



Guinea-Bissau Country Report February 2023

Guinea-Bissau is a former Portuguese colony that gained independence in 1974 under President Luis Cabral after a decade-long war against Portugal. Cabral and the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) [massacred thousands](#) of local soldiers who fought for Portugal during the colonial war.

In 1980, Joao Bernardo Vieira ousted Cabral in a coup and ruled until Guinea-Bissau's first multi-party, free elections in 1994. Cabral won the election. After a series of military coups and a civil war, Vieira was elected President in the 2005 elections.

In 2009, military officials assassinated Vieira. His chosen successor, Bacai Sanha, died in January 2012. There was a [considerable increase](#) in the smuggling of cocaine following a 2012 military coup. During elections three months later, the military junta detained Interim President Raimundo Pereria and frontrunner Carlos Gomes. General Antonio Indjai, who led the coup, desired control over Guinea-Bissau's lucrative [cocaine trade](#).

Following pressure from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the coup faltered. General Indjai released the detainees on the 27th of April. Elections in 2014 brought Jose Mario Vaz to power. He became the first President to [complete a full five-year](#) term.

The 2019 election saw former prime minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló triumph over Pereria, ending 46 years of PAIGC rule. [Embaló appointed himself President](#) without the Supreme Court's consent and sent military troops to enforce his orders.

Guinea-Bissau has become a cocaine smuggling entrepot from Latin America to West Africa into Europe. [800-1,000 kg](#) of cocaine goes through Guinea-Bissau every night. The United Nations has designated Guinea-Bissau as a ['narco-state.'](#)

The [support the Guinea-Bissau military provides](#) to organized crime has made the country a free port for the drug trade. [Guinea-Bissau's drug trade](#) will grow. Drug smuggling cartels promote corruption and murder. Corruption of the police has destabilized Guinea-Bissau and left it open to mass violence.

Guinea-Bissau's women's rights groups have recently made progress in [ending Female Genital Mutilation](#), which has been outlawed since 2011. But civil society leaders face threats from the powerful drug cartels with numerous cases of [torture, police brutality](#), and political violence, as seen in the [abduction of a member of parliament](#), Marciano Indi, in May 2020 and the assault of two members of the opposition party.

Genocide Watch considers the military elite's cooperation with organized crime and drug cartels, coupled with its disregard for constitutional and international law, as **Stage Five: Organization**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The United Nations, African Union, ECOWAS, US, and EU should place targeted economic sanctions on leaders of Guinea-Bissau's military who have facilitated organized crime.
- Guinea-Bissau must continue to allow UN and NGO observers to monitor elections.
- Donation limits on political party and campaign funding should be enacted and enforced.