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Addis Abéba, Ethiopia, B.P.: 3243 Tél.: (251-11) 5513 822 Télécopie: (251-11) 5519 321
Courriel: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
734th MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
14 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 734th meeting, held on 14 November 2017, received a briefing on the situation in the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

Council took note of the briefings made by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Ovidio Manuel Barbosa Pequeno, and by the Minister of State of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, H.E. Soares Sambu, as well as the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Togo, in his capacity as Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Council also took note of the statements made by the representatives of the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

Council, recalled its previous pronouncements on the situation in Guinea Bissau, particularly Press Statement PSC/PR/BR. (DCIV), adopted at its 604th meeting held on 9 June 2017, in Addis Ababa.

Council expressed deep concern over the continued political crisis in the country, which is particularly marked by the escalating tension between the main political actors and State institutions, despite relentless mediation efforts being made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), the AU, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

Council strongly stressed, once again, the urgent need for Guinea Bissau stakeholders to work resolutely for the effective implementation of the Conakry Agreement of 14 October 2016 and the Bissau Roadmap, with a view to ending the current crisis in their country. In this regard, Council underscored the importance for all Bissau-Guinean actors to fully abide by their commitments to bring about lasting peace and stability to their country.

Council appealed to the political leadership of Guinea Bissau, including the President of the Republic, to demonstrate utmost restraint, statesmanship and high spirit of responsibility and comply with the country's constitution, with a view to identify a way out of the current political deadlock that may jeopardize the fragile gains on the way to the consolidation of peace and stability in the Guinea Bissau. In this respect, Council underscored the imperative for an urgent and lasting solution to the protracted crisis within the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC).

Council also underlined the importance of organizing free, fair and credible elections within the constitutional timelines. In this regard, Council urged all Bissau-Guinea actors to place the supreme interests of their country and people, above all and to begin to work towards the creation of conducive conditions for the successful organization of legislative elections in 2018.

Council commended the mediation efforts lead by ECOWAS, as well as the contribution of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) to the consolidation of the stabilisation

gains in the country. In this regard, Council reiterated its call for the international community to redouble efforts to mobilize additional financial resources to support the continuation of ECOMIB operations in Guinea Bissau until the national security forces of Guinea Bissau have developed the capacity required for them to take over full responsibility of ensuring security and stability in their country. Council encouraged ECOWAS to persevere in its efforts in Guinea Bissau.

Council, once again, commended the Bissau-Guinean defence forces for continuing to demonstrate their professionalism and uphold their constitutional mandate and refraining from interfering in the current political situation. In the same context, Council urged the other Bissau-Guineans actors to refrain from any initiative or declaration that may incite violence and contribute towards further escalation and extension of the current political crisis.

Council calls on the international partners, particularly the UN, EU and CPLP, to continue to coordinate their efforts in the search for a lasting solution to the current political impasse in Guinea-Bissau, including the necessary support to the next electoral process in the country.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the situation.

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