



GENERAL

NGUEMA

Joint Crisis Committee: Gabon Coup

High School Crisis Committee

Background Guide

Virginia Invitational

V I M  N C

Model United Nations Conference

11th Session

March 1st-2nd, 2024

VIMUNC XI



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

MEI TORREY

SECRETARY-GENERAL

PEYTON WALCOTT

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

RYAN DADOO

CHIEF OF STAFF

SOPHIA BONGIOVI

*UNDERSECRETARY-
GENERAL OF GENERAL
ASSEMBLIES AND
SPECIALIZED AGENCIES*

MATT TAM

*UNDERSECRETARY-
GENERAL OF CRISIS*

GENERAL NGUEMA

(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: Taking Control of the Military

Topic Background

Created in 1960, the Gabon military is divided into four main categories: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and a National Gendarmerie, which essentially is a police force under the direct command of the president. Separate from these entities, however, is The Gabonese Republican Guard, which is Gabon's most powerful security unit. Originally organized as the Presidential Guard from 1960 to 1975, the organization was formed by President Omar Bongo, with members of his ethnic group to protect him, but the Guard has since expanded to protect government officials and buildings as well as maintain internal security.

Past Actions

Previously in 2019, The Republican Guard attempted a coup after Ali Bongo, the president at the time suffered a stroke and needed to go to Morocco for treatment. They declared that the purpose for the coup was to restore democracy in Gabon, claiming that the current president, Ali Bongo, was “desperately clinging to power”. The Republican Guard sent many heavily armored vehicles to the capital in an attempt to solidify their coup. However, the coup was put down that same day by the Gendarmerie.

Current Situation

General Nguema currently has control of the military, and many members of the armed forces remain loyal to the Bongo Dynasty. If the Bongo Dynasty were to regain control of the country's military it would render all political aspirations ineffective. It is imperative to remain in control of the army so that the Bongo Dynasty has no way to fight back against the coup.

TOPIC B: Proving the Election Fraud of President Bongo

Topic Background

In 2016 Ali Bongo ran to be re-elected as president of Gabon, opposing various parties including Jean Ping. This election was controversial from the start and after Bongo was inaugurated by a slim margin the suspicions were reinforced. After repeated allegations of vote intimidation, ballot stuffing, and even vote count discrepancies, outside nations and groups within Gabon observed the election closely. All of this suspicion led to violent public protests and in response, the government furthered suppression in the form of human rights abuse.

Past Action

Ali Bongo's succeeded father faced similar fraud allegations including institutional control and imposing illegal means of limiting competition in politics. He is the reason Gabon has been under heavy scrutiny from outside nations. Action on this election by the public was undermined by the amount of control Omar had over voting institutions. Action taken by other nations was limited to actual voting influence. Omar agreed to political reforms, however, change was only implemented in small increments and very slowly. His death in 2009 left Ali to control the country in the Bongo name as it has been for decades. The short-term fraud allegations have forced change however the reason the Bongos were able to maintain power for so long all comes down to a lack of political will in the people. People are intimidated by the

Bongos and with decades of credentials in authority, it was very difficult to oppose them in the past. Gabon has had internal parties in the past, however, they were very divided and failed to act in harmony with one another which rendered them ineffective. International action was mitigated by domestic regulation and proved to be ineffective. The limited speech and press freedoms further ensured the Bongos stayed in power.

Current Situation

Observers found inconsistency with voter amount and population count in certain areas. The election results were also delayed multiple days, perhaps to change the votes. The government invited observers of the election, however, they limited their transparency and what was shown. The sole act of suppressing protest and civil liberties is pointing towards guilt behind the election. It is important to understand that though observers found problems in the election, several observers found the election to be entirely free and fair. In the past, speech freedoms have been limited, now people can voice their opinions and take action. Past protests enforced the fact that riot and violence are not enough to incite reform and the chances of diplomatic means of reform proving to be effective is very slim.

Questions to Consider

- How will the military continue to incentivize its members to remain by their side?
- How will the military prove that the Bongo Dynasty falsified the election?
- How will the military keep the people and the media on their side during any coup attempts?

- How will the military keep the people safe, during any riots or protests that could break out?

Map of Gabon and neighboring countries



DOSSIER

Albert Ondo Ossa

Albert Ossa ran against Ali Bongo in the election. He is an associate professor of economics at Omar Bongo University and the Minister of Scientific Research & Technological Development.

Jean Ping

Jean Ping is a half-Chinese and half-Gabonese diplomat. He is the Chair of the African Union Commission. He is a Former Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Former President of the United Nations General Assembly, and former member of UNESCO. He has two children with Pascaline Bongo.

Om Sharma (Fictitious)

Om is the captain of a mercenary vessel P-400 patrol vessel with his crew the Rowers, however, his men need to be paid regularly or they may commit a mutiny against Om. Om has much influence over illegal trade that goes in and out of Gabon. This includes drugs and counterfeit goods.

Commander Gub(Fictitious)

Commander Gub is the leader of a militia group called the Minute Gabons, similar to their American counterparts, they are a group of ragtag men and women who choose to fight with limited weapons and expertise, they number in the hundreds and tend to have popular support, yet they lack the military experience or equipment to make meaningful combat advancements.

His relationship with the Army has been mixed and controversial up to this point.

Brice Oligui JR (Fictitious)

Brice Oligui JR is the son of the General Nguema. He does not have the best relationship with his father, however, he does have a vast knowledge of the Republican Guard and has connections with some of his father's associates.

Raymond Ndong Sima

PM from 2012 to 2014, switched sides to pro-junta in 2022

Raymond Ndong Sima is a Gabonese politician who has served as Prime Minister of Gabon since February 2022, when he was appointed to the post by President Ali Bongo Ondimba.

Raymond advocates for a referendum on a new constitution.

Melania Roberto (Fictitious)

Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the United States

Melania Roberto is the chief inspector of international criminal affairs for the US and has a deep history of working with UN peace troops and Interpol in tracking down known criminals and their networks. Melania has developed a system of CIs (criminal informants) throughout the Gabon region.

Pacome Moubelet Boubeya

Pacome Boubeya is the Former Minister of the Interior and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs. Even though he is retired, he maintains a close working relationship with many powerful Gabonese influencers and politicians, having been known to sway certain legal decisions.

Daniel Ona Ondo

Daniel Ondo is the former Prime Minister and former Minister of Education for Gabon. He resigned from his duties after the disputed re-election of Ali Bongo in 2016. Since then he has been public with his Anti-Bongo Dynasty ideology.

Denis Sassou Nguesso

President of the Congo

Denis Sassou Nguesso has served as the president of the Congo since 1997. He has been one of the longest-serving leaders in Africa for more than 30 years. He has faced allegations of corruption, violations of human rights, and repression of opposition parties which have characterized his leadership.

Marc Ona

Marc Ona founder of the environmental NGO Brainforest and is the president of the Environment in Gabon. He holds numerous conferences annually in Gabon, where he invites entrepreneurs from all over Africa. The goal of these events is to show off African innovation.

Lee White

Lee White is a British-Gabonese conservationist who served as the Gabonese Minister of Water and Forests. He leads all Gabonese initiatives concerning climate change. He is in charge of measuring Gabon's carbon emissions. Lee has amassed many power friends worldwide from attending climate change conferences.

Guy Nzouba-Ndama

Guy Nzouba-Ndama is a prominent Gabonese politician who served as National Assembly President from 2006-2009. He resigned from the ruling party in 2008 to form the opposition UPG. After unsuccessfully running against Ali Bongo in the 2009 election, Nzouba-Ndama was briefly exiled but later returned. He continues pushing for democratic reforms in Gabon.

Stéphane Séjourné

Stéphane Séjourné is a French politician who serves as a Member of the European Parliament for La République En Marche! He previously was a high-ranking advisor to President Emmanuel Macron, working on his 2017 campaign and as an advisor in the Elysée Palace. In 2019, Séjourné left Macron's staff to lead La République En Marche's European election campaign efforts.

Claude Sezalory

Claude Sezalory is a Gabonese politician who was married to Sylvia Bongo Ondimba before she married Ali Bongo in 1989. Since this relationship, he has been plotting to get revenge on his former partner. Claude maintains several connections within the Bongo family.

Omar Wassanji (Fictitious)

Ali Bongo's Personal Chef. Omar follows the sitting president almost everywhere, accompanying him abroad as well. Omar is aware of many illegal dealings by the Bongos from his close relationship with the president. Omar lives in the same quarters as the president, he is great friends with Ali and they often speak as if Omar was a member of his cabinet.

Felix Tshisekedi

Felix Tshisekedi is the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Felix has been accused of election fraud but has proven his innocence every time. Felix is known for his mass pardoning of criminals and savvy political ways. When he was young he would deliver pizza, this has made him extremely relatable and popular with the people of DRC.

Clarisse Lucien (Fictitious)

Clarisse Lucien is a Gabonese representative of Pure Aqua Inc. She specializes in water treatment and controls the filtration of water and its distribution to the people of Gabon. She has taken a very neutral position since the election occurred.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is a professional footballer who plays for Premier League club Arsenal and the Gabon national team. He is a source of national pride and inspiration for many Gabonese, and his IMAGE brand clothing line and signature goal celebrations have permeated Gabonese popular culture, becoming the heart and joy for many Gabonese citizens.

Teodoro Mbasogo

Teodoro Mbasogo is the president of Equatorial Guinea, he is the second longest-serving president in the world. He overthrew his uncle who was the former leader, fearing he had gone insane. Recent discoveries of mass amounts of oil in Equatorial Guinea have made Mbasogo a new powerful player in terms of trade in Africa.

Nabeel Elsanousi (Fictitious)

An affluent businessman and entrepreneur, Nabeel Elsanousi is known for his investments in military arms, weapons, technologies, and trades. While he has great national pride, he pursues several international business deals with the assistance of his primary consultant; Ava Smash.

Smash Industries will serve as a great source of Elsanousi's influence.

Seydou Kane

Seydou Kane is a Malian businessman who lives in Gabon. He is an entrepreneur who owns businesses in retail, electronics, and concrete. He has many friends in politics with ties to the Bongo Family and General Ngeuma.

Stephane Lasme

Stephane Lasme is a Gabonese Basketball player who played for the University of Massachusetts and the Golden State Warriors. He also played for the Gabon national team during the African Championship in 2005. Stephane has returned to Gabon to attempt to create a basketball culture among the poor communities. He has met with Ali Bongo on several occasions to achieve this goal. But on social media, he has been very anti Bongo Dynasty.

Mario Lemina

Mario Lemina is a midfielder for Wolverhampton Wanderers in England. He was born in Libreville and is a symbol of success for the poor community in Gabon. Playing in England, and being seen as a hero in Gabon, he has influence particularly with the young community in Libreville.

Pierre Akendengué

Pierre Akendengué is a Gabonese musician and composer. He also received a doctorate from the University of Paris. Pierre has captured audiences all over Gabon and France with his music. He is a standout public figure for the people of Gabon.

Kalyna Dadoo-Sabharwal (Fictitious)

Kalyna Dadoo-Sabharwal is a historian and scholar. She guides deans and writes curriculums for many Universities in Gabon. She has a huge build and is a former secret police, incredibly intimidating and threatening to the general public, whilst also being an expert in hand-to-hand combat.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“A ‘coup’ in Gabon: Who, what and why? | Military News.” *Al Jazeera*, 30 August 2023,
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/30/a-coup-in-gabon-who-what-and-why>.

“Gabon: Freedom in the World 2019 Country Report.” *Freedom House*,
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/gabon/freedom-world/2019>.

“Gabon - Independence, Economy, Wildlife.” *Britannica*,
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Gabon/Gabon-since-independence>.

Henry, Archibald S. “What to Know About Gabon's Coup.” *United States Institute of Peace*, 31
August 2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/08/what-know-about-gabons-coup>.

Miller, Matthew. “Military Coup d'Etat in Gabon - United States Department of State.” *State
Department*, 23 October 2023, <https://www.state.gov/military-coup-detat-in-gabon/>.

Obangome, Gerauds Wilfried. “Gabon cuts internet, imposes curfew amid election voting
delays.” *Reuters*, 26 August 2023,
<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/gabon-vote-president-bongo-seeks-extend-56-year-family-dynasty-2023-08-26/>.

Reddy, Micah. “Gabon’s Bongo family enriched itself over 56 years of kleptocratic rule,
spreading its wealth across the world.” *ICIJ*, 5 September 2023,
<https://www.icij.org/investigations/pandora-papers/gabons-bongo-family-enriched-itself-over-56-years-of-kleptocratic-rule-spreading-its-wealth-across-the-world/>.

Wodu, Nkasi. "How media repression facilitated election manipulation in Gabon and

Zimbabwe." *Democracy in Africa*, 29 August 2023,

<https://democracyinafrica.org/media-unfreedom-in-the-elections-in-gabon-and-zimbabwe/>.

Yeung, Jessie. "Gabon military coup: What to know about the overthrow of the Bongo dynasty."

CNN, 31 August 2023,

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/31/africa/gabon-military-coup-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html>.