



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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## GUINEA-BISSAU

# U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

### FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

United States foreign policy and goals in Guinea-Bissau are to promote sustainable democratic political development, combat narcotics trafficking, and lay the foundations for renewed economic growth based on sound economic policy in this increasingly fragile state. Assassinations of the former President, chief of defense staff, and subsequently, Presidential candidates in 2009 further stunted efforts of the civilian leadership to assert de facto control over the government. The U.S. Embassy in Dakar has been accredited to Guinea-Bissau since operations at the Embassy in Bissau were suspended at the outbreak of civil war in 1998.

Guinea-Bissau ranked 173 out of 177 countries in the 2008 Human Development Index. Although the country enjoyed good harvests for the vital cashew crop in 2008 and 2009, significant challenges in all sectors inhibited the progress and stability Guinea-Bissau needs to capitalize on its agricultural and natural resources potential. Power shortages and crumbling infrastructure cripple economic output and make life difficult for the population of 1.6 million.

Ongoing domestic instability and poor governance have further eroded already debilitated education and health care systems.

Guinea-Bissau's archipelago, with over 90 islands, is an unprotected coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone, and a haven for narcotics trafficking. With an economy that has yet to recover from the effects of the civil war of 1998-99, the enormous profitability from facilitating the transit of cocaine from Latin America to Europe continues to corrupt political and security officials and to undermine the rule of law. As a result, the country remains at risk of becoming a narco-state.

Guinea-Bissau is a fragile state where many years of concentrated effort will be needed to bring it to a level of development that could be considered "transformational." In concert with other donors, United States Government (USG) efforts to improve security and strengthen democratic institutions are essential and complementary steps toward that goal. While virtually no development assistance was allocated to Guinea-Bissau in FY 2009 to begin to meet this crucial need, several forms of law

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Programs discussed in this publication are funded through the Department of State. The U.S. Agency for International Development does not currently provide direct assistance to Guinea-Bissau.

enforcement type assistance were available.

## **HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

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### **Peace and Security**

Guinea-Bissau has been an operational platform of choice for drug traffickers since 2004 due to its location, corruption, and its poorly monitored airspace, borders, and shorelines. Many senior officials are suspected of orchestrating or facilitating trafficking, while low-level officials are particularly susceptible to bribes, as most government workers often go months at a time without receiving salaries. As USG technical support continues through International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement and the United States Africa Command, with funding by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Agency, the Embassy increased diplomatic pressure on senior political and military officials of the Government of Guinea-Bissau (GOGB) to show tangible proof of their commitment to fight narcotics trafficking. Embassy Dakar, in concert with European donors, is working to identify the most reliable host government partners in this fight, and to formalize a set of programs that will deny traffickers easy access to the country's territory and facilities. The United States began to build anti-trafficking technical capacity among the most credible Guinea-Bissau individuals and institutions together with, primarily, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). At the same time, Embassy Dakar works with other U.S. Embassies in West Africa and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to develop a coordinated approach to thwart drug traffickers' efforts to shift operations among countries in response to counternarcotics efforts. In the coming years, the USG will continue to train select members of the armed forces and civil servants in the Ministry of Defense, and use civilian-military programs to promote civilian control of the military, respect for human rights, and professionalism. The Embassy will also join other donors to look for ways to support the GOGB's comprehensive security-sector reform plan, a necessity if civilians are to regain control of the government. As security sector reform is implemented, the USG intends to surge International Military Education and Training (IMET) in order to assist the government with this essential, but politically difficult, task.

The Bissau-Guinean military has had little exposure to friendly, more developed military establishments. As a result, there is poor structure, little professionalism, and a lack of basic education. Guinea-Bissau's older and top-heavy armed forces need a complete overhaul if they are to stop being the main source of instability and begin to contribute to counternarcotics efforts. Professional military education is an important part of that process. U.S. program support in this area will go toward traditional areas of focus under the IMET program – specifically, in the fields of human rights, civilian control of the military, and professionalism.

In the area of defense, military and border restructuring, reform, and operations, in FY 2009, IMET sent an army captain to the Basic Officers training course at Fort Benning, from which he graduated in February 2010.

The Center for Civilian-Military Relations held a seminar on civil-military relations in Guinea-Bissau in August 2009. Twenty eight members of the armed forces and 29 civilians attended. Themes of the seminar were civil-military relations in post-conflict societies, roles and missions of the armed forces, civic education programs, security forces and the media, security sector reform, and security forces and the legislature. Feedback showed that seminar participants considered it very successful.

Regarding explosive remnants of war (ERW), a number of anti-personnel mines from the anti-colonial war of the 1960s and 70s still litter the countryside. Mine-related accidents pose a public health risk, and uncleared land limits terrain that could be used for economic activities.

The United States trained local non-governmental organizations in the removal and destruction of landmines and unexploded ordnance, but the GOGB does not have funds to keep trained deminers employed.

Demining efforts have been so successful that the USG now faces the problem of safely disposing removed mines. In FY 2009, \$1 million in Non-proliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs funds was allocated for humanitarian mine action and conventional weapons destruction in Guinea-Bissau, a continuation of such efforts intermittently since 2000. Of that funding, \$682,000 was granted to Humanitarian Aid (HUMAID) to continue clearing landmines and explosive remnants of war throughout Guinea-Bissau. Cleared Ground Demining was granted funding to support a roving explosive ordnance disposal team and a military stockpile destruction team. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines' 2009 annual global report counted only one casualty from an ERW in 2008 (the year for which data was most recently compiled) in Guinea-Bissau, down from eight casualties reported in 2007. With modest support to sustain the capacity developed so far, Guinea-Bissau could become free of ERW within five years.

Narcotics trafficking has undermined both the economy and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau, leading some observers to consider it already to be a narco-state. During this period, traffickers have further entrenched their transshipment operations in the country, even as they have extended their activities to other West African countries. The USG coordinates with the Government of Senegal, donors, ECOWAS member countries, and international organizations such as UNODC to maximize training and capacity building efforts and to share intelligence. The Departments of Defense and Justice in FY 2009 provided training and material assistance to those in the government and security forces working to fight drug trafficking. The corruption and money associated with drug trafficking, largely unchecked to date, are destroying the fragile democratic systems in Guinea-Bissau.