

Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the PBC Guinea-Bissau Configuration

22 February 2022

Concept Note

Background

On 1 February in Bissau, President Umaro Sissoco Embaló and his cabinet came under armed attack at the Government Palace. After hours of shooting, forces loyal to the President regained control. According to a 2 February Government communique, 11 people were killed in the assault, including several members of the Bissau-Guinean security forces, three civilians and one assailant. ECOWAS and the African Union both released statements on 1 February, condemning the attempted coup and holding the military responsible for the safety of President Embaló and his government. At the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of 3 February, the Authority decided to deploy a stabilization force to Guinea-Bissau. Of note, ECOWAS' previous mission to Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) departed in 2020 after serving eight years in country to provide security and assist authorities in addressing security challenges following the coup of April 2012.

On 7 February, a private radio station, Capital Radio FM, was attacked by armed and hooded men in civilian clothes, who vandalized the property and injured three journalists among others. At the time of the attack, the radio station was hosting an open debate that included discussions on the ECOWAS decision to deploy a stabilization force, which some national political and civil society actors have described as a foreign force.

Considering the recent events, renewed international support and UN engagement in Guinea-Bissau is even more critical to promote stability, peace and development. In 2020, the UN in Guinea-Bissau commenced a reconfiguration process with a view to supporting the Government's peacebuilding and sustainable development priority goals more effectively and efficiently. Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 2458 (2019) and 2512 (2020), and after more than 20 years of in-country presence, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) completed its mandate on 31 December 2020, following which the residual peacebuilding priorities were assumed by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). These priorities, which were endorsed by the government from 5-6 November 2020 during a joint UN-Government workshop, and subsequently incorporated into the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for the period 2022-2026, signed by the Government in August 2021, are as follows:

1. Support and encourage inclusive and meaningful political dialogue and implement urgently needed key reforms as stated in the 2019 Stability Pact and the 2016 Conakry Agreement and create an enabling environment conducive to long-term stability and sustainable development, in close collaboration with development partners. Further incorporate good offices' role to promote peacebuilding initiatives, gender equality and respect for human rights and compliance with international norms and standards.
2. Support the Government in strengthening democratic and accountable institutions and enhance the capacity of state organs to function effectively, in accordance with the country's Constitution, including through a progressively decentralized and inclusive governance system, and a National Parliament that fully plays its oversight role.
3. Create an enabling environment to expand socio-economic opportunities and inclusiveness and implement fiscal policy and accountability reforms. Further improve management of

natural resources and the extractive industry, climate change mitigation as well as environmental protection.

4. Support the Government in the fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime through capacity building and provision of advisory support for an effective implementation of its National Strategy Plan and the introduction of innovative approaches.
5. Strengthen judicial capacity and the national human rights protection mechanism to effectively address impunity and promote and protect human rights, through the adoption of a national policy on human rights, a strategic plan to combat impunity, and a human rights responsive legislation including the establishment of a national human rights institution that is compliant with the Paris Principles¹.
6. Support the mainstreaming of gender in all actions, through the promotion of meaningful and effective participation and representation of women in social, economic and political life. Support the revision of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (2000) to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.
7. Support efforts of the Government to ensure effective civilian control and oversight of defence and security, in close collaboration with ECOWAS.
8. Enhance alignment of international assistance with the peacebuilding priorities of Guinea-Bissau and promote respect of core peacebuilding values such as inclusive and gender-sensitive politics, participatory dialogue and reconciliation as well as environmental sustainability.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund see the eight peacebuilding priorities as consistent with its long-term engagement. Since 2007, the Peacebuilding Commission has focused on providing a platform for the Government of Guinea-Bissau and its partners to exchange on the challenges impeding stability and long-term development as well as to help mobilize international and regional support for the country's peacebuilding and development priorities. Also since 2007, the Peacebuilding Fund has invested over \$45 million in UN-implemented projects in Guinea-Bissau, ranging from youth and women's empowerment to support for the institutional reforms agreed in the ECOWAS Roadmap and 2016 Conakry Agreement, reflected in the country's 2019 Stability Pact.

Objective

The Ambassadorial-level meeting will provide an opportunity for Member States to receive an update on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and to hear from UN representatives in the country about the status of the peacebuilding priorities and need for support to address the financial cliff the UN Country Team has faced following UNIOGBIS closure.

Agenda

- Opening remarks by the Chair of the PBC Guinea-Bissau Configuration, H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho
 - Briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, H.E. Ms. Suzi Barbosa (TBC)

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/statusofnationalinstitutions.aspx>

- UNOWAS Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Giovannie Biha
 - UN Resident Coordinator a.i. Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Jean Marie Kipela
 - UNDP Resident Representative Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Tjark Egenhoff
- Member State interventions and discussion
- Closing remarks by UN Assistant Secretary-General of Peacebuilding Support, Ms. Elizabeth Spehar
- Closing remarks by the Chair