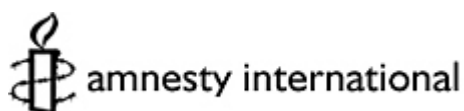


Title	Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Guinea-Bissau
Publisher	Amnesty International
Country	Guinea-Bissau
Publication Date	24 May 2012
Cite as	Amnesty International, <i>Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Guinea-Bissau</i> , 24 May 2012, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fbe393773.html [accessed 5 December 2012]
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Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Guinea-Bissau

Head of state: **Malam Bacai Sanhá**
Head of government: **Carlos Gomes Júnior**
Death penalty: **abolitionist for all crimes**
Population: **1.5 million**
Life expectancy: **48.1 years**
Under-5 mortality: **192.6 per 1,000**
Adult literacy: **52.2 per cent**

Tension within the military remained a potential source of instability. There were reports of an attempted coup in late December. With no progress in the investigation into the killings of political and military figures in 2009, thousands of people took to the streets to demand an end to impunity. Freedom of expression came under threat as a newspaper was ordered to close after implicating a military official in the killing of the country's former President. A law prohibiting female genital mutilation (FGM) was passed in July, and in October a case was filed against two practitioners.

Background

Magistrates and other justice officials went on strike several times throughout the year to demand better salaries and working conditions.

In February, the EU partially suspended development aid. It also threatened to freeze assets and impose visa bans on several military officers and other officials suspected of involvement in drug trafficking and of threatening peace, security and stability. The EU repeated its demand for an investigation into the political killings that took place in 2009.

In March, 600 Angolan police and military officers were deployed as part of the Angolan Military Mission to Guinea-Bissau (MISSANG) to assist with training and reforming the country's security sector. The Angolan government had agreed to provide funds and training for reforming the military and police after the EU ended its Security Sector Reform Mission in September 2010.

In June, the National Assembly approved several new laws, including one banning FGM and another aimed at preventing and penalizing people-trafficking. Both were promulgated in July and came into force with immediate effect.

In July, thousands of people took part in demonstrations organized by 10 opposition political parties in the capital, Bissau, to protest against the lack of progress in investigating the 2009 political killings. They also demanded the resignation and prosecution of the Prime Minister, and others whom they accused of being responsible for the killings.

In August, the newly appointed Procurator General pledged to fight corruption, organized crime and impunity.

In late December, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces announced that an attempted coup had been foiled involving soldiers and civilians, including a former minister and a parliamentarian. Other reports suggested a military revolt caused by disagreements between the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces and the Navy. Around 50 people, mostly soldiers, were reportedly arrested. About 10 were quickly released without charge. At least 25 people remained in prison.

Extrajudicial executions

On 27 December, the Rapid Response Police extrajudicially executed Iaia Dabó as he prepared to hand himself over to the Judiciary Police. He was suspected of involvement in an alleged coup attempt the previous day. No arrests had been made in connection with his killing by the year's end. Iaia Dabó was the brother of a politician killed by soldiers in June 2009 following accusations of involvement in another alleged coup.

Impunity

No one had been brought to justice for the killings of politicians and high-ranking military officers in 2009 and before.

In March, the former Procurator General announced that investigations into the killings of President João Bernardo Vieira and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Tagme Na Waie, had reached a dead end because of difficulties in gathering evidence.

In May, he also announced that there was no evidence of an attempted coup in June 2009 and provisionally closed the investigation. He submitted the case of two politicians killed in the alleged coup to the Military High Court, which he said had jurisdiction over it. The Military High Court refuted this and the case was passed to the Supreme Court. No decision had been made by the end of the year on who should deal with the case.

Violence against women and girls

Female genital mutilation

In July, a new law was passed which forbids FGM and penalizes practitioners with prison terms of between one and five years. In October, two practitioners and another woman were arrested in the eastern town of Bafatá after being accused of subjecting four girls to FGM in September. The four girls, who are related and between two and five years old, were taken by their grandmother to be excised. She was among those arrested in October. After a few days in detention, the three women were conditionally released pending further investigation, and had to report daily to the local Prosecutor's office. The case had not been brought to court by the end of the year.

Freedom of expression – newspapers

In April, the government ordered the weekly newspaper *Última Hora* to close after it published an article quoting excerpts from an official, as yet unpublished report which apparently implicated the navy's then Chief of Staff in the killing of President Vieira. Following widespread condemnation by civil society groups, the government denied it had ordered the newspaper to close. However, it warned all newspapers to be prudent with their reporting or else they would lose their licences.

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