

**BEYOND TURF WARS: MANAGING THE
POST-COUP TRANSITION IN GUINEA-BISSAU**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	i
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. CHRONICLE OF A COUP.....	1
III. AN EXAMINATION OF CAUSES	6
A. MISTRUST OF THE MILITARY	6
B. A TENSE ELECTORAL CONTEXT.....	8
IV. INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS: A BATTLE FOR INFLUENCE.....	11
V. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?	15
VI. CONCLUSION	17
APPENDICES	
A. MAP OF GUINEA-BISSAU	18
B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS	19
C. ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP	20
D. CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON AFRICA SINCE 2009	21
E. CRISIS GROUP BOARD OF TRUSTEES	23

BEYOND TURF WARS: MANAGING THE POST-COUP TRANSITION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Guinea-Bissau took another dangerous turn on 12 April 2012, when the army arrested Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior, who was about to be elected president. A military junta accused him of conspiring with Angola to curtail the military's power and quickly installed transitional authorities, before officially stepping aside on 22 May. International condemnation was swift, but differences developed between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP). The former, pushed by Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, supports a year's transition, the latter, especially Portugal and Angola, immediate resumption of the presidential vote. Coup and transition may have opened a way for vital reforms, which must go beyond changes in the army and combating the drugs trade. But for that to happen, ECOWAS and CPLP must reach a consensus on working with international partners to mobilise resources for security, judicial and electoral reforms and refusing to validate Gomes Júnior's illegal exclusion from political life.

Crisis Group warned three months before the coup that two related factors posed significant risks for stability: the likely victory of the prime minister in the presidential election and the military presence in the country of his ally, Angola, including its part in security sector reform (SSR). Both caused the military (Forças Armadas da Guiné-Bissau, FAGB) to fear what might be in store for it under a Gomes Júnior presidency.

The coup that suspended the constitutional order and broke off the second round of the presidential election (scheduled for 29 April) was not a mere reflex of an isolated minority of narco-military against a reformist civilian government. Rather, it demonstrated that the tense relations between civilian and military elites that have marred progress since independence in 1974 remain unresolved and that these in turn feed into broader grievances around issues of citizenship, entitlements, the rural/urban divide, regional inequalities and the mounting sense of historical marginalisation felt by the Balanta ethnic group that depends on its majority in the army to champion its cause.

Controversy rages over the role opposition leaders may have played. Both Serifo Nhamadjo, a rival within Gomes Júnior's Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and political heir to the deceased president, Malam Bacai Sanhá, and Kumba Yalá, a former president whose Partido para a Renovação Social (PRS) is rooted in the Balanta community, have influence in the military. But the coup was also stimulated by the inability of the electoral process to deliver uncontroversial results. Nhamadjo and Yalá, as well as Henrique Rosa, a former transition president, rejected the March first round results, claiming registration flaws and voting fraud.

The coup also confirmed that Gomes Júnior's divisive style made him many enemies among politicians as well as soldiers. The legitimacy he gained by improving the lives of ordinary citizens was weakened by opposition accusations of nepotism and that he was implicated in not yet credibly investigated political killings in 2009. While he denied the accusations, many citizens put their lives on the line in his defence during the April 2010 military turmoil but failed to do so two years later.

The events likewise raise questions about why international efforts to help the tiny, poor, aid-dependent country have so persistently failed to bring real change. After the European Union (EU) pulled out as a result of the April 2010 troubles, and in the absence of other major international patrons, Angola did much to produce stability, but it has not been able to stimulate transformation or build and maintain consensus at the national and international level on shaping the future. It allowed itself to become an object of suspicion in the country and locked in jurisdictional fights with some key ECOWAS member states, which weakened its credibility, acceptability and efficiency.

Guinea-Bissau is unlikely to receive substantially more attention in the near future for several reasons: the international community's preoccupation with other, much bloodier situations; the capacity of the transitional authorities to maintain domestic order so far and play the dialogue game; and the willingness of ECOWAS to engage with them. The CPLP's tough stance – seeking a stabilisation force and

completion of the presidential election – has encouraged Gomes Júnior and the PAIGC to refuse all compromise and made ECOWAS the military's favourite with which to broker a deal.

The regional organisation has obtained two significant concessions: preservation of the parliament and release from detention of Gomes Júnior, who left the country two weeks after the coup. The price has been ECOWAS support for a one-year transition, to end with new elections. Nhamadjo took over as transitional president, and Rui Duarte Barros, a PRS associate, became prime minister, formed a cabinet and presented his transition program on 21 July. ECOWAS deployed a 629-man strong police and army contingent (ECOWAS mission in Bissau, ECOMIB) to help with security sector reform, support the transition and facilitate the departure of the Angolan military mission, which was completed peacefully on 9 June.

Transitional structures are now in place, and new elections have been set for April 2013. But the transition remains unsteady. The new authorities are a mix of technocrats and opposition politicians of varied stripes, and a new sharing of spoils is under way the impact of which on state capacity is yet unclear. PAIGC remains in control of the parliament and hostile to the transition authorities, while politicians backing the transition are trying to keep Gomes Júnior at bay through their accusations. The military has formally retreated from public life with the dissolution of the junta in May but remains influential. Factionalism persists within it, and rumours of a new coup circulate endlessly. The withdrawal of much international assistance and disruption of the cashew nut export sector herald rough times for the transition authorities.

But though there are limits to the transition as engineered by ECOWAS, it is the only game in town at this point. The more radical demands Gomes Júnior and the PAIGC are making with encouragement from Angola and Portugal could make the transition a riskier exercise. Tempting as it may be for some to hold back in the not unrealistic hope it will collapse, it is more prudent to work through ECOWAS and in the present framework.

In their quest for a negotiated settlement, ECOWAS and its key member states have allowed themselves to be perceived internationally as letting the junta get away with too much and doing away with elective democracy, all in order to neutralise Angolan influence. The bulk of the international community has nevertheless been pragmatic in accepting the regional organisation's leadership – it is the player with the ear of the military and the transitional government – but uneasiness persists in diplomatic circles over its handling of the situation. This makes it difficult for the transitional government to gain international recognition and recover suspended aid, without which it will be hard

to mobilise resources for a successful transition and necessary reforms.

ECOWAS and several of its member countries have legitimate interests in Guinea-Bissau, as well as leverage over the new authorities. That leverage can and should be used to work out a peaceful solution. However, ECOWAS, which has put a good deal of its prestige on the line, should learn from Angola's experience: it must not act in isolation from the rest of the international community and become party to the complex conflicts that have divided Guinea-Bissau. It should instead help the transitional government realise and then do what is needed to rebuild international good-will: demonstrate its sincerity about reform. There would be a much better chance for this to happen if especially ECOWAS and CPLP would put aside their turf wars and develop a common strategy. The CPLP and its member countries should show greater flexibility, and the African Union (AU) should help facilitate discussions between the two organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On international coordination

To the international partners of Guinea-Bissau, in particular CPLP and its member states:

1. Support the lead of ECOWAS, while helping it to establish clear benchmarks for progress on the transition roadmap that the transition authorities are to prepare; and tie renewal of international development assistance and investment to achievement of those benchmarks.

To the African Union (AU):

2. Support, through the AU Special Representative in Bissau, efforts to achieve better coordination between international partners, particularly ECOWAS and CPLP.

To ECOWAS and its member states, in particular Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Senegal:

3. Elaborate, on the basis of consultations, particularly with CPLP and the transition authorities, a mandate for the ECOWAS mission in Bissau (ECOMIB) and seek UN Security Council approval of that mandate.

On the transition

To the transition authorities:

4. Elaborate, in line with the 21 July transition program and on the basis of consultations with the PAIGC majority in the assembly and with ECOWAS and oth-

er international partners, a detailed and inclusive transition roadmap that includes the following elements:

- a) election of a new speaker of the assembly and a partial reshuffle of the government to make room in the transitional institutions for the various groups within PAIGC;
- b) free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections no later than May 2013, and a guarantee that Carlos Gomes Júnior can participate;
- c) adequate resources and legal framework for the electoral commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições, CNE) to revise the electoral roll and create a biometric electoral register;
- d) guarantees of full freedom for the media, public and private, including during the electoral campaign and beyond;
- e) renewal of open dialogue between the armed forces, civilian authorities and the general public over the position of the military in Guinean society;
- f) launch of security sector reform (SSR), beginning with the quick-start program for the Special Pension Fund, to which ECOWAS has pledged funding;
- g) replacement of informal, erratic and potentially criminal income arrangements within the armed forces (FAGB) by decent wages paid through a transparent biometric payment system; and
- h) request for an international commission of inquiry into the assassinations of key political and military figures not covered by the 2007 amnesty law.

To the international partners of Guinea-Bissau:

5. Support the CNE's ability to exercise electoral oversight and help civil society groups to create networks of national electoral observers, to include independent monitoring of the media.

To ECOWAS:

6. Plan for a credible armed protection component to protect leading politicians, including Carlos Gomes Júnior, who wish to contest presidential and legislative elections.
7. Confirm and make available the money previously pledged for the Special Pension Fund.

To the UN Security Council:

8. Authorise an international commission to investigate the assassinations of key political and military figures not covered by the 2007 amnesty law.

On social and economic development

To the transition authorities:

9. Give priority to securing development assistance to reduce the inequalities between the capital and the rest of the country.

Dakar/Brussels, 17 August 2012

BEYOND TURF WARS: MANAGING THE POST-COUP TRANSITION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

I. INTRODUCTION

Carlos Gomes Júnior, prime minister since his party, the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), won the 2008 elections, appeared on his way to becoming the first executive in Guinea-Bissau's multi-party history to complete a full term, after a decade of coups, unresolved assassinations and unpunished drug trafficking inaugurated by the 1998 war. His tenure had been a troubled one, however. In April 2010, dissident soldiers had arrested him, along with the then chief of the general staff, Zamora Induta, but had released him due to massive internal and international pressure. In December 2011, the new chief of the general staff, António Injai, had repelled another coup, while troops from the Angolan military mission protected Gomes Júnior. But his candidacy to replace President Malam Bacai Sanhá, who died from illness in January 2012, pushed his luck too far. Formidable and controversial, he had too many adversaries in the army and politics (including in PAIGC). A bloodless coup on 12 April 2012 left Guinea-Bissau isolated internationally, returned to its vicious circle of poverty, crime, militarisation, clientelism and low-intensity political violence.

This report discusses the April coup, its causes and consequences. It analyses the transition that has ensued, with particular attention to the complex diplomatic struggle that has unfolded, and assesses whether and under what conditions the transition could be an opportunity for reform.

II. CHRONICLE OF A COUP

Early in the evening of 12 April, armed FAGB units moved through the city of Bissau, taking control of key sites: the presidency, headquarters of the ruling PAIGC and the public and private radio networks. Interim President Raimundo Pereira was seized without a fight, but shots were fired at the residence of Carlos Gomes Júnior, the man who until that moment had seemed set to win the presidency in the second round of the election on 29 April.¹ Gomes Júnior was arrested, and the military tightened its grip on the city, establishing checkpoints around embassies and road-blocks on main arteries. In a well-orchestrated action, a junta took over with no apparent loss of life.²

In the early days of the coup, there were several instances of harassment against senior supporters of Gomes Júnior, including pillaging of homes or offices, and Aly Silva, an influential and controversial blogger, was molested and robbed of his equipment by soldiers. The FAGB apparently later gave some of what was taken from officials to the transition authorities.³ There were reports of arrests and attempted arrests of major PAIGC figures, including some ministers, governors and sector administrators,⁴ but the junta insisted that all were released. Some officials, including Adiatu Djaló Nandigna, who had replaced Gomes Júnior as prime minister when he resigned to stand for president, took refuge in embassies and other diplomatic

¹ Gomes Júnior, the president of PAIGC, had been prime minister since the 2008 legislative elections. He resigned on 10 February 2012, handing over to Adiatu Djaló Nandigna, a close PAIGC associate, to seek the presidency. He won 49 per cent of the first round votes on 18 March.

² Media has not reported any casualties since 12 April. Bissau hospital was calm that night, though some independent sources reported later the unexplained presence of soldiers at the morgue. Crisis Group email correspondence, civil society activist, 19 April 2012.

³ "Guiné-Bissau: Militares entregam a governo de transição 15 viaturas tiradas ao governo deposto", Agência Angola Press (Angop), 31 May 2012.

⁴ The sector administrator is the intermediate level in the territorial administration, under the region governor. Both are political nominees.

enclaves. A number of them subsequently left the country. After leaving the safety of the EU embassy on 29 May, Desejado Lima da Costa, the president of the electoral commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições, CNE), who belongs to PAIGC and was widely considered a Gomes Júnior supporter, tried to return to his office but was expelled by men in uniforms and, he said, brutalised.⁵

Gomes Júnior's PAIGC has been allowed to operate; its headquarters on a main Bissau square has remained busy with meetings and press conferences.⁶ Security forces do not tolerate demonstrations, however. While the ban they initially issued was formally removed, attempts by several dozen persons to protest the coup were suppressed: on 15 April, with two protesters wounded; on 25 May, with another wounded; and again on 27 June. Amnesty International expressed concern for political freedoms in May but said the human rights situation remained more or less stable following the coup.⁷

The nature of the junta, calling itself the *comando militar* (military command), gradually became clearer. It was led by senior officers from the Balanta ethnic group, and there are indications that it kept key non-Balanta officers under surveillance for a few days.⁸ There were conflicting reports about the chief of the general staff, António Injai. The junta originally claimed to have arrested him, but Gomes Júnior supporters insisted he was behind the coup.⁹ Otherwise, the junta said the FAGB hierarchy remained unchanged. Injai's cabinet director, Lt. Colonel Daba na Walna, acted as junta spokesperson, while the vice chief of the general staff, Mamadu Turé "Nkrumah", as well as the army, navy and air force chiefs of staff, took part in its activities. So did Injai, after a few days. The influential and controversial former navy chief of staff, Bubo na Tchuto, who had been arrested but not charged in the failed December 2011 coup, was kept under surveillance at the Mansoa army base until 20 June, then released, though he remained under watch from the military until his departure to Senegal in July, officially for medical reasons.¹⁰

The junta sought to explain its action in a series of communiqués: it insisted it acted because Gomes Júnior and Raimundo Pereira had signed a secret agreement with Angola allowing its military mission (Missão de Segurança de Angola na Guiné-Bissau, MISSANG) to intervene against the FAGB. On 18 April, in an effort to substantiate this claim, the junta released a 9 April letter from Gomes Júnior to the UN Secretary-General asking the Security Council to consider deploying a peacekeeping operation.¹¹

MISSANG kept to its headquarters at the Bissau Palace Hotel. The rapid reaction police (Polícia de Intervenção Rápida, PIR), generally considered close to Gomes Júnior, initially withdrew from view on orders from their commanders.¹² Other police have resumed operations discreetly, and not without risks: on 31 May, a judiciary police officer handling a complaint against a paratrooper in a family matter was seized and beaten by soldiers.¹³

The announcement on 15 April that a Portuguese force was on its way to Bissau raised alarm, though Lisbon insisted that its only mandate was to prepare for an eventual evacuation of the 4,000 Portuguese nationals resident in Guinea-Bissau.¹⁴ Soon after the announcement, an estimated 10,000 people left Bissau for the countryside or neighbouring Senegal.¹⁵ The junta announced closure of the borders and insisted it would defend Guinean territorial integrity. The Portuguese force kept away from Guinea-Bissau and went back to Portugal on 9 May. Most displaced Guinean civilians have since returned to Bissau.

The junta quickly opened discussions with political parties and ECOWAS representatives. The day after the coup, it had several meetings with major opposition leaders, including PAIGC dissidents who had opposed Gomes Júnior in the presidential election. The PAIGC, however, under its permanent secretary, Augusto Olivais, refused to take part until Gomes Júnior and Pereira were released. On 16

⁵ "Guinée-Bissau: le président de la Commission électorale expulsé de son bureau par des hommes armés", Xinhua, 2 June 2012.

⁶ An attempt to seize the party headquarters by anti-Gomes Júnior PAIGC militants failed in late April. The junta did not intervene.

⁷ See "Amnesty International's concerns following the coup in April 2012", May 2012; and the comment by Marisé Castro in "Division and stasis in Guinea-Bissau", IRIN, 18 May 2012.

⁸ Such as the army chief of staff, Augusto Mario Cú. "Guinea-Bissau, Carlos Gomes Junior was arrested by the military", Portuguese News Network (PNN), 13 April 2012.

⁹ See also Section III.A below.

¹⁰ On na Tchuto and the December 2011 coup, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°183, *Au-delà des compromis: les perspectives de réforme en Guinée-Bissau*, 23 January 2012, pp. 28-30.

¹¹ The junta, which seemed to take that request as a threat, offered no other evidence. The letter was mentioned at the 13 April briefing to the Security Council and passed on to members on 24 April. Annex to the "Letter dated 23 April 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council", 24 April 2012.

¹² Crisis Group email correspondence, Guinean police officer, 5 June 2012.

¹³ "Guiné-Bissau: Agente da PJ raptado e agredido por militares", PNN, 4 June 2012.

¹⁴ The Portuguese defence minister seemed to contradict initial statements, however, when he said the force had been sent according to "a logic of support for a diplomatic dimension", that is, that there had been an intention to apply some pressure on the junta. "Guiné: força portuguesa começa a regressar hoje", tvi24, 8 May 2012.

¹⁵ "Amnesty International's concerns", op. cit., p. 4.

April, an ECOWAS technical mission met with the junta, the political parties and civil society.

On 18 April, the junta organised the signing of an “agreement for the stabilisation and maintenance of constitutional and democratic order” by two dozen opposition parties, including Kumba Yalá’s PRS but not two of Gomes Júnior’s major challengers, Serifo Nhamadjo and Henrique Rosa.¹⁶ It included dissolving and replacing the legislative and executive branches for two years by an ad hoc legislature, the National Transitional Council (Conselho Nacional de Transição, CNT), a government of national unity and a transitional president. On 19 April, it was announced that Nhamadjo, the speaker of the parliament (Assembleia Nacional Popular, ANP), would be the transitional president, and Braima Sori Djaló, a PRS leader and the first vice speaker of the ANP, would head the CNT. The junta said Gomes Júnior and Pereira would be released once these transitional institutions were in place.

This first attempt to impose a political transition petered out under unanimous international rejection.¹⁷ Nhamadjo declined the presidency, saying he was not consulted and would not cooperate with illegal institutions.¹⁸ The junta pulled back, saying the plan was only a proposal, it was open to discussions, and it hoped to find a solution “with ECOWAS”.¹⁹ After further negotiations with civil society and parties, it announced on 22 April creation of a “forum” for consultations open to all. This was an attempt to discomfort the PAIGC, which agreed, under civil society pressure, to take part in the dialogue.²⁰

Despite international rejection of the transition plan, ECOWAS kept communication lines open and held a summit in Abidjan on 26 April, attended by junta representatives.²¹ It obtained the release of Gomes Júnior and Pereira, who were moved to Abidjan on 27 April, from where they went to Lisbon on 16 May. It also urged all parties to accept

ECOWAS mediation for a consensual transition, with elections within a year; and announced dispatch of a contingent of its Standby Force to, “among other things”, assist in MISSANG withdrawal, aid early implementation of security sector reform and secure the transition.²² But three days later ECOWAS announced immediate “diplomatic, economic and financial sanctions on Guinea-Bissau”, because “it was fruitless to continue [talks] as it became obvious that the head of the military junta was not willing to negotiate”.²³ The junta’s spokesperson insisted the military agreed to all ECOWAS conditions except reinstatement of interim President Pereira.²⁴

Another ECOWAS summit, in Dakar on 3 May, confirmed both the twelve-month transition plan and the sanctions.²⁵ It also drafted a roadmap: the ANP would remain in place and elect a new speaker, who would replace Pereira as interim president; the current speaker would be replaced by a newly-elected first vice speaker; “a consensual prime minister with full powers” would be designated; neither he nor the interim president would be allowed to contest the legislative or presidential elections; the assembly’s tenure would be extended until the end of the transition.

As the PAIGC parliamentarians, in line with Gomes Júnior, refused to follow the Dakar plan to designate a new speaker, the interim speaker, Serifo Nhamadjo, accepted the transitional presidency on 11 May, following a meeting of military and opposition politicians with ECOWAS. He called on the PAIGC to designate a prime minister, but Gomes Júnior’s partisans refused again to associate themselves to any form of transition.²⁶ In reaction, the bulk of opposition parties and the new interim speaker, Braima Sori Djaló, signed a pact on 16 May reiterating the principles established by ECOWAS in Dakar, while providing for transformation of the interim presidency into a more powerful transitional post. Rui Duarte Barros, a PRS as-

¹⁶ This is based on the widely circulated PDF version of the agreement. It does not include signatures of junta members, possibly because they insist they have no political authority.

¹⁷ “L’ONU menace la junte au pouvoir en Guinée-Bissau de sanctions”, *Le Monde* (online), 21 April 2012; “Guiné-Bissau: UE ‘pronta’ a aplicar sanções”, *tv24*, 23 April 2012.

¹⁸ “Bissau: Nhamadjo refuse sa nomination”, *Agence France-Presse*, 21 April 2012. Apparently, Djaló, whose PRS is a minority in the ANP, did not express a view on his appointment.

¹⁹ “Guinée-Bissau: Les militaires acceptent de rendre le pouvoir aux civils, le calendrier dépend de la CEDEAO”, *Xinhua*, 18 April 2012. The junta mentioned no other international actors.

²⁰ “PAIGC condiciona diálogo a conhecer ‘verdadeiro líder’ do golpe de Estado”, *Lusa* (news agency), 23 April 2012.

²¹ These include the spokesperson, Daba na Walna, a senior navy official, Sanha Clussé, and the president of the Instituto Nacional da Defesa, Celestino de Carvalho, who has since become the transitional defence minister.

²² This remains the only known mandate of what is now the ECOWAS Mission in Bissau (ECOMIB). “Final communiqué: Extraordinary summit of ECOWAS heads of state and government”, Abidjan, 26 April 2012.

²³ “ECOWAS sanctions Guinea Bissau after failed talks”, press release no. 124/2012, Banjul, 1 May 2012. This followed a meeting, chaired by Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, between the Contact Group created by ECOWAS at the summit and representatives of the junta, political parties and civil society.

²⁴ “Guinée-Bissau: sanctions ouest-africaines après un revirement de la junte”, *Agence France-Presse*, 30 April 2012.

²⁵ “Final communiqué: Extraordinary summit of ECOWAS heads of state and government”, Dakar, 3 May 2012.

²⁶ “Guiné-Bissau: Presidente de transição insta PAIGC a sugerir nome para primeiro-ministro”, *Lusa*, 15 May 2012.

sociate, was chosen as prime minister “by a consensus of signatory parties”.²⁷

On 18 May, the opposition parties, the new speaker and the junta signed a new agreement insisting on the subordination of the military to civilian authorities and pledging collaboration over security sector reform (SSR) and investigations into the political killings of the last few years. It also established that the assembly would pass an amnesty law for those who carried out the coup; the CNE would be presided over by a judge (thus paving the way for removal of Lima da Costa, a supposed Gomes Júnior partisan); parties not represented in the ANP would be consulted over new legislation; all cabinet members would be selected following consultations with the signatory parties and the military command; and the posts of governors and sector administrators would be shared “between those that were not chosen to join the cabinet”, provided they have the “relevant qualifications”.²⁸

A cabinet was soon formed, a mix of anti-Gomes Júnior politicians from a variety of parties, including the PAIGC, former advisers to President Sanhá and technocrats who had been sidelined under Gomes Júnior. Active duty soldiers became the defence minister and secretary of state for veteran affairs. On 22 May, the junta was dissolved. On 15 June, the government announced a four-point program, which received further elaboration in an eight-page document that the prime minister presented to the political parties on 21 July: preparation and realisation of legislative and presidential elections; strengthening justice and combating impunity; countering organised crime, corruption and drug trafficking; and SSR.²⁹ Lima da Costa resumed his CNE functions following a meeting with President Nhamadjo, contrary to the provisions of the 18 May agreement.³⁰ Since then, it has been engaged in preparing for the elections, including presenting a budget for them (€5 million) and asking the government to reach out to the ANP to modify the electoral law for the biometric census.³¹

The return to civilian rule has allowed for another important development: the departure of the Angolan military. As

agreed with the junta, ECOMIB deployed 629 police and soldiers from Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Senegal by early June and established its headquarters at the refurbished military academy of Cuméré, 35km from Bissau.³² MIS-SANG withdrew peacefully between 6 and 9 June.

The institutional structure for the transition now seems to be in place, but remains fragile and apparently negotiable. Led by Rui Diã da Sousa, the PAIGC majority in the ANP has refused to cooperate with the pro-transition speaker, Braima Sori Djaló (PRS), and the transition government. Its deputies are boycotting sessions that have had to be adjourned for want of a quorum and demanding election of a new speaker.³³ It is uncertain whether they want to take over the speakership to weaken the transition authorities and defend Gomes Júnior better; to negotiate their inclusion by the new regime, or both. Consultations are ongoing between the transition presidency and senior PAIGC figures (with former Defence and Education Minister Aristides Ocante da Silva playing a key part). There are even suggestions of a national unity government led by a PAIGC prime minister other than Gomes Júnior.³⁴

Seeing the transition authorities survive their first months, some in the PAIGC, especially those who have stayed in Bissau and are not particularly close to Gomes Júnior, may indeed now be tempted to take up offers from ECOWAS and Nhamadjo they initially rejected. Several observers believe Nhamadjo has from the start expected PAIGC deputies to drift slowly in his direction, allowing him to build his own PAIGC majority in the ANP.³⁵

Gomes Júnior has not recently commented publicly on a possible restructuring of the transition authorities. He is facing another threat. The transition authorities have insisted on the need to bring impunity to an end, including to make progress in the investigations of a series of unresolved assassinations of senior political figures. This is an obvious attack on Gomes Júnior, who has been accused by his opponents of involvement in the killings, all of which occurred while he was prime minister. Accusations have

²⁷ República da Guiné-Bissau, “Pacto de transição política”, 16 May 2012. Barros, 48, has a Portuguese father and Balanta mother. A Cuba-trained engineer, he served in cabinets under President Yalá (2001-2003) and as a commissioner at the West African Economic and Monetary Union until September 2011. He retains ties with Yalá, whose PRS he may still belong to.

²⁸ República da Guiné-Bissau, “Acordo político”, 18 May 2012.

²⁹ “Comunicado do Governo”, Bissau, 15 June 2012; “Guiné-Bissau: Primeiro-ministro de transição apresenta Programa do governo”, Lusa, 21 July 2012.

³⁰ “Presidente da CNE convidado a retomar funções”, Angop, 14 June 2012.

³¹ “Guiné-Bissau: CNE quer alteração da Lei de recenseamento eleitoral”, PNN, 19 July 2012.

³² Under the command of a Burkinabè colonel, Gnimanga Barro, ECOMIB has 140 police and 160 military from Nigeria; 140 gendarmes from Burkina Faso; and nearly 200 soldiers from Senegal (mostly engineers plus a medical unit). The innocuous site of its headquarters contrasts with MISSANG, whose decision to locate in a hotel on the main road from the city centre to the airport, next to major government buildings, led to speculation it was intended to facilitate direct intervention in internal affairs.

³³ “Parlamento guineense inicia trabalhos sem qualquer ordem do dia”, Lusa, 29 June 2012.

³⁴ “Partido União para Mudança propõe formação novo Governo liderado pelo PAIGC”, Lusa, 6 August 2012.

³⁵ This might explain why Gomes Júnior pushed back the PAIGC congress, which was due in July 2012, to January 2013.

occasionally been explicit.³⁶ A recent unresolved case is that of Roberto Cacheu, a PAIGC figure who disappeared during the December 2011 coup attempt.³⁷ Gomes Júnior has denounced the accusations as “a campaign to give him the part of a murderer”, and demanded that evidence be advanced, proper trials held and an international investigation launched.³⁸

Economic prospects appeared difficult in the early days of the coup, as the banking system came to a halt. The cashew nut is the main cash crop and export product. Its season, starting in late March, is when farmers need traders with cash to whom they can sell and from whom they can buy rice to prepare for the hunger season. This is all the more important in 2012, as the local rice crop was poor in 2011-2012, and the global price has been rising.³⁹ The capacity of rural areas to absorb food-supply shocks will probably be tested in the coming year.⁴⁰

The quick resumption of banking operations was a relief to rural producers. Bissau harbour has been functioning, though slower than in the past. The transition authorities expressed hope in June that cashew nut exports would reach 150,000 tonnes in 2012, against 174,000 the year before, but this may be optimistic. By the end of that month, the half-year total was 30,000 tonnes, with 90,000 more in prospect. In July, however, the head of a major peasant organisation estimated the year's total would be only 100,000 tonnes, and a drop in Indian imports makes prospects even more sombre.⁴¹ Contraband shipments of cashew nuts to Ziguinchor in Senegal resumed, helping the

northern regions market their produce but depriving the state of important revenue. Imports of consumer goods are coming in, though more slowly, leading to some inflation.⁴²

The suspension of aid by such key donors as the EU, the U.S., Brazil, the African Development Bank and the World Bank and the lack of international recognition have hurt the new authorities. On 25 April, the civil service went on strike after the junta said salaries could not be paid.⁴³ On 25 May, the transition authorities insisted all wages would be paid, and trade unions asked strikers to return to work. Though it appears not all civil servants have received full salaries and arrears, health and education services have been prioritised and the state schools reopened.⁴⁴ In July, however, the health sector experienced a new strike. Electricity in Bissau was badly affected by the end in June of the World Bank contract with the Senegalese company Matforce, which rented generators to the national power company, but new generators, bought earlier by the World Bank, are due to start operating.

In this turmoil, drug trafficking accusations have proliferated. The Portuguese foreign minister called it the origin of the coup,⁴⁵ as did many supporters of Carlos Gomes Júnior, who described him as a bulwark against the cocaine trade, while implying that some within the transition authorities and the military have close trafficking links with some ECOWAS states. Equivalent accusations have been made against Gomes Júnior and his Angolan partners.⁴⁶ Beyond unverifiable accusation and counter-accusation, there are suspicions several significant air and sea deliveries have taken place since the coup, with continuing protection and logistical support from FAGB elements.⁴⁷

³⁶ See, for instance, the statements of Boucounta Diallo, the legal counsel to the widow of Nino Vieira, “La famille Vieira veut que Carlos Gomes Junior reste à l'écart du pouvoir et à la disposition de la justice”, Radio France Internationale (RFI), 10 May 2012. On the history of these accusations, see also Section III.B below and Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., pp. 21-23.

³⁷ “Carlos Gomes Júnior nega envolvimento na morte de Cacheu”, PNN, 30 July 2012.

³⁸ “Carlos Gomes Jr. fala sobre o golpe de Estado de 12 de abril”, Deutsche Welle, quoted by Ditadura do Consenso (ditaduradocenso.blogspot.com), 4 August 2012.

³⁹ Crisis Group interview, Portuguese agricultural experts, Dakar, April 2012.

⁴⁰ During the 1998-1999 war, humanitarian aid was limited; the massive flight of urbanites to the countryside was largely dependent on indigenous resources. Marina Temudo and Ulrich Schiefer, “Disintegration and resilience of agrarian societies in Africa ... A case study on the reception of urban war refugees in the South of Guinea-Bissau”, *Current Sociology* (2003), pp. 395-418.

⁴¹ “Guiné-Bissau: Governo de transição prevê exportar 150 mil toneladas de caju”, Lusa, 14 June 2012; “Venda de caju deverá cair 40% na Guiné-Bissau em 2012”, Deutsche Welle, 28 June 2012; “Baisse de régime pour la noix de cajou en Guinée Bissau”, Agence Ecofin, 25 July 2012.

⁴² Crisis Group interview, Guinean bank official, Bissau, May 2012.

⁴³ “Guiné-Bissau: Comando Militar informa que não poderá pagar salário do mês de abril aos funcionários públicos”, Lusa, 25 April 2012.

⁴⁴ Crisis Group email correspondence, European academic based in Guinea-Bissau, 10 June 2012.

⁴⁵ “Poder militar na Guiné é ‘permeável ao narcotráfico’”, Lusa, 17 May 2012.

⁴⁶ Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and police officers, Dakar and Bissau, May 2012; Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., pp. 23-25; “Guiné-Bissau: Comando militar diz-se alvo de ‘ataques’ pela imprensa portuguesa”, PNN, 23 May 2012. Gomes Júnior has spoken out against drug trafficking and denied accusations that he has tolerated trafficking or provoked political instability. “Bissau election marred by military assassination”, Reuters, 19 March 2012.

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Dakar and Bissau, May, June 2012. On post-coup deliveries, see “Son pó, na Guiné...”, Ditadura do Consenso (ditaduradocenso.blogspot.com), 20 June 2012. The retail price of a kilo of cocaine in Bissau was €17,000 in October 2011. In December, soon after a significant delivery, it had fallen to €7,000. In May 2012, it was €10,000,

III. AN EXAMINATION OF CAUSES

Guinean politicians and military are used to blaming one another for the country's problems. The politicians like to say that they have little influence and responsibility, and the military is really in charge. This is not true: the two spheres interact in many ways, while maintaining their own logic. After the coup, while retaining an implicit veto on issues it considers important, the military chose not to hold power and arranged its transfer to a largely civilian government. To understand the coup, one has to take into account the two different but interconnected logics.

A. MISTRUST OF THE MILITARY

The junta has continued to use the "secret agreement" of Gomes Júnior with Angola to justify the coup, but its actions are unmistakably rooted in the long history of difficult relations between the military and civilian authorities that reached new heights of mutual distrust under Gomes Júnior.⁴⁸

Unlike its West African neighbours, Guinea-Bissau waged a successful liberation war: the armed wing of the PAIGC won that war against the Portuguese colonial power and derives a strong sense of legitimacy from it. This was reaffirmed in the 1998-1999 civil war, which started as a struggle within the PAIGC but became viewed as another liberation war, this time against Senegal and Guinea (Conakry), which had intervened to support President João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira against the rebellious chief of staff of the armed forces, Ansumane Mané. Since independence, the military has been suspicious of the civilians' intentions toward the army. Indeed, SSR – a serious reduction and restructuring, including a decent retirement program – is long overdue for forces that are too costly, numerous and aged, and with a surreal rank structure.⁴⁹

indicating the market was still well supplied. The price varied between €12,000 and €15,000 in July, which suggests that stocks were still fairly high but that there had not been a significant resupply. "Armée et cocaïne font toujours bon ménage en Guinée-Bissau", RFI, 27 June 2012. Shortly before the coup, the police reported seizure of 4kg of cocaine. "Guinée-Bissau: Saisie de plus de quatre kg de cocaïne de février à mars", Xinhua, 21 March 2012; Crisis Group email correspondence, police expert, 8 August 2012.

⁴⁸ These issues are discussed in greater detail in Crisis Group Africa Reports N°142, *Guinea-Bissau: In Need of a State*, 2 July 2008, and *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Only 15 per cent of soldiers are under 30; 4 per cent are above 60. Officers are more than 40 per cent of the armed forces; the international standard is around 8 per cent. "Roadmap for the effective take-off of the security sector reform programme",

No matter FAGB weaknesses, many soldiers feel they represent average Guineans against the white-collar elites who run the state and whom they regard as a privileged minority with dubious wealth and possibly compromised by colonial-era ties with the Portuguese.⁵⁰ Their efforts to incite populist resentment have worked primarily among the Balanta, a large, mainly rural ethnic community with significant numbers in the military.⁵¹ The Balanta have long been at the margins of the colonial and post-colonial state and market and nurture a deep sense of exclusion. Limited Balanta presence in Gomes Júnior cabinets is just one element in a long list of grievances.

The informal patronage role the military plays in the welfare, protection and advancement of significant rural communities, particularly among the Balanta, gives some military chiefs a strong sense of legitimacy and a support base in kin and client networks. While still limited, there is no doubt that ethnic talk and stereotyping is gaining momentum. Some partisans are talking about "getting rid of the Balanta", while critics of Gomes Júnior decry him as a representative of the illegitimate domination of the *burmedjus* (reds) and *cristons* (Christians), two words from the Portuguese kriol of Bissau that refer to the country's tiny Christian Mestiço minority.⁵²

Military-civilian tension sharpened under Gomes Júnior. A tough politician with an aggressive style, he is seen as the archetypal urbanite the military likes to hate: the son of a wealthy Mestiço trader; a soldier in the Portuguese army during Portugal's decolonisation wars; a partner of Portuguese business interests; a rich kid rumoured to have gotten richer through deals with guerrilla-hero-turned-president Nino Vieira (before turning against him); and "a stranger in the service of strangers".⁵³ Prime minister since 2008, he gained some civilian popularity, but for the military, he is associated with an SSR they believe he would use to increase his power at the expense of their

Extraordinary Meeting of the Committee of ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff, Bissau, 11-12 August 2011, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ Crisis Group interviews, Guinean military, September 2009.

⁵¹ The Balanta formed 26 per cent of the population in the 1991 census, quoted in Álvaro Nóbrega, *A luta pelo poder na Guiné Bissau* (Lisbon, 2003), pp. 71-72. On the Balanta issue, see Marina Temudo, "From the Margins of the State to the Presidential Palace: The Balanta Case in Guinea-Bissau", *African Studies Review*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2009), pp. 47-67.

⁵² Crisis Group interviews, academics and politicians, Bissau, May 2012, and email correspondence, March and June 2012.

⁵³ Kumba Yalá is quoted as having denounced Gomes Júnior in the following terms: "Everybody knows who Carlos Gomes Júnior is. Me, I am a Balanta, him, he is a Mandingo, and this one there, he is a Fulani. ... But him [Gomes Júnior], so, who is he? What ethnic group? What region?" "Grands dossiers: Réunion de la CEDEAO à Abidjan: les dirigeants des 15 applaudiront-ils la médiation d'Alpha Condé?", *Guinée News*, 25 April 2012.

rights and entitlements, including, for some of them, their lucrative share in the drug business.⁵⁴

The April 2010 mutiny against Chief of Staff Zamora Induta, during which Gomes Júnior was briefly detained, was rooted in this fear. Induta was seen as his ally, and many FAGB “big men” assumed he was using the pretence of SSR and the struggle against trafficking to weaken their influence. The military replaced Induta with António Injai, and it took heavy national and international pressure to secure the release of the prime minister.

One result of that 2010 mutiny was the deployment of the Angolan military assistance mission to Bissau in March 2011. It was then-President Sanhá who arranged for it as a compromise between the FAGB and the international community (particularly ECOWAS), which wanted a full-fledged international force.⁵⁵ But the FAGB were always suspicious of MISSANG’s mandate and numbers.⁵⁶ Sanhá was able to temper these suspicions for a while, but as deteriorating health removed him from the political sphere, MISSANG and Angola became increasingly associated with Gomes Júnior’s perceived ambitions to streamline the military to his advantage. That Gomes Júnior took refuge at the Angolan embassy during the December 2011 failed coup was further evidence for those looking for it that MISSANG was less an assistance mission than a protection force for the prime minister.

The qualitative and quantitative build-up of the rapid reaction police, PIR, a force regarded as closely associated with Gomes Júnior, was perceived as a direct challenge to the military’s monopoly of the means of coercion.⁵⁷ Angola’s major role in assisting the PIR seemed to confirm that it favoured Gomes Júnior. Significantly, before the first round of the presidential election, the FAGB insisted on exclusive control of heavy weapons. Shortly before the vote, soldiers beat up police in the street, officially because tear gas they used against protesters entered FAGB headquarters.⁵⁸ PIR halted its work for a time after the coup, because it knew the military would be unlikely to tolerate its presence on the streets of Bissau.

The FAGB’s suspicion of Gomes Júnior and Angolan interests may explain one of the riddles around the April coup: Injai’s status in the immediate aftermath. The junta said it arrested him, and he was not seen at its first public events, but there were reports he enjoyed a degree of freedom.⁵⁹ Gomes Júnior supporters insisted that the supposed arrest was a trick to preserve his image and that he was a prime mover behind the coup. This is possible, but his initial disappearance might also be explained by the criticism he had been receiving within the FAGB for past closeness to Gomes Júnior and Angola. Rumours were circulating about gifts he had allegedly received from them, and he had been accused of betraying the military and the Balanta.⁶⁰ The December 2011 coup attempt worsened Injai’s relations with FAGB colleagues, as he was seen as responsible for the arrest of Bubo na Tchuto, a fellow Balanta military “big man”.⁶¹ Injai’s demand in March 2012 that MISSANG leave may have been an effort to regain the trust of colleagues and the Balanta.⁶² It is possible that the junta decided to sideline him, nevertheless, for the early days of the coup. The FAGB, after all, are led by a narrow circle, and the chief of the general staff is essentially first among equals, not all powerful.⁶³

There is little doubt that in the minds of the military Gomes Júnior’s likely election as president was a threat. They maintain the coup was purely defensive, that the prime minister was calling into question their “right to live”.⁶⁴ Their claims of a secret agreement between Gomes Júnior and Angola to annihilate the FAGB, that Angola had covertly brought in heavy weapons and special forces, that neighbouring Guinea, with which Luanda has good relations, could be a launch pad for an Angolan intervention all express their fundamental mistrust of Gomes Júnior. That MISSANG, which had accepted Injai’s demand at the end of March to withdraw, had apparently not started to do so by 12 April made the military more nervous. Rumours that Angola was trying to obtain an international

⁵⁴ On Gomes Júnior’s popularity among civilians, see Section III.B below. On the vision of the military, see Carlos Cardoso, “The real reasons for the coup d’état in Guinea-Bissau”, *Pambazuka News*, 17 May 2012.

⁵⁵ See Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8, 11. The number of Angolan troops, generally regarded as 200-300, was always an object of speculation. After 12 April, such speculation proliferated. Many media mentioned 600; official Angolan sources said 249.

⁵⁷ PIR includes a nucleus of 250 trained in Angola in the mid-2000s, generally called “Angolanos” in Bissau. 350 more were sent to Luanda for training in December 2011.

⁵⁸ “Manifestação na CNE na Guiné-Bissau acaba com confrontos entre polícias e militares”, *Lusa*, 20 February 2012.

⁵⁹ In an interview, Lt. Colonel Daba na Walna did not deny Injai was arrested; insisted he had no part in the junta; but also said no one had been named to replace him. “Os revoltosos da Guiné-Bissau: ‘Se o Parlamento aceitar a vinda de uma força internacional, está bem’”, *O Público*, 27 April 2012.

⁶⁰ See Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

⁶¹ After the December coup, a European academic familiar with the area said Balanta elders organised ceremonies to deprive Injai of mystical protections, a clear expression of their disapproval. Injai is said to have asked for forgiveness. Crisis Group email correspondence, 26 April 2012.

⁶² “MISSANG vs EMGFA”, *Ditadura do Consenso (ditadura-doconsenso.blogspot.com)*, 28 March 2012.

⁶³ The chief of the general staff has often been elected by his peers, not chosen by the political authorities.

⁶⁴ “Comando militar justifica golpe em Bissau com ‘direito à vida’”, *Jornal de Notícias*, 17 April 2012.

mandate for its presence seemed to confirm for the military how dangerous the situation was for it.

B. A TENSE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

While the junta has maintained that its intervention was the reaction to a real threat against the institution of the military and not due to the election, senior figures from Gomes Júnior's government have insisted that major opposition politicians, in particular Kumba Yalá, were the real forces behind the coup.⁶⁵ The opposition politicians have denied involvement and most have officially condemned the coup, but many now cooperate with the junta.

Once again, much of the controversy revolves around Gomes Júnior, who has been at the centre of politics for ten years. A wealthy businessman, he rose to prominence when he was elected president of the PAIGC in 2004. Prime minister in the then transition government, he was removed in 2005, when his former patron, Nino Vieira, regained the presidency and arranged a new coalition in the assembly. But Gomes Júnior forced himself back on Vieira thanks to the PAIGC's crushing victory at the November 2008 legislative elections. Their relations remained rocky until the president's assassination four months later.

Gomes Júnior's electoral legitimacy, political skill and collaboration with competent technocrats brought in donors aid that his government used relatively effectively, paying civil service wages regularly, developing infrastructure, improving some public services, opening the way for investors and improving macro-economic stability. This won him popularity internationally and at home, particularly in urban areas, but opposition politicians accused him of using civil service downsizing and the wage bill to exclude them from state benefits and monopolising nominations and public tenders to the benefit of a narrow circle of allies and clients.⁶⁶

To fight the prime minister's hegemony, a dozen opposition parties, notably PRS and Partido Republicano para Independência e Desenvolvimento (PRID), joined from mid-2011 in a coalition, Colectivo da Oposição Democrá-

tica (COD), and accused him of direct involvement in the killings of Vieira and three other major figures in 2009.⁶⁷ Notwithstanding his denial of the accusation, in the absence of a satisfactory judicial process, these still unresolved cases have tainted Gomes Júnior's image, even among citizens appreciative of his policies.⁶⁸

Despite his power, Gomes Júnior was not able to prevent the selection of Sanhá as the successful PAIGC presidential candidate in 2009. A former president of the National Assembly and a PAIGC insider enjoying the backing of several party elders and good connections in the armed forces, Sanhá was able to mediate between Gomes Júnior and his many military and political adversaries. But his death in January 2012 left the prime minister more formidable and his enemies more concerned than ever.

Gomes Júnior's decision to seek the presidency surprised many observers, since the constitution makes the prime minister's office formally more powerful. Once he announced his candidacy, commentators took it for granted he would win and further entrench his power, given his advantages, including personal wealth, state power, the PAIGC apparatus, significant popularity and the support of key international partners, in particular Portugal and Angola.⁶⁹ Opposition politicians and some civil society activists suspected he would turn Guinea-Bissau into a de facto single-party state, stable, patrimonial and personalised. Some welcomed the prospect as a step-up from state failure, others expressed concern.⁷⁰

President Sanhá's death and his constitutionally correct interim replacement by the assembly speaker, Pereira, exacerbated opposition fears. The COD vainly opposed that replacement because Pereira was a known ally of Gomes Júnior, and it accused him of planning to protect the prime

⁶⁵ This was expressed forcefully in Daba na Walna's interview for a Portuguese newspaper. "Os revoltosos da Guiné-Bissau: 'Se o Parlamento aceitar a vinda de uma força internacional, está bem'", *O Público*, 27 April 2012; also Mamadu Djaló Pires, foreign minister under Gomes Júnior, at a West Africa Research Centre conference, Dakar, 2 May 2012, attended by Crisis Group; and Crisis Group interviews, civil society activists, opposition politicians, Bissau, July 2011, Dakar, September 2011 and January 2012.

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interviews, civil society activists, opposition politicians, Bissau, July 2011, Dakar, September 2011, January 2012.

⁶⁷ Chief of the General Staff Batista Tagme na Wai was killed by a bomb in March 2009; President Vieira was murdered a few hours later. In June, Helder Proença, an ex-Vieira minister, and Bació Dabó, an ex-Vieira minister and a presidential candidate, were killed during the repression of an attempted coup. The COD has been explicit in its accusations; see its 14 July 2011 letter to the attorney general, at <http://prsgw.webnode.pt/>. PRID was created in March 2008 by Aristides Gomes, a Vieira associate, former prime minister and former PAIGC figure; it ran against Gomes Júnior's PAIGC in the November 2008 legislative elections, with limited results. It has recently been divided by factionalism, with Afonso Té's faction firmly in support of the transition and Aristides Gomes's remaining more reserved.

⁶⁸ Crisis Group interviews, civil society activists and citizens, Bissau, July 2011 and May 2012.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, "Analista vaticina vitória de Carlos Gomes Júnior nas presidenciais da Guiné-Bissau", *Angop*, 7 March 2012.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interviews, politicians and civil society activists, Bissau, July 2011.

minister from prosecution. It also pressed Gomes Júnior to advance the election, assuming he preferred a delay to make his preparations, but he surprised by agreeing. That forced COD to backtrack and demand sufficient time to revise the electoral roll, which dates from 2008, so does not include citizens who came of voting age subsequently. To no avail, it also argued that he could not stand because the constitution requires a prime minister to resign 55 days before an election.⁷¹

Gomes Júnior quickly obtained the endorsement of the PAIGC political bureau. At the central committee, where his control was much weaker, he manoeuvred to block the candidacies of his two rivals, Nhamadjo and Defence Minister Baciro Djá, and imposed a show of hands instead of a secret ballot. He obtained 244 of the 351 votes; twelve voted against, ten abstained, and the rest left in protest. Djá and Nhamadjo said they would stand as independent candidates.⁷²

The campaign was replete with attacks by opposition figures against what they considered abusive practices by Gomes Júnior, including alleged use of state resources for campaigning and use of the national flag as the PAIGC banner. Two days after the first round, on 20 March, the atmosphere became more intense, as the three main challengers, Yalá, Nhamadjo and Rosa, and two others⁷³ – collectively known as the *cinco* (five) – jointly denounced alleged electoral fraud and rejected the first round results. In the results the CNE announced the next day Gomes Júnior came first, with almost 49 per cent, followed by Yalá (24 per cent), Nhamadjo (16 per cent), Rosa (5 per cent) and Djá (3 per cent).⁷⁴ The rushed announcement and Gomes Júnior's near majority led several observers to conclude that he actually received an absolute majority, but it was

decided to decrease his total slightly to have a second round in the hope of defusing tension.⁷⁵

The small, short-term international observer missions (ECOWAS, the AU and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, as well as a UK parliamentary group) found the voting free and fair.⁷⁶ But there is no doubt the electoral system has serious structural weaknesses that make fraud possible. Crisis Group received several credible reports of people who could not vote because someone had signed the electoral roll in their stead.⁷⁷ There were other reports of suspension or threats of suspension of civil servants and village chiefs who campaigned for opposition candidates and of the delivery of equipment communities could only keep if voted right.⁷⁸ A civil society activist said there was probably fraud on all sides, though Gomes Júnior supporters likely had more opportunities and resources.⁷⁹

Despite opposition protests, many, including opposition supporters, agree that Gomes Júnior's result was unsurprising given his relatively good performance as prime minister, control of the government and better access to campaign resources.⁸⁰ Nhamadjo had to fight for votes from both the PAIGC and his own Peul community against Gomes Júnior, who had powerful Peul allies, including the trade minister, Botché Candé. Rosa's core electoral target, educated urbanites, was known to appreciate Gomes Júnior too. Yalá had stable support from the Balanta, who are 26 per cent of the population, including much of certain sectors in the regions of Tombali, Catio, Oio and Cacheu, which have guaranteed him and his party between a fifth and a third of the votes at any election.

⁷¹ "Guinée-Bissau : l'opposition refuse Raimundo Pereira comme président intérimaire"; "Guinée-Bissau/présidentielle: le Premier ministre se dit candidat naturel du pouvoir", Agence France-Presse, 10 January, 25 January 2012.

⁷² "PAIGC face à atribulada escolha de Carlos Gomes Júnior", PNN, 7 February 2012. "Carlos Gomes Júnior é o candidato do PAIGC", Lusa, 4 February 2012. Gomes Júnior threatened Djá and Nhamadjo with party sanctions, but no decision was taken at the time.

⁷³ Rosa, an independent businessman with a reputation for sound management and a strong connection to the Catholic Church, presided over the 2003-2005 transition. He received 23 per cent of the votes in the first round of the 2009 presidential election, mainly in urban areas, when he appeared to enjoy discreet support from Gomes Júnior. The two lesser candidates were Afonso Té, leader of one of the two PRID factions, and Serifo Baldé, from Partido Jovem.

⁷⁴ "Eleições presidenciais antecipadas de 18 de Março de 2012", CNE, 21 March 2012.

⁷⁵ Results were due on 24 March. "Guiné-Bissau: CNE divulga resultados preliminares das Eleições Presidenciais", PNN, 21 March 2012; Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and Guinean politicians, Dakar, April 2012, and Bissau, May 2012.

⁷⁶ See "Déclaration préliminaire", Mission d'observation de la Cedeao de l'élection présidentielle du 18 mars 2012 en Guinée-Bissau", 20 March 2012; "UEMOA afirma que escrutínio obedeceu as normas democráticas", Angop, 21 March 2012; "Interim statement", All-Party Parliamentary Group for Guinea-Bissau, 28 March 2012.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group telephone interviews and email correspondence, Guinean voters, March and April 2012. The process was probably susceptible to fraud, as voting cards were not biometric and did not include a picture, and identity documents are uncommon in Guinea-Bissau and not usually asked for from voters.

⁷⁸ Crisis Group email correspondence, European academic based in Guinea-Bissau, 10 June 2012.

⁷⁹ Crisis Group email correspondence, 24 April 2012.

⁸⁰ A diplomat remarked on the ubiquitous presence of Gomes Júnior posters and PAIGC flags throughout the country, while the campaign material of other candidates was rather rare. Crisis Group interview, Dakar, 23 April 2012.

A second round between Gomes Júnior and Yalá seemed credible, though some in the opposition and among international observers suspected the result was rigged to remove Nhamadjo and thus make Gomes Júnior's victory inevitable.⁸¹ Despite efforts to restore his image and reach out to other groups (which included his conversion to Islam in 2008), Yalá has not been able to reassure many outside the Balanta of his leadership after his disastrous presidency (2000-2003), and he was viewed as extremely unlikely to win a run-off.⁸² Nhamadjo's performance in a second round against Gomes Júnior was generally considered less predictable.

Insisting that Gomes Júnior had many unfair advantages, the *cinco* appealed to the CNE, which ruled their claims had not been sufficiently established, and the documented cases did not significantly alter the vote.⁸³ The supreme court reached the same conclusion on 8 April. To make up for the delay resulting from these appeals, the CNE postponed the second round a week, to 29 April. The *cinco* maintained their position, and Yalá refused to take part in the second round. A joint UN, ECOWAS and AU mission failed to resolve the situation, as did a national commission to facilitate dialogue. The designation by ECOWAS of President Alpha Condé from Guinea (Conakry) as mediator on 2 April was no more successful: the *cinco* rejected him, accusing him of bias for Gomes Júnior.⁸⁴

Gomes Júnior supporters accuse the *cinco* of having encouraged the military intervention. Nhamadjo and Yalá are known to have FAGB ties, and Yalá's PRS has a history of emphasising Balanta frustrations and fanning FAGB suspicions of Gomes Júnior and MISSANG.⁸⁵ On 4 April,

the opposition held a rally in Bafatá calling for MISSANG's withdrawal. Hours before the coup, Yalá said there would be no second round and warned that anyone who campaigned would face "consequences".⁸⁶ It is possible some opposition politicians called on connections within the army to move against Gomes Júnior, but nothing has been proved. What is clear is that Gomes Júnior's aggressive style turned many adversaries into enemies, weakening him with the FAGB, and his popular support was an insufficient counterweight.

⁸¹ Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Dakar, April 2012, and politicians, Bissau, May 2012.

⁸² Upon converting, Yalá adopted the family name of his Peul Islamic teacher, Embalo. "Kumba Ialá pede desculpa ao povo guineense pelos erros do passado", Lusa, 11 February 2012. On his presidency, see Crisis Group Report, *Guinea-Bissau: In Need of a State*, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

⁸³ CNE press communiqué, 27 March 2012.

⁸⁴ Condé is known to be close to the Angolan president. Since coming to office in December 2010, he has received Angolan security aid and a \$150 million loan. Crisis Group interviews, Guinean civil society activist, Dakar, 24 April 2012, and Guinean politician, 19 June 2012.

⁸⁵ As president, Yalá is said to have favoured the entry of young Balanta into the army and to have promoted "his" men. It is suggested that Balanta in the military encouraged him to stand in 2012 instead of retiring. Nhamadjo is said to have met with and obtained senior FAGB officers' support in January 2012. Crisis Group interviews, Guinean politicians, Bissau, May 2012. The PRS had been denouncing MISSANG as a violation of sovereignty and a Gomes Júnior weapon against the military from the start. "Guiné-Bissau: Oposição quer acabar com missão militar angolana", Voice of America (VOA), 31 March 2012. Rosa called MISSANG "an act of external interference by Angola"

and "a praetorian guard for Carlos Gomes Júnior". See "A presença de tropas angolanas na Guiné-Bissau é o principal factor de instabilidade, não a reivindicação eleitoral", PNN, 9 April 2012.

⁸⁶ "Guinée-Bissau: Kumba Yala rejette la proposition de médiation de la Cedeao", *Jeune Afrique*, 5 April 2012. "Apparent coup attempt rocks Guinea-Bissau on eve of presidential campaigning", VOA, 12 April 2012.

IV. INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS: A BATTLE FOR INFLUENCE

International condemnation and calls for the restoration of constitutional order were quick and strongly worded,⁸⁷ but this unanimity has done little to hide disagreements. While the bulk of the international community did not treat Guinea-Bissau as a priority, two of the multilateral organisations to which Guinea-Bissau belongs, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, CPLP) and ECOWAS, some of whose member countries have a special interest in Bissau affairs, have pursued radically divergent policies. Seizing the opportunity opened by CPLP's opposition to the coup, ECOWAS has asserted its lead and pushed for a negotiated transition but has had difficulty persuading other international partners to follow.

The divergence was evident in initial reactions. From Lisbon, the CPLP called on 14 April for a UN-mandated "interposition force" for "the defence of peace and security; the guarantee of constitutional order; the protection of institutions, legitimate authorities and the population; the completion of the electoral process; and the concretisation of the reform of the security sector".⁸⁸ On 16 April, ECOWAS dispatched a high-level team to Bissau headed by the president of its commission, Désiré Kadré Ouédraogo, to meet with the junta (and other actors, including Gomes Júnior, then still a captive). It reached agreement with the junta for a return to constitutional order, but no modalities were specified. Ouédraogo stated that "if the authorities accept a return to normal constitutional order, ECOWAS will replace the Angolan troops".⁸⁹

While CPLP started by asking for a force with a UN mandate to impose a return to constitutional order, ECOWAS said it would "replace the Angolan troops" (presumably in a military assistance rather than interposition role), but only once the junta had restored constitutional order. Observers noted that ECOWAS was much more lenient toward the junta than it was to those who carried out the

coup in Mali the previous month, who had immediately faced an embargo, full sanctions and threats of an intervention by the ECOWAS Standby Force.

The CPLP has by and large maintained its tough position and refused to recognise the transition authorities, leading them to question the country's continued membership in the organisation.⁹⁰ On 20 July, Pereira, not Nhamadjo, was invited to the CPLP summit in Maputo. While no longer speaking openly of a multinational interposition or stabilisation force, Angola, which presided over the AU Peace and Security Council in April, and Portugal, currently on the UN Security Council, continue to insist on return to the pre-coup situation, including the "resumption of the electoral process", ie, the interrupted second round between Gomes Júnior and Yalá.⁹¹ With the moral high ground of a clear-cut anti-coup line, Portugal has had significant impact at the EU, while Angola has had support from allies in Southern Africa, including South Africa, but also some in ECOWAS itself, where it enjoys good links with Guinea and Ghana and has been cultivating new relations with Gambian President Yahya Jammeh.⁹²

Portugal and Angola have supported Gomes Júnior diplomatically, encouraging him to maintain a tough stance. On 2 May, his foreign minister called for military intervention and the arrest of FAGB leaders, and three months later, on 1 August, Gomes Júnior himself was still asking for the dispatch of a multinational force under UN supervision as an alternative to ECOWAS and its "barbarities".⁹³ Portugal pushed the EU to adopt individual sanctions against the junta and arranged for Gomes Júnior to brief the UN Security Council on 5 June, where he made clear he considered himself the legitimate prime minister.⁹⁴ In

⁸⁷ On the day of the coup, ECOWAS called for the "immediate restoration of constitutional order". The next day a UN Security Council statement called for "the immediate restoration of constitutional order and the legitimate Government to allow for the completion of the ongoing electoral process, including the legislative elections". See "ECOWAS reaction to the ongoing coup attempt in Guinea-Bissau", ECOWAS, 12 April 2012; and "Security Council Press Statement on Guinea-Bissau", Security Council, 13 April 2012. Similar statements came from the AU, CPLP, EU and International Organisation of La Francophonie.

⁸⁸ "Resolução sobre a situação na Guiné-Bissau", CPLP, Lisbon, 14 April 2012.

⁸⁹ "La Cédéao obtient la promesse d'un retour à l'ordre constitutionnel, sans modalités prédéfinies", RFI, 17 April 2012.

⁹⁰ "Guiné-Bissau: Governo de transição admite 'questionar' presença na CPLP", Lusa, 22 June 2012.

⁹¹ While all international actors have called for a "return to constitutional order", the "resumption of the electoral process" is the key phrase that marks the divide in their approaches to the crisis.

⁹² Ghana shared some of Angola's sympathy for Laurent Gbagbo during the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, and there have been discussions about Angolan investments in Ghanaian oil. Jammeh was invited to Luanda on 22 April and soon after held an ECOWAS meeting on Guinea-Bissau in Banjul. Pro-junta politicians blamed him for the failure of that meeting. See Fernando Vaz's statement in "Situação tensa na Guiné depois do falhanço das negociações de Banjul", Guiné-Bissau: Notícias, Actualidades e Opiniões (www.gbissau.com), 1 May 2012.

⁹³ Mamadu Djaló Pires, foreign minister under Gomes Júnior, at a West Africa Research Centre conference, Dakar, 2 May 2012, attended by Crisis Group; "Gomes Júnior defende força da ONU na Guiné Chefe de Governo deposto diz que pretende evitar barbaridades cometidas pela CEDEAO", tvi24, 1 August 2012.

⁹⁴ The EU adopted targeted sanctions against five key soldiers on 3 May and added sixteen on 31 May, after the formal dissolution of the junta. The junta shrugged them off as "normal".

statements during that trip, he said sanctions on the military were not enough; called for their extension to civilian supporters; said he would press charges against the military for attacking his home; and urged an international conference, an indication he hopes a broader arena than ECOWAS would give him with a better chance to advance his agenda. “God help Africa”, he told the UN radio, if it continues to follow the example that ECOWAS is trying to impose on us, and which we will not accept”.⁹⁵

ECOWAS has maintained a very different orientation: while insisting on constitutional order and zero-tolerance for coups, it backs a transition. This somewhat contradictory stand came out in its 26 April summit communiqué, which “firmly” condemned the coup and “any unconstitutional transitional arrangement”; gave the junta 72 hours to comply with its terms or face sanctions, “not excluding prosecution by the International Criminal Court”; and demanded “immediate and unconditional release” of Gomes Júnior and Pereira as well as the “immediate restoration of constitutional order to allow for the completion of the electoral process”.⁹⁶

Simultaneously, however, it envisaged “a consensual transition through the holding of elections within twelve months” and a “restoration of constitutional order, based on modalities to be worked out” with its help. Finally, it called not for an interposition force (already rejected by the junta), but for deployment of “a contingent of the ECOWAS Standby Force ... to, among other duties, facilitate the withdrawal of [MISSANG], assist in securing the transitional process, and undertake preparatory work for the immediate implementation of the roadmap for the Defence and Security Sector Reform Program” – a softer agenda, strongly at variance with the CPLP position.⁹⁷

In subsequent negotiations on the transition process, ECOWAS engaged in horse-trading with the junta. It obtained two major concessions (release of Gomes Júnior and Pereira and retention of the ANP), while failing to obtain Pereira’s return to the interim presidency. On this last point, it came up with what was presented as a constitutionally compatible compromise: the ANP would elect a new speaker, who would then become the interim presi-

dent. But that did not happen, because PAIGC refused to vote Pereira out. The junta’s choice, Nhamadjo, was eventually validated by ECOWAS and the opposition parties without the support of an ANP majority, thus further reducing the semblance of constitutional order.

To understand the dispute between ECOWAS and CPLP, their common past in the country must be examined. After the April 2010 military turmoil and the withdrawal of the EU SSR mission, the two organisations cooperated at the request of the authorities. But ECOWAS has held to the view that Angola, a major force in CPLP, used the joint efforts to develop special relations with and influence in Bissau.⁹⁸ Immediately after April 2010, while the FAGB were tenaciously resisting ECOWAS pressure for an international force, Angola negotiated a bilateral deal for a military assistance mission that was more acceptable to the military, resulting in MISSANG’s deployment in March 2011.

Some ECOWAS member states were frustrated with this situation, and implementation of the SSR roadmap has been frozen. Neither funds ECOWAS had pledged to finance the pension fund for retiring soldiers nor the memorandum of understanding that CPLP, ECOWAS and the government were to sign to launch SSR ever materialised.⁹⁹ To some in ECOWAS, it may be poetic justice that while Angola used earlier ECOWAS pressure for an international force to bring in MISSANG, ECOWAS has now used CPLP pressure for an international force to establish its own military mission in Bissau.

Tensions and suspicions between the two organisations have been so high that at least one pro-CPLP observer has maintained that “personalities from ECOWAS countries” encouraged the coup, promising their mediation to arrange a subsequent solution. Along the same line, sources insisted that Nhamadjo has a strong connection to Nigeria thanks to his membership in the ECOWAS parliament, which is based in Abuja, while others mentioned the role of Umaro Sissoco Embalo, an ex-military and former adviser to both Vieira and Sanhá, who is said to have links to Nhamadjo and Burkina Faso.¹⁰⁰ ECOWAS as an institution, however, seems to have been quite supportive of the electoral process that was expected to confirm Gomes Júnior’s power: it allocated \$1 million to help finance the elections (with Nigeria giving another \$2 million); it tried

“Comando militar da Guiné-Bissau entende e acha normais sanções da União Europeia”, Lusa, 5 May 2012.

⁹⁵ “Guiné-Bissau: PM deposto diz que Conselho de Segurança considera sanções a políticos”, Lusa, 6 June 2012; “Na ONU, Carlos Gomes Jr. pede restauração da ordem na Guiné-Bissau”, Novas da Guiné Bissau (<http://novasdaguinebissau.blogspot.com>), 6 June 2012.

⁹⁶ “Final communiqué”, op. cit., Lt. Colonel Daba na Walna, a military lawyer and the command’s spokesperson, seemed unimpressed, commenting that nothing qualified for an ICC investigation; Daba na Walna press conference, 27 April 2012.

⁹⁷ “Final communiqué”, op. cit.

⁹⁸ Crisis Group interviews, ECOWAS diplomats, New York, May 2012.

⁹⁹ See Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Crisis Group interviews, PAIGC and FRENAGOLPE activists, Bissau, May 2012. “Guiné-Bissau: em marcha reposição da normalidade anterior a golpe de Estado”, *África Monitor*, 23 April 2012. *África Monitor* is a Portuguese newsletter interested in CPLP issues and close to Lisbon policymaking circles.

to appease tensions before and after the first round; and it dispatched an observer mission that, like the mission from the West African Economic and Monetary Union, validated that first round.

What is certain is that while some ECOWAS countries are close to Angola (or, like Cape Verde, also belong to CPLP), other key players, notably Nigeria, Senegal, Burkina Faso and the new Ouattara government in Côte d'Ivoire, have a tense history with it and are not keen on its attempts to build influence in West Africa.¹⁰¹ None of these latter four were pleased with Angola's direct support to Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo, including in military matters. Nigeria has expressed a claim to regional leadership,¹⁰² and Senegal's tight relations with the FAGB, which supported its struggle against separatists in the Senegalese region of Casamance, cooled after the killings of 2009, the ascent of Gomes Júnior and Angola's increased role reduced Dakar's influence over its neighbour.¹⁰³ It is thus possible that while these countries had accepted Gomes Júnior's victory as inevitable before the coup, they realised after 12 April that they had an opportunity to get back at Angola.

Guinea-Bissau is also where the Lusophone and Francophone blocs collide. The consul-general of Guinea-Bissau in Luanda blamed France for the coup.¹⁰⁴ Mirror-image

accusations are made, with critics accusing Lisbon of being too close to Gomes Júnior and of having played a direct role in the killing of General na Wai in 2009.¹⁰⁵ It is difficult to know how much such conspiracy theories inform the perspectives and actions of the various actors, but competing policy networks are at play, and the level of suspicion is high, which distracts from the country's real problems, in particular the persistent suffering of the population and the continued failure of the political and military classes to agree on a governance framework. There is clearly need for both better international coordination and special care to make it visible to Guinean actors.

These tensions, scarcity of resources and a belief that the situation does not amount to an especially grave crisis such as might require it to override the principle of subsidiarity (pursuant to which regional organisation leadership is normally welcomed) have led both the AU and the Security Council to adopt cautious positions. A carefully-worded 21 April statement from the presidency of the latter condemned the coup, threatened targeted sanctions and noted the AU's decision to initiate consultations "on possible additional means necessary for the stabilisation of the country" – a hint some sort of force might be considered at some point, but not quite what the CPLP had wanted.¹⁰⁶ The 8 May Security Council press statement was no stronger.¹⁰⁷

Security Council Resolution 2048 (18 May) validated by and large the transitional approach of ECOWAS, while echoing the suspicions of the rest of the international community regarding its motivations. While the initial Portuguese draft *demand*ed the "completion of the electoral process", the final text only *deplored the junta's refusal* to complete the electoral process and opened room for new elections by calling on the junta to take "immediate steps to restore and respect constitutional order, including a democratic electoral process". The resolution also "encourage[d]" the ECOWAS mediation, while calling for the UN Secretary-General to be actively engaged "in order to harmonize the respective positions of international bilateral and multilateral partners". The targeted sanctions 2048 adopted aim only at five senior military figures and spare opposition politicians alleged to have encouraged the coup.¹⁰⁸ Portugal kept pressing for sanctions on transi-

¹⁰¹ This history dates to the Angolan civil war and the Cold War, when the rebel leader Jonas Savimbi had many allies and business partners in West African ruling circles. Angolan interest in the region survived Savimbi's death and defeat in 2002.

¹⁰² During a visit of Angolan Foreign Minister Chikoti, President Jonathan said Angola must lead in Central Africa and Nigeria in West Africa. "Angola deve liderar a África Central", diz Presidente da Nigéria, *Televisão Pública de Angola*, 13 January 2012.

¹⁰³ According to a European diplomat, President Wade had concluded that Gomes Júnior would win and had to be worked with. Crisis Group interview, Dakar, April 2012. There are reports Wade played a part in resolving the controversy over the electoral timeline in January 2012. "Choc des ambitions, après le décès du Président: Wade sauve Bissau du chaos politique", *rewmi.com*, 17 January 2012. As far as Bissau is concerned, the new Senegalese president, Macky Sall, seems to walk in the footsteps of Wade and cultivate influence there in order to keep the Casamance separatist rebels as weak as possible.

¹⁰⁴ "Acusação: 'Paris está por detrás da confusão que se regista na Guiné-Bissau ...'", *Semanário Angolense*, 21 April 2012, quoted by *gbissau.com*. The struggle between the Francophonie and Lusofonia had earlier been mentioned by some observers as a factor in the 1998-1999 war, a popular reaction against President Vieira's attempt to get closer to France, including adopting the CFA franc, joining the Francophonie and obtaining Senegalese military support. See, for example, Roy van der Drift, "Democracy: legitimate warfare in Guinea-Bissau", in *Soronda: Revista de Estudos Guineenses* (2000), pp. 37-65. French diplomatic edifices were plundered and destroyed after Mané's victory over Vieira. French diplomats insist that France

has few hard interests in Guinea-Bissau, does not want a dispute with an important European partner like Portugal, but cares for its good relations with ECOWAS and its member states. Crisis Group interviews, Paris, December 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Crisis Group interviews, Guinean politicians, Bissau, September 2009; diplomat, Dakar, April 2012.

¹⁰⁶ "UN Security Council Presidential Statement on Guinea-Bissau", U.S. Mission to the UN, 21 April 2012.

¹⁰⁷ "Security Council Press Statement on Guinea-Bissau", 8 May 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Around this period, the AU Commission, asked by the Peace and Security Council to identify potential sanctions targets,

tion politicians but without success.¹⁰⁹ On 18 July, six more military officers were put under UN sanctions.

Angola, Portugal and their allies have realised that their initial position was untenable. They have stopped calling openly for an intervention, and have formally acknowledged the lead of ECOWAS, while insisting in international arenas, from the AU to the UN, on better international coordination and calling for ECOWAS to be more open to dialogue. But the debate now is no easier, as was clear during the July Security Council meetings. The Ivorian ambassador, speaking for ECOWAS, insisted that “the Carlos Gomes Júnior faction” and its “international supporters” were making difficulties, despite the transition government efforts at “inclusion and consensus”. The Portuguese ambassador replied that it was a “lack of elegance” to describe the PAIGC parliamentary majority as a “faction” and pointed out divisions within ECOWAS over the issue. Typically, CPLP countries reiterated calls for a high-level meeting, suggesting the General Assembly in September might be a good occasion.

ECOWAS offered no direct reply, but declared itself ready to come to Lisbon for discussions with CPLP. After such exchanges, the resulting declaration, jointly prepared by Portugal and Togo, was non-committal, simply mentioning that the possibility of a high-level meeting had been discussed and calling for the Secretary-General to work for international coordination.¹¹⁰

If they have failed to impose their line, Angola and Portugal are keeping up enough pressure in the EU, AU and UN to allow Gomes Júnior and his ministers in exile to engage in diplomatic operations and make recognition of the transition regime difficult. They discourage most donor dealings with the transition authorities. The U.S. decision in May to withdraw its recognition of Nhamadjo as transitional president at the same time as it declared support for ECOWAS is typical of major Western countries’ uneasiness and hesitation. Voice of America reported that the liaison officer following Guinea-Bissau from the Dakar embassy stated, after meeting with the transitional prime minister on 19 June: “There is a government here, whether it is legitimate or not, it is governing. We are ready to work with whoever wants to rule for progress”.¹¹¹ Sub-

sequently, the U.S. government emphasised that it was fully in support of the ECOWAS lead in securing a rapid democratic transition.¹¹²

The moral pressure exerted by Gomes Júnior and his international supporters has made it difficult for ECOWAS to mobilise the support of other donors. In May, after it announced it would need 7.5 billion CFA Francs (about \$13 million) to deploy in Guinea-Bissau (and Mali), it learned no outside funding would be forthcoming. It bank-rolled ECOMIB (though not a Mali mission) and gave the transition authorities in Bissau budgetary support from its own resources. Regional financial institutions, such as the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the West African Development Bank, have been intensifying efforts to provide financial assistance, probably in an attempt to mitigate the impact of the withdrawal of other donors.¹¹³ These special efforts demonstrate how serious major West African countries are about defending what they consider to be “their” ground.

The transition authorities have launched a diplomatic offensive to break through the CPLP cordon, saying the proper things about gender issues, SSR, impunity, drugs and good governance.¹¹⁴ But officials, including Nhamadjo and Foreign Minister Faustino Imbali, have had difficulty reaching beyond ECOWAS partners.¹¹⁵ Gomes Júnior, not they, addressed the Security Council in June. The results of international coordination meetings the UN has held seem limited. The tense 7 June Abidjan session of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, for instance, did not even produce a communiqué.¹¹⁶ While they are un-

laise, 17 May 2012. “Guiné-Bissau: Washington anuncia apoio ao governo de transição”, VOA, 19 June 2012.

¹¹² Crisis Group interview, senior State Department official, Washington DC, 9 August 2012.

¹¹³ “Cedeao: Environ 7,5 milliards de FCFA pour déployer la force d’interposition en Guinée-Bissau”, Agence Ivoirienne de Presse (AIP), 16 May 2012; “Guinée-Bissau: L’Uemoa et le Nigéria vont ‘éponger les arriérés de salaires’ des fonctionnaires”, AIP, 7 juin 2012; “Guinée-Bissau: prêt de la BOAD et l’UEMOA pour la construction d’une route”, Xinhua, 2 August 2012; “La BOAD octroie un prêt de 35 milliards de FCFA à la Guinée-Bissau”, Xinhua, 21 July 2012.

¹¹⁴ The new authorities insisted that the cabinet would not include businessmen and that all key officials would have to declare their assets. They also announced a 50 per cent cut in income for top officials, and Nhamadjo said 30 per cent of the cabinet would be women (though in the end, only two of 27 cabinet members were).

¹¹⁵ When Imbali went to Dakar to meet with ambassadors to Guinea-Bissau based there, EU ambassadors declined to attend. Crisis Group email correspondence, European diplomat, 11 June 2012. Imbali did take part to the China-Africa Cooperation Forum in July in Beijing.

¹¹⁶ CPLP participants apparently refused to acknowledge that there had been “constant progress” on resolution of the crisis,

listed several senior politicians, but not Nhamadjo or Yalá; letter, AU Commission to the CPLP Executive Secretariat, Addis Abeba, 10 May 2012.

¹⁰⁹ “Guiné-Bissau: Portugal defende sanções do Conselho Segurança a mais golpistas”, Lusa, 21 June 2012.

¹¹⁰ “Portugal e África Ocidental em choque na ONU”, Lusa, 27 July 2012; “Situação na Guiné-Bissau divide Comunidade da África Ocidental”, *Expresso*, 27 July 2012.

¹¹¹ “EUA recuam no reconhecimento de Presidente interino”, Lusa, 15 May 2012; “Guinée-Bissau et Mali: Washington salue ‘le très bon travail’ de la CEDEAO”, Agence de Presse Sénéga-

likely to lose their lead on the Guinean case, the few West African countries shaping ECOWAS policy risk isolation and will be hard-pressed to find resources to deal with the country's many problems.

With ECOWAS's policy firmly fixed, others can either let the transition run its course and accept (or even wish) that it may not be steady, or engage and try to influence it. The suspension of aid by major donors has been significant. All Guinean actors realise how reliant the country is on donor support, not least for the state budget that politicians and the military actors live on. The release of Gomes Júnior and Pereira, the speed with which the junta dropped its initial two-year transition plan and the relative freedom of the PAIGC to operate in Bissau all indicate that the military and the transition authorities recognise they need to preserve international ties and work out a peaceful solution. That suggests there is an opportunity to advance much needed and long-delayed reforms. It should not be jeopardised by geopolitical turf wars.

V. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The interruption of the electoral process and break in the constitutional order are damaging to such little progress as Guinea-Bissau has achieved in the last few years.¹¹⁷ The persistent weakness of institutions requires sustained international attention. It is good that the international community unanimously declared its rejection of the coup, but the operative question should be: what policy options are available for meaningful international engagement?

The initial CPLP proposal for an interposition force was a non-starter. The FAGB would resist a non-negotiated intervention force, upsetting a situation that has remained essentially peaceful. Such an intervention would probably be perceived by some in Bissau as disproportionate and reflecting a double standard, since so little was done in 2009 when President Vieira and a presidential candidate were killed. An aggressive international intervention would feed into the narrative that Gomes Júnior has an improper liaison with foreign forces, and it would be as likely to aggravate factionalism and criminalisation within the FAGB as to cause it to yield.

The moderate line pursued by ECOWAS is the only game in town, at least for now. Paradoxically, ECOWAS owes something of its leverage over the military and transition authorities to the CPLP's hard line, which it shields them from. A "good cop, bad cop" technique can sometimes get results.¹¹⁸ In its eagerness to see MISSANG out, however, the regional organisation and its key member states may have given the transition authorities too much room for manoeuvre, rendering necessary changes harder to produce. As the Angolan example shows, a foreign contingent in itself is not enough; without a clear reform agenda backed by sufficient international clout, the ECOWAS force may have little impact. Still, ECOWAS has one powerful tool Angola never had: should the transition authorities fail to deliver reform and new elections, it could impose a damaging embargo, including blocking financial flows from the Central Bank of West African States.

Gomes Júnior's controversial rule and the electoral system's inability to produce accepted results made it easier for the FAGB to intervene. Not just the military, but the whole structure of state institutions – political, judicial and economic – requires significant reform. Despite a negative international image, the military has significant national influence, a strong sense of legitimacy and networks linking it to rural communities. Reducing it to a caricature of drug-trafficking spoilers would both be a mistaken read-

as suggested in the ECOWAS draft of the communiqué. Crisis Group email correspondence, diplomat, June 2012.

¹¹⁷ See Crisis Group Report, *Au-delà des compromis*, op. cit., pp. 2-13.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

ing and make reform impossible. Guinea-Bissau mainly reaches the international agenda via the issue of cocaine transit (Latin America to Europe), but while the military can give traffickers security and logistics, the organised criminal groups operate in complex coalitions that also include civilians, politicians and businessmen. Long-term economic development and an increase and formalisation of wages in the security and justice sector are needed to render state and society less vulnerable to the narcotics trade. For this to happen, the international community must give the tiny state sustained attention.

Successful international engagement will also require careful coordination. Guineans must not be allowed to think they can play one actor against the other. ECOWAS and CPLP, Nigeria and Angola, France and Portugal should all take special care to build and maintain consensus. Because of its strong position and the special commitment and interest of some of its member states, ECOWAS should remain the prime driver of the process, but it must work with others, starting by engaging the CPLP in a serious, direct and high-level discussion over the future of the transition. The AU should work through its new special representative to Guinea-Bissau to facilitate this ECOWAS-CPLP dialogue.¹¹⁹ The high-level meeting envisaged during the September UN General Assembly could be another occasion to build consensus. Based on these discussions and on consultations with the transition authorities, ECOWAS should then seek a mandate for ECOMIB from the Security Council that would send donors a powerful signal for a gradual resumption of financial support.

Crisis and fragility must be approached in a holistic manner. For example, unequal regional development feeds Balanta resentment, which in turn raises tensions in the FAGB. Despite the generally positive assessments of the short-term observer missions, the electoral system has failed to build enough legitimacy and must be improved. The electoral roll needs to be revised to include all eligible voters. A proper biometric electoral register should replace the current voting cards. Political parties need help to develop their capacity for electoral oversight. Networks of national electoral observers must be developed in cooperation with civil society coalitions. All candidates must have guaranteed access to the media, public and private, during campaigns.

The transition authorities would certainly make their position stronger if they succeeded in renegotiating a deal with the PAIGC. The election of a new speaker of the ANP (who would presumably come from the PAIGC majority)

and a partial reshuffle of the government would be welcome steps.

A new presidential election must be held as soon as possible. The transition authorities have said it will take place in April 2013, in combination with the legislative elections that were due in November 2012. The suggestion by the União para Mudança party to keep that November 2012 date and hold both elections on it makes sense – the earlier the better – but the priority should be development of a less contentious electoral system.¹²⁰ Gomes Júnior must be allowed to take part in the new elections. No credible political order can be built if a leader with his demonstrated support is barred. He (and others) will need credible armed international protection that may require reinforcement of ECOMIB, including from a broad range of ECOWAS countries.

Accusations of drug trafficking and murder have become tools to destabilise political adversaries. In the absence of a robust justice system, these accusations are never the object of proper investigations and judgments; they persist as deleterious rumours that will haunt and be a threat to whomever is in power. The transition authorities should realise the national judiciary is not in a position to deliver uncontroversial justice and so ask the Security Council to create an international commission of inquiry to look into all political murders not covered by the 2007 amnesty, including the murders of March and June 2009, the killings of Major Iaia Dabo in December 2011 and of Colonel Samba Djaló in March 2012, and the disappearance of Roberto Cacheu in December 2011.

Reform of the security sector needs to begin. Serious trimming and restructuring of the armed forces and a decent retirement program is long overdue, as many soldiers understand. But for reform to succeed, the military must be part of the process and come to recognise that it works for, not against them. On this count, the presence of an officer as the defence minister might be more of an opportunity than a problem. ECOWAS should make good its pledge of resources to help the transition authorities kick-start the pension fund, which has become a powerful symbol of reform. Other dimensions of SSR should quickly become topics of renewed open discussion between the armed forces, the civilian authorities and the general public. The only chance to make the FAGB less susceptible to drug money is to replace informal, erratic and potentially criminal income arrangements within the force with decent wages through a transparent payment system that makes use of biometry.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ovídio Pequeno, a former foreign minister from São Tomé, took over in May 2012. The position had remained vacant for more than a year.

¹²⁰ “Comunicado”, União para Mudança, 16 April 2012.

¹²¹ To achieve FAGB cooperation, it will also be important to acknowledge the role of the armed forces in defence of signifi-

Special attention should be given to the deep development inequalities between Bissau and the rest of the country. Only economic development can break entrenched patron-client links that define governance in both civilian and military life and thus weaken the capacity of drug dealers to bribe their way through society. None of this can be achieved overnight, however.

VI. CONCLUSION

The 12 April coup was the culmination of new levels of tension in military-civilian tensions since Gomes Júnior became prime minister in 2008. As imperfect as the transition engineered by ECOWAS might be, it is now the reality that has to be dealt with. Operating within the CPLP, Angola and Portugal can make matters difficult for the transition authorities by blocking or delaying international recognition and aid, but they are not strong enough to seize leadership from the West African organisation. Even if they did, they would face the same problem of mustering resources for reform when there is no real international appetite to pour extensive aid into the country.

The turf war between some ECOWAS and CPLP member states must end, because the only thing that results from the present standoff is loss of time, energy and opportunities that are costly to all Guineans. The current situation has opened up some significant possibilities. The weakness of a minority government that seeks legitimacy at home and internationally and of a military feeling embattled may make it feasible to advance critical reform issues. But this can only happen if there is a unified and coherent international response led by the region.

Dakar/Brussels, 17 August 2012

APPENDIX A

MAP OF GUINEA-BISSAU



APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANP	Assembleia Nacional Popular, National Popular Assembly, the 100-seat parliament in which PAIGC has controlled 67 seats since the November 2008 elections.
CNE	Comissão Nacional de Eleições, National Electoral Commission
COD	Colectivo da Oposição Democrática, Convention of the Democratic Opposition (sometimes also mentioned as Forum of the Democratic Opposition), a gathering of some dozen parties, including PRS and PRID, formed in the summer of 2011 to denounce the rule of Gomes Júnior and his alleged implication in a series of unsolved political killings.
CPLP	Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, an international organisation gathering eight Portuguese-speaking countries.
ECOMIB	ECOWAS Mission in Bissau, military contingent deployed in June 2012.
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAGB	Forças Armadas da Guiné-Bissau, Armed Forces of Guinea-Bissau
FRENAGOLPE	Frente Nacional Anti-Golpe, National Anti-Coup Front, a gathering of parties (including PAIGC) and civil society organisations supportive of ousted Prime Minister Gomes Júnior; led by Iancuba Injai.
ICC	International Criminal Court
MISSANG	Missão de Segurança de Angola na Guiné-Bissau, Angolan Security Mission in Guinea-Bissau, present from March 2011 to June 2012.
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the party founded by Amílcar Cabral in 1956, which led the liberation war against Portugal and held power until the 1998-1999 war; now led by Gomes Júnior.
PIR	Polícia de Intervenção Rápida, Rapid Intervention Police, an elite police force that includes elements trained in Angola and is generally considered close to Gomes Júnior.
PRID	Partido Republicano para Independência e Desenvolvimento, Republican Party for Independence and Development, created in March 2008 by Aristides Gomes, a Vieira associate, former prime minister and former PAIGC figure; Afonso Té's faction of the party belongs to COD.
PRS	Partido para a Renovação Social, Party for Social Renewal, one of the first opposition parties created to oppose PAIGC after the legalisation of multi-partyism; led by Kumba Yalá.
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UM	União para Mudança, a small opposition party that supported Malam Bacai Sanhá; now led by Agnello Regalla.
UNIOGBIS	UN Integrated Office in Guinea-Bissau, the heir to the UN political unit created in Guinea-Bissau in April 1999, as the war of 1998-1999 was coming to a close, and that has remained continuously since.

APPENDIX C

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since July 2009 has been Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

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August 2012

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