

# Guinea-Bissau

## Country Overview

### Politics

Guinea-Bissau is a multiparty republic in West Africa. President Jose Mario Vaz was elected in 2014 in an election that international observers considered to be free and fair.<sup>1</sup> Umaro Sissoco Embaló is currently Prime Minister. There have been five prime ministers since August 2015, with none holding office for more than several months.<sup>2</sup>

The country has experienced political and military turmoil since independence in 1974. A military coup brought General Joao Bernardo “Nino” Vieira’s authoritarian regime to power in 1980. The regime survived multiple coup attempts until the military mutiny and subsequent civil war of 1998. A series of transitional governments and coups occurred between 1998 and the most recent 2014 election.<sup>3</sup> Since independence, the World Bank reports that Guinea-Bissau has had four successful coups and 16 attempted or plotted coups.<sup>4</sup>

### Economy

Guinea-Bissau is classified by the World Bank as a low-income economy.<sup>5</sup> The World Bank considers the country to be one of the world’s “poorest and most fragile.” Despite the unstable political system, the economy had a 4.9 percent GDP growth in 2015 and is expected to have an annual GDP growth of 5 percent on average for 2016-2018. The anticipated growth is based on the following assumptions: that the agricultural sector will continue to flourish, electricity and water generation in the country will recover, and the political situation will remain stable enough for donor support to return.<sup>6</sup>

Guinea-Bissau’s main exports are nuts, frozen fish, fruits, and aluminum ores.<sup>7</sup> The country’s economy is especially reliant on the cashew nut harvest.<sup>8</sup> Threats to Guinea-Bissau’s economy include deforestation, soil erosion, overgrazing, overfishing, brush fires, lack of donor funding, and the precarious political situation in the country.<sup>9</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State, approximately 80 percent of the working population is employed in the informal sector.<sup>10</sup>

### Social/Human Development

The population of Guinea-Bissau is growing and almost 60 percent of the population is under 25 years of age. The country has high infant and maternal mortality rates due to early childbearing age of many mothers, lack of birth spacing, high number of births that occur outside of health care facilities, and lack



of medicines and supplies in those facilities. According to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Guinea-Bissau lacks educational infrastructure, has high rates of unemployment, and experiences widespread poverty. Local drug use and violent crime have been increasing, due in part to the lack of occupational prospects, particularly for young men.<sup>11</sup>

Poverty levels have been increasing in the country. In 2010, it was observed that 69.3 percent of the population was at or below the national poverty line, compared to 64.7 percent in 2000. The percentage of the population living at USD 1.90 a day (2011 international prices) was 43 percent in 1990, 53.9 percent in 2000, and 67.1 percent in 2010. In 2010, it was reported that 4.5 percent of the income share was held by the lowest 20 percent, down from 7.3 percent in 2000 and 5.6 percent in 1990.<sup>12</sup> Guinea-Bissau's Human Development Index score for 2015 was 0.424, ranking the country 178 out of 188 countries.<sup>13</sup>

There are many ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau, but the Fulani and Balanta account for just over half of the population.<sup>14</sup> Forty-four percent of the population speaks a Portuguese-based creole language called Crioulo. Only 14 percent still speak Portuguese and the rest of the population speaks native African languages.<sup>15</sup>

Widespread poverty and lack of infrastructure have allowed the growth of a flourishing drug-trade as Guinea-Bissau has become a hub between South American and European markets.<sup>16</sup> Much of the drug transport takes place at sea, potentially interfering with fishing activities or involving impoverished subsistence fishers as transporters.<sup>17</sup>

## U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2017)

### U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 3

The *Trafficking in Persons Report* notes vulnerability to trafficking in potentially exported supply chains including agriculture and mining.

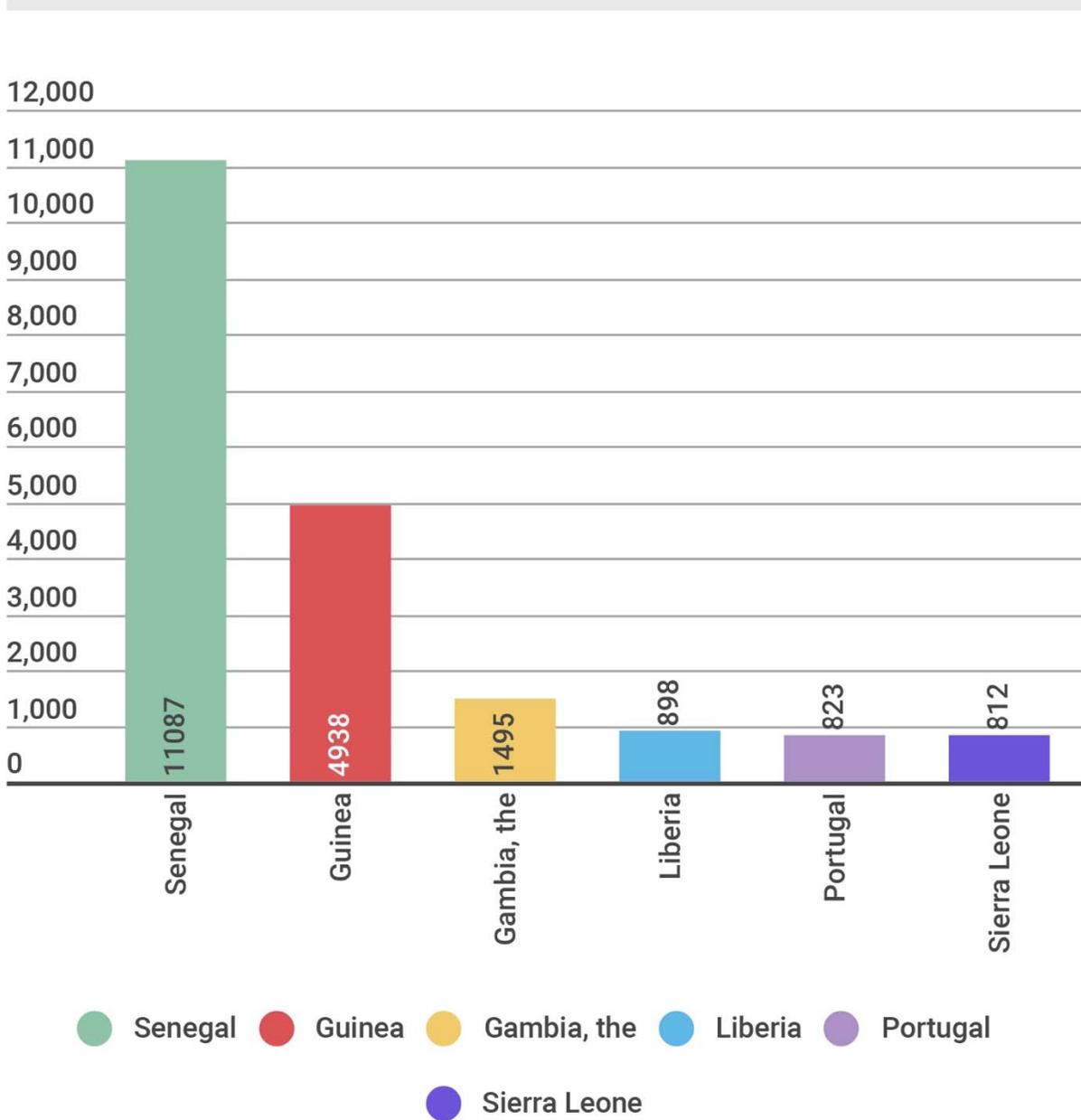
Read the full TIP report at: <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271198.htm>

## Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

Guinea-Bissau has a negative net migration.<sup>18</sup> The largest source country for migrants is Senegal, followed by Guinea and the Gambia.<sup>19</sup> There were an estimated 9,295 persons of concern in Guinea-Bissau at the end of 2016 according to the UNODC, most of whom were refugees.<sup>20</sup>



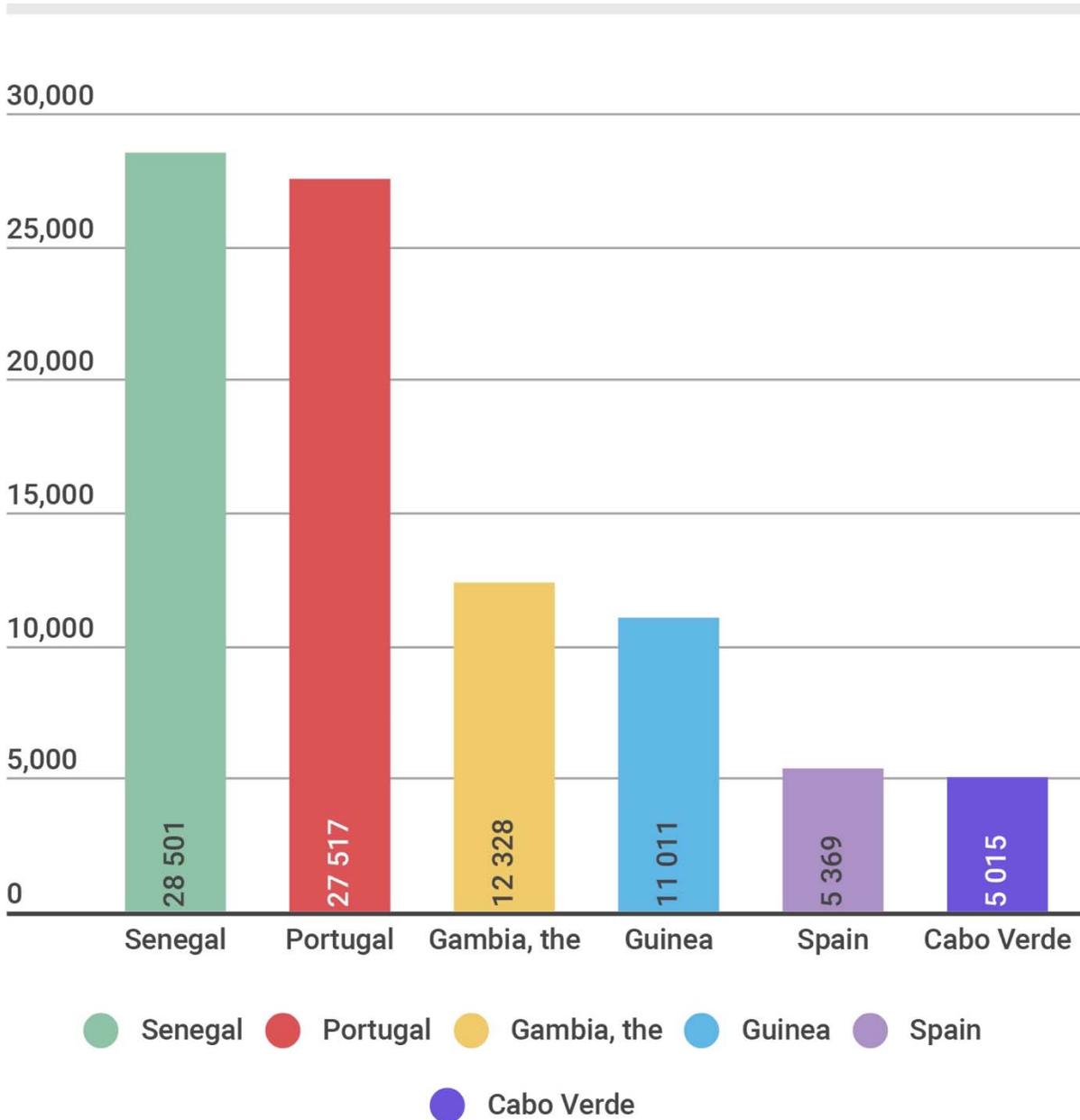
## Migrants to Guinea-Bissau



The most common destination countries for migrants from Guinea-Bissau are Senegal and Portugal, followed by the Gambia, Guinea, Spain, and Cabo Verde.<sup>21</sup>



## Migrants from Guinea-Bissau



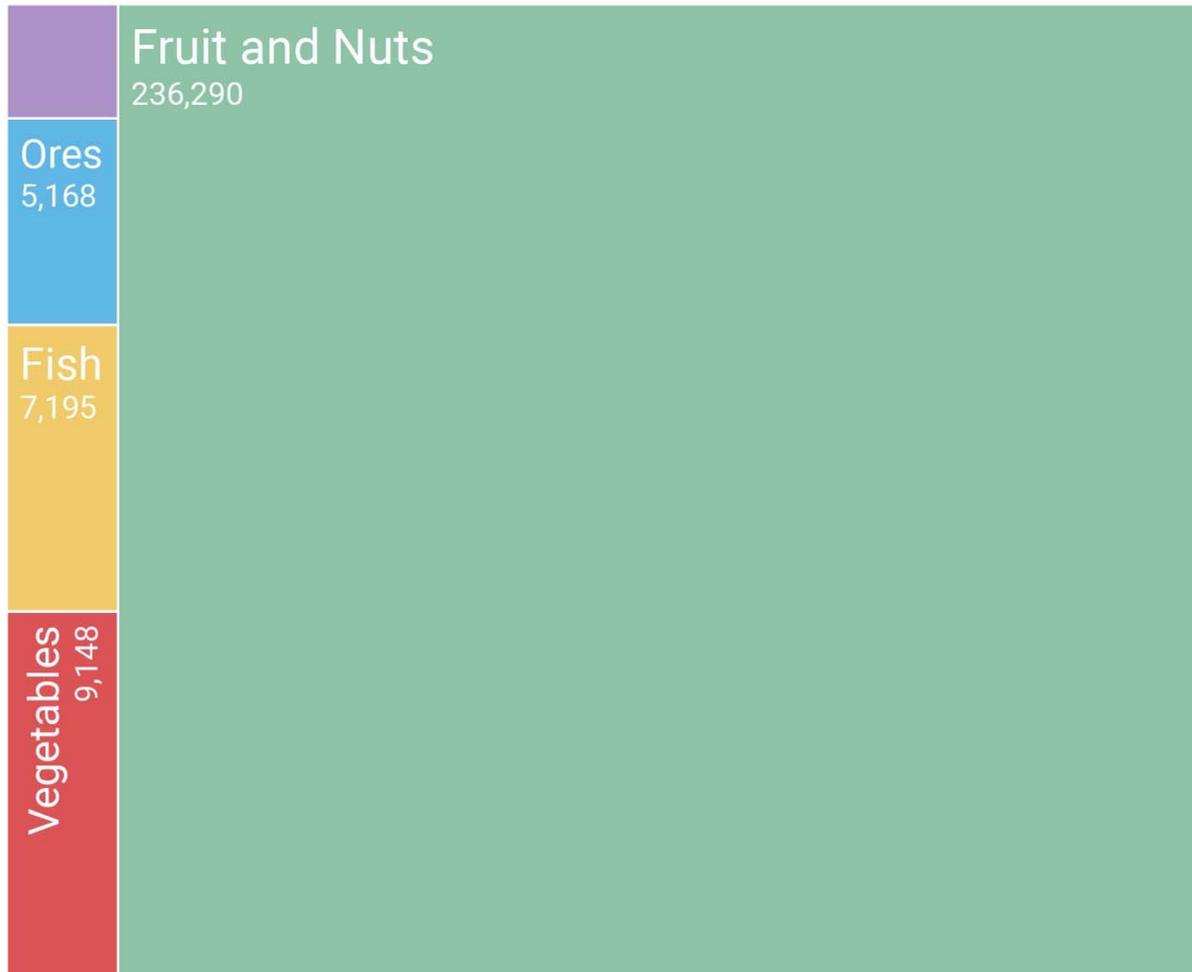
## Exports and Trade



Guinea-Bissau's top exports in 2016 were various nuts, including coconuts, Brazil nuts, and cashew nuts; frozen fish; various fruits, including apricots, cherries, peaches, nectarines, plums, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and currants; and aluminum ores.<sup>22</sup>

## Top Commodity Exports

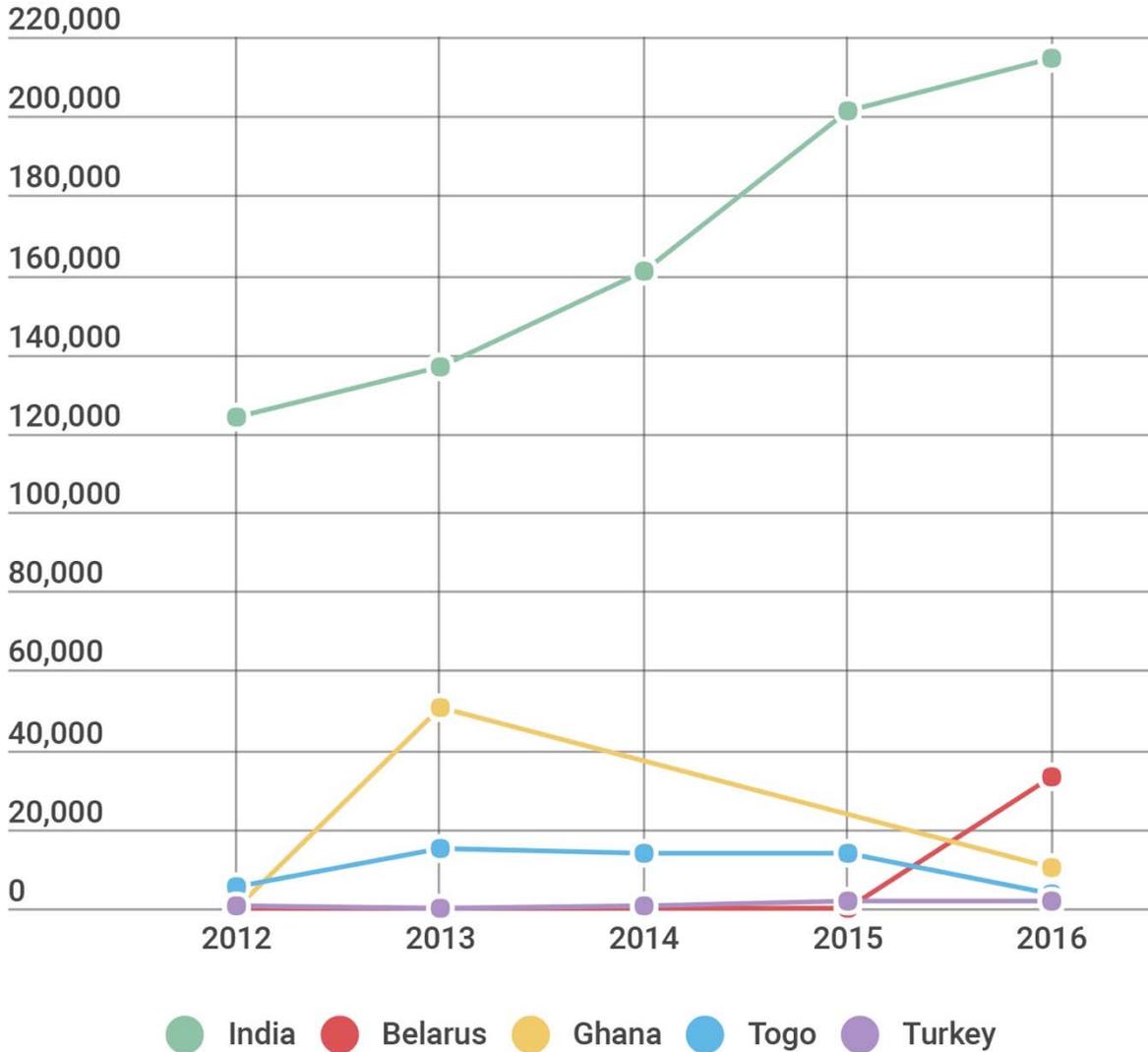
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The top importers of all goods from Guinea-Bissau are India and Belarus.<sup>23</sup>



## Guinea-Bissau Export Partners (USD)



Guinea-Bissau ranked as the 225<sup>th</sup> largest export supplier to the United States in 2014. <sup>24</sup>



## Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

### Legal/Policy Risk Factors

#### Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

##### Freedom of Association

The law provides for the rights of workers to form and organize unions. Workers are not permitted to engage in collective bargaining. Most wages are set by bilateral negotiations between workers and employers, though the tripartite National Council for Social Consultation can consult on salary issues. The law provides workers with the right to strike but prior notice is required. The law prohibits employer discrimination based on union involvement and government interference in union affairs. The U.S. Department of State has reported that the government does not effectively enforce the law and officials are undertrained and under resourced.<sup>25</sup>

##### Working Conditions

The minimum wage in all “categories of work” is set annually by the Council of Ministers. In the formal sector, the lowest monthly minimum wage was CFA 19,030 (USD 33) plus a bag of rice. The legal workweek is 45 hours with a mandatory 12-hour rest period between workdays. Overtime work is compensated with premium pay and limited to 200 hours per year. The Ministries of Justice and Labor, in collaboration with worker unions, created legal health and safety standards for workers. These standards are not effectively enforced in the formal or informal sector, according to the U.S. Department of State. Workers are also not granted the right to remove themselves from hazardous working conditions without fear of dismissal.<sup>26</sup>

##### Discrimination

According to the U.S. Department of State, the law does not prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national origin, citizenship, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, communicable disease status, or social origin.<sup>27</sup> However, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, and religion.<sup>28</sup> There was no available *de facto* information on discrimination based on these categories, with the exception of sex. Women face considerable discrimination in hiring and pay.<sup>29</sup>



## Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State reports that the government has not met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and has failed to make significant efforts to do so.<sup>30</sup>

## Child Labor

The law sets the legal minimum working age at 14 years old for general factory labor. The law sets the legal minimum age for work in heavy or dangerous labor, including in mines, at 18 years old. Other than this law, there are no laws that specifically protect children from being employed in hazardous work. Minors are not permitted to work overtime. According to the U.S. Department of State, children work overtime in practice and forced child labor occurs in the country as well. Child labor laws are not effectively enforced, due to inadequate resources and inspection efforts. No arrests for child labor were made during 2016.<sup>31</sup>

## Civil Society Organizations

The U.S. Department of State reports that human rights groups “generally operated without government restriction” and that “government officials were somewhat cooperative and responsive to their views.”<sup>32</sup> According to Freedom House, NGOs are able to voice their outrage over human rights abuses without interference.<sup>33</sup>



**Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants**

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	Not ratified
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	Not ratified
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	Not ratified
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified

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**Political Risk Factors**

**Political Instability or Conflict**

Guinea-Bissau has extremely high levels of political instability. Since 2014, no single prime minister has held office for a full year.<sup>35</sup> This instability has left “economic and social institutions perilously weak.”<sup>36</sup>

Guinea-Bissau scores a 99.5 in the 2017 Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Alert” Category, a slight improvement from the country’s score of 99.8 in 2016. Neighboring Senegal scored an 82.3 and Guinea scored a 102.4 in the same index.<sup>37</sup>

According to the World Bank’s 2015 Worldwide Governance Indicators report, Guinea-Bissau’s rank for political stability and absence of violence/terrorism is in the 32<sup>nd</sup> percentile..<sup>38</sup>



## Level of Crime and Violence (Organized Crime, Gangs, Unchecked Street Violence)

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report did not have ranking information on Guinea-Bissau for any index measure, including for business costs of crime and violence and organized crime.<sup>39</sup> According to Freedom House, the U.N. Office for Drugs and Crime reports that the armed forces and other state entities in Guinea-Bissau were involved in drug trafficking in 2016.<sup>40</sup> Guinea-Bissau is reportedly a key hub of narco-trafficking for South American drug cartels.<sup>41</sup>

## Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Guinea-Bissau as a 16 out of 100, where 0 signals "Highly Corrupt" and 100 signals "Very Clean." Guinea-Bissau is ranked 168 out of 176 on that index.<sup>42</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State, officials engaged in corruption with impunity in the country and corruption was present in all branches of the government. Judges and the attorney general were reportedly subject to corruption and political pressure. Members of the military and civilian administrators were allegedly involved in drug trafficking. The World Bank has characterized the corruption problem in the country as severe.<sup>43</sup> Freedom House has described corruption in the government and military as "bureaucratic and large-scale."<sup>44</sup>

## Socio-Economic Risk Factors

### Level of National Economic Development

Guinea-Bissau is scored in the low human development category, according to the U.N. Human Development Index, with a rank of 178 out of 188 countries and a score of 0.424. Guinea-Bissau's human development score is higher than its southern neighbor, Guinea, but lower than its northern neighbor, Senegal.<sup>45</sup>

### Level and Extent of Poverty

Guinea-Bissau has a high level of poverty, with 80.4 percent of the population determined to be living in multidimensional poverty according to the U.N. When adjusted for inequality, the Human Development Index score falls to 0.257.<sup>46</sup> Guinea-Bissau's gross national income (GNI) per capita was recorded as USD 620 in 2016, an increase from USD 570 in 2010, USD 200 in 2000, and USD 220 in 1990. The income share held by the lowest 20 percent was 4.5 in 2010, down from 7.3 in 2000.<sup>47</sup>



## Degree of Gender Inequality

The U.N. Development Programme's Gender Equality Index and the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report does not have data on Guinea-Bissau.<sup>48</sup>

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau prohibits discrimination based on sex. However, there is no additional legislation to support this measure and the international commitments that Guinea-Bissau has made, which include ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Customary laws are still followed in many rural communities. Customary laws prohibit women from inheriting property and allow for widow inheritance, meaning that the widowed woman is married off to one of her deceased husband's male relatives. Women are legally allowed to access financial services, like bank loans. However, in practice their access is severely restricted because men operate as heads of households.<sup>49</sup> The U.N. Security Council in 2015 reported that 34 percent of girls in Guinea-Bissau are forced into marriages.<sup>50</sup>

Women experienced discrimination in employment, pay, credit access, business management, and education.<sup>51</sup> The U.S. Department of State reports that employers prefer to hire men because they can avoid paying maternity benefits. Women are predominantly employed on subsistence farms. Women are generally discouraged from participating in politics. Only 14 members of the 102-member National Assembly were women in 2016. Of the 16 cabinet ministers, five were women, including the minister of defense.<sup>52</sup>

Rape, including spousal rape, is illegal in Guinea-Bissau. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, the government does not enforce the law effectively.<sup>53</sup> Domestic violence was criminalized in 2013 and the first case was brought to court in June 2015. The problem is still widespread in the country, however, and many victims choose not to report because they mistrust the country's police and courts.<sup>54</sup> Sexual harassment is not prohibited by law in the country and is reportedly widespread.<sup>55</sup>

## Landlessness and Dispossession

There were no reported IDPs, returnees, or stateless persons in Guinea-Bissau, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>56</sup>

## Environmental Factors

Guinea-Bissau experiences brush fires, deforestation, and soil erosion.<sup>57</sup> Freedom House reports that illegal logging and fishing in the country has caused considerable environmental damage in the country, especially in recent years.<sup>58</sup> Clear cutting for cashew production contributes to deforestation.<sup>59</sup>



## Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

### Cashews

#### Cashews Overview

Cashews are of critical importance to the economy in Guinea-Bissau, with about 85 percent of the population relying on income from cashews.<sup>60</sup> Most nuts are exported raw, but investments are being made in primary processing so an increased percentage of the value chain stays within the country – current estimates are that about 9-10 percent of cashews are processed in-country, with most of the balance being processed in India.<sup>61</sup> In 2017, smuggling of cashews to Senegal was reported, depriving the government of tax revenue.<sup>62</sup>

There are two types of cashew production in Guinea-Bissau: smallholder and commercial. Most smallholder orchards are about two or three hectares in size.<sup>63</sup> For smallholder production, wooded land is cut and burned at the end of the dry season to prepare for cashew planting. Smallholders typically intercrop cashews with subsistence food crops.<sup>64</sup> In the commercial system, a monoculture system is more typically used.<sup>65</sup>

#### Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cashews

Cashew production contributes significantly to deforestation as producers clear-cut and burn land. An estimated 30,000 – 80,000 hectares a year are cut clear cut for cashew production.<sup>66</sup> Although trafficking in cashew production has not been noted specifically, boys are thought to be exploited in forced labor in agriculture more broadly.<sup>67</sup>

### Fishing/Seafood

#### Fishing/Seafood Overview

Foreign fishing vessels conduct industrial fishing on Guinea-Bissau's large continental shelf.<sup>68</sup> The revenue from foreign fishing licenses accounts for 40 percent of government revenue.<sup>69</sup> Target species of industrial vessels include tuna, horse mackerel and shrimp.<sup>70</sup>

Artisanal fishing is also practiced, although primarily as a subsistence activity.<sup>71</sup> The government has identified the fishing sector as a key priority for economic development.<sup>72</sup>



## Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Fishing/Seafood

There has been documented environmental destruction within the fishing sector due to large amounts of illegal and unregulated fishing,<sup>73</sup> particularly by foreign trawlers.<sup>74</sup> Local fishers have been implicated in narco-trafficking as they reportedly act as drug carriers, ferrying packages of cocaine to shore.<sup>75</sup> These activities are more attractive in the absence of other viable livelihood options.



Gift of the United States Government

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## Endnotes

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[http://www.trademap.org/Product\\_SelProductCountry.aspx?nvpm=1|624||||TOTAL||4|1|2|2|1|1|1|1|1](http://www.trademap.org/Product_SelProductCountry.aspx?nvpm=1|624||||TOTAL||4|1|2|2|1|1|1|1|1)



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- <sup>22</sup> International Trade Centre. *List of products at 4 digits level explored by Guinea-Bissau in 2016*. 2016. [http://www.trademap.org/Product\\_SelProductCountry.aspx?nvpm=1|624|||TOTAL||4|1|2|2|1|1|1|1|1](http://www.trademap.org/Product_SelProductCountry.aspx?nvpm=1|624|||TOTAL||4|1|2|2|1|1|1|1|1)
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