



# BONGO

# DYNASTY

Joint Crisis Committee: Gabon Coup

High School Crisis Committee

# Background Guide

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# VIMUNC XI



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Esteemed delegates and sponsors of VIMUNC XI,

Welcome to the eleventh annual Virginia Invitational Model United Nations Conference. As the MUN year winds down, we hope to provide the best experience yet, with paramount service and attention to detail that creates the greatest conference. From broad UN organizations to regional bodies, from corporations to criminal organizations, VIMUNC has committees that truly serve every interest. With experienced chairs, czars, and staff, we will ensure that every delegate truly has a positive experience, and we hope that you can enjoy your experience with us.

VIMUNC's 21 committees and over 850 delegates make this year's conference one of the largest editions ever, and we look forward to expanding our outreach across the DMV region to continue to provide a wonderful experience for all delegates. With a large MUN team that has years of experience, we hope that every single minute of the committee is filled with substantive debate that will create learning experiences that last for years to come.

So much hard work has been put into every single crisis update, background guide, and dossier, and we sincerely hope that the work and care placed in each aspect of this conference is displayed in its quality. If at any time you feel something about the conference is unsatisfactory, please don't hesitate to talk to your chairs, a staffer, or a member of the Secretariat.

Thank you so much for your commitment to VIMUNC XI, and best of luck in your committee, future conferences, and ambitions.

Sincerely,

Mei Torrey

Secretary-General, VIMUNC XI

# **BONGO DYNASTY**

**(Joint Crisis Committee: Gabon Coup)**

*TOPIC A: Maintain Control of the Military*

*TOPIC B: Eliminate Election Fraud Rumors*

## **Overview of the Body**

### *Timeline and Structure of the Committees:*

The committee will start on August 27, 2023; the day after Ali Bongo was “Re-Elected” as president of Gabon. The people of Gabon have started to question the legitimacy of the election and they have started protesting on the streets. The current government of Gabon stated the election was legitimate and that they would prove it. Meanwhile, the military which is the combined force of the Republican Guard and the armed forces have made it known that they oppose the election results and sitting president. The Military side of this committee will be located at Camp Militaire Melen and the Bongo Dynasty will be located in the capital city of Libreville. This JCC will consist of the Bongo Dynasty and the Military fighting for control of the Gabonese people and resources.

In real life, the coup was completed on August 30, 2023. However, this committee has no timeline for when such events have to occur. The flow of this committee will be organic and up to the delegates about how they approach the situation.

## *General Overview*

The Gabon coup d'etat of 2023 involved a group of Gabonese military officers from the elite presidential guard unit seizing power just hours after the announcement of President Ali Bongo Ondimba's re-election. The officers declared General Brice Oligui Nguema as the new leader of the country's transition, thus ending over five decades of his family's dynastic rule in Gabon. The situation remains tenuous, with the military officers consolidating their control over the country and citizens expressing both support and frustration for the coup. However, the intentions of the coup leaders are still unclear as they haven't specified their plans for a transition of power, all while international powers are demanding a return to civilian rule.

The military officers established the Committee for the Transition and Restoration of Institutions (CTRI), and in a video address shortly afterward, they canceled the election results, suspended all government institutions, and closed the country's borders. General Brice Oligui Nguema, who previously served as head of Gabon's Republican Guard, the elite team responsible for protecting the president and other senior figures, was announced as the new leader of the transition. The military junta then reinstated foreign media outlets that President Bongo's government banned during the recent election.

Although Gabonese citizens showed heavy support for democracy, a large majority don't believe that the elections allow voters to remove leaders from power who don't measure up to

their expectations. Alongside their frustrations over unfair elections, the citizens of Gabon experience mass poverty despite the abundant natural resource supply of timber, oil, and manganese that give Gabon one of the highest per-capita GDPs in all of Africa.

A slim chance stands that the leaders of the coup may be able to utilize the frustrations of the citizens to rally support for the coup, but they first need to prevent it from falling. However, because the president and his inner circle have historically used their political power for the benefit of themselves, there is a high probability that the leaders of the coup will do the same, all while negatively affecting the well-being of the average citizen.

This event is not the first of its kind, as there has been a long history of military takeovers based in Africa. However, the African Union, China, Russia, the United States, and France have condemned the coup, urging for a peaceful return to constitutional order. The United Nations Secretary-General and the US State Department also expressed concern and condemned the military seizure of power. The international response has been critical of the coup, and there are calls for dialogue to return the country to civilian rule.

A crucial factor to consider is the response of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), whose headquarters resides in Gabon's capital, Libreville. Their goal is to promote cooperation between the central African countries, and one of their main contributors through donations and political support is Gabon. Because of their relationship with Gabon, ECCAS may have a strong influence regarding discussions with Bongo's group regarding their actions moving forward.

A similar group, the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) went through a similar scenario, where a wave of coups swept through the Sahel, a region across northern Africa, and they needed to end them. ECOWAS implemented sanctions across several military juntas, going as far as to call on Niger's military force for assistance. This retaliation has been largely inconsistent, however, as Niger is also experiencing a coup, leading to its military force losing credibility. Because the African Union and ECOWAS haven't been able to make any meaningful changes, the African Union and ECCAS's actions moving forward are incredibly important to the future of Africa.

The soldiers who seized power announced the annulment of the election, the closure of all borders, and the dissolution of various state institutions. They cited the country's serious institutional, political, economic, and social crisis as the reason for their actions and called for a transparent, credible, and inclusive ballot. Africa is no stranger to military coups, as 45 of 54 African countries have endured at least one coup since 1950, with 7 coups stretching from Niger to Sahel in 2023 alone.

# TOPIC A: Maintain Control of the Military

## *Topic Background*

Gabon has witnessed many periods of political instability and transitions. The challenges faced by the Bongo Dynasty, the ruling power in Gabon, are deeply rooted in the country's socio-political landscape. According to "History of Gabon", the country's declining petroleum prices led to an economic crash. Over the country's history, problems like these are common and an additional challenge the Bongo Dynasty needs to tackle. The Gabonese military has faced a power struggle between the Bongo Dynasty and General Nguema of the Republic Guard. The Bongo Dynasty has and still faces the complex task of maintaining control over the military. All prospects of maintaining power will be gone if the Bongo Dynasty is not able to pull the military to their side. In a country, such as Gabon, the military will not only keep the Republican Guard at bay but also the military will be able to maintain order among the people.

## *Past Actions*

To maintain military power, Gabon has focused on utilizing its economic resources to its advantage. Major uses include strengthening cross-national political relations. This was successful specifically when cooperating with the French military. This not only led to a more technological advanced and stronger military but also a more stable government in Gabon. The military focuses not only on protection from other nations but also on internal conflicts.



Therefore the larger military in Gabon has increased internal security including border control, counterterrorism, and privacy operations. Privacy operations encompass all of the classified information on governmental actions like voting as well.

## *Current Situation*

At this point, General Nguema controls most of the military except for a few hundred troops still loyal to the Bongo Dynasty. Trust and loyalty within the military and alliances with influential figures must be built if the Bongo Dynasty wanted to remain in control. Removing disloyal individuals and reorganizing the military's structure is another option the current government is considering.

# TOPIC B: Eliminate Election Fraud Rumors

## *Topic Background*

There have been multiple accusations of election fraud previously, and the president has been seen to have political power for himself. The opposition camp has also claimed that President Ali Bongo orchestrated a fraud with his supporters. This situation is dire because as more election fraud rumors arise, more talk about a coup arises, and maintaining government control is essential. In January 2018, the government promoted constitutional amendments that further consolidated executive power and excluded opposition proposals to impose presidential term limits. This raised concerns about potential election fraud among the citizens. Later in 2023, hoping to halt President Ali Bongo's bid to extend his dynasty's 56-year grip on power, the opposition claimed there was foul play during the election. The opposition to the past elections' validity undermines the government's legitimate electoral system.

## *Past Action*

Gabon's government blocked internet access and imposed a curfew on Saturday after an election marked by major voting delays. There were also accounts of widespread media censorship and disinformation. The Bongo Dynasty omitted information to their voters, for example, they invited observers to witness the counting of the votes, but instead, they only showed them parts of the election to make the Bongo Dynasty appear favorable. The Bongo Dynasty also suppressed multiple attempts of protest against their long-lasting familial political

empire, for example, they used military force and press regulation. President Ali Bongo's father Omar Bongo, vertically integrated every step of the election into his own institutions.

## *Current Situation*

The Republican Guard is trying to prove election fraud within the Bongo dynasty. They currently have found irregularity between voter count and population count (Voter count was higher than the population in certain areas). The Republican Guard also finds the suppression of press and protests, as well as the fitness of certain voter turnouts to be suspicious. Although there were many speculators, there was a demographic of citizens who found the election to be fair. With newfound political will, the people have been able to voice their opinions and take action more than ever before. After years of attempts at diplomatic reform were ineffective, the Republican Guard now looks more favorably at performing a coup against the Bongo Dynasty.

## *Questions to Consider*

- How will the Bongo Dynasty stay in power, while the military is publicly opposing them ?
- How will the Bongo Dynasty get rid of the election fraud rumors?
- How will the Bongo Dynasty maintain control of the media to stop conspiracies from spreading?
- How will Gabon prevent international interference?

## Map of Gabon and neighboring countries



## DOSSIER

### **Noureddin Bongo Valentin**

Noureddin Bongo Valentin is the son of the current president Ali Bongo. He has been named the Coordinator of Presidential Affairs by his father. He graduated from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. He founded an investment firm in Gabon called Shanah Investments. In addition, he has invested in many local restaurants in Libreville.

### **Sylvia Bongo Ondimba**

Sylvia Bongo is the first lady of Gabon and the wife of Ali Bongo. She founded the Sylvia Bongo Ondimba Foundation, to aid disadvantaged people all over the world. She does work for her father's company OGAR, which is an issuance company in Gabon. She has an advanced degree in corporate management from her time in France.

### **Denis Sassou**

Denis Sassou is a former military officer and the current president of the Congo. He previously led rebel forces in Congo to overthrow the government. He is known for his military knowledge, having served as a pilot, head of the intelligence department, and general of the Congolese army.

### **Marie Mborantsuo**

Marie Mborantsuo is the head of the Constitutional Court of Gabon and a Lawyer. She is a former member of the Gabonese Supreme Court and is one of the writers of Gabon's Constitution. She influences all new legislation in Gabon.

### **Colonel Frederic Bongo**

Colonel Frederic Bongo is a former Lieutenant in the Republican Guard and the half-brother of Ali Bongo. He serves as a Public Relations manager of the Republican Guard and is widely recognized by the people of Gabon.

### **General Gregoire Kouna**

General Gregoire Kouna is one of the directors of the armed forces of Gabon. He is also the cousin of Ali Bongo. He originally served as one of the president's bodyguards. His extensive knowledge of the inner workings of Gabonese presidential security makes him a vital asset to the Bongo Dynasty.

### **Albert Bernard Bongo (Fictitious)**

Albert Bernard Bongo is the Gabonese Chief of Staff. Named after Gabon's second President, he has been touted to be the next of the Bongos in line for the presidency. He has his security detail which obeys all his commands.

### **Pascaline Bongo**

Pascaline Bongo is the daughter of former president Omar Bongo. She is the former personal adviser to the President of the Republic and former Minister of Foreign Affairs. She currently serves as the High Representative of the President of Gabon. She has two kids with Gabonese Official Jean Ping and dated Bob Marley.

### **Moussa Fauki**

Moussa Fauki is the African Union (AU) Commission President. He is also the former Minister of Foreign Affairs for Chad. Moussa carries unmatched international influence.

### **Richard Onuviet**

Richard Onuviet is the Current President of the Gabonese National Assembly. Former Minister of water and environment, Minister of oil and energy, and Minister of planning and urban policy.

### **Jessye Elogha**

Jessye Elogha is a Communications Consultant. He attended Saint-Cyr Military Academy. He currently specializes in Deals with contracts between private firms and the Gabonese Government

### **Nigerian President Bola Tinubu**

Bola Tinubu is the current President of Nigeria. He graduated from Chicago State University with a degree in accounting. After working for Deloitte in America, he became an executive of the company Mobil Oil, and then eventually the President of Nigeria.

### **John Kirby**

John Kirby is a former Navy Admiral of the United States. He is currently serving as the Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council in the White House.

### **Majordomo Peygondo Walcott (Fictitious)**

Peygondo Walcott is the public relations manager for Ali Bongo. In charge of all press conferences conducted by the family, Peygondo is also in charge of many of the speeches made by members of the Bongo Family during their public appearances. While he is not part of the family, he is considered an honorary member by the President.

### **Joao Lourenco**

Joao Lourenco is the President of Angola. He is the former Minister for the defense of Angola. He previously gained popularity from his leadership against the Portuguese in the Angolan Independence movement. He has spearheaded the movement for LGBTQ+ rights in Angola.

### **Rose Christiane Raponda**

Rose Christiane Raponda is the Vice President of Gabon. She is a former Prime Minister of Gabon and the former Mayor of Libreville. She has a very good working relationship with all Ministers in the president's cabinet.

### **President Mohamed Bazoum**

Mohamed Bazoum is the President of Niger. Bazoum is a founding member of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism. He is a survivor of a coup attempt.

### **Parfait Onanga-Anyang**

Parfait Onanga-Anyang Gabonese diplomat who serves in the United Nations in the African Union. He formerly worked for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna and New York.

### **David Cameron**

David Cameron is the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom. He is the Former leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of England.

### **Paul Biyoghé Mba**

Current Prime Minister of Health for Gabon. Paul Mba was the former Prime Minister of Gabon and Former President of the Economic and Social Council of Gabon. He oversees all the hospitals in Gabon.

### **Eudoxie Mbouguiengue**

Eudoxie Mbouguiengue is a famous Gabonese writer for Entertainment Weekly. She married rapper Ludacris. She maintains a heavy social media presence and influence.

### **Denis Bouanga**

Denis Bouanga is a Gabonese forward for Los Angeles Football Club. Has influence in the MLS and American social media. Denis has been very public with his opinion on the election. He has hailed Ali Bongo as a hero of Gabon.

### **Pierre-Alain MOUNGUENGUI**

Pierre-Alain MOUNGUENGUI is the President of the Gabonese Football Federation. Has influenced not only the Gabonese National Team, but he influences many aspects of football culture in Gabon.

### **Ibrahim Ndong**

Ibrahim Ndong is a midfielder for Al Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. He has access to an ever-expanding Saudi Arabian Football influence. He is very close to Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman and is known to have annual meetings with him.



### **Karim Ummadisetti (Fictitious)**

Karim Ummadisetti is the sole partner of the Gabonese Government in deciding where to invest their money internationally. He used his mass fortune to build a brand new airport in the capital city. He is currently facing trial for illegal narcotics smuggling, however, due to the current political unrest the trial has been suspended.

### **Brijon “Brij” Bongo (Fictitious)**

Bishop of the Episcopal Conference of Gabon, Brijon “Brij” Bongo, is a trusted ally of the Bongo Dynasty and a momentous religious figure to the Gabonese public. Bishop Brij has the unwavering support of the Episcopalians and access to Roman Catholic communities, particularly sects of Protestants, and Evangelicals.

### **Shane Pombajambo (Fictitious)**

Shane Pombajambo is a brick enthusiast, Gabonese architect, and builder. He owns a construction company named “Shane Like Brick (SLB)”. Which has an estimated value of 10 million USD. SLB is responsible for most of the infrastructure projects in the poorer communities of Gabon.

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