

# President of Guinea-Bissau assassinated

Renegade soldiers shot dead the president of the West African country of Guinea-Bissau, Joao Bernardo Vieira, just hours after a bomb blast took the life of his rival, the armed forces chief of staff



■ **Population:** 1.6 million

■ **Religion:** Traditional animist 55%, Muslim 35%, Christian 5%

■ **Per capita gross domestic income (2006):** 142 euros

■ **Life expectancy:** 46 years

■ **1974:** Portuguese colony achieves independence

■ **2004:** Guinea-Bissau becomes major centre for cocaine trafficking, exporting 200,000-300,000kg a year from Colombia to Europe and Russia

■ **1980:** *Joao Bernardo Vieira* takes power in bloodless coup

■ **1999:** Vieira ousted after a year of civil war – forced into exile in Portugal

■ **2005:** After 2003 overthrow of *President Kumba Yala*, Vieira returns and wins presidential election

■ **Mar 2, 2009:** Vieira dies in tit-for-tat murder following assassination of army chief *General Tagme Na Waie*