

Understanding The Casamance Conflict: A Background



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Acronyms

AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française
APRAN-SDP	Association pour la Promotion Rurale de l'Arrondissement de Niyassia-Solidarité, Développement et Paix
AU	Africa Union
CNAM	Centre National d'Actions Anti-mine
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GoS	Government of Senegal
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PRAESC	Programme de Reconstruction Economique et Sociale de la Casamance
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1 Introduction

For the first decade of independence, West Africa became the theater of numerous armed conflicts. Whether it was bloody coups d'état, rebellions or violent separatist projects, no single West African country has escaped armed intervention in its politics. West Africa's secessionists backed their claims for the independence of certain ethnic groups or regions through the barrels of guns. Nigeria and Chad represented the most glaring examples of this tendency in the 1960s. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, new secessionist movements emerged in Niger, Mali, and Senegal (Abdullah and Rashid, 2004:169). In Senegal, the *Movement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* which had agitated for regional autonomy since 1947, chose the path of violent secession only in 1982. Like other secessionist groups, the MFDC has framed its struggle around regional particularism and historical autonomy of the Casamance province.

The Casamance conflict is part of numerous civil wars of post-colonial Africa. The conflict opposes the Senegalese State and the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC)¹. The MFDC has been fighting for the independence of Casamance province since 1982, but to date (2010), has failed to achieve this goal. To the MFDC's claim, the Senegalese state has opposed its sovereignty and territorial integrity, inherited at its independence in 1960. Despite its similarities with other contemporary African conflicts, the Casamance conflict presents some particular aspects: the regional dimension of the conflict which related to the landlocked position of The Gambia inside the Senegalese territory² and the border with Guinea Bissau. The conflict is above all a separatist conflict, one of the rarest of the continent. The Casamance war has been one of the less bloodiest among the multitude of African conflicts for the number and the nature/type of victims: despite several violations of human rights³ committed by each side, there have never been mass killings as in other civil wars (Marut, 2004); Paradoxically, the Casamance conflict is taking place in the southern part of one of the West African country known to be stable, namely Senegal.

Little is known about the conflict⁴ as compared to other ones that have taken root in West Africa. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to discuss the Casamance conflict in order to provide some knowledge and a better understanding of the conflict which has been going on for 28 years. Section one provides a background of conflict and gives details on the pre-conflict situation, the beginning of the conflict, the triggers and the actors to the conflict; Section two discusses the dynamics of the conflict from the beginning to present. A third section discusses

¹ In English, Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance

² See map n°1 at page 5.

³ See reports of Amnesty International on the Casamance conflict: Amnesty International (1998), Amnesty International (1999), Amnesty International (2002) and Amnesty International (2003).

⁴ Another paper explores the reasons why little is known about the conflict: A.Fall, (2010), The Casamance Civil War in Senegal: A Forgotten Conflict, a forthcoming KAIPTC monograph

the consequences of the conflict. The conclusion provides some lessons learned from the Casamance conflict and recommendations for the management of the conflict.

Besides the fact that it provides some knowledge on the Casamance conflict, this paper constitutes a background to another paper, *The Casamance Civil War in Senegal: A Forgotten Conflict*⁵. For the purpose, a field work was undertaken in Casamance from 1st to 13 December 2008 for the sake of gathering updated information on the conflict. The compilation of this current paper was made possible thanks to information collected during the field work, in addition to secondary sources.

2 Background

Casamance is located in the Republic of Senegal, which is situated in the western part of the African continent. It is bordered by Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, Guinea and Guinea Bissau to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The Republic of The Gambia is an enclave stretching into the southern part of the Senegalese territory, separating the Casamance from the rest of Senegal. Senegal is a former French colony. The country was first invaded by the Portuguese in the 15th century. For the next three centuries, other European states, such as France, Great Britain and Portugal, battled for the control of Senegal's natural resources, territory and slave labor⁶. In the mid-19th century, the French solidified their rule over a large part of West Africa, including Senegal, forcing the Portuguese out of the Casamance, pushing them into what is now Guinea Bissau. Despite resistance from the Senegalese people and in particular from the *Casamançais*, French colonial rule continued until 1960, when Senegal became independent and a sovereign state with its capital Dakar (Woocher, 2000:344).

Casamance has had a different experience of colonialism. The French gained it later⁷ than the rest of Senegal by trading territory with the Portuguese, and its subsequent administration was different in character (Evans, 2003:4). During the colonial period, French rulers were faced with a lot of resistance in Casamance. This resulted in a multitude of subsequent arrangements regarding the authority managing the region. In details, the current

⁵ See note 4

⁶ More on these battles for the occupation of Senegal, and in particular of the Casamance region, can be found in Roche, C., (1985), *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance: 1850-1920*, Karthala: Paris. The title of the book in English is, *History of Casamance: Conquest and Resistance*.

⁷ Dramé (1998) explains that the Casamance region was the last part to be attached to the Senegalese territory, after the Second World War. Taken from 'Décentralisation, Pouvoirs Sociaux et Réseaux Sociaux: l'Exemple du Conflit Casamançais, Senegal', 1998, *Le Bulletin de l'APAD*, n° 16. The region has been managed as a colony on its own, due to the violent resistances against the French colonial rule. In addition, the organization of the society in the Casamance region (The Rivers of the South) was egalitarian, as opposed to the highly hierarchical structure of the rest of Senegal (the North). More on this topic can be found in Roche, C., (1985).

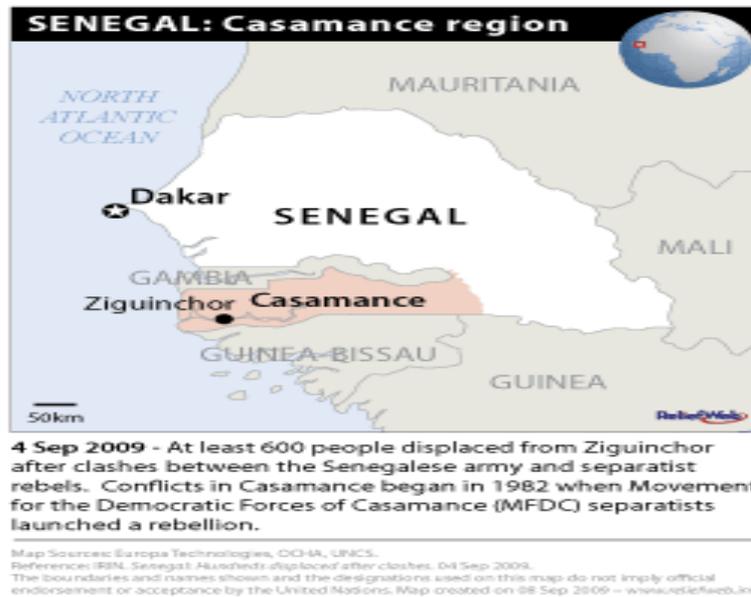
Casamance region was part of an area called *Les Rivières du Sud*⁸ and which roughly corresponded to the costal sides of Guinea. In 1845 *Les Rivières du Sud* and all French holdings as far south as Gabon were made independent of Senegal and placed under a naval commander on the *Ile de Gorée*⁹. On February 26, 1859, a French decree again put the *Ile de Gorée* and *Les Rivières du Sud* under the Governor of Senegal. In the meantime, the colony of Senegal was being expanded eastward and southward until by 1865, it was almost comparable in size to its present limits. In 1882 a decree placed *Les Rivières du Sud* under a lieutenant governor who was subordinate to the Governor of Senegal. Additional authority was given to the lieutenant governor in 1889 to deal directly with Paris on certain administrative matters. In 1891, *Les Rivières du Sud* was given complete independence from Senegal and a governor was appointed to the colony (Roche, 1985).

Casamance was administered separately from the rest of Senegal from 1854 to 1939, under direct authority of the governor of French West Africa, and only integrated with it towards the end of the colonial period (Charpy, 1994; Beck, 1999:5). At independence in 1960, the Casamance province remained part of Senegal. Casamance was a strategic place for the colonialists, being a trading point for slaves, wax, ivory and rice. The Casamance people are known for their long history of resistance against colonial invaders, characterized by violent battles and assassinations¹⁰. The highly decentralized and egalitarian societies of the Casamance region stood in contrast with the centralized polities and hierarchical caste societies in the north of Senegal (African Research Group, 1999: 2). Their egalitarian political system and rejection of any central authority has, from a government point of view, made the Diolas difficult to govern (Posthumus, 2000:1).

⁸ Translated in English, it means The Rivers of the South.

⁹ Gorée is the Slavery Island in located in Senegal.

¹⁰ For further details about the resistances, battles and assassinations, see Roche, C., (1985), *Histoire de la Casamance: Conquête et Résistance: 1850-1920*



Map n°1: Map of Senegal. The Casamance region is highlighted in pink colour.
 Source: Reliefweb available at <http://reliefweb.int>

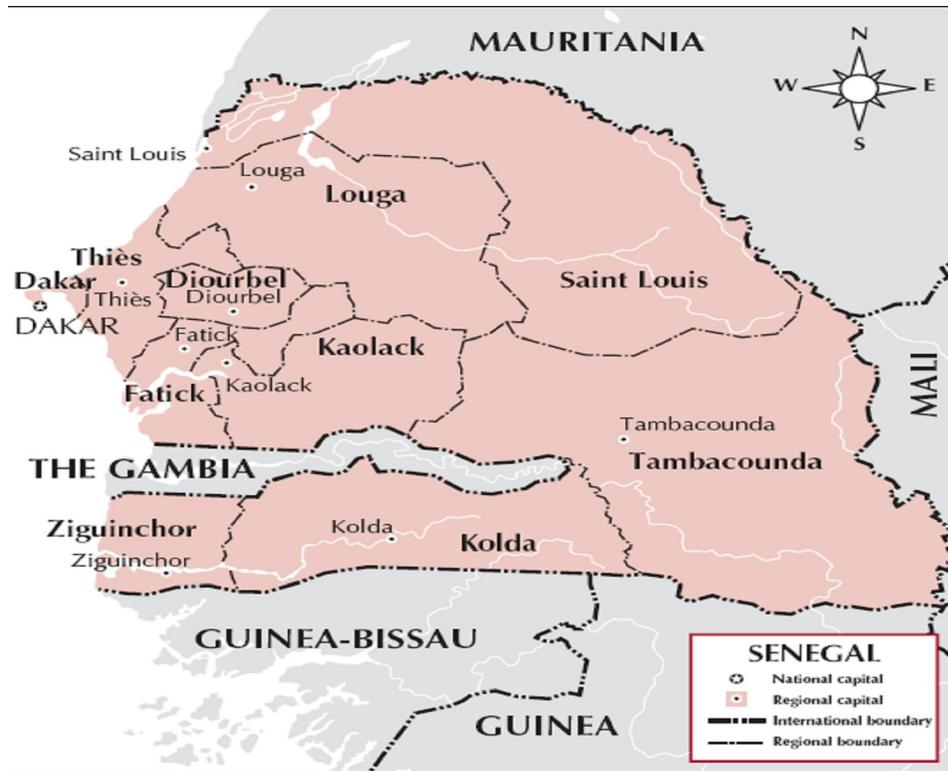
The Senegalese population is made up of 17 different ethnic groups, classified into four larger groups: The **Sahelian-Sudanese** group, which is the largest numerically and estimated to be 55 %¹¹; the **Hal Pulaar**, 25%¹²; The **Sub-Guinean**¹³, 13% and the **Mande** group¹⁴ which is estimated to 7% (Faye, 2006:7-9). Among these ethnic groups, the Wolofs who belong to the Sahelian-Sudanese group are the most populous, totaling over 40% of the Senegalese population

¹¹ The group includes the Wolofs (over 40 % of the population) and Sereres (about 15 % of the population). The Wolofs live in all regions, notably in towns, and are the majority in the Northwest and the West, while Sereres are found especially in the central regions (Fatick, Kaolack and Thiès).

¹²The Peuls and the Toucouleurs represent respectively 15 % and 10 %.

¹³This group includes the Diolas, Balants, Mandiaks, Mankagnes, Bainouks, Bassaris, Bediks, and the Koniaguiss.

¹⁴ This group is made up of the Soninkes, Bambaras and Malinkes, who live in certain areas of Casamance and in the Tambacounda region



Map n°2: Map of Senegal (showing the different regions). The name of Casamance has disappeared from the map following the division of the region into two parts: Ziguinchor and Kolda
 Source: Ecowas, available at <http://www.ecowas.int>

in contrast with the Diolas who represent only 5 % of the total population. However, the Diolas are the dominant ethnic group in Casamance and are estimated to be about 60 % of the population of the Lower Casamance region. Notwithstanding Senegal’s ethnic diversity, the population exhibits a generally high degree of cultural homogeneity (Woocher, 2000:344) to which the Casamance crisis seems to be an exception. The Casamance crisis has often been labeled by the Senegalese State as an ‘*Affaire Diola*’ (African Research Group, 1999) as the Diola ethnic group had been the main instigator of the crisis in the early 1980’s. Moreover, the most violent fighting in Casamance took place essentially in the Lower Casamance region, mainly populated by the Diola ethnic group.

Geographically, Casamance differs in a number of respects from the rest of Senegal: it gets more rain, its landscapes – including areas of rain forest – and beaches are a major tourist attraction, while, culturally, it leans more towards the south and Guinea, rather than the north of Senegal itself. The Diola people are the majority group in Casamance, but the ethnic mix is varied. Although the Casamance region has been islamised like the rest of the country, there are a significant number of people who practice Christianity and/or traditional beliefs (Posthumous, 2000).

The region has experienced a different history than northern Senegal and its socio-cultural make-up varies markedly from that of northern Senegal. The Lower Casamance (basically the area around the regional capital of Ziguinchor) is the least Islamized region of Senegal with a high proportion of the population practicing some form of animism. This contrasts markedly with the high level of Islamization that northern Senegal has known. The population of Senegal is reported to be 95 % Muslim (USAID report, 1999).

This 28-year struggle is the most recent phase of passive and sporadic armed resistance to outside control that is more than 300 years old. Earlier phases of this protracted struggle involved resistance against Portuguese invaders and French colonial troops, who were often composed mostly of northern Senegalese recruits¹⁵. There is an historical tendency on the part of the native Casamance population to resent Senegal's northern majority, i.e. the Wolof ethnic group. And, on the other hand, there exists a traditional disdain by northern Senegalese groups for the Diola people.

These traditional ethnic stereotypes and biased perceptions have much of their basis in a classic conflict of people of very different origins. The Diolas and other groups of the Ziguinchor Region are forest people with a very different set of values, beliefs than northern Senegalese, who originate from the vast arid zones of the Sahel and the Sahara. These perceptions, and the ethnic and territorial divide they reflect, will be hard to overcome. Bringing these groups together in a peaceful manner that endures long enough to allow significant development to occur in the Casamance will be a challenge.

2.1 Pre-conflict situation

This section discusses the root causes of the Casamance rebellion. It provides some of the political, social and economic grievances as well as significant events that occurred prior to the outbreak of the conflict. According to Azar, 'the source of protracted social conflict is the denial of those elements required in the development of all people and societies, and whose pursuit is a compelling need in all. These are security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity and other such developmental requirements' (Azar, 1986:29). The same root causes apply for the Casamance conflict, which is one of the longest protracted social conflicts in Africa.

2.1.1 Resistance of the Casamance people against the nation building process

Hipler (2005) argues that 'nation-building is, on the one hand, a process of sociopolitical development which ideally allows initially loosely linked communities to become a common

¹⁵ More on these historical resistances can be found in Roche Roche, C., (1985), *Histoire de la Casamance : Conquête et Résistance : 1850-1920*, Karthala : Paris

society with a nation-state corresponding to it. Such a process can get off the ground as a result of political, economic, social, cultural and other dynamics. However, it is not automatic that such nation-building process will proceed successfully. They can involve extremely different dimension and instruments, such as economic integration, cultural integration, political centralization, bureaucratic control, military conquest or subjugation, creation of common interests, democratization and establishment of common citizenship or repression and acts of 'ethnic cleansing' (Hipler, 2005:6-7). Such unsuccessful features of nation-building are part of the root causes of the Casamance conflict. In the case of Senegal, the attempts of the first two presidents of the country to unite the different ethnic groups under one common Senegalese identity through the promotion of one language over the others, faced a lot of resistance in the Casamance region where such policies were seen as discriminatory and elitist, because in direct contradiction to the egalitarian nature of certain ethnic groups in the Casamance region.

In 1960, Leopold Sédar Senghor, a Serere, was elected as the first President of Senegal. He started the nation building process and then thought that the French language was needed to unify the country because according to him, Senegal's indigenous languages and Arabic lacked the logic and rationality needed to transform and modernize the country. After independence, proficiency in French, therefore, remained a prerequisite for government employment (Gellar, 2003:10-11). On the other hand, president's President Senghor's successor, Abdou Diouf, also a Serere by ethnicity, proved to be more sensitive to Senegal's historical traditions. According to him, the emphasis on tradition reflected a return to Senegal's authentic values and insured continuity between the past and the present (Gellar, 2003:12-13). He then promoted the Wolof language¹⁶ to the detriment of the other officially recognized national languages which are Pulaar, Serer, Diola, Mandinka, and Soninke¹⁷.

The Casamance people opposed all these policies of unification of the people because they saw them as discriminatory against their own traditional customs which rejects any leadership. Under President Senghor, the imposition of the French language went with a cooptation of the leadership of political parties that would represent the government in their respective regions. Although President Senghor was able to co-opt some political parties in the Casamance region, because the latter believed that this move would give their region more political and economic opportunities, there was resistance from the Casamance elite. This was due to the egalitarian organization of the Diola ethnic group, in comparison to the social organization of the other ethnic groups in Senegal, which is hierarchical by nature. Indeed, 'the Senegalese government was unable to apply its fusion-of-elites policy in Casamance, despite its successes in the Wolof groundnut basin, because here, the Dakar regime found no rural leaders

¹⁶ Probably because Wolof is a language that is spoken throughout Senegal and comes in second position after the official language which is French.

¹⁷ Senghor had always refused to favour the Wolof language to the detriment of other local languages. Smith (2002), revealed that Senghor, as a Serer, was wary of the possibilities of Wolof ethno-nationalism and anxious of keeping the equilibrium between ethno-cultural communities.

with whom to broker a stable and secure alliance; there are no castes, no monarchies or aristocracies, and no hierarchical or bureaucratic state structures' (Bone 1994). As a consequence of this, Senegalese officials appointed non-Diola individuals in the local administration of Casamance, a practice which will also be a source of contestation. Similarly, the use and domination of the Wolof language to the detriment of other local languages was also seen by the Casamance people as an instrument of domination of the Wolof culture (*Wolofisation*) on their own local culture (Trzeciński, 2005:174). Moreover, another contentious issue was that most of the historical heroes from the Casamance region were not known or revered as compared to their Wolof counterparts. The Casamance people refused that state of fact, based on the ground that their region was the last bastion to capitulate to the French during colonization (Trzeciński, 2005:198-199)¹⁸.

2.1.2 Social and economic grievances of the Casamance people

Another source of resentment was the development of a feeling of marginalization in terms of employment. This is somehow a consequence of the egalitarian nature¹⁹ of the Diola society and therefore the refusal of Casamance people to take leadership positions, leading to the domination of Northerners in Senegal's political life²⁰. As a consequence, the interests of the southern part of Senegal could not be adequately voiced in Dakar. The most unfair and frustrating issue for the educated elites of Casamance was the so-called internal colonialism, that is to say, the Dakar authorities' longstanding filling of the region's administrative posts²¹ with civil servants who descended from ethnic groups other than the Diola who are the majority there. Before the outbreak of the conflict in Casamance, mayors in the Casamance region were often drawn from the Wolof ethnic group, who most of the time, were not acquainted with the problems of the local communities and were therefore not accepted by the locals.

¹⁸ To these complaints, the authorities in Dakar explained that their policy was not against the Diola, but it only aimed at strengthening the conscious of the Senegalese people that they belong to one nation regardless of ethnic differences.

¹⁹ The impact of the egalitarian nature of the Diola society on employment is that less Casamance people were employed at leadership position in comparison to other ethnic groups because of their fear of pointed out in their own community (from the interview with Malamine Dieme, Principal of a secondary school met during my field work in December 2008).

²⁰ For example, *Casamançais* claimed that a southerner has never become Senegal's prime minister and member of the Diola community has never been nominated to higher ranks such as Chief of Staff of the Senegalese Army. However, moderate politicians from Casamance have several times occupied important ministerial positions in the government and also sat in the Senegalese parliament. However, their participation in political life did not entail representing the population of the South and was exclusively connected with their membership in the then ruling party, the Socialist Party, which until 2000 governed the country and which had a *de facto* monopoly on power. Another reason for the absence of Casamance people in the political elite, according to Malamine Diemé, Principal of a secondary school in Ziguinchor that I met during my field research was linked to the fact that some Casamance people were refusing propositions to take leadership positions for fear of being pointed out in their own community.

²¹ In particular for the posts of governor and deputy-governor.

The Senegalese government undertook a number of new land policies that further alienated the Diola²². The 1964 National Domains Act, completed by the 1972 reform of the territorial administration are policies among others. The 1964 National Domains Act established the State's propriety of rights over all land for which no legal deed existed. By withdrawing recognition of customary communal land tenure rights, the reform aimed to do away with ethnic homelands. This law, however, violated Diola traditions and customs. As a result, the Diola would no longer be able to distribute their lands in the way they had done traditionally²³. Dakar failed to take into consideration the local traditions and consequently, government decisions were no longer applied by the Casamance people or were circumvented. Due to the new law, there was an increase in the demand of land in Casamance, by local people and people from the north²⁴ (Nicole, 1997:124). The Wolof often bought land from impoverished Diola people, allegedly paying below the land's real value, and developed the cultivation of peanuts, which the native inhabitants of Southern Senegal associate mainly with colonialism²⁵ (Faye, 1994; Dramé, 1998, Trzciński, 2005). The Casamançais saw this as spoliation of their lands. In the Diola culture, land is sacred²⁶ and inherited from generation to generation. The Diola in particular were repeatedly dispossessed and their lands were allotted as settlement plots for migrants, grounds for building tourist infrastructure, and planting orchards (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:43).

Underinvestment and underdevelopment of Casamance have also been part of the issues which have generated frustrations among the Casamance people. The authorities in Dakar have been accused for years of neglecting investment in, or even of entirely passing over, the southern region (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2003:41)²⁷. Lack of investment in Casamance has led to a slow down of development in the South and has increased the problems of local people in connection with the labour market. As a consequence of this, many inhabitants of Casamance

²² These policy measures did however affect also other regions of Senegal. Perhaps, they felt it less due to the closer relationships that the latter developed with Dakar, the center of decision making, and that the people of Casamance were not able to build due to the egalitarian nature of the organization of their society, as opposed to the rest of Senegal which is a hierarchical society. The emphasis is put here only on the ethnic groups of Casamance, mainly the Diola people, as the focus is on the Casamance conflict.

²³ Land is inherited from generation to generation.

²⁴ Casamance is called the south due to its geographic location in Senegal. The rest of the country is called the north, and is populated by Wolof and other ethnic groups.

²⁵ Peanuts were brought to contemporary Senegal by the Portuguese and were popularized by the French who managed to levy tax on local people partly thanks to their cultivation.

²⁶ Some newcomers from the North cut down trees for firewood in local woods considered by the Diola as sacred. Earth is of sacred significance to the Diola, while for the Wolof, mostly of material importance.

²⁷ As a matter of example, in 1979 in Casamance there was not a single kilometer of asphalt road, while the average for all regions was 486 kilometers. Similarly, in 1978 there was one single telephone line per 793 people, while the average for all the rest of Senegal's administrative regions was one line per 132 people.

migrated for economic reasons to Dakar, especially young girls, who worked in the capital as house help²⁸. The Casamance people felt ignored and abandoned by the central authorities. Part of the local elites interpreted the authorities' policy as vengeance for Casamance's traditionally strong sense of identity. The inhabitants of Casamance bear the central authorities a grudge for poor investments in local education and discrimination²⁹. The inhabitants of other regions in Senegal were also not satisfied with the underdevelopment of their educational systems, but in their case communications with Dakar or Saint-Louis³⁰ facilitated matters (Trzeciński, 2005:193-194).

Transportation was also part of the issues and has mainly been related to the landlocked position of the Casamance region, wedged between The Gambia in the north, and Guinea Bissau in the south. For years, the authorities in Dakar ignored the need for improving the existing transport infrastructure of Casamance and for connecting the region with the rest of Senegal³¹. Most roads in the south of the country were in very bad condition, which makes traveling in the region difficult and time-consuming³².

Migrations from Northern Senegal to Casamance were also part of the issues causing fears and resentments among the Casamance people. Since the 1970s, these migration flows have been increasing. The migrants were mainly from the Wolof ethnic group and the Lebu people³³, who enjoyed higher financial standing than inhabitants of the South by means of trade in fishing. Migration of ethno-culturally disparate people started to be regarded – especially at

²⁸ Strangely enough, this migration of women in Dakar is often omitted in the discourse of the Casamance people. A study on this female migration can be found in Foucher, V. (2005), *Les relations hommes-femmes et la formation de l'identité casamançaise*, *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, EHESS Editions, n°178.

²⁹ For instance, at the beginning of the 1980s, i.e., before the break out of the conflict, there was only one secondary school whose graduates were capable of going on to higher studies²⁹. The educational policy of the authorities was regarded by the inhabitants of the South as being discriminatory, especially in a situation where graduating from a college in the capital provided Senegalese youth from the provinces with an opportunity to make a career in Dakar.

³⁰ Saint-Louis was the first capital of Senegal. The capital was later transferred to Dakar. Saint-Louis has now become one of the eleven regions of Senegal.

³¹ It must however be acknowledged that significant investments in road infrastructure were made in northern Casamance at the end of the 1990s.

³² The distance between Dakar and Casamance (Ziguinchor) is around 310.86 to 337.89 kilometers (between 193.74 to 209.96 miles). For many years, the easiest way for inhabitants of Casamance to reach the capital has been to travel by sea. A regular connection between Ziguinchor and Dakar has not existed since 2002, when the only ferry that sailed between the cities sank in the Atlantic Ocean. The other option is to travel through The Gambia, but this unfortunately requires going through the arduous border control twice. Indeed, on the way to Dakar or Ziguinchor, one needs to cross The Gambia River twice and since there is no bridge, one needs to take a –usually overloaded– ferry and pay for it. Flight connections also link the Casamance region to Dakar, but the airfare (around 150 Euros) is not affordable to ordinary citizens of Casamance.

³³ The Lebu are a small group of people whose main economic activity is fishing. They can be found in Senegal along the coastal areas, namely in Dakar Rufisque, Mbour, Saint-Louis, Mbao, and also nearby Cape Verde. The Lebu speak the Wolof language and earn their living by fishing. They are traditional fishermen.

the beginning of the 1980s – by the inhabitants of Casamance as a serious threat to their cultural identity and traditional lifestyle. Casamance's elites suspected that an influx of migrants from the northern part of Senegal was stimulated by the authorities in Dakar and aimed at the future quantitative domination of the indigenous population by the immigrants from the north.

Similarly, these migrations created a feeling of food insecurity with regards to livelihood. The Casamance people were convinced that their region was economically exploited by the Senegalese state. This feeling of insecurity was reinforced by the fact that Casamance people are not traders by nature, in contrast to the other regions of Senegal. Cultivated crops are kept for subsistence, not for trade. They therefore saw this as an attack to their lifestyle and natural equilibrium. Indeed, it is important to highlight that, thanks to good natural conditions, the Casamance region is a well irrigated and fertile land, and, for that reason, it has often been described as the granary of Senegal. Its cultivated crops include mainly rice, peanuts, maize, oil palm, various kinds of other trees and fruit shrubs, tuberous plants, cashews, sorghum, and cotton. Most of the food products which are consumed in the Northern part of Senegal are imported from the Casamance region. In case of drought in Senegal, Casamance would be the only region with a food surplus. Thanks to its access to the sea, Southern Senegal has also developed fishing (of fish, prawns, and lobsters). Furthermore, foreign tourism has been developing for years in the region. However, the latter did not contribute in any notable way to improving the quality of life of most of the inhabitants of the region³⁴. Most income from tourism is transferred abroad, goes into the central budget, or to tourist entrepreneurs in the capital city (Trzeciński, 2005:196-197).

Moreover, a certain inferiority complex started to develop among the Casamance people. Indeed, the patronizing attitude of some Wolof people towards people from the South became an issue. It was reported that some of the Wolof traditionally looked down upon the Casamance people and considered them as less civilized. Some Wolof people referred to them as *Niak*, which is a pejorative term equivalent to a savage. The North to South internal migrations were also considered as a threat to their beliefs and animist practices as the majority of the migrants were Moslems and contributed to the spread of Islam in the Casamance region. Casamance people perceived this as a process of acculturation due to changes that the Northerners introduced in the dress code, funeral rituals, food consumption and the use of Moslem names (Faye 1994:4)³⁵.

³⁴ In Cap Skirring on the Atlantic Ocean, where most of Casamance's hotels were built, local people complain that they do not even have permanent access to running water, and the tourism businesses like Club Med do not contribute to alleviating their problems. A significant number of people employed – especially in managerial positions – in the hotel industry and other tourist branches come from the North, only because private tour operators who act as go-betweens in organizing tourist transport to Casamance have their seats in Dakar.

³⁵ To give an example of the divergence of their practices, in the Diola culture, the name given to a baby depends on the first signs the latter shows after the mother has just delivered the baby. Pregnant women in the Diola culture are taken to a special place (woods) where they deliver babies while traditional and animist practices are being performed to assist the mother in the delivery. Such practices do not exist in Islam. However, strangely enough, members from the rebel movement in Casamance draw from diverse backgrounds: Christianity, Islam and Animism.

2.1.3 The agitation in the neighbouring countries: Guinea Bissau and The Gambia

Several other factors contributed to the origins of the conflict. There were events which encouraged the Casamance people to undertake guerilla warfare, hoping that this was the right response to their frustrations and resentments. For example, in the neighboring country of Guinea Bissau, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) fought a successful war of independence against the colonial Portuguese power in 1974 and liberated Guinea-Bissau. It is important to mention that the Casamance people went to fight with the people of Guinea Bissau during the war of liberation against the Portuguese colonial domination. There was a certain hope that they will benefit from the same support while fighting for the independence of the Casamance region. In The Gambia, the movement led by the opponent Kukoi Samba Sagna against the power of Daouda Diawara, former Gambian president, was also a determinant factor, in the sense that it showed to Casamance people that it was possible to challenge the state. In addition, the dense forest of Casamance with the advantage of rear basis in The Gambia and Guinea Bissau, the presence of Casamançais veterans of Indochina and Algeria wars as well as retired officers of the Senegalese army were an asset for the Casamance rebels.

2.2 Triggers of the conflict

One of the triggers of the conflict is the central role played by one Catholic Priest, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor. Earlier in 1967, he started doing radio programmes on education and used the opportunity to prepare the ground for the rebellion in Casamance. During the programmes, he would talk about the uniqueness of the Casamance region in terms of cultural specificities and practices which leans more to animism³⁶. In 1978, the charismatic priest published a booklet in which he enumerated the various injustices that the inhabitants of Casamance suffered under the post-colonial Senegalese authorities. A ‘feeling of otherness’ arose among the Casamance people because of the egalitarian nature of their traditional society, which stood in direct contrast with other ethnic groups in Senegal, mostly hierarchical societies with monarchies and casts. From 1980 to 1981, Father Diamacoune held conferences, wrote letters to the Senegalese authorities and distributed pamphlets. Secret meetings were held in the sacred groves of Casamance known as *Le Bois Sacrée*, where much of the rebellion has been tactically³⁷ and spiritually prepared with the assistance and blessings of women³⁸. Pro-

³⁶ These radio programmes were done in the Diola language. Therefore, the Wolof people, and consequently the Government of Senegal, were not aware that such an ethnic propaganda that was ongoing.

³⁷ As it will be discussed later, following the peace marches which took place in 1982 and 1983, some people were arrested and jailed. Those who were not arrested fled into Casamance dense forest, in the sacred groves, to prepare the armed branch of the movement.

³⁸ Casamance Women have played a major role in the preparation of the rebellion. They have done the mystical and animist preparations for the first *maquisards* who joined the armed rebellion. They have also contributed to the seeding of landmines, which they were told, will not killed anybody.

independence slogans began to spread in Casamance and also among the Casamance people established in France (Evans, 2004).

In 1980, the region was affected by student demonstrations due to the deteriorating conditions³⁹ in which they were studying, resulting from the government's budgetary crisis following the Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The highest peak of this social unrest was the death of a student of the state college, *Lycée Djignabo*, in Ziguinchor. The student was killed by security forces during the demonstration. This tragic end reinforced the desire of the youth to continue the struggle by seeking the support of the women. The involvement of the women in the ongoing events meant two things. First, it reflected a refusal to see their children being killed, and secondly the will to prove that they were determined people, capable to play their devoted role in the society (Faye, 1998; Evans, 2004:3). Violent sport events also took place, resulting from the elimination of the *Casa-Sport* Football team (the Casamance regional football team) against the Dakar Football team *Jeanne d'Arc*, after unfair refereeing decisions⁴⁰.

Separatism as such did not feature in any of these events but it contributed to growing regionalist sentiments and an ability to express grievances through organized mass protests. Certain local intellectuals were, however, codifying separatism on the grounds of discontent with government from Dakar, perceived underdevelopment of the Casamance, cultural differences from *nordistes* and the still-disputed claim that the Casamance had full political autonomy during colonial times. These grievances in turn expressed deeper processes, notably including a breakdown in the state's ability to provide public-sector jobs for Casamance migrants to northern Senegal – previously an important means of integrating the Lower Casamance into the national political economy – owing to a combination of retrenchment and demographic growth (Evans, 2004:3).

As in many conflicts, identifying a date for the start of the Casamance rebellion is to some extent arbitrary because of the multiplicity of events that was leading the Casamance people to fear and resentment as discussed above. However, the formal outbreak of the rebellion is usually considered to be 26 December 1982, when a large number of demonstrators⁴¹ marched in Ziguinchor, replacing Senegalese tricolour flags on public buildings with white flags. The recently formed MFDC, taking its name from a late colonial-era political party, circulated pamphlets demanding independence for the Casamance. Small-scale but violent clashes at the town's *gendarmerie* left a number of people injured, including one *gendarme* who subsequently

³⁹ This situation was not unique to Casamance. Similar demonstrations took place in other regions, even in Dakar, the centre of decision making. However, there are some particularities to the Casamance region: it is distanced from the centre of decision making, Dakar.

⁴⁰ The Casa-Sport Football team was playing a final cup with the Jeanne d'Arc Team of Dakar. It was reported that the referee granted a penalty against the Casa-Sport team, which favoured the Jeanne d'Arc Team of the Dakar region.

⁴¹ Estimates range from a few hundred to a few thousand.

died, but the march otherwise dispersed in an orderly fashion. President Abdou Diouf, who had only acceded to the Senegalese presidency in January 1981 as the groomed successor to Léopold Sédar Senghor, responded by organizing a loyalist counterdemonstration on 28 December 1982 and arresting more than a hundred people in subsequent weeks.

Calm returned until early December 1983, when those still under arrest were tried in Dakar for violation of territorial integrity. They included the Catholic priest Abbé (Father) Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, who was to become MFDC Secretary General in 1991 and still effectively hold the post despite attempts in following years to relegate him to the role of 'Honorary President'. He and the other accused received relatively mild sentences but in the Lower Casamance itself, events became increasingly violent. Secret MFDC meetings continued and on 6 December 1983 at Diabir, near Ziguinchor, three *gendarmes* were killed when they entered a sacred grove to arrest participants at one such gathering; some 50 people were subsequently arrested. On 18 December 1983 – 'Red Sunday' – demonstrators again entered central Ziguinchor, marching on the *gouvernance*⁴², *gendarmerie* and local radio station. Security forces quashed the demonstration at considerable cost in human life: officially 24 killed, in reality between 50 and 200. A curfew was imposed in Ziguinchor and arrests were made across the Lower Casamance, although other activists escaped into the countryside (Evans, 2004:3).

It is against this background that the conflict started. While the trials of the first prisoners were taking place, and particularly on Sunday 18 December 1983, arms started to boom, leading to an outburst of violence for many years, including armed attacks, arrests, threats, violations of human rights, rape, and torture (Mané, 2001:2). The separatist *Movement Des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC) was born.⁴³

2.3 Actors in the conflict

There are two main protagonists in this conflict. On the one hand, the separatist movement called the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* and the Senegalese State, represented by the Government of Senegal.

2.3.1 The Rebel Movement

The MFDC is composed of two main parts: a political and a military wing. The movement is today split into moderate and extremist factions. The military wing, called *Atika*

⁴² The seat of the regional administration.

⁴³ The current MFDC at its inception in 1982 borrowed its name from the former MFDC which was a political party claiming for more recognition, development and inclusion of the Casamance region in the post-colonial administration of Senegal. This initial MFDC was born in March 1947 and was founded by Emile Badiane, a politician and native of the Casamance Region. As stated in the report of the Commonwealth Foreign office (1999) 'the MFDC was not a separatist party, as such, although it stood for Casamance interests and was particularly strong amongst the Diola of the Ziguinchor region' (FCO report, 1999: 2).

(*warrior in diola*) was under the leadership of Sidy Badji, *Casamançais* and a veteran of the French Army, until his death in May 2003⁴⁴. Following internal divisions, *Atika* was further split into *Front Nord* and *Front Sud* following the signature of the first cease-fire agreement between Sidy Badji and the Government of Senegal on 31 May 1999 in Bissau. Supporters of Sidy Badji grouped under the *Front Nord* and ostensibly abiding by the Bissau Accord, retired from military action. Keeping their weapons and maintaining effective control of a zone within the department of Bignona⁴⁵, the *Front Nord* has since then been active in the timber and, reportedly, the cannabis industry (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006, cited from Evans, 2002). The latter benefited also from the government and donor support through development projects (Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006) such as fishing activities.

Atika is currently organized around 3 different competing groups: the *Baraka Mandioka*⁴⁶ group led by Salif Sadio⁴⁷ who is an extremist; the *Cassolol*⁴⁸ group under the command of César Atoute Badiate⁴⁹ and the *Diakaye*⁵⁰ group under the leadership of Kamugué Diatta. Only the *Cassolol* and *Diakaye* factions have been involved in the negotiations for the peace process which are blocked since 2004, date of the last peace agreement signed between the MFDC and the Government of Senegal.

The political wing was led by the Catholic Priest Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor until his death in January 2007⁵¹. Father Diamacoune denounced the Bissau Accord and formed the *Front Sud* with Léopold Sagna⁵², who took over Sidy Badji as head of the *maquis*. The relative success of the *Front Sud* and the increased reliance on financing from looting was accompanied by a new set of internal divisions. Another major division happened between Léopold Sagna and Salif Sadio. The latter, a younger *maquisard* appointed as number 2 was

⁴⁴ The death of these two leaders of the movement led to leadership problems. Currently there is no official leader accepted by the different factions of the MFDC.

⁴⁵ See map of Senegal. Bignona is located in the southwestern part of Casamance.

⁴⁶ Name of the area in which the group is established.

⁴⁷ Salif Sadio, in his 50s now, was the youngest among the leaders of the movement at the time the rebellion was starting. He is less educated than the others having left school he was at secondary level at Djinabo High School of Ziguinchor and was then recruited at *Atika*.

⁴⁸ Name of the area.

⁴⁹ Cesar Atoute Badiate is considered to be the current chief of the armed branch *Attika*.

⁵⁰ Name of the area;

⁵¹ He passed away on January 13, 2007 in France, after a long illness/disease. He was first sent to a hospital in Dakar. When the situation became critic in October 2006, he was evacuated at the Hospital *Val de Grâce* in France for intensive care. It was reported by the newspapers that the Senegalese state has supported all the health fees, until his death and repatriation of the body in Casamance.

⁵² Léopold Sagna Sagna was a soldier and quit the Senegalese army in 1980 with the rank of corporal. He took over from Salif Sadio as Chief of Staff of the *Front Sud*, when the latter separated with Father Diamacoune.

widely held to be responsible for the growth in success of operations and rose as a rival to Sagna. After Sagna met president Diouf, apparently undertaking fresh negotiations without consultations with the wider organization, a radical wing of the MFDC moved to replace him with Sadio. Upon his return to the *maquis*, Sagna was arrested and killed by rebels under the leadership of Sadio (Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:253).

The external branch of the political wing in France also suffered from internal divisions caused by issues evolving around the leadership of the movement⁵³. As a result of the ongoing dissensions, each *Front* split into several sub-groups, some are even unknown and uncontrollable. The MFDC went through an ongoing fractionalization which, as Baker (2001) said, is characteristic to rebel movements. He further explained that 'rebel movements are capable of holding more than one vision within their ranks, and every faction of the movement is capable of changing policy direction according to which way the fortunes of the war and financing are going (Baker, 2001). Indeed, money and the struggle for the control of resources between the different factions have resulted in the current division of the MFDC.

2.3.2 *The Senegalese State*

The Casamance rebellion is about the struggle of ethnic groups (the majority being Diola) against the Senegalese state. Since the beginning of the conflict, two governments have managed the Casamance conflict: the Government of Presidents Abdou Diouf and Abdoulaye Wade. The position of both presidents has been the same regarding the refusal to grant independence to Casamance. However, their conflict management style differed. Upon his coming to power in 1981, Diouf was confronted with the sudden outburst of the rebellion and responded to it in a repressive way. When the military solution became inefficient, then he tried negotiating with the MFDC, granted amnesty to MFDC members who were jailed after the 1982 and 1983 demonstrations in Ziguinchor. Under his leadership, external actors such as The Gambia and Guinea Bissau were very much involved in the negotiations. Wade, upon his arrival to power after the February 2000 presidential elections introduced a new strategy of 'direct' discussions with the armed wing of the MFDC and limited the role of neighbouring Guinea Bissau and The Gambia (College and Englebert, 2004). Subsequently, in December 2000, he issued a general warning to the national press that the dissemination of information collected from the MFDC would be considered as attempts to derail the Casamance Peace Process and would be prosecuted under the Penal Code. On the same day, the publisher and Chief Editor of the newspaper *Le Populaire* were summoned and interrogated for 7 hours by the criminal investigation division after the newspaper published a review of the 19-year old Casamance conflict, at that time. Three days later, they were arrested and released on the same day after

⁵³ Jean-Marie François Biagui and Mamadou Nkrumah Sané, both living in France, Father Diamacoune Senghor and Abdoulaye Diedhiou (who replaced Sidy Badji after his death) did not agree on the 2004 peace agreement. The accord was rejected by some factions of the MFDC, which led to quarrels of leadership.

being charged with ‘disseminating false news and undermining public security. The cases were dropped in January 2001 (Global security report, 2008; *Le Populaire*, 2000).

Apart from the main protagonists of the conflict, it is worthy to mention other national actors such as the civilian population of the Casamance region which is usually the victim. Sometimes, it is either attacked by rebel forces or is forced to flee for fear of being trapped by the fighting. Local Non-Governmental Organizations have been usually aiding civilians, helping in integration, providing education and demining efforts.

2.3.3 Regional actors: the neighbouring countries of Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia

At the regional level the Republics of Guinea Bissau and The Gambia have become actors to the conflicts. Due to the inter-connections between the ethnic Diolas, Balantes and Mandingos of Northern Guinea Bissau and the troubled Casamance region of Senegal, Guinea Bissau’s role is crucial in the conflict. Some governments in Guinea Bissau find themselves aiding the MFDC campaign efforts in the Casamance just as in the case of the Military Junta led by the Late General Ansumana Manneh (Minteh, 2009). The same interconnection makes the role of The Gambia very crucial. President Yahya Jammeh was on numerous occasions alleged to have provided assistance to the MFDC in the Casamance. The MFDC rebels are predominantly President’s Jammeh’s ethnic kinsmen and his active role in the crisis has been questioned in numerous fronts. There are also reports indicating that weapons used by rebels in the Casamance are from The Gambia with the assistance of the Government (Minteh, 2009).

2.3.4 External actors

As far as international actors are concerned, the United Nations through its different agencies and program such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), have been providing assistance for refugees fleeing the conflict to neighbouring countries. It has also provided various forms of developmental assistance in education, agriculture, reintegration and other demining efforts. The Republic of France, as a prominent colonial master of the troubled region, has been playing a critical role. It played both mediation role and provides developmental role in the form of training Senegalese Security and Armed Forces. France is also home to MFDC in the Diasporas. The MFDC Diaspora is also an actor. The latter is the mouthpiece of the MFDC to the international community. It does advocacy and mediation work for the rebel movement. It is also responsible for raising funds and other logistical support for the organization.

2.4 Dynamics of the conflict

2.4.1 The first Ceasefire agreement (1992)

From December 1982 up until March 1990 the strategy of the Senegalese Government was repression. Following the December 1982 and December 1983 events and the subsequent arrests, Father Diamacoune and nine of his followers were jailed and sentenced to 10 years for

violating territorial integrity (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:251). Several people fled into the bush following the numerous arrests carried out by the Senegalese Army, and also because of a general feeling of insecurity among the Casamance people. The group of people who sought refuge in the bush formed the armed wing of the movement called *Atika*, and started launching the first attacks in the form of sporadic low-intensity ambushes (Dramé, 1998). Lack of dialogue between the two protagonists allowed deaths, tortures and disappearances to occur in Casamance (Amnesty, 1998; Amnesty, 1999). Discussing the crisis was considered as taboo subject, for fear of being arrested and brutalized by elements of the Senegalese Army. At the head of the newly founded armed branch, were veteran army soldiers Sidy Badji and Léopold Sagna. Armed with traditional weapons and a small number of hunting rifles, most of the group had no prior military training. *Atika* had also no military or political plan and consequently did not undertake military actions until late 1986. The Senegalese government undertook an administrative reorganization of the Casamance province by dividing the region into two main entities: the Kolda and Ziguinchor regions, thus removing the word Casamance from usage. In the meantime, throughout the mid- and late 80s, intelligence and torture were used to undermine the organization. However, as steps towards appeasement, two Casamançais ministers were added to the cabinet. The mayor of Ziguinchor was replaced by a Casamançais, the former one being of Wolof ethnic group. And public investments were oriented towards the region. Dakar also placed the region under special governance with an army general assigned as governor for the region of Ziguinchor (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:251).

At a moment when Senegal's relationships with neighbouring Mauritania⁵⁴ and The Gambia were becoming strained, the MFDC stepped up its military campaign using automatic rifles, and hand grenades for the first time, attacking government positions on the Gambian border in the north and by the border with Guinea Bissau in the south. The MFDC also brought insecurity into Ziguinchor, taking direct action against civilians⁵⁵, forcing the population to take side with the MFDC, and attacking people suspected of collusion with the Senegalese state. Meanwhile, they established networks to manage recruitment and to collect 'subscriptions'⁵⁶ for

⁵⁴ April 1989, there were massacres of an estimated 2,000 Senegalese people in Mauritania and massive tit-for-tat expulsions between the two countries. International agencies attempted to help the resettlement of tens of thousands of refugees and deportees. The seeds of this tension had been sown in 1987 when African Mauritians staged a failed coup against the country's Arab rulers. This occasion marked the birth of an organization called the Forces of Liberation of Africans in Mauritania (FLAM), which went on to operate from Senegalese soil (some 60,000 Mauritanian refugees remain in Senegal). Not surprisingly, the Senegalese government and the press were quick to suspect a Mauritanian hand behind the outbreak of open hostilities in the troubled southern province of Casamance (Posthumous, 2000).

⁵⁵ In these attacks, the main targets were non Diola ethnic groups. Attacks included the launching of grenades on Muslims at the Place de Gao, Ziguinchor, and immolation of villagers who were not sympathetic to MFDC claims, holdups on thoroughfares, robbing boutiques, and burning of homes.

⁵⁶ Money to support the rebellion was initially collected from the local people in Casamance, the Casamance people who were lucky to get a job in Dakar, as well as the Casamançais from the Diaspora in European countries such as France, Belgium, Geneva, etc. As the rebellion was losing ground locally due to the multitude of casualties among the Casamance people, the armed wings of the MFDC starting looting, targeting people in their houses, committing

the movement. The Senegalese army responded with crop destruction, internment, summary executions, and in some cases the clearance of entire villages (Amnesty, 1998; Amnesty, 1999). In May 1990, the intensity of the fighting was such that the Senegalese army, pursuing rebels into Bissau, nearly sparked an interstate war, with direct engagement of Senegalese and Bissau troops on May 19-20. Casamançais refugees settled in the thousands in Guinea Bissau and The Gambia, sheltered by cross-border ethnic kin. Hundreds more internally displaced swelled the suburbs of Ziguinchor (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006: 251-252). The step-up in government action against the rebellion coincided with a report by Amnesty International criticizing Dakar for the practice of torture between 1983 and 1989 (Amnesty, 1998; Amnesty, 1999). By 1990, there was a radicalization of the movement due to the context favorable to the MFDC. The movement reorganized after the freeing of Father Diamacoune and after amnesty was granted to MFDC members. During the same period, the end of the Senegambia Confederation led to border tensions. Senegal was accusing The Gambia of serving as rear base and safe haven for the MFDC rebels. Frictions started with Guinea Bissau with the discovery of *offshore* oil, along the Senegalese maritime borders (Faye, 1994; Dramé, 1998).

On 31 May 1991, Sidi Badji signed a ceasefire agreement with Defence Minister Médoune Fall in Cacheu, Guinea Bissau. The amorphous political leadership, largely in prison in Dakar, had limited participation in the signature to this ceasefire. The ceasefire guaranteed the end of any armed activities, the withdrawal of armed forces from Casamance, and the free circulation of people and goods. Thus, it was followed by the release of Father Diamacoune Senghor and 350 detainees. MFDC members were granted amnesty and a peacebuilding commission led by a former Casamançais member of the parliament, Mr. Marcel Bassene, was set up. Sidi Badji's followers in *Atika* have continued to observe this ceasefire ever since, and he has been a prominent MFDC representative on various structures⁵⁷ established to further the peace. Significant elements of *Atika* ignored his leadership however. The subsequent killing of two representatives of the state led to tensions. Intimidation and attacks on civilians started again (African research Group, 1999:6; Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:252).

However, the renewed violence in early 1992 signaled a deepening split in the military command. The *Front Nord* of *Atika* under commanders with war experience in Algeria and Indochina constituted a greater intrinsic threat to the Senegalese military. The *Front Sud* on the other hand, committed itself to all-out independence won by force of arms. Badji and Diatta were left by the authorities in de facto control of certain areas of Bignona District to the north of

armed robberies in shops, and also widely benefited from drug cultivation and trafficking towards the Gambia and Guinea Bissau.

⁵⁷ I refer here to structures such as the **Central Bureau**, which was created after the 1982 demonstration in Ziguinchor, the **Cacheu Bureau** (in Guinea Bissau) created in April 1992 after the ceasefire agreement signed in Guinea Bissau with the objective of ending the divisions within the MFDC and the **Provisional Steering Committee** which was established by Father Diamacoune Senghor in October 1998 in order to facilitate a common MFDC position in the negotiations with the Government of Senegal. More on these structures can be found in the African Research Group paper, 1999.

the Casamance River, where no taxes were collected and police did not venture. By mid-1992 the perception was widespread that the Dakar Government had cut a deal with Sidi Badji and his Northern ally, Diatta and excluded the more intransigent political leader, Father Diamacoune Senghor. The MFDC political leadership claimed that the reintroduction of the armed forces in the Casamance was in contravention of the Cacheu ceasefire agreement. The split in *Atika* became complete (African research Group, 1999:6-7).

2.4.2 The second agreement (1993)

Father Diamacoune Senghor, whom the press at that time associated with the more militant *Front Sud*, went underground, resurfacing in exile in Guinea Bissau while Sidi Badji maintained a dialogue with the authorities of the state in Casamance. Subsequently, violent clashes between the army and the southern Front of *Atika* worsened. President Diouf laid the blame on 'the armed bandits' and absolved the signatories of the 1991 Cacheu agreement of any responsibility. In September 1992, Sidi Badji and Kamougué Diatta appealed over radio Ziguinchor for respect for the ceasefire, to little effect. Violations continued and included attacks on fishing villages near the tourist resort of Cap Skirring where non-Diola northerners were deliberately singled out and killed (African research Group, 1999:7). Between February and July 1993, 250 people were killed.

In the meantime, Diouf launched his presidential election campaign in Casamance in January 1993 with heavy security protection. Despite the troubles⁵⁸, the turnout at the 1993 presidential election was 40 % in Casamance, as opposed to 51.46 % nationwide (Dramé, 1998). Diouf, reelected as president of Senegal, announced he was going to use a new strategy in order to solve the Casamance problem. The new strategy took cognizance of the fractured nature of the MFDC and the failure of the partnership with Sidi Badji to bring peace. Therefore, on 19th March 1993, due to pressure from the Senegalese authorities, Guinea Bissau authorities handed over Father Diamacoune Senghor and put him on board of a flight to Ziguinchor. His arrival was preceded by a peace march in Ziguinchor of some 10,000 people, organized by various civic groups. On 8 April 1993, Father Diamacoune broadcast a ceasefire appeal. On 8 July 1993, he and other members of the MFDC signed a ceasefire agreement in Ziguinchor. Following the ceasefire, 104 detainees in Ziguinchor prison were released (African research Group, 1999:7).

This was followed by agitation due to the release of the Charpy report⁵⁹. This report was the result of efforts put together by the Government of Senegal and the MFDC to call upon an independent academic French historian, Jacques Charpy, to investigate the origins of the status

⁵⁸ It was reported that the Southern Front worked to disrupt the poll in February 1993 and the legislatives in May 1993. Systematic persecution of non-combatant Casamançais became common, with those found in possession of a polling card being taken by the MFDC for traitors. *Atika*'s rocket attack on Ziguinchor airport illustrated their increasing military capacity. A landmine campaign aimed to discourage voters going to the polls: an ICRC vehicle was blown up by an anti-tank mine (African research Group, 1999:7).

⁵⁹ Charpy, J. (1994), *Casamance et Sénégal au temps de la colonisation française* (in English, Casamance and Senegal during the time of French Colonization)

of Casamance (Woocher, 2000, cited from Charpy, 1994; Marut, 1999; Posthumous, 2000). He finished his work in November 1993 and concluded the following: ‘The Casamance did not exist as an autonomous region before colonization. Despite its unique geographic characteristics, its distance from Saint-Louis (the Capital of the AOF, Francophone West Africa), and the consequence of being wedged between the Gambia and Guinea Bissau, during the time of the French colonization (the Casamance) was administered by the governor of Senegal, even if sometimes, due to military problems of ‘pacification’, the governor of the AOF (*Afrique Occidentale Française*) would intervene. The problem that Casamance posed to French colonisers was a matter of administration not a problem of government’ (Charpy, 1993).

The Charpy report was rejected by the MFDC and violence subsequently followed between the Senegalese Army and the MFDC.

2.4.3 Escalation of the conflict (1995-1998)

The period from 1995 to 1998 saw an escalation of the conflict with an increase in the intensity of violence. This was due to the acquisition of sophisticated weapons (with the support of Guinea Bissau and The Gambia) and the beginning of seeding of landmines in villages, road accesses and rice fields, etc. by the rebel movement⁶⁰. On 21 April 1995, Father Diamacoune and others were placed under house arrest. Subsequently, attacks, violation of human rights, kidnappings and bloody fighting continued in the regions of Ziguinchor and Kolda where four French tourists disappeared⁶¹; The Senegalese army also suffered its biggest loss in Babonda⁶² in July 1995 with 23 soldiers killed, followed by another major tragedy in Mandina Mancagne in August 1997 where 23 soldiers were ambushed and killed by the MFDC. Father Diamacoune then called for a ceasefire and proposed negotiations to be held in Paris, but the Senegalese government refused⁶³. In June 1998, the Senegalese army intervened in the Guinea Bissau civil war in order to impede the coupists supported by some elements of MFDC military wing to reverse the power of President Joao Bernardo Vieira.

The government response to these events was to make their most serious efforts to reach a settlement. A national peace commission was set up and headed by the former Foreign Affairs minister, the Casamançais (but not Diola) Assane Seck, to reopen the dialogue with the MFDC. At the same time, the army resumed its offensive in Casamance, with the dual objective of securing territory in the vicinity of the tourist resort at Cap Skirring and of placing the state in a strong position at the peace talks being arranged by Seck and colleagues. Despite preliminary

⁶⁰ Amnesty International reported that the Senegalese Army was also seeding landmines.

⁶¹ They were never found, but it allowed the Senegalese army to launch a major clean-up operation in the border area with Guinea Bissau

⁶² These are villages which were attacked by MFDC rebels.

⁶³ A part from the negotiations held in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, the Senegalese state has never accepted to discuss the issue of Casamance with members of the MFDC at the international level.

contacts made early in 1996, the MFDC leaders pulled out of the April 1996 talks at the last minute. They cited a variety of reasons, including restrictions on their rights to travel and consult with MFDC exile cells in Paris. President Diouf visited Ziguinchor in May 1996 and made a well received speech outlining his regionalization plans which would give Casamance greater autonomy, but no further progress was to be made on direct talks with the MFDC. A rapprochement between Father Diamacoune Senghor and the *Front Nord* leader, Sidy Badji, which took place at the beginning of September 1996, did, on the other hand, mark an advance in repairing one of the MFDC's more glaring internal divides (African research Group, 1999:8).

The MFDC disunity was by now a stumbling block to the search for peace. France's Ambassador in Dakar M. André Lewin became actively engaged in encouraging a more united MFDC position. He facilitated a discreet visit to Paris in March 1997 by Father Diamacoune Senghor's four principal aides so that they could meet representatives of MFDC's external branch. Subsequently several members of the external wing visited Casamance in July 1997, except Mamadou Nkrumah Sané, associated with the MFDC's more radical wing. The latter refused Father Diamacoune Senghor's summons on the grounds that he distrusted the Senegalese authorities and feared for his life. These visits, interpreted as sign towards a peace settlement, were totally ignored by a fraction of the *Front Sud* (African research Group, 1999:8-9).

2.4.4 Attempts of conflict settlement

2.4.4.1 Under President Abdou Diouf

January 1999 to March 2000 marked the beginning of efforts from both sides to seek a definitive settlement of the conflict. During that period, President Diouf met for the first time in the history of the rebellion, the leader of the MFDC Father Diamacoune Senghor, in Ziguinchor. This was followed by a meeting during which President Diouf addressed the Casamance people and urged them to forgive and think about reconciliation. In the same vein, the MFDC held a meeting in Banjul (Banjul I) in order to discuss the reunification of the different factions as a preliminary step towards the upcoming negotiations with the Government of Senegal. These efforts for peace resulted in several rounds of negotiations in Banjul (Banjul II and Banjul III), The Gambia, and Ziguinchor. During that period, there was a strong aspiration for peace from the civil society in Casamance which organized peaceful marches under the leadership of women and religious leaders. The federation of women's organizations also supported the victims of landmines and peace talks were organized by the people of Casamance (APRAN-SDP paper, 2002)⁶⁴. In February 2000, Diouf lost the presidential elections, leading to the succession of President Wade.

⁶⁴ More on the engagement of the civil society in Casamance can be found in the magazine *'En Casamance (Sénégal) une organisation paysanne agit pour le retour de la paix et la relance du développement'*, 2002, APRAN-SDP, Ziguinchor, Casamance. Title in English: a grassroots organization is working for the return of peace and development in Casamance.

2.4.4.2 Under President Abdoulaye Wade

In April 2000, the accession of Abdoulaye Wade to power after democratic and peaceful elections in February 2000, inaugurated a new era in the conflict. President Wade shifted from the style of his predecessor. He stopped any work that was being done by civil society groups, intermediaries, diplomatic or non-governmental officials to manage the conflict⁶⁵. While claiming to put its faith in negotiations, the Wade government put a price on the head of Salif Sadio (an extremist) and continued to attempt to negotiate with the increasingly irrelevant⁶⁶ Father Diamacoune (Ag Mohamed and Humphreys, 2006:254, cited from *Jeune Afrique Economie*, May 1993:167). The MFDC in contrast began pushing for greater internationalization of the process, as the limitation of the role played by Guinea Bissau and The Gambia was perceived as an attempt to confine the conflict at a domestic level (Walfadjri, December 2000; *Sud Quotidien*, December, 2000:4⁶⁷; Foucher, 2003; Sonko, 2004:35). The results of Wade maneuvers to date have been successive and unsuccessful peace accords signed on December 2000, 16 March 2001 and December 2001, followed by meetings in Banjul (Banjul IV)⁶⁸. In September 2001, for the first time since the beginning of the conflict, the leader of the MFDC was given an audience at the presidential palace to meet President Abdoulaye Wade and focused his message on peace and the development of the Casamance region. This led the foundation for a strong civil society mobilisation to accompany the peace process⁶⁹ and also the launching of economic activities in Casamance, under the *Programme de Reconstruction Economique et Sociale de la Casamance* (PRAESC). In October 2003 the MFDC organized talks in Ziguinchor, Casamance. These talks marked a very important phase in the conflict because a significant change occurred in the discourse of the rebel movement: for the first time the word ‘independence’ has been included into the concept of ‘political, cultural and socio-economic emancipation’ of Casamance. Moreover, during these talks, the incumbent Secretary General Jean-Marie François Biagui recognized the military failure of the rebellion. In addition, Father

⁶⁵ The explanations which were given by President Wade were that ‘there have been a lot of inconsistencies in the handling of the Casamance issue, that a number of people have benefited financially, and have abuse the confidence of his predecessor (Foucher, 2003).

⁶⁶ The meetings of Father Diamacoune with President Diouf in 1999 and subsequently with President Wade in 2001 have met with a lot of criticism because a lot of MFDC members viewed it as a softening of their claims.

⁶⁷ *Walfadjri* newspaper (December 16-17, 2000:2) and *Sud Quotidien* newspaper (December 1, 2000, 4)

⁶⁸ This refers to the meeting held in Banjul in June 2001 by the MFDC following a request from the Government of Senegal for the MFDC to have a unified position before the start up of the negotiations. Talks were also organized in August 2001 and resulted in the creation of the post of honorary president – Father Diamacoune Senghor - and the nomination of a new Secretary General of the Movement – Jean-Marie François Biagui.

⁶⁹ Talks were organized in September 2002 and a Forum for Peace organized by groups of traditional women in Casamance in October, 2003; these activities were accompanied by advocacy for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Diamacoune, President of the MFDC declared at the opening of the talks that there were no more reasons to fight, the MFDC having obtained satisfaction... (Marut, 2004). Not only was the armed struggle condemned, but the idea of independence was abandoned. Turning back to more than twenty years of commitment to the struggle, the charismatic leader of the rebellion was talking about 'our homeland Senegal' (Marut, 2004). The MFDC committed itself publicly to start negotiations instead of continuing the armed struggle. The last peace accord between the MFDC and the GoS was signed in December 2004. In this peace accord, the state and the MFDC made a commitment to 'immediately nominate delegates in the *Commission de Concertation*, who will be responsible for the start-up phase of the negotiations (Evans, 2004). A first round of negotiations was held in Foundiougne (Foundiougne I)⁷⁰ in February 2005 and was supposed to be followed by a second round (Foundiougne II) which never took place.

The sudden change in the discourse of the MFDC, according to writers and commentators, has been attributed to money and corruption. Indeed, Marut (2004) argues that the strategy deployed by the Senegalese government to deal with the MFDC has made use of corruption and money. Corruption, he says, has been cited a lot by the separatists as being the factor for betrayals of some of their chiefs. It seems that a lot of money has circulated to impact on the dynamics of the conflict. Thus, aids, mainly external have been given to encourage the conversion of ex-maquisards into economic projects. Food aids have also been distributed to avoid the maquisards to fall into banditry activities. Since 1991 up until 2000, the Senegalese government has supported the MFDC financially and materially, for example by providing the logistics of MFDC meetings or trips (see letter in appendix one). With the arrival of Wade to power, such support was cut off, a situation which pushed Father Diamacoune to collaborate with the state and to openly request money to fund his MFDC activities. Undoubtedly, this could be considered as a worry to reposition himself in the political game from which he has been ousted in favour of another faction (Marut 2004). On the money issue, a Senegalese private daily reported in 2006 that big sums of money have been allocated to some rebel leaders (*Le Quotidien*, 2006)⁷¹ and people acting as mediators for the GoS, *Les Messieurs Casamance*⁷², as they are ironically called by the public in Senegal (*Le Quotidien*, 2008). The Casamance conflict has become a business for several actors, as Pierre Goudiaby Atepa, President of the *Collectif*

⁷⁰ Foundiougne is located in one of the 11 regions of Senegal, the Region of Fatick. For the first time, negotiations took place between the Senegalese state and the MFDC in the Senegalese territory, after President Wade took the decision to exclude Guinea Bissau and The Gambia from the management of the conflict.

⁷¹ The stance adopted by the GoS has been the allocation of big sums of money to some faction's leaders and government members nominated by the President Wade to mediate for the conflict. *Le Quotidien*, a Dakar local daily newspaper released the news in one of its September 2005 edition and stated that the Senegalese state has been giving monthly allocations of money amounting to 16 million CFA to the MFDC. Most of the people concluded that Wade was trying to buy the peace instead of tackling the root causes of the conflict.

⁷² The *Mr. Casamance*, in English.

*des Cadres Casamançais*⁷³, said. He further revealed that in the committee which was set up by the government to discuss the Casamance issue, a lot of people had their flight tickets, hotel fees and honorarium paid by the government. These people have made of the Casamance issue a rent seeking activity and would certainly not prefer the conflict to be resolved (*Le Quotidien*, 2008)⁷⁴. It can be argued that issues such as money and corruption constitute stumbling blocks for a definitive settlement of the Casamance conflict, as the unsettlement of the conflict allows some people to benefit from financial gains. As Le Billon (2003) posits, 'while some conflicts resulting from corruption have opened dialogue and promoted positive reforms in societies, others have degenerated into large-scale violence and even further illegitimate and predatory rule characterized by a shift from monopolistic forms of corruption to criminal competitive ones. In turn, corruption played a role in the prolongation and termination of these conflicts (Le Billon, 2003:414). It seems to be the case of the Casamance rebellion with the political assassinations of state officials that took place in December 2006 and 2007⁷⁵.

2.5 Consequences of the conflict

While relatively small compared with civil wars elsewhere in West Africa⁷⁶, the Casamance civil war has had significant humanitarian consequences for the local populations of Casamance and in neighboring countries of Guinea Bissau and The Gambia. An estimated 3,000-5,000 have died since the beginning of the rebellion in 1982, with at least 652 killed or wounded by landmines and unexploded ordnance (Evans, 2004:4, cited from Humphreys and Ag Mohamed, 2003). The *Centre National d'Action Antimine* (CNAM)⁷⁷ gives an updated number of 748 victims of landmines as of the end of December 2008. Many more have been displaced: a

⁷³ The *Collectif des Cadres Casamançais* is an association of executives from the Casamance region, working in Dakar. They are rather favourable to the social and economic development of the Casamance region than its secession from the rest of Senegal.

⁷⁴ On the same issue, Goudiaby further adds the nomination of people as *Monsieur Casamance*, giving them two, three or four billion CFA francs and requesting them to go and solve the problem, should be avoided' (*Le Quotidien*, 2008).

⁷⁵ These are Mr. Samsidine Dino Nemo Aïdara, presidential envoy and mediator in the Casamance conflict killed on December 20th 2007 (Africa Research Bulletin, 2007) and Mr. Oumar Lamine Badji, a local authority and representative of the ruling party of Senegal, PDS, slaughtered in his own house on the eve of Christmas and Muslim fest celebrations on 31 December 2006. More on these political assassinations can be found in African News, 2007 and 2008; Irinnews, 2008; All Africa, 2008; Africa Research Bulletin, 2008.

⁷⁶ The Casamance conflict although being the longest in West Africa (1982- up to present), has capitalized between, 3000-5000 deaths in 25 years as compared to the civil war in Sierra Leone which has recorded more than 50,000 casualties in 4 years (1999-2002), taken from Armed Conflict Reports, available at <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/ACR-SierraLeone.html#Deaths>, accessed on January 20, 2009.

⁷⁷ The CNAM is a national structure put in place since 2007 by the government of Senegal to deal with the landmine issue, with the support of external donors and Handicap International.

census in 1998⁷⁸ by Caritas gave a total of 62,638 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Displacement has been concentrated according to the geography of the conflict, with Ziguinchor region accounting for about 70%. Ziguinchor town is estimated to have received some 14,000 IDPs while thousands more have swollen other Casamance towns and relatively secure villages (Evans, 2004:4). The United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees (UNHCR) sources estimate that there are 10,000-13,000 refugees in Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia, roughly equally divided. Many of the displaced have returned in recent years, partly under USAID-funded projects – an estimated 10,000-15,000 returnees were expected in 2004 alone (Evans, 2004:4). In the survey done by Demba Keita in 2007, the number of displaced people who returned to their villages was estimated to be 26,000. The latter were from 227 different villages (Keita, 2007).

The wider *in situ* population has also suffered as insecurity has damaged livelihoods in agriculture, trade and tourism. Underinvestment in infrastructure worsened when the start of widespread mine use in 1997 prompted several major donors to leave⁷⁹. The region's transport problems became tragic international news in September 2002 when *The Diola*, the Ziguinchor-Dakar ferry capsized off the Gambian coast with the loss of over 1,800 lives⁸⁰. The provision of already limited government services also declined as qualified staff left or refused to work in insecure areas and schools and other public buildings were requisitioned as army posts (Evans, 2004:4-5).

A war economy has developed and has been evolving around timber, cashews and other tree crops, cannabis, livestock and bush meat⁸¹. Timber is the largest⁸² and most visible

⁷⁸ This is the most recent statistic I have found as far as the number of displaced persons is concerned. With time there might be a decrease in the number due to the situation of relative peace in the Casamance region.

⁷⁹ In the 1990s, several donors and international organizations, in particular USAID, withdrew from the Casamance region because of the situation of insecurity due to attacks on their own personnel and the seeding of landmines. Today, USAID is back and is working with several NGOs such as the Catholic Relief Service, World Education, Africare, etc. For more on this, see 'Casamance, le difficile recommencement', published by the *Association pour la Promotion Rurale de l'Arrondissement de Niyassia- Solidarité, Développement et Paix* (APRAN-SDP) brochure n°3, January 2003, pp 41 and 42.

⁸⁰ The causes of the accident were imputed to overload of more than half of the normal capacity of the ferry, which is around 900 passengers. It was also reported that some technical checks were required months before the event, these have been overlooked. The whole country was under shock at the announcement of the news and the subsequent months. It was the first time that such tragic event happens in Senegal. The subsequent measures have been dismissal of those accountable for neglect and suspension of the maritime liaison for months. Since the incident, a smaller ferry was doing the liaison between Dakar and Ziguinchor, but its capacity was very limited, as compared to the Diola. However, since February 2008, a new ferry, *Aline Sioe Diatta*, whose capacity is 502 passengers and 200 tones of goods, is ensuring the liaison Dakar/Ziguinchor/Dakar.

⁸¹ Evans further reports that theft of livestock, mainly cattle has been a long-standing problem along the Casamance's borders, particularly Kolda region's with Guinea-Bissau for three reasons: first of all, among the Balanta, an ethnic group in Guinea-Bissau and in southern Casamance, stealing cattle is an important part of the male initiation process; secondly, extensive cross-border family ties and economic migration give potential rustlers in Guinea-Bissau good 'intelligence' about livestock resources in the Casamance. Finally, the poor economic situation in Guinea-Bissau has exacerbated such cross-border theft.

commodity in the Casamance war economy. It is heavily exploited by combatants on both sides (Evans, 2003:9). Cannabis is another significant conflict good in the Casamance. However, its illicit nature makes it difficult to investigate. This is further complicated by the fact that cannabis along with cashew, is one of the main export crops of Casamance, its cultivation there predating the rebellion (Evans, 2003:9).⁸³ *Maquis* members from north of Casamance are said to exchange cannabis for arms in The Gambia (Evans, 2004:8). The Casamance conflict has become transnational with the spread of the conflict in Guinea Bissau and The Gambia, coupled with the development of a buoyant trafficking in arms and ammunition between the MFDC and their supporters in both countries. Historically, the most important arms supplier to the *maquis* has been the Bissau-Guinean military, elements of which have been sympathetic to the MFDC, particularly through cross border kin and ethnic ties, and which has more generally suffered from unreliable salary payments. Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea have been alternative sources of supply for weapons. During the Liberian civil war, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia supplied weapons to the *maquis* in return for Casamance Cannabis (Evans 2004:9; cited from Ellis, 1999). Arms trafficking into and between conflict zones in the subregion have been facilitated by porous borders and coastlines, which are inadequately policed because of states' limited resources (including their inability to pay their armed forces, as in Guinea Bissau) and corruption. In 2000, President Wade publicly identified Libya, Iraq, Ukraine, Russia and China as arms suppliers to the *maquis*, but the MFDC credibly riposted that direct supply from foreign states was unnecessary given the subregional free market. These weapons would pass through Mauritania and Mali (Evans, 2004:8). The fluidity of nationality status across the borders can also be factored in as a consequence. For instance, in The Gambia, although there are no *maquis* rear bases, many *Casamançais* Diola – estimated by some to be in the tens of thousands – were registered in 2001 as Gambian voters in the election that kept the country's Diola President, Yahya Jammeh in power (Evans, 2004:7).

As in any other conflict, the Casamance rebellion has had psychological effects on the populations of Casamance. The Casamance populations are stigmatized and there is a permanent situation of fear related to the mines. Up until now, the psychological effects of the war on the veterans of the Senegalese Army who have been in the frontlines have still not been investigated. The same is valid for the *maquisards*, but the latter is difficult to document because of the secrecy surrounding the *maquis*⁸⁴. The security of the population has also been hampered by the

⁸² Probably by volume and value (Evans, 2003). I was not able to get figures on this.

⁸³The users are young local people, European tourists at the Cap Skirring and Kafountine, tourist zones in Casamance. Some Casamance cannabis also supplies northern Senegal's cities. The largest market is in The Gambia, taken from (Evans, 2003).

⁸⁴ Members of the rebel movement who entered the *maquis*, went through mystic preparation phases done by the women of the sacred woods⁸⁴ called *Forêt sacrée*. What is generally known is that certain rituals and oath swearing are performed there secretly before the individual can join the rebellion and that they are only accessible to initiated adult men, from the Diola ethnic group. More of this secrecy can be found in (Djong, 1999).

seeding of landmines which has restricted the mobility and the activities of the population. In December 2008, the *Centre National d'Actions Anti-mine* (CNAM) reported 93 suspect zones and 149 unchecked suspect areas. The Centre also recorded 231 unchecked villages, of which 171 are inaccessible (Seck, 2008; CNAM, 2008). Education and health have also been largely affected by the conflict as a lot of infrastructure has been destroyed, followed by a lack of manpower because many civil servants of the State (the majority being from the north) began to flee the Casamance region (APRAN, 2003)⁸⁵. As far as the *maquis* is concerned, their conditions of living are said to be harsh and their health deteriorating. Most of them are either sick, old (40-60) or mutilated. The MFDC has also become a largely divided movement, which makes any prospect for negotiations difficult.

3 Conclusion: Learning lessons from the Casamance conflict

This analysis of the Casamance conflict suggests key lessons which will be briefly discussed in concluding this paper. First, the Casamance conflict reveals that the legitimacy and authority of the post-colonial African states are still being challenged by non-state actors who are claiming for their right to self-determination. Indeed, conflict of the Casamance kind shows that such demands for recognition can be self-perpetuating and prolong the civil war because self-determination and a state's sovereignty and territorial integrity are two conflicting demands.

Second, secessionist conflicts such as the Casamance rebellion take their root in history, in the colonial arbitrary boundaries that divided the same people, in colonial elite formation and ethnic identity, as well as economic, social and political grievances. This means that any attempt to manage the conflict that excludes these important parameters will result in failure, as shown by the unsuccessful peace agreements between the MFDC and the Senegalese state.

Third, the dynamics of the conflict indicates that there is shift in the agenda of the MFDC, having moved from independence claim to a greed agenda favoured by the circulation of money within the *maquis*, corruption of some of the factions, and a flourishing war economy based on cannabis cultivation and drug trafficking, arms and several other types of trafficking in goods along the borders with Guinea Bissau and The Gambia. Such moves in the conflict constitute real stumbling blocks for the resolution of the conflict because of the interests of external actors to the conflict and MFDC factions relying more and more on the war economy that has developed to survive. The divisions that occurred in both the military and the political wings – split in several uncontrollable factions - make the prospects for peace very weak because

⁸⁵ More on the consequences of the war can be found in the magazine 'Casamance, le difficile recommencement', published by the *Association pour la Promotion Rurale de l'Arrondissement de Niyassia* '- Solidarité, Développement et Paix (APRAN-SDP) brochure n°3, January 2003, pp 1-43 and the document of Malamine Diémé: Diémé, M., 2003, 'Situation d'Avant Conflit: Context Historique des Hostilités Actuelles' (unpublished document collected during my field research).

of the difficulty to find credible MFDC interlocutors that can negotiate the peace with the Government of Senegal.

The Casamance populations have been the main victims of this conflict with the killings, the deaths perpetrated by landmines, and the number of displaced families and refugees in Guinea Bissau and The Gambia. Although they have initially blessed the rebel movement, today their aspirations is for peace and the economic and social development of the Casamance region. Certain moderate factions of the MFDC are also ready to go to the negotiation table with the Government of Senegal⁸⁶. However any rounds of negotiation that will not address the real issues of the Casamance conflict – the status of the region, the land issue and the recognition of the specificities of the region- will be bound to fail.

Finally, the conflict has lasted too long with ‘no end in sight’⁸⁷. From a domestic level, it has moved to a transnational one with the spread of the conflict in the neighbouring countries of The Gambia and Guinea Bissau. The Casamance conflict triggered a civil war in Guinea Bissau and the territories of Guinea Bissau and The Gambia have been used by rebels to launch attacks on the Senegalese Army posts and Casamance’s populations. The recent resurgence of violence in Casamance with MFDC attacks perpetrated on armed forces of the Senegalese army⁸⁸, political assassinations of state’s representatives in the Casamance region, the resurgence of military coups d’états or failed attempts in the unstable neighbourhood of Senegal (in Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea and The Gambia) and a development of a flourishing war economy in drugs and arms all inform about the urgency to look for a definite settlement of the Casamance conflict because of its potential to destabilize the West Africa region still recovering from decades of civil war in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire. Recent attacks show that the movement, despite its internal divisions, still has some strong supporters. Given the nature and dynamics of regionalisation of domestic civil wars and the fact that African states are inextricably locked into security complexes (Francis, 2006:115), there is a need to

⁸⁶ See ‘*Casamance : A Batons Rompus avec Cesar Atoute Badiate, Chef d’Etat Major du Maquis : ‘nous voulons des négociations maintenant’*’ (translated in English, ‘we want to negotiate now’), 8 March, 2010, article online available at <http://www.galsentv.com> , accessed on 10 March 2010

⁸⁷ Evans, (2002)

⁸⁸ More on the resurgence of violence in Casamance can be found in the following articles: IRINNews, Senegal: Villagers mutilated by armed men in Casamance, Ziguinchor, 8 May 2008, available at <http://www.irinnews.org>, Accessed 9 May, 2008; IRINNews, *Senegal: landmines claim new victims in Casamance, Ziguinchor*, 2 May 2008, available at <http://www.irinnews.org>, Accessed 9 May, 2008; AllAfrica.com, *Ambush of 40 vehicles in Casamance*, 28 February, 2008, available at <http://www.allafrica.com>, Accessed 14 May 2008; and Mbai, P.N., *Casamance separatists kill regional local leader-Wade offers a ransom with stern warnings*, African News, January 2nd, 2007, available at <http://.bloggernews.net/13533>, Accessed 10 April, 2008

manage the conflict and involve all the actors⁸⁹ that are key to its successful settlement. This calls for a regional concerted strategy initiated by Senegal (including all civil society actors), supported by the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, France and regional organizations such as ECOWAS, the AU, and at a global level the UN.

⁸⁹ The Senegalese government, the representative of all the factions of the MFDC, the local communities, the Senegalese civil society, the neighboring countries of The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, regional organizations such as ECOWAS and the AU.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: MFDC Secretary General requests Senegalese President for money and plane to organize a MFDC meeting in Banjul, The Gambia

Ziguinchor, le 18 Avril 2003.

Monsieur le Président
de la République
du Sénégal,

Dans le cadre de nos activités pour la Paix en Casamance, Veuillez nous accorder :

- Un Avion pour le transport de notre Délégation ZIGUINCHOR BANJUL Aller et Retour, le 23 Avril 2003.
- La Sécurité pour le déplacement de nos Combattants à l'intérieur du Territoire du Sénégal.
- La Facilitation par les Autorités de la Gambie de la Rencontre du MFDC en terre de Gambie.
- Une aide de trois millions de Francs CFA pour l'organisation de la Rencontre, l'hébergement et la nourriture des Délégués.

Dans l'espoir d'une réponse favorable à notre requête, la Casamance entière vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président de la République, l'expression sincère de sa profonde et déférente gratitude.



A. D. J. S. P. H. O.



Source: (Dissertation on Casamance, Faye, 2006)



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