




September 2023



PBF Investments in

 TOTAL APPROVED \$102 M

 CURRENTLY ACTIVE: \$10.3 M

Focusing on

Land and natural resources conflict management

Local security, human rights, and rule of law

Women and youth empowerment

Support to more inclusive political transition and national reconciliation

Partners



PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

The year 2023 marks the second year of the political transition in Guinea following the coup d'état of September 2021 as well as the continuation of the much expected and highly publicized trial of the 28 September 2009 Stadium massacre, which commenced on 28 September 2022. The political transition as well as the trial, while largely peaceful, have some inherent risks and have not been without tensions. These risks and tensions include political mistrust and polarization, perception of ethnic stigmatization, impunity for some past events, perceived weakening of the national reconciliation process, and some human rights concerns, including through state demolitions of illegal settlements of highly marginalized populations as well as some restrictions on public freedoms and civic space.

PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been operating in Guinea since 2007. Guinea was also the Fund's first intervention in a country that had not experienced full armed conflict. At the time of the Fund's first intervention, the country was faced with regional crises and presented multiple risk factors for violent conflicts and socio-political stability. The Fund's original areas of support were: reform of the security sector; promoting reconciliation and national unity; youth and women's empowerment and livelihood support. Over the years and as the political and peacebuilding context in Guinea evolved, the Fund has invested in various areas based on conflict risk factors, increasingly focusing on community-level conflicts and empowerment of marginalized populations, while also supporting initiatives to improve rule of law, protection of human rights and dialogue, as well as land conflict and environmental protection.

With the political transition that commenced in 2022, the major focus of PBF support has been on promoting a more inclusive and peaceful transition, focusing on increased opportunities for the participation of young people and of women, and also supporting the process of national reconciliation and social cohesion. This includes accompanying the trial of 28 September with technical training of magistrates and lawyers from the bar association, advocacy for an efficient victims support and compensation program, training and sensitizing the media actors for an accurate and responsible media coverage of the trial, as well as monitoring and daily reporting of the progress of the trial. It also includes the set-up of a National Youth Council of Guinea, which is an important step in young people's participation in the transition and future political processes.

The other key focus of current PBF support is addressing cross-border conflicts, mainly conflicts between farmers and herders, in border areas with Côte d'Ivoire and with Sierra Leone. The current PBF investments also include a focus on management of land conflicts through multi-stakeholder dialogue and improved environmental governance in "Basse Guinée", including the revision of the Land Code which aims to trigger the design of the first National Land Policy for Guinea.

■ PEACEBUILDING FUND IMPACT

Some key results from the recent support of the PBF in Guinea include:

- **Cross-border social cohesion and security improvements:** PBF support has led to the reduction of conflicts and the improvement of coexistence between targeted cross-border communities (including in the border zones of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea and Sierra Leone). This has been done through the establishment of a cross-border consultation frameworks between the local and administrative authorities of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire which facilitates the exchange of information between border actors and promotes a more effective response to border tensions, helping to prevent the escalation of conflicts.

Similarly, at the Guinea-Sierra Leone border, the PBF contributed to the development of the joint declaration on cross-border cooperation signed by the two governments in August 2022 and organized the first joint missions in October to foster bilateral dialogue on cross-border transhumance. PBF support also fencing materials to prevent the destruction of crops on farms, one of the main sources of conflict between breeders and farmers, and built and equipped a joint border post between the two countries. In February 2023, an annual peace summit was held in the border town of Koindukura, convening 50 stakeholders from Sierra Leone and Guinea to discuss issues raised in the different cross-border community dialogue fora and culminating in a community peace agreement for a more cohesive and peaceful co-existence at the border. In Guinea and Sierra Leone, the identification of transhumance routes, gathering points, conflict-prone zones and pastoral infrastructure provided crucial information for informed decision-making, enabling the communities and local authorities to agree on harmonizing the transhumance calendar and coordination mechanisms.

- **The reduction of conflicts linked to land governance and environmental degradation:** As part of the project to strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and reduce land and environmental conflict in Lower Guinea, PBF has provided new surveillance equipment and techniques to the Ministry of Environment including drones. The project has also brought the community and local government members together to undertake the reforestation of 45 hectares of degraded land, leading to greater community trust and reducing a key source of conflict in these areas, linked to exploitation of granite sand mines. In a different region of "Haute Guinée", through a recently completed project, the PBF support contributed to integrating a group of indigenous local hunters known as 'donzos' who had been perceived with mistrust by other community members into a community actor for peace, reorienting their engagement in favor of community security and environmental protection while also establishing improved collaboration between them and the defense and security forces.

- **Youth empowerment:** In Forest Guinea, an area renowned for the frequency and violence of community conflicts, significant progress has been made in restoring social cohesion through PBF investments by supporting the structuring and the capacity of Young Community Leaders to mediate community conflicts. These youth associations were able to undertake community awareness-raising and social dialogue, as well as to contribute to peaceful resolution of community conflicts in their areas and are now actively sought out by communities for conflict mitigation and prevention. Similarly, the establishment of 20 local youth committees in twenty localities pre-identified for high levels of conflict in Guinea has been found, by the PBF portfolio independent evaluation, to have been an important step in local violence reduction and youth empowerment.

- **Support to social cohesion and reconciliation:** As part of the project, PBF is supporting national authorities in the development of a national strategy on reconciliation. The project has contributed to foster the capacities of magistrates and lawyers involved in the trial on the 28 September 2009 events as well as to sensitize 200 media professionals and some local communities on hate speech.

■ LOOKING FORWARD

In 2023 the Fund is considering additional support towards a peaceful transition in Guinea, focusing on the promotion and protection of human rights and human rights defenders, advocacy against hate speech, as well as further initiatives to empower young people as agents of peace, while exploring cross-border peacebuilding opportunities in border areas with Mali.