

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Bougainvilleans

Activity: 1975-1976; 1988-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Already prior to Papua New Guinea (PNG)'s independence in 1975, Bougainville had announced its intentions to secede, following increased environmental degradation due to the exploitation of natural resources as of the 1960s. Napidakoe Navitu, formed in 1969, was the first Bougainvillean nationalist movement (Regan & Griffin 2005: 480) and demanded a referendum on whether Bougainville should remain within PNG (Minority Rights Group International). Only days before PNG gained its independence from Australia, the Bougainville provincial government voted in favor of a separate state and proclaimed the independence of Bougainville (Republic of the North Solomons, also called Republic of Bougainville). We peg the start date of the movement at 1969 but only code the movement from 1975, the year of PNG's independence. We found no evidence of separatist violence before 1975.
- Bougainvillean independence was rejected by both the Australian government and the soon to be PNG government. When PNG finally gained independence, it suspended the Bougainville provincial government and dispatched troops. After months of negotiations following violent clashes, Bougainville was granted autonomy in 1976. Minahan (2002), Ghai & Regan (2002) and Minority Rights Group International argue that separatist sentiment declined after the 1976 autonomy grant. We code an end to the first phase in 1976 on this basis. [start date 1: 1969; end date 1: 1976]
- Discontent flared again in Bougainville in the 1980s in connection to working conditions at, and environmental effects of, a copper mine run by an Australian company (Roth 2015: 394). In 1988, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) was formed and a civil war broke out soon thereafter (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl 2019). In 1990, an organization called the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) unilaterally declared independence (Roth 2015: 394). In 1998 a cease-fire was signed. We code the second start date with the formation of the BRA in 1988. According to Minahan (2002: 320), there were protests before that, but they were focused on the mine and not self-rule.
- A peace agreement was signed in 2001 which gave Bougainvilleans broad autonomy, but full implementation of the agreement is contingent on completion of a UN-sponsored weapons disposal program. A referendum on independence was also scheduled to be held within in 10-15 years. In 2005, the people elected the first autonomous government.
- Nationalists continued to make claims for a referendum on full independence. In November 2019, an independence referendum was conducted and over 98% of valid ballots were cast in favor of independence. On this basis, we code the movement as ongoing as of 2020 (Bougainville Freedom Fighters; Ghai & Regan 2006; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Lexis Nexis; Marshall & Gurr 2003; Minahan 1996, 2002, 2016; MAR; Regan & Griffin 2005; TRAC; CNN 2019; Minority Rights Group International). [start date 2: 1988; end date 2: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Two weeks before Papua New Guinea gained its independence from Australia in 1975, the Bougainville provincial government voted in favor of a separate state and proclaimed the independence of Bougainville (Republic of the North Solomons).
- Secessionism revived and resurfaced in 1988 when dissatisfaction over the limited benefits from the mining industries combined with protests against environmental degradation escalated and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) was established. Its goal was outright secession from the state of Papua New Guinea, as the declaration of independence in 1990 illustrates (Ghai & Regan 2006; Minahan 2002, UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia). In the peace process starting in mid-1997, the Bougainville movement was divided. One faction was led by Joseph Kabui and advocated secession. It was opposed by a coalition of groups that supported stronger autonomy within PNG and was led by John Momis. The two rival groups reached a compromise in June 1999 which involved dropping the demand for early independence in return for an agreement that this issue will be dealt with through a referendum among Bougainvilleans later on (Regan 2002; Ghai & Regan 2006). However, the claim for independence was never dropped; we hence continue to code independence as the dominant claim. The currently still active secessionist Bougainville Independence Movement, led by Francis Ona who has refused to join the peace process, has only limited popular support (Ghai & Regan 2006). However, despite agreeing on it, also moderate nationalists do not see autonomy as a lasting solution (Minahan 2002). We therefore code secession as the dominant claim throughout. We hereby follow Ghai & Regan (2006), who claim that the peace agreement was only reached because the PNG movement conceded that “the issue of independence would be kept alive and revisited through a referendum”. [independence claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date 1: 1969; end date 1: 1976; start date 2: 1988; end date 2: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Bougainvilleans consists of Bougainville island, which forms a part of the Solomon Islands archipelago in the southwestern Pacific Ocean (Minahan 2002: 317). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

- Two weeks before Papua New Guinea (PNG) gained its independence from Australia in 1975, the Bougainville provincial government voted in favor of a separate state (Republic of the North Solomons) and proclaimed the independence of Bougainville. Although, technically, the proclamation happened prior to independence, we code this event since PNG by that time had been effectively independent. [1975: independence declaration]
- In 1990 the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Interim Government again unilaterally declared independence (Ghai & Regan 2006; Minahan 2002; Minority Rights Group International). [1990: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- There were violent clashes in 1975. We found evidence of injuries but not casualties (Lexis Nexis).
- Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2019) code a civil war between 1988 and 1998. However, according to UCDP/PRIO the armed struggle was initiated only in 1989 (12 deaths) and only crossed the 25 deaths threshold for the first time in 1990. According to SSW, the number of killed between 1989 and 1998 exceeded 10,000 while UCDP/PRIO suggests a much lower number of battle-related deaths (300). The University of Central Arkansas conflict database, on the other hand, suggests a much higher figure (15,000), in keeping with SSW. The discrepancy appears to emerge as SSW also include indirect deaths due to famine and disease (Australian Parliament House n.d.). The latter report corroborates that violence started in 1988, picked up in 1989, and fully escalated in early 1990, after which PNG established a blockade (see below). (The report does not report specific casualty numbers). While the rebels did demand secession, the violence in the initial stages was mostly related to the Pangua mine. Based on this, we code HVIOLSD, in line with SSW, from 1988-1998.
- We found no evidence for separatist violence above the threshold after 1998. In 2006, there were 8 deaths attributed to the Bougainville Freedom Fighters, a new rebel group, but attacks were aimed at businessman Noah Musingku rather than government soldiers (ABC Premium News, 2006). [1975-1976: NVIOLSD; 1988-1998: HVIOLSD; 1999-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- After World War II, the islands of Bougainville and Buka, both former German colonies and occupied by Japanese forces during the war, were returned to Australian administration. Bougainville had already been ruled by the Australians in the interwar period (Minahan 2002).
- Exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation caused grievances among the Bougainvilleans, who opposed the mining operations stipulated in the 1967 Bougainville Copper Agreement (Minahan 2002).
- With independence within reach and protest against the highly centralized Australian colonial government and its mining industry increasing, there was growing talk about a possible secession of Bougainville from Papua New Guinea (PNG) or union with the Solomons. In 1968 nationalists proposed a referendum on the options available to the islands: independence, autonomy or union with the neighboring British Solomon Islands. The colonial government and the Constitutional Planning Committee refused to hold the referendum, but in response to increasing Bougainvillean nationalism responded by reluctantly recognizing the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government and by granting the island limited autonomy in 1973 (Ghai & Regan 2006; Minority Rights Group International). [1973: autonomy concession]

Concessions and restrictions

- Both the Australian as well as the soon to be Papua New Guinea (PNG)'s government rejected the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government's proclamation of independence (Unilateral Declaration of Independence of the Republic of North Solomons). So when PNG became independent a few days later, one of its first actions was the suspension of the provincial government of the North Solomons and withdrawal of any grant payments (Minahan 2002; Ghai & Regan 2000). [1975: autonomy restriction]
- In August 1976, Bougainville accepted PNG sovereignty and signed the 'Bougainville Agreement', which included constitutionally entrenched autonomy arrangements for Bougainville as the North Solomons Province within PNG (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 50; Laracy 1991; Momis 2005). The agreement was at least partially implemented, but it crucially did not provide Bougainvilleans with autonomy over mining affairs (Ghai & Regan 2002, 2006; Momis 2005; Regan 2017). [1976: autonomy concession]
- Mounting grievances over the rapid expansion of the mining industry made the pressure for

secession resurface in the late 1980s. As peaceful protests and demands for financial compensation were ignored, the Bougainvilleans rebelled. The recently-emerged Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) destroyed mining infrastructure and forced the closing of the Panguna copper mine in 1989. The national government responded with a total blockade of goods and services to the province in May 1990, which led to the unilateral declaration of independence of Bougainville by the BRA and the Bougainville Interim Government (Ghai & Regan 2006; Minahan 2002; Minority Rights Group International; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 51). The blockade was only lifted with the 1998 ceasefire (see below). [1990: autonomy restriction]

- When the PNG government changed in 1994, a new peace initiative was initiated. It included a ceasefire agreement, the deployment of the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force and the establishment of a Bougainville Transitional Government in March/April 1995 (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 51). We do not code this act since the BTG was appointed by the Papua New Guinean central government and with the BTG's Premier, Theodore Miriung, being murdered in 1996 the peace accord became a "complete failure" (UNPO).
- In 1998, a cease-fire was signed. Subsequently the economic blockade was lifted (which is not coded as a concession in line with the codebook). We found no evidence for a concession on autonomy apart from the lifting of the blockade (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 51).
- Under the Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001, the government forces had to withdraw from the island and the region of Bougainville was granted a high level of autonomy. Competencies were divided between the national government and the autonomous Bougainville government, while the latter was granted some sort of fiscal self-reliance. Furthermore, the PNG government established a Bougainville Provincial Government and agreed to a referendum on independence 10 to 15 years after the first autonomous Bougainville government was elected. The independence referendum was conducted in November 2019 and over 98% of valid ballots were cast in favor of independence (Minority Rights Group International; CNN 2019). [2001: autonomy concession; 2001: independence concession]
 - o Relatedly: In December 2004, a new constitution was adopted. It established Bougainville as an 'autonomous region' possessing 'higher autonomy' within PNG. This included wide-ranging powers with regard to all fields except defence, foreign affairs and finance (Minority Rights Group International).

Regional autonomy

- We code regional autonomy in 1975-1976 given that Bougainville was de-facto independent when PNG gained independence.
- With the 1976 'Bougainville Agreement', the PNG government offered constitutionally entrenched autonomy arrangements for Bougainville within Papua New Guinea. The offer was implemented (Ghai & Regan 2006), hence we code regional autonomy throughout. Note: in 1990-2001 we code autonomy because of de facto independence. [1975-1976; 1988-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

- Caspersen (2012) defines Bougainville as a de facto state from PNG independence in 1975 until the end of hostilities in 1997. In agreement with Caspersen, we code de facto independence in 1975-1976. Notably, de facto independence was already in place when PNG gained independence in 1975.
- We found no supporting evidence to suggest that Bougainville had de facto independence in 1977-1988. In August 1976, the Bougainville Agreement was signed between the government and secessionist leaders, which reintegrated Bougainville into PNG (Laracy 1991; Ghai and Anthony 2002; also see EPR). [1975-1976: de facto independence]
- In 1989, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) achieved control of much of the island (Laracy 1991: 55). De facto independence ended after the signing of a peace agreement in August 2001. [1990-2001: de facto independence]

Major territorial changes

- In 1975, Bougainville's autonomy was revoked and de facto independence established. [1975: revocation of regional autonomy, establishment of de facto independence, host change (new)]
- In 1976, de facto independence came to an end. [1976: revocation of de facto independence]
- [1976: establishment of regional autonomy]
- In 1989, there was again de facto independence, which lasted until 2001. [1989: establishment of de facto independence, 2001: end of de facto independence]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Bougainvilleans
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Bougainvilleans
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	91002000

Power access

- We follow EPR. Self-exclusion = powerless. [powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.034]
 - o This matches with Minahan (2002: 317), according to whom there were around 200,000 Bougainvilleans in 2002. Given the entire country's population of 5.66 million that same year (World Bank), this leads to 3.5%.

Regional concentration

- The Bougainvilleans are concentrated on the Bougainville Island (the Autonomous Region of Bougainville), where they make up 93% of the population (Minahan 2002: 317). This amounts to 188,000 Bougainvilleans (in 2002), which is more than 50% of the 200,000 Bougainvilleans in the whole of Papua New Guinea in that same year. [concentrated]

Kin

- The Minorities at Risk data codes the Bougainvilleans as having close kindred in the Solomon Islands (Melanesian Peoples). There are >500,000 Melanesians in Solomon Island. [kin in neighboring country]

Sources

ABC News (2006). "Five Killed in Bougainville Shoot-Out." November 22.
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2006-11-22/five-killed-in-bougainville-shoot-out/1315608> [June 21, 2014].

Amnesty International (1997). "Bougainville: The Forgotten Human Rights Tragedy."
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a9874.html> [March 2, 2014].

Australian House of Parliament (n.d.) "History of the Bougainville Conflict."

- https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/house_of_representatives_committees?url=jfadt/bougainville/bv_chap2.pdf [May 15, 2023].
- Bougainville Freedom Fighters (BFF). <http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/bougainville-freedom-fighters-bff> [December 12, 2013].
- Caspersen, Nina (2012). *Unrecognized States*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min (2010). "Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel: New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.
- CNN (2019). "Bougainville independence vote delivers emphatic demand to become world's newest nation." <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/12/11/asia/bougainville-papua-new-guinea-intl-hnk/index.html> [November 24, 2022].
- Ghai, Yash (2000). *Autonomy and Ethnicity: Negotiating Competing Claims in Multi-Ethnic States*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghai, Yash, and Anthony J. Regan (2000). "Bougainville and the Dialectics of Ethnicity, Autonomy and Separation." In: Yash Ghai (ed.), *Autonomy and Ethnicity. Negotiating Competing Claims in Multi-ethnic States*, 242-265. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghai, Yash, and Anthony J. Regan (2002). "Constitutional accommodation and conflict prevention." *Weaving consensus: The Papua New Guinea-Bougainville peace process*. London: Conciliation Resources Accord Series, pp. 12-16.
- Ghai, Yash, and Anthony J. Regan (2006). "Unitary State, Devolution, Autonomy, Secession: State Building and Nation Building in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea." *The Round Table* 95(386): 589-608.
- Hewitt, Christopher, and Tom Cheetham (2000). *Encyclopedia of Modern Separatist Movements*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, pp. 50-51.
- Laracy, Hugh (1991). "Bougainville secessionism." *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 92 (1): 53-59.
- Lexis Nexis. <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [December 10, 2013].
- Marshall, Monty G., and Ted R. Gurr (2003). *Peace and Conflict 2003: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements and Democracy*. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, p. 60.
- Minahan, James (1996). *Nations without States: A Historical Dictionary of Contemporary National Movements*. London: Greenwood Press, pp. 413-415.
- Minahan, James (2002). *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 317-322.
- Minahan, James (2016). *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations. Second Edition*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press.
- Minorities at Risk ,Project (2009). College Park, MD: University of Maryland.
- Minority Rights Group International. *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*. <http://www.minorityrights.org/4767/papua-new-guinea/bougainvilleans.html> [November 24, 2022].
- Momis, John Lawrence (2015). "Shaping leadership through Bougainville indigenous values and Catholic seminary training—A personal journey." *Bougainville before the conflict*. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 317-330.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1994). "E/CN.4/1994/60" <http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/3bf0b09b7e4ce38e802567370034d107?Opendocument> [March 2, 2014].
- Regan, Anthony J. (2002). "Resolving Two Dimensions of Conflict and Division: The Dynamics of Consent, Consensus and Compromise." In: Andy Carl, and Lorraine Garasu (eds.), *Accord: Weaving Consensus—The Papua New Guinea–Bougainville Peace Process*, 36-43. London: Conciliation Resources.
- Regan, Anthony J. (2017). "12. Bougainville: Origins of the Conflict, and Debating the Future of Large-Scale Mining." *Large-scale mines and local-level politics: Between New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 353-414.

- Regan, Anthony. J. and Helga-Maria Griffin (2015). *Bougainville before the Conflict*. Canberra: Pandanus Books.
- Roth, Christopher F. (2015). *Let's Split! A Complete Guide to Separatist Movements and Aspirant Nations, from Abkhazia to Zanzibar*. Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books.
- Sambanis, Nicholas, & Schulhofer-Wohl, Jonas (2019). "Sovereignty Rupture as a Central Concept in Quantitative Measures of Civil War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63(6): 1542–1578.
- Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (TRAC). Minority Rights Group International. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. <http://www.minorityrights.org/4767/papua-new-guinea/bougainvilleans.html> [June 18, 2014].
- University of Central Arkansas (n.d.). "Papua New Guinea/Bougainville (1975-present)." <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/asiapacific-region/papua-new-guineabougainville-1975-present/> [May 15, 2023].
- Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). "History of Bougainville." <http://unpo.org/article/34> [January 29, 2015].
- Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). *Conflict Encyclopedia*. <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=124&value=#> [November 24, 2022].
- Vogt, Manuel, Nils-Christian Bormann, Seraina Rüegger, Lars-Erik Cederman, Philipp Hunziker, and Luc Girardin (2015). "Integrating Data on Ethnicity, Geography, and Conflict: The Ethnic Power Relations Data Set Family." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59(7): 1327-1342.