

Security Council - The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Statement by the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission

H. E. Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

16 May, 2018

Mr. President,

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

Before starting, I would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. José Viegas Filho of Brazil, as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

Mr. Viegas has more than four decades of experience in public service and in diplomacy and the PBC looks forward to closely working with him.

I would also like to thank former SRSG Modibo Touré for his close collaboration with the PBC and PBSO during his tenure in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. President,

Since my last briefing to the Security Council, on February 14, there have been positive developments in Guinea-Bissau. I will not dwell long on these points, especially after the excellent briefing we received today from the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun.

As we have heard, President José Mário Vaz appointed Aristides Gomes as the new consensual Prime Minister and confirmed that legislative elections will be held on November 18. Members of the new Government were sworn in on April 26.

After almost three years of a political impasse, an extraordinary plenary session of the parliament was convened on April 19, when the National People's Assembly elected a new leadership for the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and extended its ninth legislature until November of this year.

The appointment of a new president for the CNE is indeed an important step, since this was a factor blocking the preparations for the upcoming elections in November. As I informed the Council in my last statements, this was stressed by many of my interlocutors in Guinea-Bissau last July, when I visited the country.

Let me also add that, on May 3, the president of the organizing committee of the National Conference for Guinea-Bissau Peace Consolidation and Development, Father Domingos da Fonseca, delivered to President José Mário Vaz the report "In the Name of Peace". This document was drafted after a long process of national consultations involving more than three thousand people in the Guinean diaspora and in the country. The paper examines a series of issues related to peacebuilding and aims to contribute to national reconciliation. Preparations for this report began in 2009 and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provided support to it.

Still regarding the PBF, it is worth mentioning that the implementation of its new portfolio for Guinea-Bissau has already started this year. As I have mentioned during my last briefing, it consists of six projects, totaling \$ 7.3 million, running from January 2018 to June 2019 and it aims to contribute through bottom-up peacebuilding approaches, supporting inclusive processes and strengthening the participation of women and youth.

Mr. President,

Last Monday, on May 14, I convened a meeting of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the PBC to discuss the situation in the country.

On that occasion, we received briefings from Mr. David McLachlan-Karr, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG) in Guinea-Bissau; Mr. Tanou Koné, Permanent Observer of ECOWAS; of Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea and Chair of the Security Council Committee concerning Guinea-Bissau; Ambassador Fernando Delfim da Silva of Guinea-Bissau; and Ms. Barrie Freeman updated us on the most recent work of PBSO.

During that very positive meeting, participants expressed support for developments in the country, including the fact that the constitutional framework for free and fair elections would be respected. Members also underlined the engagement of ECOWAS and recognized the effective, preventive and deterrent role of ECOMIB, as well as the importance of ensuring its continuity until the necessary conditions for its withdrawal are fully met, at least until the 2019 presidential elections.

The PBC therefore would like to congratulate the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the political actors for the constructive spirit which allowed for the consensus appointment of Prime Minister

Aristides Gomes and his cabinet and for the establishment of a date for the legislative elections this year.

I would like to stress, however, the importance of continued support to this positive momentum and underline the need to move forward on other provisions of the Conakry Agreement, including the adoption of a Stability Pact.

I am sure that the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and key political actors will continue to demonstrate leadership and determination in this direction.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of the region to solve the political impasse in the country. It was possible due to an exemplary case of international coordination which includes the “P5 of Guinea-Bissau” - ECOWAS, African Union, European Union, United Nations and the CPLP. The PBC actively participated in these efforts.

All of this speaks to the ‘sustaining peace’ approach in peacebuilding and the importance of ensuring the coherence of international efforts in support of building and sustaining peace in a country specific context, with strong emphasis on inclusivity and partnerships – with regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as other relevant

stakeholders, including the civil society. This is also where the added value of the PBC comes into play.

Mr. President,

With regard to the electoral process, important challenges ahead include, among others, the financing of the election and the update of the voter's registration list.

The existing financial challenges must be surmounted, in order to allow for the timely preparations of the elections.

A project for the support of the elections has been signed between UNDP and the Government of Guinea-Bissau. The total budget of USD 7.7 million covers technical preparations for cartography, an update of voter registration, and the practical administration of the elections. It is important to underline that the government of Guinea-Bissau has already made an unprecedented contribution to this basket fund. The UNDP has also made contributions. Along with the ongoing technical assistance to the Technical Office of Support to the Electoral Process (GTAPE), the European Union is also preparing its contribution to the Election Support Project. However, additional financial resources are needed.

Therefore, I once again would like to call for the support of the international community for bridging the existing financial gap for this process.

I would also like to reiterate to the Council my intention to visit Guinea-Bissau in the coming months, probably in July, to consult with a broad range of stakeholders on how the PBC can further support peacebuilding efforts in the country, especially the upcoming elections. The exact date of this visit will be scheduled in consultation with the local authorities.

This visit will allow me to witness first-hand the on-going preparations for the legislative election. On my return, I intend to convene a PBC meeting to discuss the process. I would also like to reiterate my disposition to share these findings with the Members of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

The Guinea-Bissau Configuration will continue to be actively engaged in following the situation in Guinea-Bissau and in providing support for the country through different initiatives. All efforts must

be made to encourage the international community to demonstrate renewed confidence in Guinea-Bissau now that the political impasse has been addressed.

Finally, I would like to remind you that Brazil is currently the Chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). As was done in the last times I briefed the Council, the members of the CPLP have endorsed my remarks and recommendations.

Thank you.