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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
896TH MEETING

18 NOVEMBER 2019
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXCVI)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 896th meeting held on 18 November 2019, on the situation in Guinea Bissau,

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.2(DCCC)], adopted at its 800th meeting held on 10 October 2018, in which Council reiterated the AU's readiness and determination to spare no efforts in supporting the people of Guinea Bissau to overcome the challenges facing their country in the preparations for the legislative and presidential elections in 2019, in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, as well as the Press Release issued by the Chairperson of the AU Commission on 30 October 2019; **also recalls** Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLV)], adopted at its 855th meeting held on 11 June 2019, which, inter alia, decided to dispatch the PSC Troika, which visited Guinea Bissau from 16 to 19 June 2019; **further recalls** Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXCII)], adopted at its 892nd meeting held on 6 November 2019, in which Council reiterated the imperative of all political actors to respect the Constitution of Guinea Bissau;

Recalling the Communiqué of the Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) held on 8 November 2019, in Niamey, Niger;

Noting the opening statement made by the Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Rachid Benlounes, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November 2019, and the briefing made by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Guinea Bissau, H.E. Ambassador Ovidio Pequeno; **also noting** the statements made by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, Honorable Dr. Ruth Monteiro, and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Niger, H.E. Ambassador Zakariaou Adam Maiga, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the ECOWAS;

Reaffirming the solidarity of the AU with the people of Guinea Bissau in their aspirations and efforts towards the implementation of the 2016 Conakry Agreement and Bissau Roadmap.

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Expresses deep concern** over the prevailing political and security instability, which continue to threaten constitutional order in Guinea Bissau, despite relentless efforts by the ECOWAS, the AU and the larger international community;
2. **Reiterates its deep concern** over the drug-trafficking and related crimes in Guinea Bissau, which remain a major destabilizing factor and contribute to the fueling of instability of the country; in this regard, **appeals** to the Government of Guinea Bissau to further strengthen

national law enforcement mechanisms, in order to enable them to more effectively discharge their mandate, in particular addressing drug-related crimes;

3. **Takes note** of the resignation of Mr. Faustino Fudut Imbali as Guinea-Bissau Prime Minister, together with his Government on 9 November 2019. This follows Prime Ministers illegal appointment by President José Mário Gómes Vaz on 29 October 2019;

4. **Re-affirms** the legitimacy of the Government of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes and, in this regard, **expresses its full support** to his Government's efforts towards organizing the presidential election on 24 November 2019;

5. **Welcomes** the statement of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Guinea Bissau on the status of preparedness of the country to hold the presidential election as scheduled, and in this respect, **encourages** the NEC to maintain its independent and impartiality in the discharge of its constitutional mandate, with a view to ensuring a conducive environment for the conduct of the upcoming presidential election;

6. **Takes note** of the commencement of the electoral campaign on 2 November 2019, and **encourages** the 12 presidential candidates who were validated by the Supreme Court of Guinea Bissau to uphold the supreme interest of the country above all other considerations, and respect the will of the people of Guinea Bissau to vote for their preferred candidate through an election which is free of violence and intimidation, and which is also transparent and credible;

7. **Calls** for political actors to strictly adhere to the electoral calendar, and in this respect, **underscores** the importance of ensuring conducive environment for the successful organization and holding of the presidential election on 24 November 2019, and in case of a possible run-off, on 29 December 2019, in a transparent, credible and peaceful manner, in order to consolidate constitutional democracy which will pave a way for national reconciliation and sustainable development in Guinea Bissau;

8. **Appeals** to all Bissau Guinean political stakeholders to refrain from any inflammatory statements or conduct which can jeopardize the conduct of the elections and **encourages** them to accept the results of the elections and to address any election related dispute through existing legal channels of the country and; **strongly discourages** the presidential candidates from announcing their preferred election results;

9. **Warns** that punitive measures, including targeted sanctions will be considered against any individuals or entities, for any action deemed to be obstructing the holding of a violent-free elections and undermining efforts towards the search for a durable solution to the persistent political and constitutional crises in Guinea Bissau;

10. **Commends, once again**, the Guinea Bissau national defence and security forces for maintaining their professionalism and neutrality in the face of the current political and constitutional crises; **encourages** them to uphold their non-interference stance, as Republican forces, and **urges** them to remain purposefully apolitical throughout and beyond the electoral process;

11. **Welcomes** the outcome of the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit held on 8 November 2019 in Niamey, Niger, in particular, the decision to send a mission of Heads of State and Government to Guinea Bissau led by the Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou of the Republic of Niger, and comprising the Presidents of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria; **also welcomes** the visit to Guinea Bissau by the Chiefs of Defence of some of the ECOWAS Member States which took place on 14 November 2019, in solidarity with the people of Guinea Bissau ahead of the presidential election;
12. **Pays tribute** to the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) for its continued support to efforts aimed at upholding constitutionalism in Guinea Bissau; and in this respect, **commends** the determination of ECOWAS for its substantial support towards the reinforcement of ECOMIB, which will undoubtedly enable the Mission to efficiently discharge its mandate, particularly, during the electoral period;
13. **Expresses appreciation** to the Group of Five in Guinea Bissau, namely the AU, the ECOWAS, the Community of the Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) and to the broader international community for their continued support towards the implementation of the 2016 Conakry Agreement, and the successful organization of the upcoming presidential election;
14. **Reiterates the imperative** for the people of Guinea Bissau to expedite the much needed institutional reforms, including constitutional reform immediately after the election, in accordance with the 2016 Conakry Agreement, as well as the ECOWAS Six-Point Roadmap;
15. **Expresses appreciation** to all bilateral and multilateral partners supporting the organization of elections in Guinea Bissau and appeal for the international community to continue providing support, in particular deficit of funds, in a case of a possible run-off, on 29 December 2019;
16. **Requests** the Chairperson of the AU Commission to dispatch, as soon as possible, the electoral observers to accompany and provide support the electoral process in Guinea Bissau, with a view to ensure credibility and transparency of the expected democratic process;
17. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.