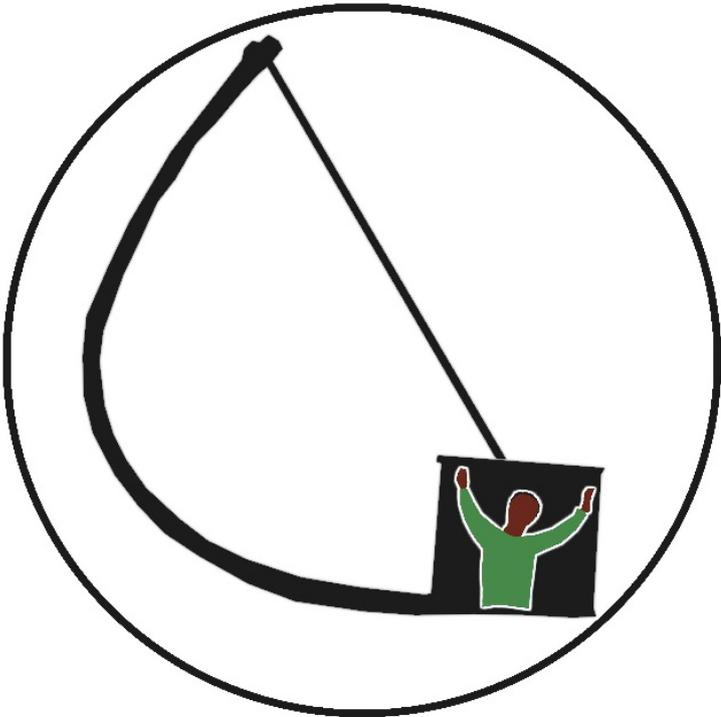


Casamance Peace Festival and Conference 2019



Bayo Sora e.V.

1. Project

For over 30 years there has been a civil war in southern Senegal, in the Casamance region, about the independence of the area. Since December 1982, fighting has repeatedly taken place between the *Mouvement des Forces Democratiques de la Casamance* (**MFDC**) and the Senegalese military. The conflict has already claimed several thousand lives and is the main cause of flight in the region (Senegal - Gambia - Guinea Bissau).

Bayo Sora e.V. acts as a mediator at the annual peace talks held since 2014 during the Casamance Peace Festival in Ziguinchor. We help to facilitate communication between the MFDC and government representatives, as well as diaspora and people interested in the roundtable. In addition, we help reunite the highly fragmented MFDC subgroups, or at least resume communication with each other. We also involve the population and diaspora in the peace talks.

Another goal of the association is the sustainable development of the region, as well as the promotion of culture and artists of the Casamance.

Only with the help of a final, lasting peace the people of the region can live in safety and normalcy. An economic development of the country even by foreign investors can only take place, if peace is guaranteed. A sufficient education and good living conditions for the children of the Casamance are not possible without peace. Much of the population under the age of 35 grew up in civil war and has known no normality or life without fear. That must be changed by the project. We want to achieve peace for the Casamance and Senegal and thus set a sign that long-standing civil wars can be ended. Especially in times of continuing unrest in Africa, such a sign of peace means hope for many people.

2. Casamance Peace Festival 2019 (6th Edition)

The sixth Casamance Peace Festival took place from 13th to 20th January 2019, with the motto "Peace and Education". It was a great festival that was marked by the Peace Conference on 17.01.19 and attracted several thousand visitors. For the first time we were able to win the local politician and presidential candidate, **Maitre Madické Niang**, as patron of the festival.

Sunday, January 13th, 2019 Inter-religious prayers

The festival started this year again with inter-religious prayers involving all denominations. Muslims, Christians and representatives of nature religions prayed together for peace in Casamance and the world and for the success of the Peace Festival.



Figure 1 Inter-religious prayers for peace and the success of the festival in Ziguinchor

Monday, January 14th, 2019 courtesy visit to Oussouye

On the first day of the visite de courtoisie, the representatives of Bayo Sora Senegal drove towards Oussouye. First, we visited the family of *Abbé Diamacoune Senghor* (MFDC, died 2007) in Sèngèlene.



Figure 2 Team Bayo Sora Senegal / Bayo Sora with relatives of Abbé Diamacoune Senghor

Next, we visited *La Reine Anna* (Queen Anna Manga) in Calobone.



Figure 3 La Reine Anna Manga in Calobone (Oussouye)

The third visit of the day was to the King of Oussouye, *Sibilumbai Diedhiou*. This audience with the king has a long tradition and is an extraordinary honor, as the *Roi d'Oussouye* is the religious, spiritual and traditional leader of the Diola Animists. He is an important advocate for peace in Casamance and Bayo Sora.



Figure 4 Aly Bayo and Sibilumbai Diedhiou; Bayo Sora with Sibilumbai Diedhiou, the Roi d'Oussouye in the bois sacré

On Monday, members of the *Groupe provisoire du MFDC* arrived in our house. The *Groupe provisoire du MFDC* is a working group composed of members of different groups of the MFDC. These have taken the Peace Festival as an opportunity to reassemble and focus on an agreement by the MFDC to work on one head (spokesman, senior negotiator to negotiate with).



Figure 5 Bayo Sora with the *Groupe provisoire du MFDC* in Ziguinchor

Tuesday, January 15th, 2019 courtesy visit to Bignona

On the second day of courtesy visits, we headed to Bignona to meet the authorities there and invite them to the peace conference and the festival.

First, we went to Tandième to meet the family of *Emil Badiane*. Then to Bignona to the house of the *Imam Ratib de Bignona*. We encountered his deputy (and little brother) *Nfanssou Bodian*. Next we visited the *Curé de la Paroisse Notre Dame de Lourde de Bignona*, *Abbé Jean Bernard Manga*.



Figure 6 Bayo Sora with the family of Emil Badiane in Tandième and the chef de village Theodor Badiane / Bayo Sora and the representative of Imam Ratib de Bignona Nfanssou Bodian / Bayo Sora and Abbé Jean Bernard Manga

Local government employees, like *Dr. Annette Seck Ndiaye* (Directrice de la Pharmacie nationale d'Approvisionnement du Senegal, PNA) became aware of our project and the Peace Festival and donated money for the success of the festival.

Wednesday, January 16th, 2019 Courtesy visit in Balanta Kunda

Balanta Kunda was the direction that the Bayo Sora Senegal team set out on Wednesday. On the way to Balanta Kunda, still in Ziguinchor, we visited Henry Ndecki, the president of the *Maison de la paix*. And we met *Youssouph Diatta*, the *Khalif generale de Simbandy Balante* in Ziguinchor. We wanted to visit him anyway that day and were happy about the lucky coincidence.



Figure 7 Bayo Sora and Henry Ndecki, president of the *Maison de la paix* / Aly Bayo with Youssouph Diatta, *Khalif generale de Simbandy Balante*

Next we went to Niaguis to meet *Elhadj Mamadou Bayo*, the *Khalif generale de Niaguis*.



Figure 8 Bayo Sora with Elhadj Mamadou Bayo, Khalif generale de Niaguis / Pupil of Khalif generale de Niaguis

The courtesy visits were completed by a visit to *Samba Goudiaby*, representative of MFDC leader *Cesar Atout Badiate* and brother of *Lansanna Goudiaby*, who recently passed away. We have expressed our condolences and cordially invited him to the festival.

Saly Sadio, the sister and representative of *Salif Sadio*, one of the MFDC leaders, came to the festival. This is a very big vote of confidence and through her, her brother's MFDC group will again be hearing about the peace festival and the news. Representatives of the *MFDC Groupe de Contacte*, our project partner, were present and accompanied us and our work.



Figure 9 Samba Goudiaby (MFDC), Representative of Cesar Atout Badiate / Aly Bayo with Saly Sadio and Youssouph Coly (Groupe de Contacte, MFDC)

Thursday, January 17th, 2019 Peace Conference in Ziguinchor

This year, the theme of the festival and thus the peace conference, was *Paix et Education* Peace and Education. Referring to this topic, several speakers were heard, including Professor *Nouha Cisse* and the philosopher *Adama Diouf*. In the lively discussion and question-and-answer session after the speeches, people's concerns about peace and education were heard.



Figure 10 Lectern for the Peace Conference at the Maison de la Paix in Ziguinchor / From left to right: Elias, Youssouph Coly, Aly Bayo, Nouha Cisse, Adama Diouf, Lamine Mane, not pictured: Miriame Sarr, Francis Manga, Jeannot Diamacoune, Abdou Coly / Spectators of the conference
 Lectern for the Peace Conference at the Maison de la Paix in Ziguinchor / From left to right: Elias, Youssouph Coly, Aly Bayo, Nouha Cisse, Adama Diouf, Lamine Mane, not pictured: Miriame Sarr, Francis Manga, Jeannot Diamacoune, Abdou Coly / Spectators of the conference

Following the Peace Conference, interviews with the topic Peace Festival and Peace were given. These were broadcast at the local news channel GMS, *Groupe Médias Sud*:
<https://youtu.be/zrJzKYqDNo>



Figure 11 Aly Bayo at the interview for GMS / Professor Nouha Cissee at the interview

Friday, January 18th and Saturday, Jan. 19th, 2019 Concerts on the Place Alioune Sitoé Diatta
During the entire peace festival, traditional groups performed in Ziguinchor, Colobane. Traditional Senegalese music was played live, and the traditional mask dances were performed.

From Friday to Sunday, starting around 6pm, local and international artists performed at the large stage at the *Place Sitoé Diatta*.



Figure 12 Festival stage on Place Alioune Sitoé Diatta in Ziguinchor / artists on stage

Sunday, January 20th, 2019 Visit of Maitre Madické Niang and end of the festival
On Sunday we welcomed our patron *Maitre Madické Niang* in Ziguinchor. He was enthusiastic about the commitment of the association and the peace efforts of all involved participants. We were also able to meet the members of the *Groupe provisoire du MFDC* in our house. This meeting, as well as the visit of *Maitre Madické Niang* to Ziguinchor and the awarding of a Peace Prize by Bayo Sora, went through the national Senegalese media (dakaractu.com; seneplus.com; senego.com; news.sen360.sn; senenews.com; flashactu.info; dakar24sn.com; kewoulo.info; teranganews.sn).



Figure 13 Aly Bayo (Bayo Sora e.V.) with Maitre Madické Niang

PRESIDENTIELLE 2019 : Me Madické NIANG reçoit une délégation du MFDC à Ziguinchor favorable à la Paix en Casamance



Dans le cadre de sa tournée nationale dans la région Sud du pays, Me Madické NIANG candidat de la coalition Madické 2019, a reçu hier à Ziguinchor une délégation du MFDC. Les échanges ont porté sur la Paix en Casamance et le projet de société Jamm ak Xéweul (La Paix et l'Abondance) qui en consacre une partie essentielle.

Soldat infatigable de la Paix, Me Madické NIANG a appelé à l'unification de toutes les forces vives de la Casamance et s'est engagé, une fois élu, à asseoir les bases d'une solution définitive de la crise casamançaise.

« Il est grand temps de s'engager résolument et méthodiquement dans la voie qui mène à une paix définitive dans cette région aux immenses potentialités et qui doit jouer un rôle central dans la transformation économique du Sénégal. L'heure est venue de prendre le taureau par les cornes et d'instituer un organe régulier de l'État qui sera publiquement chargé de trouver une solution consensuelle, sur la base de négociations franches et sincères, sans préalable, avec comme seul objectif de trouver un consensus générateur de paix et de stabilité pour le Sénégal.

Dans cette perspective, il ne faut exclure aucun acteur ni refuser aucune mesure de réinsertion devant permettre aux personnes directement impactées de retrouver une sécurité collective et individuelle indispensables à l'amélioration de leur niveau de vie qui passe forcément par une exploitation rationnelle et endogène des immenses ressources naturelles de cette région » a déclaré Me Madické au cours de l'audience accordée à la délégation du MFDC.

Me Madické NIANG a par ailleurs reçu à Ziguinchor le trophée de la Paix décerné par l'association Bayo Sora promotrice du concert de la Paix dont le candidat de la coalition Madické 2019 était le parrain de la présente édition.

Ce lundi, Me Madické NIANG sera l'hôte de Monsieur Sibilou MAGNE, le Roi d'Oussouye et les populations du département, de l'évêque de Ziguinchor avant de présider un meeting à Bignona. Cette dernière étape de la tournée nationale dans le sud du pays sera bouclée par un grand rassemblement au terrain de basket de Ziguinchor où une importante déclaration sera faite sur la Paix en Casamance.

LA CELLULE DE COMMUNICATION

Lundi 21 Janvier 2019
Dakaractu

After the solemn end of the festival on Sunday, we accompanied *Maitre Madické Niang* on the following day to many public appearances. We were able to organize an audience in Oussouye with the *Roi d'Oussouye*. We were also able to organize an audience with the Bishop of Ziguinchor, *évêque Paul Abel Mamba*.

Because of the upcoming elections in Senegal, we (Bayo Sora) were also visited by two election observers of the European Union. Ms *Sónia Pereira de Figueiredo* and Mr *Claude Leroy* from the *Mission d'observation électorale de l'Union européenne Sénégal 2019*. They were enthusiastic about the concept of the Peace Festival and its successes.



Figure 14 Maitre Madické Niang with the Roi d'Oussouye / Bayo Sora with S. Pereira de Figueiredo and C. Leroy, election observers of the European Union

Summary

We look back on a successful and peaceful festival and a peace conference that has attracted many participants. We were very happy this year that *Maitre Madické Niang*, a leading Senegalese politician and presidential candidate, has taken on the patronage of the festival. He is one of the few politicians who openly address the Casamance conflict and aim to work towards a solution.

Another success of the festival was the meeting of the *Groupe provisoire du MFDC* in our house and their one-week conference in Ziguinchor. The MFDC is now ready for peace negotiations and also on the path of internal agreement. With our peace project we are preparing a way for them to enter negotiations with the government. What we still lack at the moment is a clear readiness for peace on the part of the Senegalese government. We put our hopes in *Maitre Madické Niang*, who personally experienced our work this year and was able to talk to the members of the *Groupe provisoire du MFDC*.

It is moving to see how the hope for peace is drawing ever wider circles through our work. Every year, the atmosphere in which the festival takes place becomes more peaceful and friendly, communication between the parties of the conflict becomes more and more possible, and even travelling is now possible without permanent military controls. That was unthinkable 6 years ago.

A downer remains: Due to our limited financial resources, we can't bring most of the dignitaries to the center of the action to Ziguinchor or accommodate them (transport, hotel, food). This hampers communication and peace efforts enormously. Despite all adversities, we continue to do our best to resolve this conflict.

Bayo Sora e.V. in March 2019

Video collection of the festival 2019: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQxF3lju_H3rFcm-M4h9nGrZta6wKvORJ