



Genocide Warning: Equatorial Guinea 21 February 2012

Equatorial Guinea gained independence in 1968. Ever since this small African country has suffered under authoritarian rule.

The first president was Francisco Macías Nguema. After his election in September 1968 he installed a single-party system and assumed all powers, including the legislature and the judiciary. During his bloody rule approximately one third of the population was either exiled or murdered, targeting in particular the Bubi people. President Macías Nguema was notorious for his arbitrary executions of entire villages and families. He held mass executions in football stadiums while loudspeakers blared "Those were the days my friend. We thought they'd never end." In 1979 he was overthrown by his nephew, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. The former president was put on trial and executed. The charges included the crime of genocide.

The change of power did not improve the situation for the population of Equatorial Guinea. Its human rights record is abominable and characterized by torture, arbitrary executions, lack of freedom of expression and association and corruption. Freedom House identifies Equatorial Guinea as one of the nine least free countries in the world.

Since oil reserves have been discovered in Equatorial Guinea its GDP has increased enormously to \$14 billion (2010) annually. However, due to kleptocracy and nepotism this oil wealth has not reached the majority of the population.

There is deep ethnic division in Equatorial Guinea, and also clan division within ethnicities. The majority of the population belong to the Fang group. Within this group there are clans. President Obiang Nguema favors his own clan, the Esangui.

The Bubi people represent the minority ethnicity and are indigenous to Bioko Island. They are subject to systematic discrimination and persecution by the government, and were the main victims of the genocide carried out by president Macías Nguema from 1978 - 1979.

Genocide Watch closely monitors the situation of repression in Equatorial Guinea. Early warning signs of potential genocidal massacres are the following:

- There have been previous genocidal massacres of the Bubi minority under former president Macías Nguema (1968-1979), but he was the only person tried for them.
- The Bubi minority is discriminated against and persecuted. This practice has increased during recent years. In 2006, president Obiang Nguema denounced the tradition of appointing a prime minister from the Bubi group.
- Nepotism and kleptocracy mean that the nation's oil wealth has mostly benefited the president's family and the Esangui clan of the Fang group. This has created an ethnically polarized elite. The resulting income inequality is enormous.

Genocide Watch considers Equatorial Guinea to be at stage 6: Preparation for potential massacres.