



United Nations and

GUINEA-BISSAU



UN Peace-building Office Established

To assist Guinea-Bissau in its peace-building efforts, including the electoral process, the Secretary-General appointed, on 30 April 1999, [Mr. Samuel Nana-Sinkam](#) (Cameroon) as his Representative in Guinea-Bissau and the Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). [Established](#) at the request of the Government of Guinea-Bissau, UNOGBIS became operational on 25 June 1999. It focused on promoting two central elements in the transition period: national reconciliation and the presidential and legislative elections in November 1999.

Background

On 1 November 1998, in Abuja, Nigeria, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the self-proclaimed Military Junta led by General Mane signed a Peace Agreement. The Agreement ended the fighting between the forces loyal to President Vieira and those loyal to General Mane, former Army Chief of Staff. The fighting had begun on 7 June 1998 as a result of the President's dismissal of General Mane over allegations relating to the smuggling of arms to separatist rebels in Senegal's Casamance region. On 7 May 1999, however, President Vieira was forcibly removed from office. On 14 May, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Malam Bacai Sanha, was inaugurated as interim President pending new elections, scheduled for November 1999.

In the following months, the Government continued to have security concerns, both inside the country and along the borders with Guinea-Conakry and Senegal, and requested that international military observers be deployed to monitor the situation along Guinea-Bissau's borders with those two countries. On 13 October the Secretary-General informed the Security Council that it was preferable at that juncture to take a number of interim confidence-building measures, while keeping the option of deploying international military observers open. Subsequently, his Representative undertook a mission to that effect to Guinea-Bissau's neighbours.

Elections

Meanwhile, UNOGBIS worked toward creating technical and political conditions in the country, propitious for holding orderly and peaceful legislative and presidential elections. While the organization and conduct of the elections was the responsibility of the National Electoral Commission (CNE), the United Nations, at the Government's request, coordinated activities of 88 international observers from 19 countries, and provided, through UNDP, technical assistance at all stages of the electoral process. The international community provided the necessary financial resources, as well as in-kind contributions.

The elections were held as scheduled on 28 November 1999, with over 80 per cent of eligible voters participating. On 30 November, international observers, in a joint communiqué, declared that the voting had taken place in a "climate of civility, serenity, transparency and sincerity" and in accordance with the electoral laws of Guinea-Bissau. The opposition Party for Social Renewal (PRS) led by Kumba Yala, won 38 of the 102 seats in the National Assembly. Guinea-Bissau Resistance (RGB) obtained 29 seats, while the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) represented by interim President Sanha was third with 24 seats. None of the parties gained an absolute majority in the National Assembly. As none of the 12 presidential candidates received the required majority and, a second round of the presidential elections was scheduled for January 2000.

For the second round, the United Nations provided technical assistance and coordinated activities of 60 international electoral observers, who concluded that the elections had been carried out in an atmosphere of civic responsibility and tranquillity and were free, transparent and fair. Mr. Kumba Yala won the second round of voting with 72 % of the vote.

Revision and Extension of UNOGBIS's Mandate

The interim Government requested the extension of the mandate of UNOGBIS, which ended on 31 December 1999, for one more year. Since no candidate won the first round of the presidential elections and the formation of the new Government was delayed, the mandate of UNOGBIS was [extended](#) for three months until 31 March 2000, pending consultations with the new Government. The new President of Guinea-Bissau, Kumba Yala, was sworn in on 17 February 2000. He appointed Caetano N'Tchama as Prime Minister on 18 February, who took office on 19 February and announced a 22-member broad-based Government. The successful completion of the electoral process brought to a close the transitional Government put in place under the Peace Agreement of 1 November 1998.

Following consultations with the new Government, the Secretary-General [proposed](#) and the Security Council [approved](#) the extension of the mandate of UNOGBIS for one year after its previous one expired on 31 March 2000. With the conclusion of the transitional period, the mandate of UNOGBIS has been revised to reflect the post-electoral situation

on the ground and includes the following:

- To support national efforts to consolidate and maintain peace, democracy and the rule of law, including the strengthening of democratic institutions;
- To support national efforts, including those of civil society towards reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful management of difference;
- To encourage initiatives aimed at building confidence and maintaining friendly relations between Guinea-Bissau and its neighbours and its international partners;
- To seek the commitment of the Government and other parties to adopt a programme of voluntary arms collection, disposal and destruction;
- To provide the political framework and leadership for harmonizing and integrating the activities of the United Nations system in the country;
- In close cooperation with the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to facilitate the mobilization of international political support and resources for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development priorities of Guinea-Bissau.

Further Extension Proposed

[Reporting](#) to the Security Council on 28 June 2000, the Secretary-General noted that while important progress had been made, many challenges remained as Guinea-Bissau sought to restore lasting peace, stability and sustainable development and to improve the critically low living standards of its people. The Secretary-General welcomed the repeated commitment by the military establishment to withdraw from the political process and to accept the authority of the democratically elected institutions. Having said that the restructuring of the armed forces was crucial for the unfolding democratization process and remained one of the Government's post-electoral priorities, he appealed to the international community to provide the necessary financial and material support to enable the Government address this issue effectively. Further, given the serious paucity of the country's national resources and infrastructure, the Secretary-General called on the international community to continue to provide assistance to Guinea-Bissau to strengthen its institutional capacity and further smooth implementation of its rehabilitation, reconstruction and development priorities.

In his further [report](#), the Secretary-General stressed again that although Guinea-Bissau had continued to make important progress towards consolidating its democratization process, the overall situation in the country remained worrying. The ever-present threat of military intervention, the precarious border situation and the country's chronic poverty made the road ahead difficult. The Secretary-General reiterated that the challenges were formidable and the new civilian Government had neither the means nor the capacity to address them on its own. The United Nations, he said, would continue to provide whatever assistance it could to support the Government's national reconciliation and reconstruction programmes.

On 28 September 2000, the Secretary-General [proposed](#) that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOGBIS until 31 December 2001 to contribute further to the

consolidation of democratic gains and help Guinea-Bissau lay the foundations for lasting peace and development. The Council [took note](#) of that proposal.

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