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Security Council

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SECURITY COUNCIL PRESS STATEMENT ON GUINEA-BISSAU

The following Security Council press statement was issued today by Council President Raimonda Murmokaitė (Lithuania):

On 26 February 2014, the members of the Security Council were briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, José Ramos-Horta, and the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota.

The members of the Security Council note that the normalization of the political, security, social and economic situation in Guinea-Bissau is dependent on the return to constitutional order through, *inter alia*, credible elections, as well as on reforms in the defence, security and justice sectors, the promotion of the rule of law, the protection of human rights, the promotion of socioeconomic development, an improvement in the humanitarian situation and the fight against impunity and drug trafficking. They also note that the restoration of constitutional order would facilitate the full re-engagement of international partners.

The members of the Security Council note that the conclusion of the voter registration process is a significant step towards the holding of presidential and legislative elections, and welcomed the efforts of the authorities in charge of the transitional period for its completion, and commend the people of Guinea-Bissau for their commitment to exercise their democratic right in a peaceful manner. They also commend Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Governments of Timor-Leste and Nigeria for providing timely technical and financial assistance for the voter registration process and welcome the intention of ECOWAS to strengthen its mission to assist the authorities in charge of the transitional period in providing security for the upcoming elections.

The members of the Security Council encourage all national stakeholders to maintain the momentum begun with the registration process and to work towards timely elections and to renew their commitment to ensuring a conducive environment in the final weeks before the elections. The members of the Security Council commend Guinea-Bissau's international partners for their pledges of financial and technical support to the electoral process and urge them to work in close coordination with the National Electoral Commission to ensure the speedy disbursement of their stated commitments in order to facilitate a smooth electoral process, stressing the need for a redoubled effort at enhanced coordination of electoral assistance under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ramos-Horta, in line with Security Council resolution 2103 (2013) and in close collaboration with the United Nations country team.

The members of the Security Council express their concern at the continuing delays in the electoral process and underline that such delays have a negative impact on the country's social and economic well-being, and on the already fragile security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau. They stress the imperative to hold presidential and legislative elections without further delay. They urge the authorities in charge of the transitional period to create a conducive environment for the safe, full and equal participation of all actors including women, in the electoral process.

The members of the Security Council condemn the episodes of violence in Guinea-Bissau, which have contributed to an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among the population. They reiterate their concern about the

prevailing culture of impunity and lack of accountability in Guinea-Bissau. They urge, in this regard, the authorities in charge of the transitional period to take swift action to fight effectively impunity and promote justice by ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice.

The members of the Security Council urge national stakeholders, including political parties and their supporters, the defence and security forces, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, women's and youth groups, as well as the media, to refrain from any action that could hamper the electoral process, to facilitate the conduct of peaceful and credible elections, and to respect the election results as an expression of the will of the people of Guinea-Bissau. They call upon the military to respect the constitutional order, including the electoral process, and to submit themselves fully to civilian control. The members of the Security Council recall their readiness to consider further measures, as necessary, including targeted sanctions against both civilian and military individuals who undermine efforts to restore the constitutional order.

The members of the Security Council express support for the leadership of Special Representative Ramos-Horta and commend his role in facilitating a conducive pre-electoral environment, as well as his proposals for strengthened continued international engagement after the elections for key reforms and the strengthening of State institutions, as well as good governance and inclusive social and economic development.

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