



Senegal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC)

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Diola farmers from the Lower Casamance hamlet of Tourécounda, near the Guinea-Bissau border, pressing palm oil. Together with large areas of the border zone, the hamlet has largely been abandoned by its civilian population because of MFDC guerrilla activity and the presence of landmines. The former residents of Tourécounda still visit their orchards and fields during daylight hours, but by sundown they return to the nearby village of Camaracounda, which is protected by a Senegalese army camp.

- The little-known rebellion of the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) in the south of Senegal is now in its twenty-second year, making it West Africa's longest-running civil conflict.
- There are hopes that the current calm could herald a lasting peace but the MFDC is deeply factionalized and its guerrillas are spread over three countries (Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia). This makes negotiations with the Senegalese government more problematic.
- The economic reconstruction under way in the Casamance risks leaving behind hardline guerrillas who are alienated from the current peace process.
- Understanding the origins, motivations and support structures of the guerrillas is crucial for the search for peace.

Introduction

The previous paper in this series, on LURD in Liberia,¹ depicted an insurgency at its peak. With considerable manpower, clear aims and foreign backing, it was ultimately instrumental in unseating Charles Taylor from the Liberian presidency. In these respects, LURD contrasts with the guerrillas in West Africa's longest-running civil conflict: the Casamance rebellion in the south of Senegal, now in its twenty-second year. In recent years the Casamance situation has improved, allowing many formerly displaced people to return and donors to fund much-needed reconstruction. But the current period of calm belies certain ongoing difficulties in the peace process. It is therefore timely to examine the fragmented and impoverished military wing – the *maquis* – of the rebel *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC). The purpose here is to understand the nature and dynamics of the *maquis* and its engagement with the peace process, rather than to recount in detail the political complexities involved.²

This paper is derived from research on the 'war economy' of the conflict undertaken during the author's doctoral fieldwork in the Casamance, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia between 2000 and 2002, and from a further field visit to research the *maquis* more directly in April–May 2004. During fieldwork, interviews were conducted with active and retired *maquisards* (guerrillas) and their families, mostly in Ziguinchor and Guinea-Bissau, as well as with senior members of the MFDC political wing, local NGO personnel close to the peace process, international agency staff, diplomats, local government officials, journalists, traders and villagers. Their testimonies are supplemented with information from media reports, 'grey literature' and academic works.

However, a number of difficulties were encountered in this research that were in essence the same as those afflicting the peace process. These include the wary nature of a guerrilla group created only when peaceful political protest was driven underground by government repression; factionalization of the MFDC, both between and within its military and political wings; dispersal of the *maquis* across three countries and its blurring with refugee communities; and, resulting from all these features, the problem of identifying interlocutors who can credibly speak for the *maquisards*. Some findings presented here are therefore inevitably tentative.

The Casamance

The physical and human geography of the Casamance and its proximity to neighbouring countries have created, for the Senegalese government, a problematic environment in which to fight an insurgency and to secure a peace. The Casamance is the southwestern corner of Senegal, sandwiched between The Gambia – which largely separates it from the rest of the country

– and Guinea-Bissau. It comprises about one-seventh of Senegal's land area and is divided into two administrative regions, named for their respective capitals: Ziguinchor region (formerly the Lower Casamance) to the west, and the much larger Kolda region to the east. The conflict has largely concerned Ziguinchor region: it was initially confined there and only from 1995 onwards did it move eastward into western parts of Kolda region, particularly Sédhiou department. Ziguinchor region is divided into three departments, again named for their chief towns: Ziguinchor and Oussouye departments south of the Casamance River, both bordering Guinea-Bissau; and Bignona department to the north, bordering The Gambia.

The area most affected is therefore relatively small: Ziguinchor region covers an area of 7,339km², around two-thirds that of the neighbouring Gambia, mainland Africa's smallest country. The region is low-lying (less than 50m above sea level), its sandy plateaux broken up by the complex network of tributaries and backwaters of the tidal Casamance River. The wet season lasts on average four-and-a-half months between June and October, bringing considerably higher rainfall than that in Senegal north of The Gambia. The region's verdancy thus contrasts with northern Senegal, which is mostly Sahelian in character: the climate supports sub-Guinean forest, while the Casamance River and its many branches are fringed with mangroves and marshland.

Much natural vegetation in the region has been converted to agricultural use, while remaining forest areas provide hardwoods for furniture and construction. In the alluvial valleys there are large areas of paddy rice cultivation, while the plateaux are cultivated for other cereals, vegetables and salads, or planted with orchards of cashews, mangoes, citrus fruits, oil palms and other tree crops. Along the Casamance River and the many inland waterways, fishing and oyster-gathering are important activities. Unfortunately, however, the productive potential of the region has not been fully realized during the conflict; or where it has, this has sometimes been through illicit activities, partly within the 'war economy' that has developed. Seasonal or longer-term migration by both men and women to the urban centres of northern Senegal and The Gambia is another long-established economic activity and the remittances thus generated remain an essential component of the livelihoods of most households in the region.

An estimate in 2002 put Ziguinchor region's population at some 438,000. In line with trends across much of sub-Saharan Africa, large demographic growth makes this a young population, over 57% of whom are less than 20 years old according to the most recent (1988) official census. The region is ethnically diverse, although the Diola – a polyglot assemblage of microcephalous (stateless) peoples – form an absolute majority: 61% according to the census, while other sources give higher estimates more consonant with one's impression on the ground. Some ethnic groups in the remaining mix have affinities stretching across West Africa, notably the Mandingo and Peul (Fulani).

Others come from northern Senegal: the Wolof, nationally the majority (43%) and hegemonic group but less than 5% in Ziguinchor region, and Toucouleur and Sérér. The rest, like the Diola, have southern (Casamançais or Bissau-Guinean) roots: the Balanta, Bainouk, Manjak and Mancagne.

The region's population is mainly Muslim (75%) but with significant Christian (17%, mostly Catholic) and animist (8%) minorities; the Diola are c.60% Muslim. These figures represent a significant divergence from the national average – Senegal is 94% Muslim – leading some Western media coverage of the conflict falsely to characterize Ziguinchor region as a predominantly Christian and animist enclave pitted against Muslim northern Senegal. Rather than religion, a strong regional identity is expressed among Casamançais, particularly the Diola, in which they distinguish themselves from *nordistes* (northern Senegalese) and which also forms part of the separatists' discourse.

Another important feature of Diola and other communities in the region is their 'transnational' character, with familial, ethnic, religious and economic links with Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. Such links are long-standing but in the context of the conflict, cross-border movements of people have come to include Casamance rebels and refugees, and trade to include arms and conflict goods.

The origins of the maquis³

As in many conflicts, identifying a date for the start of the Casamance rebellion is to some extent arbitrary. The 1970s saw protests in the Lower Casamance (at this time the Casamance was all one administrative region) against injustices by the Senegalese administration, particularly in relation to land tenure disputes arising from application of the 1964 *loi sur le domaine national*. This gave ownership to the state of all land that was not formally registered (in effect most land), privileging those more able to register legal title – often *nordistes* benefiting from government patrimony – over local traditional owners, often Diola or Mancagne. Urban growth, agricultural development and hotel construction for the expanding tourist trade led to protests against land expropriations in Ziguinchor and the coastal resort of Cap Skirring.

These problems were followed in 1980 by a violent student strike at Ziguinchor's state college, *Lycée Djignabo*, against deteriorating conditions resulting from the government's budgetary crisis, during which one student was killed by security forces. Later the same year, Ziguinchorois were outraged to see their *Casa-Sport* football team lose the Senegal Cup to Dakar after unfair refereeing decisions.

Separatism as such did not feature in any of these events but they contributed to growing regionalist sentiment and an ability to express grievances through organized mass protest. Certain local intellectuals were, however, codifying separatism on the grounds of discontent with government from Dakar, perceived underdevelopment of the Casamance, cultural

differences from *nordistes* and the still-disputed claim that the Casamance had full political autonomy during colonial times. These grievances in turn expressed deeper processes, notably including a breakdown in the state's ability to provide public-sector jobs for migrants to northern Senegal – previously an important means of integrating the Lower Casamance into the national political economy – owing to a combination of retrenchment and demographic growth.⁴

These two strands of dissent soon came together, and the formal outbreak of the rebellion is usually taken as 26 December 1982, when a large number of demonstrators – estimates range from a few hundred to a few thousand – marched in Ziguinchor, replacing the Senegalese tricolour on public buildings with the white flag of the Casamance. The recently formed MFDC, taking its name from a late colonial-era political party, circulated pamphlets demanding independence for the Casamance. Small-scale but violent clashes at the town's *gendarmerie* left a number of people injured, including one *gendarme* who subsequently died, but the march otherwise dispersed in an orderly fashion.

The government of Abdou Diouf, who had only acceded to the Senegalese presidency in January 1981 as the groomed successor to Léopold Sédar Senghor, responded by organizing a loyalist counter-demonstration on 28 December and arresting more than a hundred people in subsequent weeks. More positively, it set up a land commission and engaged with the *cadres casamançais* (professionals of Casamance origin based largely in northern Senegal), ordering a report from them.

Calm returned until early December 1983, when those still under arrest were tried in Dakar for violation of territorial integrity. They included the Catholic priest Abbé (Father) Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, who was to become MFDC Secretary General in 1991 and still effectively holds the post despite attempts in recent years to relegate him to the role of 'Honorary President'.⁵ He and the other accused received relatively mild sentences but in the Lower Casamance itself, events became increasingly violent. Secret MFDC meetings continued and on 6 December at Diabir, near Ziguinchor, three *gendarmes* were killed when they entered a sacred grove to arrest participants at one such gathering; some 50 people were subsequently arrested. On 18 December 1983 – 'Red Sunday' – demonstrators again entered central Ziguinchor, marching on the *gouvernance* (seat of regional administration), *gendarmerie* and local radio station. Security forces quashed the demonstration at considerable cost in human life: officially 24 killed, in reality between 50 and 200. A curfew was imposed in Ziguinchor and arrests were made across the Lower Casamance, although other activists escaped into the countryside.

Even two decades on, the importance of these events in the rebel psyche cannot be overstated. MFDC members still often cite them, and their resulting sense of persecution and injustice is very evident, even if they were not directly involved. One *maquisard*

interviewed said 'The Casamançais didn't take up arms. We raised a white flag and what did they do? They shot us.'⁶ Some even see the authorities' heavy-handed reaction as proof in itself of the Casamance's historical right to independence, which the government was thereby attempting to suppress. It is certainly true that the government's actions only served to crystallize and consolidate separatist feeling in the region.

The mid-1980s saw President Diouf try to defuse the crisis politically, appointing four Casamançais ministers to his cabinet and further examining, and to a lesser extent addressing, underlying Casamance grievances. The Casamance was also divided into two new regions, as described above, in what is generally interpreted as an attempt by the government to isolate and control separatism in Ziguinchor region alone. But on the ground, repression continued with the arrest of several hundred people, often on purely political grounds although the rebellion was also used as a cover to settle local scores, for example through false denunciations of individuals as rebels or rebel sympathizers. A number of detainees were tortured or murdered in custody.

This drove the rebellion further underground, away from political protest and towards armed violence. Occasional clashes between separatists and Senegalese forces continued but the MFDC was mostly engaged in arming and training an armed wing under the leadership of Sidy Badji, out of sight in the region's forests and across the border in Guinea-Bissau. This guerrilla force, sometimes known as *Attika* ('warrior' in Diola), mobilized fully in 1990. On 20 April its first attack, on the customs station at Séléti on the Gambian border, marked the start of the 'military phase' of the conflict. The appointment of a military governor to Ziguinchor region in May 1990 and large-scale army deployment accelerated the downward spiral of violence and human rights abuses by both sides.

Continuing conflict

Throughout the 1990s a combination of military, political and diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the conflict. Ceasefires and accords were signed between the MFDC and the successive governments of President Diouf but sporadic and sometimes serious violence continued. The civilian population of large areas along the Guinea-Bissau border was displaced by the mid-1990s. In August 1997 elements of the *maquis* and, it is claimed, the Senegalese army began widespread seeding of anti-personnel mines (although they were used earlier), rendering parts of the border zone yet more inaccessible to its inhabitants – a problem that continues to this day.

President Abdoulaye Wade, elected in March 2000 in the first change of ruling party in four decades of Senegalese independence, has tried some new approaches and has been helped by changes in Guinea-Bissau (outlined below). But despite much improved security conditions, a definitive peace remains elusive. Recent rebel attacks on military targets and continuing

armed robberies illustrate shortcomings in the current peace process.

As with recent conflicts elsewhere in Africa, notably in the Mano River Union and Great Lakes region, spillover into neighbouring countries has occurred, with Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia becoming implicated in various ways, by choice or by imposition. At a diplomatic level, both countries have brokered negotiations between the Senegalese government and the MFDC or between MFDC factions. But their territories are also used by *maquisards* for arms supply or other material support, with rear bases situated in Guinea-Bissau; and by Casamance refugees, some of whom are closely associated with the *maquis*. Both countries, especially Guinea-Bissau, have suffered internal instability and violence as a result and have occasionally had villages directly attacked (usually by aerial bombardment) by Senegalese forces in pursuit of *maquisards* across the Casamance's international borders. Transnational dynamics have thus been critical throughout the Casamance conflict and remain so in the current search for peace.

Humanitarian impacts

While relatively small compared with wars elsewhere in West Africa, the humanitarian impacts of the conflict have still been of considerable significance within the Casamance and in neighbouring countries. An estimated 3,000–5,000 people have died, with at least 652 killed or wounded by landmines and unexploded ordnance.⁷

Many more have been displaced: a census in 1998 by Caritas gave a total of 62,638 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Displacement has been concentrated according to the geography of the conflict, with Ziguinchor region accounting for c.70% of this total and Ziguinchor department alone c.63%. Ziguinchor town is estimated to have received some 14,000 IDPs while thousands more have swollen other Casamance towns and relatively secure villages. UNHCR sources estimate that there are 10,000–13,000 refugees in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia, roughly equally divided, although the Gambian figure has been subject to greater flux as it has been periodically and temporarily augmented by Senegalese army operations north of the Casamance River. Many of the displaced have returned in recent years, partly under USAID-funded projects – an estimated 10,000–15,000 returnees are expected in 2004 alone – but the need for de-mining, land clearance and reconstruction to support them presents a huge challenge.

The wider *in situ* population has also suffered as insecurity has damaged livelihoods in agriculture, trade and tourism.⁸ Underinvestment in infrastructure worsened when the start of widespread mine use in 1997 prompted several major donors to leave. The region's transport problems became tragic international news in September 2002 when the *Joola*, the Ziguinchor–Dakar ferry, capsized off the Gambian coast with the loss of over 1,800 lives. The provision of already limited government services also declined as

qualified staff left or refused to work in insecure areas, and schools and other public buildings were requisitioned as army posts.

Factionalization of the *maquis*

Once fully engaged in conflict with government forces, the *maquis* did not remain a united force for long. During the 1990s a series of splits arose, defining the main *maquis* factions today. These are now described but with the caveats that they necessarily simplify more complex subdivisions, which are sometimes difficult to determine, and that the situation has been particularly fluid in recent years.⁹

The *Front Nord*

The main historical division in the *maquis* has been between the *Front Nord* (Northern Front) and the *Front Sud* (Southern Front), named for their original areas of operation in Ziguinchor region, north and south of the Casamance River. This division arose following accords signed in April 1992 in the Bissau-Guinean town of Cacheu, which aimed to consolidate the first ceasefire signed by Sidy Badji and the Senegalese government in Bissau in May 1991. However, Abbé Diamacoune denounced the Cacheu accords for failing to address the MFDC's central demand for Casamance independence. Badji and his followers therefore regrouped as the *Front Nord* and retired from active combat against Senegalese forces, in informal exchange for which they were allowed to retain *de facto* control of much of the northwest of Bignona department, with few or no Senegalese forces present in the area covered until recently. This split, which opposed the grouping around Abbé Diamacoune and his younger brother Bertrand against that around Sidy Badji, continued as a defining dynamic in the MFDC political wing and *maquis* until (and indeed beyond) Badji's death from natural causes in May 2003.

Under the nominal command of Kamougué Diatta, at least until recently, the *Front Nord* has its main base at Diakaye, near Ebinako on the Bignona-Diouloulou trunk road. Ostensibly 'pacified' and engaged in economic development of its zone, the *Front Nord* is regarded by some as a positive political force for peace. This is naive: it has not laid down its arms and *Front Nord* 'development' largely comprises illicit activities (see below) with some *maquisard* livelihoods achieved at the expense of local people, although some civilian collaborators have benefited. Like the rest of the *maquis*, the *Front Nord* suffers internal splits and dissent, and its commanders find it difficult to control its more predatory elements.¹⁰ In 2003 a significant splinter group formed under Magne Diémé, a former close associate of Kamougué, and this may now be the most powerful element of the *Front Nord*.

The relationship of the *Front Nord* with the *Front Sud*, including the latter's geographically adjacent Djibidione group (described below), has been troubled and occasionally violent. Furthermore, in May–June 2001 a Senegalese offensive aimed primarily at

Djibidione elements enabled the army also to re-establish itself in parts of the *Front Nord* zone, most importantly along the Bignona-Diouloulou road. This prompted *Front Nord* elements to attack the army position at Djinaki, where an army post had been installed on the main road just a few kilometres from Diakaye. Substantial engagements ensued across Diouloulou district but the *Front Nord* ultimately failed, the army positions remained until very recently, and the uneasy peace in the area returned.

The *Front Sud*

Following the Cacheu accords, Abbé Diamacoune aligned himself with *maquis* commander Léopold Sagna, who took over from Badji as Chief of Staff but now controlled only the more militant *Front Sud*; this operated south of the Casamance River with its rear bases mainly along both sides of the Casamance's porous forested border with Guinea-Bissau. The *Front Sud* remained the MFDC's active military force for separatism but its internal divisions became increasingly pronounced. Sagna's moderate stance and direct contact with President Diouf alienated him from hardliners in both the military and political wings, who instead grouped themselves around one of his younger lieutenants, Salif Sadio. While Abbé officially renamed Sagna as Chief of Staff in 1999, the *Front Sud* was still effectively divided into two factions with two leaders.

Matters were brought to a head by the 1998–9 civil war in Guinea-Bissau and subsequent changes in the country. The civil war itself was partly the result of, and became a proxy for, the Casamance conflict. In June 1998 Guinea-Bissau's then Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Ansumane Mané, launched a military *coup* after being scapegoated by then President João Bernardo ('Nino') Vieira for arms supply to MFDC *maquisards*. In the ensuing eleven-month civil war, members of both *Front Sud* factions went to Bissau to support Mané's forces, fighting partly against Senegalese troops shipped in from the Casamance to help prop up Vieira. Eventually Vieira was toppled and a new elected government was later installed under President Kumba Yala. Mané launched a second *coup* attempt in November 2000, again supported by *Front Sud* elements, but this failed and he was killed by Yala loyalists.

Mané's death freed Yala to align himself more firmly with the Senegalese government *vis-à-vis* the Casamance and he turned his forces against Sadio's *Front Sud* hardliners on Bissau-Guinean territory. In December 2000 a contingent of the Bissau-Guinean army under Colonel Tagmé Na Way, in cooperation with Sagna moderates, launched an offensive against the hardliners, which was repressed in May–June 2001. This action also included the forced removal from parts of the border zone of refugees believed to be linked with hardline *maquisards*. The offensive displaced some Sadio elements from the country and Sadio himself was wounded, although in the course of 2001 Sadio's men succeeded in capturing and executing moderate commanders; there is still some doubt as to whether Sagna himself is dead. Overall, however, the action was in favour of the Sagna faction.

Unsurprisingly, interviewees of each faction held the other responsible for the splintering of the *Front Sud*. Along Guinea-Bissau's border with the Casamance, most *maquisards* of both factions remain but with different areas and degrees of influence. Sagna's men are now under the command of César Atoute Badiate, who came to prominence in the conflict with the Sadio faction. They are largely found at the western end of the border zone with their main base at Kassolol, near the coastal town of Varela. Despite their ostensible loyalty to Abbé Diamacoune and their label as 'moderates', the discourse of those interviewed was more extreme. Those of Sadio's hardliners remaining in Guinea-Bissau have their bases further east, around São Domingos and along the border with the Middle Casamance, although they lost territory and mobility in the 2000–01 offensive. They continue to be harassed sporadically by Bissau-Guinean forces and are forbidden to enter São Domingos (to which Mané used to grant them *laissez-passer*) while Badiate's men apparently have freedom of movement.

President Yala's economic mismanagement, repeated delays to elections and increasingly erratic behaviour prompted his removal in another, bloodless, military *coup* in September 2003. The coalition government of Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior, formed after parliamentary elections in March 2004, continues to cooperate with Senegal over cross-border security issues, including cattle-rustling by elements from Guinea-Bissau – a particular problem in Kolda region. It should also take seriously the issue of the many *maquisards* still on its territory. The *Front Sud* showed that it was prepared to intervene in the country's internal disputes in the 1998–9 civil war, and in February 2004 *maquisards* near the Casamance border ambushed Bissau-Guinean soldiers, leaving four dead and 14 wounded, in the most serious fighting between the two forces since 2001.

However, the new government in Guinea-Bissau has very limited means to police the country's northern border as it tries to restore relations with donors and rebuild the crippled economy, and political instability remains an evident danger. During summer 2004 the UN warned of the country's volatility and of the need to reduce tensions ahead of presidential elections scheduled for March 2005. Such concerns were justified in early October when some 600 Bissau-Guinean soldiers mutinied, complaining of pay arrears related to their recently completed tour of duty in Liberia, poor living conditions in barracks and corruption among senior officers. The mutineers killed the Chief of Staff, General Verissimo Correia Seabra, and the military's head of human resources, Colonel Domingos de Barros. Seabra had recently been a force for stability: it was he who deposed Yala but he quickly appointed the civilian transitional government that paved the way for the March 2004 elections.

Although the crisis was subsequently resolved, the potential for further unrest in Guinea-Bissau remains very real, raising uncertainties in the Casamance peace process. In this respect it is notable that, among two Senegalese government representatives on the first ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

crisis mission sent to Guinea-Bissau to help address the mutiny, one was General Fall, Wade's chief mediator in the Casamance.

Outside of Guinea-Bissau, *Front Sud* hardliners have since 1997 controlled the northeast of Bignona department around Djibidione and adjacent areas of Sédhiou department. Under the command of Vieux Faye Sambou, they have been joined by Ousmane Goudiaby and other *Front Nord* dissidents, and in 2001 Sadio faction members displaced from Guinea-Bissau augmented this group. Sadio himself is now based in the area, although given his poor state of health – possibly with gangrene resulting from his combat injuries – his power is unclear. Again there seems to be factionalism within the Djibidione group and the activities of certain elements prompted the 2001 Senegalese army offensive in the area, followed by another in May–June 2002. But with the more recent calm, better relations have developed: in 2003 the army was able to access the area peaceably, escorting youth volunteer teams undertaking house reconstruction under a government project.

The *maquisards*

The following account of the composition of the *maquis* is drawn from fieldwork cross-referenced with other academic and media sources but, as with the sociological base of most insurgencies, information is understandably limited.

Size

In terms of size, the estimates available are usually for membership of the whole MFDC. Given that it does not function as a broad-based political movement, these numbers should mostly represent *maquisards* although in neighbouring countries the blurring between combatants and refugees creates a further problem with such estimates. Whatever the true figure, the *maquis* seems to have been considerably larger in the past. Estimates of current strength start at a few hundred men but gravitate more plausibly around 2,000–4,000. One source puts some 2,000 members in Guinea-Bissau and 1,000 on both sides of the Gambian border; there is another estimate of 750 specifically for the Sadio faction.

However, logistical and financial constraints mean that not all *maquisards* are mobilized simultaneously; one informant claimed that only about one-third of any unit's members is on base at any given time. When not on active service, *maquisards* often undertake other economic activities, either in Casamance towns and villages or in settlements hosting refugees in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia.

Demography

The demography of the *maquis* reflects the length of the conflict. Most current and former *maquisards* interviewed during fieldwork or in the press are in their 30s and 40s, occasionally older, which is consistent

with the known recruitment, voluntary or coercive, of considerable numbers of young men during the 1980s and early 1990s. Some leaders are older, now in their 50s and 60s; Sidy Badji was 88 when he died.

Those joining voluntarily did so for a variety of reasons, among which ideological conviction coupled with Senegalese army persecution of family members or attacks on home villages are most commonly cited: 'To defend the colours of my nation and my kin', as one *maquisard* put it. Some degree of indoctrination occurred. According to one former *maquisard*, in the early days of the rebellion senior activists (including Sagna) held 'awareness meetings' where they explained the reasons for claiming independence, especially those rooted in the MFDC version of colonial history: 'They made us understand that we weren't the same [as the rest of Senegal] because we had our autonomy'. Perceived discrimination against them by *nordistes*, persuasion by friends already in the *maquis*, or even alienation from their communities for reasons unrelated to the conflict also figure in the reasons for enlistment given by *maquisards*. This first generation originated in various urban and rural milieux, and seems generally literate (in French).

Insofar as it is possible to distinguish, there is also a second generation, under 30 years old. They may now form the majority of the *maquis* and, although older ones generally remain in command, this has implications for military capability. The more rural elements of this group, at least, may be illiterate. This second generation mostly comprises the sons of first-generation *maquisards*, born or at least raised on bases and in associated villages in the Casamance or in 'refugee' settlements in neighbouring countries; for example, some interviewees fled as children with their parents to Guinea-Bissau in the early 1990s. Other youngsters may, again, have been drawn into the *maquis* later through familial ties or army oppression in their villages. More complex accounts were heard: an elderly lady explained how one of her sons went into the *maquis* (and is still there) to take his father's place when the latter was imprisoned by the Senegalese authorities; another, older son, now back at home, went into the army, although he served in Dakar rather than the Casamance.

Under-age combatants

There is no evidence of impressment of child fighters of the kind witnessed in Sierra Leone and Uganda, and the MFDC was probably sincere in its denial, through a spokesman in The Gambia in April 2004, that this occurs. However, there are accounts of child *maquisards*, albeit not as frontline combatants: a reliable eyewitness in Bissau during the 1998–9 civil war said that among the *Front Sud* contingent bolstering Mané's forces were a number of young teenagers, 13–15 years old, who carried out support operations such as transporting munitions. Worryingly, such under-age combatants do not figure in the reports of relevant international agencies.¹¹

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of *maquisards* is a thorny issue, embedded in the politics of war. All interviews, published research and press coverage indicate that the *maquis*, like the MFDC political wing, is overwhelmingly Diola in composition, although this is not to deny that members of other ethnic groups are involved. Also, various non-Diola opportunists use the rebellion as a cover for banditry, acting particularly out of Guinea-Bissau. The *nordiste*-dominated Senegalese government initially denounced the rebellion as '*une affaire diola*' and in the past, government forces in the Casamance have harassed, arrested and attacked individuals and communities on the basis of their Diola ethnicity alone. The MFDC, meanwhile, generally pursues a nationalist discourse, claiming to represent all ethnic groups present in the Casamance and denying any Diola bias, although some *maquisards* have targeted non-Diola for attack. The ethnic picture is further complicated by the selective deployment of ethnic arguments by both sides and some circularity between the state's presumption of Diola agency in the rebellion, state repression, and the strengthening of Diola identity.

Nationality

Nationality is a similarly sensitive question. Any claims that there are Gambian and Bissau-Guinean *maquisards* as well as Senegalese must be seen in the context of porous borders, the typically transnational nature of Diola communities, and indistinct boundaries between *maquisards* and Casamance refugees. A number of former and current *maquisards* described themselves as 'refugees', while two refugee settlements visited in Guinea-Bissau consisted in considerable part of families of the *maquis*. Such blurring comes from the human displacement history of the conflict. Those fleeing Senegalese army persecution may have been rebels, innocent victims or radicalized by their experience, as one testimony indicated: 'We went as refugees, but because we grew up in those circumstances [in Guinea-Bissau], we became *maquisards*.' Improving security conditions in recent years have allowed greater freedom of movement for members of such communities. A Casamance refugee in Guinea-Bissau may now hold a Senegalese identity card, a UNHCR-endorsed refugee card and, in some cases, a Bissau-Guinean identity card as well; each is used as appropriate to the particular authority demanding the individual's identification.

In The Gambia there are no *maquis* rear bases but, as in Guinea-Bissau, there are links and blurring between rebels, refugees and local Diola communities. As noted, the refugee situation there is more dynamic, with movements following well-established cross-border channels. The fluidity of nationality status across this border was well illustrated in 2001 when many Casamance Diola – estimated by some to be in the tens of thousands – were registered as Gambian voters in the election that kept the country's Diola president, Yahya Jammeh, in power.

The presence in the *maquis* of mercenaries from other countries, including Sierra Leone and Liberia, has

been rumoured but there is little hard evidence for it. The converse is more probable, namely that Casamance *maquisards* have fought in Liberian and Sierra Leonean insurgencies, particularly given past and present arms trading between the *maquis* and Liberian groups.

Religion

Religious aspects of the conflict have been exaggerated.¹² The composition of the *maquis* reflects the Casamance's mixed Muslim, Catholic and animist population, combined in individual units – a demonstration of the religious tolerance characteristic of Senegal. Religious divisions seem only rarely to surface and then play a role in more multifaceted factionalism. Some observers characterize the Sagna/Sadio split in ethno-religious terms, claiming that it is a manifestation of differences between the Kasa Diola subgroup (Sagna), from Oussouye department, and the Fogny (Sadio), from Bignona department, which have a religious dimension of predominantly Christian or animist versus predominantly Muslim respectively. However, the split also concerns different negotiating positions in the conflict and men interviewed from the Sagna (now Badiate) group came from various parts of Ziguinchor region, north and south of the Casamance River. This example illustrates how, in the political mire of the conflict, cultural polarities may be misleading and actually proxies for other divisions.

Arms

At first armed only with hand weapons (including bows and arrows and spears) and hunting rifles, the *maquis* has obtained more modern arms through various means. It inherited some arms caches left in the Casamance rear bases of the PAIGC (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*), abandoned after the latter had won its war of liberation against Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau in 1974. Regarding external arms supply, early requests by Sidy Badji to Presidents Fidel Castro of Cuba and Dawda Jawara of The Gambia were unsuccessful. However, arms did come to the *maquis* from Libya and Iraq via Mauritania and The Gambia. In 1989 the conflict between Senegal and Mauritania prompted arms-trafficking by elements in the latter, although it is unclear whether this was government-sponsored or just undertaken by traders with personal grudges against the Senegalese. The *maquis* obtained some 50 automatic rifles through this channel, facilitating the initiation of its armed campaign in 1990. Arms have also sometimes been seized from Senegalese forces in successful attacks.

Historically, however, the most important arms supplier to the *maquis* has been the Bissau-Guinean military, elements of which have been sympathetic to the MFDC, particularly through cross-border kin and ethnic ties, and which has more generally suffered from unreliable salary payments. In the past, at least, those

soldiers wanting to sell and even hire out arms held markets in certain Bissau-Guinean towns close to the Casamance border, such as Ingoré, which *maquisards* would attend. With limited cash, *maquisards* would sometimes barter cashews, cannabis or stolen cattle or cars for arms, although anti-personnel mines could be had for as little as 1,500 francs CFA each and anti-vehicle mines for 2,500 francs CFA.¹³

Another important strand of supply was that, in return for *Front Sud* military support in the 1998–9 civil war, Mané's forces allowed the *maquisards* to keep some weapons captured from Vieira loyalists. These went mainly to Sadio's men, greatly boosting their arsenal – possibly because Mané trusted them more than the moderate Sagna faction. Members of the latter (now Badiate) faction interviewed thus felt betrayed, claiming that they had not benefited from their support for Mané.

Maquis elements from north of the Casamance River are said to exchange cannabis for arms in The Gambia, although there is no firm evidence for this. President Jammeh himself has been accused of supplying weapons to *maquisards*. His relationships with them present a mixed picture, with his home village and much-used presidential retreat of Kanilaye less than 2km from the border with the Casamance – specifically the Djibidione area, a stronghold of *Front Sud* hardliners. Some claim that *maquisards* have, at least in the past, formed his praetorian guard at Kanilaye, although in May 2003 over 700 Casamance refugees were expelled from there on a flimsy official pretext. Jammeh was also a close friend of Mané, a Gambian Mandingo by birth who in turn supplied *Front Sud* elements.

However, in recent years the Gambian government has tried to dissociate itself from any illicit links with the Casamance rebellion and has generally become increasingly cooperative with the Senegalese government in this respect. Any former or current arms supply across the Casamance's northern border now seems to be coming back to haunt The Gambia, with small arms apparently from the Casamance increasingly used in Gambian crime.

The weaponry used by the *maquis* reflects the sources described. It is mostly of Soviet/Russian manufacture or variants thereof made by other countries. The *maquis* largely uses AK-47 (Kalashnikov) assault rifles and RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, both staples of insurgencies worldwide. Acquisitions by the Sadio faction during the Bissau-Guinean civil war included 82mm mortars, B-10 82mm recoil-less guns and DShK-38 12.7mm heavy machine guns. However, there are few recorded instances of these heavier weapons being used, possibly because they were being stored against future need or because the *maquisards* lacked the necessary technical competence. They were, in any case, relieved of this arsenal by Tagmé Na Way's 2000–01 offensive; Sadio demanded its restitution in writing but the Colonel refused on the basis that the weapons had been given to the *maquis* without authorization (Mané was dead by this time), and so still belonged to the Bissau-

Guinean army.

Supplies from Guinea-Bissau have also included Russian, Chinese and European landmines. Recorded types include the Belgian PRB M-35 (anti-personnel), the Spanish Expal C3A and the Russian TM-46 (both anti-vehicle).¹⁴ In a declaration following peace talks in Banjul in December 1999, both the MFDC and Senegalese government committed themselves to stop using landmines, but more recent constraints on Bissau-Guinean supply have had greater effect, considerably reducing minelaying in the Casamance since early 2001.

However, landmines already laid remain a scourge that continues to generate casualties among Senegalese soldiers and civilians. As indications of the large numbers seeded, between October 1995 and May 1998 the Senegalese army dealt with 845 anti-vehicle mines and 2,053 anti-personnel mines, while a total of 1,150 mines has so far been recorded in the de-mining campaign that began in September 2003. Furthermore, while the hardening of the Bissau-Guinean position against the supply of arms to the *Front Sud* has clearly been positive for the Casamance, such supply has not stopped completely.

Neither should the problem of wider subregional arms flows be underestimated. There is a buoyant arms market in West Africa, where an estimated eight million illegal small arms and light weapons are in circulation, originating mostly in the former Eastern Bloc, particularly Bulgaria and the Ukraine. Arms-trafficking into and between conflict zones in the sub-region is facilitated by porous borders and coastlines, which are inadequately policed because of states' limited resources (including their inability to pay their armed forces) and corruption. In 2000 President Wade publicly identified Libya, Ukraine, Russia and China as arms suppliers to the *maquis*, but the MFDC credibly riposted that direct supply from foreign states was unnecessary given the subregional free market. The details of how this illicit market functions in the Casamance are difficult to determine, but insurgents in both Sierra Leone and Liberia have trafficked arms to the *maquis*. During the Liberian civil war, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia supplied weapons to the *maquis* in return for Casamance cannabis.¹⁵

With the demise of Guinea-Bissau as a supplier, such sources may now be relatively more important to the *maquis*, particularly as restoration of relative calm in Liberia has left an arms surplus there. Members of the Badiate faction insisted that they no longer receive any arms through Guinea-Bissau or The Gambia. Instead, they claimed, they send members to Liberia, travelling along the coast by *pirogue* (traditional fishing boat) and bringing back arms by the same route, landing them on the coast near Varela. Such purchases again include AK-47s and RPG-7s, and bazookas of an unspecified type. The *maquisards* quoted a price of 150,000 francs CFA for an AK-47 in Liberia, cheaper than the 200,000–250,000 francs CFA that they would pay elsewhere. Such a route would be consonant with known and established trafficking networks, for hard

drugs particularly, that use fishing boats along the whole Guinea Coast from Senegal to Nigeria.

Recently there also seems to have been an influx of weapons to the Casamance from Guinea-Conakry. Such trafficking could pass overland or, given that the long *pirogue* trip to Liberia requires stopovers along the Guinea-Conakry coast, via the maritime route. Arms are known to cross Senegal's other land borders (with Mauritania and Mali) and there are trafficking centres elsewhere in the country, including Dakar (where arms enter through the port) and the holy city of Touba (where state authority is limited and where local weapons production is also active). It is unclear what connections, if any, these other markets may have with the Casamance.

For the *maquis*, then, rogue elements in neighbouring and distant countries have more generally supplied arms than official state sponsors. Such arms are mostly second-hand, and short-term economic gain rather than geopolitics is the main motivation for such trafficking. Guinea-Bissau's importance as a source may have diminished since 2000 but in the absence of any disarmament programme in the Casamance, all *maquis* factions remain in possession of their arms and other suppliers are not lacking.

Military capability

The military capability of the *maquis* is illustrated in a history of operations ranging from successful military strikes to shameful atrocities and banditry. Earlier *maquis* recruits, in the 1980s and early 1990s, received rigorous training from former servicemen, some of whom had been French colonial troops with combat experience in Indochina, Algeria or the liberation of Europe. Sidy Badji had been a corporal in a French infantry regiment, Léopold Sagna a corporal in the Senegalese army. One *maquisard* spoke of Badji's exhausting training regime, from 5 am to 11 pm every day over several weeks, with instruction given in weaponry, mechanics and tactics. Another source close to the *maquis* claimed that some *maquisards* were trained at Libya's infamous Mataba military base, but this could not be confirmed.

In the 1990s this training occasionally showed. The *maquis* killed 23 Senegalese soldiers at Babonda, very near the Guinea-Bissau border, after capturing them in an ambush in July 1995. Two years later, in August 1997, the Senegalese army's biggest single loss in the whole Casamance conflict occurred at Mandina Mancagne, just southeast of Ziguinchor, where 25 soldiers were killed in an ambush.

More invidious attacks have occurred against civilians.¹⁶ On the night of 9 September 1997 some 20 *maquisards* burst into a dance at Djibanar, south of the Casamance River in Sédhiou department, reproaching the youths there for partying while the *maquis* was fighting for independence. They then fired into the crowd, killing nine – four of them only seven years old – and injuring 15 others; the victims were mostly Diola,

but the village had declared itself opposed to the rebellion.

Non-Diola have on occasion been targeted in more deliberate 'ethnic cleansing'. In October 1992 dozens of immigrant (*nordiste* and foreign) fishermen were killed by the *maquis* at Cap Skirring and Pointe St-Georges. More recently 13 civilian travellers were massacred at Niahoump on the trans-Gambian highway on 16 February 2001, closely followed by seven more under similar circumstances at Bélaye on the Bignona–Diouloulou road on 2 March 2001. Both incidents were armed hold-ups of vehicles, with Wolof separated from other travellers on the basis of their identity cards, then executed. These atrocities were finally attributed to Ousmane Goudiaby and elements of the Djibidione group; they were not committed, as originally believed, by Sadio and his men. This seems true to character: sources close to the *Front Sud* maintain that Sadio is calm and not as violent as the Senegalese authorities and press maintain, an assertion that is supported by the tone of measured affront in Sadio's businesslike report on the Bissau-Guinean attack on his positions in December 2000.¹⁷

Apart from such major events, much *maquis* violence in recent years has consisted (militarily) of hit-and-run attacks on Senegalese forces and (economically) of armed robberies of shops and vehicles, sometimes in combination. Such haphazard or opportunistic operations again indicate lack of command and coordination in the fragmented *maquis*, and they are perpetrated in spite of ceasefires or interdicts from the political wing or senior commanders.

Newer recruits, it seems, receive little training: as one former *maquisard* complained, 'Now they only get shown a rifle and how to use it for a couple of hours.' Another source, present in Bissau at the time of the civil war there, asked one of Mané's commanders how much help the *maquisards* were: tellingly, he replied that they were 'useless – they're here to learn'. Mané's officers had considerable military expertise, many of them from fighting the forces of a NATO country in Guinea-Bissau's war of liberation. Conversely, a young Bissau-Guinean combatant who also fought on Mané's side said in interview that the *maquis* contingent at least brought useful experience of fighting the Senegalese army. But the splintering of the *Front Sud* in Guinea-Bissau and the routing of some of Sadio's bases there has clearly weakened it in terms of weaponry, command, organization and communications.

However limited their military ability, a relatively small number of guerrillas with automatic weapons can still generate a climate of terror. The 'ethnic cleansing' attacks of 2001, coupled with frequent breakdowns of the *Joola* ferry around that time, seriously impeded the transport of Casamance produce to market, causing considerable hardship in some rural areas. Despite the current calm, attacks in 2004 on military targets have undermined the projected return of civilians to parts of the Guinea-Bissau border zone, and in April the robbery of cashew-harvesters

prompted some drivers to refuse to carry materials there for a local NGO organizing house reconstruction. Even occasional attacks by *maquisards* can succeed, then, in creating a disproportionate sense of insecurity, inhibiting access, trade, return and reconstruction in certain areas.

Finances and livelihoods¹⁸

In the early days of the rebellion, the MFDC benefited from much more widespread and organized (though still covert) popular support than it has today. This took the form of subscriptions, either in cash, with many locals buying MFDC membership cards for 1,000 francs CFA, or in kind, usually rice. These were channelled through local support committees, which also organized fundraising events such as dances, all to support political activism or feed activists in hiding. However, sustained government repression, particularly the numerous arrests of MFDC activists and suspected supporters in the mid- to late 1980s, put paid to such funding, and with militarization of the conflict the *maquis* had to seek revenues elsewhere.

The Casamance possesses no high-value mineral resources so, unlike the 'diamond insurgencies' of Sierra Leone, Angola and the DRC, the *maquis* has had to make do with low-value, high-volume natural resources, products of the Casamance's wetter climate. All such economic activity has built on and interacted with the pre-existing production base and trade routes in the Casamance and across its international borders, making it difficult to identify the extent of the 'war economy' within these wider structures.

However, more illicit activities have particularly benefited from insecurity and the near-absence of state authority in certain areas in both the Casamance and border zones in neighbouring countries. The products involved include timber,¹⁹ cashews and cannabis, all of which the *maquis* exploits in association with certain local civilians and actors in neighbouring countries.²⁰

The *Front Nord*, particularly, benefits from cutting timber in its zone and exporting it to The Gambia along with firewood and charcoal. The *Front Sud* exploits the rich cashew orchards of the considerable abandoned area of the Guinea-Bissau border zone. Cannabis (*yamba*) is another long-established crop: it is grown elsewhere in Senegal but the Casamance climate is more favourable and it is cultivated particularly in the Karone Isles in the west of Bignona department. As well as supplying local users, it is exported to The Gambia and urban northern Senegal. Members of all *maquis* factions cultivate, traffic and use cannabis,²¹ although its contribution to their 'war economy' has probably been overstated by some observers. Cannabis may be more important for the *Front Nord*, which has some control over its trafficking to The Gambia and also 'taxes' other contraband flows across the border where it can (typically Casamance primary produce goes in one direction, and manufactured goods that can be obtained more

cheaply in Gambian markets in the other).

Members of the *Front Sud*, at least, shoot game in abandoned areas, using the bushmeat gained as a source of food or revenue. Two former *maquisards* interviewed said that on their bases during calm periods, they used to make bags, purses and shoes from doeskin, for sale via intermediaries at Ziguinchor's tourist market.

Revenues are obtained by more brutal means including exactions and armed robberies in the Casamance, in spite of Abbé Diamacoune's interdicts on such activity. Cattle-rustling is also important, particularly for *Front Sud* elements based in Guinea-Bissau. Stolen Casamance cattle and cars are sold or traded through established channels in Guinea-Bissau although *maquisards* are not alone in conducting such cross-border theft. Economic violence of all kinds is perpetrated by other elements from within the Casamance or across both its northern and southern borders: professional or opportunistic bandits, former *maquisards* and Bissau-Guinean soldiers are probably all involved to varying degrees, some taking advantage of increased small arms availability because of the conflict. It is thus often difficult to distinguish between *maquis* economic violence and general banditry, and both add to the sense of insecurity.

Funding sources important to other African insurgencies, for example LURD and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, have been diaspora members living in the West. A number of prominent MFDC activists, the 'exterior wing', live in Europe²² and have over the years produced pro-rebellion propaganda through newsletters and websites. However, there is no evidence of organized funding of the *maquis* from members of the Casamance diaspora in the West, although person-to-person remittances by family members – a significant form of livelihood support for many ordinary Casamançais – are of course possible.

Humanitarian aid flows have also supported insurgencies elsewhere in Africa. Under President Diouf, certain agencies in the Casamance supplied food directly to *maquisards* with official support during ceasefire periods, to ensure that they were not forced into banditry by hunger and as an act of goodwill, all to facilitate dialogue. Wade has largely stopped such practices, although ten tonnes of foodstuffs were given to the *Front Nord* in November 2000 and smaller instances of supply to the *maquis* continue. With the current calm, incentives have shifted more towards demobilization.

Relief aid for civilians has also reached the *maquis* but via indirect and unintentional routes. Food given to refugees in both Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia has supported *maquisards* there to a limited extent, while that given to rural populations *in situ* in the Casamance has sometimes made an attractive target for armed robbery by *maquis* or criminal elements. But by whatever channel, such food supplies to the *maquis* have been sporadic and small-scale. Food aid has thus not become a significant conflict good in the Casamance 'war economy', neither has a black market in such aid arisen, in contrast to parts of the Horn of

Africa.

Much more important for the livelihoods of *maquisards* is their 'social capital' in the Casamance and neighbouring countries. A number of interviewees spoke of the *maquis* as a 'family', and both literally and metaphorically it functions as such on a socio-economic level. In a peripheral suburb of Ziguinchor, a support network for *maquisards* of the 'fourth company' of the *Front Sud* was investigated. It provides financial support and health care for *maquisards* coming in from the bush, but those seeking help have their *maquis* credentials checked thoroughly by questioning as impostors have also sought support, either for material ends or as informants for the authorities.

In neighbouring countries, similar relationships between *maquisards* and refugee families or wider kin networks are of mutual economic importance. Members of one refugee community visited near São Domingos were supplied with oranges and doe meat, from abandoned border areas of the Casamance, by their sons and brothers in the *Front Sud*. These *maquisards* also helped their refugee kin in agricultural and construction activities, and used family members as intermediaries to sell their cashews. Near Varela, mutual support was again evident, with members of the *maquisard/refugee* community diversely engaged in fishing, growing orchard crops, rice and millet cultivation, and work in the small tourist sector, as well as cannabis cultivation and trafficking. Both these communities visited in Guinea-Bissau undertake a similar range of activities there as they would in the Casamance, but compared with autochthones, refugees are generally disadvantaged in terms of access to land and security of tenure.

Overall, life in the *maquis* is harsh, although with the current calm *maquisards* now have better access to their homes, families and more normal means of livelihood, albeit within considerable economic constraints. Health care remains a significant problem. One former *maquisard* explained how, because he had received Red Cross training at school, he and another refugee (a healthcare professional) provided medical care to injured *maquisards* or the many cases of malaria in Guinea-Bissau, to where he had been displaced with his family. Medicines have, like food aid, been officially supplied to the *maquis*. Sadio formerly sent lists of medicinal requirements to agencies in Ziguinchor at the start of the wet season; these included antibiotics, antimalarials, vermifuges and rehydration salts, indicative of poor living conditions in the bush. Such a request was met, with government permission, on one occasion at least, but again such policy has changed under Wade.

Now, as security improves and abandoned areas are reclaimed by their rightful inhabitants, different dynamics are taking over from this 'war economy'. There is increasing contest for control of aid flowing into the region in support of peace and development, with various political, civil society and MFDC actors vying to secure benefits. While some people may have gained part of their living from the 'war economy', no

one has got rich exploiting the low-value resources available. By comparison, the economic stakes in reconstruction and demobilization are relatively high. As one local NGO officer cynically put it, 'Being a *maquisard* has become a job – you just wait in the bush for your slice of the cake.' But whether a definitive peace is forthcoming or not, such benefits will be available for a limited period only, depending largely on donor agendas.

The current peace process

Since his accession to power, Wade's approach to the Casamance peace process has been characterized by attempts to negotiate more or less directly with the *maquis*, trying to bypass other intermediaries and sideline to some extent the MFDC political wing. His current initiative began in August 2002, through two key figures. General Abdoulaye Fall is Wade's mediator in the peace process; Fall in turn uses a civilian emissary as his more public face, namely Latif Aïdara, originally from Bignona and formerly a government technical advisor under Diouf. Fall sent audio- and videocassettes to the main *maquis* factions in which Wade appealed to the *maquisards* directly, addressing some MFDC demands. Wade said that he had ordered the army to stop seeking and harassing the *maquis* and, among other propositions, he offered an amnesty to *maquisards* if they laid down their arms. Some doubts were raised, however, as to whether the cassettes reached all their intended recipients. In another move, Wade invited certain MFDC figures who had taken refuge in neighbouring countries to meetings at the presidential palace in Dakar; they subsequently returned to their home villages with official support and some act as intermediaries with the *maquis*, for example in the Djibidione area.

Somewhat piecemeal efforts followed, necessitated by the fragmented nature of the *maquis*, but Fall and Aïdara have recently made better progress. At the village of Mongone in early September 2004, various *maquis* factions (though none of the key leaders) agreed to try to formulate a common position for direct negotiations with the Senegalese government to take place by the end of the year. A further advance in late September saw a historic encounter in the village of Bandjikaky, where a delegation consisting of Fall, other Senegalese army officers and Aïdara held preliminary talks with representatives of most factions. Both meetings took place in the *Front Nord* zone and Kamougué Diatta seems to have helped bring factions together. The Badiate faction was represented at Bandjikaky, and the Djibidione group is also engaged in the peace process, even if Sadio's men in Guinea-Bissau apparently are not.

Generally these moves have been favoured by changes in the Bissau-Guinean position *vis-à-vis* the *maquis*. The overall amelioration in the security situation observed from the late 1990s onwards has accelerated considerably since 2001. The current calm, while not total, is still the most prolonged, largely

peaceful period since 1990. Casamançais are thankful for this in itself and because it also allows large-scale return of the displaced, and much-needed reconstruction of houses, public buildings and transport and agricultural infrastructure. However, the situation is only provisional given that few *maquisards* have demobilized, no disarmament has taken place and violence still occasionally occurs. The peace process, while advancing on some fronts, remains troubled by ideological, political, economic and psychological issues, which are now addressed in turn.

Ideological factors

Despite the disintegration of the *maquis* into factionalism and banditry, the commitment of many of its members to the cause of independence remains considerable. Part of an interview with some Badiate *maquisards* illustrates this. They were asked if they intended to stay in the *maquis* in spite of the current demobilization initiative:

- A: 'Until the day after tomorrow – only death will make me leave without peace.' ...
- B: 'We didn't go into the *maquis* for "rehabilitation". We didn't go into the *maquis* for "projects". It was the idea of all of us, all combatants, from south to north [of the Casamance].' ...
- A: 'We went into the *maquis* for a good reason: total independence – life or death.'
- B: '[Independence] will come – the day we strike hard, it will come.'
- A: 'When the Kalash' talks, that day will come.'

It is hard to dismiss such rhetoric as mere posturing, a means by which the *maquis* hopes to get a better peace settlement with the Casamance still within Senegal. Some members of both main *Front Sud* factions apparently fear that they are being sold out after years in the bush fighting for independence, which the political wing has effectively renounced.

It is unknown to what extent those with such views are responsible for the very few acts of 'military' violence (rather than just armed robberies) that still continue. On 1 April 2004 three soldiers on de-mining operations near Guidel, near the Guinea-Bissau border and in the operational zone of the Sadio faction, were killed although the political wing denied MFDC responsibility. Subsequently, the claim of one of the above interviewees that his group would launch attacks during the 2004 wet season seems to have been realized, in a small way: on the night of 23–24 June, two rockets were fired at the military post at Djirack, a Casamance village just across the border from the Badiate stronghold.

On 29 July armed elements along the Kolda road east of Ziguinchor engaged in further clashes with Senegalese soldiers and banditry. The highway robbers entrusted one of their victims with an open letter restating their commitment to Casamance independence – an odd means of stating their case, but suggesting their alienation from current political

channels. The letter also rubbished the recent amnesty on the grounds that the rebels had no case to answer.

Political factors

Politically it has already been shown that, like many insurgencies (only perhaps more so), the MFDC suffers from an ill-defined organizational structure, confusion over demarcation of powers and bitter infighting. A major stumbling block in negotiations with the government has been the semi-independence of the *maquis* from the political wing.²³ This is a historical problem: in the 1980s, while Sidy Badji was organizing the *maquis*, Abbé Diamacoune and other MFDC political activists were in prison, only entering into negotiations when they were released in 1991. Harmonizing positions between (as well as within) the political and military wings has thus always been difficult. Whatever commitments the political wing has made on behalf of the *maquis*, there has been no or limited consultation with the *maquisards* and no means to ensure their compliance.

The current calm has made liaison and meetings easier, such as that on 18 October in Ziguinchor between Abbé Diamacoune and representatives of the Badiate faction. However, the more moderate line pursued in recent years by Abbé and his sometime replacement, Jean-Marie François Biagui,²⁴ has still not been fully matched by peace on the ground but has been frustrated by dissent within both the political and military wings and by certain *maquis* groups undertaking rogue attacks. *Maquisards* interviewed from both the Djibidione and Badiate groups claimed to recognize Abbé Diamacoune's authority, and other factions have done so publicly in recent years. But many are highly selective in this respect, for example paying little attention to Abbé Diamacoune's interdicts on robbery of Casamance civilians. In Guinea-Bissau, where ongoing harassment of Sadio's men by government forces and more moderate *maquis* elements reached another peak in bombardments on 16 October 2004, those on the receiving end of the attacks called on Abbé Diamacoune to intervene on their behalf. But tellingly, they argued that 'these bombardments ... risk striking a blow against the struggle for Casamance independence'.

In the current context, this recognition of Abbé Diamacoune by many *maquisards* may stem partly from a belief that he is still their best chance for a good economic settlement. However, he himself referred the author to his brother Bertrand regarding certain research questions on the grounds that the latter had much more political experience – a strange admission from someone who has effectively held the MFDC leadership for over a decade. It may be more that the ageing leader increasingly prefers to leave the endless, Byzantine manoeuvrings in the political wing to his younger brother, although Bertrand himself is quite elderly and seems increasingly tired.

Bertrand is also clearly mistrusted on the ground: a number of *maquisards* and local NGO workers interviewed regarded his agenda as predatory. Wade has largely excluded the political wing from the

benefits of the influx of donor funding in support of peace and Bertrand's actions can be read as attempts to gain control over such funds. The Badiate *maquisards* interviewed denounced him as 'a seeker of money – that's what we don't like, corruption, when we have gone to defend the colours of our nation'. This was borne out in an interview with Bertrand, who was dismissive of current return, reconstruction and demobilization projects on the grounds that the MFDC political wing was not involved. He saw this as a sign of the government's lack of sincerity in negotiations, given the political wing's (self-appointed) roles as the main channel through which peace can be achieved and as the popular representative of the interests of Casamançais – discourses that can be seen as either naïve or disingenuous, but that certainly bear little relationship to reality.

This lack of clear political leadership means that poorly formed and contradictory positions were evident among the *maquisards* interviewed, and attempts to unite all the different factions around a common negotiating position have thus far proved impossible. In recent years their differences have at times been addressed through violence, notably between the two main *Front Sud* factions in 2000–01 and in subsequent clashes; an attempt by Laurent Diamacoune (a nephew of Abbé Diamacoune) to unite them resulted in his execution by Sadio's men in December 2002. Just assembling faction representatives in one place has been deeply problematic. Concern for their own security, founded on historical distrust of Senegalese forces, means that many senior *maquisards* will not come (at least publicly) to Ziguinchor, despite the current calm. Even MFDC conferences hosted by the Gambian government in Banjul in June 1999 and August 2001 failed to bring all *maquis* factions together, with hardliners largely absent; Sadio attended the former conference, brought there by Mané, but did not take part in discussions.

Most recently, in May 2004, Abbé called 'all combatants who say they are under my authority' to convene for a conference at Ziguinchor's public stadium. In the event only a hundred or so old-timers of doubtful provenance turned up, probably some former *maquisards* and other MFDC sympathizers but no one of any significance. Many observers and the Badiate *maquisards* interviewed saw this farce as another attempt by Bertrand to bolster his position and attract donor funding. Surprisingly, however, the government granted at least one demand issued by the meeting, namely the removal of soldiers from the Bignona–Diouloulou road.

The many schisms in the *maquis* also make it difficult to identify credible interlocutors, even within a given faction. This is again evident in negotiations and was a problem in the research undertaken for this paper and by others: one is never quite sure to whom one is talking, what their role is in any command structure and whose views they represent. To gain money and/or kudos, some former *maquisards* falsely claim current importance when they speak with researchers, journalists or even government mediators,

while other former and current *maquisards* obscure their true involvement under a discourse of being 'refugees'. In the Djibidione area at least, those with whom Wade and his emissaries are dealing are only spokesmen who by their own admission have no real power to negotiate or make decisions on behalf of the *maquisards* behind them.

A further problem is the dispersal of the *maquis* across three countries, often in rural areas, creating communications problems. One 'relay agent' of the Badiate faction interviewed in Guinea-Bissau claimed to be unaware of Abbé Diamacoune's most recent convocation. Local NGOs working for peace also identified the problem of getting information to *maquisards* about demobilization programmes.

Problems come from other parties in negotiations too. On the government side, while Wade has called for MFDC unity to facilitate negotiations, successive Senegalese governments have tended to foment division by playing factions off against each other. The Wade government's direct contacts with *maquis* chiefs seem sometimes to have accentuated splits. In Guinea-Bissau, the splintering of the *Front Sud* and the death of Ansumane Mané have also made negotiations with *maquisards* there more difficult, while in March 2004 Aidara fell foul of the authorities for entering the country and meeting the *maquis* there without informing them.

Furthermore, Fall and Aidara initially had to work through others in the field to facilitate contacts with the *maquis*, including politicians and civil society actors as well as *maquis* spokesmen. As a result the situation at times resembled that which Wade expressly set out to dismantle when he came to power, namely layers of intermediaries on both sides. This may have hindered the peace process through uncoordinated action or because certain intermediaries seek their own advancement by claiming privileged access to the *maquis*. However, the situation seems more recently to have rationalized itself, as exemplified by Fall and Aidara attending the Bandjiky meeting; in fairness, the former, more indirect contacts were probably necessary means of building up trust.

Economic factors

Economic dimensions of the peace process are no less problematic. While any material vested interests in conflict appear low, different *maquis* factions vary in their willingness to concede political demands for economic benefits, namely development funding for themselves and the region. In apparent contradiction of their respective labels as 'hardliners' and 'moderates', members of the Djibidione group interviewed seemed prepared to accept such a trade-off while Badiate *maquisards* were not, as illustrated above.

More widely, after up to two decades in the bush, *maquis* habits of livelihoods often gained at society's expense – armed robbery, cattle-rustling, unsustainable timber extraction and drug-trafficking – may be hard to break, particularly among second-generation *maquisards*. In this respect and contrary to received

wisdom, the *Front Nord* may prove to be the most recalcitrant faction of all to demobilize and wean off its timber- and cannabis-trading.

Even those wishing to demobilize face financial obstacles, returning to communities immiserated partly by the conflict, and in their absence the land of some *maquisards* has been distributed to others. The possibilities for raising capital to start a new enterprise are very limited.

Psychological factors

Neither should psychosocial obstacles to peace be underestimated. Feelings of persecution inflicted on themselves, their families or communities in the 1980s and 1990s came through clearly in interviews with *maquisards*. Fear of Senegalese forces was also evident among some Casamance refugees interviewed in Guinea-Bissau and those forced to return after the expulsions of 2001, despite much-changed circumstances and indeed official support given to returnees. An added layer of hurt for some is a sense of betrayal by Guinea-Bissau, which had previously given them succour. This too has historical roots, in a perceived quid pro quo whereby Casamance support in Guinea-Bissau's war of liberation (the presence of PAIGC rear bases even prompted the Portuguese to bomb the Middle Casamance town of Sédhieu) should be reciprocated by Bissau-Guinean support for the Casamance's own independence struggle.

More individual obstacles include problems of reintegration with communities in which *maquisards* may have committed atrocities and thus risk reprisals on return. 'Forgiveness' is a theme of a number of culturally oriented (if largely ineffectual) projects aimed at promoting peace. One former *maquisard*, now an evangelical Christian, highlighted the need for 'emotional healing' among *maquisards* themselves. Certainly a number encountered seemed twisted and traumatized by their experience; some were heavy drinkers, and cannabis use in the *maquis* has already been noted, although such social problems occur in other sections of Diola society.

The commitment of *maquisards* to their unit and fear of being attacked or killed if they leave are also issues for them, although some individuals interviewed had had no problems in this respect. One had left after falling sick but continued to maintain strong links with the *maquis* through family members. Another was arrested and, despite wanting to return to the *maquis* after his release, his marabout advised him against it – a reason that his former comrades respected.

Prospects for demobilization

Such are some of the difficulties that demobilization projects try to address. In essence Wade has offered development funding in various forms to those *maquisards* who cooperate in the peace process. From August 2003 onwards a government scheme has sought to demobilize *maquisards*, including some from

Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia, using a local NGO as intermediary. Once they have returned, and with lodgings, food and health care provided, the FNPJ (*Fonds national pour la promotion de la jeunesse*) has financed training and start-up costs for small businesses organized as GIE (*groupements d'intérêt économique*) in which demobilized *maquisards* are integrated with other local young people. *Pirogues* and refrigerated lorries belonging to such GIE can be seen in Ziguinchor and elsewhere in the region. Other projects for which the necessary capital has been provided include shops, buses, chicken-rearing, millet mills and rice-husking machines, with ongoing interest-free credit and technical support.

However, there is concern for and among those rehabilitated that *maquisards* still active will harass or attack them or rob their new businesses. For this reason they were housed during training at a secure public building in Ziguinchor rather than with their families. In their new businesses, most preferred to go to parts of the region other than where they were known, sometimes for their past actions. Inevitably, different parties give different accounts of this project: the NGO involved claimed that some 40–50 *maquisards* have been demobilized so far; Badiate *maquisards* interviewed said only around ten; and Bertrand Diamacoune's views have already been recounted.

Reconstruction by youth volunteer teams is another government initiative, run by the Youth Ministry. In one village visited, near the Djibidione area, house reconstruction for a returning senior *maquisard* was at first blocked by the village chief because of the former's past crimes in the village including, according to one source, exactions and rape. The youth team leader eventually helped convince village elders to give the *maquisard* a second chance, but even then the returnee was himself reticent because of possible reprisals, returning only after some time and then not leaving his new house without a protective entourage. However, he now seems adequately reintegrated in the village and has no problems from the soldiers stationed there. Another senior *maquis* figure had his house rebuilt in a nearby village and was given a television and solar panels to power it.

In both cases, reconstruction was a 'reward' for their acting as intermediaries between the Djibidione *maquis* and President Wade. However, these intermediaries and associated *maquisards* interviewed claimed that the government was not fully delivering its side of the deal in providing livelihood support in the form of food and projects for them. They generally felt that Wade was acting in good faith but accused some of his agents of being inadequately supervised, making false promises, not acting in an even-handed way and possibly siphoning off funds. But while the interviewees were clear about their material wants, they were less precise about how peace would be delivered from the *maquis* side, with disarmament seen as a lower priority than the return of refugees from The Gambia and development of the area.

It is worth adding that the house reconstruction scheme has recently been criticized by certain former

volunteers who claim to have expected greater rewards (i.e. a job) afterwards, although the government has legitimately stressed that it was a purely voluntary programme. Government micro-credit schemes for young Casamançais are also running into problems of non-repayment by beneficiaries.

Wade's recent claim that the Casamance is on a one-way track to peace 'despite the exactions of a handful of bandits' and 'desperados'²⁵ is thus questionable. His insistence that 'nothing, but nothing, will turn us from our route towards definitive peace' is laudable but recent robberies and attacks, apparently by *Front Sud* members, show that there are *maquis* elements who are not engaged in the peace process. Large-scale reconstruction coupled with demobilization and rehabilitation of willing *maquisards* alone cannot obviate a definitive settlement encompassing all *maquis* groups.

Furthermore, the lessons of demobilization and rehabilitation without disarmament seem not to have been learned from the debacle of *Front Nord* 'pacification'. Following its 'retirement' from active combat in 1992, the *Front Nord* was rewarded with development projects, supported by the government and donors, including bakeries and fishing. But when these enterprises were unsuccessful, the *maquisards* continued and expanded their illegal and predatory activities, and in 2001 showed that their 'pacification' means little if their territorial control is threatened.

Indeed, some feel that Wade is giving away too much too soon in his drive to achieve peace. On 6 July 2004 the Senegalese National Assembly voted an amnesty for any act committed under the rebellion between 1 June 1991 and that date. Human rights observers expressed concern that this risks promoting impunity, while some Casamançais felt that the government should not have granted the amnesty without first obtaining a definitive peace settlement from a unified MFDC (if that were possible). The definition of exactly what crimes can be absolved also seems problematic. Some MFDC elements, meanwhile, felt predictably insulted when the amnesty was mooted and when it was enacted, following their habitual discourse that they had done nothing wrong but simply acted to defend their 'nation'.

Overall, then, the prospects for demobilization are unclear but there are some grounds for optimism in spite of the difficulties and hardline rhetoric observed. The number of former *maquisards* encountered in the course of this research points to substantial and unrecorded voluntary demobilization over time. The rotation of *maquisards* between bases and their home communities, where they may undertake 'normal' activities, could augur well for demobilization insofar as they are not completely alienated from civilian life. Some former *maquisards* even run rural development projects: one heads his own NGO while another is an organizer at village level.

With continuing favourable circumstances in Guinea-Bissau, it is possible that many more *maquisards* there could be brought back, along with their refugee families. However long-settled, many of

them are still disadvantaged by being foreigners. Lack of security of residence was recognized by members of such communities: in both Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia there is the ever-present risk of removal by fickle states and their security forces, as events in recent years have shown. They may still fear Senegalese forces but if that can be overcome, they would at least have the advantage of returning to their homeland. *Maquisards* of the *Front Nord* and Djibidione group may present a greater challenge in these terms, given that many are already on their home territory and indeed have considerable control over parts of it.

Political, geopolitical and economic stakes

The stakes in the Casamance conflict – what the *maquis* actually hopes to gain – merit examination. Objectively, independence is out of the question: of course, no Senegalese government during the conflict has ever been prepared even to consider it and Wade has also dismissed any notion of a ‘special statute’ (i.e. some degree of autonomy) for the Casamance. The weak divided leadership of the political wing, disconnected from a *maquis* that is itself factionalized and lacking adequate resources, plus the lack of popular support from the long-suffering Casamançais, all mean that no significant challenge can be made by the MFDC in this respect. Indeed, the conflict presents little real threat to the Senegalese state or, despite its ethnic dimension, to Senegalese pluralism.

Arguably more important are the challenges that the conflict poses to a country that sees itself as a model African democracy with a well-developed civil society and ostensibly free press. The behaviour of Senegalese forces has greatly improved but Wade’s desire to manage the Casamance dossier with minimum internal and foreign interference has prompted some curiously illiberal actions. Journalists have continued to be arrested (as they were under Diouf) or expelled for legitimate coverage of the conflict, but it is unclear what purpose this serves given the lack of domestic threat.

It is perhaps Wade’s credibility at international level, as a self-styled pan-African statesman and one of the principal architects of NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa’s Development), that is more undermined by having a conflict still rumbling on at home. For instance in a press interview in April 2004 Madame Simone Gbagbo, wife of Côte d’Ivoire’s president, acerbically remarked that Wade should settle the Casamance conflict before trying to intervene in her country’s problems.

In its more immediate neighbourhood, the Casamance problem is more than a civil conflict but, rather, a transnational affair, despite both national and international attempts to present it otherwise. Probably recognizing the considerable sensitivities around the issue, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for West Africa, Ahmédou Ould-

Abdallah, finessed the Casamance problem in April 2004 as ‘an internal conflict different from classic African conflicts’. But the *maquis* has used neighbouring countries for military and economic purposes, and as a result insecurity has spilled over their borders too. The Casamance conflict helped precipitate the Bissau-Guinean civil war, and armed banditry has spread into The Gambia as well as eastwards into areas of Kolda region previously untouched by the conflict. Links have formed with armed groups in Liberia and possibly Guinea-Conakry also. Continuation of the Casamance conflict can thus only help perpetuate instability in the subregion and the geopolitical prospects are by no means clear. Guinea-Bissau’s situation is still precarious; history suggests that political and economic stability there are prerequisites for durable peace in the Casamance. In The Gambia, Jammeh’s actions *vis-à-vis* the Casamance remain hard to predict.

Economically, no serious case can be made that either side in the conflict has been fighting for control of the Casamance’s low-value natural resources although displacement of civilian populations from and subsequent local clashes over cashew-rich areas, in particular, have occurred. The Casamance’s mineral wealth comprises the unexploited Dôme Flore offshore oilfield on the Senegal/Guinea-Bissau maritime boundary. Discovered in the 1960s and containing up to one billion barrels of heavy crude, it has yet to be developed for reasons of economic viability. But oil reserves along the western coast of Africa are of increasing interest to the US, given its geostrategic aim to source some 25% of its oil imports in Africa by 2015, compared with 15% currently, thereby reducing dependence on the troublesome Middle East.²⁶ Offshore oil exploration is proceeding in countries adjacent to Senegal, including Guinea-Bissau, and there is continuing commercial interest in exploration of the Dôme Flore. Originally the subject of geopolitical dispute, it is now managed jointly by Senegal and Guinea-Bissau through the AGC (*Agence de Gestion et de Coopération entre la Guinée-Bissau et le Sénégal*), based in Dakar. Senegal holds the majority share, 80%, in any future benefits, and Guinea-Bissau 20%. MFDC discourse predictably maintains that lack of development of the Dôme Flore has been yet another means by which Senegal has sought to subjugate the Casamance. However, this belies commercial realities, and adequate security would seem to be another prerequisite for any possible benefits to flow to the Casamance in the future.

Conclusion

Rather than present the Casamance conflict as something ‘different’, it should be honestly addressed for what it is: a transnational conflict that has many similarities with situations elsewhere in Africa. It shows that Senegal suffers the same problems as a number of its neighbours, albeit less seriously: troubled relations between centre and regions, and governance problems

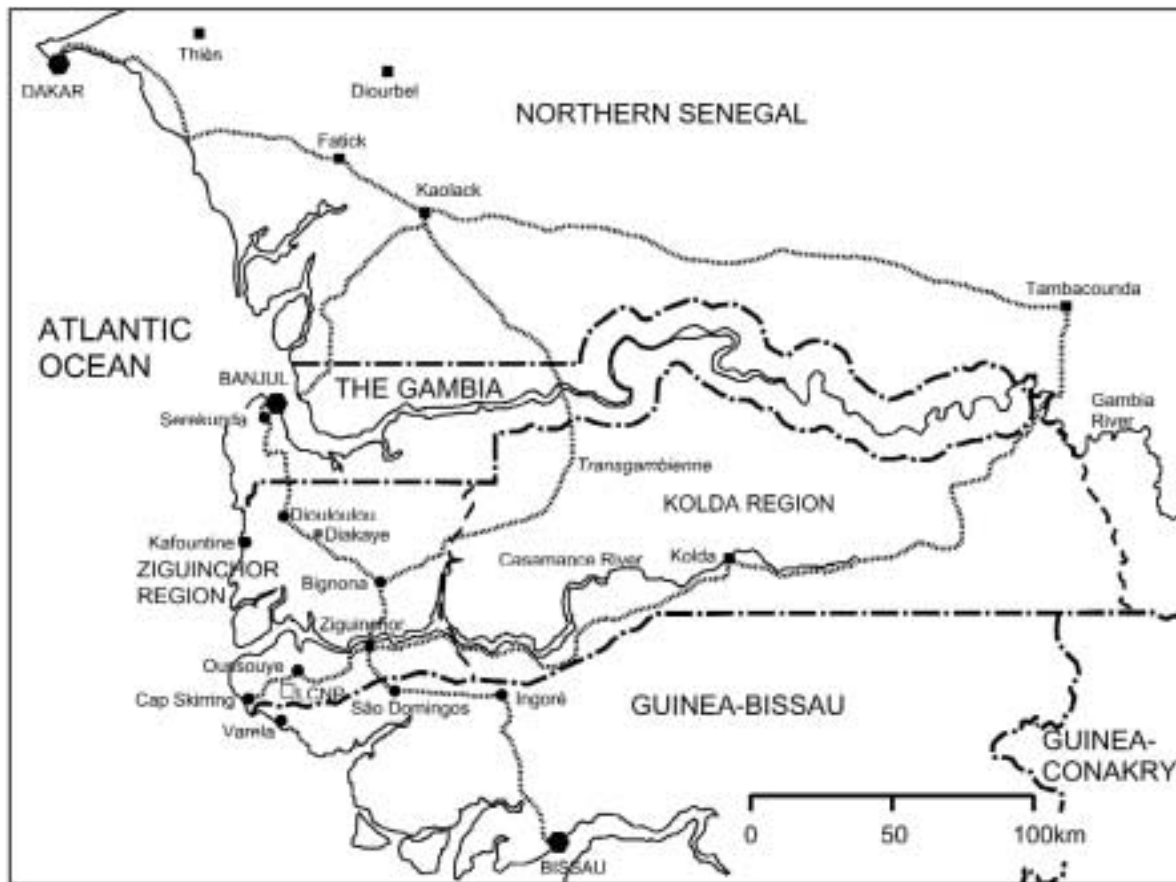
and political failures leading to intractable violence that spills over international borders porous to guerrillas, arms and conflict goods. Similarly, the MFDC *maquis* resembles other insurgencies across Africa in a number of ways: factionalism, lack of clear political strategy, and slippage over time from attacks on military targets towards economic violence inflicted mostly on the population whose interests the guerrillas claim to represent.

Largely the creation of an excessively heavy-handed response by the Senegalese government to political protest two decades ago, the MFDC *maquis* remains a potentially dangerous element in the Casamance, however divided and weakened it now seems. While *maquisards* maintain many links with their social base, which continues to give them support in the Casamance and neighbouring countries, they have become desocialized in some respects, as shown by activities such as armed robbery and drug-trafficking.

Worryingly, a whole generation has grown up in this milieu. More widely, the *maquis* has shown its capacity to export political instability and violence to neighbouring countries, especially Guinea-Bissau, where *maquisards* were prepared to engage directly in a foreign civil war in pursuit of their own interests.

Given the lack of any agenda beyond an ill-formed and unrealizable demand for independence, and the absence in the MFDC of politically astute leaders who can really carry the Casamance question forward, an unknown but possibly substantial number of *maquisards* remain alienated, some deeply so, from the peace process. However, the current calm presents the most favourable opportunity yet for peace and both sides should now capitalize on this in a determined effort finally to end West Africa's longest-running civil conflict. After twenty-two years of violence and suffering, the war-weary population of the Casamance deserves nothing less.

THE CASAMANCE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



- Key:
- · — · — International border
 - - - - - Regional boundary (within the Casamance)
 - Trunk road (serving the Casamance)
 - LCNP Lower Casamance National Park

Endnotes

- ¹ J. Brabazon (2003), 'Liberia: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)'. Armed Non-State Actors Project Briefing Paper no. 1. London: Chatham House Africa Programme.
- ² For a good recent account of the politics of the peace process under Abdoulaye Wade's presidency, see Foucher (2003).
- ³ Much of the following account is drawn from Foucher (2002), De Jong (1998) and Hall (1999).
- ⁴ For a full analysis of this and other causes of the rebellion, see Foucher (2002).
- ⁵ In a *coup de palais* at the MFDC conference held in Banjul in August 2001, Jean-Marie François Biagui replaced Abbé Diamacoune as MFDC Secretary General, while the latter took up (with bad grace) the new vague post of 'Honorary President'. However, showing deep-seated factionalism in the political wing, Biagui's status and wider recognition within the MFDC have repeatedly shifted and he was sacked in March 2004, with Abbé Diamacoune resuming his former role. In September Biagui and his partisans met in Ziguinchor with none of the Diamacoune faction present, voting to retire Abbé Diamacoune (again) and re-install Biagui. This move has no apparent legitimacy: Wade himself had ordered the meeting to be cancelled and the Senegalese government continues to recognize only Abbé Diamacoune as Secretary General.
- ⁶ Interviews cited here were conducted by the author in French, either directly or through a Diola-speaking local translator, and all quotes given are the author's translations.
- ⁷ This total death toll, given by Humphreys and Mohamed (2003), is based on reported deaths, but such enumeration is made difficult by the *maquis* habit of never leaving its dead on the battlefield and by possible official manipulation of figures. Indirect civilian casualties, such as the sick or elderly who have died while being displaced from their villages, are not included in this figure and would be even more difficult to estimate. Landmine and unexploded ordnance victims are recorded by Handicap International, the principal NGO concerned with mine awareness and survivor assistance in the Casamance, whose Ziguinchor office kindly provided the author with its data for the period from 1988 to 20 April 2004, the vast majority of such victims having occurred from 1997 onwards.
- ⁸ For detailed analysis of the impacts of the conflict on livelihoods and development in Ziguinchor region, see Evans (2003a).
- ⁹ This schema and its history are drawn from the author's doctoral research (Evans 2003a), Foucher (2003) and recent interviews with *maquisards* and observers in the field.
- ¹⁰ As Kamougué himself declared to the 2001 MFDC conference in Banjul, 'it's no secret that our movement is corrupted by a terrible illness of which the visible symptoms are indiscipline, anarchy, factionalist activities'.
- ¹¹ For example, see UN (2002), *Report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict*. Document no. S/2002/1299 (New York: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict). In fairness to this report, the Security Council 'confined its [brief for the report] to a list of situations that are currently on its agenda', which does not include the Casamance (pers. comm. with Communications Officer, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict) – although this only serves to illustrate the conflict's low visibility to the international community (Evans 2002).
- ¹² For a debunking of purported religious aspects of the Casamance conflict, see Foucher (forthcoming 2004).
- ¹³ The franc CFA (*Communauté Financière Africaine*) is the single currency of Senegal, most francophone countries of West Africa and, since 1997, Guinea-Bissau. Tied to the French franc and now the euro at fixed rates, 1,000 francs CFA are currently worth approximately US\$1.90.
- ¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Senegal, Landmine Monitor Report 2003* (online at <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2003/senegal.html>) and field sources.
- ¹⁵ S. Ellis (1999), *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War* (London: Hurst).
- ¹⁶ None of this is to deny or condone the human rights abuses and atrocities committed by Senegalese forces during the 1980s and 1990s. However, by all accounts their behaviour has greatly improved in recent years, partly because of better command, discipline and resourcing in the army instigated under President Wade (Foucher 2003).
- ¹⁷ Letter from Salif Sadio to the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, 3 January 2001.
- ¹⁸ For a more detailed account of the Casamance 'war economy', see Evans (2003b).
- ¹⁹ The most commercially important hardwoods in the Casamance are *ven* (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*), the timber of choice for furniture; *cail-cédrat* or *bois rouge* (*Khaya senegalensis*), known in The Gambia as *jallo* or simply mahogany; and teak (*Tectona grandis*), an Asian plantation species introduced in French colonial times.
- ²⁰ Members of the Senegalese armed forces also engage substantially in the timber and cashew trades and, by certain accounts, may have some involvement in cannabis-trafficking.
- ²¹ For example, members of the *maquisard* refugee community visited near Varela were involved in growing cannabis for sale, at 250 francs CFA/joint or 500 francs CFA for a 'matchbox' full of resin, to both *maquisards* and tourists. Some tourist buyers, mainly from the nearby resorts of Cap Skirring and Kabrousse on the Casamance coast, come to Varela on day trips, and *pirogues* also take cannabis over to the Cap.
- ²² Notable among these are hardliner Nkrumah Sané (Paris), Almamy Badiane (Bordeaux) and Ansoumana Badji (Lisbon). Mamadou Goudiaby (Paris) and Ousmane Tamba (Switzerland) joined the new seven-member bureau of the MFDC under Jean-Marie François Biagui (Lyon) in August 2001. However, in a heated meeting in a Paris restaurant in August 2004, Mamadou Goudiaby and Lansana Goudiaby – adopting an increasingly hardline position under Nkrumah's influence – condemned Biagui as a traitor to the cause of

Casamance independence, illustrating the same volatility in the exterior wing as in the political wing at home.

²³ For detailed discussions of this point see Foucher (2003) and Humphreys and ag Mohamed (2003).

²⁴ This line was made most explicit in statements following the October 2003 meeting of the MFDC political wing in Ziguinchor. Abbé Diamacoune called on *maquisards* to lay down their arms and, rather than demand independence, he said that the Casamance should receive better treatment 'in a Senegal that belongs to all of us'; Biagui said that 'for us the war is definitively over'. Both men committed to dialogue with the government.

²⁵ From President Wade's address to the nation on Independence Day, 4 April 2004.

²⁶ For further discussion of this issue see M. Paulo and A. Vines 'West Africa's oil boom: blessing or curse?'. *The World Today*, May 2004: 26–27; and S. Ellis (2003), 'Briefing: West Africa and its oil', *African Affairs*, 102(406): 135–8.

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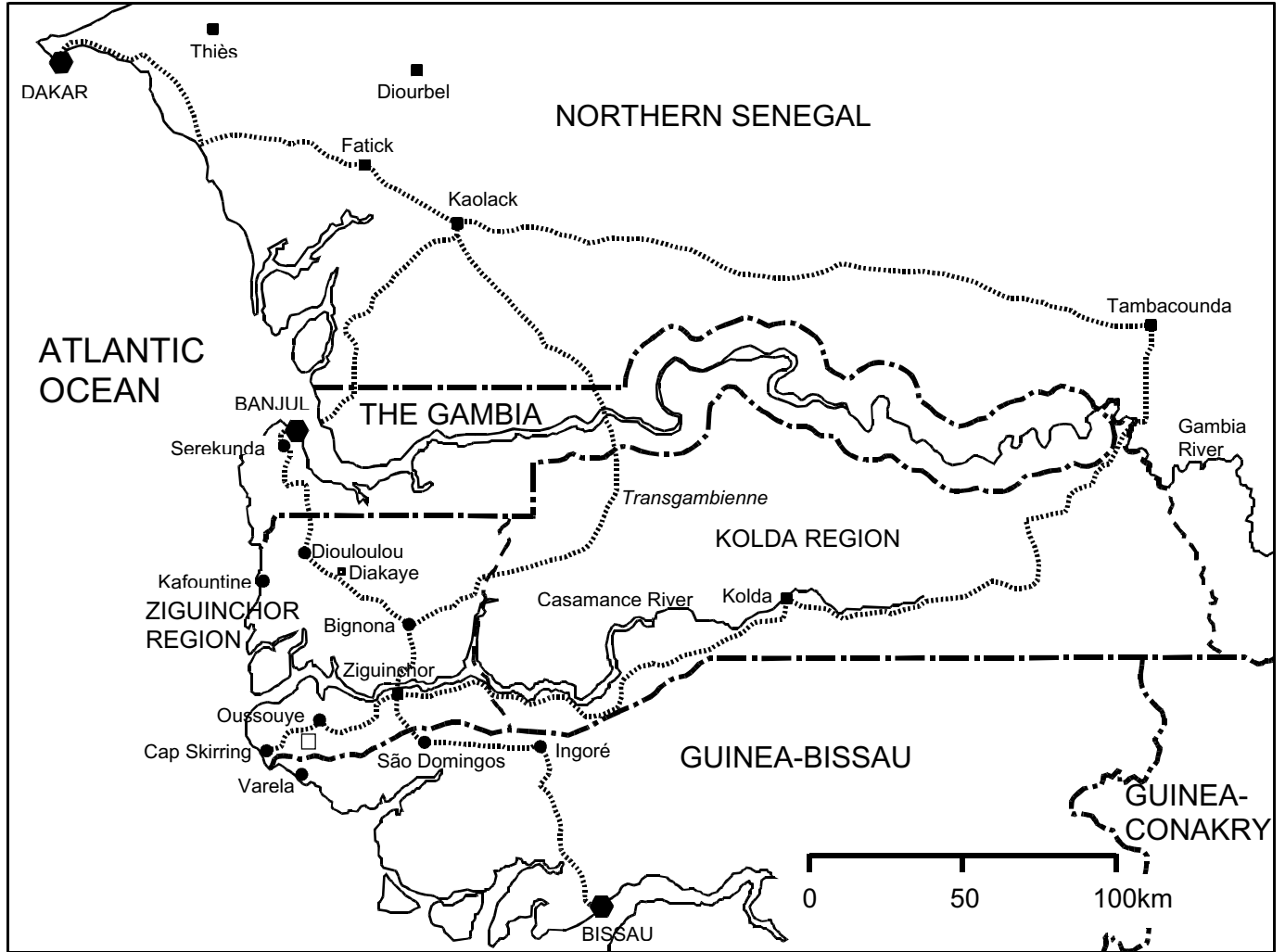
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- - - - - Regional boundary (within the Casamance)
- Trunk road (serving the Casamance)
- LCNP Lower Casamance National Park