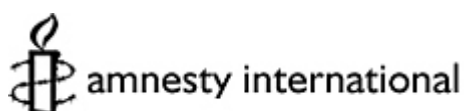


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Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 - Guinea-Bissau

Head of state: **Malam Bacai Sanhá**
Head of government: **Carlos Gomes Júnior**
Death penalty: **abolitionist for all crimes**
Population: **1.6 million**
Life expectancy: **48.6 years**
Under-5 mortality (m/f): **207/186 per 1,000**
Adult literacy: **51 per cent**

The political situation remained fragile as conflict between political and military authorities continued. Divisions within civilian authorities, as well as military infighting, exacerbated instability. Tension increased in April following a military rebellion. The armed forces were responsible for human rights violations, including torture and arbitrary arrest and detention. No one was brought to justice for political killings and torture which took place in 2009.

Background

In January, the government signed an agreement with the USA to allow a US prosecutor to work alongside Guinea-Bissau's Attorney General to fight drug trafficking and other crimes. However, the US prosecutor had not been deployed by the end of 2010.

In February, a former Minister of Fisheries and three ministry officials were charged with embezzlement. Their case had not been adjudicated by the end of the year. The National Assembly was apparently reluctant to lift the parliamentary immunity of one of the accused.

In April, the deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General António Indjai, deposed and arrested the Chief of Staff, Admiral Zamora Induta. General António Indjai briefly detained the Prime Minister, Carlos Gomes Júnior, and threatened to kill him if demonstrators, who took to the streets in support of the Prime Minister, persisted with their protest. At the same time soldiers acting on the General's orders stormed the UN headquarters in the capital, Bissau and "liberated" the former Chief of Staff of the navy, Vice-Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto. He had taken refuge in the UN building after voluntarily returning to Bissau in December 2009 from Gambia, where he had fled in 2008 after being accused of plotting a coup. He was reinstated as the navy's Chief of Staff in October. In June, President Sanhá removed Admiral Zamora Induta as Chief of Staff of the armed forces and appointed General António Indjai in his place. His appointment

and the reinstatement of Vice-Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto as head of the navy in October were widely criticized inside and outside the country.

In May, Guinea-Bissau's human rights record was assessed under the UN Universal Periodic Review. The UN Human Rights Council's final report was adopted in September. The government rejected five recommendations, including those related to ending impunity of the armed forces for human rights violations. Among those it supported was a commitment to the eventual criminalization of female genital mutilation, but only after a public education campaign.

The National Assembly approved a package of laws in May including amendments to the organic law of the armed forces and laws on the National Guard, Public Order Police and the State Security Information Services.

In September, the EU ended its security sector reform mission to the country, which started in 2008, on grounds of political instability and lack of respect for the rule of law.

In November, Guinea-Bissau ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They were to enter into force on 1 December 2010 and 1 February 2011 respectively.

Impunity

Investigations into political killings in March and June 2009 stalled, apparently for lack of resources to question some witnesses outside the country. The armed forces continued to commit human rights violations with impunity.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions

Six military officers, including one woman, arrested in connection with the killing in March 2009 of former Chief of Staff General Tagme na Waie remained in incommunicado detention without charge for 20 months. They were released in December pending formal charges and trial, and were reportedly not allowed to leave the country.

In April, General António Indjai arrested Admiral Zamora Induta, Chief of Staff of the armed forces and accused him of involvement in the disappearance of drugs seized during a raid. However, other reports indicated that the arrest was linked to an investigation Admiral Zamora Induta had launched in March into the involvement of high-ranking military officers in drug trafficking. General António Indjai also arrested Colonel Samba Djaló, head of the military intelligence service, and accused him of interfering in the activities of political parties. The two arrested men were reportedly tortured in detention at Mansôa military barracks. The Supreme Military Court ordered their conditional release in September, but they remained in detention until mid-December, when they were released without charge, pending further investigations. Apparently, the only restrictions imposed were that they were not allowed to leave the country.

Torture and other ill-treatment

In July, Fernando Té died in hospital a few days after being arrested and beaten by police officers stationed at the 5th police station in Bissau. According to reports, he was arrested following a dispute with a shopkeeper and taken to the police station, where he was beaten before being released without charge a few hours later. Two days after his death, the police officers involved were arrested. However, by the end of the year they had not apparently been charged or tried.

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls, including forced and early marriages, was widespread.

- A 15-year-old girl was beaten to death in April for refusing to marry a much older man. Women in a village in the southern region of Tombali beat the girl, who had previously run away to avoid being married, during the wedding ceremony. Although the case was referred to the Attorney General's Office, no one was arrested.
- In March, members of the Evangelical Church in Tombali region were beaten by villagers for sheltering about 20 girls aged between 14 and 16 who had run away to avoid forced marriages to older men.
- In August, a girl and two of her female relatives were beaten by male relatives in another village in Tombali region. The girl had been given in marriage to an older man, but her female relatives objected to the wedding on grounds that the girl was under age. Although a complaint was lodged with the police, no action was taken.

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