

SECURITY COUNCIL
THE SITUATION IN GUINEA-BISSAU
STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE GUINEA-BISSAU
CONFIGURATION OF THE PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

H.E. Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota

Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

28 August 2015

Madam President,

I wish to thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council this morning in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

I would also like to thank SRSG Miguel Trovoada for his detailed briefing and update on the political crisis that Guinea-Bissau is facing today. I am particularly grateful for his on-going efforts to help end this crisis, and his cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission in this matter and in the broader peacebuilding agenda in Guinea-Bissau.

Last week on 17 August 2015, I chaired a meeting of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC, to discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau and ways for the PBC to respond to the escalation of a crisis that had started as a tension between President Vaz and former Prime Minister Simões Pereira. In that meeting, I reported a telephone conversation I had with SRSG Trovoada on Friday 14 August. The Configuration also heard a comprehensive briefing by Mr Joao Honwana, Director of DPA/Africa II Division.

These insightful inputs enabled members of the PBC to have a useful discussion. A statement was issued on 18 August, through which the PBC expressed concern that recent political developments might undermine progress achieved so far, and risk destabilizing the fragile political situation in the country and compromise continued economic progress.

In the statement, the PBC regretted that national, regional and international efforts to help resolve the political crisis, in particular the SC

statement of 12 August calling for the resumption of dialogue, the statement of the representatives of the international community in Bissau, issued on 10 August, as well as engagement by AU, CPLP and EU had not prevent the escalation of the crisis.

The PBC called for the resumption of political dialogue in order to address the current tensions within full respect of the national constitution and the rule of law and for the national actors to find a concerted way out of the current political crisis.

Madam. President,

To complement SRSG Trovoada's briefing and suggestions, I would like to offer three comments.

First, the current crisis carries the risk of having a negative impact on the already fragile economic situation, on the stability of the country and on its democratic gains. The PBC believes that Guinea-Bissau was making good progress towards stabilisation and development since the elections of 2014 and the round table held in Brussels in March 2015. Our main goal should be to prevent that the escalation of the political crisis undermines progress achieved so far.

The PBC and the international community as whole have invested in these processes and in the overall peacebuilding agenda in Guinea Bissau. The efforts undertaken by the PBC have greatly contributed to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections, resulting into a legitimate, competent and inclusive Government for the first time in the history of the country.

For its part, the PBF has allocated since September 2013 about \$4.8 million to contribute establishing constitutional order, filling crucial gaps through a package of Immediate Response Facility projects which included: support for the electoral commission, peace dividends through employment for youth and women, support jointly with DPA to the High Level Commission for Planning, electoral security, support for the media during and after the elections, support for women's participation in the elections, and support to the Transnational Crime Unit in Bissau as part of the West African Coast Initiative. More recently, the PBF has approved a new Peacebuilding Priority

Plan, amounting to \$10 million to help the Government implement crucial reforms.

Second, the nature of this crisis illustrated that there may be space for debates on better delineating the spheres of competence of the President and the Prime Minister, so as to avoid it becoming a source of instability and fragility in an otherwise promising environment. In this regard, should the Bissau-Guineans eventually decide to go forward with a political reform and request for support, the UNIOGBIS and CPLP are well positioned to provide the expertise that may be required by a revision of the Constitution.

Third, it is worth noting that different partners of Guinea-Bissau have been consistent in their engagement over the crisis. The role being played by the region as well as the coherence demonstrated by international partners will remain a key element to achieve any sustainable solution.

In this vein, Mr. President, one cannot overemphasize that the current political deadlock can only be overcome by the Bissau-Guineans themselves, through a constructive dialogue based on the full respect of the constitutional provisions and for the rule of law. The success of Guinea-Bissau is in the hand of its government and its people.

Madam President,

To conclude, allow me to point out that the PBC will continue to complement the work of the Security Council, in providing support and advice to the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to address the current crisis and to implement the broader peacebuilding agenda in the country.

Thank you.