

# Beyond Compromises: Reform Prospects in Guinea-Bissau

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful resistance of the Bissau-Guinean authorities to an attempted coup on 26 December 2011 is encouraging. It confirms the stabilisation the country has been experiencing since the political and military turmoil of 1 April 2010. However, this relative stability is the outcome of fragile, uncertain and very ambiguous compromises. Crucial political, military and judicial challenges still lie ahead. The death of President Malam Bacai Sanhá on 9 January 2012 raises questions over the country's future. Political parties will have to manage inter- and intra-party competition and resist the temptation to harp on inter-communal tensions and the manipulation of army factions. Security sector reform (SSR) is pending, while the March and June 2009 assassinations still generate rumours, accusations and threats. Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior's regime, while solid, has yet to improve the country's overall situation. International involvement must remain steady, sustained and critical. Angola must do more to improve communication, transparency and coordination with other international actors.

The dominant political and military factions reached a tacit agreement in the wake of the overthrow of army Chief of Staff Zamora Induta by his deputy António Injai and the brief arrest of Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior on 1 April 2010. The country's dependence on international assistance, which is recognised by ordinary Guineans, and the firm response of the European Union (EU) and the U.S., have strengthened the hand of other international actors and the Guinean authorities to negotiate with the military. Tensions between the late president's and the prime minister's camps, both members of the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), have gradually diminished.

The leaders of the 1 April 2010 events, General Injai and Admiral Bubo na Tchuto – long regarded as the strongman of cocaine trafficking from Latin America – have both recognised the legitimacy of the civilian rule, in exchange for a validation of their leadership over the army. The 26 December 2011 military unrest, which is subject to several interpretations, has, however, led to the arrest of na Tchuto without charges being brought against him. Angola has proven a key player during this delicate period. Luanda has deployed – albeit with a crucial lack of transparency – a robust military cooperation mission and provided material support to the Guinean state.

State reforms, favourable economic conditions and significant donor support have also slightly improved the economy and strengthened police and justice capacities. This has consolidated the tacit agreement between politicians and the army top brass and the legitimacy of the civilian leadership. A resumption of development has ensued, as well as some progress in investment plans in a promising natural resource sector.

But the most important developments have yet to come. The country faces daunting political

hurdles: the PAIGC's forthcoming congress and its factionalism; the death of President Sanhá and presidential elections which should be held by March 2012; the legislative elections scheduled for the end of the year; and the subsequent local elections – the first in the country's post-colonial history. These milestones will likely consolidate the hegemony of the PAIGC and the prime minister. The future of a marginalised opposition hangs in the balance, as it may be tempted by radicalisation and resort to force. Some opposition parties are using recent tensions to capitalise on the unresolved political assassinations of 2009 and defy the prime minister.

Structural reforms to strengthen the state and foster development, especially SSR, represent another challenge. The future of the army is uncertain. Can 2,500 soldiers demobilise as scheduled? Will the military abide by rule by civilians who have fulfilled their obligations better than before with regards to the army? Does the international community's condition that controversial military leaders step down endanger reforms? Have the Angolan military presence and the likelihood of more robust international intervention really changed those leaders' calculations? All these questions, combined with concerns, notably from Nigeria and Senegal, about Angola's growing leadership, delay and weaken international support for wider reforms, particularly regarding the much needed pension fund.

The Angola-backed domination of the prime minister and the army chief of staff must make a clean break from drug trafficking and impunity. Doing so will win them legitimacy, meet the aspirations of the population, relieve international concerns, and address both the complex history of civilian-military relations and the politicisation of the Balanta ethnic identity. An efficient bureaucracy and credible checks and balances are urgently needed. Education and capacity building of the political parties are particularly important over the long-term. Political and military woes and drug trafficking should not obscure other prominent, structural problems, such as governance, economic control and the inequality between the capital and the rest of the country. Regional and international actors should keep a critical eye on the concentration of political and economic power by Guinean elites.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *On the security sector reform*

#### **To the Government of Guinea-Bissau:**

1. Confirm its commitment to SSR, notably by:

- a) Informing clearly and transparently the members of the security forces, Guinean citizens, the National People's Assembly and the international community about the layout of the reforms, the criteria, the figures, pension levels and the sustainability of the fund.
- b) Convening a high-level international meeting on SSR within a realistic time frame.

#### **To the Governments of Angola, Nigeria and Senegal:**

2. Engage in direct dialogue to rapidly sign the memorandum of understanding regarding the roadmap jointly established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP).

**To the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States:**

3. Prepare and confirm publicly the availability of funds pledged for SSR.

**To the President of the African Union Commission:**

4. Appoint quickly a new special representative to head the AU office in Guinea-Bissau and work with its mediator, Burkina Faso's president, Blaise Compaoré.

5. Assist in creating a genuine consensus among the Guinean authorities, ECOWAS and CPLP for the implementation of the SSR roadmap.

**To President Blaise Compaoré, mediator of the President of the African Union Commission:**

6. Facilitate internal discussions with the Guinean military leadership and ease the relationship between Angola and ECOWAS.

**To the United Nations:**

7. Work with President Compaoré to intervene immediately at the regional, sub-regional and national levels to facilitate a coherent, unified implementation of the SSR roadmap by the AU, ECOWAS and the CPLP, with the Guinean authorities.

**To the International Partners of Guinea-Bissau:**

8. Prepare to scale up efforts rapidly in all the SSR areas as soon as the memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the reform is signed.

*On justice and impunity*

**To the Government of Guinea-Bissau:**

9. Strengthen the fight against impunity, especially by facilitating the implementation of the legal proceedings on the 2009 assassinations.

**To the Integrated Office of the United Nations for Guinea-Bissau:**

10. Provide material and technical support to the legal proceedings on the 2009 assassinations currently led by the attorney general.

*On transparency in the economy*

**To the Government of Guinea-Bissau:**

11. Improve economic transparency by:

a) Joining rapidly the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

b) Submitting for approval the main contracts in fishing, mining, oil and wood to the National People's Assembly.

c) Submitting a law compelling prominent state representatives to declare their assets to the National People's Assembly.

*On economic and social development*

**To the Government of Guinea-Bissau:**

12. Strengthen development efforts in health and education, notably in higher education, while ensuring access to public resources is ethnically balanced.

**To the International Partners of Guinea-Bissau:**

13. Boost development efforts in health and education, notably in higher education, without exacerbating ethnic imbalances in accessing public resources.

14. Pay significant attention to the accessibility and quality of higher education.

*On political pluralism*

**To the political parties of Guinea-Bissau:**

15. Contribute to national politics, keep a critical watch on political developments, and refrain from feeding rumours and escalating ethnic tensions.

**To the International Partners of Guinea-Bissau:**

16. Encourage capacity building for political parties through non-governmental organisations.

*On the future electoral process*

**To the Political Parties:**

17. Engage immediately in discussions on the organisation of the presidential election within the constitutional deadline or, if impossible, within the shortest time frame feasible to ensure a free and fair vote.

**To the International Partners of Guinea-Bissau:**

Provide logistical and financial support to rapidly organise the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2012.

**Dakar/Brussels, 23 January 2012**