.

On the other hand, the government made a pledge for undertaking rearrangement after the Presidential election. Other positive developments are seen in the financial support from the IMF, Angola, China, and UNOGBIS to strengthen various institutional capacities within the country.

## **THE ECONOMIC SECTOR**

The economic sector saw few improvements during this period. In particular, the cashew nut commercial campaign has had limited impact and salaries remain unpaid.

## **THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR**

Civil society was very active during this period with undertaking many activities aimed at promoting a peaceful election (e.g. having politicians sign a code of conduct, holding radio debates, improving voter education through radio programming, etc.). National laws prevent civil society groups from observing the elections. Nevertheless, some groups succeeded to informally and discretely monitor the election with the aim of resolving any minor disputes that emerged in the polling stations.

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## VIOLENCE TRIGGERS

The following three Violence Triggers were present during this reporting period:

1. The people arrested in early June were not transferred to judiciary authorities and the director of the State Information Services is still in detention. Furthermore, a full investigation into these attacks has not been completed.
2. The 28 June presidential elections.
3. The unsolved issue of the March, 2009 assassinations.

## TARGETING VULNERABILITIES TO VIOLENCE

The following activities that address the Vulnerabilities to Violence occurred during this reporting period:

TARGETING VULNERABILITIES TO VIOLENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portugal advocates for an international military presence.</li> <li>- EOWAS sent 5 high level officers to assess the security situation.</li> <li>- ECOWAS will pay 3 months salary of the military.</li> <li>- Security Council as well as all the international community condemns the June assassinations.</li> <li>- Training session for the Judiciary Police staff held.</li> <li>- Launching of a campaign against light weapons proliferation.</li> <li>- EU analyses SSR with the objective of preparing a document for the pension fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IMF, China, Angola, UNDP, ECOWAS, UN, and others supported the electoral process and capacity building activities for the institutional sector.</li> <li>- Prime Minister announced Government rearrangement after the Presidential Election.</li> <li>- UN Secretary-General reaffirms the necessity of an international enquiry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IMF approved the post-conflict program.</li> <li>- UNICEF's support to the protection of women and children program.</li> <li>- Portuguese cooperation, via UNPF, supports the Gabu Hospital.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Much civil society involvement in the civic education campaign.</li> <li>- Demonstrations held in support of a peaceful election.</li> <li>- Informal electoral monitoring initiative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The candidates' commitment for a peaceful election.</li> </ul>
	© Dr. Ben Hoffman	<b>SV1</b> Security Sector	<b>SV2</b> Institutional Sector	<b>SV3</b> Economic Sector	<b>SV4</b> Civil Society

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## RECOMMENDATIONS: ACTIONS FOR TARGETING ACTORS AND FACTORS WHICH MAKE VIOLENT CONFLICT MORE LIKELY

The following recommendations address the gap between the Violence Triggers and the Targeted Actions from the previous two sections by targeting those remaining actors and factors which make violent conflict more likely:

- ✓ Impunity must not be tolerated any longer in Guinea-Bissau: the UN should take immediate steps to act on the request from the Prime Minister for providing greater assistance with fighting impunity. This will help counter the growing climate of fear and intimidation. Moreover, other steps to help promote a "culture of peace" and counter impunity such as reinforcing the rule of law through institution-building and seriously considering the presence UN Civilian Police at this juncture, fully and completely respecting human rights (and having the government and the military publicly commit to this), and completing the investigation of the March and June assassinations plus bringing those responsible for these crimes to justice would create an enormous impact.
- ✓ The elections are a necessary but not sufficient first step towards improving stability in Guinea-Bissau. Hence, the elections in and of themselves will not guarantee stability. The potential for further violence is still very real. In fact, the elections themselves may trigger this new violence. This stems from the fact that holding the elections does nothing to actually change the underlying "corrosive" political culture nor do they address the long-standing rivalries between different members of the political and military elites. Moreover, the elections themselves might actually spark further unrest because they are going to create a major shift in political power. In order to help avert this situation from occurring there is a need to take intensified efforts to moderate political conflict through increased dialogue and/or mediated talks between a core group of politicians and the military.

### About this Report

This report is produced by the Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation (CIAN) for the International Peace and Prosperity Project (IPPP) in Guinea-Bissau.

CIAN is a Canadian NGO dedicated to the prevention and resolution of violent conflict and to building sustainable peace at local, national, and international levels. For more info on CIAN or the IPPP see [www.cian.org](http://www.cian.org)

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