

SENEGAL

Casamancais

Activity: 1982-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The diverse peoples of Casamance, impelled by common interests, began to unite in the early 1950s. The first nationalist organization, the Casamance Autonomy Movement, was formed in 1954 to press for autonomy and a separate administration within Africa. Following Senegalese independence in 1960, the party was banned and forced underground. Hewitt & Cheetham (2000: 61) report that “several movements for independence emerged in the early 1960s”, but we found no corroborating evidence.
- The nationalist movement resurfaced in the 1980s, led by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (re-constituted in 1982), with the aim of secession. Since this is the first evidence of organized separatist activity that we found, we peg the start date of the movement at 1982. The movement remained active throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Englebert 2005; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Hewitt et al. 2008; Humphreys & Mohamed 2005; Lexis Nexis; Marshall & Gurr 2003, 2005; Minahan 1996: 108ff, 2002: 396ff; MAR; UCDP/PRIO).
- The MFDC has been riven with factionalism. In 2007, after the death of the group’s then leader, Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, the movement splintered into three factions (McGregor 2021: Senego 2020). The most important faction seems to be the militant wing led by Salif Sadio, which agreed to a unilateral ceasefire with Senegal in May 2014 (Business Monitor Online 2014: Wars in the World 2014: UCDP 2022). However, Sadio’s faction is not universally accepted as the leader of the movement (voaportugues 2021).
- Peace negotiations between the MFDC and government continued in a secretive fashion from 2014 until the MFDC agreed to disarm in 2022 (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue 2022). Throughout this period, the MFDC continued to make claims for territorial self-determination, so we code the movement as ongoing as of 2020 (Modern Ghana 2018; Senogo 2022). [start date: 1982; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- In 1982 the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamancais (MDFC) was formed, which demanded independence (Minorities at Risk Project). The MDFC has remained an important player in the Casamance movement; however since the early 1990s, serious splits occurred within the movement, leading to the fragmentation of the movement (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia).
 - o In 1992, the movement split into the Front Nord and the Front Sud; what according to Minahan (2002: 400) continued to be the major faction, the Front Sud, demanded independence.
 - o Further splits occurred in subsequent years, with some factions demanding independence and others autonomy (Minahan 2002: 400).
 - o In 1998, the MFDC offered to give up its independence claim in return for measures directed at the region’s economic and social development (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia). In 2003, the MDFC formally gave up its claim for independence, and began to demand autonomy within Senegal. Militant radicals, however, who by that time

- had acquired a significant role, continued to demand independence (Minorities at Risk Project; UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia; Fall 2010: 26-27).
- In 2007, the MFDC splintered into three factions, most of which favored a final peace agreement (McGregor 2021; Senego 2020). The most important faction appears to be Sadio's, which makes ambiguous claims but is often described as secessionist (Business monitor online 2014; Senego 2020; McGregor 2021; voaportugues 2021).
- Independence was the movement's initial demand, but the fragmentation of the movement makes it difficult to determine the dominant claim from the early 1990s onwards. We code the most radical claim (independence) throughout. [1982-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 1982; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Casamancais consists of Casamance, the southernmost region of Senegal (Minahan 2002: 396). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The MFDC started to organize protests in 1982 which turned violent in 1983. On December 6, three gendarmes were killed while intervening at a MFDC meeting near Ziguinchor (Foucher 2019). On December 18, 1983 supporters of the MFDC held a demonstration in Ziguinchor calling for independence from Senegal. The protests led to the deaths of at least 29 people, at least 19 of whom were protestors (Humphreys & ag Mohammed 2005: 247). We therefore code 1983 as LVIOLSD. After that we could not find evidence of secessionist violence at the level of at least LVIOLSD until 1989, hence a NVIOLSD coding for 1984-1988.
- According to Humphreys & ag Mohammed (2005: 247), the MFDC began to prepare for an insurgency after the 1983 incident: "A handful of those retreating, led by veterans from the Senegalese army, under the banner of the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance (MFDC), headed to the mangroves and dense forest of lower Casamance to set up rebel bases. They started military training and planning attacks on government positions. In doing so, they began a guerrilla war that has left thousands killed and the south of Senegal strewn with land mines." The HVIOLSD coding for 1989-1999 follows Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2019).
- While a ceasefire was reached in December 1999, it was not completely respected as a more militant rebel faction rejected the peace agreement and continued low-level hostilities. UCDP/PRIO codes low-level intensity armed conflict over Casamance in 2000-2001 and in 2003. In 2002, UCDP/PRIO records just under 25 battle-related deaths (20), suggesting sustained fighting. Furthermore, MAR's rebellion score is four in 2002 ("small-scale guerilla activity"). We code continued LVIOLSD until 2003.

- According to MAR, “violence escalated in 2006 (REB06 = 4).” However, UCDP/PRIO does not code the incident on the grounds that the “MFDC lost their traditional backer [Guinea-Bissau] due to developments in Guinea-Bissau in 2005. In that year, Guinea-Bissau got a new president when president Nino Viera regained power. President Viera promptly decided to root the MFDC rebels from Guinean territory once and for all and launched an offensive against one of MFDC's factions - the so called Front Sud-Sadio and their main base on the border with Senegal. Fierce fighting between Guinean troops and the MFDC-Sadio faction raged from mid-March to mid-April 2006, after which the rebels were forced to flee across the border into Casamance. Guinea-Bissau insisted that the operation was a strictly Guinean affair, launched to pacify the northern part of the country, wherefore it is not recorded as part of the Senegal - MFDC conflict.” We follow UCDP/PRIO and do not code the 2006 episode as LVIOLSD as it does not appear to concern the Senegal-Casamançais dyad.
- According to UCDP/PRIO, armed conflict reignited at a low level in 2008 and each year between 2008 and 2010, UCDP/PRIO reports around a dozen battle-related deaths. This increases to 25-43 deaths in 2011; hence, we code that year as LVIOLSD. In 2012 (19) and 2013 (8), deaths are again below the threshold. What appears to be the most important rebel faction agreed to a unilateral ceasefire in 2014, and deaths fall to 0 from that year. [1982: NVIOLSD; 1983: LVIOLSD; 1984-1988: NVIOLSD; 1989-1999: HVIOLSD; 2000-2003: LVIOLSD; 2004-2010: NVIOLSD; 2011: LVIOLSD; 2012-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Senegal and with it Casamance were first invaded by Portugal in the 15th century. Over the next centuries, France, the UK, and Portugal battled over Senegal. In the 19th century, Senegal fell to the French, and it remained a French colony until independence in 1960. However, the French only gained Casamance a bit later. Casamance, having unsuccessfully resisted colonialization, had its own colonial administration separate from Senegal until 1939. In 1939, it was integrated with Senegal, implying a loss of autonomy (Fall 2010: 5), accentuated by the centralizing tendencies of the Wolof-dominated government in Dakar (Minahan 2002: 398). Calls for separate independence or autonomy upon decolonization were ignored (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 61). After independence, the French and the Wolof language were promoted by Dakar, to the detriment of the other officially recognized national languages, including Diola (the Casamance movement is strongly associated with the Diolas) (Fall 2010: 10). In 1964, there was a controversial land reform which pre-empted the Diola from distributing their lands in the way they had done traditionally (Fall 2010: 12). Demands for self-determination grew intense after 1978, when a change in non-democratic regime led to a change in the manner in which the Casamance dossier was managed, as the new leader was less inclined to negotiate and more inclined to use repression. Large-scale expropriation of indigenous land in Casamance began in 1979 and a systematic denigration of Casamançais began through the imposition of Wolof in the media, education and administration. [1979: cultural rights restriction; 1979: autonomy restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- In 1982, there was a violent crackdown against protesters demanding self-determination and the leadership of the movement was imprisoned (Humphreys & ag Mohammed 2005). This does not, however, constitute a restriction as defined in the codebook.
- In 1986, Casamance lost its status as an official language. Moreover, the region was placed under special governance with an army general appointed governor (Humphreys & ag Mohammed 2005). [1986: cultural rights restriction; 1986: autonomy restriction]
- In May 1991, the Bissau Accord was signed, a cease-fire agreement that did not, however, address the status of Casamance. Further agreements were signed in subsequent years, seemingly without addressing the status of Casamance (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia).

- The MFDC rebels signed a peace deal with the Senegalese government in 2001 and again in 2004 (Minority Rights Group International; Minahan 2002: 401; Fall 2010; BBC 2004; IRIN 2001; UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia; Zinguinchor Peace Agreement), but these peace deals did not (once again) address the question of Casamance's status.
- The 2014 MFDC ceasefire and subsequent rounds of negotiations until 2022 again did not address the question of Casamance's status but instead focused largely on providing a roadmap for the eventual demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of MFDC combatants into society (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue 2022). In 2013 the government began a series of programs in Casamance aimed at development and the addressing of socio-economic concerns amongst many Casamançais (World Bank 2013). However, Casamance's level of territorial SD has remained unchanged. We do not code a concession.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Casamançais
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Diola
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	43305000

- The Casamance movement is strongly associated with the Diolas (Minorities at Risk Project; Fall 2010: 8), hence the 1:1 match.

Power access

- We follow EPR. [junior partner]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.055]

Regional concentration

- The Casamançais are concentrated in the historic region of Casamance, where the Diolas and the Bainouk (the groups most associated with the Casamançais movement) together make up 72% of the population (Minahan 2002: 396). This amounts to 998,000 Diolas and Bainouk (in 2002),

which is more than 50% of the 1.005 million Casamancais in the whole of Senegal in that same year. [concentrated]

Kin

- According to EPR there are Diolas also in neighboring Gambia. The Diola make up around 10% of Gambia's population of 1.8 million in 2014 (see EPR). The kin group is thus large enough to be coded here. Further evidence comes from MAR; MAR codes "close kindred in more than one country" mentioning the Dioula in Guinea-Bissau and in Gambia as the largest kin groups. Also see Minahan (2002: 396). [kin in neighboring country]

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