

# SENEGAL

## REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

**Head of state:** Abdoulaye Wade

**Head of government:** Idrissa Seck (replaced Mame Madior Boye in November)

**Death penalty:** abolitionist in practice

**International Criminal Court:** ratified

**Tension continued to be high in the disputed region of Casamance despite two peace agreements signed in 2001. Several civilians were killed during military operations. Abuses against civilians by armed opposition forces continued throughout the year, particularly against people with "non-Casamance" names. Despite a long-standing government commitment to investigate past human rights violations, no inquiry was set up.**

### Background

In November President Abdoulaye Wade dismissed the government and appointed as Prime Minister Idrissa Seck, deputy leader of the ruling *Parti démocratique sénégalais*, Senegalese Democratic Party. The move followed public anger at the sinking of an overloaded ferry in which more than 1,800 people died.

In Casamance, continuing insecurity and internal fighting within the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC), Democratic Forces of Casamance Movement, an armed opposition group claiming independence for Casamance, prevented peace agreements signed by the government and the MFDC in 2001 from being implemented. Nevertheless, talks continued throughout the year. In August President Wade met Father Diamacoune Senghor, former Secretary General of the MFDC. Negotiations were set to resume in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau but had not begun by the end of the year.

After several attacks allegedly by armed members of the MFDC, the security forces launched a military operation in June in the northern part of Bignona department. These "combing operations" lasted one month and extended to the border with Gambia where more than 1,000 villagers had sought refuge from the fighting.

### Killings of civilians by the army

Several civilians were killed by the army during clashes with the MFDC or when soldiers were pursuing armed members of the MFDC.

☞ In May, five people were killed by soldiers who entered Coubalang village, Bignona department, following an attack by alleged members of the MFDC. The soldiers apparently mistook three civilians – Ampaï Diémé, Louis Coly and Yancouba Tamba – for alleged MFDC armed members and killed them. A shell launched by the army entered a house killing Diaratou Sané and her baby.

### Detention without trial of alleged MFDC members

At least 40 people were arrested during the year and charged with collaborating with the MFDC. Some were reportedly in possession of light weapons when arrested. None appeared to have been tried by the end of the year.

☞ In March, Alexandre Djiba, former MFDC spokesman, was arrested in Guinea-Bissau and handed over in May to the Senegalese Minister of Interior who was visiting Guinea-Bissau. Soon after, Alexandre Djiba was returned to Dakar where he was released without charge.

### Abuses by the MFDC

Several attacks against civilians were launched by alleged members of one of the MFDC's armed wings. Unarmed civilians were beaten or shot after reportedly being identified by their "non-Casamance" names.

☞ In April, Ibrahima Kébé, a woodcutter, was killed in the forest of Djibanar, Kolda department, by armed people who told relatives of the victim that the forest was reserved for the MFDC.

☞ In July, six fishermen were detained by MFDC armed members near Brin village by the river Casamance. One was released because he had a Casamance name. The five others – Babacar Sall, Abdou Guèye, Abdoul Ba, Mama Thiam and Boubacar Ba – were taken away and never seen again.

### Impunity

Despite formal commitments by the authorities to investigate past human rights violations, no steps were taken to institute an inquiry into the large-scale violations committed by the security forces in Casamance in the past decade. Security officials widely believed to have been responsible for excessive use of force and torture in Dakar in recent years, including some who had been arrested, were not brought to trial.

☞ A police auxiliary arrested in October 2001 in connection with the killing of Balla Gaye, a student shot dead in January 2001 during a clash between demonstrators and police near the University of Dakar, had not been brought to trial by the end of the year.

### AI country reports/visits

#### Report

- Senegal: Putting an end to impunity – a unique opportunity not to be missed (AI Index: AFR 49/001/2002)

#### Visit

In November an AI staff member went to Dakar to meet lawyers in connection with a project addressing the denial of social and economic rights to relatives of the "disappeared" in Casamance.