



Relaunching defence and security sector reforms in Guinea-Bissau

Summary

Defence and security sector reforms (DSSR) in Guinea-Bissau have been a recurring topic for nearly two decades. Despite the different directions taken by the reforms and the engagement of regional and international actors alongside the state, obstacles remain and fatigue is perceptible. It is essential to analyse the true causes of these obstacles before proposing technical solutions that will not address fundamental political, economic and social problems.

Key recommendations

- ▶ Put the defence and security forces at the heart of the re-launch of the reform dialogue.
- ▶ Encourage open discussions between defence institutions and partners on desirable and realistic targets for the number of troops.
- ▶ Remobilise international and regional partners around a financially realistic reform project.
- ▶ Continue to improve socio-economic conditions in the military and fight clientelism, which leads to widespread uncertainty about careers and promotions.
- ▶ Maintain the presence of ECOMIB to contain risks and reassure stakeholders.

This note analyses the reasons for the persistent stalemate in defence and security sector reforms (DSSR) in Guinea-Bissau. Given the fundamental – and constant – role that military experience plays in the formation of internal security forces, and links between the defence force and police, the analysis focuses on the defence sector, which remains the real blocking point.¹

The note gives an overview of the singular history of the Guinea-Bissau army and analyses its problems before presenting the reform efforts attempted over the past 10 years, with technical and financial support from regional and international partners. It is not a question of evaluating reforms and suggesting technical improvements, as this work is already carried out by the National Institute for Studies and Research (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas*, INEP), but of analysing the factors that have thus far prevented their implementation.²

The historical role of the armed forces and reform attempts

Glory and fall of a liberation army

The Guinea-Bissau army is an exception in sub-Saharan Africa. A guerrilla force formed by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (*Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*, PAIGC), it is the only one to have led a victorious liberation war against a colonial power (Portugal, in this case). In 1974, at independence, this army had a significant number of troops, at least when compared to the population of the country.

Some remain in the same rank for 20 years while others jump three or four grades in a few years

The War of Independence has marked the army in three essential ways. Firstly, it was formed ad hoc, on the job, with a weak normative framework. Secondly, a generation of soldiers still present in the army today have gained an ‘alternative’ legitimacy through their participation in the liberation struggle, instead of the technical competence associated with a level of training that is theoretically the foundation of a ‘modern’ army. Finally, for complex reasons, many soldiers from the Balanta ethnic group, which represents about a quarter of the population and forms a significant proportion of the army, feel that the barracks are their fiefdom.

The question of the army’s size has arisen since independence, and several times since, owing to budgetary difficulties. The end of the Cold War resulted in a sharp decline in international support, further aggravated by the 1998 civil war. But attempts to restructure and downsize the army have become increasingly contentious.

In 2016 the army consisted of just over 4 000 soldiers, or more than two soldiers per 1 000 inhabitants, to which are added the paramilitary units

of the National Guard. Senegal and Guinea, Guinea-Bissau's neighbours, although richer, were well below this rate. Senegal's ratio (despite the conflict it faces in its southern region of Casamance, and the fact that it is a major troop contributor to peacekeeping operations) hovers around one per 1 000, and that of Guinea around 0.75 per 1 000.³

Along with the army, Guinea-Bissau has several security forces: the National Guard, various police forces (the Public Order Police, the Rapid Intervention Police and the Judicial Police) and an intelligence service.⁴ In total, the defence and security forces number about 8 500 members.

The institutional framework put in place to carry out the reform is theoretically still in force

The army did not know how to become a real bureaucracy. As in the rest of the public service, recruitment and access to training, positions and promotions are governed not by stable and known procedures but by patronage. This gives rise to inequalities and injustices, with some remaining in the same rank for 20 years while others jump three or four grades in a few years. Even the payment of wages, until the recently instituted use of banking facilities, was carried out in a clientelistic and arbitrary manner, with unit leaders paying soldiers as they saw fit with cash made available by the Treasury.

Geopolitical hazards, resource mismatches, politicisation and factionalisation have weakened the military. The statistics are overwhelming. The average age in the army is high (in 2008, 55% of soldiers were over 40, in 2016, some were over 80) – in the absence of a retirement structure, most soldiers prefer to stay in the ranks.⁵

The major political upheavals of the 1990s and 2000s were accompanied by a rise in promotions, reversing the pyramid of ranks. In 2009, the army comprised 42% officers and 27% non-commissioned officers, with only 31% troops. It had 17 generals and admirals in 2009 and 37 today, whereas it had only one in the 1990s. Finally, the level of training is sub-par: in 2016 barely

more than 200 of the 4 000 soldiers had a secondary qualification.⁶

Reform: solution or problem?

Under one name or another, attempts to transform the defence and security sector have followed one after the other since independence, without halting its deterioration. Worse, these attempts often seem to aggravate difficulties. They have fuelled a spiral of politicisation, with each reform regarded as arbitrary, partisan and unfair, unjustifiably hurting the interests of one group to the benefit of another. Each new attempt easily finds opponents. Sometimes politicians seize on these frustrations to try to shake up the political edifice.

At the same time, the DSSR has become an inescapable goal, and each regime feels bound to relaunch it to signal its good intentions to international partners. Finally, each new attempt at reform has further blurred a normative framework that still needs to be developed fully.⁷

• 2005: *The beginnings of defence and security sector reforms (DSSR)*

In 2005, after an election that was supposed to put an end to the instability, the prospect of DSSR became clearer. Britain, fresh from its success in the field in Sierra Leone, sent a team to Bissau to help in the preparation of a DSSR project.

An ambitious national strategy was then developed and presented in November 2006 at a roundtable in Geneva. Although this strategy has been revised, it still forms the basis of the national approach. The institutional framework put in place to carry out the reform is theoretically still in force today, even if it is called into question.⁸

The action plan, estimated at \$184 million, includes:

- Consolidating the legal framework for the Defence and Security Forces (DSF);
- Reducing the strength of the defence forces to 3 440 soldiers, 70% of whom are enlisted, with a shift from the army to the navy;
- Reorganising the police force, with the creation of a National Guard through merging several existing police forces;
- Improving equipment, living conditions and DSF training, including the establishment of a military school and a police academy;

- Improving the economic situation of veterans of the War for Independence;
- Instituting a reintegration programme for freedom fighters (*combatentes de liberdade da pátria*) and demobilised soldiers;
- Involving civil society and the population in the DSSR.

In support of these efforts, the European Union (EU) deployed an expert mission in June 2008, initially for one year. With a budget of €5 million and about 15 members, this mission had the exclusive mandate of assisting in planning the implementation of the DSSR strategy. It provides for outreach efforts aimed at the public and international actors, but not the military.

Nearly all international actors condemned the coup and reduced their commitments, and the EU and the UN adopted sanctions against the military coup leaders

The United Nations (UN), for its part, is mainly involved in police and justice issues. The UN Development Programme is conducting a census of the army. However, after the first hopeful moments, it has become clear that the subject is sensitive and progress is slow.

The EU mission is making a major effort in the legislative field, which allows the creation of the National Guard. But the mission has been criticised for its size and cost, its lack of demonstrable impact on soldiers' circumstances and its inability to mitigate the military's mistrust of reforms, which many see as an attempt at purging and 'de-Balantisation'.

After the events of March 2009 – the double assassination of Army Chief of Staff Tagme na Waie and President João Bernardo Vieira⁹ – the authorities tried to restart the process. However, a new crisis, which occurred in April 2010 when new Chief of Staff Zamora Induta was replaced by his deputy, Antonio Injai, led to the withdrawal of the EU.¹⁰

• 2010, the ECOWAS/CPLP partnership

The civilian authority continued in its attempts to implement the process. Only days after the change in command, the government adopted a decree creating the DSF Special Pension Fund, which is meant to allow the rapid retirement of nearly 1 500 military personnel and 300 police members. In the face of the EU's withdrawal, two international organisations of which Guinea-Bissau is a member – the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) – became involved. Based on the 2006 strategy and the work done by the EU, the two organisations prepared a road map for a revival of the DSSR.

In addition to financing for the pension fund (then estimated at \$45 million), the idea of a rehabilitation programme for the benefit of outgoing military personnel to 'facilitate the return to an economically attractive civilian life',

RATIO OF ARMED FORCES/ POPULATION



GUINEA-BISSAU:

2 SOLDIERS/1 000 POPULATION



SENEGAL:

1 SOLDIER/1 000 POPULATION



GUINEA:

0.75 SOLDIERS/1 000 POPULATION

Source: Calculation based on IISS data, *The military balance*, 117: 1, Chapter 9.

mentioned in the 2006 strategy, began gaining ground. More than €8 million was earmarked for economic projects in aid of demobilised soldiers.¹¹

However, tensions began rising rapidly between the two organisations. Only Angola, then the actual leader of the CPLP, actually deployed resources, providing material support to the army. The Angolan action was quickly perceived as a threat by a group of political and military leaders, who associated it with the hegemonic attempts of the then Prime Minister and head of the PAIGC, businessman Carlos Gomes Júnior.

- *The 2012 coup and ECOWAS's takeover*

These concerns largely explain the coup d'état of April 2012, which occurred between the two rounds of a presidential election that Gomes Júnior was set to win. Nearly all international actors condemned the coup and reduced their commitments, and the EU and the UN adopted targeted sanctions against the military coup leaders. Angola withdrew its troops and assets while ECOWAS negotiated with the putschists to organise a transition.

In 2012, ECOWAS deployed a stabilisation force, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), and took over the DSSR file, deploying experts to train with the Guinea-Bissau military in a 'DSSR joint team' from March 2013. While the ECOWAS action was a continuation of previous efforts, progress was limited, with the organisation's assistance focused on the rehabilitation of some barracks.

Progress was made in defence legislation. On 25 March 2015, the new regime presented a revised plan for \$270 million over five years

To encourage the military to cooperate, ECOWAS espoused the idea of allowances ('gratifications', in the Portuguese formulation) for demobilised soldiers that would replace the benefits (for example, transport and housing) soldiers would lose when leaving the army.¹² Guinea-Bissau's military seized the opportunity to propose a high figure, for which it got the support of the civilian authority, eager to placate it.

- *The return of a civilian government and its limits*

The leaders who came to power in the April–May 2014 elections, all of whom were members of the PAIGC and owed nothing to the military, at first were in a position of power relative to the latter. In September 2015, the new president, José Mário Vaz, appointed General Biaguê Na Ntan as the army's new chief of staff, replacing Injai – the first peaceful transition in this position since 1992.¹³ Na Ntan then renewed part of the operational command, setting aside some, but not all, of the officers facing international sanctions.

Progress was made in defence legislation, although many sections remained unfinished. On 25 March 2015, the new regime presented a revised plan for

Main initiatives in the defence and security sector in Guinea-Bissau

- **After 1973:**
Demobilisation wave with compensation and pension benefits
- **1979:**
Organisational reform of the army on a classical army model
- **1985:**
Modernisation of the army according to a Western framework
- **1991:**
Budget adjustment reducing armed forces' strength
- **After the 1998–1999 civil war:**
Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Veterans Programme (DRRVP)
- **2005:**
Introduction of the Defence and Security Sector Reform Project (DSSR)
- **November 2006:**
National Strategy for Restructuring and Modernising the Defence and Security Sector
- **2008:**
Deployment of an EU mission to plan the implementation of the DSSR strategy
- **2010:**
Decree creating the SDS Special Pension Fund
- **25 March 2015:**
Presentation of a five-year \$270 million defence plan
- **April 2015:**
Decree-law on the operation of the Special Pension Fund

\$270 million over five years at a roundtable in Brussels. In April 2015, a new decree-law clarified the functions of the Special Pension Fund, distinguishing between gratuities and pensions in order to encourage donors, reluctant to pay compensation to outgoing soldiers, to at least finance the pensions. Some progress in their management was made, including in banking officers' salaries.

However, the political crisis plaguing the country since 2015 has largely broken the reform momentum. The military has taken advantage of political tensions to obtain benefits and resources from the government that do not seem to correspond with the DSSR framework. In July 2017 the army organised a formal recruitment drive, the first since 1992, selecting 750 young people for military service.

Overcoming obstacles

Barriers to the effective implementation of the DSSR

The DSSR is currently deadlocked in Guinea-Bissau. Stakeholders' positions, concerns and hopes must be taken into account to understand this blockage. Actors' perceptions play as big a role as the reality, and help to prevent progress.

The military has little respect for a civilian authority whose governance is not perceived as effective and fair. There is considerable resentment of the political elite

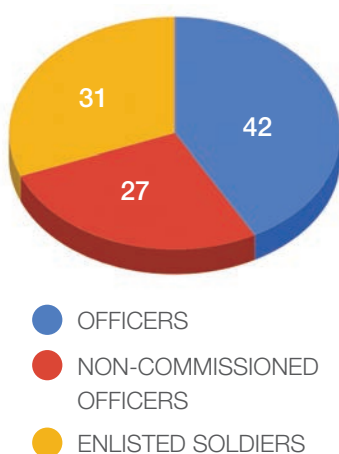
The army is deeply ambivalent about the DSSR. On the one hand, it is inherently suspicious of any civilian authority, as it remembers past reforms. 'Reform' has long been perceived simply as 'retirement' (the primary meaning of the Portuguese word *reforma*), thus as punitive retrenchment and an economic penalty.

In addition, the military has little respect for a civilian authority whose governance is not perceived as effective and fair. There is considerable resentment of the political elite in Guinea-Bissau, including among the military, who justify their abuses by pointing out those of politicians.

The question of the state's legitimacy is therefore central to any reform. This legitimacy is not only electoral but also comes from providing public services and curbing visible excessive enrichment. Because they fought for independence, older military leaders believe they have greater legitimacy than the often younger civilian leaders, some of whom were abroad or even sided with the Portuguese during the War of Independence. All these factors explain the military's reluctance to accept the need for adjusting the size of the army to the resources of the country.

Although they shocked a number of international partners, the 'gratification' projects discussed when ECOWAS took over have made the prospect of a DSSR more attractive. However, these projects have not materialised, and

COMPOSITION OF THE
GUINEA-BISSAU ARMY



Source: Direção Geral da Função Pública, Validação back dados dos funcionários militares (Versão validada), 2016, 12.

the military no longer tries to hide its impatience with politicians and/or international partners on this point.

Moreover, despite military officers' relative lack of formal education (some speak only Kriol and are functionally illiterate) and the fact that their priorities and expectations are out of step with those of international partners, they do give careful consideration to the consequences any reforms will hold for their personal and collective interests. Without coercion, the chances of their accepting measures that undermine¹⁴ these interests are slim.

For the civilian authority, the DSSR raises other questions. It is one of the objectives in which progress needs to be made to mobilise international partners. But the future of the military sector is very sensitive, as it has been a central element, cause, pretext or aggravating factor in a number of the coups that have occurred since independence. After the 1998–1999 war, in particular, successive civilian authorities gave the army a lot of room to manoeuvre in terms of promotions and salaries. Attempts to take it in hand again have been feeble, at best.

International partners have many concerns. First, they were upset by the fall of Domingos Simões Pereira, who had established good ties with them and had created an atmosphere of optimism at the Brussels roundtable in March 2015. More fundamentally, there is a great deal of frustration with the lack of progress in the DSSR, including simple issues such as shortcomings in the legislative framework.¹⁵

Furthermore, the army's retention of soldiers perceived as undesirable (or 'spoilers') – officers involved in coups and drug trafficking, especially those who were punished after the 2012 coup d'état – is an important concern and a powerful symbol. For many international actors, any reform that would not lead to their departure (or even punishment) would be incomplete.

In addition, the proposed DSSR budget is high and has steadily increased with the addition of various projects, with each new civilian authority trying to appease the military. Yet spending so much money on a few hundred soldiers with oftentimes-problematic careers, while key sectors such as health and education, which benefit hundreds of thousands of people, remain poorly

endowed, is unjustifiable, especially in the current context of budgetary difficulties.

Indeed, a compromise was reached with the separation between the pension fund and the 'gratification' fund, with a possibility that the latter, more controversial, fund could be financed by ECOWAS. However, the availability of funds promised by the West African organisation is the subject of constant rumours.

Finally, the troop target numbers mentioned do not reassure international partners either. The military hierarchy often still evokes the figure of 5 000 soldiers, which is more than today, with a navy and an air force.

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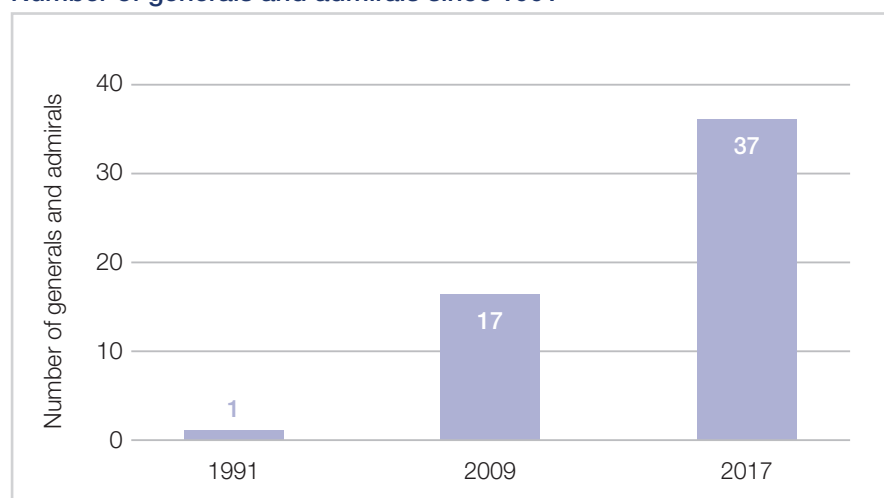
The Gambia, a neighbouring country comparable to Guinea-Bissau in terms of population and gross domestic product (GDP), has an army of 2 000 and no air force. Of course, Guinea-Bissau is larger, and its important maritime and archipelagic domain poses specific problems. But the unrealistic target proposed by the military makes international mobilisation difficult.

The underlying causes of the blockage can ultimately be found in the interconnections between the actors: a fragile and cautious civilian authority incapable of carrying out a real DSSR project, a suspicious and demanding military power, a regional organisation – ECOWAS – that has acquired a major role on paper but is struggling to deploy and mobilise the support of other international actors, and discouraged and suspicious international partners who are reluctant to commit funds to such a fragile issue.

The priorities in relaunching reforms

As the hopes raised by the 2014 elections have faded a political crisis has set in, making the civilian authority even more cautious in the face of the army; donors have become demotivated; and ECOWAS is showing fatigue – the configuration that thus might have seemed unusually favourable to the DSSR has disappeared. But perhaps the blocking of a DSSR marked by ambiguous

Number of generals and admirals since 1991



Source: Direção Geral da Função Pública, Validação dos dados dos funcionários militares (Versão validada), 2016, 12.

compromises and serious misunderstandings may allow the project to be relaunched on a more realistic basis, after some clarifications.

In the face of the current crisis, this revival is necessary for several reasons. First, the army's neutrality in the current political fracas has gone some way in restoring its legitimacy. Second, soldiers are willing to leave the army if they are offered decent terms, which the 'gratification' project would do.

- *Allow the defence and security forces to relaunch the reform dialogue*

At this stage and for the moment, the DSSR can only be resumed in earnest if an effort is made by the interested parties themselves. Since many questions remain about the DSF's commitment to this issue, and since it is currently controlling the debate on the subject, it may, by demonstrating its commitment to a clarified and coherent project, try to remobilise the civilian authority and international partners. The DSF should be helped to take stock of the current deadlock, and understand the part it plays in it.

The army chief of staff, the Ministry of Defence and the DSSR unit must make the necessary clarifications together to take into account international concerns



DSSR ACTION PLAN
ESTIMATED AT \$184 MILLION

The army chief of staff, the Ministry of Defence and the DSSR unit must make the necessary clarifications together to take into account international concerns. They must then build consensus by engaging in discussions with civil society, the National Assembly and political parties.

- *Encourage discussions on troop targets*

The revival of the DSSR must encourage communication and transparency. To mobilise, the DSF must abandon the argument of a 'secret defence', often

put forward to avoid discussion. It is also important to start from the existing template, as important work in terms of planning and texts has already been carried out, even if clarifications are necessary.

Among the clarifications needed is the structure of the future army, which must be reasonable. To convince international partners, the DSSR must aim in the medium term to reduce military expenses. These are too high for a state that is not facing immediate external threats and is unable to provide adequate basic services to the vast majority of its population. All decisions must be made bearing in mind that every member who is recruited is one less teacher or nurse, and that while an armed force can be useful, other sectors are important.

- *Maintain the priority objective: the progressive construction of real defence and security institutions*

The reforms should not only be aimed at dismissing those officers considered undesirable by the international community. New undesirables will constantly arise in the absence of structural reforms. The essential and often hidden issue is the construction of real defence and security institutions. Clientelism, which leads to widespread uncertainty about careers and promotions, must be eliminated.

The deliberate ethnic rebalancing of the army, which may have played a part, often implicitly, in some SSR attempts, must be ruled out

The state must therefore consolidate improvements to military appointments in a formalised framework, and organise career paths. This question is at the heart of the DSSR, and must remain so.

Since the reform responds to the logic of institutionalisation, it cannot be a programme that only runs over three or five years. It thus seems desirable to give less space to international organisations, which are subject to budgetary and programmatic changes, and accord states more space, in particular those with a history with, and interest in, Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, the deliberate ethnic rebalancing of the army, which may have played a part, often implicitly, in some SSR attempts, must be ruled out. This issue remains sensitive and will only end when historical inequalities in other sectors are addressed. The other actors involved must maintain a favourable framework for this discussion, which must take be held again. The political elite, for its part, must refrain from making the DSF an issue in its struggles.

- *Maintain ECOWAS's military presence*

As for the international presence, ECOMIB undoubtedly plays an important role. The force is small, but it is well connected and knowledgeable. While



A FUTURE ARMY OF A
REASONABLE SIZE

it may not be able to oppose a massive army mutiny, it is well placed to discourage small military groups that are likely to attempt a coup. It also helps to calm the political situation. It would be helpful if the presence of ECOMIB, even in a reduced format, could be guaranteed until the end of President Vaz's mandate (in 2019).

International actors must reconfirm their support for a reasonable DSSR. The committee steering the reform must resume its regular activities to promote transparency and coordination. Short-term mobilisations, including of international and regional organisations, which can overcome certain resource thresholds, and those that are longer term, should be encouraged from countries with a history with Guinea-Bissau and that wish and have the means to be strategic partners in the long run.

The committee steering the reform must resume its regular activities to promote transparency and coordination

Conclusion

The obstacles the DSSR faces are political. The reform gives shape to the contradictory interpretations that various national and international actors have of the situation, and to their interests. It is important to identify a realistic path for a revival of the DSSR by highlighting the clarifications needed on major issues.

Renewed reforms should examine the responsibilities of the defence and security forces' hierarchies, the opening of far-ranging discussions on desirable and realistic troop numbers and the progressive construction of real defence and security institutions. All this requires long-term external commitment.

Notes

- 1 The strengthening in recent years of the National Guard, a paramilitary body linked to but distinct from the army, could change the situation.
- 2 At the end of 2016, with funding from the Netherlands and on behalf of the Bissau-Guinean authorities, INEP, based in Bissau, prepared a revision of the DSSR strategy, pushing, *inter alia*, for a 'holistic' approach to reforms, which consists of a participatory process that includes civilians, through the Assembly and civil society, a concern for human security and a gender perspective, taking into account new risks, transnational crime and violent extremism in particular. At the institutional level, the revision proposes setting up a new coordination and implementation mechanism.
- 3 Calculations based on data from IISS, *The military balance*, 117:1, chapter 9.
- 4 The National Guard, created as part of the 2006 reforms, incorporated the Border Guard, the Rapid Reaction Force, the Tax Guard, the Maritime Police, and the Ranger and the Fishery Control Unit.
- 5 Veterans of the Independence War are entitled to a pension, but it is so modest that they often prefer to stay in the army.
- 6 Information taken from Direção Geral da Função Pública, *Validação dos dados dos funcionários militares (Versão validada)*, 2016, 12.
- 7 Thus, at the organizational and administrative level, Guinea-Bissau inherited a Portuguese fund but suffered the influences of multiple cooperation – in the military arena, Russia, China, and Cuba especially, and from the 1990s, the West and African countries.
- 8 This framework includes an interdepartmental committee, a steering committee and a technical coordination committee, all under the responsibility of the Prime Minister. The recently revised RSDS project led by INEP proposes replacing it with a new coordination and implementation mechanism.
- 9 International Crisis Group, *Beyond the compromises: prospects for reform in Guinea Bissau*, *Africa Report* 183, January 2012, 3.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 11 Translation from the roadmap, English version.
- 12 Some of these benefits were never formally implemented, such as the housing and vehicle allowances provided for by Law No. 1/86 of 15 March 1986, which Guinea-Bissau experts had proposed. The unpaid wages of the early 2000s were also mentioned at the time.
- 13 In 1994, Ansumane Mané replaced Seco Soares Cassamá, who died of illness. Since and until 2015, all replacements for this position have resulted from or resulted in violence.
- 14 Thus the military leaders opposed the “débalantisation” under cover of recruitment on the basis of the academic level envisaged in 2010. It is thus also that Antonio Injai defused the installation of the GN, supposed to counterbalance the army, by placing faithful there. Far from weakening Injai's influence, this aspect of the RSDS has strengthened it.
- 15 Admittedly, with the current political crisis, the Assembly is not sitting. But even when it sat, the legislative and regulatory corpus made only limited progress.

Methodological note

This note is part of a series of six analytical notes on the reforms that Guinea-Bissau needs in order to return to stability, and which are also proposed in the October 2016 Conakry Agreement. The first notes are respectively about the reform of the Constitution, the reform of the electoral law, the reform of the Framework Law on Political Parties, the reform of the defence and security sector and the reform of the judiciary. The sixth and final note summarises the main recommendations presented in the notes as a whole. These publications are the result of field research and analysis conducted from March 2017 to January 2018 by a team of researchers from the Dakar office of the Institute for Security Studies, with the support of experts from Guinea-Bissau, the region and internationally. They were developed at the request of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to facilitate discussions on these reforms among the forces of political and civil society in Guinea-Bissau.

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The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) was established in 2009 by Security Council resolution 1876, of 26 June 2009. The current mandate of UNIOGBIS, as specified in resolution 2404 of 28 February 2018, focus on the following priorities: i) supporting the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and facilitating an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process; ii) supporting, through good offices, the electoral process to ensure inclusive, free and credible legislative elections in 2018; and iii) supporting national authorities in expediting and complementing the review of the Constitution. The Mission is also mandated to assist, coordinate and lead international efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and enhance the capacity of state organs, promote and protect human rights, support the combat against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, mainstream gender in peacebuilding efforts, and mobilize, harmonize and coordinate international assistance with view to upcoming elections.

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