



UNITED NATIONS  
*Office on Drugs and Crime*

**COCAINE TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA**  
**The threat to stability and development**  
(with special reference to Guinea-Bissau)

**DECEMBER 2007**

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared by the Research and Analysis Section and the Regional Office for Western and Central Africa of UNODC in the context of 'Data for Africa', the segment of UNODC's Trends Monitoring and Analysis Programme dedicated to Africa and funded by France and Sweden.

Research and drafting: Denis Destrebecq (Regional Monitoring Expert, Research and Analysis Section, based in Dakar) and Theodore Leggett (Research Expert, Research and Analysis Section), assisted by Phillip Sewing (Intern). Edited by Thibault le Pichon (Chief, Research and Analysis Section) and Antonio Mazzitelli (Representative, West and Central Africa Regional Office). Desktop publishing: Suzanne Kunnen (Research and Analysis Section).

UNODC reiterates its appreciation to the African and European Member States who responded to the UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire on drugs. This questionnaire, together with the UNODC data base on individual drug seizures, constitutes the core source of information on which this report was built. Comments and feedbacks can be addressed to <ras@unodc.org>.

The boundaries, names and designations used in all maps in this report do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

This report has not been formally edited

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1. A PATTERN OF REMARKABLE SEIZURES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>2. WHY IS COCAINE BEING TRAFFICKED HERE?</b> .....	<b>11</b>
POVERTY AND POLITICAL WEAKNESS .....	11
GUINEA BISSAU’S VULNERABILITY .....	12
NUMEROUS BUT POORLY RESOURCED POLICE IN GUINEA-BISSAU .....	14
AN INEFFICIENT JUSTICE SYSTEM.....	15
A DERELICT CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM .....	15
<b>3. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?</b> .....	<b>17</b>
SHIFT OF THE COCAINE MARKET FROM NORTH AMERICA TO EUROPE .....	17
HISTORIC ROLE OF WEST AFRICAN CRIME “NETWORKS” IN DRUG TRAFFICKING.....	18
<b>4. HOW IS IT BEING DONE?</b> .....	<b>19</b>
MARITIME SHIPMENTS .....	19
AIR SHIPMENTS.....	19
SOUTH AMERICANS AND WEST AFRICANS: WHO CONTROLS THE TRADE?.....	20
<b>5. WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE THE IMPACT?</b> .....	<b>23</b>
SOCIAL IMPACT .....	23
ECONOMIC IMPACT .....	24
GOVERNANCE IMPACT .....	29
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>ANNEX : PARTIES TO UN DRUGS AND CRIME CONVENTIONS</b> .....	<b>35</b>



## PREFACE

West Africa is under attack. With growing demand for cocaine in Europe, and improved security along traditional trafficking routes, criminals are now using West Africa as a hub for their illicit trade.

Countries like Guinea Bissau are off most people's radar screens. They are poor, weak, and yet not so unstable as to attract attention. This makes them a perfect cover for criminal groups.

As a result, in the past few years, the amount of cocaine moving from South America via West Africa to Europe has risen dramatically. In some cases, like Guinea Bissau, the value of the cocaine trafficked through the country may be greater than the entire national income.

With their low risk/high return business, drug traffickers can afford satellite phones, move around in fast boats and expensive cars, transfer money and information discreetly and buy protection. The mismatched police, who have low salaries that are seldom paid, lack phones, computers, and even electricity, have almost no ships to patrol a rugged coastline, and little fuel for their few police cars. The air-space is particularly vulnerable.

In a region already affected by poverty and pandemics, drug money is perverting fragile economies and rotting society. Using threats and bribes, drug traffickers are infiltrating state structures and operating with impunity. This is deepening fear and mistrust among and between senior officials and the public. There are also signs of drug addiction, adding a further tragedy to a region of Africa that has experienced so much turmoil in recent years.

The security implications for countries like Guinea Bissau go to the very core of the state's ability to maintain its sovereignty and integrity. There is a growing risk of some West African states being captured by foreign and local criminal networks colluding with senior officials, or even collapsing.

While the situation is most acute in Guinea Bissau today, it could also develop somewhere else in the region tomorrow unless resolute steps are taken quickly.

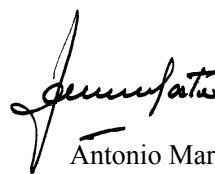
I welcome the attention that this issue is getting in the UN Security Council and among concerned donors. In the long term, Guinea Bissau needs development: greater amounts of aid provide the best safeguard. In the short-term, it needs urgent help to restore its sovereignty, for example through more effective patrolling of air, sea and land borders. Regional cooperation and international assistance are needed to provide the expertise, equipment, and information that can help Guinea Bissau and its neighbors detect illicit consignments, fight criminal networks, prevent money laundering, and bring traffickers to justice.

Assistance in policing and counter-narcotics is badly needed. Security sector reform could increase the capacity of the military to restore order rather than abetting criminals.

The backbone of the country's legal system needs to be strengthened to better administer justice, build integrity and uphold the rule of law. At the moment the country's legal system and its detention centers are in a sorry state. A few basics, like a financial intelligence unit, anti-corruption agency, modern prison, and better trained and paid judges could have a major impact.

Europeans can help by curbing their appetite for cocaine that is the main driver of this problem.

We cannot abandon Guinea Bissau to a fate of drugs and crime. By supporting courageous individuals, and bolstering key institutions, the country can be saved. There is still time to make the right choice.



Antonio Maria Costa

Executive Director

United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime*



Map No. 4242 UNITED NATIONS  
February 2005  
Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A declining US cocaine market and a rising European one appear to have prompted South American cocaine traffickers to make use of low-governance areas in West Africa as transit zones. Guinea-Bissau appears to be the epicentre of this phenomenon.
- At least 33 tons of cocaine have been seized on route to Europe via West Africa since 2005. Prior to that time, the entire continent combined rarely seized a ton.
- Most of this total was intercepted in just 23 large seizures, often accidental and partial seizures, indicating a much larger underlying flow.
- Based on an analysis of seizures in Europe where the origin was known, it is estimated that some 27% (or some 40 tons) of the cocaine consumed annually in Europe is presently transiting West Africa. This amount is worth about US\$ 1.8 billion at wholesale level.
- The entire national budget of the government of Guinea-Bissau is just about equal to the wholesale value of 2.5 tons of cocaine in Europe. The estimated budget for law enforcement is worth less than some of the largest seizures of the past two years. Given current resource limitations, it is difficult to see how local police can compete with organisations collectively making hundreds of millions of dollars per year.
- Even when arrested, international drug traffickers operating in West Africa are seldom sentenced. While West African cocaine peddlers are increasingly being arrested in Europe, there is no jail in Guinea-Bissau for international traffickers, mostly from Latin America, who handle multi-tons cocaine shipments.
- The impact of this drug flow on parts of West Africa could be considerable, depending on how the trafficking is organised. An influx of currency for drug purchases could distort local economies, and the attendant corruption threaten fragile political stability in some countries. The impact of this traffic is likely to be especially hard on countries with small economies, such as Guinea-Bissau.
- In post conflict and weakened countries like Guinea Bissau, reconstruction and development must start with the security and justice sector.
- International support is needed to help governments in West Africa establish justice and security as one of the cornerstones of their country's development.





## INTRODUCTION

In the last few months, United Nations officials have raised concerns about growing cocaine trafficking in West Africa and its potential impact on stability and development in that fragile region. At the 11<sup>th</sup> High-Level Meeting of Heads of United Nations Peace Missions in West Africa in November 2007, the Heads of Mission emphasised:

*... the crucial importance of addressing drug trafficking and organised crime in the West African sub-region. With regard to Guinea-Bissau, the Heads of Mission expressed concern about the alarming increase in drug trafficking and the threat posed to stability both in the country and in the sub-region at large.*

Guinea-Bissau in particular has been the subject of concern for some time, due to the relative weakness of that country and the evidence that it is being used as part of a major drug transshipment route. A report of the Secretary General presented to the Security Council on 28 September 2007 on Guinea-Bissau concludes:

*Drug trafficking threatens to subvert the nascent democratisation process of Guinea-Bissau, entrench organised crime and undermine respect for the rule of law.*

Cocaine is considered one of the two most dangerous drugs on the world market today (the other being heroin) and commands a market value estimated by UNODC at some US\$ 18 billion a year at the wholesale level, and US\$ 70 billion at the retail level<sup>1</sup>. Nearly all the world's cocaine comes from just three countries: Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Traditionally, Colombian traffickers have dominated transnational trafficking in cocaine, smuggling the drug to the most lucrative markets: via Central America and the Caribbean to the United States and across the Atlantic to Europe (directly from South America or via the Caribbean). Recent seizures indicate a new pivot-point in the trafficking route to Europe: West Africa.

In the three years between 2005 and 2007, some 33 tons of cocaine have been seized bound for Europe via West Africa. Prior to that time, seizures for the entire continent had rarely exceeded one ton annually. Something has shifted, recently and dramatically. This report describes this shift, its possible causes, and potential consequences.

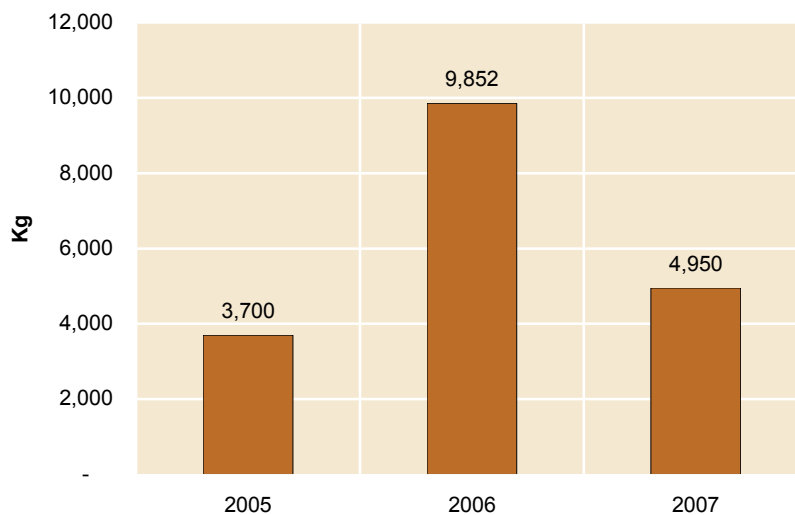


## 1. A PATTERN OF REMARKABLE SEIZURES

The recent cocaine seizures are being made by two entities: European law enforcement agencies operating in international waters and local African law enforcement agencies. The largest share of these seizures have happened on the high seas, although an increasing share is being encountered on African soil.

In the last three years, West European countries have made remarkable seizures of cocaine destined for or coming from the West African coast – some of the largest ever recorded in the world. Since these countries can dedicate only limited capacity to policing this vast region of ocean, it is likely that they are only scratching the surface. While maritime seizures linked to Africa and made by European law enforcement agencies are less in 2007 than the 2006 annual total, this is not believed to be indicative of any underlying trend, but rather representative of the spotty nature of interdiction in this area.

**Figure 1: Total of large cocaine seizures (above 100 kg) linked to Africa and made by European law enforcement agencies**

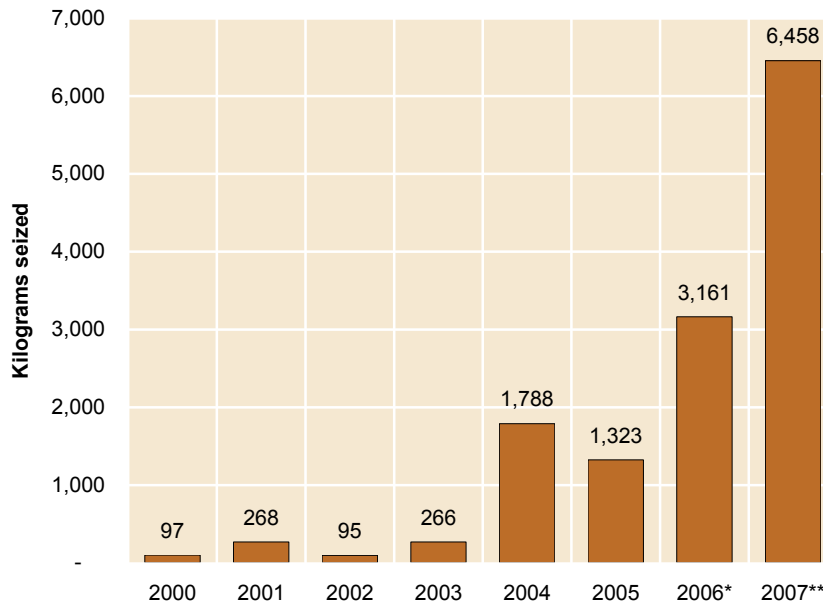


*Source: UNODC Individual Drug Seizures Database and Data for Africa*

Given the limited law enforcement capacities of many West African states, it is also likely that only a small share of the cocaine trafficked through these countries is detected. In fact, the circumstances surrounding the best documented seizures suggest that most are made by chance<sup>a</sup>, and that, in many instances, the amount seized was much less than the amount trafficked.<sup>b</sup> But, despite this under-capture, seizures on African soil have also increased dramatically. West African cocaine seizures were over 60 times higher in the first three quarters of 2007 than they were in the year of 2002. This would appear to be indicative of a dramatic increase in the underlying traffic.

<sup>a</sup> For example, in May 2007, the airport authorities in Nouadhibou, Mauritania noticed a group of people unloading a shipment from a small private plane. When they approached, the plane took off, leaving behind its load of cocaine. The plane later made an emergency landing on a road and the crew disappeared. In yet another example, in May 2006, the Ghanaian authorities seized 1.9 tons of cocaine after searching a van during a routine traffic stop.

<sup>b</sup> For example, a consignment of around 635 kg of cocaine was intercepted by the Judicial Police of Guinea-Bissau near the capital Bissau in April 2007. However, the traffickers escaped with the remainder of the consignment (believed to total around 2.5 tons) because police did not have the manpower or vehicles to give chase.

**Figure 2: Annual Cocaine Seizures in West Africa, 2000 – 2007**

Source: UNODC World Drug Report 2007, and UNODC 'Data for Africa' for 2006 and 2007 statistics

\* preliminary data for 2006 based on available data as of November 2007

\*\* from data collected by UNODC between January – November 2007

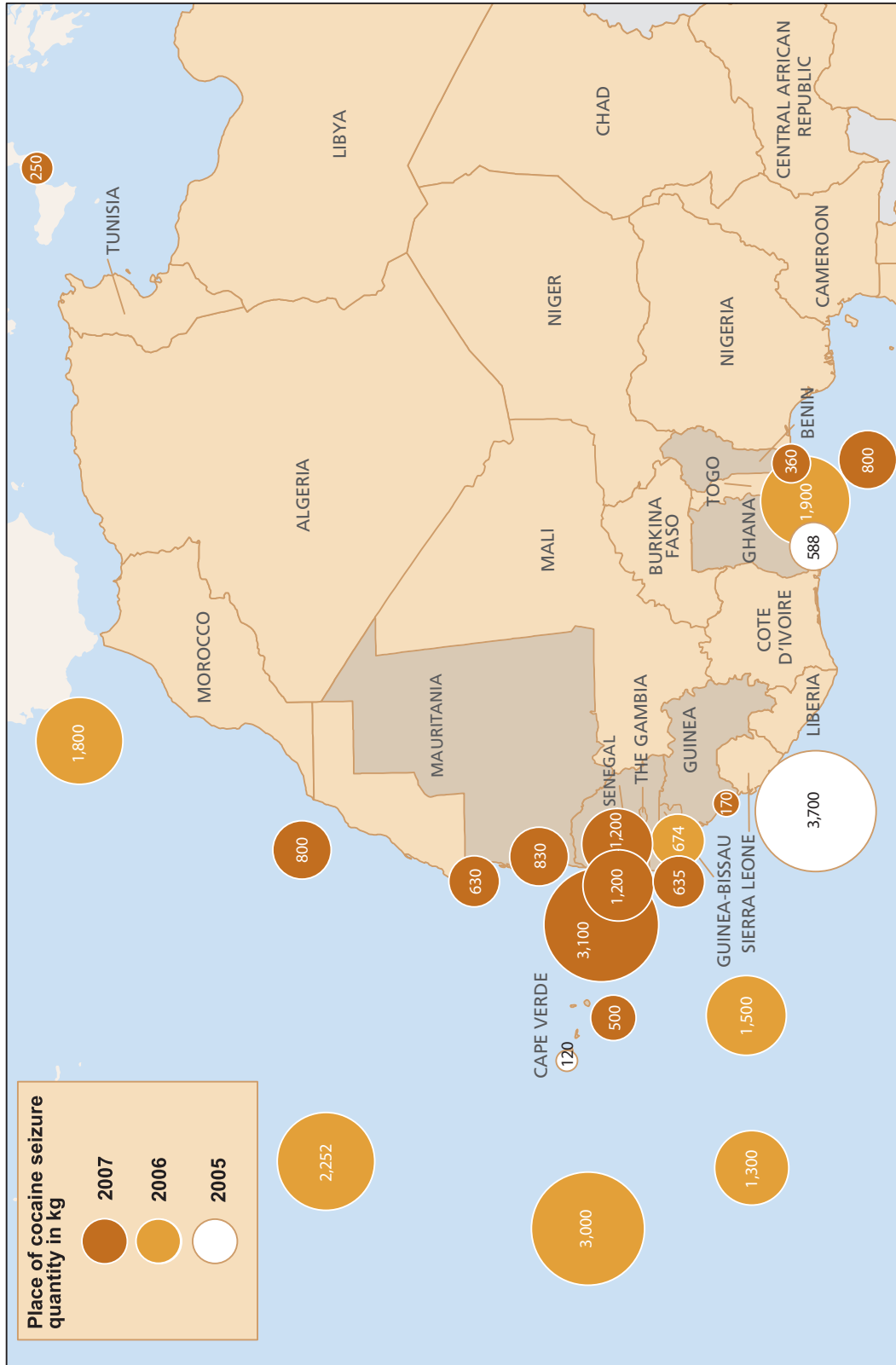
To put these figures in perspective, UNODC estimates that European cocaine demand is currently between 135 and 145 tons per year. Multi-ton seizures therefore represent a significant portion of total annual supply. The total of 13 tons seized off the coast of West Africa and on land in 2006 would be about 10% of cocaine consumed in Europe. Most of this massive amount was intercepted in just seven seizures – five at sea and two on the continent. It is likely that the un-seized flow represents a sizeable portion of Europe's cocaine supply.

#### **Box: Stumbling across cocaine in Senegal**

On 27 June 2007, a passer-by informed the Senegalese Gendarmerie about a boat, unknown to the local fishermen, in M'bour, a village south of Dakar. The Gendarmerie found the unanchored boat had washed ashore in front of Club Aldiana, 11 kilometers south of M'bour. In the boat were 50 sacks, each containing 20 bricks of cocaine. Each of the sacks weighed 24 kg, for a total load of about 1.2 tons. Rumor had it that the boat had broken down, and the owners had gone in search of a mechanic to fix the engine.

On 30 June 2007, another 1.25 tons of cocaine were seized from a walled, two-storey beach house close to the first seizure. In the garden was a semi-rigid pneumatic boat covered by a tarpaulin. Under the boat was a hidden concrete cellar containing another 51 bags of cocaine, identical to the first. Seven persons were arrested, including three Latin Americans and a French woman. The seizure was burned in August 2007 and the investigation is still underway.

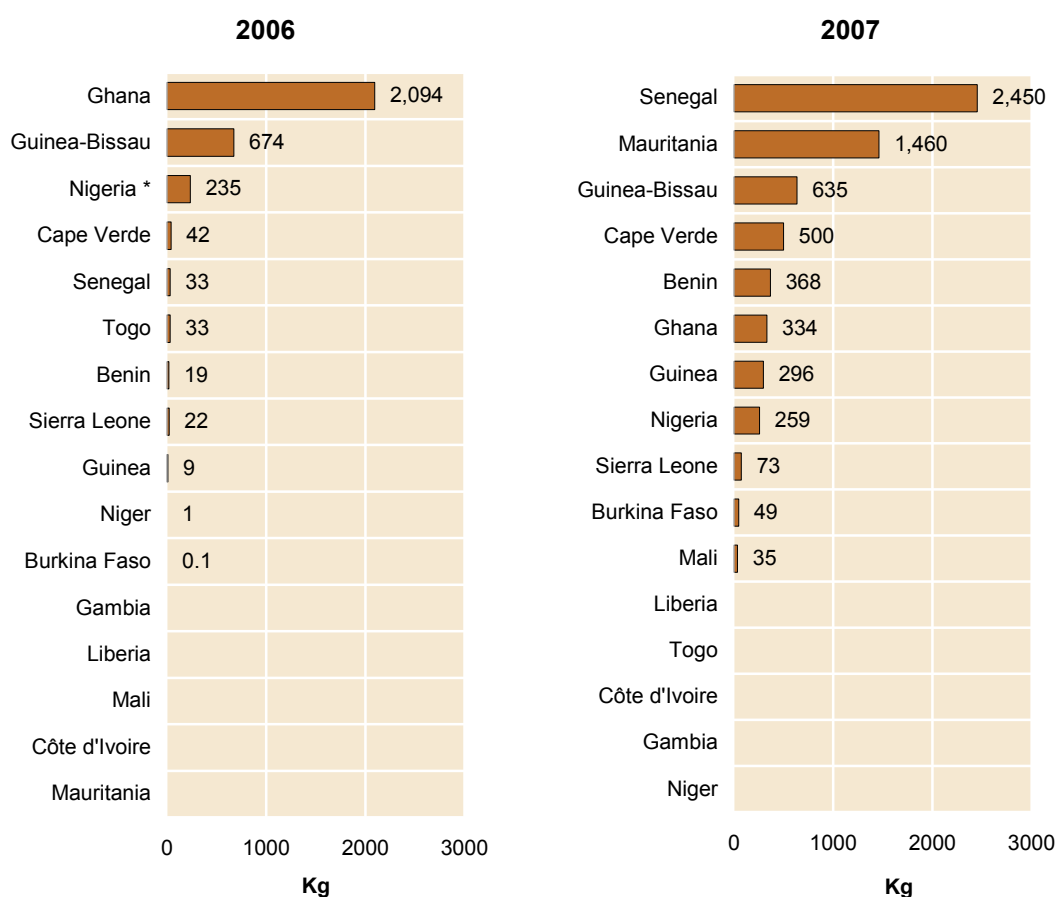
Large individual seizures (above 100 kg) linked to cocaine trafficking in Africa, 2005-2007



Source: UNODC  
 Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

While these seizures represent only a small share of the underlying traffic, their value can easily exceed the entire budgets of the local agencies assigned to interdiction. A kilogram of cocaine typically wholesales at around US\$ 46,700 in many of the key European markets. A ton would therefore be worth just under US\$ 50 million on reaching its destination, and double that amount at retail level. The entire GDP of a small country like Guinea-Bissau was only US\$ 304 million in 2006,<sup>2</sup> or the equivalent of six tons of cocaine at wholesale level in Europe. According to the IMF, the national budget of Guinea-Bissau in 2006 was equal to 41.3% of its GDP, or US\$125 million, slightly more than the wholesale value of two and an half ton of cocaine. Guinea-Bissau is an interesting case in point, because indications are that this country is particularly utilised by traffickers. While eight West African countries have seized more than 100 kg of cocaine in either of the last two years, Guinea-Bissau has done so in both of them. The particular vulnerability of this country, as well as the rest of the region, is discussed in the following section.

**Figure 3: Kilograms of cocaine seized in West African countries in 2006 and 2007**



\* Nigeria 2006: A seizure of a mixture of cocaine and cement totalling 14,200 kg was made in July 2006. The proportion of cocaine contained in the mixture is still unknown and the seizure is therefore not included in the annual total for Nigeria.

Source : ARQ 2006 and UNODC Individual Drug Seizures database (based on data received as of November 2007)

## 2. WHY IS COCAINE BEING TRAFFICKED HERE?

Many countries suffer the adverse effects of lying between the sites of drug production and the most lucrative consumption markets. For example, Central America and the Caribbean have long suffered for being placed between South America's cocaine producers and the cocaine users of North America. Similarly, South East Europe has been affected by heroin trafficked from Afghanistan to West Europe via the so-called "Balkan route". These countries have had to dedicate substantial resources to combating a problem starting and ending elsewhere.

At first glance, trafficking through West Africa appears to make little market sense. To make use of the region as a way station, traffickers must add kilometres and thus risk, to their traditional smuggling routes. There must be substantial incentives in favour of making this detour.

Most obviously, there is value in novelty – professional drug traffickers avoid interception by continually shifting operations away from routes known to law enforcement. But there are indications that in some instances, such as Guinea-Bissau, South American traffickers have actually relocated to the west coast of Africa, an unfamiliar territory for them. The investment they have made suggests that this is more than just fleeting slight-of-hand. Trafficking via West Africa apparently offers long-term advantages over more direct routings.

### Poverty and political weakness

These advantages are linked to poverty and political weakness in some countries. Drug trafficking can find a particularly favourable environment in under-governed regions, where the state is either too poor to assert authority or where insurgent groups have assumed some degree of control.

West Africa has suffered from the effects of a number of civil conflicts during the last decades. War and rapid social change have left large populations displaced and borders blurred. Conflict remains a serious threat in the region. Between 1998 and 2005, 35 armed groups have been active in ten West African countries: Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. While many of these groups have demobilized, many could re-emerge if conditions were favorable. Firearms proliferation in the region is considered to be very high, despite weapons destruction efforts. Between 1998 and 2004, personnel successfully collected or seized more than 200,000 small arms region-wide, at least 70,000 of which were subsequently destroyed, but this is believed to represent a small share of weapons on hand.<sup>3</sup>

Small arms proliferation is an acute problem in Guinea-Bissau, with many veterans of the country's war of independence against Portugal in the 1970s still holding their AK-47 assault rifles. As many as 10,000 small arms were distributed to civilians during the 1998–99 civil war, primarily Kalashnikov assault rifles of Ukrainian and Bulgarian origin, and handguns.<sup>4</sup> As a result, Guinea-Bissau's territory has often served as a weapons stockpile for the region, including, for example, for the rebels in Casamance.

Perhaps most importantly, the fact that governments are under-resourced and that some are unable to control properly their institutions, seriously limits the ability of many states to regulate their own territory. Uncertainties about long-term stability may encourage citizens, including public servants, to take whatever they can, even if it is not legal. The fact that key security personnel are underpaid, and often irregularly paid, contributes greatly to their vulnerability to corruption. Once a critical mass of law enforcement is taking bribes, it may become difficult, or even dangerous to remain honest. In a vicious cycle, citizen cooperation declines with each police failure, further undermining the ability of officials to do their jobs.

**Box: The case of the missing cocaine**

On 21 April 2006, the British Navy sighted a fishing trawler they suspected to be a Ghanaian vessel (the MV Benjamin) carrying a multi-ton consignment of cocaine in the Atlantic Ocean, heading towards the West African coast. They promptly relayed the information to the Ghanaian Narcotic Control Board and continued to monitor the vessel until it was 40 nautical miles south of Tema, the main sea port in Ghana, keeping the Ghanaian authorities apprised.

Unfortunately, the Ghanaian authorities did not take action until 27 April, six days after the tip-off from UK counterparts. The boat was searched, but only one bag of 30 kg of cocaine was found. At the request of the Ghanaian Minister of Interior, a fact finding commission was set up to establish the reason for the slow reaction time of the Ghanaian authorities and the small amount of cocaine seized. The committee established that the boat was actually carrying 77 bags, or about 2.3 tons of cocaine. The head of the national drug control committee resigned after this incident and criminal proceedings are pending.

The capacity of honest law enforcement may be so limited that little can be done to counter sophisticated organised crime. Police forces in this region often lack basic equipment, such as vehicles, petrol, communications technology, handcuffs, and even office supplies. They may be insufficiently trained to build a case that will withstand a serious attempt at cross-examination. An overburdened judiciary or corrupt judges can undermine even the best police work, and convictions may be limited by the capacity of the corrections system to receive them.

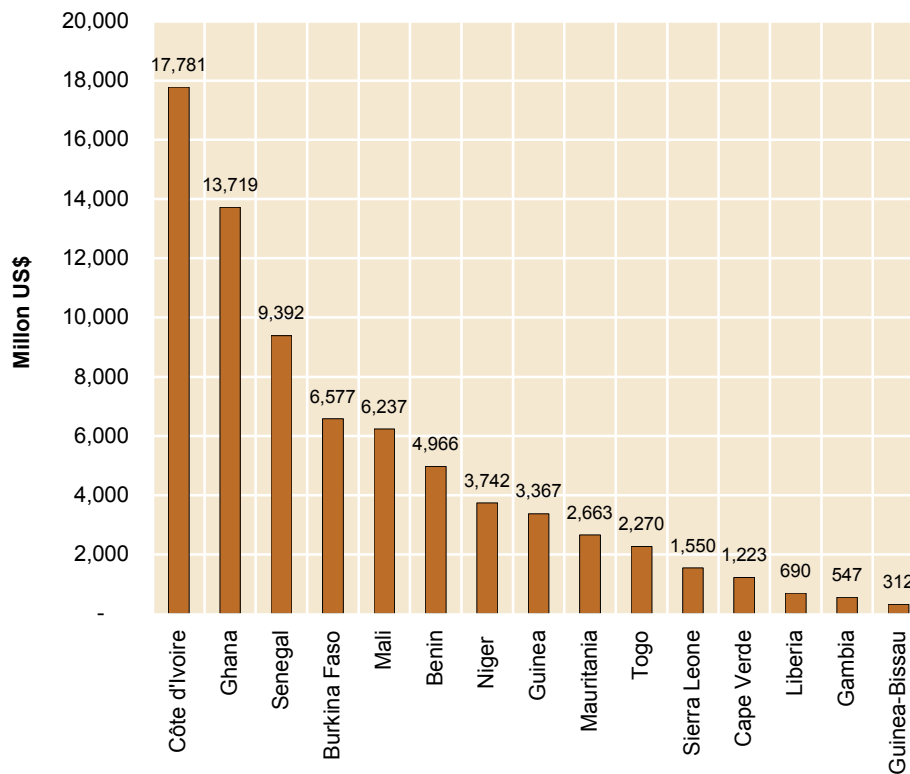
**Guinea Bissau's vulnerability**

In terms of vulnerability, Guinea Bissau faces serious challenges. First, it is one of the smallest and one of the poorest countries in a poor region: its population is about 1.6 million<sup>5</sup> and GDP per capita (PPP) was estimated at just US\$722 in 2004<sup>6</sup> (compared with an average of US\$ 1946 in Sub-Saharan Africa and US\$ 1350 for all least developed countries). As mentioned above, the national budget of Guinea-Bissau is worth about the same as the wholesale value of two tons and a half of cocaine in Europe. The primary source of foreign exchange is export of cashew nuts, mainly to India, but this crop is commanding low prices this year. In addition, late rains have seriously jeopardised agricultural production in 2007, raising fears of famine.<sup>7</sup> Lack of resources mean that government employees, including police personnel, have gone unpaid.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of language and cultural ties is often underestimated in assessing traffickers' choice of transit countries and Guinea Bissau shares a language and cultural links with Brazil, Cape Verde, and Portugal – all key points in the trafficking of cocaine to Europe. Guinea-Bissau has so far received relatively little international attention in comparison to similarly troubled areas such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. In order to draw on regional supports, it took on French as an official language in 1979, despite the fact that the language is not widely spoken in the country, and adopted the CFA franc in 1997.



Figure 4: Forecast 2007 GDPs of Western African countries (except Nigeria)



Source: World Bank and IMF 2007

Guinea Bissau also has a history of conflict and military rule – the government has changed hands more often by coup than by elections, the most recent coup being in 2003. The present president, João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira, was both a coup perpetrator and a coup victim in the past. He was ousted in 1999 after having accused the General Ansumane Mané of trafficking arms to Casamance, plunging the country into “11 months of armed clashes with ethnic and criminal undertones in which at least 15,000 civilians and soldiers died.”<sup>9</sup> Under these circumstances, the ability of the executive to challenge some military leaders, despite repeated allegations of involvement in drug trafficking, may be limited.

The capital city, Bissau, is a port town, the coastal areas include mangrove swamps, and the country encompasses a large number of small islands in the Bijagós Archipelago with their own landing strips, which are used by traffickers. In August, in response to increasing reports on the landing of unidentified aircraft suspected of transporting cocaine, the Chief of General Staff announced the deployment of anti-aircraft artillery in the archipelago<sup>10</sup> and the army seized 8,700 liters of jet fuel from the island of Bubaque.



Map No. 4063 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS  
June 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

## Numerous but poorly resourced police in Guinea-Bissau

It might appear as a paradox that one of the poorest countries in Western Africa also has a relatively large armed force. The ratio of troops to population between 1999 and 2004 was 10 times the ECOWAS average ratio of the region<sup>11</sup>. This is a legacy of the liberation war fought against the Portuguese between 1963 and 1974, as well as of the civil war of 1998-99 and the subsequent governments' inability to tackle military reform. Many ex-rebels integrated the army pay roll but most of the army personnel remain untrained and under-equipped.

At the end of the 1999 civil war, there were 17,000 uniformed military and police personnel in Guinea Bissau. The military budget for Guinea-Bissau amounted to US\$ 7.5 million in 2003, with most soldiers paid just US\$ 400 per year<sup>12</sup>. Between 2003 and 2005, the army demobilized 7,782 persons and a military census recorded 5,100 personnel in full-time active service in May 2005. Relative to the size of its population, the country remains however one of the most militarized in West Africa.

For policing the country, in 2006, Guinea-Bissau had about 3,000 gendarmes under the Ministry of Defense for rural areas and 1,500 policemen under the Ministry of Interior<sup>13</sup>. The combined total of about 4,500 personnel gives a ratio of 284 law enforcement officers per 100,000 citizens. This ratio is one of the highest in Western Africa and is only slightly below the European average (346 police officers per 100,000 citizens).

The gendarmes have however a poor disciplinary record and there are plans to downsize their staff to 1,200 personnel under the 2007-2009 security sector reform plan. This will bring the police

ratio down to around 190 personnel per 100,000 citizens, which will still be among the highest in Western Africa<sup>c</sup>.

Even if paid low wages, a relatively large police force creates a financial burden on the law enforcement budget and reduces funding available for investigations and operational activities. Some missions of the police continue to be understaffed and under-resourced. The judicial police in charge of drug control has only 60 agents, a single vehicle<sup>14</sup> and often no fuel to use it.

## **An Inefficient Justice system**

Cocaine traffickers tend to operate according to rational principles aimed at minimizing their risks and maximizing their profits. Traffickers face two main types of risks: economic risks and judicial risks. Traffickers risk financial losses when their drug loads are seized or when criminal business partners default on their obligations, resulting in the use of violence. As far as judicial risks are concerned, if arrested, traffickers will normally face criminal prosecution and sanctions. In a transnational context, however, and particularly in Western Africa, the risk of prosecution is often mitigated by loopholes in national legislations that hinder international judicial cooperation.

The judicial risks appear especially low in Guinea-Bissau, which makes the country all the more attractive for illegal activities. Like many other state institutions, the judicial system in Guinea-Bissau lacks sufficient resources and trained personnel who could fend off corruption attempts.

The facts surrounding two major hauls of cocaine in Guinea-Bissau are particularly telling in this respect. In September 2006, the former head of the judicial police, Mr. Orlando da Silva, announced the seizure of 674 kg of cocaine after police received a tip-off from Interpol. The drugs had been smuggled into the country using a military air-strip. Military officers transferred the seized drugs from the facilities of the Judicial Police to a safe in the Ministry of Finance, from which they subsequently disappeared. The two Colombian traffickers arrested were later released by a judge, never to be seen again, with no legal reason given for their release. The Minister of Justice later described the decision as “regrettable”. Investigations into the involvement of several high-level officials in the government of the former prime minister are pending.

In April 2007, another 635 kg were seized from two military officers. It is believed that there were another two tons of drugs, but the interception was not complete as the judicial police did not have vehicles to give chase. As army personnel, the two officers came under military jurisdiction. To this day, there is no information available regarding their prosecution.

According to Interior Minister Baciro Dabo, “High-level state authorities are implicated in drug trafficking...”<sup>15</sup> High-ranking officers have also publicly admitted the involvement of some military officials in drug trafficking. One judge lamented, “The military has impunity and we have no protection.”<sup>16</sup> According to Reporters Without Borders, journalists who have reported on drug trafficking have reportedly been threatened by senior military officials<sup>17</sup>.

The Head of the Judicial Police, Mr. Orlando da Silva, and his principal investigator had been praised by the international community for their work against drug trafficking. They received death threats and were summarily dismissed in June 2007. The proposed successor to Mr. da Silva declined the job<sup>18</sup>.

## **A derelict correctional system**

Particularly troubling is the state of the correctional system and its impact on the other justice sectors. Following the total destruction of the only prison in Guinea Bissau during the armed conflict of 1998, none of the remaining detention facilities in Bissau meets the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and other relevant international norms.

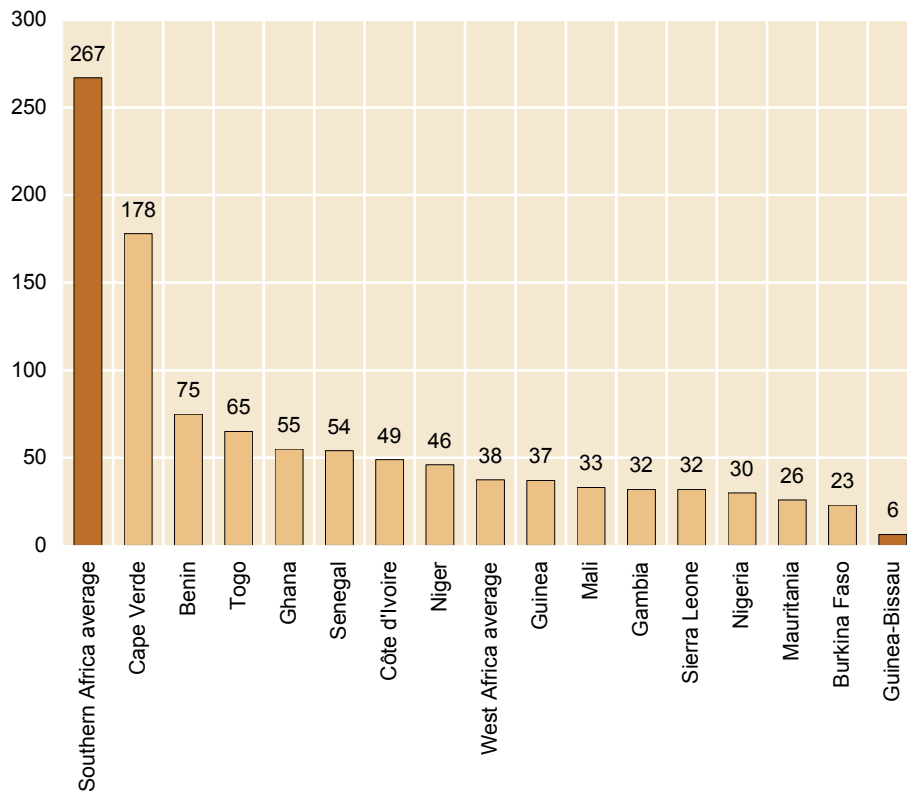
---

<sup>c</sup> Based on available data on police personnel in Western Africa, two countries would have higher ratio of police officers than Guinea-Bissau: Mauritania (307 per 100,000 citizens) and Nigeria (268 police officers per 100,000 citizens).

Police staff without corrections training are required to man the holding cells in which detainees are held. In the absence of prison facilities, judges may expediently refrain from passing jail sentences on offenders who have been proven guilty, or shy away from handing down severe sentences against dangerous offenders who might easily take vengeance upon them.

In January 2006, 101 offenders and suspects were held in detention, of whom 22 were sentenced and 79 awaiting trial. This represents an inmate population of 6 persons per 100,000 inhabitants, which is by far the lowest rate in the region. According to the International Center for Prison Studies and excluding Guinea-Bissau, the average for Western African countries is 38 persons per 100,000.

**Figure 5: Inmates per 100,000 population in West Africa**



Source: International Centre for Prison Studies<sup>19</sup> and UNODC for Guinea-Bissau

Females accounted for five of the 22 sentenced individuals held; four out of the five female inmates were of Nigerian nationality. In October 2007, in the central detention facility in Bissau, a UNODC mission found 36 prisoners being held in extremely poor conditions. Over half of the inmates were awaiting trial for serious crimes such as armed robbery and murder and several were foreigners. There are no facilities to detain juvenile offenders separately and in some cases men and women are held within the same facility. There is no adequate system of prisoner records. A visit to a rural detention center also found offenders incarcerated under poor conditions and again without the effective maintenance of records. For the poor Treasury of Guinea-Bissau, running a prison is a luxury the state cannot really afford.

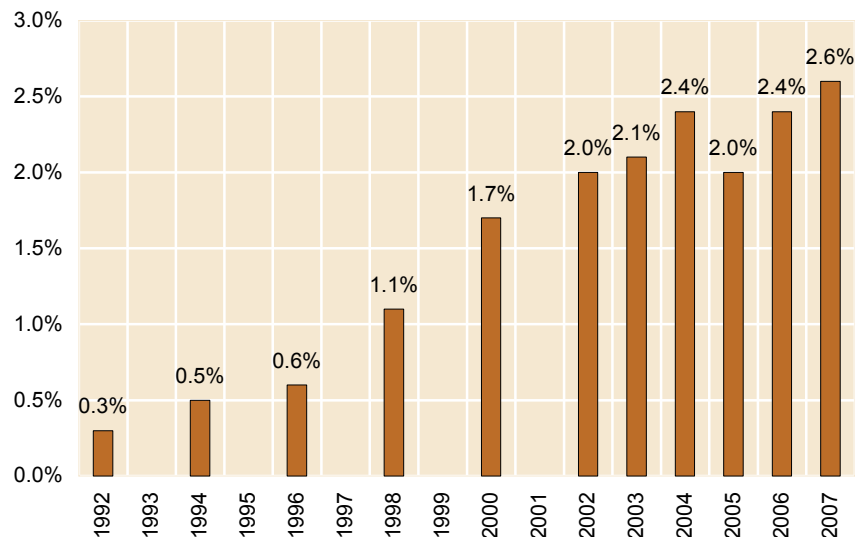
### 3. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?

#### Shift of the cocaine market from North America to Europe

Global cocaine markets are in flux. Since the mid-1980s, cocaine has been losing its appeal in the United States. Adult cocaine prevalence is currently 50% lower than it was two decades ago.<sup>20</sup> In the face of declining demand in the premiere market, cocaine traffickers have had to find new consumers elsewhere.

They found these new users in West Europe. From the mid-1990s, cocaine markets in several European countries began to grow. In some areas, cocaine has become the club drug of choice, as ecstasy and related substances become passé. For example, according to the British Crime Survey, the prevalence of cocaine use increased more than four-fold in the last decade, from 0.6% of the adult population in 1996 to 2.6 in 2007. Spain, Italy, and France have all seen cocaine use levels double or triple in recent years.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 6: Share of the adult population of the United Kingdom that uses cocaine annually**



Source: British Crime Survey

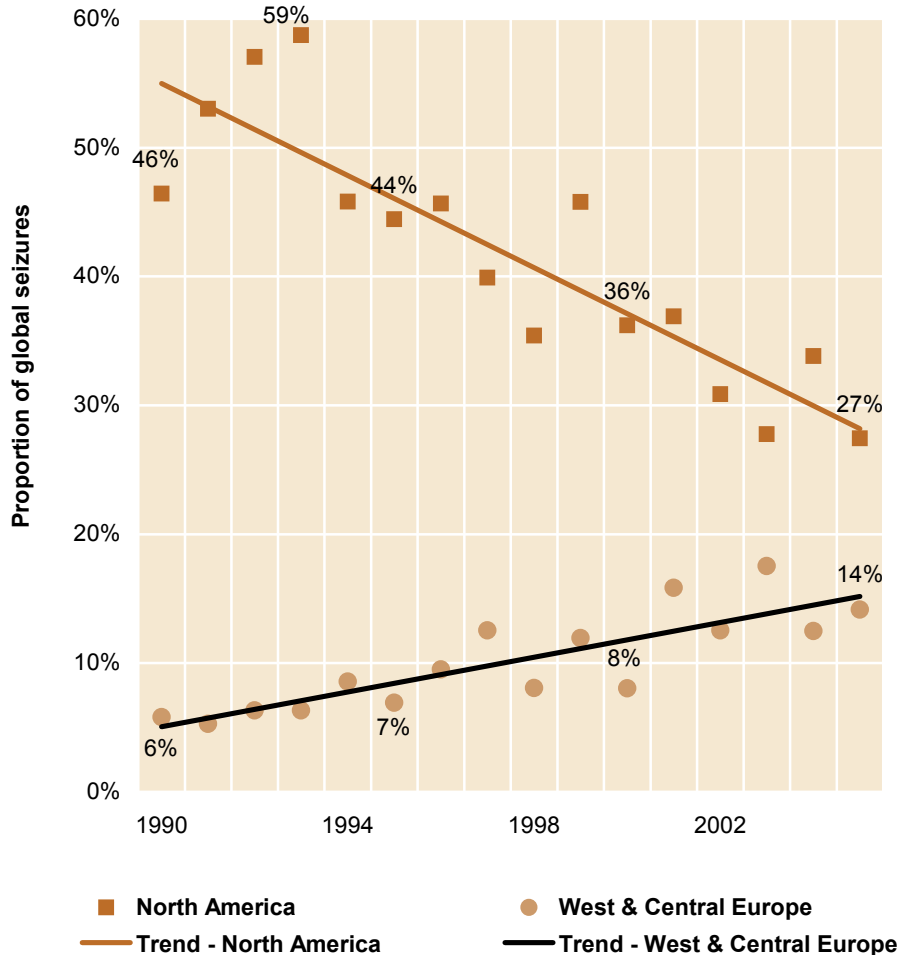
As a result, a growing share of total cocaine production is shifting from markets in North America to markets in West Europe, as reflected in the seizure figures (Figure 7). The declining value of the US dollar relative to the Euro may also be affecting traffickers' choices of preferred markets.

Another important factor is interdiction. After years of effort, the governments of the Western Hemisphere have scored significant gains in stopping cocaine supply to the United States. The crackdown on cartel leaders by President Calderon's administration in Mexico appears to have significantly affected trafficking.<sup>22</sup> Increased law enforcement, among other things, has scored several record cocaine seizures and significantly hindered fast boat traffic.<sup>d</sup> For the first time, a cocaine drought has been witnessed in 38 U.S. cities, causing prices to double.<sup>23</sup> While predictions

<sup>d</sup> In March 2007, the U.S. Coast Guard seized more than 20 tons of cocaine off Panama's Pacific coast. In April, Colombian authorities discovered 13 tons of cocaine buried near the coastal town of Pizarro. In October, authorities seized 10 metric tons of cocaine in the northern Mexican city of Tampico. Later in the month, authorities seized 26 tons of cocaine from a ship in the port city of Manzanillo. See 'Mexico calls cocaine seizure biggest in nation's history'. The Associated Press, 1 November 2007.

are that cocaine supply to the U.S. will soon be resumed,<sup>24</sup> traffickers may be increasingly following the path of least resistance.

**Figure 7: Share of global cocaine seizures made in North America and West/Central Europe**



### Historic role of West African crime “networks” in drug trafficking

Finally, there is the historic role that nationals of West Africa have played in global cocaine and heroin markets. As will be discussed further below, West African crime “networks” have long been key players in supplying cocaine to many European countries. While the relationship remains unclear, it is difficult to believe that there is no connection between the fact that West Africans are key cocaine distributors in Europe and the selection of West Africa as a staging ground for cocaine importation.

## 4. HOW IS IT BEING DONE?

What can be learned from the major seizures about the way that cocaine is being moved from South America to West Africa and from there to West Europe? With regard to the leg between South America and West Africa, it appears that both *sea* and *air* traffic are involved.

### Maritime Shipments

The maritime shipments tend to involve large commercial fishing or freight “mother ships”, often specially modified for cocaine storage. These same ships are likely to ply the other maritime routes to Europe. According to a September 2007 report from Europol:

*Three main sea routes to Europe have been identified: the Northern route, leading from the Caribbean via the Azores to Portugal and Spain; the Central route from South America via Cape Verde or Madeira and the Canary Islands to Europe and, more recently, the African route from South America to Western Africa and from there to Spain and Portugal.*

These ships discharge their cargo at sea to fishing vessels from the West African coast. According to Europol, the crews of these smaller vessels are West African, with Spanish or South American “controllers”.<sup>25</sup>

### Air Shipments

Air shipments have also been detected, often using relatively small aircraft modified for the trans-Atlantic voyage by the inclusion of additional fuel tanks. Seizures of these craft have been made in both South America<sup>e</sup> and in Africa.<sup>f</sup>

**Picture 1: The Dual-engine Cessna 441 aircraft used to fly cocaine from Venezuela to Mauritania in May 2007**



photo : Interpol IRT mission to Mauritania

<sup>e</sup> On 10 July 2007, in Venezuela of 2.5 tons of cocaine were seized. The traffickers were loading the drug in a private plane bound for Sierra Leone.

<sup>f</sup> On 1 May 2007, in Mauritania 630 kg of cocaine compressed into bricks were seized on board a 2-engine Cessna 441 aircraft. The GPS-record of the aircraft revealed the plane had left a small airstrip in Venezuela. In July 2007, the Moroccan Narcotic Control Board reported the seizures of similar cocaine bricks.



## South Americans and West Africans: who controls the trade?

Once on African soil, it is unclear what share remains in control of South American<sup>g</sup> organised crime groups and what share is transferred to West African<sup>h</sup> or European groups. There are several possibilities. South American nationals are known to have relocated to some West African countries,<sup>26</sup> and seizures in Africa have revealed large stockpiles.<sup>i</sup> It is possible that, in light of continued pressure in South America, trafficking organisations have relocated some share of their wholesale distribution to West Africa. In other words, some locations in West Africa may have emerged as open markets for cocaine, where a large range of agents can buy at low prices, taking upon themselves the risk of further onward transport to destination markets.

There are indications that pressures in South America are forcing traffickers to relocate other aspects of the trade. Several cocaine labs, which convert cocaine base into the useable drug, were detected in Portugal and Spain in 2006,<sup>27</sup> and it has even been suggested that cocaine processing is occurring in West Africa<sup>j</sup>. If traffickers are willing to move portions of the manufacturing process across the Atlantic due to more favourable conditions, the relocation of part of the wholesale market appears plausible.

**Picture 2: Seizure of 1,900 kg of cocaine in the small coastal village of Phrampan in May 2006, Ghana**



*Picture: Ghanaian authorities*

Alternatively, it is possible that South American groups are merely using parts of the vulnerable West African coast as a staging area for storage, repackaging, and re-routing of the drugs, while still retaining ownership and control of the drug until it arrives in Europe. In this scenario, West African involvement could be kept to a minimum, beyond a few labourers and a handful of corrupt officials.

Most likely, a combination of these two scenarios is the case. Similar to the relationship between Colombian traffickers and Mexican couriers in the past, it may be that South American groups are

<sup>g</sup> Comprised of, especially, individuals from Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil.

<sup>h</sup> Comprised of, especially, individuals from Nigeria and Ghana.

<sup>i</sup> For example, the seizure of 1,900 kg of cocaine on the small coastal village of Phrampan in May 2006, revealed the use of Ghana as a stockpiling place in Western Africa

<sup>j</sup> Information communicated to UNODC during a meeting of International Drug Liaison Officers organized in 2006



employing West Africans to accept and protect cocaine shipments in West Africa, and perhaps to transport some share of the drugs to Europe, paying for these services in cocaine. This would result in two parallel systems of importation to Europe: one involving larger quantities remaining in South American control, and one involving smaller quantities owned by West Africans. The former would more likely be maritime and the latter would probably involve a large number of couriers on commercial air flights, a favoured technique of West African groups world-wide.

The contention that a large number of players are involved in transporting the cocaine from West Africa to West Europe is supported by the diversity in technique detected in seizures. Some cocaine departs West Africa by again going to sea. Some goes directly by courier or air cargo on air flights from West African to European cities. But there is evidence of both land<sup>k</sup> and air<sup>l</sup> transport to North Africa before proceeding to Europe by sea or by air.

This latter routing may involve Moroccan nationals, who have gained smuggling expertise through years of trafficking hashish. In the past, Morocco's cannabis farmers were the source of an estimated 80% of Europe's hashish demand, but a number of developments in recent years may have undermined this market. First, a combination of interdiction and bad weather seriously reduced both the number of hectares under cultivation and the hashish yield of those hectares. In 2003, UNODC and the Moroccan government did a survey of the hashish-producing areas of the country and found 134,000 hectares under cultivation.<sup>28</sup> Similar surveys conducted over the next two years found a decline to 72,500 hectares in 2005. In addition, there are indications that West Europeans are increasingly using herbal cannabis produced indoors in Europe, which is actually more potent than Moroccan hashish.<sup>29</sup> Europol has recently confirmed that former hashish smuggling routes are being used by cocaine traffickers.<sup>m</sup> Large amounts of cocaine have been seized from fast boats departing from Morocco.<sup>n</sup> Growing numbers of Moroccans have been arrested for cocaine trafficking in some European countries.

Air couriers, departing from West African or North African cities, have been detected in great numbers, both in Africa and in Europe. Based on an analysis of 452 cocaine seizures reported from 11 airports of four European Countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and France) between June 2006 and September 2007, 26% of the cocaine seized originated from Africa in 2006. This percentage doubled to 46% in the first three quarters of 2007.<sup>30</sup> Between June 2006 and October 2007, a total of 641 kg of cocaine was seized on flights from Africa in these 11 European airports. Out of this total, 597 kg (93%) was seized on flights from West African countries. Tripoli and Casablanca were frequently used as transit points.

---

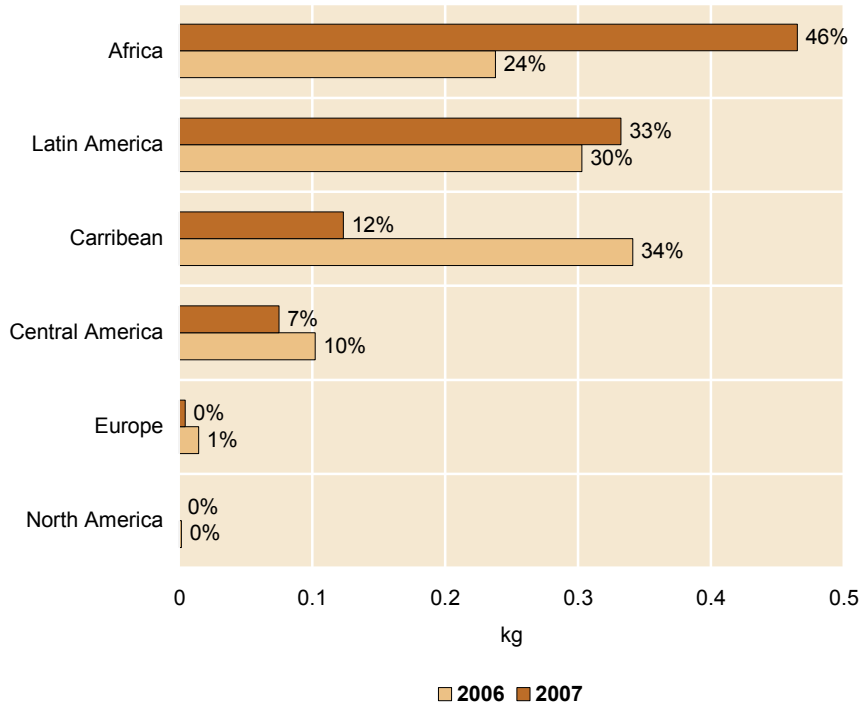
<sup>k</sup> In May 2006, 28 kg of cocaine were seized in Morocco from a French citizen. The drug was concealed in a four-wheel drive vehicle, which the perpetrator had driven from Senegal via Mauritania to Morocco. The vehicle was registered in Guinea Bissau.

<sup>l</sup> On 21 June 2007, 800 kg of cocaine was found by the Spanish authorities on a plane forced to land in the Canary Islands. The plane had departed from an unknown location in the Sahara, in the north of Mauritania.

<sup>m</sup> According to Europol, "Recent information confirms the existence of overland cocaine smuggling routes from Western to Northern Africa to link up with traditional cannabis smuggling routes into the European Union, benefiting of the logistics and know-how of well-established cannabis trafficking groups." Europol 2007 op cit, p. 4.

<sup>n</sup> For example, on 30 December 2006, the Spanish Navy intercepted a go-fast boat off the coast of Galicia. The boat had left Casablanca, in Morocco, a few days earlier and rallied with a boat coming from Latin America. Some three tons of cocaine were transferred to the go-fast boat, but most of it was dumped into the sea when the boat was spotted by the Spanish authorities. Eventually, the operation led to the seizure of 1.8 tons of cocaine and the arrests of 28 people in Galicia. During the investigation, the Spanish Police established that Moroccan traffickers were involved.

**Figure 8: Region of origin of the cocaine seized in 11 European airports between June 2006 and September 2007**



Source: *Illicit Drug Seizures in Relations to European Airport - IDEAS*

A typical West African air courier tactic is the so-called “shotgun approach”. Large numbers of couriers are placed on board a single flight, with the knowledge that customs officers only have the capacity to arrest and process a limited number of them. Losses are anticipated, and even planned, but the bottom-line remains viable. There have been recent instances of this approach utilising West African couriers departing from West Africa for Europe with cocaine.<sup>o</sup>

Indeed, the greater availability and lower cost of body couriers in West Africa may also be a factor in the shift of the market to the continent. At considerable risk to their health, African body-packers appear to be willing to ingest larger loads than their counterparts from other parts of the world, symptomatic of the poverty of the region. Based on data collected from 13 EU airports from mid-2006, 47% of detected air couriers were African. Among body couriers, the Africans ingested an average just over a kilogram, 25% more than the non-Africans. Given the weaker economies of the region, African couriers are also likely to charge less for their services.

Whoever owns the cocaine when it enters Europe, much of it is likely to be returned to West African hands for distribution. West Africans remain a prominent part of the cocaine distribution apparatus in a number of West European countries. It would be odd if all of the drugs were transiting West Africa in South American hands, only to be sold on arrival in Europe to West Africans.

<sup>o</sup> In December 2006, the Dutch authorities arrested 32 couriers on the same plane. The couriers had left Guinea-Bissau, transited Casablanca and landed at Schiphol airport. Out of the 32 couriers, 28 were Nigerians. In July 2007, 16 couriers were arrested on the weekly flight between the Gambia and the Netherlands. Eight couriers were arrested at Banjul airport before departure and eight other persons were arrested at Schiphol airport on arrival. The couriers were mostly Nigerians with residency in Europe. On 23 October 2007, another 22 swallows were arrested on the flight from Bamako to Tripoli to Schiphol, of which 19 were Nigerian, two were nationals of Mali and one was a national of Liberia. Of these, 18 were resident in Spain, two in Greece, one in Nigeria and one in Italy.

## 5. WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE THE IMPACT?

The impacts of cocaine trafficking and related corruption can be divided into three categories: social, economic, and governance-related.

### Social impact

The most likely short-term social impact of cocaine trafficking would be an increase in local drug use rates. Unfortunately, data on the use of cocaine in Western Africa is very limited. No survey has ever been conducted to estimate the prevalence of cocaine use among the general population. UNODC has supported a few surveys on the abuse of drugs in schools and populations deemed at risk, but it remains difficult to generalize on the basis of this data.

Data on the use of cocaine in Western Africa mostly come from three sources: the Annual Report Questionnaire returned by Member States to UNODC, some qualitative studies, and the analysis of data from drug treatment centers. From these three sources, it is possible to see that cocaine is used to some degree in Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Use of older data (2000-2004) also suggests use in Benin and the Gambia. Press reports have also indicated some use of cocaine in Guinea-Bissau. But in all these instances, it is impossible to say how serious or widespread the problem is at present.

According to the opinion of national experts, elicited in the Annual Reports Questionnaire, cocaine use among the general population was increasing in Senegal and Guinea-Conakry in 2005, whereas the situation was reported as stable in Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The use of crack was reported in Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia.

Still, treatment data show very few people presenting for help with cocaine problems, with cannabis continuing to dominate demand for rehabilitative services.

**Table 1: Share of patients presenting with cocaine as their primary drug of abuse in West African treatment centres**

Country	Proportion naming cocaine as primary drug of abuse	Sample
Burkina Faso	5%	275 users from 28 institutions
Senegal	2%	202 users from 3 institutions
Nigeria	2%	925 users from 25 institutions
Ghana	1%	1531 users from 3 institutions

Source: UNODC Global Assessment Programme

In any case, if the flow through the region is highly organised, it is unlikely that much cocaine will be “spilled” into local markets, as there are strong economic incentives to bring as much of the drug as possible to its highest value destination – West Europe. West African organised crime networks, being very profit-oriented, generally shun drug use, so there may be some protections against cocaine use spreading in the region. If, on the other hand, there is truly a local wholesale market in which a range of players are acting as middlemen and couriers, the risk of a local drug use problem developing is much greater.

In order to project the probable social impact of drug trafficking on the region, there is a need for hard data on the extent of local drug use, as well as more detail on the nature of the trafficking groups involved.

## Economic impact

The routing of cocaine through West Africa is probably too recent an occurrence for any economic impact to be measurable yet. All evidence suggests that the traffic only began to take off in the last few years, and many of the current social indicators are based on data older than that. But there are a number of curious data trends in the region, and projections can be made based on similar experiences in other parts of the world.

In the short run, drug trafficking could result in an unexplained influx of currency to the region. Just how much money is involved depends on the details of how the market is organised. As discussed above, it is possible that South American groups are retaining ownership of the drugs until they enter Europe. If so, only a few local workers would need to be paid for tasks like loading and re-packaging, and a few key officials bribed. South American expatriates would stimulate the economy to some degree by their presence and spending, but in the end, the impact could be minimal.

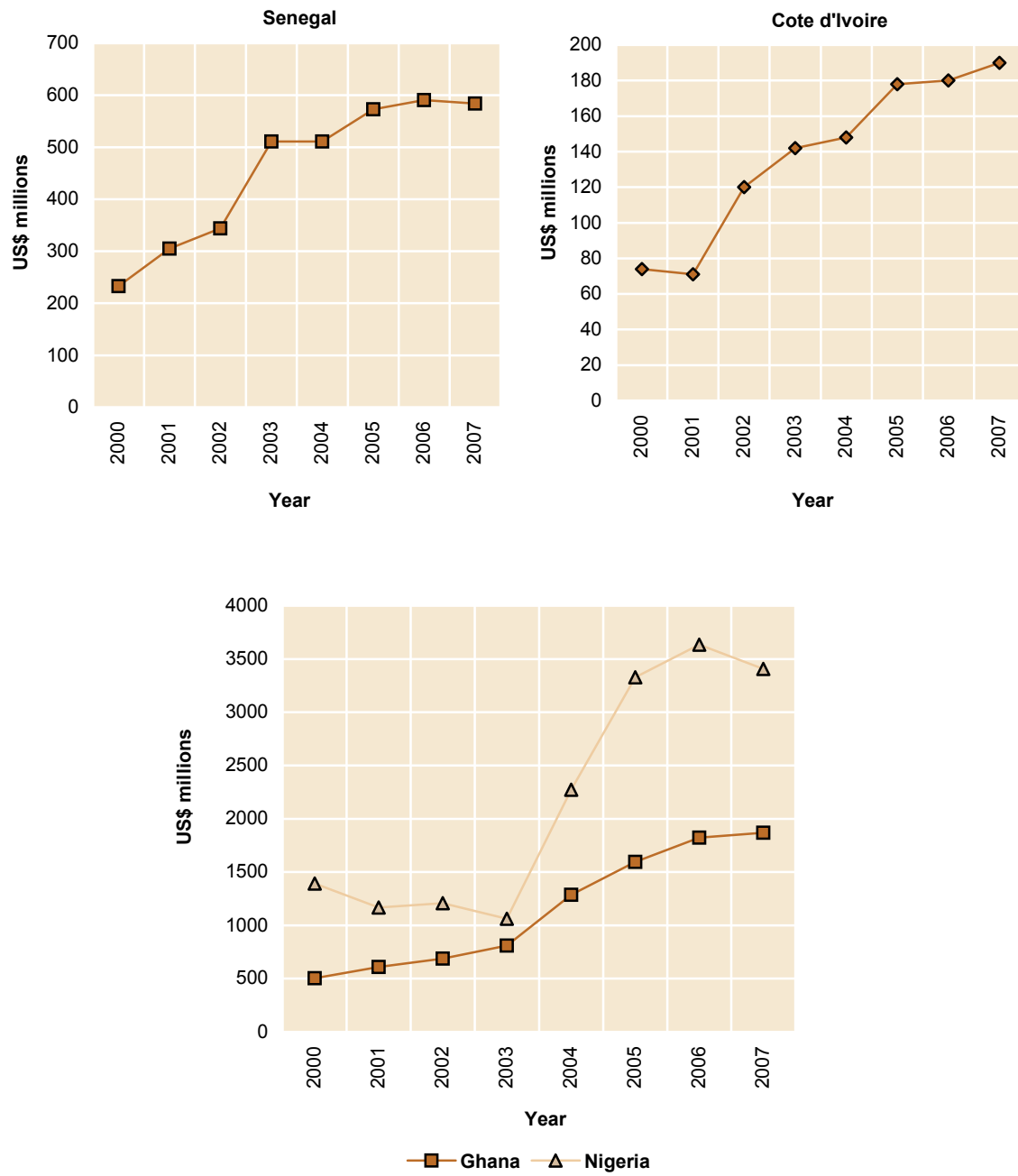
On the other hand, if parts of the region have become active as open wholesale markets, the influx of money could be considerable. Proceeds of drug sales in Europe would have to be transferred to the region in order to pay for more drugs. This could be done through wire transfers (remittances), though bogus commercial investments and transactions, or through the movement of bulk cash. While risky in such a volatile area, genuine investment of illicit money in licit businesses could occur. Some of this activity is likely to be captured in the recorded economy.

Even if, as is likely to be the case, the truth lies between these two extremes, there might be macroeconomic indications that a high-value commodity has entered the region and that well-heeled players have emerged in local markets. A few recent local data anomalies might already be indicating this new presence.

### *Unexplained increases of cash remittances*

First, reported cash remittances from Europe have increased dramatically in recent years in a number of West African countries. This is best seen in the larger countries with better developed accounting systems. In Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, there has been a doubling or tripling of remittances in the past several years. While all these countries have large expatriate populations, this sudden growth is difficult to explain. If part of the European wholesale market for cocaine has indeed moved from Colombia to West Africa, the movement of large amounts of hard currency to the region, representing the proceeds of retail cocaine sales reinvested in future supplies, would be expected.

Figure 9: Worker remittances, actual and estimates

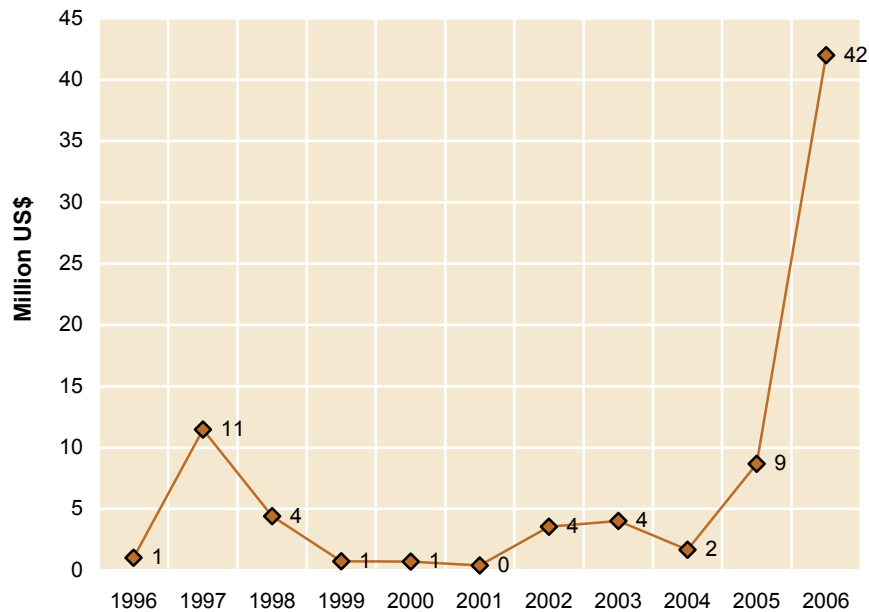


Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, World Data and IMF/IBRD

### *Sudden increase of Foreign Direct Investment in Guinea Bissau*

Aside from wire transfers, drug money could be moved into the region through business transactions, perhaps showing up as foreign direct investment (FDI). After years of little or no FDI, Guinea-Bissau suddenly attracted US\$ 42 million in 2006, equal to nearly a sixth of GDP. Unlike remittances, FDI can suddenly jump as a result of a small number of transactions, so more detail is needed on this sudden increase. While this may, in fact, be legitimate investment, the matter merits further investigation.

**Figure 10: Foreign Direct Investment in Guinea-Bissau**

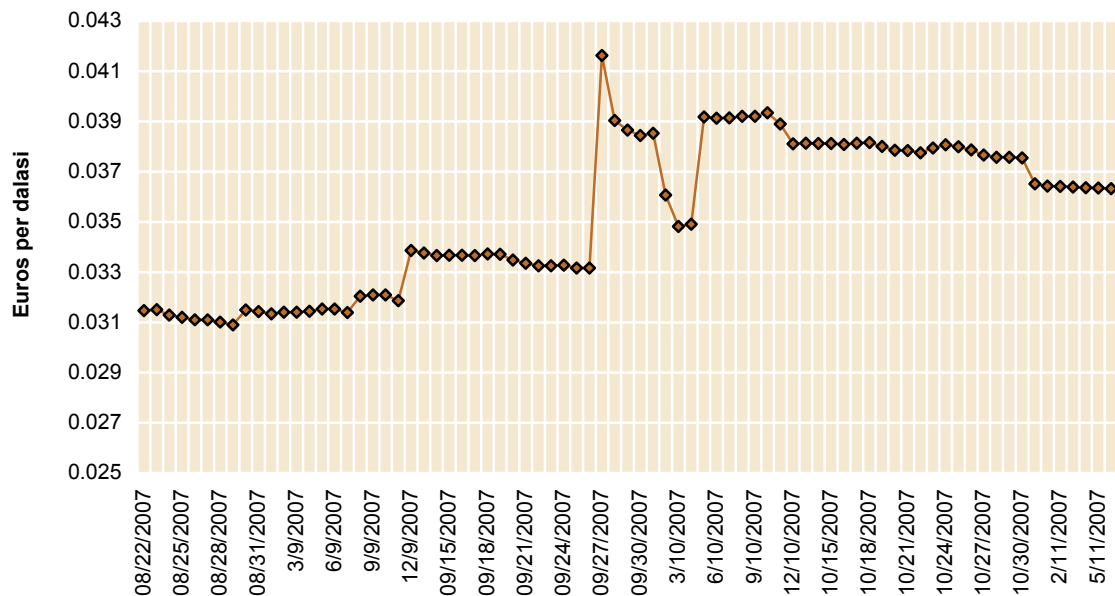


Source: UNCTAD

### *Appreciation of local currencies : the intriguing case of the Gambian Dalasi*

One possible effect of a sudden influx of money into an area could be an appreciation in the value of the local currency. Many of the economies of the region are extremely small, with GDPs of less than US\$ 3 billion annually. Some of these countries are members of the *Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine* or the *Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale* and so use their respective versions of the CFA Franc.<sup>31</sup> Other countries have economies too large for sudden influxes to have much impact, such as Nigeria and Ghana. But others, such as Gambia, are both small and maintain their own currency.

The Gambian currency, the Dalasi, after years of declines, has experienced a rapid appreciation of its value since the end of July 2007 which has left economists and local analysts baffled. The appreciation has been most remarkable between 26 and 27 of September 2007, where the Dalasi increased 25.9% in value against the dollar in one single day (see graph). Between mid-July and the beginning of November 2007, the Gambian currency had appreciated 37.9% against the dollar, 31.1% against the Euro and 34.5% against the British pound. This could be due to speculation or legitimate investment, but it could also be due to money laundering.

**Figure 11: Value of Gambian Dalasi in Euros (August – November 2007)**

Source: OANDA

The consequences of a rapid appreciation in currency are mixed. Exports would be harmed, as they become more expensive to foreign buyers and thus less competitive. Tourism, one of the country's main foreign exchange earners, would similarly be adversely affected. On the up side, imports should become cheaper, resulting in lower consumer prices on these items. The short term consequences of the appreciation of the Dalasi appear to have been negative, though, as the goods market is responding slower than the capital market, and lay-offs in the tourism sector have been seen.

It remains speculative whether these sudden increase in remittances or the appreciation of the Dalasi have anything to do with criminal activity, but these possibilities do highlight the kinds of financial instability that can be wrought, especially on small countries, by the sudden influx of criminal money. At its worst, drug money can create a kind of "Dutch disease", in which a sudden influx of money can cripple local industry by causing the local currency to appreciate and thus making exports less competitive.

### *Estimating the volume and value of the cocaine flow*

To evaluate this risk, it is necessary to estimate the volume of the total flow of cocaine through this region. According to UNODC estimates, about four million people used cocaine in West Europe in 2005, and on average it is estimated that cocaine users consume about 36 g of cocaine per year. Based on these figures, European cocaine users would consume a total of about 146 tons of cocaine per year.

What share of this flow transits West Africa? One way of answering this question is to look at those large cocaine seizures where the source of the drug was known. In 2006, the government of Spain (which is the primary entry point of cocaine in Europe and leads Europe in cocaine seizures) provided UNODC with information on 900 cocaine seizures, totaling 33.5 tons. Out of these seizures, data on the origin or the transit routes of the consignment could be established for 892 seizures, totaling 27 tons of cocaine,<sup>32</sup> equal to 49% of the volume of all cocaine seized in Spain. Some 29% of this volume transited Africa. Looking at similar data from other countries (France, Germany, Belgium, Italy), it is possible to estimate that about 27% of the cocaine that entered Europe in 2006 transited Africa.

Twenty-seven percent of Europe's 146 ton cocaine supply is 40 tons. With an average wholesale value of US\$ 46,700 in Europe, the value of these 40 tons to importers would be US\$ 1.8 billion. Compared to other illicit activities like local trading in cannabis-herb or smuggling of migrants to Europe, trafficking of cocaine appears to generate the largest market value. UNODC estimates the market for smuggling human beings from Western Africa to Europe in transfer fees alone could be on the order of US\$ 300 million each year<sup>33</sup>. The Western African market for cannabis-herb, based on an estimated regional production of 3,500 tons<sup>34</sup> sold at a typical price of US\$ 0.17/g<sup>35</sup>, would amount to slightly less than US\$ 600 million.

**Figure 12: Value of various illicit activities affecting Western Africa**



Source: UNODC

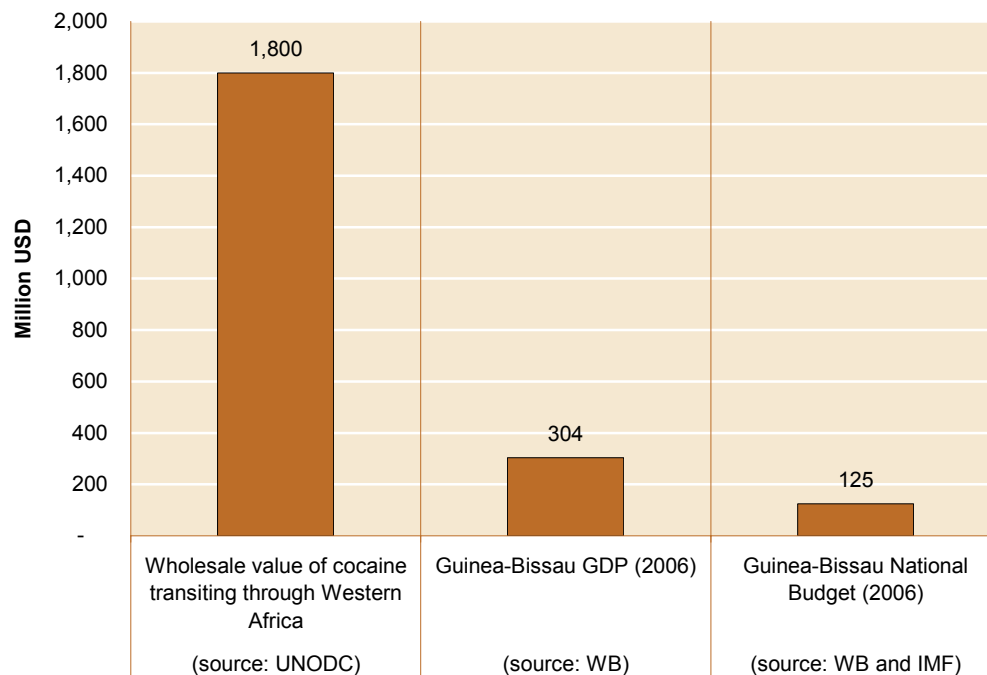
The trafficking of cannabis-herb and the smuggling of migrants across the region not only generate smaller illicit revenues than cocaine trafficking, but these revenues are also spread out among many small players. By contrast, due to the logistics required to traffic cocaine across the Atlantic, the illicit revenues of cocaine trafficking are likely to remain concentrated among fewer criminal networks that have thus larger amounts at their disposal for corrupting national administrations.

This is not to say that cocaine traffickers could readily have at their disposal the total market value. In fact, the share of this total wholesale value of cocaine that accrues to traffickers is unclear, but studies of the books of traffickers seized in law enforcement investigation in the Western hemisphere suggest a profit margin of 25% on the wholesale price, which, in this case, would represent US\$ 450 million annually. Profits would be greater if the traffickers also retailed the drug, as some West African networks are known to do.

If Guinea-Bissau spent 5% of its budget on law enforcement (a large share, but similar to that spent by the Ministry of the Interior of Nigeria), it would still have only about US\$ 6 million to fund all its police missions (including drug interdiction). This highlights the enormous difficulties the Government is facing to offset the activities of cocaine traffickers making hundreds of millions of dollars in profits each year. Although the entire profit margin of cocaine trafficking is unlikely to stay in Africa, its mere size is enormous compared to the licit production and the state revenue of small countries like Guinea-Bissau. In 2006, the GDP for Guinea-Bissau was estimated at US\$ 304 million and the Guinea-Bissau National budget (including credit) was US\$ 125 million.



**Figure 13: Guinea-Bissau: GDP, national budget, foreign direct investment and value of cocaine trafficking in Western Africa**



Source: UNODC, World Bank and IMF

## Governance impact

Whatever the macroeconomic effects, drug flows of this magnitude are highly likely to result in the higher incidence of corruption of law enforcement and the consequent undermining of the rule of law. In countries like Guinea-Bissau, there are repeated allegations that high ranking officials in government and the military are complicit in drug trafficking, and there have been a number of questionable judicial and executive decisions that appear to be corruption-related. Corruption of this sort cannot but undermine the already tenuous confidence many citizens of the region have in their governments.

Based on the international indicators, many of the countries of the region can scarcely afford to suffer a further loss in credibility. The World Bank creates quantified governance ratings for countries throughout the world.<sup>36</sup> Six separate governance indices are compiled, covering Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and the Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. Governance ratings for countries in West Africa are generally not high, with few countries scoring about the international average for most indicators.

*Rule of Law*

In terms of rule of law, a number of countries in the region score in the bottom 10%, including Guinea-Bissau.

*Political stability*

With regard to political stability, there was considerable variation among the countries of the region in 2006, with Cape Verde being rated more stable than the OECD average and Guinea, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire scoring in the bottom 10%.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was founded by the Sudanese-born telecommunications entrepreneur of the same name. In cooperation with academics from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Governance, it also publishes a set of composite governance indicators, but only for African countries. These figures place Guinea-Bissau last in the overall governance ratings, and second to the last for rule of law/corruption, above Liberia. But while Liberia's score remained stable between 2000 and 2005, Guinea-Bissau was previously ranked much higher, and has seen the most marked decline over the five years.

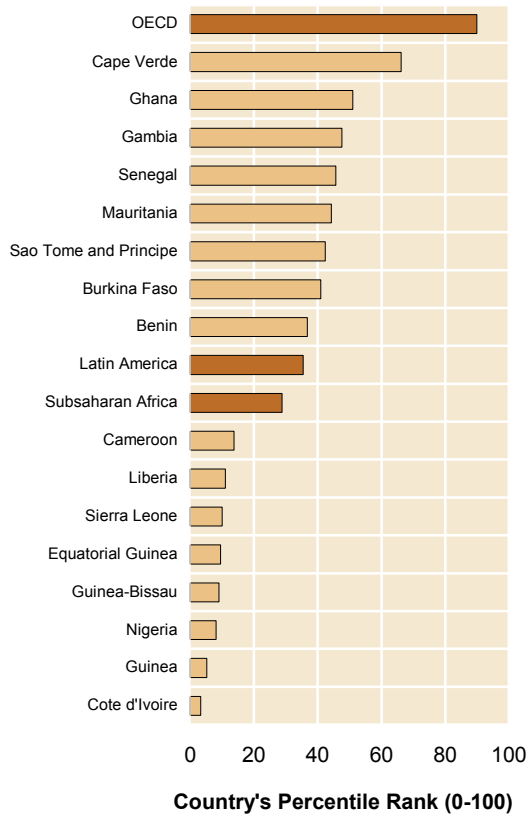
*Civil liberties*

There have been significant instances of interference with the freedom of the press by some officials in Guinea Bissau, related to media reports on drug trafficking and alleged related corruption in the military. According to the report of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the mission to Guinea-Bissau in September 2007:

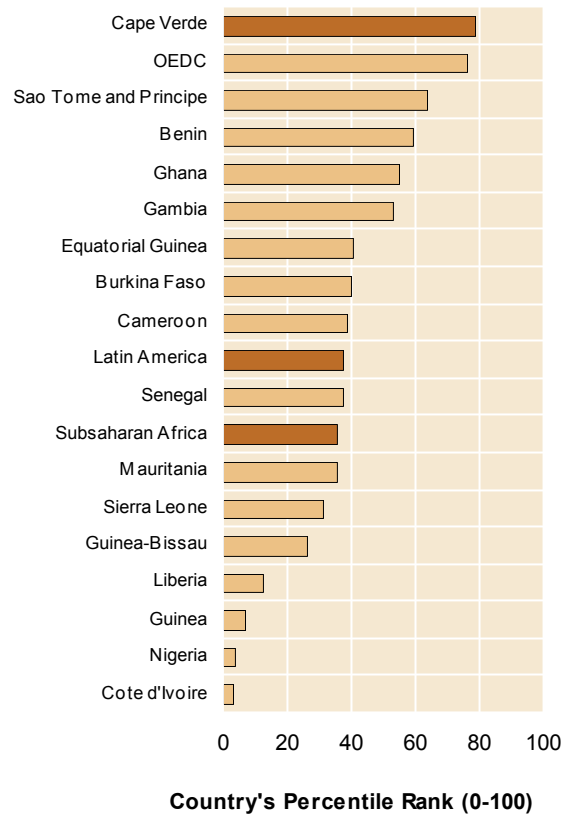
*The period from July to August 2007 was marked by tensions over concerns by civil society organizations regarding what they saw as pressures relating to freedom of the press and freedom of expression in connection with their reports on drug trafficking.*<sup>37</sup>

A November 2007 report from Reporters Without Borders recounts how journalists have received death threats from senior military officials.<sup>38</sup> Human rights can quickly become a casualty when drug traffickers are calling the tune.

**Figure 14: World Bank 2006 Rule of Law rankings**

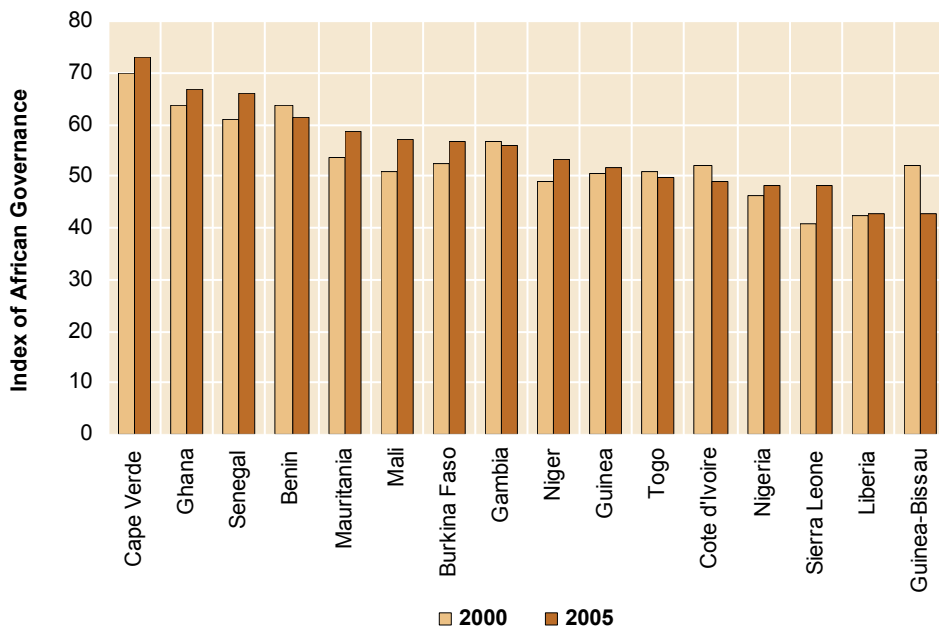


**Figure 15: World Bank 2006 Political Stability rankings**



Source: World Bank

**Figure 16: Overall Index of African Governance, 2000 and 2005**



Source: Mo Ibrahim Index of Governance 2007



## CONCLUSION

Cocaine is not the only illicit drug trafficked through West Africa, and drug trafficking is not the only transnational criminal venture expanding in the region. Criminal networks based in West Africa have also been trafficking human beings, small arms, light weapons or natural resources, and been involved in the smuggling of migrants, counterfeiting, e-fraud or the illegal dumping of toxic wastes.

Although there is no reliable estimate of the amount of dirty money reinvested in West African countries, the amounts can be considerable. Criminals, however, do not invest with the objective of generating productive and sustainable employment and wealth. Their investments are aimed at securing impunity for themselves, through the corruption of weak state institutions and, if necessary, the use of violence.

Approaches and solutions to the problem of drug trafficking and, more generally, to criminal activities in West Africa must be holistic. Strengthening border and territorial controls, law enforcement agencies' operational capabilities, legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms against organized crime, money laundering and corruption are all measures required to restore the authority of the state and the rule of law. Sustaining their effects will however require in-depth reforms of the criminal justice sector and, in the case of post conflict countries, of the security sector.

Socioeconomic development is also key for rebuilding countries like Guinea Bissau, but development assistance must reach its intended beneficiaries. Complete transparency and strict accountability is required in the allocation and use of development assistance.

In post conflict and weakened countries like Guinea Bissau, reconstruction must start with the security and justice sectors and be accompanied by economic investments. International support is needed to help governments in the region firmly establish justice and security as one of the cornerstones of their countries' development.



**ANNEX : PARTIES TO UN DRUGS AND CRIME CONVENTIONS**

(as of 2 November 2007)

Country	Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961 <sup>a</sup>	Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971	Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988	Convention against Corruption	Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
Benin	*	*	*	*	*
Burkina Faso	*	*	*	*	*
Cape Verde	*	*	*		*
Côte d'Ivoire	*	*	*		
Gambia	*	*	*		*
Ghana	*	*	*	*	
Guinea	*	*	*		*
Guinea-Bissau	*	*	*	*	*
Liberia	*		*	*	*
Mali	*	*	*		*
Mauritania	*	*	*	*	*
Niger	*	*	*		*
Nigeria	*	*	*	*	*
Senegal	*	*	*	*	*
Sierra Leone	*	*	*	*	
Togo	*	*	*	*	*

<sup>a</sup> States parties to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 or as amended by the 1972 Protocol.

## REFERENCES

---

- <sup>1</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2005*. Vienna: UNODC, 2005
- <sup>2</sup> According to the World Bank:  
<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPPProfile.asp?PTYPE=CP&CCODE=GNB>
- <sup>3</sup> Small Arms Survey, *Armed and aimless: Armed groups, guns, and human security in the ECOWAS region*. Geneva: SAS, 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2005 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.
- <sup>6</sup> According to the United Nations Development Programme:  
<http://hdrstats.undp.org/indicators/133.html>
- <sup>7</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Guinea-Bissau*. London: EIU, October 2007, p. 13.
- <sup>8</sup> See the *Report of the Secretary General on Developments in Guinea-Bissau*, presented to the Security Council on 28 September 2007 (S/2007/576), p. 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Vincent, L. *Guinea-Bissau: Cocaine and coups haunt gagged nation*. Paris: Reporters Sans Frontières, November 2007, p. 1.
- <sup>10</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit op cit, p. 10.
- <sup>11</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *Guinea-Bissau: Security and Foreign Forces*. London: Jane's, 3 August 2007.
- <sup>12</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, *Guinea-Bissau: Defence Budget*. London: Jane's, 1 August 2006.
- <sup>13</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, op cit
- <sup>14</sup> Vincent 2007 op cit, p. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Dabo, A. "Guinea-Bissau probes state complicity in drug trade". Reuters, 1 June 2007
- <sup>16</sup> Walt, V. "Cocaine country". Time Magazine, 27 June 2007
- <sup>17</sup> Vincent, L. *Guinea-Bissau: Cocaine and coups haunt gagged nation*. Paris: Reporters Sans Frontières, November 2007
- <sup>18</sup> Dabo, A. 'Bissau drug smuggling worsening daily-police chief'. Reuters, 20 July 2007.
- <sup>19</sup> Walmsley, R., *World Prison Population List Seventh Edition*. London: Kings College London.
- <sup>20</sup> Further, recent forensic evidence from workplace testing indicates a sharp downward turn in use levels. See ONDCP, *Cocaine Use Declines Among U.S. Workforce*, press release 9 August 2007.
- <sup>21</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2007*. Vienna: UNODC, 2007.
- <sup>22</sup> Cook, C. *Mexico's Drug Cartels*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 16 October 2007.
- <sup>23</sup> McKinley, J., "Citing Price Rise, U.S. and Mexico see Antidrug Progress". *New York Times*, 2 October 2007.
- <sup>24</sup> National Drug Intelligence Center, *National Drug Threat Assessment 2008*. Washington: D.C.: Department of Justice, November 2007, p. 7.
- <sup>25</sup> Europol "European Union Cocaine, Situation Report 2007", The Hague, 5 September 2007
- <sup>26</sup> Europol 2007 op cit.
- <sup>27</sup> Europol 2007 op cit.
- <sup>28</sup> UNODC, *Enquête sur le cannabis au Maroc, 2003 and Enquête sur le cannabis au Maroc, 2005*.
- <sup>29</sup> See, *World Drug Report 2006*, "Cannabis: Why we should care", p. 175.
- <sup>30</sup> This dataset comes from a initiative of law enforcement based in European airports which began in June 200, known as IDEAS. Since this dataset does not include data from Spain, UK and the Netherlands – three of the major points of entry for drugs in Europe – it cannot be said to be representative, but the trend, nonetheless, is striking.
- <sup>31</sup> Including, on the West African coast, the countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Sénégal, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon.
- <sup>32</sup> Information on the origin of the consignment is missing for two large maritime seizures, one of 2 tons and another one of 3 tons
- <sup>33</sup> UNODC, "Organized Crime and Irregular Migration from Africa to Europe", July 2006



---

<sup>34</sup> UNODC estimates global cannabis herb production was 42,000 metric tons in 2005. Africa alone accounted for 10,500 metric tons or 25 per cent of the total and West Africa alone accounted for 3,500 metric tons. For 2006, information is still partial, but the volumes are expected to remain stable.

<sup>35</sup> Based on retail prices for cannabis herb provided by 6 Western African countries through the Annual Report Questionnaire for 2006, the typical price of cannabis is estimated at US\$0.17 / g for 2006.

<sup>36</sup> These are “a statistical compilation of responses on the quality of governance given by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries, as reported by a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.” See Kaufmann, D., A. Kraay and M. Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Policy Research, June 2007.

<sup>37</sup> *Report of the Secretary General on Developments in Guinea-Bissau*, presented to the Security Council on 28 September 2007 (S/2007/576), p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Vincent, op cit.