

# HPG Background Paper

**Ni paix ni guerre: the political  
economy of low-level conflict  
in the Casamance**

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## Abstract

The Casamance is the southern limb of Senegal and an area rich in agricultural and forest resources. Since 1982, it has witnessed a separatist rebellion by the Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC). This case study focuses on the 'war economy' established during the period of serious conflict (since 1990), principally in Ziguinchor region, and based mainly on natural resources such as timber, tree crops and cannabis. Members of the MFDC guerrilla group, Senegalese forces and civilians, together with elements from neighbouring Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia, are implicated. However, the majority of Casamançais suffer because of exclusion from productive resources and regional economic crisis resulting from the conflict. The war economy may also be obstructing the current peace process, with vested interests profiting from ongoing, low-level conflict, at a time when donors and agencies are returning. This case study therefore aims to describe the war economy in terms of the actors and commodities involved; to characterise the role of force in its operation; to identify the problems that this environment poses for aid; and to make recommendations for agency practice.

## Acronyms and glossary

AJAC-APRAN	Association des jeunes agriculteurs de la Casamance – Association pour la promotion rurale de l'arrondissement de Nyassia (a Ziguinchor NGO)
AMA (a cail-cédrat CFA	Association des musulmans d'Afrique Kuwaiti-based INGO) timber species <i>Khaya senegalensis</i> Communauté Financière Africaine: the franc CFA is the currency of Senegal, most francophone countries of West Africa, and (since 1997) Guinea-Bissau; formerly tied to the French franc, the CFA is now tied to the Euro at a fixed rate, making 1,000 CFA worth approximately \$1.50
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (a Dakar-based research institute)
CONGAD	Conseil des organisations non-gouvernementales d'appui au développement (an umbrella body for Senegalese development NGOs)
CRS Eaux et Forêts	Catholic Relief Services Senegalese government service responsible for forestry
ENDA-ACAS EU forêt classée Front Nord	ENDA – Actions Casamance European Union state forest Northern Front of the MFDC maquis, 'pacified' since 1992
Front Sud GDP GMI	Southern Front of the MFDC maquis gross domestic product Groupe mobile d'intervention (a branch of the Senegalese police)
GPF	groupement pour la promotion féminine (a local women's group)
IDP INGO	internally displaced person international non-governmental organisation
maquis maquisard menuiserie menuisier MFDC	guerrilla group guerrilla carpenter's workshop carpenter Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance
nordiste	generally pejorative Casamance term for a northern Senegalese
NPFL PAIGC	National Patriotic Front of Liberia Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné Cabo Verde (Guinea-Bissauan political party, formed by Amílcar Cabral, which successfully orchestrated the 'War of Liberation' against Portuguese colonial rule)
RADDHO	Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme (a Senegalese human rights NGO)
teak UNHCR UNICEF	timber species <i>Tectona grandis</i> UN High Commissioner for Refugees UN Children's Fund

USAID

ven

US Agency for International  
Development

timber species *Pterocarpus erinaceus*

## 1. Introduction

The Casamance is the southern limb of Senegal, an area largely separated from the rest of the country by The Gambia. For 20 years, it has witnessed a separatist rebellion. This makes it West Africa's longest-running civil conflict, albeit one that is little known in the wider world (Evans, 2002a). Some argue that this durability has partly arisen, at least over the past decade or so, from the establishment of a 'war economy', based mainly on high-volume, low-value natural resources (including timber, tree crops and cannabis). Certain economic vested interests may therefore have more to lose from peace than from maintaining the status quo (Keen, 1998). The Casamance conflict has also been appropriated by various political interests, locally, nationally and internationally. In sum, it has come to fit Rubin's (2000: 1,789) model of 'transnational war involving a variety of official and unofficial actors, often from several states. Such wars create conditions for economic activity, though often of a predatory nature ... A few actors profit, while most have no say in the development of their own society'.

With a peace process, however troubled, now in place, it is an apposite moment to describe the political economy of the Casamance conflict and discuss the implications for aid. For this purpose, the predominantly economic framework of Le Billon (2000) and the political framework of Cliffe and Luckham (2000) are used in this case study.<sup>1</sup> The thematic focus is on how local and external resources have been exploited in the conflict situation, and what this has meant for aid agencies operating in the Casamance. The geographical focus is Ziguinchor region, the western part of the Casamance and heartland of the rebellion, although reference is also made to neighbouring Kolda region, which forms the rest of the Casamance. First, the background is explained: the geographical and historical context of the conflict, its principal military actors, and the aid agenda. Second, the research rationale and methods are described. Third, the case study findings are recounted, in three parts: the nature of the war economy; how force is used to maintain it; and how aid has functioned in this situation. Finally, recommendations for agency practice are made.

## 2. Background: the Casamance conflict

### 2.1 Geographical and historical context

The sense of separation of the Casamance from northern Senegal is enhanced by marked differences in physical and human geography. The Casamance is the wettest part of an otherwise mostly semi-arid country, with seasonally high rainfall promoting the growth of forests containing commercially important timber species, and orchards of cashews, mangoes, citrus fruits and oil palms. Agricultural richness also includes a strong rice-growing tradition, the cultivation of other cereals and groundnuts and kitchen gardening. Ethnic differences are evident, principally the Diola majority in Ziguinchor region, together with the presence of other groups with little affinity for northern Senegal and its Wolof and other Sahelian peoples. The Casamance also had a different experience of colonialism: the French gained it later than the rest of Senegal by trading territory with the Portuguese, and its subsequent administration was different in character. However, at independence in 1960 the Casamance remained part of Senegal.

The social and political origins and course of the rebellion have been charted by a number of researchers (Foucher, 2002a; Gasser, 2002; de Jong, 1998; Lambert, 1998; Marut, 1999a). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, protests began against the Senegalese state's administration of the Casamance, leading to the formation of the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC, named after a late-colonial political party). Since 1982, the MFDC has actively sought independence for the Casamance, on the grounds of colonial history, discontent with government from Dakar and cultural differences from 'nordistes', or northern Senegalese. Increasing repression by the Senegalese authorities during the 1980s prompted the MFDC to form an armed *maquis* (guerrilla group), which became fully mobilised in 1990. A spiral of violence ensued, with human rights abuses perpetrated by both sides (Amnesty International, 1998; RADDHO, 1997). Efforts by former governments of Senegal, under President Abdou Diouf, to resolve the conflict through ceasefires and accords with the MFDC during the 1990s were largely unsuccessful. President Abdoulaye Wade, elected in March 2000, has tried new political, diplomatic and military approaches (Evans, 2000), but despite generally improved security conditions 'an intolerable situation of neither peace nor war prevails there' still (Le Matin, 15–16 April 2000: 3).

### 2.2 Military actors

Several armed groups are involved in the conflict. While the MFDC has for most of its history been nominally united under its secretary-general, the Catholic priest Father Diamacoune Senghor, in practice this unity is a 'fiction' (Marut, 1999a: 158).<sup>2</sup> Like other insurgencies, the MFDC suffers from an ill-defined organisational structure, confusion over demarcation of powers, factionalism and infighting, all of which have hindered attempts at peace.

The principal division in the *maquis* is between the Front

Nord (Northern Front) and the Front Sud (Southern Front), named for their original areas of operation within the Casamance. Following negotiations with the Senegalese government in 1992, the Front Nord largely retired from active combat, but remains in de facto control of large areas north of the Casamance River, mainly in Bignona department.<sup>3</sup> Since 1992, the Front Nord has engaged mostly in economic development, including bakeries and fishing, with some projects initiated with EU finance and state backing. While regarded by some as a positive political force for peace, the Front Nord has not laid down its arms, and occasionally mobilises either against the Front Sud or against the Senegalese army; in one notable incident in June 2001, the Front Nord attacked new army positions that it saw as infringing on its territory.

The Front Sud remains the active military force for separatism, with its bases mainly situated along both sides of the Casamance's porous, forested southern border with Guinea-Bissau. However, it too suffers from internal divisions, which from late 2000 onwards took a violent form, crucially involving the Guinea-Bissauan army on the side of more moderate *maquisards*, against hardliners. The conflict zone was thus progressively squeezed during the 1990s, first south of the Casamance River (with 'pacification' of the Front Nord), then into the Guinea-Bissau border area, along which it spread eastwards into the southern margin of Kolda region (Marut, 1999a). More recently, this situation has fragmented with Front Sud infighting, and some hardliners are now apparently operating across the Casamance.

The ethnic and social composition of the MFDC is not fully known. The MFDC has consistently asserted that it is a nationalist movement, representing all ethnic groups present in the Casamance and denying any Diola bias (Lambert, 1998). The (nordiste-dominated) Senegalese government, however, initially denounced the rebellion as a 'Diola affair' (a claim that persists more widely), and Senegalese forces in the Casamance have in the past arrested and attacked individuals and communities on the basis of Diola ethnicity alone. Certainly, the MFDC leadership and *maquis* today are very largely Diola, and more radical elements have occasionally attacked non-Diola, such as immigrant fishermen and Wolof traders. However, the picture has been complicated by the selective deployment of ethnic arguments by both sides, and some circularity between the state's presumption of Diola agency in the rebellion, state repression and the strengthening of Diola identity (Diaw and Diouf, 1998; de Jong, 1998; Lambert, 1998). While ethnic dimensions are inescapable, applying the label of 'ethnic conflict' would therefore be facile. The importance of religious dimensions, while they are occasionally manifested in the conflict, has been overstated (Foucher, 2002b). Demographically, the *maquis* seems to comprise a first generation from various urban and rural milieus; and a second generation (some as young as 13 years) that has grown up mostly in forest bases and associated villages. Estimates of the size of the *maquis* gravitate around a few thousand, though not all are mobilised at any one time.

The Senegalese government has some 4,500 troops stationed in the Casamance, in large bases in the main towns and

numerous smaller rural cantonments. Government paramilitary police forces are also present, namely the Groupe mobile d'intervention (GMI) and the Gendarmerie. Responsibility for the security of larger Casamance towns seems to be divided arbitrarily between the army, GMI and Gendarmerie, to maximise use of limited human resources and materiel. The army lacks adequate equipment for its role in the Casamance and soldiers' living conditions are poor, particularly in rural cantonments, where they live mostly in bunkers. While there have always been Casamançais in the Senegalese army, the belief is widespread (and supported by observations) that there is now a deliberate policy of placing them in 'frontline' positions in the Casamance. This may be regarded either as sensitive community policing or, as one member of the MFDC Political Wing maintains, a cynical attempt to promote fratricidal self-destruction. Unlike in some other conflicts, local self-defence militias have not figured highly in the Casamance, the Senegalese government having refused to arm such groups (RADDHO, 1997). 'Self-defence committees' therefore mainly undertake surveillance, although even without firearms, villagers have occasionally resisted and killed maquisards threatening their communities.

Combatant groups in the Casamance cannot be understood in isolation from the conflict's transnational dimensions. From an early stage, Guinea-Bissau has been home to Front Sud rear bases, and active or retired Guinea-Bissauan soldiers have supported and sometimes taken part in maquis operations in the Casamance. These elements form part of a chronic, destabilising problem in Guinea-Bissau (Evans, 2000), where efforts to demobilise a large proportion of the over-manned and financially unsustainable armed forces since the civil war of 1998–99 have so far met with very limited success. However, recent political and military dislocations in Guinea-Bissauan support have considerably weakened Front Sud supply lines. Meanwhile, along the northern border of the Casamance, The Gambia is believed to have long harboured and supplied elements of the MFDC, especially since President Yahya Jammeh (a Diola) seized power in 1994, although he also maintains key roles both as a broker between the Senegalese government and the MFDC, and as a host to meetings of the latter. The situation is further complicated by criminal elements from the Casamance and neighbouring countries – some former maquisards, others opportunistic bandits – who undertake armed robbery under the cover of the rebellion, probably also taking advantage of the increased availability of small arms. President Wade has accused more distant countries of supporting the MFDC, including Libya, China, Russia and Ukraine. On the Senegalese government side, general military support and training (though not specifically for the Casamance) come from France and the US, both of whom wish to maintain Senegal as a stable bastion in West Africa.

### 2.3 The aid agenda

The humanitarian and developmental impact of the Casamance conflict, while not large relative to some other conflicts in the sub-region (Evans, 2002a), has been locally serious nonetheless. The total death toll to date is probably around 1,000 (Humphreys, pers. comm.), victims of attacks or landmines (since 1997 especially, anti-personnel mines

have been seeded in some areas by maquis elements and, it is claimed, by the Senegalese army).<sup>4</sup> Many more people have been displaced: reliable estimates are difficult, but a 1998 Caritas census gave a figure of 62,638 (AJAC–APRAN, 2000) out of a total Casamance population of around 1.1 million. Ziguinchor has received some 14,000 of these, with a further 6,000 in other Casamance towns. More secure villages have also become swollen with IDPs from surrounding areas; UNHCR figures indicate that a further 10,000 are refugees in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia.

Apart from occasional spates of violence and displacement, there is chronic, low-grade insecurity – principally the risks of armed robbery and, in certain areas, landmines. This is particularly damaging to the Casamance economy, acting as a major disincentive to traders travelling by road between the large markets of northern Senegal and the Casamance, and to tourists. Most Casamançais feel the negative impact on their livelihoods and in broader sociological terms, with women generally suffering more than men (AJAC–APRAN, 2000; ANAFA, 1996; Gasser, 2001). Insecurity also significantly reduces social service provision, as qualified staff leave or cannot be attracted to work in schools and dispensaries in rural areas.

This is the environment in which agencies supplying external aid to the Casamance have tried to function for the past decade or so of serious armed conflict. These include multilateral donors such as the European Union (EU), bilateral donors (notably the US Agency for International Development (USAID), plus various European and Asian state agencies) and international NGOs. Reflecting the Casamance's religious mix, faith-based INGOs such as the Agence des musulmans d'Afrique (AMA) and Caritas are prominent. Following a trend across Africa, indigenous NGOs have increasingly become the medium of choice through which Western agencies deliver aid (Hibou and Banégas, 2000).

At times of significant displacement, relief aid has included the provision of food and healthcare to IDPs by the Senegalese Red Cross, Caritas, AMA and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). With most of the displaced accommodated by their families, housing IDPs in camps has not featured beyond the Red Cross reception centre just outside of Ziguinchor, although UNHCR partners in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau run camps for some Casamance refugees. Longer-term provision for IDPs seems limited to schooling and work creation programmes run by the above agencies. The psychological impact of conflict is being addressed by UNICEF (2001) in areas touched by violence. Handicap International and local NGOs implement landmine awareness programmes and the rehabilitation of mine victims, and these form relatively small but significant aspects of relief in the Casamance (Handicap International, 1998, 2000; ASVM, 2000). Human rights abuses have long been the subject of advocacy by Amnesty International and the Senegalese NGO Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme (RADDHO). Development aid, meanwhile, has targeted various sectors in the Casamance, but with an inevitable emphasis on agriculture: diversifying, increasing, processing and marketing the production of annual

and tree crops. Through these and other, artisanal, activities improving the livelihoods of various groups is a key aim of some agencies, as is better provision of healthcare, education and drinking water. INGOs currently involved in development aid include some of those also concerned with relief (such as Caritas and AMA), plus smaller agencies such as World Education and the Methodist Relief and Development Fund.

Various local NGOs actively support peace and reconstruction. The Ziguinchor-based Association des jeunes agriculteurs de la Casamance – Association pour la promotion rurale de l'arrondissement de Nyassia (AJAC-APRAN), supported by USAID funding, is one of the sole intermediaries between the government and the MFDC. This NGO has recently facilitated visits by Front Sud chiefs to Ziguinchor to discuss what would be needed for them to disarm and reintegrate into society; on at least one occasion, there have been face-to-face discussions with the Senegalese armed forces minister. AJAC-APRAN and RADDHO also support the return of IDPs to various sites in Ziguinchor

department, again with USAID funding through Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Assistance mainly comprises tools and materials for the reconstruction of houses, whose mud walls have not survived years of Casamance rain (any iron roofing is often removed from abandoned houses by rebel or army elements for their own use). The 168 houses, plus village wells, completed in 2001 formed the vanguard of further reconstruction in 2002. Other projects attempt to reintegrate former maquisards by giving them legitimate livelihoods. Following questionable efforts to rehabilitate the Front Nord, more recent projects engage true repentis: some 30% of those who worked on one local NGO's projects were former maquisards. USAID's Casamance Recovery Program also gives 'Training and Social Reinsertion of Former Rebels' (USAID, 1999, annex 1:4) as an objective, and AJAC-APRAN has such projects in the pipeline. Some former maquisards even run rural development projects: one heads his own NGO, another is an organiser at village level. Social dimensions of the peace process are also being addressed by some local NGOs, with AJAC-APRAN's village activities recognising the need for 'le pardon'.

### 3. Research rationale and methodology

#### 3.1 Aims and parameters

These aid activities take place within a political economy of conflict that is poorly researched. While geopolitical dimensions have been analysed in depth (Marut, 1999a), meso- and micro-scale dynamics have, as elsewhere, been neglected (Le Billon, 2000). This case study therefore aims to describe the war economy in terms of the actors and commodities involved; to characterise the role of force in its operation; to identify the problems that this environment poses for aid; and to make recommendations for agency practice.

Three research visits were made between 2000 and 2002, totalling a year spent in the field. Fieldwork was based in Ziguinchor and conducted mainly in Ziguinchor region, with several trips to Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. A local assistant was employed; there was no formal collaboration with any agency, although AJAC-APRAN and ENDA-ACAS provided occasional practical assistance. Such local NGOs have a good overview of the war economy, but generally lack a political economy perspective. Given the constraints on aid activity described below, needs assessments for local populations in recent years have been limited largely to speculative local and regional development plans (for example AJAC-APRAN, 2001; République du Sénégal, 1998, 1999a, 1999b) – essentially ‘wish lists’ for use if and when funding becomes available – and reactive measures such as Red Cross inventories of IDPs and their losses. However, with the current resurgence in development aid in the region, assessments in relation to particular projects may now be increasing.

#### 3.2 The research environment

Security and local sensitivities present problems for research in any conflict, but the Casamance is probably less difficult to investigate than most. This is partly a reflection on Senegal as a whole: generally stable since independence, suffering neither coup nor military rule, with no particular tradition of state suppression of undesirable information, the country now has a vigorous and largely free press and some independent radio stations. President Wade has at times been peculiarly litigious about reporting on the Casamance conflict, but there is no imposed censorship as such. Senegal also has a strong academic culture with many links to the West, and is accustomed to foreign visitors, welcoming over half a million tourists every year, mostly from Europe. Despite the damage caused to its tourist industry by the conflict, many still visit, though they mostly stay at the coastal resort of Cap Skirring, an enclave served by direct charter flights. Still, the wider Casamance is largely accessible, despite insecurity along some main roads. There are frequent checkpoints in some areas, but these present few problems other than delays. Only certain zones, mainly along the Guinea-Bissau border, are effectively closed off (by the Senegalese army and/or rebel activity and landmines), although local news and advice have to be followed concerning temporary trouble-spots elsewhere. Politically, however, the Casamance is mired in intrigues at all levels,

and extracting a coherent political economy analysis required a variety of techniques.

#### 3.3 Key informant interviews

Most of the findings presented below come from semi-structured interviews with key local informants (Le Billon, 2000), including agency staff, MFDC members, local elected representatives, civil servants, journalists and traders. In the research environment described, some interviews had to be conducted with particular care, including those with MFDC members (although only Father Diamacoune is under permanent guard by Senegalese gendarmes). With sensitive actors, academic credentials had to be demonstrated (particularly to the Diola, with their strong interest in schooling), then trust built up steadily, with sensitive questions posed only on the basis of the degree of openness that an interviewee had already demonstrated. Going beyond this, while it might elicit useful responses, risked embarrassment or offence and could thus close off subsequent possibilities for better information. Some aspects of the conflict could therefore not be tackled at the opening of an interview, or indeed during a first interview; it was only later in fieldwork that more useful testimonies were forthcoming. Dialogue was also achieved in certain MFDC interviews by referring to problems in Northern Ireland with parallels in the Casamance, which implicitly showed that the researcher did not regard civil conflict as an alien phenomenon. Alternatively, with civil servants and some agency officers, asking them simply to describe their work and identify problems encountered gave them an opening to discuss, non-defensively, the situation in the Casamance. Other key sources in Ziguinchor's NGO and media communities were, however, very willing to discuss the conflict and keen that it should be more widely publicised. They perceived a European researcher as having more opportunities and risking less comeback in this latter respect, while they themselves were more constrained, by means and by concerns about local sensitivities and possible reprisals.

#### 3.4 Menuisier survey

Illicit timber exploitation by combatants is well known among Casamançais, but investigating it directly is problematic: both the Senegalese armed forces and rebel elements involved are very sensitive about the subject, and the government's Eaux et Forêts (forestry) service is understandably guarded in what it says. For research, the easiest access point in the commodity chain proved to be the local menuisiers (carpenters) through whose hands much Casamance timber passes. Rather than present them with a European researcher, the local assistant carried out a survey of 40 menuiseries (carpenters' workshops) in Ziguinchor and Bignona: in each town, the sample was evenly divided between menuiseries near to a Senegalese armed forces base, and those far from one.<sup>5</sup> The assistant arrived in each menuiserie with only a few, open questions: not about the conflict or combatants, but about the respondent's trade in general, to see how highly certain actors and activities figured. He sometimes did this under the guise of doing market research for his own planned sawmill, and only noted the

results after leaving the menuiserie. While this survey therefore involved some deception, the testimonies presented here are anonymous or aggregated in a frequency table.

### 3.5 Livelihood surveys

Livelihood surveys were undertaken at four sites reflecting different security environments, and of IDPs from a rural community on the Guinea-Bissau border. A simple structured random sampling regime was used, although certain village notables had to be interviewed for reasons of courtesy. Similarly, while questionnaires were kept anonymous, respondents were sometimes offended if their names were not noted. The conflict was not tackled directly in the questionnaires used (apart from asking about displacement history), to avoid upsetting respondents. Overnight or longer stays in survey villages proved particularly valuable, providing opportunities for social visits, when local affairs could be discussed more informally. While largely outside the scope of this case study (see instead Evans (2002b)), some livelihood survey results are presented here insofar as they illustrate the flipside of the war economy: what it means to ordinary people in terms of exclusion from their resources. By thus widening the socio-economic base under investigation outside of the main actors in the war economy, the surveys were a more dilute source of information on the local political economy than the previous two techniques, but still gave important insights into economic strategies employed by combatants – without asking for such information directly. Undertaking livelihood surveys was, however, very time-consuming.

### 3.6 Secondary sources

The sources above were augmented and triangulated with published academic research, and Senegalese and Western media reports. Also useful was documentation produced by agencies and local government – ‘grey literature’ – abundant in a country known for its ‘reports in drawers’.

### 3.7 Analytical issues

The main problem in the approach described was the analytical asymmetry arising from the methodologies used primarily to investigate the war economy (key informant interviews and the menuisier survey) on the one hand, and the livelihood surveys on the other. One striking example was that, despite strong evidence from the former sources for involvement of members of the wider civilian population in the war economy (see below), no such admission was forthcoming in any of the 259 livelihood interviews (although interviewees were prepared to admit to other illicit activities, such as smuggling). The results obtained from the different sources, while largely complementary, therefore do not quite mesh. However, the reasons for this are themselves informative, namely a historically founded fear of army persecution of anyone suspected of helping the MFDC economically; and acute sensitivities around the issue of illicit timber exploitation.

Another analytical problem was that the very few current and former maquisards interviewed in this study were first-generation only – older, literate (in French) and now town-based – and so do not reflect the full composition of the maquis. There is also a near-absence of quantitative data on the war economy: armed groups engaged in natural resource exploitation do not publish annual reports and accounts, and volumes or values of product traded are difficult to estimate. Quantitative and qualitative changes in Senegalese military expenditure resulting from the conflict were not investigated, and it is not known how accessible the relevant budgetary data are in Dakar (Humphreys, pers. comm.). A further gap arising from the research focus on the Casamance itself was that insufficient time was available to examine the ultimate markets for certain ‘conflict goods’ elsewhere. While this is less important for an understanding of local processes, it leaves unanswered certain questions about the transfer of wealth out of the Casamance.

## 4. The Casamance war economy

### 4.1 Timber

Timber, a common conflict good across the humid tropics, is the largest (by volume and probably by value) and most visible commodity in the Casamance war economy. It is heavily exploited by combatants on both sides, probably involving the greatest use of force but also the greatest participation of civilian actors. Most of Senegal's hardwood resources are located in the Casamance, and are made mainly into furniture and fittings for domestic, office and trade use. This manufacture takes place either in the abundant menuiseries of Ziguinchor and Bignona, or timber is transported to Dakar and The Gambia. The ultimate markets are local, national (Casamance furniture is popular in northern Senegal's cities) and international (with some furniture exported to France through diaspora networks). The most commercially important tree species used are:

- ven (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*), the timber of choice for furniture;
- cail-cédrat (*Khaya senegalensis*) or 'bois rouge', known in The Gambia as 'jallo' or simply 'mahogany'; and
- teak (*Tectona grandis*), an Asian species grown only in forêts classées (state forests).

Timber exploitation is in theory regulated by Eaux et Forêts, which forbids any extraction from forêts classées and issues permits for trees to be taken from the domaine national (national estate). This means that ven (actually classified as an 'artisanal wood' rather than 'timber') may be extracted under licence within a quota; teak cannot be exploited; while extraction of cail-cédrat and all other timbers has been formally closed in Ziguinchor region since 1991 (in response to the conflict). Any timber processed in the region's four licensed sawmills should therefore come from Kolda region. In practice, such restrictions are meaningless, as the menuisier survey results show.

The first striking point is that illicit exploitation is the norm: nearly all the menuisiers questioned obtained timber at least partly from illicit sources, such as the local black market, or direct from villages (without permits). This is reflected in the main species used: ven and cail-cédrat, as noted, are highly unlikely to be legal, while teak by definition cannot

be. Legal but more expensive timber from licensed sawmills is regarded as uneconomic except for large orders, with supplies sometimes unreliable. The second point is the extent of Senegalese forces' involvement, on both supply and demand sides (menuisiers may also use timber from rebel elements, but again no such admission would be expected).

In Ziguinchor, half the menuisiers surveyed receive timber from servicemen (soldiers, GMI policemen and gendarmes) based there. Timber is sometimes sold to menuisiers for cash: one spoke of 'timber fairs' held at Ziguinchor's main army base and its Gendarmerie in the small hours of the morning. Timber is also shipped to Dakar by the army. Alternatively, a serviceman may bring timber to a menuiserie to make furniture to order, paying in cash or in kind (with some timber kept by the menuiserie for other orders). Information on timber provenance was less forthcoming, but suggests that timber is readily available to servicemen at villages along the main roads of Ziguinchor department, hence easily accessible and relatively secure. One menuisier said that soldiers and GMI policemen employ young men in town and take them to forest villages where they fell and plank timber using hand tools. By contrast, in Bignona supply by servicemen is rare, with the local black market partly sourced, particularly with teak, from a forêt classée adjoining the town.<sup>6</sup> On the demand side, servicemen are more important still, buying furniture for themselves or on behalf of family and friends, sometimes in northern Senegal, or for resale, again in the north. This is transported mostly by sea, on the military ship (the Edict) or the ferry (a civilian service, but run by the Senegalese navy), which both ply the Ziguinchor–Dakar run.<sup>7</sup> Returns to servicemen from resale may be considerable: one menuisier supplied figures suggesting profit margins of 100% or more. Menuiseries near bases do more business with servicemen on both supply and demand sides: servicemen sometimes encourage and assist menuisier relatives to set up shop close to their bases, thus creating tighter trading relationships.

On the MFDC side, probably the most lucrative and certainly the most contentious economic activity of the Front Nord is its exploitation of the rich forests of Bignona department. The Front Nord has a sawmill at its main base at Diakaye, just off the main road between Bignona and The Gambia's urban centres. Timber extraction is thus concentrated in surrounding Diouloulou district and neighbouring Sindian

Table 1: Summary of *menuisier* survey, Ziguinchor and Bignona, February–May 2001

Town	no. of <i>menuisiers</i> surveyed	<i>Menuisiers</i> using				Proximity to a base	No. of <i>menuisiers</i>	Servicemen			
		illicit timber	<i>ven</i>	<i>cail-cédrat</i>	teak			suppliers	clients		
Ziguinchor	20	19	15	6	3	near	10	8	10	10	15
						far	10	2		5	
Bignona	20	18	19	3	15	near	9	1	1	5	12
						far	11	0		7	

district, which both border The Gambia, to where sawn timber and logs, particularly of cail-cédrat, are transported overland. The logs go to sawmills along the Casamance border and in Serrekunda (The Gambia's largest urban area and centre of informal trade), enterprises that some claim are run by associates of President Jammeh. The imported timber probably mostly supplies the Gambian domestic market. The Front Nord also exports dead wood and charcoal to The Gambia (charcoal exploitation too should in theory be licensed under quota by *Eaux et Forêts*): such trafficking predates the conflict, but has increased because of it. Timber exploitation in the insecure forests along the Guinea-Bissau border is harder to investigate. The Front Sud lacks the same means to cut, process and transport timber that are available to the Front Nord, and vehicle movement in the border area is difficult, with some roads mined or overgrown. However, border *forêts classées* such as Bayot and Bissine are known to be exploited, and one source claims that Front Sud *maquisards* cut some timber for sale on the Ziguinchor black market.

A large proportion of the Casamance's timber resource is thus divided between the Senegalese armed forces, the Front Nord and to a much lesser extent the Front Sud, exploiting forests in their respective domains. The Gambia, with its commercial advantages of more sawmills and larger markets than exist in the Casamance, seems likely to account for a considerable volume of timber, although much also ends up in northern Senegal.

#### 4.2 Cashews and other tree crops

Cashews are the Casamance's principal export crop, although a small proportion goes for artisanal processing and consumption locally and nationally. The cashew business is purely private: grown largely by smallholders (sometimes organised into local '*groupements d'intérêt économique*'), raw nuts are bought by local dealers, who are few but relatively wealthy, each with a network of seasonally employed agents.<sup>8</sup> These dealers resell to buyers from India, with no industrial processing facilities in Senegal and few anywhere in Africa.<sup>9</sup> Among producers and dealers alike, this monopsony generates resentment against the Indian buyers for imposing a price that varies from year to year, although the latter are only operating within the vagaries of the world market. For example, world cashew prices fell sharply in 2001, with Casamance producers paid only 100–215 CFA (\$0.15–0.32) per kilo, compared with 300–500 CFA (\$0.45–0.75)/kg the previous year.<sup>10</sup> Such a fall hit many smallholders hard, given their general shift in recent decades from lowland cultivation (adversely affected by declining rainfall) to plateau arboriculture (Cormier-Salem, 1989).

The cashew season (April–June) sees combatants on both sides, along with many Casamançais, occupied in harvesting, trade or local processing.<sup>11</sup> This may produce a short, *de facto* ceasefire, although it is suggested that, before the season, fighting may intensify in some areas for control of richer cashew orchards. Army involvement is again fairly visible: in one platoon, from the regional army base in Ziguinchor, encountered during the lucrative 2000 season, the soldiers may each (according to the author's calculations) have earned

the equivalent of three months' basic salary from cashew harvesting. Senior officers are also involved; indeed the military dominate the trade in some areas abandoned by or inaccessible to civilian populations because of insecurity or landmines placed around orchard perimeters. Such areas are found in the immediate environs of Ziguinchor (Mandina Mancagne is one example), and the Guinea-Bissau border zone with its abundant cashew orchards.<sup>12</sup>

The rebels similarly benefit from abandoned orchards, especially the Front Sud, whose *maquisards* sell cashews, via intermediaries, to dealers in Ziguinchor and the Guinea-Bissau border towns of São Domingos and Ingoré, or trade them for rice or arms (see below). 'Conflict cashews' thus enter the commodity chain in the same way as the civilian harvest, benefit the same dealers and leave Dakar or Bissau in the same Indian ships. Unlike timber, there is no parallel, illicit market. It is believed that cashews are one of the main revenue-earners of the Front Sud, whose total harvest is estimated at 200–300 tonnes a year; the army's is probably of similar magnitude. However, such harvests must be set in the context of overall production: probably of the order of 10,000 tonnes per year for the Casamance, and up to 78,000 tonnes/year for Guinea-Bissau (where cashews account for 20% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 90% of export earnings). Other, opportunistic armed elements may also be involved (Marut, 1999a).

Mangoes and citrus fruits are also common tree crops in the Casamance, and again both the army and *maquis* harvest from abandoned orchards under their control. Like cashews, the fruits are sold through existing marketing channels. For example, the Front Sud markets mangoes and oranges via retailers in São Domingos or Ziguinchor, while the army harvests lemons from orchards in an abandoned peripheral suburb of Ziguinchor and transports them on the Edict to Dakar, presumably for wholesale there. Other forest products form smaller parts of the war economy, reflecting combatants' opportunism (as Richards (1996) notes in Sierra Leone). Army pickup trucks carrying palm oil, cashew wine and sacks of mangoes and charcoal may be seen on the roads of Ziguinchor department, but in such cases soldiers are probably purchasing forest products in villages for their wives and friends in towns, where such commodities cost appreciably more. Villagers undoubtedly welcome such trade, especially in areas where few civilian traders venture because of insecurity. Similarly on the rebel side, plunder probably shades into the legitimate trade of products from forests around bases: for example, the (now fallen) Front Sud base of Diouhounk was a centre for the sale of palm wine. However, other parts of the civilian population have comprehensively lost out: of 50 IDPs surveyed in Ziguinchor, 44 had lost access to orchards in their home area, while only two could still return to harvest their orchard crops.

#### 4.3 Cannabis

Cannabis, or '*yamba*', is another significant conflict good in the Casamance, but its illicit nature makes it difficult to investigate. This is further complicated by the fact that cannabis is, like cashews, one of the Casamance's main export crops, its cultivation there predating the rebellion, although

trafficking has increased in response to economic depression caused by the conflict. The main cannabis-growing areas have long been in the north and west of Ziguinchor region, particularly around Kafountine and the Karone Isles. Cultivation and trade there is well established and organised, and despite government and NGO attempts to stop it (through prosecution, anti-drugs publicity and incentives for licit crops), cannabis production is too lucrative for farmers to give up.<sup>13</sup> The ultimate destination of the product is a matter of debate. The Casamance market must be relatively small, beyond Ziguinchor's demimonde of cannabis use and prostitution, and users among European holidaymakers and local young people at Cap Skirring and Kafountine. Some Casamance cannabis also supplies northern Senegal's cities. The largest market is probably in The Gambia, where yamba arrives via various overland and sea routes, for processing and sale in the many tourist bars and hotels and to local youth. It is again claimed that Gambian government and army interests are involved in this trade. Such trafficking may form part of extensive networks (for hard drugs also) along the West African coast, involving fishing boats from Ghana and other countries in the sub-region (Marut, 1999a). Small volumes of Casamance cannabis may reach Europe in tourist yachts from Kafountine, Cap Skirring or nearby Varela in Guinea-Bissau.

Since early in the rebellion, maquisards have earned revenue from cannabis either by direct involvement in production and trade, or by 'taxing' other producers (Hall, 1999). This has led Senegalese forces in the past to carry out cannabis eradication in some areas, with a large-scale campaign following the disappearance of four French tourists near Cap Skirring in 1995. Production of 'conflict cannabis' thus now seems largely confined to areas under maquis control, with little or no presence of Senegalese forces, though there are also suggestions that some servicemen cultivate or traffic cannabis (Marut, 1999a; Oxfam GB, 1998). Marut (1999a) posits that 'pacification' in the Front Nord area has facilitated cannabis production and trafficking by the maquis there, which has reportedly annexed production sites in the Kafountine area and started up new ones in Sindian district, all close to The Gambia. The Front Sud, meanwhile, cultivates cannabis along the Guinea-Bissau border, again marketing the product through existing channels.

The significance of cannabis in the Casamance war economy is debatable. Like most African-grown cannabis, Casamance yamba is of relatively low value (Anderson, pers. comm.): large volumes are required to make substantial profits, while transaction costs tend to be high, with a long commodity chain. It becomes lucrative only if one can control production and processing and regulate the market, which is not the case among Casamance combatants, who have done little more than graft themselves onto parts of the existing chain. The revenues earned from cannabis by the maquis have therefore probably been overstated. Such exaggeration is partly instrumental: labelling the Casamance conflict as a 'narco-rebellion' has justified intervention and increased territorial control by Senegalese forces, and has helped demonise the Front Sud while the Front Nord are actually bigger yamba culprits (Marut, 1999a). It has also framed the conflict in criminal rather than political terms, to which

Senegal's friends in the West are more receptive (Foucher, pers. comm.). But whatever the financial benefits, the cannabis trade may be important in connecting the maquis to wider illicit markets in the sub-region. The maquis has exchanged cannabis for weapons in the past (see below), and fishing boats carrying drugs and arms have been seized by Senegalese authorities near The Gambia (Marut, 1999a). However, other than these instances there is little more than speculation about such links, and the whole story may again be overblown (Anderson, pers. comm.). A more concrete concern is cannabis use by some maquisards, with the associated loss of inhibition that is clearly dangerous in an armed man (Richards, 1996).

#### 4.4 Livestock and bushmeat

Theft of livestock, mainly cattle, is a long-standing problem along the Casamance's borders, particularly Kolda region's with Guinea-Bissau, for three reasons. First, among the Balanta – the largest ethnic group in Guinea-Bissau, and common in the southern Casamance – stealing cattle is an important part of the male initiation process (van der Drift, 1992). Second, extensive cross-border family ties and economic migration give potential rustlers in Guinea-Bissau good 'intelligence' about livestock resources in the Casamance. Third, the poor economic situation in Guinea-Bissau has exacerbated such cross-border theft. (It should be added, though, that cattle-rustling is endemic in all of Senegal's border areas, and in insecure border zones in Africa generally.) With the conflict, rebels have acquired livestock left behind by fleeing villagers, while deliberate cattle-raiding of Casamance border villages has sometimes reached high levels (Evans, 2000). But the degree to which the latter is attributable to the Front Sud is hard to judge, given the context described, plus the opportunism of other elements, including bandits and Guinea-Bissauan soldiers. Marut (1999a) links the trafficking of stolen Casamance cattle more widely with that of drugs and arms, involving elements in Guinea-Bissau, The Gambia and Guinea-Conakry. There are no accounts of organised cattle-rustling by Senegalese servicemen, although one IDP, recounting pre-displacement harassment, said that soldiers would shoot and eat livestock in his village if salary payments were delayed.

Bushmeat also figures in the war economy, with armed groups in forest areas again exercising an established culture of hunting and consuming or selling game such as antelope, porcupine and monkey; doe meat is a particular delicacy. Wildlife populations may have benefited from human displacement, with hunting by civilians thus reduced. It is believed that the Front Sud exploits bushmeat from abandoned areas as a source of revenue; on forest bases, at least during past ceasefire periods, maquisards made dooskin bags, purses and shoes for sale, via intermediaries, at Ziguinchor's tourist market. Rebels of both camps fish: indeed, the Front Nord was once robbed of donated fishing equipment by a Front Sud element. The army is also involved in hunting, directly or indirectly. An interviewee at one border village recounted how the local cantonment allows him to hunt without the necessary permit; soldiers are among the main buyers of his bushmeat (in this village, supplies of fish and meat are limited), so the arrangement is mutually

beneficial. The rich fauna of the Lower Casamance National Park (near the Guinea-Bissau border, and closed since 1993 because of maquis activity) is believed to have been thus exploited by both maquisards and soldiers.

#### 4.5 Subscriptions and donations at home and abroad

The early days of the rebellion saw more widespread and organised (though still covert) support for the MFDC from local populations than today, in the form of 'subscriptions' in cash or in kind, usually rice (Marut, 1999a). These were channelled through local support committees, which also organised fundraising events such as dances. Many Casamançais bought MFDC membership cards, costing 1,000 CFA, the proceeds supporting political activities or feeding activists in hiding. However, sustained government repression, particularly the numerous arrests of MFDC activists and suspected supporters in the mid-to-late 1980s, put paid to such funding; those with membership cards destroyed them for fear of summary execution by Senegalese forces. The MFDC was thus driven further underground and towards guerrilla warfare (de Jong, 1998), and with full mobilisation of the maquis, subscriptions became exactions (see below).

However, rumours persist of support within Senegal, again in cash or in kind (food and medicines). The precise sources are unknown, although elements of the Diola community are cited. In The Gambia, the numerous Casamance and indigenous Diola (linked by family and cultural ties) raise funds at meetings held in urban areas every Sunday, though for whom (the maquis or refugees) and through what channels are unclear. Both there and in Dakar, it seems unlikely that Diola, employed mostly in service occupations (particularly as domestics), could raise large sums. The many Diola maids working in the cities seem a particularly improbable constituency for the MFDC. The better-paid 'cadres casamançais', senior bureaucrats and executives of Casamance origin based largely in northern Senegal, have generally acted as advocates for a peaceful solution to the conflict (de Jong, 1998), though intriguingly there are reports of collections among Casamançais soldiers stationed in Dakar (Humphreys, pers. comm.). The motives for any such support are unknown: direct family assistance or vengeance for past acts by Senegalese forces seem likely, separatist ideology less so.

The Diola diaspora in the West is also believed to provide funding. France has a notable Diola community, and prominent members of the MFDC 'Exterior Wing' are based there and in other western European countries, producing pro-rebellion newsletters and a website.<sup>14</sup> But again, it is unclear how external funding for the MFDC is generated: large Diola fêtes held in Paris have been cited, but it seems unlikely that immigrants, at least first-generation ones, could contribute significant amounts. Allegations also exist of financial support from French businesses, perhaps paying 'protection money' for their hotels at Cap Skirring (de Jong, 1998).

#### 4.6 Exactions and robbery

Like other insurgencies, the MFDC maquis gain revenue through exactions and armed robberies, inflicted mostly on the very population whose interests it claims to represent. The harshest exactions began once sustained violence set in, with villagers given the choice between 'subscription' (or, for young men, joining the rebellion), or being beaten or killed. Unsurprisingly, many fled, or indeed were given short notice to quit by the maquis, which could then claim their possessions and agricultural resources (Amnesty International, 1998; RADDHO, 1997). Armed robberies by the maquis of shops and sometimes houses usually accompany attacks on military or political targets, or are undertaken as actions in their own right: the shops of Lyndiane, a peripheral suburb of Ziguinchor, are a favourite destination. Most common is highway robbery along main roads. Typically, public transport or trade vehicles are stopped (there are few private cars in the Casamance) and the occupants relieved of their cash, luggage and wares. Attempts to escape or resist are usually met with beating or shooting. In early 2001, a rogue Front Sud element briefly coupled highway robbery with ethnic violence, separating Wolof from other passengers, then executing them.<sup>15</sup> Maquisards have developed channels for disposing of booty from robberies: if surplus to their requirements, stolen goods are sold through shops owned by their families or sympathisers in Guinea-Bissau and Ziguinchor.

The MFDC view of such actions is mixed. Father Diamacoune has consistently condemned and (unsuccessfully) sought to forbid robberies by maquisards. Elements of the Front Sud, however, claim that robbery has been forced upon them: first by Senegalese repression depriving the movement of a popular support base; and more recently, by cessation of food aid from the Wade government (see below) and cutting of their supply lines by the new Guinea-Bissauan regime. Other maquis elements seek to distance themselves from armed robberies, though this may be disingenuous, another manifestation of Front Sud factionalism; or just indicative of the absence of firm command. Again, opportunistic criminals are also involved. In Kolda region in 2001, a number of Senegalese soldiers were found to be undertaking armed robberies of wealthier homes, posing as maquisards – activities reminiscent of Sierra Leone's 'sobels' ('soldier by day, rebel by night' (Richards, 1996: 7)). Their arrest raises the question of how many other robberies have been carried out by Senegalese servicemen.

#### 4.7 Humanitarian aid

As with other conflicts, the question of humanitarian aid finding its way to combatants has arisen in the Casamance, with certain agencies, notably Caritas, being accused of thus fuelling the rebellion. However, this must be qualified with the fact that under President Diouf, some agencies supplied food to the maquis with official support during ceasefires. This was to ensure that maquisards would not be forced into banditry by hunger (thus protecting the civilian population) and as an act of goodwill, all to facilitate dialogue. The MFDC and intermediaries see the ending of this practice by President Wade as now hindering the peace

process. Medicines have similarly been supplied to the maquis with government permission. Lists of requirements, sent by one Front Sud element to agencies in Ziguinchor at the start of the wet season in recent years, include antibiotics, antimalarials, vermifuges and rehydration salts (MFDC, 2000a), suggesting poor living conditions in the bush. Besides approved distributions to maquisards, food aid given to rural populations has sometimes made an attractive target for armed robbery by maquis or criminal elements. A Red Cross officer interviewed counters that, normally, soldiers are dispatched to protect civilian populations still in place after an attack and hence secure aid distribution.

Another contentious area has been aid for the peace process itself. Early in his presidency, Wade dissolved the 'mediation committees' established under his predecessor, opting instead for direct contact between the government and the MFDC. It was argued that such committees had become a gravy train and, worse, that the large sums of money involved over the years (claimed to be millions of dollars' worth) had created a form of clientelism. Individual committee members were cultivating maquis factions, with benefits from timber and charcoal trafficking going to the former, while humanitarian aid was channelled to the latter.

#### 4.8 Arms

The MFDC was at first armed only with hand weapons such as bows and arrows, and hunting rifles. Guerrilla warfare against Senegalese forces, armed largely by France, clearly required modern weaponry, and the maquis now commonly uses AK-47 assault rifles, RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launchers and landmines. Various sources of such equipment have been alleged. The Casamance rebellion began within a decade of the end of Guinea-Bissau's 'War of Liberation', during which guerrillas maintained rear bases in the Casamance: some of the arms and bases that they left behind were subsequently used by the MFDC maquis. Arms from Libya and Iraq have come to the maquis via Mauritania and The Gambia, as have weapons (probably in smaller volumes) trafficked by insurgents in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Ellis, 1999; de Jong, 1998). Arms are also sometimes seized from Senegalese forces in attacks.

The most important arms supplier to the maquis has been the Guinea-Bissauan military, elements of which are sympathetic to the MFDC, and which more generally suffers from unreliable salary payments. Historically this has been a sore point between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and within Guinea-Bissau itself. It was the attempted scapegoating of Ansumane Mané, Guinea-Bissau's then-chief of staff, by President 'Nino' Vieira, for arms supply to the MFDC, that pushed Mané to launch a military coup against Vieira in June 1998. During the ensuing 11-month civil war, a Front Sud contingent went to Bissau to support Mané's forces, fighting partly against Senegalese troops shipped in from the Casamance to help prop up Vieira. The main benefit to the maquis was the acquisition of heavier weaponry (mostly of Soviet manufacture), including mortars, given to them by Mané's forces or captured from the opposition. In a second, failed coup attempt in November 2000, Mané was executed by forces loyal to the new government of President Kumba

Yala, which has tried to stop arms supply to the MFDC. From December 2000, the Guinea-Bissauan army drove hardliners from their bases on that side of the border, retrieving some of the heavy arsenal obtained in the days of Mané. However, given the chronic structural problem of an overlarge, underpaid army containing elements closely tied, culturally or financially, to the Casamance rebellion, it seems unlikely that the flow of arms to the maquis from Guinea-Bissau has completely dried up. President Jammeh in The Gambia has also been accused of supplying weapons to the maquis, formerly as a close friend of Mané (a Gambian Mandingo by birth), and suspected of wider economic ties to the rebellion.

The ways in which the maquis pays for weapons are similarly diverse. The Front Sud has limited cash, so barter plays a significant role, with cashews or cattle used to buy or rent arms from the Guinea-Bissauan army. One source cited a rate of three sacks of cashews for a landmine or the hire of a small arm for one 'mission'.<sup>16</sup> During the civil war in Liberia, rebels there supplied weapons to the MFDC maquis in return for Casamance cannabis (Ellis, 1999).

The MFDC itself claims that direct arms supplies from foreign states are unnecessary given a buoyant free market in weapons (Evans, 2000). This is credible, given that West Africa is awash with illegal small arms – an estimated eight million of them, mostly from the former Eastern bloc – with trafficking facilitated by states' inability to police their borders or pay their armed forces. It seems that rogue elements in neighbouring and more distant countries have more commonly supplied arms to the maquis than official state sponsors, with short-term economic gain as the main motivation (Hall, 1999; de Jong, 1998).

#### 4.9 Funding flows within combatant groups

An examination of the different MFDC elements does not suggest a significant concentration of wealth at any point, at least in Senegal. None of the Political Wing in Ziguinchor lives in opulence, their standard of living ranging from average to comfortable (for Ziguinchor). The maquis is less fortunate: the Front Sud seems to live in particularly harsh conditions, although the Front Nord, absorbed in economic 'development' and with greater freedom of movement, may be relatively more comfortable. The only MFDC members who live in any real style are certain political activists based in The Gambia or Europe, with undisclosed sources of funding there. Any 'trickle up' of revenues from the maquis to the political leadership seems highly improbable, and recent peace-process funding has not been channelled in the opposite direction. The question therefore arises: to what extent is money gained from the above activities pooled for the rebellion (and if so at what level), or kept by individual MFDC members to maintain their and their families' livelihoods (as Marut (1999a) claims for cannabis trafficking)? The distribution of finances has become a divisive issue, with accusations of misappropriation of external funds exchanged between factions of the Political Wing, and reported friction within the Front Sud over the sharing of cashew revenues. Such conflict between private and group interests may be common in the MFDC.

Similarly, the extent to which the army's economic activities are institutionalised is probably limited. Senegalese government sources maintain (in interview) that military expenditure has not increased significantly as a result of the conflict (Humphreys and ag Mohamed, 2002), although in the Casamance itself it is claimed that soldiers operating there are paid 'risk indemnities' on top of their salaries. The army's stake in the war economy as such is purely one of supplementing livelihoods; it is not using revenues to purchase weapons to further any political end. Testimonies suggest that economic activities operate at the level of individuals or small groups, with some restraining influence by senior officers on lower ranks, although the former are sometimes involved. A term such as 'army' therefore needs disaggregation, as its members are by no means all winners in every sense (Nest, 2001). Soldiers stationed in rural cantonments in the Casamance endure poor living conditions

and may find themselves far from their families, fighting a war that cannot be won by military means alone. Soldiers complain of late salary payments, and they and their wives have demonstrated on the streets of Dakar to demand better conditions (Marut, 1999b; Humphreys, pers. comm.). Such circumstances make it unsurprising that soldiers in the Casamance supplement their income by deploying their advantages in resource exploitation: manpower, logistical means (especially vehicles) and capital (as a large salaried group in an otherwise economically depressed region), coupled with a monopoly of authority in some areas. For both sides in the Casamance, as in other conflict areas with rich natural resources, 'the political goals of wars often interact with the multiple logics of resource appropriation, the drugs trade, the looting of private property, and vandalism' (Bangura, 1997: 117).

## 5. The political economy of force in the Casamance

The Casamance war economy could not function without the use of force. At the macro (national and transnational) level, the geographical context is crucial in defining these dynamics. The Casamance is a well-watered land in an otherwise Sahelian country, giving it a comparative advantage in forest products. It is also sandwiched between two countries with politico-economic characters that are different but which both serve as driving forces in the war economy. Guinea-Bissau, very poor and burdened with increasing austerity in recent years because of entry into the CFA zone and civil war, has problematic armed forces that have sought external revenues through arms supply and predation. The Gambia, an 'entrepôt state', has provided buying power, access to national and international markets and (for timber and cannabis) processing facilities, all of which are limited in the Casamance itself. Strong sociocultural ties have long promoted commercial relations between these two countries and Senegal, but with the conflict these relations have, through violence and predation, become pathological for the Casamance.

Senegalese forces in the Casamance have maintained access to particular resources in various ways, evolving with the conflict. With the entrenchment of armed violence in the early 1990s, the army's human rights abuses were at times accompanied by the plunder of resources from villagers. Following displacement, the army destroyed houses in some villages to prevent maquisards from occupying them. Servicemen have also used force against the civil authorities that police resource extraction. In a well-known incident in 1995, the Eaux et Forêts Regional Inspector seized a consignment of ven that the army was attempting to ship out of Ziguinchor; soldiers countered by threatening him and assaulting his wife, forcing him to release the shipment. Another, subsequent dispute between Eaux et Forêts and the Ziguinchor's Gendarmerie has limited the number of late-night timber fairs held by the latter, according to one menuisier. This suggests that Eaux et Forêts still wields some power over servicemen, despite being unarmed and generally hamstrung by lack of means.

However, with the conflict now at a relatively low level and the behaviour of the armed forces having greatly improved, servicemen maintain access to resources mainly by forbidding or restricting the entry of civilians to certain areas of insecurity, 'for their own safety' or to prevent them from sheltering or supplying maquisards. A counter-argument used in one project supporting the return of IDPs was that 'if a zone ... remains abandoned, that allows [maquisards] to infiltrate; so we want to reoccupy our lands to prevent that' (interview with project coordinator, Ziguinchor, 13 May 2001). Return in this case was overseen (and assisted logistically) by the army, though a continued military presence in a return setting may still restrict access to resources. In one border village with an army cantonment, interviewees complained that a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the village environs limited their ability to cultivate their fields. Attempts to return to another border village by individual IDPs have been blocked by the authorities, civil

and military, even during ceasefire periods; refugees wishing to return from Guinea-Bissau are afraid of the Senegalese army. The presence of landmines also allows the army to control civilian access. To exploit one cashew orchard in Kolda region, civilians must be escorted by soldiers along a safe corridor through a mined perimeter.

The most powerful force restricting access is fear among civilians, many having suffered at rebel hands, though in Ziguinchor this at times seems disproportionate in relation to the real security situation. Soldiers may deliberately reinforce this sense of insecurity to justify their continued presence, thus maintaining their 'risk indemnities' and access to sources of revenue unavailable elsewhere in Senegal. It is even suggested that soldiers have fired their weapons at nothing while on patrol in the bush to create the illusion of combat, or have prevented access to areas that they claim to be mined when in fact no landmines are present.

The maquis maintains access to resources through similarly diverse means. The Front Sud holds areas, particularly in the border zone, from which it has displaced civilian populations through exaction, robbery, terror or sowing landmines, and again has destroyed their houses. Some IDPs in Ziguinchor said that they or family members had been attacked by maquisards when they had tried to return to their home villages. However, Front Sud economic activity in that zone implies a degree of access by civilians (possibly including the families of maquisards), and involves contact with normal trading networks. More generally, many civilians still go to 'abandoned' areas, on a day- or short-term basis, for economic reasons; IDPs in Ziguinchor maintained that, besides maquisards, civilians remaining in their home rural community, or traders who travelled there specially, were benefiting from their lost resources. The border zone, though insecure, is thus not quite the no-man's-land, punctuated only by enclaves protected by one side or the other, that is sometimes presented. But its construction as such may serve certain rebel or army interests, and their civilian associates, who wish to keep the area as their *chasse gardée*.

The situation in the Front Nord area is rather different. 'Pacification' has been bought through a Faustian bargain, allowing maquisards to benefit at the expense of most local people in a 'governance void' (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000: 302) – no longer by direct predation, but by exercising their near-monopoly of force to their economic advantage (Marut, 1995). For example, in parts of the Buluf maquisards forbid local civilians from cutting down timber trees, particularly cail-cédrat, thus conserving this resource for Front Nord exploitation. More widely, the Front Nord has associates in the villages of its zone who help it exercise control, and also uses quasi-legal methods, in one instance obtaining use of communal land through a request to the rural council. However, a councillor present at that meeting complained in interview that proper procedures were bypassed, and that having a maquisard in attendance was effectively intimidation.

Eaux et Forêts cannot gain access to the forests of the Front Nord zone, let alone control timber extraction; much evidence points towards impoverishment of ven and cail-

cédrait there (and elsewhere in the region). The ease with which timber is exported by the Front Nord also suggests complicity on the part of Senegalese forces, still posted in larger towns and at official border crossings; while the involvement of elements of the Gambian government and authorities allows duty-free importation of Casamance timber. Overall, civil authorities are unable or unwilling to police resource exploitation because of a combination of insecurity, corruption and 'structural adjustment' cuts in government expenditure. This opens the door to unrestricted use by armed groups effectively acting as the main authority in areas of insecurity (although as noted maquisards and the Senegalese armed forces are not the sole forestry actors in their respective zones, with some civilians also engaged in illegal timber extraction). Recognising the problems of over-exploitation, the maquisards themselves have 'admitted with regret that they are the first and foremost enemies of the forest heritage of the zone' (MFDC, 2000b: 1), and declared a moratorium on timber-cutting by themselves and others. This attempt at self-regulation failed partly because of non-cooperation by the population, who saw it as further repression. Accusations by the MFDC that the government has let 'Senegalese newcomers ... pillage ... forest resources to the point of dangerously threatening the ecosystem of the Casamance' (MFDC, 2000c: 9), while not totally unfounded, are therefore hypocritical and identify only part of a wider problem. But, as the quotes illustrate, the forest has long been a political as well as an economic stake in the conflict.

Thus while notions of 'economic violence' (Keen, 1998: 12) and 'societies of fear' (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000: 303)

are applicable in the Casamance, a focus on armed groups and their sometimes deplorable actions risks masking a more complex political economy of conflict. Violence is not necessarily used or even threatened to exploit the Casamance's natural richness: as in other conflict situations, the co-option over time of certain sectors of the civilian population into the war economy is evident, particularly amid deepening poverty. The exploitation and trade of Casamance products by combatants augment the limited flow of resources through the civilian trading networks of an area economically depressed by conflict; even if the bigger winners, in military, governmental and commercial (licit or illicit) spheres, probably reside mostly outside of the Casamance or even Senegal. Timber exploitation by servicemen, particularly, creates local economic benefits, providing jobs for young men cutting timber, and trade for menuiseries. By harvesting or buying other forest products, particularly fruit, the army facilitates marketing of produce that would otherwise rot (as it commonly does during the orange and mango seasons, for want of transport and buyers). On the MFDC side, timber trading by the Front Nord can at least be credited with overcoming a general lack of business sense among the Casamance Diola. One otherwise struggling refugee village visited in Guinea-Bissau was supplied with oranges and doe meat by villagers' sons and brothers in the Front Sud maquis, who obtained such products in abandoned border areas of the Casamance. While neither the socio-economic benefits nor perverse humanitarianism described here justify the continuation of the war economy, they do help to explain it.

## 6. Aid problems and pitfalls in the Casamance

While humanitarian aid does not figure highly in the Casamance war economy, past external funding may have been allocated to maquis elements, either through mediation committees or support for the Front Nord. Past direct agency involvement in the peace process has also been problematic: one French Caritas officer in Ziguinchor developed a rapport with the maquis that enabled him to instigate development projects, but his resulting appointment as France's 'representative for peace' in the Casamance created diplomatic problems for the French ambassador to Senegal. Current agency activities in support of peace may be more prudent, but access to funding from Western donors for the peace process has still been the subject of bitter disputes between the Senegalese government (through which such funding is channelled) and MFDC political leaders, and between different factions of the Political Wing. USAID-funded activities in the peace process (by AJAC-APRAN and CRS) seem largely open and enjoy the general approval of both sides (though there are opponents in local government and the maquis).

Development aid has similarly had to operate in the complex and fluid political economy of the conflict. Those trying to run projects in rural Casamance have been confronted with problems of insecurity restricting activity. For example, one Ziguinchor NGO had its truck commandeered by maquisards for an armed robbery, with its driver held hostage for 12 hours. But in other cases, local agreements have been reached with maquisards, who have then allowed freedom of movement or a project to continue. Such ad hoc negotiations have essentially involved agency or local NGO officers explaining to maquisards what the project entailed and gaining their trust. The MFDC is generally amenable to development workers in the Casamance, but elements may have other agendas. In one case, a few years after a successfully negotiated project, the maquis assassinated an important organiser for the NGO in that village for reasons unknown.

The biggest problems have arisen from the articulation of development projects with local politics. Local disputes over access to external resources may be no more than non-violent feuds, but in extreme cases conflict has been used to settle scores. The worst example heard concerned a local NGO project with one of the two groupements pour la promotion féminine (GPFs – local women's groups, running livelihood projects for their members) in a particular village. This provoked jealousy on the part of the other GPF, which denounced the former to the army as harbouring rebels. The army, still practising arbitrary repression at that time (1992), responded by killing the husband of the president of the successful GPF and the brother of one of its organisers. Other organisers suffered sexual harassment from soldiers and fled.<sup>17</sup>

This incident illustrates that Senegalese forces have also obstructed agency activity in the Casamance. The turnover of army personnel may be a problem: an understanding may be reached with one officer, but his replacement may be

less amenable, or a new agreement has to be negotiated from scratch. Some officers' reactions to the mere possibility of insurgency have verged on the psychotic.<sup>18</sup> Human rights groups and the testimonies of Casamançais all point to much better relations between the army and civilians, although mistrust and bitterness over past atrocities remain. The involvement and continued presence of soldiers in return projects may be particularly contentious for those who previously suffered army persecution. Two accounts were heard of European agency workers being arrested, a result of Senegalese sensitivities about foreign interference in the conflict and support for the maquis.

At a national level, it may be asked to what extent the developmental neglect of the Casamance, particularly its transport infrastructure, is instrumental on the part of the Senegalese government. This question has important implications for the aid macro-agenda, which in the generally improving security climate is shifting from relief to rehabilitation (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000). The MFDC Political Wing claims that neglect is a form of economic warfare 'against' the Casamance, of a kind that would fit Le Billon's (2000: 1) 'economic strategies of war'. Reconstruction has thus become a significant issue in peace negotiations, with the MFDC somewhat bizarrely demanding that the Senegalese government (with donor funding) adopt a massive rehabilitation programme for the Casamance. In fairness to the government, long-overdue remaking of the crucial Bignona-Diouloulou tarmac road was undertaken in 2002. The Gambian government, meanwhile, is blocking donor-supported plans for a road bridge over the Gambia River for the other main Casamance artery, the 'transgambienne' to Dakar, on the specious grounds that it stands to lose the revenue from the existing ferry. This objection may have more to do with the benefits certain Gambian economic interests gain from the continued isolation of the Casamance.

Meanwhile, the MFDC's own violence has deterred infrastructure investment and maintenance. Indeed, the most significant event for development aid in the Casamance over the course of the conflict was the widespread seeding of landmines by the maquis from 1997. This provoked a precipitous flight of Western donors from the Casamance, most importantly USAID, whose departure abruptly terminated projects and whole development quangos (CONGAD, 1998). Resentment over this 'abandonment' is still evident in Ziguinchor's NGO community, which was faced with accusations of deception from its constituencies, and ever since has found it difficult to obtain funding. However, USAID returned to the Casamance in 2000 with a three-year, \$10 million programme (USAID, 1999), and other donors are also coming back: prospects for most local NGOs, while still not good, are therefore improving.

The return of IDPs, refugees and rebels also has political dimensions. The reconstruction projects described, while warmly welcomed by beneficiaries and rooted in a human rights-based approach to development, have unfortunately not escaped the mire of local politics. Criticisms of these and other projects heard from some local state-appointed officials and elected representatives probably arise at least partly from jealousy of privileged NGO access to external

funds entering their domains, funds which they themselves feel that they should control. Obstacles to the demobilisation of maquisards, meanwhile, may include the threat of reprisals from their comrades, their home communities or the Senegalese authorities; or occult commitments that are difficult to revoke (Humphreys, pers. comm.). The potential problems of reconciliation are evident: as one woman returning home under a reconstruction project said, 'those with clean skin should come back, and are welcome, while those involved in the conflict should stay away' (meeting of project beneficiaries, 1 July 2001). It may also be asked to what extent an unknown proportion of the maquis, involved in the economic activities described above, either need or want alternative livelihoods (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000). However, the consensus is that most of the Front Sud, given the opportunity, would return from the bush and into normal life. The Front Nord, in fact, could ultimately prove the more recalcitrant faction, and may be difficult to wean off its more lucrative timber and cannabis trading; its nominal 'pacification' means little if its territorial control is threatened.

## 7. Conclusions

The Casamance rebellion, whatever its original legitimacy, has over time been appropriated by various local, national and transnational actors for their own political and economic ends. At the same time, the isolation of the Casamance from the rest of Senegal (as geographical fact) has been aggravated by insecurity and the (partly related) breakdown of infrastructure. The result has been to create a war economy far from the eyes and concerns of most of the Dakar elite, though benefiting some of them. Still poorly understood compared with some wars involving higher-value resources, the political economy of the Casamance conflict is starting to be seen as an obstacle to peace. To enhance their livelihoods or purchase weapons, combatants have generally taken up pre-existing forms of production and trade, mostly using established marketing channels rather than developing a parallel economy (cf. Cliffe and Luckham, 2000). This war economy is sustained by predatory interests and sociocultural connections in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. Certain sectors of the Casamance population have benefited, or at least maintained their livelihoods, but the majority have suffered, economically, socially, physically or psychologically. While social capital is still strong among Casamançais and keeps many afloat, denial of access to resources by real or perceived insecurity and difficulties in accessing markets create genuine hardship, particularly in rural areas. This environment presents numerous problems for aid agencies and their local partners. Defining best practice is difficult because the political economy is constantly evolving, but as Cliffe and Luckham (2000) note, it is precisely this understanding of processes that should inform aid.

First, the provision of any aid must be more closely tied with security. Support for the peace process in particular needs to be allocated with care, and in the light of past experience. Feeding maquisards previously did not create lasting peace; development assistance to the Front Nord without a concomitant deposition of arms has allowed it to instigate its own form of 'development', to the detriment of much of the local population, and though supposedly 'pacified' it has on one occasion attacked Senegalese forces. Support for livelihoods should therefore be restricted to those who have definitively renounced armed violence. Such linkage could be achieved through a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme similar to that in Sierra Leone, which removed large numbers of rebels from the bush and arms from circulation, even if its results in terms of longer-term peace remain to be seen (see Chapter [number]). The Front Nord fiasco also demonstrates why the provision of security should be the responsibility of the state. Unfortunately, despite considerable improvements in Senegalese forces' behaviour, there remain army elements with substantial economic interests in controlling access to territory. However, handing over control to a totally unaccountable rebel band is undoubtedly worse.

Second, agencies have to tread a fine line between not getting embroiled in local politics, while also dealing with political

structures that have a legitimate role in achieving peace, reconstruction and development. This applies to any project in peacetime, but in a war situation relatively minor local disputes may take more dangerous forms. More generally, aid initiatives risk falling foul of political actors wanting to control resources entering their domains. This desire is normatively legitimate, given the state's (theoretical) primacy in delivering public services; the claim of one NGO officer that 'We work with the grassroots, and bypass the administration if they're being difficult' (interview, Ziguinchor department, 26 July 2001) is understandable but naive. The question for agencies in the Casamance is which political actors to work with or bypass: the degree of cooperation or conflict between state-appointed, elected and traditional authorities varies widely between areas, as do the relations of each authority with individual aid providers. The rural council can probably claim to be the most democratic, locally accountable body, but one encountered was riven by party-political factionalism. The return of Western donors after a few years' absence may create its own problems as NGOs jostle for new funding, and the implication of local political interests creates further scope for a divisive scramble for resources (supporting Jackson's view (see the related background paper on coltan in the Kivus) Chapter [number]) that large fluctuations in aid over time are potentially destabilising). With the economic development of the Casamance itself now an important stake in the peace process, these factors are already becoming problematic for local NGOs engaged in the erratic steps towards peace and reconstruction. Where they have a political role (as intermediaries or advocates) in the peace process, this should therefore be clearly defined in relation to governmental activities. Again, while state legitimacy may be challenged in a conflict situation, the state still has a central role in achieving peace (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000); the problem is getting everyone to agree on what that role is.

Finally, a more fundamental issue arises from the political economy of conflict approach, which has consequences for the aid agenda. In this case study, the specific effects of conflict on the Casamance economy were difficult to isolate from wider problems, common to many provincial areas in developing countries. This was particularly true in the livelihood surveys, which approached interviewees on the grounds of their economic problems in general, to see how highly the conflict figured. The surveys thus proved to be an informative source on the political economy of the Casamance, including (but by no means limited to) the political of the conflict. The economic impact of conflict on local populations may be serious, but applying this approach too strictly risks associating certain phenomena with conflict when they are, in fact, endemic to a region or country, at war or at peace. Poor infrastructure, inadequate public services, unregulated resource extraction for the benefit of a few, and capricious global markets all form a wider, "silent violence" of underdevelopment, poverty and inequality' (Cliffe and Luckham, 2000: 295). Above all, aid agencies should be clear about whether they are really looking at a political economy of conflict, or at business as usual.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> In particular, Le Billon's (2000: 1) definition of the war economy is maintained here: 'the production, mobilisation and allocation of economic resources to sustain a conflict', which forms part of the wider political economy of conflict, 'the production and distribution of power, wealth and destitution'.

<sup>2</sup> In August 2001, Diamacoune was replaced as Secretary-General by Jean-Marie François Biagui, taking up (with bad grace) the new, vague post of 'President of Honour'. Subsequent disputes over leadership have only brought to the fore deep-seated factionalism within the MFDC.

<sup>3</sup> Partly following the French model, a région is divided into départements, which are subdivided into communes (urban municipalities) and arrondissements (rural districts). Electorally, the latter are divided into communautés rurales: 'rural community' is therefore used throughout this case study in this strict sense of a defined administrative unit governed by an elected conseil rural (rural council). Ziguinchor region comprises three departments, each named for its chief town: Ziguinchor and Oussouye south of the Casamance River, and Bignona north of it.

<sup>4</sup> This estimate is based on reported deaths. Enumeration of the death toll is made difficult by the maquis habit of never leaving its dead on the battlefield. Indirect civilian casualties, such as those sick or elderly who have died while being displaced from their villages, are not included in this figure, and would be more difficult to estimate.

<sup>5</sup> 'Near' was defined as the immediate area – within roughly 500m – of a base.

<sup>6</sup> The forêt classée of Tanghory, whose extensive teak plantations are visible from central Bignona, shows signs of considerable illegal cutting; neighbouring Tanghory quarter is the heart of the local black market, with teak logs taken in full view to houses there for planking with hand tools.

<sup>7</sup> During the research period, and since 1990, the Joola was the ferry in operation. However, in Africa's worst-ever maritime disaster, the Joola capsized off the Gambian coast on 26 September 2002, with the loss of over 1,000 lives. At the time of writing, the Senegalese government has committed itself to the purchase of two replacement vessels.

<sup>8</sup> This is in contrast with Senegal's larger groundnut trade, where until recently seeds were supplied and the crop bought mostly by parastatals, although these are now being privatised. Eaux et Forêts does, however, help in the provision of cashew saplings to local populations.

<sup>9</sup> The Mozambican industry having collapsed due to trade liberalisation, there are now only a handful of small-scale processing plants there and in Tanzania (Cramer, pers. comm.).

<sup>10</sup> The franc CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) is the single currency of Senegal, most francophone countries of West Africa, and (since 1997) Guinea-Bissau; formerly tied to the French franc, the CFA is now tied to the Euro at a fixed rate, making 1,000 CFA worth approximately \$1.50.

<sup>11</sup> This includes roasting cashew nuts for sale on the street, and pressing cashew 'apples' for their juice, which is then fermented to give cashew wine.

<sup>12</sup> Mandina Mancagne, just south-east of Ziguinchor, saw the Senegalese army's biggest single loss in the whole Casamance conflict, with 25 soldiers killed there by the MFDC on 25 August 1997. Access is now largely restricted

to the army.

<sup>13</sup> One Ziguinchor NGO officer stated that a farming family growing cannabis under contract to buyers may earn twice the sum that it would from cultivating groundnuts, with the latter hampered by unreliable or expensive parastatal supplies of inputs, followed by delays in payment for the harvest.

<sup>14</sup> Newsletters in France have included *Le Palmier*, *La Voix de la Casamance* and *Casamance Kunda*; the Swiss-based online *Journal du Pays* is at <http://members.tripod.com/journaldupays>. There is also a US-based website (Humphreys, pers. comm.).

<sup>15</sup> The massacre of 13 civilian travellers at Niahoump on 16 February 2001 shocked many Casamançais even after two decades of violence; it was closely followed, on 2 March, by the killing of seven more under similar circumstances at Bélaye.

<sup>16</sup> At this price, the landmine is presumably anti-vehicular rather than anti-personnel: cf. Hall (1999), who cites a price of just \$2.75 for the latter type.

<sup>17</sup> The local NGO officer who oversaw the project in question and tried (unsuccessfully) to prevent harassment of the GPF organisers is still, ten years on, too traumatised by these events to return to the village.

<sup>18</sup> In one border village, a previous *nordiste* captain of the cantonment there had traders travelling up from Guinea-Bissau harassed and beaten as suspected rebels or rebel supporters; he also banned village dances, which he believed were being held in support of the rebellion.