

## Guinea-Bissau

### PROMOTING AND PROTECTING DEMOCRACY BY GUARANTEEING FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND COMBATING MISINFORMATION

Guinea-Bissau faces numerous challenges in terms of human development and governance, in a political context marked by chronic instability and recurring episodes of institutional tension, including coup attempts. The latest coup, which took place in November 2025, paralyzed the country and increased the pressure already being exerted on the media and journalists. This crisis has further weakened the rule of law and is fueling a climate of uncertainty that is weighing on social cohesion and the functioning of democratic institutions.

Since January 2025, Fondation Hironnelle has been working alongside the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on a project funded by the European Union aimed at strengthening the media environment and civil society in Guinea-Bissau. This project aims to support freedom of opinion and expression and combat misinformation. To this end, the project proposes a three-pronged approach: 1. At the institutional level, the project promotes the recognition of journalists' rights by the authorities; 2. At the organizational level, it contributes to the certification of media outlets through the Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI); 3. At the journalistic level, it supports the production of high-quality information that is accessible to all populations in the country through training and coaching.

To ensure that it reaches audiences across the country, Fondation Hironnelle has chosen to work with 24 media professionals in the context of training courses and 10 media outlets in the context of coaching activities in Bissau and the regions.

#### ANNUAL BUDGET

110'000 CHF

#### SOURCES OF FUNDING

- European Union

#### Key figures 2025



24 journalists trained



Productions in Bissau-Guinean Creole (Kriolo)



3 hours of audio programs produced and broadcast

#### PRIORITIES

- ▶ Strengthening self-regulation and ethical standards in the media
- ▶ Improving the safety of journalists
- ▶ Developing journalists' skills in fact-checking and combating hate speech
- ▶ Raise awareness among young people and women about the risks associated with misinformation

#### ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Organize practical journalism training courses
- ▶ Support editorial teams in the form of coaching in the production of their media content

## Supporting high-quality media production

As part of this 18-month project, Fondation Hironnelle is organizing a series of activities including targeted training sessions for media professionals on fact-checking, human rights and gender issues, and combating hate speech; an editorial coaching program in several newsrooms in Bissau and the regions; and the provision of production equipment.

After finalizing the selection of participants and preparing the training sessions during the summer of 2025, the first activities were launched in October 2025. They included a five-day workshop on journalistic ethics and fact-checking, followed by two on-site coaching sessions at two media outlets. The coaching helped to support the production of public service radio programs dealing with disinformation, hate speech, and/or transparency in journalism. A production kit was given to each of the radio stations that received coaching.

The activities demonstrated a strong commitment on the part of the participating journalists and confirmed the relevance of strengthening professional standards in the Guinean media context. However, the coup d'état at the end of November 2025 significantly affected the operating environment for independent media and led to the temporary suspension of the project's activities.

Since December, media outlets have been facing increasing restrictions, pressure to self-censor, and financial difficulties. In light of this situation, the consortium members have decided to postpone certain project activities.

In 2026, Fondation Hironnelle will organize two series of training courses to complement the first, in order to continue to strengthen participants' knowledge and practice. At the same time, eight media editorial initiatives will be selected to receive personalized support from a journalist coach in the field. The main objective is to support these editorial teams in producing high-quality media content, whether by developing innovative formats or improving existing programs.

### BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries of the project include experienced journalists, editors-in-chief, and media managers. Ultimately, it is the audiences of ten media outlets, selected in Bissau and the regions, who will benefit from the project.

### OUR IMPACT

75% of participants rated the improvement in their knowledge and skills in journalistic ethics and professional conduct as "very good." The remaining 25% rated it as "good." In addition, nearly 90% of participants indicated that they were likely to apply these new skills in their daily work. Finally, two long-form radio programs were produced and broadcast by the first two radio stations that received coaching.

### DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Professional media
- Journalist safety
- A legal framework and/or standards that promote the work of journalists

