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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
604th MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
9 JUNE 2016

PSC/PR/BR.(DCIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 604th meeting, held on 9 June 2016, was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the situation in Guinea Bissau. Council also received the statements made by the representatives of Senegal, African member of the United Nations Security Council, and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Council, recalling its previous pronouncements on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, including Communiqué PSC/PR /COMM/2. (DLXXXVI), adopted at its 586th meeting held on 31 March 2016, following its mission to that country, from 16 to 21 March 2016, expressed its deep concern about the latest developments in the political and institutional crisis in Guinea Bissau. Council noted, with regret, that despite numerous mediation efforts made by the international community, particularly the AU, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and many other actors, the differences deepened between the main political authorities of the country, especially between the President of the Republic and the leadership of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), after the dissolution of the Government by Presidential Decree, on 12 May 2016.

Council stressed, with deep concern, that the political and institutional crisis has the potential to undermine the fragile gains made by the country, since the 2014 elections, on the path to peace and stability, as well as the hopes of improving the socio-economic situation, raised by the financial commitments, to the tune of \$ 1.5 billion, made by the partners at the Round Table in Brussels, in March 2015.

Council appealed to the President of the Republic to promote compliance with the Constitution and reiterated the deep conviction of the AU that only a genuine and inclusive dialogue, based on mutual respect, would enable the Guinea Bissau stakeholders to find a consensual solution to the crisis in their country and to establish the necessary conditions to consolidate peace and stability in Guinea Bissau. Council urged all political actors in Guinea Bissau to exercise maximum restraint, to place the supreme interests of their country above any personal or partisan considerations. In this regard, Council urged them to strive, actively and in good faith, with the support of the neighbouring countries, ECOWAS, the AU and the rest of the international community, for an inclusive dialogue with a view to resolving their political differences, and to make every effort to preserve the gains made on the path to stability in Guinea Bissau.

Council noted with satisfaction the exemplary behaviour of the armed forces of Guinea Bissau, which, so far, have refrained from any intervention in this political and institutional crisis. Council encouraged the military leaders to continue to stay out of the political disputes and to demonstrate professionalism and respect for the constitution of their country. Council, once again, stressed the urgent need to reform the Defence and Security sector to ensure lasting peace and stability in Guinea Bissau.

Council welcomed the efforts made by ECOWAS, particularly through the work done by its outgoing Chairman, President Macky Sall of Senegal, and of former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, in his capacity as Special Envoy of ECOWAS. Council took note, with appreciation, of the initiatives taken by the 49th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS on 4 June 2016, in Dakar, notably the decision to dispatch incessantly to Bissau a Delegation of Heads of State, composed of Senegal, Guinea and Sierra Leone, to meet with the stakeholders in Guinea Bissau, in order to help find a negotiated solution to the crisis. Council, recognising, once again, the importance of the presence of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) in stabilising the country, also welcomed the decision of the ECOWAS Summit to extend the mandate of the ECOMIB for an additional period of 12 months. Council also expressed its appreciation to the CPLP for its efforts to promote peace and stability in Guinea Bissau.

Council underscored the need to mobilise adequate resources to help the people of Guinea Bissau to address the major challenges they are facing in order to achieve the restoration of peace and stability, particularly through reform of the defence, security and justice sectors, within a context marked by violent extremism and transnational organised crime.

Council reaffirmed the readiness of the AU, in close cooperation with ECOWAS, to support the ongoing process to revise the Constitution in order to clarify, among others, the powers of the sovereign organs of the State so as to enhance the rule of law, the separation of powers and to maintain the balance of the national political system, including the establishment of a Constitutional Court.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the situation.

2016-06-09

Press Statement: Peace and Security Council 604th Meeting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 09 June 2016

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