

The Guinea-Bissau Coup

(Translated)

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A military coup took place in Guinea-Bissau on November 26, 2025, and the country's president, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, the chief of staff of the armed forces, General Biag Nantan, his deputy, General Mamadou Touré, and the interior minister, Botche Candé, were arrested.

This coup came just three days after general elections were held in Guinea-Bissau on November 23, 2025, in which both the president and opposition candidate Fernando Dias da Costa declared victory in the presidential election.

This is the ninth coup in Guinea-Bissau since it gained independence from Portugal in 1974. The coup was carried out by military officers led by the army spokesman and head of the military family in the presidential palace, General Denis Nakana. They announced that they had taken full control of the country, and ordered the suspension of all political institutions, media outlets, the electoral process, the closure of international borders, and an indefinite night curfew. The officers announced the formation of the "Supreme Military Command for the Restoration of Order," composed of all branches of the armed forces, which would lead the country until further notice.

Coup leader Denis Nkana said the coup was carried out in response to "the discovery of an ongoing plot orchestrated by politicians and other local and foreign figures, along with a known drug trafficker, with the aim of destabilizing the country by attempting to manipulate the election results," but he did not provide any evidence to support his claims.

The Popular Front – an alliance of civil society organizations in Guinea-Bissau – accused Embaló and the military of staging a "sham coup," to prevent the publication of the election results and to remain in power, until Embaló could name a new president and prime minister, to hold new elections in which he could run again for president.

Guinea-Bissau opposition leader Fernando Dias, who confirmed his victory in the presidential elections, accused President Embaló of what the Popular Front had accused him of: that this coup was orchestrated by the president and the army to prevent Dias from coming to power.

Election observers from the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union said in a statement that they "deplore this blatant attempt to disrupt the democratic process" and called for the African Union and the ECOWAS to "take the necessary steps to restore constitutional order."

For its part, the Portuguese government, the former colonial power in Guinea-Bissau, urged "all parties concerned to refrain from any institutional or civil violence and to restore the normal functioning of institutions to allow for the completion of the vote count and the announcement of the election results".

“The surprising and unusual thing is that the outgoing president, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, was the one who contacted the French media and revealed to Jeune Afrique magazine that he had been arrested inside his office at the presidential palace around midday,” says Idris Ayat of the Department of Political Science at Kuwait University. He added, “Embaló has recently gained a bad reputation in the African continent for his disturbing closeness to France and its president, Macron, to the point that some people call him by his famous phrase, ‘Macron is my brother,’ as a sign that he is one of the leaders of France’s policies in Africa to maintain French influence on the continent, at a time when Africa is witnessing aversion to France and its neo-colonial policies; or as France itself calls it, a growing anti-French sentiment.”

The words of this Kuwaiti writer suggest that the coup was fabricated, orchestrated by France to maintain its influence in Guinea-Bissau through loyal military officers, including the president himself, because the coup occurred one day before the election results were announced, and the results were not in favor of the army and President Embaló, who represents the army. This is also confirmed by what the civilian opposition, led by an alliance of civilian and military forces under the name “Popular Front,” stated, that President Embaló and the army organized a “sham coup” to keep power in the hands of the military. It is also confirmed by the statement of the opposition leader, Fernando Dias, that President Embaló agreed with the army to orchestrate the coup to prevent him from coming to power.

It appears that the army fears losing power if a civilian candidate wins the elections, so it fabricated this coup to thwart the civilian opposition's rise to power.

The army has a long history of coups that have prevented the opposition from coming to power, the latest of which was President Embaló’s own coup against legitimacy when he carried out what was considered a constitutional coup in December 2023, when he dissolved the elected parliament headed by his former rival Domingos Pereira.

Thus, most evidence points to the fact that the coup was orchestrated by France, to maintain its influence in Guinea-Bissau, and to thwart change through elections that would have likely been won by civilian rulers, who hate France and cooperate with all Western powers against it, especially America and Britain, which rejected the coup. Observers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union said in a statement that they “deplore this blatant attempt to disrupt the democratic process” and called for the African Union and the ECOWAS to “take the necessary steps to restore constitutional order.” Portugal, the former colonialist power of Guinea-Bissau, also urged all parties involved to refrain from any institutional or civil violence and to restore the regular functioning of institutions to allow the completion of the vote count and the announcement of the election results.

Thus, the international conflict appears evident in this small country, with a population of no more than 2.2 million, through the use of traditional colonialist tools, which in this country are a small army controlled by France, and civilian forces supported by America, Britain, and Portugal. These tools are often used to gain power by using this army, or by using parliamentary elections, and because the army is still dominant and in control of power, this means that French influence is still dominant in the country.