



**Statement by**

**H. E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti**

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**Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration  
of the Peacebuilding Commission**

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Madam President,

I thank you for the invitation to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Mamadú Saliu Djaló Pires; to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, H.E. Mr. Paulo Portas; and to the Minister of External Relations of Angola and Chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), His Excellency Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti.

I also welcome Ambassador Youssoufou Bamba, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire and Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). And I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his briefing and for his work as head of UNIOGBIS.

It is most unfortunate that 22 days after I briefed this Council on the progress that Guinea-Bissau had been making in the implementation of its peacebuilding priorities, I have to return here to brief you on the forcible seizure of power from the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau, that took place on 12 April.

I will not dwell on the details of the recent developments of the electoral process and the coup d'état, since they were ably presented by previous speakers.

Madam President,

The Configuration for Guinea-Bissau of the Peacebuilding Commission condemned in the strongest terms the forcible seizure of power from the legitimate Government of Guinea-Bissau and the arbitrary detentions of the interim President, Prime Minister and other senior officials. The Configuration, moreover, called upon all parties to resolve their disputes through political and peaceful means within the framework of the country's democratic institutions, and to oppose any attempt to change the government through unconstitutional means. We encouraged the Government of Guinea-Bissau and all stakeholders to continue to work together to pursue political dialogue so as to preserve stability in the country and promote national reconciliation.

The solution to the current crisis requires the immediate release of all the authorities presently detained by the coup perpetrators, the return of the Armed Forces to the barracks and the resumption of the electoral process.

We welcome the engagement of the regional and sub-regional organizations and key international partners, notably the CPLP, ECOWAS, and the African Union in pursuit of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. We must continue to support such efforts towards the restoration of the constitutional order without delay and a lasting and peaceful solution to the current political crisis in the country.

Madam President,

It is not the first time that the Constitutional order is broken in Guinea-Bissau. The recent history of the country has been unfortunately marked by

upheavals and crises. However, the 12 April coup d'état is particularly regrettable because it happens at a moment in which progress towards a more stable and prosperous society was under way in Guinea-Bissau.

The people and the Government of Guinea-Bissau were implementing reforms to steer the country in the right direction. Political stability, improvement in governance and management reforms had led to economic recovery and the revival of trust in the country by national stakeholders and foreign partners.

Stability had brought important gains to the country, allowing it to move from a situation of financial disarray into a more stable position, thanks to greater control of public spending, increased tax revenues and considerable reduction of public debt. Due to this progress, the Government of Guinea-Bissau had managed to establish regularity in the payment of salaries, an element that used to give rise to constant dissatisfaction and instability.

With respect to security sector reform, Guinea-Bissau had adopted the necessary legal instruments and had made efforts to put in place a Special Pension Fund in order to demobilize and reintegrate part of the current military and police personnel into civilian life, paving the way for more professional Armed Forces.

Progress had also been made in the fight against drug trafficking. The Government of Guinea-Bissau adopted an operational plan to combat drug trafficking. The Transnational Crime Unit (TCU), within the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI), is operational, and INTERPOL has set up an Office

in Bissau. The immediate return to constitutional order is crucial to allow those processes to move forward. Grave consequences will ensue if the current situation is not reversed. The military coup will certainly curb confidence and donors support, thus compromising the efforts to address security sector reform and to fight drug trafficking.

Madam President,

The international community must urgently act to avoid the persistence of the current scenario. It is very important that the hard-won socioeconomic gains that stability brought to the country in the recent past be protected and built upon in an environment of respect for the rule of law and democracy. The Council and the international community as a whole must act with resolve to assist Guinea-Bissau in breaking away, once and for all, from the cycle of violence, coup d'états, impunity and instability that has plagued the country for so long.

I thank you.