



Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Djani	(Indonesia)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
	China	Mr. Bing Dai
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Bencosme Castaños
	Estonia	Mr. Auväärt
	France	Mrs. Fanton
	Germany	Mr. Sautter
	Niger	Mr. Abarry
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	South Africa	Mr. Matjila
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Farrey
	United States of America	Mr. Hunter
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/755)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/755)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. João Genésio de Almeida Filho, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau; and Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Ms. Sori-Coulibaly and Ms. Waly are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bissau and Vienna, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2020/755, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. De Almeida Filho.

Mr. De Almeida Filho: On behalf of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I am grateful for the invitation to brief the Security Council, and I recognize the excellent cooperation between the Council and the PBC.

Since its establishment, in 2007, the configuration's primary focus has been to support the Government

in addressing its reform agenda, including the 2016 Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) road map, and to tackle the challenges impeding stability and long-term development.

While there has been notable progress over the years on peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, today the challenges to stability and development have deepened with the arrival of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic during a year of three transitions — first, the drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team; secondly, the country's transition to new political leadership, which has not been uneventful; and, thirdly, the closure of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau.

During the past months, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, His Excellency Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho, has engaged with several experts and stakeholders to fully grasp current dynamics in the context of COVID-19 and the way forward for the country's peacebuilding priorities. I note in particular his engagement with the World Bank's Country Director for Guinea-Bissau, with whom he discussed the Bank's activities, its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic outlook for Guinea-Bissau. He was pleased to learn that, while continuing to implement its ongoing portfolio, including increasing access to basic services and expanding economic opportunities, the Bank is also employing a multipronged approach to COVID-19 that includes a direct medical response as well as support for livelihoods, with a focus on agriculture and post-COVID-19 recovery needs.

While the Bank's response to the crisis is encouraging, the economic outlook for Guinea-Bissau is fragile and uncertain. The pandemic's restrictions on mobility hamper exports, and the 4.5 per cent gross domestic product growth once projected by the World Bank before the pandemic could now be a contraction of roughly 3 per cent instead. The Bank continues to work closely with the broader humanitarian and development community on socioeconomic issues, as well as with the International Monetary Fund on key macroeconomic issues.

Continued international engagement and sustained focus on the country's peacebuilding priorities will be critical to ensuring economic recovery and sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau. In that context,

Ambassador Costa Filho convened a meeting of the configuration on 24 June, with the participation of Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Fernando Delfim da Silva, Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of the Niger, Chair of ECOWAS, and Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, who provided an update on political developments and the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, and how both are impacting peacebuilding and the United Nations transition process.

During the meeting, configuration members were deeply concerned that the institutional crisis and the outbreak of COVID-19 and its accompanying movement restrictions were hampering United Nations support for peacebuilding efforts, including political dialogue and urgent reforms such as the constitutional review, as well as the fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Furthermore, members recognized that the poor socioeconomic situation risked further weakening social cohesion and community resilience and deepening gender inequalities.

In the light of that, members emphasized the expectation for the Peacebuilding Commission to continue to play a catalysing role in helping to mobilize and sustain international and regional support for Guinea-Bissau's peacebuilding priorities, particularly for national development plans and the future United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Keeping in mind the simultaneous challenges of post-COVID-19 recovery and the UNIOGBIS transition, they also underscored that the PBC's attention to economic revitalization, the country's cooperation with international financial institutions and institution-building will be of particular relevance in the coming months.

In addition, members recognized and valued the important role played by the Peacebuilding Fund in Guinea-Bissau, especially through projects aimed at dialogue on reforms, empowering women, fostering meaningful engagement with youth and promoting reconciliation and conflict resolution. I recognize the Fund as a unique avenue for assisting the United Nations country team during and after the transition in its critical functions linked to dialogue

and stabilization, and I encourage Member States to consider additional support.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Peacebuilding Commission's commitment to UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team during this transition and to the immediate longer-term needs of the Bissau-Guinean people.

I thank the members of the Security Council for their continued support for the configuration and for their interest.

The President: I thank Mr. Almeida Filho for his briefing.

I now give the floor Ms. Sori-Coulibaly.

Ms. Sori-Coulibaly: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council once more on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, particularly as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) draws nearer to its closure on or before 31 December 2020.

As countries around the world grapple with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the situation in Guinea-Bissau is particularly fragile given its dire health infrastructure and limited resources, with the peak still to come. The United Nations is supporting the implementation of the national response plan to the pandemic, led by my deputy in his capacity as Resident Coordinator, together with the World Health Organization, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies. As a result, a coordination framework was established and resources have been channelled to support national efforts. Meanwhile, United Nations staff in the country has been telecommuting since 26 March.

Recent political developments in the country have led to a politically charged atmosphere, with mounting mistrust among stakeholders. Mutual accusations and reported acts of intimidation against those opposing the new political dispensation have created a hostile environment, making it difficult to reach a compromise for the sake of political stability and consensus-building around national peacebuilding priorities. While the new authorities are focused on consolidating power, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) is contesting the parliamentary vote of 29 June that approved the programme of the Nuno Gomes Nabiam Government. The PAIGC continues to question the legality of the session, alleging procedural

errors and denouncing threats and intimidation against members of Parliament, which preceded the session. The PAIGC continues to reiterate its call for a political solution.

While President Umaro Sissoco Embaló has expressed the wish to form a broad-based Government with Nuno Gomes Nabiam as the Prime Minister, the prospects of a breakthrough are poor, given the PAIGC's strong opposition to joining the Government under the current circumstances. A sustainable solution that promotes stability requires all sides to compromise, but this appears far-fetched at the present time as both sides remain deeply entrenched in their positions.

Concerns about insecurity and human rights abuses, such as the 26 July raid on Radio Capital FM, which is considered to be allied to the opposition, as well as the arbitrary arrests, intimidation and detention of persons and political figures perceived as opposing the current Administration have been reported. These occurrences have heightened political tensions.

Resolutions 2458 (2019) and 2512 (2020) determined a phased closure for UNIOGBIS. The transition, the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the country and the drawdown of UNIOGBIS are proceeding accordingly. The political crisis and the parliamentary paralysis that emerged following the presidential election prevented the mission from supporting urgent reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement, including the review of the Constitution, the electoral law and the law on political parties. Regretfully, therefore, the UNIOGBIS mandate is unlikely to be fully implemented before the mission's departure.

Regarding the Constitution, the technical commission established by President Sissoco Embaló on 11 May to review the Constitution is expected to submit a draft to the President in the next few days. The establishment of the commission has been criticized by several national stakeholders, including the President of the National Assembly, the PAIGC alliance, civil society organizations and prominent legal figures, who argue that the revision of the Constitution is the prerogative of the legislature. President Sissoco Embaló counterargues that the work of the commission is in line with the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and will provide the foundation for the revision of the Constitution in conformity with the country's legal framework. It remains unclear how the technical commission's

draft will reconcile with the one being drafted by the parliamentary ad hoc commission on the review of the Constitution, which UNIOGBIS has been supporting. While there is no political consensus at this juncture on the approval process of a constitutional review, the parallel mechanisms and processes have a potential to further exacerbate political tensions.

Meanwhile, the President has expressed his desire to change the system of governance — from semi-presidential to presidential — under the new constitution. This will likely lead to internal disputes within the new *Movimento para Alternância Democrática* parliamentary alliance as well as with its supporters and the new Prime Minister, if not carefully managed and widely discussed, thus further compounding an already fragile situation.

Regarding the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, despite the political crisis and challenges posed by COVID-19, coordination with the United Nations country team on the transition is ongoing. The Peacebuilding Fund has been utilized to identify and support key partners, including United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, for the continuation of the implementation of key peacebuilding priorities. Efforts are ongoing to reconfigure the United Nations presence in the country to allow the United Nations country team to continue critical peacebuilding activities, including political dialogue, confidence-building measures, urgent reforms and combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, following the closure of UNIOGBIS.

In coordination with the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Fund, capacity-building activities for the National Assembly were supported, including training tailored for parliamentarians. Further to those endeavours, a comprehensive action plan is being defined by the mission in coordination with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and ECOWAS, to, inter alia, extend technical support to specialized commissions towards achieving cross-party consensus. In this framework, civil society contributions to political dialogue and peacebuilding are also being supported, in coordination with the European Union. In that context, women's groups continue to play a prominent role.

My plan to establish a high-level platform that brings together relevant international partners and national authorities to discuss, sustain momentum in and

accompany the country's reform efforts is progressing. Following the closure of UNIOGBIS, the platform would continue under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and in line with commitments made by the Peacebuilding Commission. Despite challenges, regular meetings of the United Nations Strategic Policy Group ensure high-level coordination and decision-making on joint strategic and operational issues. The assessment of the United Nations country team's capacity to meet peacebuilding priorities identified in the conflict analysis was concluded. A comprehensive assessment of the capacities of the Government and other partners remains outstanding.

Meanwhile, opportunities and challenges for the United Nations country team have been identified, and peacebuilding priorities will be anchored in the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which will need to be aligned with the country's development programme following consultations with the national authorities.

Continuing our efforts in support of the country will remain crucial. Funding will be essential to averting a financial cliff, and I appeal once again to the international community to generously support the Cooperation Framework. Considering the closure of UNIOGBIS, the mission remains committed to exploring options to move the process ahead.

I have been engaging with regional partners to ensure that the United Nations transition is fully supported by all stakeholders. Coordination with international partners, including with the group of five in Bissau and particularly with ECOWAS, continues. Additionally, tripartite coordination meetings between UNIOGBIS, ECOWAS and UNOWAS are being held to accompany the transition process and for supporting ECOWAS mediation efforts. A strengthened Resident Coordinator's Office is being envisioned, with adequate and dedicated capacity to continue supporting the protection and promotion of human rights in the country.

Meanwhile, the first phase of UNIOGBIS staff separation was concluded in July. Further separations are planned for September and December. A residual number of 28 staff will remain, for mission closure and liquidation purposes, until 28 February 2021.

A prognosis of the current impasse and beyond underscores the need for continued and robust engagement by the international community to avoid a deterioration of the political and human rights situation,

consolidate past democratic gains and preserve the much-needed peace and stability.

Entrenched postures and divisions among political stakeholders pose a serious threat to stability and sustainable development. All political forces must be encouraged to commit to constructive dialogue and consensus-building around national priorities. The military and security forces must consistently be reminded not to interfere in politics. Security-sector reform remains paramount, as the Conakry Agreement had highlighted. The military and security forces should become agents of change towards peace and stability.

The implementation of key reforms, notably the constitutional review as well as the continuation of efforts in key peacebuilding priorities, namely, the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law, women's participation and gender parity and the fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, are an imperative beyond UNIOGBIS. I would also recall that as included in the Conakry Agreement, the local elections are to be considered among the peacebuilding priorities.

Accordingly, the continued role of the Peacebuilding Commission in maintaining the international community's attention on Guinea-Bissau will be of utmost importance following the departure of UNIOGBIS. That will help ensure long-term sustainable support for the implementation of peacebuilding priorities that remain crucial. Allow me therefore to encourage Council members and international partners to extend additional financial contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, in support of its catalytic role and the United Nations transition in Guinea-Bissau, to help shape the United Nations country team's footprint and enable it to continue supporting national efforts in implementing the Conakry Agreement.

As UNIOGBIS advances towards its closure in less than five months, I would like to stress that the support provided by the international community to the 2019 electoral process was necessary but not sufficient to address the long-term political instability of Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, I wish to emphasize the need for the country to remain high on the international community's agenda, with paramount focus on reforms and the strengthening of State institutions. The recent political crisis linked to the electoral dispute is self-explanatory of the structural weaknesses of the country. The country and its people need the

Council's support to uphold stability, sustain peace and advance socioeconomic development. UNOWAS will be required to play a greater good-offices role. More importantly, the Council's support for ECOWAS, in its role as lead mediator and in putting in place an effective monitoring mechanism for its decisions, will remain imperative.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Security Council for its continued support for Guinea-Bissau in the face of the recurrent political crises. The people of Guinea-Bissau deserve a country with stable, transparent and independent State institutions that adhere to the principles of separation of power, accountability and the rule of law.

The President: I thank Ms. Sori-Coulibaly for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Waly.

Ms. Waly: I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the threats posed by drug trafficking and organized crime to peace and security in Guinea-Bissau.

I welcome this discussion, which comes at a challenging time of transition for international support to Guinea-Bissau and as the coronavirus disease crisis further heightens vulnerabilities and hampers efforts to deliver much-needed technical assistance. Urgently coordinated action based on shared responsibility is very much needed. As noted by the Security Council and most recently in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/755), tackling transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, is critical to building peace and working towards lasting political and economic stability in Guinea-Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau's coastal geography and related border-management challenges have been exploited by organized criminal groups, in particular for trans-Atlantic cocaine trafficking, a situation that has been greatly aggravated by instability, poverty and constrained justice and law-enforcement capacities.

Despite these severe challenges, Guinea-Bissau can nevertheless be proud of some recent law-enforcement successes. Last year two operations undertaken with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Operation CARAPAU, in March, and Operation NAVARA, in September, led to the seizure of close to three tons of cocaine. The operations were not a matter of chance or luck. They represent hard-won

achievements enabled by the integration of the Guinea-Bissau Judicial Police into regional and international anti-trafficking platforms. Notably, 19 drug traffickers, including foreign nationals, have been convicted by the judicial authorities since 2019, and assets were seized.

But these gains are proving difficult to take forward. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is also concerned about the resurgence of drug trafficking and the re-emerging influence of criminal operations in the country. The recent return of convicted drug traffickers to the country observed by UNODC is a further concern. In addition, the dismissal of key counterparts within law-enforcement agencies threatens to compromise the sustainability of what has been accomplished.

Security sector reform, as Ms. Sori-Coulibaly has mentioned, is fundamental and essential to a lasting solution to Guinea-Bissau's chronic political instability and vulnerability to transnational organized crime, which UNODC has sought to support since the Office started implementing activities in the country in 2006.

In view of that cardinal objective and as mandated by resolution 2512 (2020), UNODC assistance to Guinea-Bissau will focus on strengthening the capacity of national institutions to combat corruption and enhance criminal justice responses to all forms of organized crime. Our work will be undertaken in the framework of the national strategic action plan on drug trafficking, organized crime and security threats, which was developed with UNODC support and approved by the Council of Ministers in February. The new national strategic action plan is a comprehensive and integrated multilevel approach for the entire security and justice system chain to effectively address drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption and money-laundering.

UNODC will start implementing two new projects this summer, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). Those projects are aimed at supporting specific objectives laid out in the national strategic action plan, strengthening coordination between law enforcement and criminal justice actors and promoting anti-corruption and integrity mechanisms.

Moreover, UNODC is providing technical support to the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Protection and, in partnership with IOM and the United States, our Office has contributed to the design of the

trafficking in persons contingency plan for 2020. That plan will further serve as a basis for the preparation of the national action plan for 2021-2026, which will take the important step of including an integrated referral mechanism to identify and assist trafficking victims. At the same time, UNODC will continue supporting the operational law enforcement units our Office has helped to establish in Guinea-Bissau, which have yielded important results on which we can build.

The Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force of the Airport Communication Project, created by UNODC in partnership with INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, is a specialized multi-agency unit in charge of detecting and intercepting drugs and other illicit goods, as well as preventing terrorism and intercepting high-risk passengers in airport settings.

In the framework of the West Africa Coast Initiative implemented by UNODC, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and INTERPOL, we have also helped to establish the Transnational Crime Unit, a specialized inter-agency law enforcement unit tasked with collecting and analysing information on organized crime and producing national operational intelligence to support complex crime investigations. Both those units have helped to include Guinea-Bissau law enforcement agencies in networks of cooperation supporting South-South exchanges and coordination, especially along the cocaine route between Latin America and West Africa. Those are important steps, but much more work needs to be done to sustain and improve operationalization, with the enhanced support and participation of national counterparts.

As we approach the UNIOGBIS transition, let us be clear — Guinea-Bissau needs and deserves the renewed and redoubled commitment of the international community. For nearly 15 years, UNODC has responded to the calls of the international community to support Guinea-Bissau's peace and stability. Today, political will and extensive, long-term assistance, backed by sufficient funding, are needed more than ever. UNODC is fully engaged in supporting the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and UNOWAS in devising effective strategies to contribute to the country's stability.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his latest report on Guinea-Bissau, UNODC will continue to closely monitor and report on the drug trafficking and

organized crime situation with a view to preventing traffickers from exploiting the current pandemic situation and political dynamics. In that regard, and taking into consideration the evolving political situation, UNODC will continue delivering its large array of technical assistance activities to Guinea-Bissau. That will be supported by an expanded team on the ground. Going beyond that important but largely technical expertise, our Office stands ready to offer more formal advisory services on drugs, organized crime and justice reform to the United Nations country team and the United Nations Resident Coordinator, pursuant to resolution 2512 (2020), which mandates our continued support.

The UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa, based in Dakar, will also provide technical and advisory support and continue its strategic coordination with UNOWAS and the United Nations country team.

Furthermore, UNODC is providing Guinea-Bissau with integrated support that acknowledges and addresses important regional dynamics affecting drug and organized crime challenges. We do that through our cooperation with UNOWAS and the implementation of the UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa, with ECOWAS and global programmes, including the CRIMJUST programme to strengthen investigation and cooperation along drug trafficking routes, and our Global Maritime Crime Programme.

UNODC relies on the international community's engagement and resources to advance and strengthen that assistance to Guinea-Bissau in the transition and beyond.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Security Council for continuing to prioritize the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, and for its repeated calls for increased support for UNODC's work, with and for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

The President: I thank Ms. Waly for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): It is with deep sorrow that I inform the Council that a cowardly attack perpetrated by individuals on motorcycles took place yesterday in Kouré, 60 kilometres from Niamey. The attack regrettably resulted in eight deaths — two Nigeriens and six French citizens. Following that grave incident, the Nigerien defence and security forces,

supported by elements of the Operation Barkhane and American special forces, launched operations that are still under way. In the context of this tragic event, I would like, on behalf of the President, the Government and the people of the Republic of the Niger, to convey my heartfelt condolences to the grieving families of the victims and to the French and Nigerien Government and people.

Let me also, on behalf South Africa, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Niger (A3+1), welcome the efforts to normalize the political situation in Guinea-Bissau, and thank the briefers Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau; Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. João Genésio de Almeida Filho, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their excellent briefings, which reflect their respective commitment to continuing to work to resolve the current political crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

As the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau prepares to close its doors by 31 December 2020, I commend Ms. Sori-Coulibaly and her team for their good offices, which have strongly helped all Bissau-Guinean parties to fully commit to a process to emerge from this crisis. On behalf of the A3+1, we hope that the significant progress made to date will continue, including with regard to the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations country team in Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, despite the political challenges, gains have been made in reducing Office troops, as well as in identifying peacebuilding priorities to be jointly pursued by UNOWAS and the United Nations country team.

Since the end of the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau in December 2019, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been constantly engaged in the search for a lasting solution to the political and institutional crisis in the country. At this juncture, I wish to commend the sustained commitment of international partners, including the group of five international organizations — comprised of the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and the United Nations — that has made it possible to strengthen the process of stabilizing the political

situation in the country. I also wish to commend the eminently positive role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, whose mandate is coming to an end, following the completion of the electoral process and the gradual normalization of the political situation in Guinea-Bissau. The A3+1 welcomes the establishment of the tripartite integrated cooperation and coordination mechanism comprised of ECOWAS, UNIOGBIS and UNOWAS to support the United Nations political and transitional process in Guinea-Bissau.

It is clear that Guinea-Bissau is now at a crossroads. It therefore needs our collective assistance and support more than ever. It is in this spirit that ECOWAS, in its communiqué of 22 April, recognized the victory of Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló and called on him to appoint a Prime Minister and establish a new Government by 22 May, at the latest. In the same communiqué, President Embaló was invited to launch a reform process with a view to adopting a new Constitution to be put to a referendum within six months, in order to ensure the country's lasting institutional stability. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of a Constitutional review commission, comprising experienced Bissau-Guinean legal experts, to carry out that task. The recent approval by the majority of the Members of Parliament of the programme of the new Government should enable the appointed Prime Minister to continue the implementation of the programme until a Government of national unity is in place. We welcome the proposal of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level platform to accompany the reforms that the country so badly needs. Coordination of the many international and regional efforts in Guinea-Bissau is crucial at this stage.

Despite all the efforts that we have commended today, the context created by the COVID-19 pandemic that has struck Guinea-Bissau has greatly slowed the pace of implementation of the various reforms under way, as some political actors have themselves tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. We encourage the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, who have the primary responsibility for ensuring the security of the population, as well as all political actors, to work together to mitigate the threat at this critical time. The A3+1 welcomes the decision of the West African Health Organization, a specialized agency of ECOWAS, to send health kits to all member countries, including Guinea-Bissau, as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I have said previously, Guinea-Bissau is at a crossroads. Indeed, the holding of elections alone cannot solve the many challenges facing the country. As we move to a new configuration of the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau, we call on the international community to support national initiatives in the context of peacebuilding, particularly in the area of sustainable development, including food security and rural development. The strengthening and modernization of democratic institutions and the reform of the judicial sector are areas where substantial support should be provided. The A3+1 supports the expansion of socioeconomic development actions, which are gender- and youth-sensitive, so as to ensure the participation of all social strata in Guinea-Bissau. We commend Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho for the excellent work done by the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard.

With regard to the issue of drug trafficking, while we are concerned about a possible resurgence of this dangerous phenomenon following the progress made recently with the significant seizures made in March and September 2019 and the conviction of those involved, we must recognize that Guinea-Bissau is neither a producer nor a consumer of these illicit narcotic drugs. Guinea-Bissau is quite simply a victim of a situation that is beyond its control, owing to its fragility in terms of the lack of surveillance and control equipment on its many islands — a fragility that is unfortunately accentuated by its political instability. Today more than ever, the international community should provide greater support to Guinea-Bissau in all areas likely to strengthen its capacity to deal with this terrible scourge. In this regard, the A3+1 welcomes the continued support provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the framework of capacity-building for actors engaged in the fight against drug trafficking and the terrorism- and organized-crime-related gateway crimes of corruption and money-laundering in the region.

We remain convinced that, through the mobilization of substantial financial resources, Ms. Waly's Office will strengthen the important work it is already doing in this regard. This could be done through increased support for Guinea-Bissau in the implementation of its national strategic action plan adopted in December 2019.

In conclusion, the promotion and protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law are essential for peace, security, development and political

stabilization in Guinea-Bissau. To that end, we encourage the defence and security forces of Guinea-Bissau to observe strict neutrality towards the ongoing political process, as they have done up until now.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express our condolences in connection with the attack that took place near Niamey and our hope that those responsible for this attack will be found and punished.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly; and the representative of Brazil, Mr. João Genésio de Almeida Filho, who spoke on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Since the start of 2020, Guinea-Bissau has gone through a very complex post-electoral period. The disputes about the outcome of the presidential election have had a negative impact on the political, social and economic situation in the country. The neutrality of the military has come into question.

At the same time, we need to acknowledge that the situation has gradually been returning to normal since April. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) recognized Umaro Sissoco Embaló as the legitimately elected President. In June, Parliament endorsed the programme of work of the Government of Prime Minister Nuno Nabiam, a decision that was welcomed by the leadership of ECOWAS.

Naturally, some disagreements remain among the main political actors. In this regard, we call on all public and political forces to behave responsibly, which would lead to creating the conditions for the easing of political tensions. We call on the military to stay out of politics, as it has in the past.

We believe that the formation of a new Government in Guinea-Bissau will allow the country to focus on implementing the reforms envisioned by the Conakry Agreement, including the revision of the national Constitution, the electoral law and the law on political parties. It is particularly important to start resolving the socioeconomic problems of the country, which have clearly become more acute in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

As we have said in the past, we believe that restructuring the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) must be done gradually and in the framework of the timetable set out in resolution 2512 (2020). By the end of December, when UNIOGBIS is set to end its presence in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations country team must be given all the instruments it needs not only to assist Guinea-Bissau in its development but also to provide it with effective support in addressing such important challenges as drug trafficking and corruption and in ensuring the smooth operation of Government institutions.

In that connection, I should like to stress in particular the work that UNODC is doing in the region and which will continue, as we heard during the briefing. Furthermore, we are convinced that the time has come to consider the possibility of gradually lifting the Security Council sanctions against Guinea-Bissau, as they are now obsolete. The current situation has nothing to do with the coup d'état that took place in 2012, when the sanctions were introduced. As the events of the first half of this year have shown, sanctions in no way influence the internal political situation. It turns out that they exist as though they were in a parallel dimension. Their further maintenance, given the closure of UNIOGBIS and the absence of genuine threats to international peace and security, is increasingly puzzling.

Mr. Sautter (Germany): First of all, I wish to extend condolences following the heinous attacks near Niamey. I would like also to thank the briefers. We appreciate the insights from Mr. João de Almeida Filho, on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the briefing by Ghada Fathi Waly of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Both will play an even more prominent role in future.

At this last regular Security Council meeting before the drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), we would like to thank the mission for all the work done over the past 21 years. Above all, I should like to extend warm thanks to Rosine Sori-Coulibaly and her team. We are happy that the Office will continue to provide its expertise in supporting the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-

Bissau as well as the six-point road map of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The drawdown of the mission does not imply that we can be satisfied with the situation in Guinea-Bissau. The situation there continues to be of concern, for three reasons.

First, we regret that the political crisis resulting from last year's peaceful presidential elections remains unsolved. With the coronavirus disease pandemic, a functioning Government and trustworthy institutions are more important than ever. Continued work is necessary.

Secondly, we are deeply concerned by the reports of violence and threats against political actors. We have noted what Rosine has just reported on this issue. Respect for human rights and basic human freedoms are not negotiable; they have to be respected at all times and without preconditions.

Thirdly, to achieve stability in the country, all stakeholders have to act responsibly and in accordance with the Constitution. This includes the security forces. The lack of neutrality displayed by the military in occupying State institutions is clearly not in line with that requirement.

Any sustainable solution to the political crisis needs to involve all political actors; in particular, civil society needs to play a central role. This includes the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages of the political and peacebuilding processes. In that context, we commend the efforts made by UNIOGBIS to engage with women representatives and to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to their work. Still, a lot remains to be done. Above all, we need to end impunity for gender-based crimes and human rights violations.

With the drawdown of the mission on the horizon, we appreciate the transition process continuing, despite the additional challenges posed by the political tensions and the pandemic. An active and coordinated role on the part of other United Nations presences and regional organizations, especially ECOWAS, remains crucial to avoiding destabilization. The cooperation of the group of five, the Peacebuilding Commission country configuration and the support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund need to continue. Regional cooperation is also paramount to addressing transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, precisely because of their grave implications for the

stability of the entire region. Indications that political and military personnel are involved in these illegal businesses are appalling and need to be followed up. We should also bear this in mind when we discuss the future of the sanctions here in the Security Council.

We support the important work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNIOGBIS in supporting and empowering national law-enforcement authorities to effectively prosecute organized crime.

Let me close by welcoming the efforts made by UNIOGBIS as well as ECOWAS to foster dialogue and to overcome political tensions. Yes, national ownership remains a central requirement for real progress, but we need to, and we will, uphold international attention to this crisis. Enacting the critical reforms envisioned in the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS road map is a crucial first step.

Mr. Auväärt (Estonia): Allow me also to extend my condolences with regard to the attacks near Niamey.

I thank the briefers for their thorough reports on the latest developments and the peacebuilding activities carried out in Guinea-Bissau. I would like to express Estonia's full support for the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the continued political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau have put a significant burden on the mission. With this in mind, we commend the mission's steps towards drawdown as well as the ability to quickly take a more pandemic-sensitive approach to its activities.

At the same time, the developments in Guinea-Bissau have been less than encouraging. The ongoing political impasse and the military's interference in politics are very concerning. The decisive steps taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been very useful, and we commend them for having done so.

We further call on ECOWAS to continue on this path of active engagement in helping to solve the institutional crisis. We also urge the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves to take constructive steps towards finding a peaceful way out of the current political crisis. It is especially important now, in the context

of the COVID-19 pandemic and to avoid any potential destabilization of the country.

We are extremely concerned about reports of an increased number of human rights violations and the excessive use of force by State security forces. The reports of women being beaten up to enforce the lockdown measures are simply appalling. We urge that investigations be carried out in these cases and the perpetrators held accountable.

We commend the international organizations present in Guinea-Bissau for taking an integrated approach to addressing the humanitarian challenges in the country. Furthermore, it is important to take a holistic and gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding activities, which will be especially important after the closure of UNIOGBIS.

The role of the Peacebuilding Commission in this regard is essential. It is also a positive development that the Peacebuilding Fund has approved a new project to address the destabilizing effect of drug trafficking and organized crime.

Mrs. Fanton (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to first spare a thought for the group of humanitarian workers and their assistants who were the victims of a deadly attack yesterday in the Niger, approximately 50 kilometres from Niamey. I express my condolences and the support of the French nation to the families and loved ones of the victims. As the President of the Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, said yesterday, in an exchange with his counterpart in the Niger, our determination to continue with the joint combat against terrorist groups in the Sahel remains undiminished, and all possible measures are being and will continue to be put in place to shed light on the circumstances surrounding this deadly attack.

I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly; and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, Mr. João Genésio de Almeida Filho, representing the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

I wish to make three points.

My first point concerns the political situation in Guinea-Bissau, which remains fragile. France has taken note of the recognition by the Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of the victory of Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló in the presidential election. However, we deplore the fact that the political transition has taken place in defiance of the rule of law and regret that the recommendations made by ECOWAS, in particular regarding the formation of a new Government by 22 May, have still not been implemented by the President of Guinea-Bissau. We have noted with concern the occupation of the People's National Assembly and the Supreme Court by the military. Numerous acts of intimidation by the authorities against journalists, judges of the Supreme Court, as well as political opponents, have been reported.

We call on all political and institutional players to pursue dialogue and to work towards the stability of the country while respecting the rule of law and human rights. The objective is to enable Guinea-Bissau's institutions to devote themselves to the country's development and economic recovery, which has been particularly upended by the coronavirus disease pandemic. The resolution of the political crisis requires fundamental work, including the implementation of the reforms recommended in the Conakry Agreement of 14 October 2016, the ECOWAS six-point road map and the constitutional review.

My second point relates to international support for Guinea-Bissau. As the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau will soon conclude its activities, I reiterate our support for the Special Representative in her efforts to assist Guinea-Bissau actors and transfer tasks to the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the country team. In this critical phase, we believe that it is important for the international community to remain united and involved in order to assist the new authorities and convey to them the appropriate messages regarding our expectations. France commends the commitment of the country's partners, in particular the group of five international partners, ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and the United Nations. I would also like to commend the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, under the leadership of Ambassador Vieira, and the role of Peacebuilding Fund projects.

In a final point, I would like to stress the importance of the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. Progress in that area remains insufficient. We expect the Guinea-Bissau authorities to make a

sustained and long-term commitment to the issue. The support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is beneficial, and several of its programmes have recently assisted in drug seizures. That cooperation must continue for the benefit of peace and security in the region as a whole.

Mr. Bing Dai (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to preface my statement with a condemnation of the attack that took place yesterday in the Niger and to express our condolences to the families of the victims.

I would like to thank the three briefers — Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director Waly and Ambassador De Almeida Filho, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission — for their briefings.

China has been closely following the developments in Guinea-Bissau. Presidential elections were held at the end of 2019, which went smoothly despite some dispute of the election results. The parties have, by and large, been able to resolve their differences through dialogue. China is pleased to note that the National Assembly approved the new Government programme on 29 June this year and that the political process is gradually getting back on the right track. We find these developments commendable.

In the light of the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/755), I would like to make the following points.

First, the formation of the new Government created a pivotal opportunity. The parties in Guinea-Bissau should seize that opportunity to put the long-term interests of their country and their nation first, take practical steps to continue implementing the Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) six-point road map, expedite the constitutional review and other political reforms, consolidate the hard-won political stability, promote economic development and improve the people's living standards. The challenge of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) makes it all the more important for the parties to keep the interests of the people foremost in their minds and to work as one in the fight against COVID-19. The parties should also work harder to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in the defence of the rule of law and justice.

Secondly, given Guinea-Bissau's economic fragility, in addition to its own efforts, greater international

support is in order through increased investment in the country's poverty reduction efforts, education, health care and infrastructure, among other areas, so that the country can develop sustainably on both the economic and social fronts. China stands ready, along with the rest of the international community, to provide assistance where we can to support Guinea-Bissau's national development and COVID-19 response.

Thirdly, ECOWAS played an important role in resolving the election-related dispute through active mediation. China continues to support African countries in seeking African solutions to African issues. China supports regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and ECOWAS, in continuing to provide tailored support for Guinea-Bissau's peace and development, while respecting its sovereignty and without interfering in its internal affairs. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), for its part, can continue to play a coordinating role to create synergies among various actors.

Fourthly, China has taken note of the phased implementation of the transition plan by UNIOGBIS and encourages the Office to strengthen its communication and coordination with the United Nations country team and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and to take fully on board the views of the Government of Guinea-Bissau in order to ensure a seamless transition between mandates. China stands ready to continue supporting the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNIOGBIS.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I want to first join my colleagues in condemning the attacks in the Niger and expressing our condolences to the victims and their families.

We thank Special Representative Sori-Coulibaly for her comprehensive briefing. On behalf of the United States, I would like to express our gratitude for her leadership of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) during this very difficult period. I would also like to thank the other briefers for their fantastic information.

Guinea-Bissau faces a wide range of challenges. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has brought new negative economic effects and has further complicated the political landscape. The United States is particularly appreciative of the efforts of

the Special Representative and her team to execute a comprehensive and sustainable transition of the mission's responsibilities to the United Nations country team and other United Nations organizations working in West Africa. Such efforts are vital to ensuring that support for the people of Guinea-Bissau does not falter.

As UNIOGBIS continues its phased drawdown and prepares to transfer tasks to the United Nations country team and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel at the end of its mandate in December, the United States would like to commend the Special Representative and the men and women who have worked with her to support both the Conakry Agreement and the full implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) six-point road map for solving the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. We laud UNIOGBIS for its work to help strengthen capacity, promote the rule of law, consolidate constitutional rule and enhance cooperation and coordination with the African Union, ECOWAS and other international partners. We truly thank the Office.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to raise concern in a country where cases among health-care workers have been rising at an alarming rate in recent days. It is of paramount importance that the Government of Guinea-Bissau continue taking affirmative measures to combat the spread of COVID-19. The international community is here to support, but the local authorities must assume a leadership role.

The United States is committed to supporting the efforts of the people of Guinea-Bissau as they work to end the cycles of violence and instability that have overwhelmed the country for far too long. To that end, we desire a positive and constructive relationship with the new Government of Guinea-Bissau — one based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and true democratic governance. We will continue to provide important humanitarian and development assistance to the people of Guinea-Bissau.

The United States supports a free and independent press as essential to democratic Government. We were deeply concerned by the acts of vandalism committed against Radio Capital FM and note the statement of 29 July by the group of five international partners of Guinea-Bissau, strongly condemning those acts as an infringement upon the rights of the Guinea-Bissau people to freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

We further encourage the Government of Guinea-Bissau to remain vigilant in the fight against drug trafficking.

The United States will continue to stand with the people of Guinea-Bissau as they create a stronger and better future for themselves and their children.

Mr. Bencosme Castaños (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, we extend our condolences to the Government and the people of the Niger for the attack committed over the weekend.

We would like to thank the briefers for their briefings today.

The way forward for the authorities of Guinea-Bissau is not easy. The current landscape is full of challenges, including the need for greater political dialogue, accompanied by urgent reforms, such as a constitutional review, the fight against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, a continuously deteriorating socioeconomic situation, worsening gender inequalities and the health effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The year 2020 is also a critical one for Guinea-Bissau as it faces four major transitions, namely, the drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the transfer of tasks of the United Nations country team, the transition to a new political leadership and the closure of the Economic Community of West African States mission. As such, as the international community's involvement on the ground gradually diminishes, the responsibility falls more heavily on the local authorities to be accountable to their citizens and improve their quality of life.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/755), there was clear involvement of the military during the political crisis following the 2019 presidential elections. We deeply regret its actions, as they remind the Security Council that the army has not yet proved to be impartial or independent in an internal conflict. As a result, the humanitarian and security situation in the country has deteriorated, thus highlighting the essential role played by the armed forces and the direct negative impact on the population when they do not faithfully carry out their mandate.

With regard to freedom of expression, we consider the recent acts of vandalism against the premises and equipment of Radio Capital FM to be reprehensible. Those acts, allegedly carried out by unidentified armed

men wearing uniforms of the Guinea-Bissau National Guard, constitute a clear violation of the freedom of expression and the right to information and directly attack a cornerstone of democratic States. In that connection, we urge the authorities to conduct thorough investigations into those and other human rights violations in order to bring those responsible to justice. Of particular concern are reports of police officers beating women and of the security forces engaging in excessive use of force and inhumane treatment, especially towards women and children, as they enforce confinement measures related to the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the Dominican Republic, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, applauds the commendable work the Commission is doing on the ground at this unprecedented time, especially to mobilize funds, prioritize peacebuilding objectives, foster the participation and inclusion of women and young people in the political process and promote internal reforms in the country that are crucially needed to achieve lasting stability.

We would not wish to conclude without commending all of Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners, especially the Economic Community of West African States, for their efforts and good offices and their vital ongoing support during the contentious 2019 electoral processes.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing my country's condolences to the Governments of France and the Niger following yesterday's heinous attack in the Niger.

I would also like to thank the briefers for their statements.

Belgium notes that the political dispute following the presidential election is still not fully resolved, despite the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) recognizing the election of President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, on 22 April, and Prime Minister Nuno Gomes Nabiam's Government programme on 29 June. Tensions and a climate of mistrust continue to characterize the political sphere. In that context, the efforts made by ECOWAS and the group of five international partners must be recognized and supported. However, like the Secretary-General, we call on all political actors in Guinea-Bissau to engage in an inclusive and sincere dialogue, including with civil society, to reach consensus on contentious issues.

That spirit of cooperation is also necessary in order to embark upon a much-needed reform programme for the country and a revision of the Constitution, all in accordance with the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS six-point road map.

Political stability is essential for socioeconomic recovery; the pandemic adds an additional level of complexity to that challenge. In that regard, it is important that the measures taken by the authorities to combat this threat and its consequences take sufficient account of the situation of the poorest, who are threatened by food insecurity, malnutrition and inaccessible health care. The fight against the scourges of drug trafficking and organized crime will also be crucial to prevent drug traffickers from exploiting the current situation in the country.

Despite the challenges of the political context and the fight against the pandemic, it remains crucial that the Government and all State institutions ensure respect for the rule of law, freedom of expression and the protection of human rights. Those are indispensable ingredients for the country to return to the path of stability. Belgium calls on the Government to investigate recent events, including threats against members of Parliament and the violent attack on the media.

We commend the efforts made by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, in cooperation with the country team and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, in the context of its closure. We reiterate that the transition must be as smooth and painless as possible for the country. The success of the transition will also depend on the authorities of Guinea-Bissau taking ownership of the Integrated Office's tasks.

The departure of the Integrated Office does not in the least imply the abandonment of Guinea-Bissau by the international community. The monitoring of the situation by the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the support of the Peacebuilding Fund are positive. The work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the region will continue to be of crucial importance. It will be important to continue that support in the new phase in Guinea-Bissau.

Let me conclude by expressing Belgium's full support for the work and efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sori-

Coulibaly, and the entire Integrated Office to promote dialogue and national reconciliation in the country.

Ms. Farrey (United Kingdom): First, I should like to join others in extending condolences to France and the Niger for all those killed in yesterday's attacks in the Niger.

Let me start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly and all the briefers for setting out clearly the challenges and opportunities facing Guinea-Bissau.

At the briefing in February (see S/PV.8736), we welcomed the peaceful conduct of the presidential election and expressed concern at the risks posed by the post-electoral fallout. Unfortunately, many of those risks have since been realized.

First, the Bissau-Guinean military has taken an active and unwelcome role in politics. On 2 March, it occupied the Supreme Court, disrupting the ongoing legal challenge to the election results, and on 7 May, it briefly occupied the People's National Assembly building, preventing parliamentarians from entering.

Secondly, we have seen reports of sustained violence and intimidation against political opponents, including Members of Parliament Marciano Indi and Armando Dias and former Prime Minister Aristides Gomes, as well as judges and journalists, including, on 26 July, the vandalism of the premises of Radio Capital FM.

Thirdly, the new authorities appear to have turned a blind eye to drug traffickers, with reports of increased trafficking and no reported seizures. The serious drug-trafficking offender Braima Seidi Bá, who was convicted and sentenced by a Bissau-Guinean court in March, is not serving his sentence and is reportedly operating in Guinea-Bissau under military protection. Should that be the case, it would constitute a flagrant breach of the country's own judicial system.

The destabilizing conduct by the new authorities comes at a great cost to the Bissau-Guinean people, who, suffering in poverty, compounded by the coronavirus disease, expect and deserve more from their leaders.

However, there are also opportunities—opportunities for the Bissau-Guinean Government to show that it takes its responsibility to its people seriously. We call on the Government to take these opportunities by demonstrating inclusive governance, by resolving

problems through dialogue and by enacting crucial political reforms. Those include the urgent revision of the Constitution under the authority of the National People's Assembly and the implementation of the national strategic action plan on countering drug trafficking and organized crime.

The Government should feel supported in taking those important steps. In that regard, we welcome the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in mediating the ongoing political crisis and call on ECOWAS to remain united, to keep the interests of the Bissau-Guinean people foremost and to strengthen its presence in Bissau in order to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of its decisions and of the reforms agenda.

We call also on the group of five international partners and the international community to support Guinea-Bissau and to encourage its new authorities to live up to their responsibilities. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's recommendations, in particular the establishment of a high-level platform to accompany the reforms agenda and the establishment of an Independent National Human Rights Institution compliant with the Paris Principles.

In conclusion, as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) prepares to withdraw from Guinea-Bissau, on behalf of the United Kingdom I would like to thank Special Representative Sori-Coulibaly and all the UNIOGBIS staff for their efforts and to congratulate them on having done a good job in difficult circumstances. We hope that Guinea-Bissau's leaders can take the responsibility to build on UNIOGBIS's efforts, move past the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to carry Guinea-Bissau into the stable and democratic future that its people deserve.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): First, I would like to join others in condemning the recent attacks in the Niger and in expressing our deep condolences to the Governments of the Niger and France and the families of the victims.

I would like to thank Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), for her comprehensive briefing. I would also like to thank Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Mr. João Genésio de Almeida

Filho, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their contributions.

I also welcome the representative of Guinea-Bissau to this meeting.

We join other Member States in expressing concern about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situations in Guinea-Bissau. We are worried about the potential risk of a resurgence of drug trafficking and organized crime in the country. We believe that maintaining unity and reconciliation is the only viable path for ensuring the stability and development of Guinea-Bissau.

We commend the mediation efforts of the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the group of five and other international partners to bring peace, stability and security to Guinea-Bissau. Without such efforts, the Bissau-Guinean people would have experienced more tension and unrest.

Due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Guinea-Bissau is coping with many challenges, especially the fragility of its health-care system, food insecurity and malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), about 63 per cent of households in Guinea-Bissau have reportedly experienced food shortages, and 80 per cent have met with difficulties in accessing markets due to the curfew, the lack of transportation or fear of infection. Around 180,000 children are not able to receive school meals because of the closure of schools. The situation could be aggravated by the negative impact of the fight against COVID-19.

We welcome the international efforts of UNICEF, the WFP, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Organization for Migration in providing support for the authorities of Guinea-Bissau in creating and strengthening relevant mechanisms to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and develop pandemic risk-communication strategies, national contingency plans and funding the mobilization strategy. We note the challenges that the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) is facing in implementing its mandate under resolution 2512 (2020) and the United Nations transitional process ahead of the withdrawal and closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December. In that regard, we would like to make the following points.

First, we urge all parties to work together to narrow their differences, promote national reconciliation, consolidate government and ensure the effective functioning of institutions, while addressing political and socioeconomic challenges.

Secondly, we call on the President of the country, the Government, Members of Parliament and all concerned parties to work in a collaborative manner to enact the critical reforms envisioned in the Conakry Agreement, the Stability Pact and the ECOWAS road map. It is also important to focus on the implementation of the reform agenda, in line with the ECOWAS decision of 20 April. We also welcome the proposal by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level platform to accompany the reform agenda.

Thirdly, we stress the importance of enhancing the fight against drug trafficking and transnational crime and strengthening cooperation with the United Nations, particularly UNODC, and other partners in addressing the challenges. We emphasize the importance of the participation of women and youth in all decision-making processes. We also call on the United Nations, ECOWAS and the international partners to further provide substantial support and assistance to Guinea-Bissau so that essential aid can be delivered to those who need it.

Last but not least, we reiterate our support for the full implementation of resolution 2512 (2020). We call on the United Nations, UNIOGBIS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Government of Guinea-Bissau to work closely together in implementing the transfer of the mandate from UNIOGBIS to UNOWAS and its drawdown plan and closure by 31 December.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Indonesia.

First, I too would like to start by expressing our condolences to the Governments and the people of the Niger and France on the demise of humanitarian aid workers near Niamey, and our condemnation of that cowardly attack.

Next, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sori-Coulibaly; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly; and Ambassador De Almeida Filho, for their briefings.

I would also like to reiterate our appreciation of and support to the work of the United Nations Integrated

Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) in pursuing dialogue among all stakeholders, as well as to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in facilitating the resolution of the political impasse that crippled the functioning of State institutions.

Guinea-Bissau is facing political, security, and socioeconomic challenges that are further exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight three points.

First, concerted efforts by all national stakeholders are crucial. Although the new Government has been formed and its programme approved, we feel it is important for all parties to continue dialogue to resolve outstanding issues and pursue national reconciliation. We urge all parties to put aside their differences and work together to further implement the reform agenda, as stipulated in the Conakry Agreement, the ECOWAS road map and the Stability Pact. Of particular importance is expediting the completion of urgent reforms, including the reform of the Constitution, the electoral law and the law on political parties, pursuant to resolution 2512 (2020).

The second point is the importance of overcoming the immediate challenges. We are heartened to hear that security situation in Guinea-Bissau remains stable. Yet we are also concerned that the recent challenges, including those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, seem to create an enabling environment for drug trafficking and organized crime. In this regard, we commend the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNIOGBIS in assisting national authorities on law-enforcement and judicial processes. We feel it is important to continue building national capacity and working to prevent crime networks from taking advantage of the current situation.

We hope that Guinea-Bissau can also redouble its efforts in ensuring the functioning of State institutions, in protecting human rights and the rule of law and in improving the lives of the population. It is therefore crucial for regional and international partners to remain mobilized in supporting the country, particularly in the light of the planned drawdown of UNIOGBIS at the end of this year.

Thirdly, on the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, as Guinea-Bissau is undergoing critical reforms, we need to ensure the seamless transition of UNIOGBIS tasks to

the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the United Nations country team. We welcome the peacebuilding priorities outlined by the mission and feel that continuous engagement and support from the international community is crucial for subsequent peacebuilding and reform efforts. We also commend the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the mobilization of funds to support the United Nations country team.

Lastly, we would like to commend the ongoing efforts by, and sustained support from, regional and international actors, including ECOWAS, the group of five international partners represented in Guinea-Bissau and the PBC, to restore peace and stability and ensure sustainable development in the country. We wish all the best for Guinea-Bissau.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Silva (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, I would like to condemn yesterday's deadly attack near Niamey and offer my condolences to the families of the victims. I would also like to reiterate my feelings of solidarity with the Niger and France in this difficult situation.

I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for inviting me to take part in this meeting of the Security Council on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau. This meeting, which is being held at a moment when my country is gradually overcoming enormous difficulties that we have been facing for some time, is symbolic for me personally.

I welcome the presence and briefings of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and the representative of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to inform the Council that Guinea-Bissau has a democratically elected President of the Republic who is exercising the full range of his constitutional functions at both the national and international levels. My country has a democratically elected National Assembly that functions normally on the basis of its own rules of procedure and in accordance with the norms of good parliamentary practice. Guinea-Bissau has a legitimate Government whose programme

has been adopted by a majority of the deputies sitting in the National Assembly.

All of those points, which reflect the evolution of the political situation, are no longer a secret, as they are in the public domain. To that fact, we should add that we are now witnessing a new discourse in Guinean society — one that is based on national reconciliation. The recent past, which was marked by the discourse of hatred and the social and political divide, is over; today we are clearly witnessing a decline in political and social tensions in Guinea-Bissau.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/755) refers to the increase in cases of human rights violations in Guinea-Bissau. While there may have been some isolated incidents, as referred to in the report, it is far from being a human rights crisis. I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Bissau-Guinean authorities to respecting those rights and the principles governing the rule of law.

With regard to the alleged military intervention in political life, it should be recalled that, since the general elections of 2014 — six years ago — we have not witnessed any military intervention in national political life. The democratically elected President of the Republic, proclaimed winner of the elections on several occasions by the National Electoral Commission, with the unanimous recognition by the international community of the transparency of the elections, does not need to resort to a military coup to assume his constitutional power with all its prerogatives.

On the issue of drug trafficking, like many other countries, the borders of Guinea-Bissau are not exempt from this criminal activity. My country appreciates the role of international cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking, which is a transnational crime that requires the commitment of all relevant actors at the national and international levels. We therefore oppose any attempt by national political actors to politicize the fight against drug trafficking in order to derive political or partisan dividends.

The political synthesis that I have just described is undoubtedly an illustration of the internal commitment of the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and the political line that His Excellency Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, President of the Republic, wished to give to his presidency. But the foregoing political synthesis also reflects the constructive role of the international community, first and foremost the United Nations,

which, through its Office in our country, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), has engaged, since 1999, together with Guinea-Bissau, in, inter alia, the peace process, the rule of law, support for civil society and electoral assistance.

UNIOGBIS has consistently sought to devise responses to numerous issues, including those relating to young people, women, civilians and military personnel, journalists, facilitators of the political dialogue and actors with opposing interests that needed to be reconciled in the framework of the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

It is true that the work of UNIOGBIS — which dates back to 1999 — has never been easy. However, we also must acknowledge that it has never lacked perseverance. I should like to take this opportunity, as we near the end of a political cycle, to express our gratitude to UNIOGBIS for its support throughout those years.

Allow me to commend the commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), our subregional organization, for having, thanks to its effective diplomacy, helped us to overcome major difficulties, putting an end to the political crisis by making the decision to close out the electoral cycle following the second round of the most recent presidential elections.

I wish here to express to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Niger our immense gratitude for the solidarity and the perseverance that ECOWAS has demonstrated under the presidency of His Excellency Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of the Niger.

Like the rest of the world, Guinea-Bissau has not been spared by the global health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its economic consequences. It is clear that the decade devoted to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is aimed at promoting universal progress and our commitment to achieving sustainable development, will, unfortunately, be strongly impacted.

The consequences of the pandemic over the next few years, initially devoted to combating poverty and reducing economic and social inequality, will be even more severe if we cannot count on the support and the assistance of the United Nations as whole and its agencies, in particular the World Health Organization.

In addition to the operations carried out on the ground by United Nations agencies, I believe that it is important to recall the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund, which has proved to be a very useful instrument in the various areas in which it has been called on to become involved, including in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since we will be witnessing a reconfiguration of the model of the United Nations institutional presence in Guinea-Bissau, the Government of my country will be monitoring very closely the institutional design of this new presence in order to draw lessons from the past and prevent any dysfunction and, above all, to reap the greatest possible benefit from the United Nations engagement, that is, to increase its effectiveness.

At the political level, we are relying heavily on technical assistance from the United Nations in the implementation of all the structural reforms that are considered to be vital to political stability in our country. The establishment by His Excellency the President of the Republic of a technical commission for the review of the constitution set in motion the reform process in our country. It is important to recall here that this reform is envisioned by the Conakry Agreement, whose implementation has long been stalled.

In closing, I should like to inform the members of the Council that my mission as the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations has reached its conclusion. This is a unique opportunity for me too express to all present, on behalf of my country, our gratitude for their ongoing support for and solidarity with Guinea-Bissau.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.