

GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A Monthly Newsletter by Centre for Governance Studies



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The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the news letter.

Note: The views expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of CGS.

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Political Crisis and Military Intervention in Guinea-Bissau

Debi Karmakar



Photo: Samba Balde, AFP

Guinea-Bissau has experienced recurrent political instability since independence, marked by fragile civilian institutions and repeated military interventions. The crisis that culminated in a military takeover in late 2025 must be understood as the outcome of long-standing tensions among political parties, unresolved disputes over electoral legitimacy, and the persistent autonomy of the armed forces from civilian control.

At the center of Guinea-Bissau's party system is the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the historic liberation movement that dominated politics for decades after independence. Although PAIGC retained significant organizational strength and parliamentary influence in the 2010s, it became increasingly fragmented by internal divisions and leadership rivalries. These weaknesses opened space for new political formations, most notably Madem G15, a coalition formed by dissident PAIGC figures and allied groups seeking to break the party's dominance.

The political balance shifted decisively after the 2019 presidential election, which brought Umaro Sissoco Embaló, backed by Madem G15, to the presidency. The election outcome was contested by PAIGC and its allies, who challenged the legality of the results and the constitutional procedures used to confirm Embaló's victory. Although Embaló consolidated control over the executive, questions about the legitimacy of his mandate persisted and became a structural feature of Guinea-Bissau's politics.

Between 2020 and 2024, tensions between the presidency and opposition parties deepened. PAIGC and allied groups accused the executive of marginalizing parliament, ruling through decrees, and exerting undue influence over the electoral commission and judiciary. The presidency, in turn, portrayed the opposition as obstructive and unwilling to accept electoral outcomes. This confrontation produced repeated legislative paralysis, with boycotts, walkouts, and legal challenges preventing effective governance. By early 2025, disputes intensified over electoral timelines, the duration of political mandates, and the authority to oversee future elections.

The crisis escalated as institutional deadlock increasingly replaced political competition. The absence of a trusted mechanism for resolving disputes over constitutional interpretation allowed political disagreements to harden into a broader legitimacy crisis. Public protests and heightened political rhetoric signaled growing polarization, while state institutions appeared unable to mediate between rival camps. In this context, the military, historically insulated from civilian oversight and accustomed to intervening during periods of political uncertainty, re-emerged as a decisive actor.

The coup unfolded in late November 2025. Units of the armed forces moved into the capital, Bissau, and took control of key government and security installations. The military restricted the movement of senior political figures and effectively suspended normal civilian authority. Although there were no reports of widespread violence, the intervention disrupted constitutional governance. Military leaders justified their actions as necessary to prevent political chaos and preserve national stability, presenting themselves as neutral arbiters in a paralyzed political system. However, the absence of a clear constitutional framework or timetable for restoring civilian rule led observers to characterize the intervention as an unconstitutional seizure of power rather than a temporary security measure.

Importantly, the coup did not appear to be openly backed by any major political party. While some civilian actors privately welcomed the intervention as a means of breaking the deadlock, neither PAIGC nor Madem G15 formally endorsed military rule. The armed forces acted largely on their own institutional authority, consistent with Guinea-Bissau's historical pattern in which the military intervenes without explicit civilian sponsorship.

International and regional responses were swift and critical. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) condemned the military action and reiterated its opposition to unconstitutional changes of government. ECOWAS signaled readiness to pursue diplomatic engagement and warned of possible sanctions or suspension if constitutional order was not restored. Similarly, the African Union invoked its zero-tolerance policy toward coups, calling for the immediate return to civilian rule and respect for democratic processes. Both organizations emphasized dialogue and mediation, reflecting concern that further instability in Guinea-Bissau could compound a broader regional trend of military takeovers in West Africa.

Neighboring states, including Senegal and Guinea, did not play a direct role in the crisis. Their engagement was limited to diplomatic alignment with ECOWAS and AU positions, motivated by fears of cross-border spillover such as arms trafficking, organized crime, or refugee movements. International partners beyond the region similarly prioritized stability and constitutional restoration, offering no recognition or support to the military intervention.

In sum, the late-2025 coup in Guinea-Bissau was not an abrupt rupture but the culmination of protracted political conflict rooted in disputed electoral legitimacy, executive–legislative confrontation, and weak civilian control over the military. The intervention exposed the fragility of party politics and constitutional governance in the country and underscored the enduring role of the armed forces as a political arbiter. While the immediate crisis halted further escalation, it left unresolved the structural conditions that have repeatedly undermined democratic consolidation in Guinea-Bissau.

The Amazon is a War Zone: Why COP30 Was About More Than Just Carbon

Md. Saiful Islam Shanto



Photo: REUTERS

The world turned its eyes to Brazil last month as leaders gathered in Belém for COP30. They made grand promises to save the trees and stop global warming. However, a closer look past the polite speeches reveals a different reality on the ground. The Amazon rainforest is not just a biological reserve anymore; it is a battlefield. The recent "Amazon Summit" was not merely about environmental science, but rather about national security. It is impossible to save the climate without stopping the crime that drives its destruction. The rainforest has become a hub for dangerous international criminal groups, and this is the hard truth of 2025 that the international community must face.

Deforestation is often misunderstood as a small, local problem involving poor farmers cutting down a few trees to plant food for their families. That image is a myth. Today, the destruction of the Amazon is industrial, highly organized, and extremely violent. The statistics are shocking. A recent report by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime highlights this massive scale. They found over 4,000 illegal mining sites across the Amazon basin. These are not small pits but massive operations that destroy the earth and poison the land. The primary driver for this destruction is money.

In 2025, the price of gold hit a record high of over \$3,500 per ounce. This high price drives criminals into the jungle to extract wealth at any cost. They poison the rivers with mercury to find gold, caring nothing for the law, the environment, or human life.

Environmental crime has grown into a global giant that rivals other major illicit industries. Experts estimate it is now the third or fourth-largest criminal sector in the world. It generates between \$110 billion and \$281 billion every year. This is not small change; this is big business. It rivals the illegal drug trade in size and power. The most alarming part of this situation is the connection between drugs and the environment. Security experts call this the "crime-climate nexus." Criminal gangs, like the First Capital Command (PCC) in Brazil, have changed their business model to maximize profits. They used to only traffic drugs, but now they also traffic illegal timber and gold. They use the same logistical routes for everything. They float cocaine down the river on the same boats that carry illegal wood, creating a streamlined system of criminal activity.

The Amazon region covers eight different countries, touching Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and others. For governments, these borders are real lines on a map that define jurisdiction. A Brazilian policeman cannot just cross into Peru to catch a thief; he has to stop at the line. However, for criminals, these lines do not exist. They commit a crime in one country and then jump across the river to another country to be safe. The police cannot follow them there. This lack of cross-border cooperation is a huge failure of international relations. COP30 tried to fix this by discussing the creation of a "Green Interpol." Leaders want police forces to share data and coordinate actions. But talk is cheap, and real action on the ground is desperately needed.

This situation brings up a sensitive political issue regarding sovereignty. The question of who actually owns the Amazon is a point of contention. Countries in the West, like those in Europe or North America, see the Amazon as a global treasure because it cleans the planet's air. They say it belongs to the world and want to help protect it. However, they often want to control how it is protected. Brazil and its neighbors strongly dislike this attitude. They view it as "green colonialism." They argue that the Amazon is theirs and say, "We will protect it our way." This creates a political deadlock. Brazil needs money to fight these powerful gangs, but they do not want foreign soldiers on their soil. At COP30, Brazil proposed a new idea called the "Global Mutirão." This is a Portuguese word for a community work group. They want the world to help, but on Brazil's terms. They want technology and equipment, not interference.

COP30 in Belém was a start, but a summit is just a meeting. The real work happens in the mud and the rain, far away from the conference halls. The urgency is clear to observers from the Global South. The Amazon is bleeding. It is not just bleeding water and sap; it is bleeding blood. It is a war between the rule of law and the rule of greed. If the criminals win, the forest dies. And if the forest dies, the world suffers the consequences. World must treat the Amazon like the vital security zone it is. Countries must fight for it with the same seriousness they apply to any other global conflict.

The Jeffrey Epstein Case: Court Records, Elite Networks, and Justice Deferred

Roman Uddin



In November 2025, public discussion in the United States revisited the issue commonly known as the "Jeffrey Epstein files" in the context of ongoing legal, judicial, and institutional processes that followed earlier court-authorized disclosures. The renewed attention did not stem from a new criminal indictment or a fresh evidentiary release, but from continuing legal proceedings, unresolved disclosure questions, and the lasting implications of a case that combined large-scale sexual abuse with documented failures of accountability.

Jeffrey Epstein was a financier who, over a period extending from the 1990s through the mid-2000s, engaged in the sexual abuse and trafficking of underage girls. Court records, victim statements, and investigative materials consistently describe a pattern in which girls, often minors, were recruited through intermediaries, paid for initial encounters, and subsequently subjected to sexual abuse. Abuse occurred at Epstein's properties in Palm Beach, New York City, New Mexico, and the United States Virgin Islands. Victims also reported being pressured to recruit other girls, indicating a structured and repeatable system rather than isolated misconduct.

The first major legal intervention occurred in 2006-2008, when federal authorities investigated Epstein for sex crimes involving minors. That investigation concluded with a non-prosecution agreement between Epstein and federal prosecutors, under which Epstein avoided federal charges. Instead,

he pleaded guilty in Florida state court to lesser offenses and served a jail sentence of approximately thirteen months, much of it under work-release conditions. Court findings later confirmed that victims were not informed of the agreement, a violation of their statutory rights. This outcome became a central reference point in subsequent reviews of prosecutorial discretion and procedural transparency.

In July 2019, Epstein was arrested by federal authorities in New York and charged with sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy. The indictment detailed multiple victims and alleged conduct spanning several years. The case ended abruptly in August 2019 when Epstein died in federal custody at the Metropolitan Correctional Center. His death was officially ruled a suicide. The termination of the prosecution meant that no criminal trial occurred and no judicial determination was made regarding the full scope of his alleged network.

Criminal accountability continued through proceedings against Epstein's associate Ghislaine Maxwell. Maxwell was charged with recruiting, grooming, and facilitating the abuse of underage girls. In December 2021, a federal jury convicted her of sex trafficking and conspiracy, and she was later sentenced to a lengthy prison term. Her conviction established, as a matter of law, that Epstein's activities involved coordinated assistance by others.

The materials referred to as the "Epstein files" originate primarily from civil litigation brought by survivors, including lawsuits connected to Maxwell. These materials include deposition transcripts, sworn affidavits, exhibits, correspondence, and internal references submitted as evidence in civil proceedings. The documents were produced for specific legal purposes and were not compiled as a unified investigative record. Courts later authorized the partial unsealing of these materials, releasing hundreds of pages that had previously been restricted.

The unsealed records contain references to numerous public figures, including former US presidents Bill Clinton and Donald Trump. Clinton appears in the documentary record through references to travel and social interactions, including mentions in flight logs and witness statements. Clinton has stated publicly that he was unaware of Epstein's criminal conduct and has denied any involvement. Trump is referenced through documented social and professional contact during the period when Epstein was active in elite social circles in New York and Florida. Trump has stated that he cut ties with Epstein prior to Epstein's criminal exposure and has denied wrongdoing. No criminal charges have been filed against either individual in relation to the Epstein case.

Courts and legal authorities have repeatedly emphasized that inclusion of a name in civil filings does not constitute a finding of criminal liability. References in the files range from alleged direct contact to incidental or contextual mention. Judicial decisions governing disclosure have stressed that public access to records must be balanced against due process rights, privacy protections, and the absence of formal charges.

Beyond individual references, the files document the operational features of Epstein's activities. Victim statements describe the use of properties, staff, transportation, and financial inducements to sustain abuse. The records also show how Epstein's financial resources enabled extensive legal representation and negotiation with authorities, contributing to delayed or limited enforcement actions.

By the time of the November 2025 discussion, no additional criminal indictments had resulted from the unsealed materials. Freedom of Information Act litigation seeking further disclosure remained pending, and courts continued to assess requests for access on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Justice maintained that prosecutorial decisions must meet evidentiary standards and that grand jury secrecy and victim protection limit public release.