

**Committee:** Security Council (SC)

**Topic:** The Situation in Guinea-Bissau

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### Topic Introduction

The state of Guinea-Bissau, located in West Africa, ever since gaining independence from Portugal in 1974 has been facing a long-lasting crisis that has been degrading not only the national economy and security, but also its political landscape. As a result, Guinea-Bissau has been subject to numerable coup d'états aiming at changing the constitution and has undergone various financial restrictions, with public financial management (PFM) systems being the main measure of restoring economic growth. Illegal trafficking, notably drug-trafficking and weapon trafficking, is also a significant component of the challenges the leaders of the country have to face in order to ameliorate the situation in the country. Citizens do not only have poor quality of life due to the frail economy, but also continuously live under feelings of insecurity and fear of being killed amidst the conflicts that are currently taking place as a means of altering the governing system. Thus, it is imperative that direct action be taken to improve the condition of the area effectively.

### Definition of key concepts

#### Coup d'état

The term Coup d'état refers to “the sudden defeat of a government through illegal force by a small group, often by a military one”<sup>1</sup>. “Such illegal actions have occurred a total of 15 times in the state of Guinea-Bissau, including attempted as well as successful coups”<sup>2</sup>.

#### Constitution

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. “Coup D'état.” @CambridgeWords, 20 Sept. 2023, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coup-d-etat?q=coup+d%27%C3%A9tat.

<sup>2</sup> “Frequency of Coup Events from 1945 to 2022, by Country | Cline Center.” Clinecenter.illinois.edu, clinecenter.illinois.edu/project/research-themes/democracy-and-development/coup-detat-project/freq-table.



A Constitution refers to “a set of political principles based on which the government of a state functions, especially in relation to the rights of the people living in it”<sup>3</sup>.

### Public Financial Management System (PFM)

A PFM refers to “a set of rules, institutions, policies and processes that govern the way public funds are used and distributed among different sectors as a means of aiding the public”<sup>4</sup>. Such funds are usually raised through tax collection and donor funding support.

### Trafficking

The act of trafficking refers to “the buying or selling of goods illegally”<sup>5</sup>. There can be many types of trafficking, however, in Guinea-Bissau drug trafficking, human trafficking and sex trafficking are most prominent.

### Transit Zone

A transit zone is “the area surrounding a port of entry in a coastal country that serves as a storage and distribution center for the convenience of a neighbouring country”<sup>6</sup>. Guinea-Bissau can be characterized as a transit zone for the illegal transportation of drugs.

### Transitional Government

A transitional government is “a temporary government ruling a state until official elections can take place in the area”<sup>7</sup>.

## Background Information

### Background history

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<sup>3</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. “CONSTITUTION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Cambridge.org*, 16 Oct. 2019, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/constitution](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/constitution).

<sup>4</sup> “Public Financial Management | FP Financing Roadmap.” *Www.fppfinancingroadmap.org*, [www.fppfinancingroadmap.org/learning/specific-topics/public-financial-management](https://www.fppfinancingroadmap.org/learning/specific-topics/public-financial-management).

<sup>5</sup> “TRAFFICKING | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary.” *Dictionary.cambridge.org*, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trafficking](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trafficking).

<sup>6</sup> “What Is Transit Zone? Definition and Meaning.” *Dictionary of International Trade*, [www.globalnegotiator.com/international-trade/dictionary/transit-zone/#:~:text=A%20transit%20zone%20is%20administered%20so%20the%20goods](https://www.globalnegotiator.com/international-trade/dictionary/transit-zone/#:~:text=A%20transit%20zone%20is%20administered%20so%20the%20goods).

<sup>7</sup> “Transitional Government | Meaning of Transitional Government in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English | LDOCE.” *Ldoceonline.com*, 2020, [www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/transitional-government](https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/transitional-government).



Guinea-Bissau, a Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC), first came into contact with European states in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, mainly because of trading practices and explorers. As a result of the lack of governance of Guinea-Bissau and mainly because of the bilateral relations of it with European countries, the Portuguese managed to enslave a great number of residents of Guinea-Bissau hoping to benefit their own powerful country. Eventually, the Portuguese took control of the area by colonizing it. The Portuguese had asserted their dominance over the entire area of Guinea, but mainly in the coastal areas. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, colonialism was at its peak in Africa and Portugal still had control of the exportations from Guinea-Bissau.

During World War II (WWII), a great number of African countries gained political and military experience by protesting and through submitting petitions, resulting in the emergence of nationalistic movements in the region. In 1956, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was founded, and its goal was to achieve independence through peaceful negotiations. In 1959 however, the Portuguese responded to the protests with violence and killings. Despite the Portuguese soldiers, the PAIGC managed to gain control of over the two thirds of the country. Finally, following negotiations between Portugal and the African nationalistic groups in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Bissau managed to become an independent state.

More on the history of Guinea-Bissau: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Guinea-Bissau/History>

### Aspects of the crisis

#### Political instability

The state of Guinea-Bissau has been suffering from political instability and uncertainty. After the government has been elected, it is often overthrown by smaller organizations, in some cases including military interference. The so-called coup d'états resulted from the displeasure that the people of Guinea-Bissau felt regarding the ineffectiveness of the actions and decisions of the government at the time, believing that some were worsening the political situation in the country. As a consequence of the above, Guinea-Bissau is not given the opportunity to strengthen its affairs and ameliorate the situation of the society as well as the economy. A particularly notable coup took place in 2003, on



September 14<sup>th</sup>, when the military overthrew the democratically elected government of President Kumba Yala<sup>8</sup>. The coup was not only successful but also caused minimum disruption.

### Frail economy

In Guinea-Bissau, economic growth and development are still constrained. As the economy of the country mainly relies on the exportation of a limited range of produce, mainly cashew nuts, it is clear that this dependency hinders Guinea-Bissau from reaching more of its economic potential<sup>9</sup>. Generally, it is shown that when the exports of a country are relatively less than the imports, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of it decreases. More specifically, this dependency makes Guinea-Bissau vulnerable as in when its exports will be available for sale. Harsh weather conditions and other external factors could very easily damage the products that were to be sold, making it more difficult for the state of Guinea-Bissau to economically benefit. The fragile Public Financial Management System (PFM) of Guinea-Bissau also adds to the economic issues it faces. Residents of Guinea-Bissau have long voiced complaints over the ineffectiveness of the PFM of the state as it has managed very little to restore economic growth.

### Illegal Trafficking

Guinea-Bissau has been suffering from drug and human trafficking for many years now. Firstly, Guinea-Bissau serves as a transit zone for the illegal transportation of drugs, particularly cocaine. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Guinea-Bissau is among the most important entry points for cocaine from South America on its way from Europe<sup>10</sup>. That is the reason why residing in Guinea-Bissau is particularly dangerous, as people could easily serve as victims of sex trafficking and human trafficking. In addition to that, illegal drug transportation is bound to cause violence acts, which, in many cases, involve innocent people too, except for criminals that are responsible for transporting the drugs. Other than making Guinea-Bissau unstable, trafficking also makes it a very unsafe country to be in regarding human rights. Human trafficking taking place for the purpose of labor and forced prostitution is a practice that marginalizes the human rights of the residents of

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<sup>8</sup> <file:///C:/Users/georg/Downloads/63-Article%20Text-215-2-10-20200926.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> "Economic Update 2024: Challenges and Opportunities for Economic Growth in Guinea-Bissau." *World Bank*, [www.worldbank.org/en/country/guineabissau/publication/economic-update-2024-challenges-and-opportunities-for-economic-growth-in-guinea-bissau](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guineabissau/publication/economic-update-2024-challenges-and-opportunities-for-economic-growth-in-guinea-bissau).

<sup>10</sup> "Guinea Bissau: Mafia, Drugs and a Former President's Son – DW – 07/11/2023." *Dw.com*, [www.dw.com/en/guinea-bissau-mafia-drugs-and-a-former-presidents-son/a-66135658](http://www.dw.com/en/guinea-bissau-mafia-drugs-and-a-former-presidents-son/a-66135658).



Guinea-Bissau, leaving them unprotected. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of protection against natural and man-made hazards”<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Benfield, John. *THE RIGHT to SAFETY: SOME CONCEPTUAL and PRACTICAL ISSUES*. 2003.



Timeline of Events

<u>1956</u>	The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was founded by a group of nationalists.
<u>1959</u>	The Portugese government responds to the peaceful protests of the PAIGC with violence, resulting to a great number of killings.
<u>September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1973</u>	The PAIGC National Assembly declared the Independence of Guinea-Bissau.
<u>September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1974</u>	The state of Portugal officially granted the independence of Guinea-Bissau.
<u>September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1974</u>	Guinea-Bissau becomes a member of the United Nations (UN). <sup>12</sup>
<u>2011</u>	The EU (European Union) offers aid to Guinea-Bissau as a result of concern over the governance and political stability in it.
<u>April 2012</u>	A military coup prevented the presidential elections after the death of the previous governor named Malam Bacai Sanha.
<u>April 2014</u>	After the ruling of a transitional government, Jose Mario Vaz was elected president of Guinea-Bissau after a fair and free election process.
<u>2019</u>	Presidents Vaz and Embaló seek to control the legislature and the justice system by testing the limits of the constitution. <sup>13</sup>

## Major countries/ organizations and alliances

### China

China is one of the countries that have played a significant role in the diplomatic affairs of Guinea-Bissau, as it has offered the LEDC a lot of diplomatic and political support. The relations between the two states were ideal until 1990, when Guinea-Bissau recognized the Chinese Taipei as an independent state; which now goes by the name Taiwan; and which has been recognized by many countries globally<sup>14</sup>. After 8 years, China restored ties with Guinea-Bissau once again, which was beneficial to the aim of the PRC to isolate Taiwan and reintegrate it back to the mainland.

### Portugal

The state of Portugal is one that certainly is linked to the issue of Guinea-Bissau, due to the fact that it was the one in charge of Guinea-Bissau for many centuries until it finally gained its independence. Even though Portugal is not and has not been involved in the current situation taking place in Guinea-Bissau, the two countries still maintain strong relations due to the cultural similarities they share. Nowadays, the state of Portugal has its own diplomatic office in Guinea-Bissau.

### Senegal

Senegal, also being a Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC) in the African continent shares a border with the state of Guinea-Bissau. After gaining their independence, Guinea-Bissau had to stabilize the borders of the region in order to facilitate economic development as well as growth. However, conflict arose when Senegal claimed a certain area in between the two states, which, rich in resources, would certainly benefit them both. After negotiations failed to bring result, troops were sent from Senegal to Guinea-Bissau deteriorating the relationship in between the two countries.

### United States of America (USA)

The United States also maintain close relations with the state of Guinea-Bissau. The US work continuously to promote trading practices, enhance safety, strengthen governance and the rule of law in the country. The P5 country also has its own embassy in the state of Guinea-Bissau.

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<sup>14</sup> Horta, Loro. "Guinea-Bissau: China Sees a Risk Worth Taking." *Wwww.csis.org*, 5 Oct. 2007, [www.csis.org/analysis/guinea-bissau-china-sees-risk-worth-taking](http://www.csis.org/analysis/guinea-bissau-china-sees-risk-worth-taking).



If you wish to commit further research on the relations between USA and Guinea-Bissau, you will find this link particularly useful: <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-guinea-bissau/>

### The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is an Organization dedicated to aiding children and teenagers, which has, for many years, voiced concern about the situation in Guinea-Bissau. Aiming at protecting children's rights living in the country, UNICEF has implemented multiple campaigns and programmes aiding the younger populations of Guinea-Bissau, while at the same time raising awareness on the issues taking place in it. Currently, the UNICEF Guinea-Bissau Country Programme 2022-2026 is responsible for taking care of children in the LEDC<sup>15</sup>.

More on the work of UNICEF in aiding children in Guinea-Bissau: <https://www.unicef.org/guineabissau/what-we-do>

More on the work of Amnesty International (a Non-Governmental Organization) in trying to ameliorate the situation in Guinea-Bissau: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr30/001/2012/en/>

### Previous attempts to solve the issue

#### The work of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

While the situation in Guinea-Bissau is often disregarded, there have been some previous attempts to solve the issues of political instability, marginalization of human rights and frail economy. Firstly, multiple Non-Governmental Organizations have organized campaigns aiming at raising money and awareness to help ameliorate the situation in the region, such as Penny Appeal, which donates money aiming at limiting poverty and Mercy Ships, which is an organization that uses hospital ships to deliver medicine to Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)<sup>16</sup>.

More on the work of the above-mentioned organizations: <https://ngoexplorer.org/country/gnb/show-charities>, <https://pennyappeal.org/appeal/feed-our-world/feed-guinea-bissau>, <https://mercyships.africa/guinea-bissau/>.

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<sup>15</sup> "What We Do | UNICEF Guinea-Bissau." *Www.unicef.org*, [www.unicef.org/guineabissau/what-we-do](http://www.unicef.org/guineabissau/what-we-do).

<sup>16</sup> "Guinea-Bissau | NGO Explorer." *Ngoexplorer.org*, [ngoexplorer.org/country/gnb/show-charities](https://ngoexplorer.org/country/gnb/show-charities).





### Trade practices by USA:

Additionally, the United States of America have shown to wish to help Guinea-Bissau by enhancing trading practices and investments as means to boost the national economy. Some trade agreements include the U.S. and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), in which Guinea-Bissau is included, as well as the Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)<sup>17</sup>.

### European Union's (EU) financial aid

Finally, the European Union (EU), except for dedicating a great number of action plans to Guinea-Bissau, has allocated a generous fund of 112 million euros for the Guinea partnership over 2021-2024, thus reducing high levels of poverty and inequality.<sup>18</sup>

## Possible solutions

### Launching peacekeeping missions in Guinea-Bissau

It is essential that action be taken to protect the rights of the residents of Guinea-Bissau from the political instability, violence and trafficking in the region. Therefore, it is recommended that a peacekeeping mission be authorized by the Security Council, in order to monitor the state and situation of the residents of Guinea-Bissau. Additionally, annual reports could be presented to the Security Council (UNSC) as a means of being alert, should an illegal act rise unexpectedly.

### Encouraging peaceful negotiations and International Court of Justice's advisory opinion

It has been shown that by promoting dialogue, multiple threatening issues can be resolved. For instance, in the case of Guinea-Bissau and its territorial conflict with Senegal, the leaders of the two states will be encouraged by the Security Council to find a solution to the divergence peacefully. Additionally, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) could contribute to the resolving of the topic by analyzing the problem that has been caused, and breaking it down with the aim of finding a long-term solution, acceptable from both sides of the conflict. ICJ's claim will be obligatory for both states.

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<sup>17</sup> "Guinea-Bissau." *United States Trade Representative*, [ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/guinea-bissau](https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/guinea-bissau).

<sup>18</sup> "Guinea-Bissau - European Commission." *International-Partnerships.ec.europa.eu*, [international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/guinea-bissau\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/guinea-bissau_en).



### Enhancing cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Guinea-Bissau, being a fragile country in the context of trafficking, and mainly drug trafficking could cooperate with UNODC, which focuses on enhancing and promoting justice and rule of law as a means of limiting, and finally eliminating the illegal transportation of drugs completely. The UNODC can be responsible for organizing specific safety programmes that will detect and forbid any form of trafficking in the region of Guinea-Bissau in cooperation with the government.

### Improvement of law enforcement training

It is crystal clear that safety be ensured only with the improvement of the situation of law enforcement in Guinea-Bissau. It is imperative that law enforcement not only be properly trained but also available and present at all times in case there is a violent occurrence that will threaten the safety of the residents of Guinea-Bissau. The training of personnel ought to be funded by Non-governmental Organizations, such as Amnesty International and is bound to make the country a more secure place to live in. In the case of corruption by the said personnel, the government of Guinea-Bissau will be responsible for imposing penalties, so as to ensure that those who have violated the law will be held accountable for their actions.

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