

# D rug Trafficking and Human Security in Guinea-Bissau



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## **Abstract**

There has recently been rising concern amongst Western nations over drug trafficking through West Africa, with Guinea-Bissau identified as a major regional conduit for cocaine. Increasingly Guinea-Bissau's internal political and military turmoil has also been linked to the influence of drug money. This paper will examine this drug trafficking in the context of Guinea-Bissau's history and address what impacts it is having on "human security" in the nation, examining the categories of political, economic, health and personal security. The argument will be made that considering the already low levels of human security in Guinea-Bissau, the impact of drug trafficking may not actually be that significant, and that rather than focusing on drugs as Guinea-Bissau's primary problem, trafficking should be considered as only a symptom of deeper underdevelopment due to European colonization, and the effects of global economic structures and policies.

## **Keywords**

Drug trafficking, Guinea-Bissau, human security.

## Introduction

Since 2005, concern has risen amongst Western nations over the formation of drug trafficking routes through West Africa. The small nation of Guinea-Bissau has been identified as a major transit-route for South American cocaine through the region to Europe, and its domestic turmoil has increasingly been linked to the influence of drug money. This paper will examine drug trafficking through Guinea-Bissau in the context of the nation's history, and address the question of what impacts drug trafficking is having on "human security" in Guinea-Bissau. The categories of "political security", "economic security", "health security" and "personal security" will be used to analyse the true effects of the industry, and the argument will be made that considering the already low levels of human security in Guinea-Bissau, the impact of drug trafficking may not actually be that significant. Rather than focusing on drug trafficking as Guinea-Bissau's primary problem, trafficking should be recognised as a symptom of the true causes of human insecurity in the nation: underdevelopment due to European colonisation, and the effects of global economic structures and policies. This paper will first outline Guinea-Bissau's history, then examine the rise of drug trafficking in West Africa, before presenting an analysis of drug trafficking's impacts.

## Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau is a nation of approximately 1.6 million inhabitants, which is consistently ranked amongst the ten least-developed countries in the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index. Wedged between Senegal in the north and Guinea-Conakry to the south, Guinea-Bissau consists of 36,125km<sup>2</sup> of mainly swampy marshland, and its population are primarily peasant farmers. The daily ocean tide bathes the mangrove-strewn land up to 100km inland (Galli 1990). The populace consists of around thirty small ethnic groups, with the majority Balanta the largest at 30% of the population, and the Fulani people numbering another 20% (Temudo 2008, 245). Claimed in the imperial era as Portuguese Guinea, Portugal mainly retained a trading rather than colonial relationship with the territory until the 1930s, described by some as, 'an exercise in economic exploitation at minimal financial and human cost' (ICG 2008, 2). Few plantations were established, and the Portuguese merchant class were restricted from substantial capital accumulation by Portuguese imperial policies and international trade competition. A wealthier creole class developed in Guinea-Bissau's small urban centres, with political leadership restricted to this elite and systematically denied to the majority of the population (Galli 1989, 373-374). Portuguese mercantile policies and failure to build infrastructure in the colony not only precluded European investment, but also deliberately disrupted economic development by Bissauan entrepreneurs – including 'measures designed to maintain and protect 'traditional' forms of settlement and production' (Galli 1995, 52-53).

In the late 1950s Portugal's brutal repression of Guinean protests against economic hardship, and particularly the massacre of 50 striking dockworkers in 1959, motivated the commencement of an armed independence struggle (ICG 2008, 4). Led by Amilcar Cabral – 'perhaps the foremost political thinker to emerge out of the many independence movements of post-World War II Africa' (Forrest 1987, 95) – the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) forged a supra-ethnic struggle that mobilised the support

of the majority of Guinea's peasantry, and created liberated zones with their own village committees, schools, people's stores and health clinics (Chabal 1983, 191-192). By the early 1970s the PAIGC controlled more than 70% of Guinea-Bissau's territory and 50% of the population, operating as a one-party state and providing a higher level of social and economic administration than experienced under the colonial regime (ICG 2008, 6). Thus, at independence in 1974 the PAIGC was an effective organisation with a large network of party activists spread throughout the nation, a confident leadership and coherent ideology, widespread support from the population, and an international diplomatic stature that far exceeded Guinea-Bissau's importance as a country (Chabal 1983, 191-193).

However, the newly-independent state faced a swathe of challenges, as a predominantly agricultural economy still locked in a monopsonic relationship with Portuguese companies, with virtually no industry or infrastructure, and high unemployment in the cities (Carolissen-Essack 1980, 2175). The year before independence the PAIGC was also robbed of the talented and charismatic Amílcar Cabral through assassination, with his brother Luís Cabral taking over the reins of leadership (Chabal 1983, 190). The post-colonial government of the PAIGC thus set out upon the problematic path of trying to sustain the popular support of the peasantry while challenging their local traditional authorities; fostering democratic representation within the structures of a one-party state; and embarking upon the road of transformation to socialism while focusing on agricultural development and remaining linked to capitalist economies and the world market (Chabal 1983, 193-197). Now based in the capital, Bissau, the PAIGC found itself dependent on colonial structures of government and a hostile bureaucracy, with its own membership increasingly riven with personal, ethnic and political divisions (Forrest 1987, 96-99).

By 1980 economic crisis, the ossification of a bureaucratic elite, the increasingly dominant role of the armed forces, and constitutional changes that seemed to favour the more creolised population of Cape Verde – the nearby island with which Guinea-Bissau was moving towards unification – provided the setting for the Prime Minister João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira to lead a coup d'état on 14 November 1980, harnessing ethnic Balanta support within the military (Chabal 1983, 202; Forrest 1987, 101-103; Munslow 1981, 111-112). Vieira quickly established a Revolutionary Council rule under his authority, and set about purging Cape Verdeans from the political and military hierarchy. However, over the following decade Vieira (himself of the minority Papel ethnic group) also used repression against successive coup attempts to break the Balanta dominance of the military and reward loyal individuals. Vieira maintained his popularity in the military, and the military's dominant political position, by allowing them priority access to national resources and ruthlessly eliminating his enemies. (ICG 2008, 9-11; Forrest 1987, 101-103). He also began to oversee Guinea-Bissau's economic liberalisation through IMF structural adjustment, however the primary results of economic reform were the acquisition of large shares of the economy by public officials and their friends, a drastic decline in the purchasing power of urban workers, and little change in the living standards of agricultural producers (Galli 1990).

Pressure from international donor nations eventually forced Vieira's regime to move towards multi-party democracy, legalising opposition parties in 1991 for elections in 1994 (ICG 2008, 9-11). While the PAIGC and President Vieira won the 1994 elections by a narrow margin, Kumba Yala of the Party for Social Renovation (PRS) emerged as a presidential challenger, mobilizing Balanta support by highlighting Vieira's history of ethnic repression (ICG 2008, 11). Following the 1994 elections, divergent views on liberalization polarized the PAIGC and opposition grew to Nino Vieira within his own party and the military. By the late 1990s Vieira had also deepened relations with neighbouring Senegal and France, which drew Guinea-Bissau into conflict as the President supported the Senegalese government's war against separatists in the southern Senegalese region of Casamance (Temudo 2008, 249). Utilizing some of the estimated 650,000 light weapons in Guinea-Bissau (Francis 2009), the national military leadership had been smuggling arms to the Casamance rebels, but President Vieira intervened in 1998 by dismissing Guinea-Bissau's Military Chief of Staff, Ansumane Mané - who subsequently attempted a coup against Vieira which failed. War veterans who supported Mané soon demanded that Vieira step down, and launched a military uprising on 7 June 1998 (Temudo 2008, 250).

Within two days Mané announced that he was now running Guinea-Bissau via a military junta, and demanded that Vieira resign and hold new elections within 60 days. However, the conflict became internationalised as soldiers from Senegal and Guinea-Conakry, invaded to support Vieira's forces. This conflict continued for 11 months, drawing diplomatic interventions and military pressure from the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and displacing almost 300,000 refugees (Rudebeck 1998). It has been suggested that many young Guineans actually joined the side of the military junta in reaction to looting and atrocities committed by the foreign troop contingents (Temudo 2008, 251). Faced with an unending rebellion by the majority of the nation's armed forces, Vieira eventually fled to Portugal in May 1999 (Macqueen 2003, 5). An election was held in November 1999, and PRS candidate Kumba Yala was elected president. Former military Chief Mané attempted another coup in November 2000 against the new President Yala, but Yala prevailed and Mané was killed (Macqueen 2003, 20).

While many Guineans were hopeful that President Yala would bring a new dawn of rebuilding and political reform, they were quickly disappointed as he acted to solidify the power of his Balanta supporters within the military and the state. Meanwhile, the government drifted dangerously without effective policies, with Yala himself becoming increasingly incoherent and unpredictable – on various occasions announcing the national capital was to change cities, and threatening to invade nearby Gambia. The IMF suspended budgetary assistance to Guinea-Bissau, thus public servants ceased to be paid, and the nation entered new political crisis. In the meanwhile Yala's regime survived several attempted coups, until he was eventually overthrown on 14 September 2003 by Military Chief of Staff General Verisimo Correia Seabra. Henrique Rosa was then elected as an interim president in March 2004 (ICG 2008, 14-15).

In October 2004 General Seabra was killed by mutinous soldiers demanding unpaid salaries, though some suggested that the mutiny was ethnically motivated. General Tagme Na Wai, a Balanta, was appointed in his place and set about reintegrating 65 senior military officers who were purged from the ranks following the civil war and military uprisings. This appeared to be an effort to provide more ethnic and political balance in the armed forces leadership, so General Na Wai came to be seen as a consensus-building figure (BBC 6 October 2004; BBC 7 October 2004; Cordeiro 2004; Inter Press Service 5 November 2004; De Queiroz 2004). Meanwhile, military reform became an ever-more pressing issue, with government plans to reduce the standing army from 4,500 men to less than 3,000. Of course the prospect of demobilisation was not welcomed by many in armed forces, and would persist as a motivator of unrest (UNIRIN 18 April 2005). With new elections in June 2005 both Nino Vieira and Kuumba Yala returned to the political scene to contest the Presidency, despite being specifically forbidden by government decree. Though the elections were declared free and fair by international agencies, an agreement with General Na Wai had helped Vieira to again win the presidency –and now entrenched the military as the power behind the throne (ICG 2008, 16-17; UNIRIN 31 March 2005; UNIRIN 12 April 2005).

Under Vieira's new presidency Guinea-Bissau's economy stagnated, and military reforms continued to be delayed. Meanwhile, Vieira twice dissolved parliament to fend off political challenges, before surviving an assassination attempt in November 2008 – for which Vieira blamed the Head of the Navy, José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto (ICG 25 June 2009, 3). Increasingly rival factions began to allege the others' involvement in drug trafficking. Then in March 2009, following months of debate and violence connected to the control of the Presidential Guard, Military Chief of Staff General Na Wai and President Vieira were violently killed within hours of each other – Vieira's death seemingly a revenge attack for the General's death. Many speculated that the killings were related to disagreements over the drug trade. It was also suggested that the fugitive Head of the Navy José Na Tchuto may have ordered General Na Wai's death. A number of politicians allied with the late President Vieira were then also assassinated over the next few months. While the violence and chaos of Guinea Bissau's politics certainly pre-dated any major influence from drug trafficking, this new source of wealth and conflict was starting to make its political mark (ICG 25 June 2009, 1). A subsequent military coup against Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior in April 2010 then brought Na Tchuto back to Guinea-Bissau in alliance with his co-conspirator General Antonio Indjai – who the new president, Malam Bacai Sanha, then appointed as Military Chief of Staff (BBC 1 April 2010; Gorjão 2010). This led the United States to make statements of concern regarding constitutional violations in Guinea-Bissau, and label senior Guinean officials such as Na Tchuto and Air Force Chief of Staff Ibraima Papa Camara as 'drug kingpins' (AFP 25 June 2010). The European Union also subsequently suspended their assistance with military reform for the indefinite future (BBC 4 August 2010), and UN chief Ban Ki-moon called for sanctions on key figures in Guinea-Bissau's drugs trade (BBC 3 October 2008).

## Drug Trafficking

By some estimates the trafficking of illicit drugs in recent years has constituted more than 3% of world trade (Klein 2008, 119), with an estimated 'gross criminal product' of US\$1 trillion annually (Jojarth 2009, 7). Some crime organisations have resources exceeding those of small nations, and they increasingly take advantage of unprecedented communication and transportation networks available in the modern world to create a global system parallel to the legal international economy. '[D]rug traffickers ... have refined networking to a high science, entering into complex and improbable strategic alliances that span cultures and continents' (Van Schendel and Abraham 2005, 3). The legal architecture of international drug control, constructed over the past 50 years, commenced with the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which combined the various existing international agreements. This was supplemented in 1971 with the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. As of 2007 182 nations were parties to all three of these conventions (Klein 2008, 123).

The 1988 Convention, which sought to increase nations' powers to interdict drug trafficking, specifically noted, 'the links between illicit traffic and other related organized criminal activities which undermine legitimate economies and threaten the stability, security, and sovereignty of states' (Jojarth 2009, 100). Indeed, as Moises Naim asserts, trafficking networks, 'diversify into other businesses and invest in politics... assum[ing] a powerful – and in some countries unrivalled – influence on matters of state' (2005, 8). Increasingly the line between profit-driven organised crime groups and ideologically-motivated rebels and terrorists has blurred over recent decades, merging the spheres of crime and warfare (Jojarth 2009, 2). This is well-illustrated in nations like Colombia, where significant violence has arisen from struggles between the government, drug cartels – with their associated right-wing paramilitary forces, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* – and the nominally left-wing insurgents, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) (Jojarth 2009, 95).

However, despite these agreements and US\$150 billion spent in the United States' four-decade-long 'War on Drugs', global narcotics production has risen relentlessly since the early 1970s (McCoy 2003, 26). The increasingly high purity levels of drugs in Europe and North America, in the context of continually falling prices, is a clear indicator that drug-supply control efforts have failed (Klein 2008, 135). Klein argues that,

In no other area of social policy are the positions of policy-makers so out of step with a significant section of the population. Nor has there been such a steady, if not exponential increase, in any form of behaviour that policy-makers have tried systematically, and often brutally, to eliminate, as there has been in drug-taking (2008, 56).

Meanwhile, global prohibition necessitates that drug traffickers evade law enforcement and corrupt police, courts and governments; and successful interdiction merely encourages constantly-shifting smuggling routes that increase trafficking and consumption (McCoy 2003, 25). This is sometimes known as the 'balloon effect' of drug enforcement, in which applying pressure to any particular drug supply route will only divert the contents elsewhere.

## Drugs in Guinea Bissau

International efforts against drug trafficking have forced criminals to develop new supply routes through an increasing number of countries, and in each of these trafficking leaves a footprint of drug use and production in local markets (Klein 2008, 135). In some places the narcotics trade then becomes, ‘an indispensable source of income and employment which would be lost if effective anti-narcotics policies were implemented’ (Jojarth 2009, 103). These scenarios are of increasing relevance for the West African state of Guinea-Bissau.

In the case of West Africa, geographical position makes it predominantly suited for cocaine trafficking. West Africa is not a convenient route between heroin producer-nations (predominantly Afghanistan) and key international markets, so heroin seizures in West African countries are generally very small (UNODC 2008, 29). On the other hand, nearly all of the world’s coca leaf is produced in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia (UNODC 2008, 7) because, as Christine Jojarth explains, ‘Coca bushes require a tropical climate and develop sufficient concentration of the psychoactive substance cocaine alkaloid only if grown in high altitudes – conditions that are only found in the Andes’ (2009, 116). Meanwhile, over the past two decades US cocaine consumption has declined (due to both consumer taste and law enforcement) while Western European consumption has grown, thus diverting a significant amount of product to that market (UNODC 2008, 8). While Colombia is the world’s most prolific cocaine-producing nation (Vargas 2005, 193), Venezuela has increasingly taken over as the key shipping point due to crackdowns in Colombia, so a pattern has emerged of large maritime and air shipments of cocaine departing from Venezuela for Europe, via West Africa (UNODC 2008, 9). This has led some analysts to argue that West African transshipment routes and ethnic networks probably now pose some of the greatest drug trafficking challenges to the world (Chalk 2000, 22).

The first reports of Guinea-Bissau being a transit point for cocaine-trafficking networks emerged in April 2005, when several foreigners including two Latin Americans were arrested on an island in the Bijagos archipelago along Guinea-Bissau’s coastline. Since then there have been a number of large cocaine seizures, though nowhere near the total amount thought to be transiting the nation (Mazzitelli 2007, 1087). These seizures have also themselves been undermined on occasion, with 674kg of cocaine, worth around US\$20 million, vanishing from police custody in September 2006 (ICG 2008, 22). Also, following a seizure of 635kg of cocaine in April 2007, two soldiers travelling with the shipment were released without charge as an army spokesman claimed they were simply hitch-hikers who were, ‘in the wrong place at the wrong time’ (Kohnert 2010, 10). The UN subsequently issued a press release accusing Guinean military officers of involvement in drug trafficking (Mazzitelli 2007, 1087). While drug seizure statistics throughout Africa seem to confirm 2005 as the year Africa experienced a large drug trafficking surge, reaching a peak of roughly 50 tons of cocaine being shipped through West Africa each year, with a wholesale value in Europe of around US\$2 billion (though this amount may have since declined) (UNODC 2008, 1-2).

In this context some analysts have begun to call Guinea-Bissau a “narco-state”, and Western authorities are afraid that after spending billions on counter-drug policies in other parts of the world the West African drug route might undermine years of work. Significant sections

of the government, military, judiciary and police seem to already be corrupted by drug networks (Bernard 2008). Soldiers have been observed on several occasions unloading drugs from planes on disused landing strips inside the country, and the navy is believed to be complicit in trafficking activities (ICG 2008, 22). In addition, those who are trying to combat drug trafficking are hamstrung by a complete lack of resources, with many articles noting the almost-comical stories of the coast guard's single functioning boat, police having to hail taxis to chase traffickers, and Guinea-Bissau's lack of proper prisons in which to hold offenders (ICG 2008, 22; Mazzitelli 2007, 1087). In terms of monetary worth, for this vastly underdeveloped state the value of cocaine transiting its shores every year is estimated to be more than double its GDP, and just six grams of cocaine has a value equal to an average Guinean's annual salary – emphasising the disparity in power between the drug cartels and the Guinean state, and the high incentives for involvement in the industry (Thaler 2009, 6).

Logistically, most of the cocaine arrives in West Africa from South America, with Guinea-Bissau as a key entry point. This tends to involve using large commercial fishing or freight ships, which are met at sea by African vessels, often with a Latin American 'controller'. The African boats may then continue northward, or dock in West Africa to disperse the drugs through the region prior to transfer northward. Latin American groups retain ownership of the bulk of the shipments until they reach Europe, but some West Africans are paid for their services in drugs, which are then exported to Europe by local criminal syndicates – usually using drug mules on commercial air flights (UNODC 2008, 10-12).

### Human Security

The question of how drug trafficking affects human security in Guinea-Bissau cannot be pursued without a foundational notion of 'human security'. This term has been highly scrutinised (and often criticised) in recent years, and remains contested terrain. The term spread following its use in the 1994 UN Development Programme report, and at the time Norwegian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy explained that,

human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives. ... It is an alternative way of seeing the world, taking people as its point of reference, rather than focusing exclusively on the security of territory or governments (Suhrke 1999, 269).

Some advocates of the concept have thus expounded seven key elements of human security: political security (proper functioning of state institutions and protection of civil liberties); personal security (personal exposure to abuse through violence or mistreatment); economic security (personal income and national productivity); food security (access to and production of basic nutrition); health security (exposure to disease or other ailments not arising from violence, and access to medicine); community security (the continued physical, geographical, social and cultural cohesion of a community); and environmental security (pollution, biodiversity, and ecofacts e.g. mines-sites and rising sea-levels) (Paris 2001, 90). Other presentations of the concept have asserted that the extreme vulnerability of certain populations is the key focus, and thus highlighted the condition of 'human

insecurity', as primarily being felt by, 'victims of war and internal conflict; those who live close to the subsistence level and thus are structurally positioned at the edge of socio-economic disaster; and victims of natural disasters' (Suhrke 1999, 272).

A key criticism of the paradigm has been that it is far too broad in scope to be of analytical value or specific policymaking use (Paris 2001, 88). Some analysts have also asked whose interests the paradigm serves. From a Neorealist perspective it has been argued that the support for the 'human security' concept by middle power states like Norway and Canada has served as a mask for power-orientated goals within the global system (Suhrke 1999, 265). And more radical analysts connected to Critical Security Studies remain, 'suspicious of human security as a hegemonic discourse co-opted by the state' (Newman 2010, 77). Advocates have in turn noted the political utility for Neorealists in denigrating alternative approaches to security studies (McDonald 2002, 277), and advanced that sometimes 'human security should operate less as a policy agenda within existing political structures and discourses than as a radical critique of those practices' (Bellamy and McDonald 2002, 376). The value of the concept of human security is both its redirection of theorists' attention to individuals as the primary focus of security studies, rather than states and their institutions, and its categorisation of threats to individuals for the purposes of measurement. This study will also embrace the use of human security as part of a radical systemic critique, and is highly sympathetic to the notion that,

A discourse of human security that does not delegitimize states when they act as agents of human insecurity, does not devalue sovereignty when it protects the perpetrators of human wrongs, or does not challenge the moral value of an international economic system and structure of states that creates and perpetuates most of the globe's insecurity has, at best limited utility. At worst, it ... sustain[s] the very practices and structures that cause human insecurity... (Bellamy and McDonald 2002, 375-376)

The key focus here will thus be the real impact of drug trafficking on elements of political, economic, health, and personal security in Guinea-Bissau, and what broader conclusions may be drawn from this.

### **Drug Trafficking and Human Security in Guinea-Bissau**

What then can we identify as the impact of drug trafficking on 'human security' in Guinea-Bissau? Let us begin with political security – the proper functioning of state institutions and protection of civil liberties.

*Political Security* – Most analyses make clear that the entry of drug money into an economy can play a key role in undermining vulnerable regimes by encouraging official corruption amongst political and military leaders, and the judiciary. As well as corrupting individuals this can damage the overall structure of government by encouraging corrupted branches to violate separation of powers through interference in other spheres, e.g. military interference in government, or political interference in the judicial process (ICG 2008, 1; Chalk 2000, 24-27). Antonio Mazzitelli points out that in the West African context,

a patrimonial conception of the state within which national natural and financial resources belong to the individual(s) in power, also contribute to the creation of

an environment where a disregard for existing laws and the use of institutional prerogatives for private goals is considered not only justified, but an indicator of power (2007, 1073).

Drug activities can also disrupt the state through violent confrontation, an example being the activities of the Colombian Medellín cartel, which during the 1980s killed many public figures in Colombia, including elected politicians, a High Court Judge, presidential candidates, and journalists, as well as over 3,000 military and police personnel (Jorath 2009, 94). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime thus warns that West African states, 'risk becoming shell-states: sovereign in name, but hollowed out from the inside by criminals in collusion with corrupt officials in the government and the security services' (UNODC 2008, 2). Preventing the proper functioning of the state detracts from the expression of individual political desires through the medium of the democratic government, thus impacting the population's political security.

Guinea-Bissau is nominally a semi-presidential multi-party democracy, with an independent judiciary, and a military subservient to civilian rulers. Two major parties have exchanged power within the parliament, in coalition with several smaller parties, and three sets of presidential/parliamentary elections have been held since 1994. However, this system is far from functional, with more coups and coup-attempts than elections during the period, the assassinations of various political figures, including the president, and a military that is highly active within the political sphere. Indeed, it has been said that, 'nothing in Guinean politics can be achieved against the will of the military' (Vaz and Rotzoll 2005, 545). Specifically, over the past two years the assassinations of President Vieira and General Tagme Na Wai have been linked to drug trafficking, and the powerful explosives used to kill Na Wai are suggested to have been imported by traffickers (Monteiro and Morgado 2009, 4), and a key suspect – former Head of the Navy José Na Tchuto, who fled to the Gambia – has been named internationally as a wanted drug trafficker (Gorjão 2010, 4-5). Na Tchuto then helped instigated the 'semi-coup' in Bissau on 1 April 2010, in which the Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior was detained before temporarily fleeing the country, and which resulted in Na Tchuto-ally General Antonio Indjai being appointed Military Chief of Staff, and Na Tchuto resuming a position as a key figure in the Guinean navy (Kohnert 2010, 11).

However, while the surge in drug trafficking can be specifically dated to 2005, the events of the subsequent years are not an unusual break in the flow of Guinean politics since independence. From the coup and coup-attempts of the 1980s and 1990s, to the civil war in 1998, the coup against Kuamba Yala in 2003 and all of the violence and unconstitutional dealings in between, the operation of politics in Guinea-Bissau in the drug trafficking era maintains continuity with the previous decades. And even when the Guinean electoral system has functioned at its best, voting has often been along ethnic lines, with regional leaders deciding who an entire locality will vote for, and with candidates distributing, 'tools, motorcycles and cellular phones in an attempt to influence people's voting decisions'

(Vaz and Rotzoll 2005, 538, 542). Meanwhile the local media has been unable to facilitate informed political discourse due to lack of training and resources (ICG 29 January 2009, 4).

Generally then, “the inherent problems of the country are not explained by this trafficking, but seem rather entrenched in the ambiguous social, ethnic, political and military relations developed since [ independence]” (Monteiro and Morgado 2009, 4). As the International Crisis Group notes, Guinea-Bissau’s ‘political and administrative structures are insufficient to guarantee control of its territory, assure minimum public services or counterbalance the army’s political dominance’ (ICG 2008, 1). Rather than being a *cause* of poor state-function and instability, drug trafficking is a *symptom*. The causes of Guinea-Bissau’s political insecurity are the deep underdevelopment and,

fragile formal state structures inherited from colonial times, ... an ‘uncaptured’ peasantry on the one side and the emergence of a stratum of poverty ridden urban poor on the other, created ... by ill-conceived neo-liberal structural adjustment programs of the Bretton Woods Institutions (Kohnert 2010, 4-5).

This has been compounded in recent years by the failure of international donors to, ‘fully engage in reforming the state, allowing it to continue weak and un-capacitated’ (Monteiro and Morgado 2009, 2). As the state is the major source of wealth in Guinea-Bissau, the political and military conflict the nation has experienced has been a competition over its resources using all available means, in an environment of general scarcity, which lacks any tradition of popular empowerment. In this context, drug traffic is merely a new resource to compete over, primarily through the vehicle of the state. In the absence of drug traffic the competition would continue regardless.

This is not to dismiss drug trafficking as having no impact on the stability of Guinea-Bissau’s government. With the army so deeply embedded in politics, international donors have seen military reform as the key to resolving the nation’s intractable political quagmire – aiming to streamline the force, weed out corruption, and transform it into a guarantor of democracy (Gorjão 2010, 1). The army remains bloated with veterans of the independence war, hundreds of whom have passed retirement age, and around two thirds of the army are of officer rank. However, the involvement with drug trafficking provides a source of income that decreases their dependency on foreign donors (thus undermining international efforts to advance reform within the Bissauan military), as well as creating circumstances for increased factionalisation and conflict within the armed forces. As streamlining of the military would deprive factions of members, influence and resources, it is generally resisted (Fletcher 2008). Thus, the head of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, Shola Omoregie, asserts that, ‘Drug trafficking ... will undermine everything we do to build peace here if it is not tackled’ (UNIRIN 28 August 2008). Acknowledging this, others also apportion some blame for the ineffective reform process to the international donors, who have, ‘been present in the country for ten years now, and [whose] involvement has been disjointed and unclear’ (Monteiro and Morgado 2009, 6). So drug trafficking helps perpetuate political insecurity in Guinea-Bissau, but is not one of its fundamental causes, and a high level of political insecurity could be predicted to continue in its absence.

*Economic Security* – Guinea-Bissau’s economic position has changed very little in the last 30 years. Pervasive poverty remains entrenched, and the nation remains on the lowest rungs of the UNDP Human Development Index: with life expectancy at around 47 years-of-age; child mortality at more than 10%; and illiteracy at 60% of the population. There are only 4,400km of roads, and of that only 40km are paved; thus most become unusable during the rainy season (ICG 2008, 1). Guinea-Bissau’s economy is almost completely agricultural and cashew production provides around 90% of export income. However, agricultural revenues are insufficient for the country to sustain itself, so it also relies greatly on foreign aid (Thaler 2009, 6). Generally, in the countryside, “people live independently of the central state”, as they did at independence, and ... community structures, [supported by NGOs] ... provide basic services such as education and health care’ (ICG 2008, 1). Despite the population’s dependence, by the mid-2000s international aid donors began shifting funds away from Guinea-Bissau – classified as a ‘Difficult Partnership Country’ (DPC) – and towards nations considered ‘aid darlings’, who receive greater resources thanks to their positive political returns (Thaler 2009, 9).

Meanwhile, this *situation* is not helped by expenditure on the armed forces estimated at 30% of the national budget. This again confirms demobilisation of around 50% of military personnel as a key aim for donors, though the compensation packages considered have failed to placate soldiers with few alternative sources of income. Before his death, General Na Wai, emphasised that soldiers would only accept reform that allowed them to ‘preserve their dignity’, however one international donor made clear that, ‘dignity has a monetary value that the international community is not prepared to pay’ (ICG 2008, 20-21). Progress is thus deadlocked by the quandary that international donors will not offer enough material incentive for the military to voluntarily relinquish political control, and that any attempt to inflict penalties on the military elite will only increase the importance to those individuals of maintaining political influence. Meanwhile, drug trafficking provides a new source of income that is not contingent on satisfying donors.

The economic security of most individuals is generally linked to the overall health and diversity of the national economy. Apart from impeding reform of the armed forces, why might drugs be bad for Guinea-Bissau’s economy? Theoretically a number of problems have been suggested. Firstly, there is the issue of distortion of the economy: diverting resources from constructive activities; creating dependence on the drug industry; and ‘Dutch Disease’ – making other economic activities unprofitable (Klein 2008, 169). In West Africa, where few industries other than resource-extraction have the economic weight of cocaine trafficking, participation in the trade may be a rational choice for many. The industry thus draws in human and financial capital as a high-profit/low-risk alternative to promoting real economic development (UNODC 2008, 49). The illegal income is rarely transformed into the productive capital investments necessary for long-term economic expansion (Singer 2008, 475). Economies re-structured around smuggling are then left vulnerable to collapse once international law enforcement efforts successfully block drug traffic (UNODC 2008, 47).

Secondly, there are direct costs and losses associated with being a transit point for drugs. There is the channelling of state funds into additional law enforcement to deal with trafficking crime and the violence that surrounds it, as well as resources diverted to treating drug addicts (Chalk 2000, 24-27). By degrading the national quality of life, skilled workers are encouraged to move overseas, while crime discourages businesses from investing in the nation. The shadow economy of criminal proceeds can erode the tax base, thus further impoverishing the state, while bribe-seeking officials can fuel inequality. And the luxury lifestyle associated with illicit money fosters the consumption of imported goods over locally-produced items (Mazzitelli 2007, 1086). Thirdly, there are the direct effects on workers' productivity. There are significant occupational risks faced by workers involved in producing or transporting drugs, which can frequently result in permanent injuries and thus reduced productivity for those involved; while those who consume drugs are themselves likely to have reduced productivity due to drug intoxication or related long-term health effects (Singer 2008, 472).

However, in the context of Guinea-Bissau, many of these problems seem virtually irrelevant at present. Guinea-Bissau's economy is already highly 'distorted'. The nation has virtually no manufacturing or industrialised sector, and over the five years prior to the surge in drug trafficking activity its economy was experiencing additional contraction (UNIRIN 7 June 2006). Tens of thousands of Guineans are also periodically at risk of starvation due to widespread over-dependence on cashew nut exports, an industry that is highly vulnerable to international markets (UNIRIN 5 May 2006). Drug trafficking itself does not require a large workforce, and is therefore unlikely to take many workers away from growing food for either local consumption or export. If drugs were to be produced locally then land may be diverted to drug production, however this is unlikely to be cocaine, as the growing zones for coca are geographically limited. The drug most suitable for production in Guinea-Bissau is cannabis, which is already the most used drug in West Africa, with regional production estimated at about 3,500 tons. But the cannabis market has not emerged as a major problem, as competitive markets keep profits low, and the ability of individuals to cultivate the drug themselves prevents crime monopolies from developing (UNODC 2008, 31). If opium were to be grown in place of cashew nuts, peasants may in fact find it to be an excellent high-value alternative crop, with a stable international market – as have farmers in Afghanistan (Singer 2008, 472). Meanwhile, the Bissauan state is already completely dependent on foreign donors to pay the public service, and health costs are largely borne by the international community (UNIRIN 21 June 2006).

On the other hand, it can also be argued that not all the economic results of drug trafficking are negative. The UNODC itself acknowledges that, '[i]n countries such as Guinea Bissau, where the largest commercial activity is the export of cashew nuts to India, drug trafficking and services to the drug traffickers may generate more money and jobs than anything in the legal economy' (UNODC 2008, 41). Enriched members of drug networks increase their consumption of everything from beer to washing powder, helping to stimulate local markets; while there is also the potential for a beneficial economic multiplier effect as local businessmen expand production to meet drug industry demands for farm equipment, tools,

vehicles, simple chemicals, and various machines. Banks, legal experts and accounting firms may earn work servicing the drug industry; while traffickers' demand for luxury housing boosts local construction and related industries supplying building materials. Wealthy drug barons also require security, drivers, and domestic staff. Additionally, drug traffickers may keep investments within the country because of advantages they acquire through influence over the state, so drug money may be converted into investment in legitimate industry through money-laundering. Finally, in some countries drug barons have sometimes engaged in social investment to increase their own popularity. Social investment may include basic infrastructure, support for cultural associations, or loans to local entrepreneurs (Griffith 1993/1994, 27-28; Klein 2008, 170; Geopolitical Drug Watch 1996, 2). There is already a detectable in-flow of money into Guinea-Bissau that the UNODC believes may be drug-related, with foreign reserves increasing from US\$33 million in 2003 to US\$113 million in 2007, and a substantial increase in foreign direct investment (US\$42 million in 2006) after years of virtually none (UNODC 2008, 42-44).

Again, the argument here is not that drug trafficking is the preferred avenue for the development of Guinea-Bissau's economy, but that from the perspective of an already deeply underdeveloped state, marginalised within the global economic system, and predominantly dependent on a single export crop vulnerable to market-fluctuations, it is not necessarily a given that drug trafficking will only have negative economic effects in the short-to-medium term. The majority of the nation's negative circumstances already existed in the absence of drug trafficking. It is thus disingenuous for international agencies to devote disproportionate blame to the burgeoning drug trafficking industry, when Guinea-Bissau's underdevelopment actually arises from European imperialism that stifled domestic development in the colonial era, neo-liberal structural adjustment that undermined state-driven development after independence, and increasing abandonment of the country by aid donors in the years prior to the drug surge. Ironically, the emergence of drug trafficking may work to reinvigorate foreign assistance to Guinea-Bissau due to its new relevance to the Western world.

*Health Security* – For individuals the health impacts of the consumption of hard drugs are primarily negative, and while West Africa is not the end-market of most of the trafficked drugs, consumption is rising in the region. Cocaine and crack cocaine are becoming available in many major towns, and heroin use is also increasing (Mazzitelli 2007, 1077). In Guinea-Bissau reports are that use of crack cocaine, with the local name 'Pedra', is growing. The drug is highly addictive, and is strongly associated with personal aggression, crime, and social breakdown (UNIRIN 3 March 2008). Whether the finances are provided by Guinea-Bissau's government or international donors, costs connected with drug addiction and associated violence detract from the resources available for other conditions (Griffith 1993/1994, 26). These include high-levels of infection with HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (UNIRIN 14 July 2006). Drug use can be a particularly major contributor to the spread of AIDS due to sharing of syringes and other drug paraphernalia, and related poor sexual health practices, with the disease then often attacking sufferers during their most economically-productive years, further burdening society (Singer 2008, 473; Chalk

2000, 25). If drug processing takes place in the region there are also associated health effects of pollution and working with chemicals (Griffith 1993/1994, 29). Meanwhile, Guinea-Bissau remains ill-equipped to use any available medical resources due to, 'poorly presented proposals, demotivated civil servants, lack of technicians, institutional and authority vacuums, and wrecked infrastructure' (UNIRIN 14 July 2006).

Contextually, it must be also noted that in addition to the mere supply of hard drugs, the conditions in which people are driven to take drugs in part arise from urban environments beset by poverty, lack of housing, inadequate water and sanitation, ill-health and street violence. 'Without sufficient employment opportunities, many young people grow discouraged and feel worthless' (Singer 2008, 468). Often these conditions are fostered by the global economic policies of developed nations. It can also be reasonably argued that legal drugs like tobacco and alcohol, 'have at least as great if not a considerably greater impact on development internationally than do illegal drugs' (Singer 2008, 469, 476).

*Personal Security* – In terms of personal security, individual crime is not prevalent in Guinea-Bissau though political violence has erupted periodically in the region, particularly around the capital Bissau. Cocaine trafficking is unlikely to have any positive results for personal security, but may contribute negatively through an increase in crime rates associated with consumption, violence between drug trafficking factions, or violence between drug traffickers and state authorities (Chalk 2000, 24). Drug traffickers can commit violent crimes categorised as 'enforcement' or 'business' – with enforcement violence directed at coercing compliance with contracts and avoidance of arrest; and business violence aiming to acquire wealth through extortion or robbery. Globally, thousands of businessmen, journalists, government officials and clergymen have been killed in drug-violence, along with many ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, corruption of the judiciary allows perpetrators to go unpunished (Griffith 1993/1994, 22-24), though Guinea-Bissau has actually also lacked facilities to hold convicted offenders, due to the destruction of their prison in political violence (UNODC 2008, 36). The history of war surrounding resources in West African nations, such as diamonds in Sierra Leone and Liberia, also demonstrates the potential for conflict to emerge around drug trafficking – the monetary value of which is actually higher than blood minerals. The security situation facing Mexico today is thus often raised as a warning of the future for nations like Guinea-Bissau (UNODC 2008, 22). However, military uprisings against the government have already played a large role in Guinea-Bissau's post-independence history, and elements of the military are said to control current drug trafficking, thus future violence will probably resemble what the nation has already experienced (UNODC 2008, 35).

## Conclusion

In examining the impact of *drug* trafficking on human security in Guinea-Bissau, within the categories of political, economic, health, and personal security, I have tried to demonstrate three key points. Firstly, that Guinea-Bissau already had a high level of insecurity in all these categories prior to the onset of drug trafficking. Secondly, in the context of this existing insecurity drug trafficking's impact may actually be relatively limited. In the areas of health and personal security, the impacts will be predominantly negative, but small in scope in comparison to the general context of insecurity. In terms of political insecurity,

drug trafficking may become a major motivator and facilitator of this insecurity, but in its absence the struggle over other sources of wealth may continue regardless. And in the category of economic security, Guinea-Bissau is so marginalised within the global economy that an argument can actually be made for a beneficial impact arising from drug trafficking. Thirdly, while this does not thus lead to an advocacy for drug trafficking, it does point to the conclusion that any new focus on drug trafficking as Guinea-Bissau's most serious problem is mistaken – concentrating on a symptom of underdevelopment and insecurity rather than a cause – and instead reflects the self-interested viewpoint of the major drug-consuming nations.

Prior to the emergence of drug trafficking through West Africa, a key aim of the international community in Guinea-Bissau was army reform, and breaking their power over the political system. This was/is seen as a prerequisite for creating a stable national political system and economy, and thus future economic growth. These fundamental reforms can only be achieved with sufficient financial aid from donors, which has not been forthcoming. However, implicit in this formulation is that having 'normal' political institutions and interaction with the global political economy will bring about development – rather than an understanding that it has actually been this interaction, under European imperialism and post-independence economic liberalisation, that led to and perpetuated Guinea-Bissau's underdevelopment and political insecurity. While aid money may certainly help Guinea-Bissau, the tendency of donors to offer inadequate funds, and to withdraw these whenever there is instability, is the equivalent of a doctor offering an insufficient dose of medicine and withdrawing it whenever the symptoms reappear (ICG 2008, 21-23; Bernard 2008).

Finally, the emergence of the drug trafficking phenomenon is in itself a result of global markets and prohibition policies. It is to a large degree the demand for drugs in the developed world, and in this case particularly Western Europe, that maintains and spreads drug production; and the global prohibition policies of those nations that then push drugs into the hands of organised crime. The movement of trafficking routes to West Africa is an example of the 'balloon effect', of diversification of drug trafficking routes in the context of continued demand and prohibition. The potential effect of prohibition enforcement on drug-transit countries is itself a grave danger for Guinea-Bissau. The Caribbean was a major transit route for South American cocaine during the 1980s, leading the United States to focus on preventing trafficking through the region. In the 1990s donor states thus began to work with Caribbean nations to enhance their counternarcotics capabilities, and soon Caribbean nations criminalised the possession of even small amounts of illegal drugs. The number of Caribbean men convicted of drug offences began to rise rapidly, by the mid-2000s leaving the Caribbean with one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. Imprisonment fed into cycles of re-offence and began creating a new class of socially-excluded petty criminals. Meanwhile, the poorest in Caribbean society suffered from lack of funds to pay lawyers, bail, and fines; and the court systems became overwhelmed and corrupted (Klein 2008, 140-144). This road would not be a positive one for human security in Guinea-Bissau. In the words of the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, 'Guinea Bissau should not suffer because of

Europe's drug addiction' (Almeida 2007). Ironically, perhaps it will be Guinea-Bissau's threat of undermining Western drug prohibition that will finally bring the international attention and resources necessary to begin improving the nation's lot. However, to truly resolve the problems of Guinea-Bissau, and many similar nations, the roots of crisis in the normal functioning of the global political economy must be recognised and measures taken to ameliorate their consequences.

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## Öz

### **Gine Bissau Cumhuriyeti'nde Uyuşturucu Madde Kaçakçılığı ve İnsan Güvenliği**

Son zamanlarda Batılı ülkelerde Batı Afrika genelinin ve özellikle Gine Bissau Cumhuriyeti'nin kokain kaçakçılığının kilit noktasını oluşturmasından kaynaklanan ve giderek artan bir endişe söz konusudur. Gine Bissau Cumhuriyeti'nin iç siyasetinde ve askeri kurumlarında yaşanan çalkantılar da uyuşturucu ticaretine bağlanmaktadır. Bu makale, uyuşturucu madde kaçakçılığını Gine Bissau Cumhuriyeti'nin tarihi çerçevesinde ele alacak ve bu ülkedeki "insan güvenliği" konusuna olan etkilerini politika, ekonomi, sağlık ve insan güvenliği açısından inceleyecektir. Makalenin argümanı, Gine Bissau'da halihazırda var olan düşük insan güvenliği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, uyuşturucu madde kaçakçılığının etkilerinin o kadar da anlamlı olmadığı ve uyuşturucu ticaretini Gine Bissau'nun temel sorunu olarak ele almaktan ziyade, kaçakçılık olgusunun, ülkenin Avrupa sömürgeciliği ve küresel ekonomik yapılar ve politikalar sonucu geri kalmışlığının sadece bir göstergesi olarak ele alınmasının gerekli olduğu yönündedir.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

Uyuşturucu madde kaçakçılığı, Gine Bissau, İnsan Güvenliği

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