El Hadj Omar Bongo ONDIMBA was born on 30 December 1935 in Lewaïd, province of Haut-Ogooué to a family of farmers with twelve children, from the Batéké tribe.

He had his secondary education in Brazzaville, the then capital of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) and thereafter joined the civil service and went to work in Chad.

At independence of his country in 1960, he was noticed by the first president of Gabon, Leon Mba, who appointed him as the director of his cabinet. In 1965, he joined the government as Minister of State at the Presidency of the Republic, then became Head of National Defence and Coordination, and was later appointed Vice-President of Gabon in 1967.

The same year he came to power at the age of 32 after the death of President Leon Mba, and thus became the second president of the country, a position he held till his death.

In 1968, President Omar Bongo formed the Democratic Party of Gabon (PDG).

In 1990, he introduced a multi-party system in politics and in September of the same year, he organised the first multi-party parliamentary elections that were won by his party, the PDG with an absolute majority in the National Assembly.
He subsequently won at the first round of voting the presidential elections of December 1993 and those of 1998.

With the prestige and experience acquired over the years, President Omar Bongo Ondimba became a key mediator in various regional conflicts. It is in this role that he worked incessantly for the restoration of peace in countries like the Central African Republic, Chad, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire and the two Congo, torn by civil wars, political conflicts and armed rebellions.

President Omar BONGO ONDIMBA was, with President Olusegun Obasanjo, the brains behind the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Commission of which he was the first Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.