

SECURITY COUNCIL

THE SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE GUINEA-BISSAU CONFIGURATION OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

H. E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota

Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

30 August 2016

Mr. President,

From the outset of this briefing, I wish to thank you for the invitation today and the opportunity to address this Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I am grateful for and welcome the comprehensive briefing delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. Modibo Toure as it is timely under the current circumstances. In addition to the information presented by Mr. Toure in his briefing, I wish to add a few elements on the basis of the discussions held in the PBC on 22 August, which we hope will be helpful to the Council's deliberations.

Mr. President,

Guinea-Bissau has come a long way since the coup d'état in 2012. The country has made important strides in regaining its footing toward democratization, and the progress achieved is now acknowledged by many, even amidst a situation in which the country remains trapped in a political impasse. Despite an undeniably "fragile" stability, national actors seem to understand that they must position themselves within a context of respect for the rule of law, the country's international legal obligations and the constitution.

We were reminded last week by Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman, when he briefed the Guinea-Bissau Configuration on his recent trip to Bissau, that the authorities in Bissau today no longer face the dilemma they confronted in the wake of the 2012 coup, when there was disagreement on who would legitimately represent the country's Government during that year's UN General Assembly.

In equal measure, regional and international observers, who were then divided on matters related to Guinea-Bissau, are now aligned in supporting a strong development and stability agenda for the country. The consensus that today characterizes the oversight of the ongoing challenges in Guinea-Bissau both in the PBC and in the UNSC is something worth highlighting.

Mr. President,

At the same time, the precarious political situation in Guinea-Bissau remains a source of concern to many in West Africa and beyond. In a region that has seen great progress in consolidating peace and stability through democratic means, Guinea-Bissau remains a weak link.

I wish to use this opportunity to make a strong plea for collective efforts to help the national authorities of Guinea-Bissau find solutions to their governance problems. Options must be discussed as a matter of urgency. The longer the crisis is allowed to last, the progress achieved until now will risk being undermined, perhaps even erased. We have well-founded worries that it would become harder to steer the country back on track if viable solutions are not found in the short term to render the governance of the country truly effective. The PBC supports an inclusive and fruitful political dialogue, as stated in the press statement issued on 26 August by the PBC Guinea-Bissau Country Specific Configuration. This would be a positive step in paving the way for longer term policies that the country requires, including a possible constitutional review. The PBC

could assist these and other efforts, for example by mobilizing constitutional experts who may be able to provide adequate advice as required, and in full respect for national sovereignty. In order to tackle longer term issues, it will be up to the Bissau-Guineans to show wisdom and creativity to make their political constitutional model workable and adapt it to their specificities.

Mr. President,

The PBC believes that every effort must be made by the international partners to support the continuation of ECOMIB, the ECOWAS mission in Guinea-Bissau. We cannot afford to send the wrong signals regarding the importance of maintaining a safe and stable environment as remaining challenges are tackled. In this connection, I wish to acknowledge the role of the European Union's financial support to ensure the renewal of the mandate of ECOMIB in June of this year.

In conclusion, the PBC believes that the lack of a genuine political will to overcome current impasses is preventing the enactment of governmental measures that would lead to concrete peace dividends. The PBC urges the political parties and through them, all legislative actors to work together and urgently resume a constructive and cooperative dialogue in order to approve the Government's programme and the State budget; without a national road map for policy and a budget to sustain a functional State, the country will be ill positioned to receive support from the international community, despite the professed intentions to provide support.

The PBC believes that the international community, including this Council, must strongly encourage regional diplomatic efforts such as those agreed to at the 49th ordinary meeting of the ECOWAS Heads of State gathering in Dakar in June, and look forward to an early dispatch of the high level mission composed of the Presidents of Senegal, Sierra Leone and Guinea. President Johnson Sirleaf of

Liberia, as acting Chair of ECOWAS, has a leadership role to play in this regard. The PBC also encourages consultations aiming at organizing a meeting of the International Contact Group for Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, the PBC will continue impressing upon all actors the importance of upholding their commitments made at the Brussels donor round table in March of 2015. This equally applies to the respective pledges from national and international stakeholders. A clear commitment to place the national interest above other agendas will be conducive to stronger partnerships between the Government and its international supporters. We therefore urge the national authorities to seek a path toward sustainable constructive governance, where dissent is channelled without holding hostage the country's institutional, social and economic development perspectives.

Thank you Mr. President.