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Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) until 28 February 2020 and requested that I report every six months on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and on progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The report also provides an update on key political, security, human rights and socioeconomic developments in Guinea-Bissau since my report of 7 February 2019 ([S/2019/115](#)).

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

2. Despite a difficult preparatory process, as highlighted in my previous report, the twice-delayed legislative elections took place on 10 March 2019 and were deemed credible by international electoral observers from the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. However, renewed tensions marked the aftermath of the legislative elections. The Group of Five international partners represented in Guinea-Bissau (the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations) continued to engage and encourage the country's political actors to seek solutions within the framework of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau and the rule of law.

3. On 8 February, the Supreme Court of Justice published the final list of candidates of the 21 political parties approved to contest the parliamentary elections. On 14 February, the parties signed the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct and Electoral Ethics at a formal ceremony held at the headquarters of the National Assembly.



4. The electoral campaign for the parliamentary elections was launched on 16 February and ended on 8 March. At the official ceremony held at the headquarters of the National Electoral Commission, its President urged all political parties to respect the Code of Conduct and Electoral Ethics and refrain from language or acts that could incite violence. Although the electoral campaign unfolded in a generally peaceful environment, a climate of mistrust between the political parties persisted.

5. UNIOGBIS facilitated the visit by a mission of the Security Council to Guinea-Bissau on 15 and 16 February for consultations with national stakeholders and partners on the political developments in the country and to evaluate progress made in the reform processes called for by the Conakry Agreement, among other things. The Security Council mission organized meetings with key stakeholders, including the President of Guinea-Bissau, José Mário Vaz, the Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities, João Ribeiro Butiam Có, the Group of Five and the broader diplomatic corps. Meetings were also organized with the Presidents of the National Assembly and the National Electoral Commission, the Vice-President of the Supreme Court of Justice, political parties with and without parliamentary representation, religious leaders and civil society organizations, including representatives of women and young people. The Security Council was briefed by the UNIOGBIS leadership and the United Nations country team on the political, security and socioeconomic situation, as well as on progress made in the implementation of the mandate of UNIOGBIS and related challenges.

6. On 21 February, the Minister of Territorial Administration officially handed over the final electoral roll to the President of the National Electoral Commission, thereby concluding the voter registration process. On the same day, the President met with members of the Government, the National Electoral Commission, political parties and civil society organizations to discuss the results of an ECOWAS audit of the voter registration process, which had been conducted at the request of the Government. According to the auditors, despite a few technical problems, the voter registration process had produced a credible electoral data set to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. Subsequently, the two principal critics of the voter registration process, the Movimento para Alternância Democrática (Movement for Democratic Change, MADEM-G15) party, and the Partido da Renovação Social (Party for Social Renewal, PRS), publicly accepted the audit findings.

7. On 3 and 4 March, a high-level ECOWAS mission led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria visited Bissau. Following its visit, the delegation noted that the audited electoral roll, which comprised of 761,676 registered voters, or 86 per cent of eligible voters, constituted a sufficient basis for fair and inclusive elections.

8. On 10 March, 645,139 citizens participated in the legislative elections to choose 102 Members of Parliament for a four-year term. The voter turnout was high, at 84.7 per cent. Women were particularly active in the polls, constituting 51 per cent (330,190) of those who cast their ballots.

9. On 13 March, the President of the National Electoral Commission announced the provisional results of the parliamentary polls. Six political parties, namely the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde, PAIGC), MADEM-G15, PRS, the Assembleia do Povo Unido – Partido Democrático da Guiné-Bissau (United People's Assembly – Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau, APU-PDGB), the União para a Mudança (Union for Change, UM) and the Partido da Nova Democracia (New Democracy Party, PND), would form the next Parliament. PAIGC emerged victorious, with 47 seats. MADEM-G15, the breakaway party from PAIGC, came second, with

27 seats. PRS and APU-PDGB won 21 and 5 seats, respectively, while PND and UM each won 1 seat.

10. Despite the application of the Parity Law on the Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-making Spheres during the elections, only 13 women secured parliamentary seats, the same number as in the previous legislature. Of these, 10 were elected on the PAIGC ticket, 2 on the MADEM-G15 ticket and 1 on the PRS ticket. On 15 March, the National Electoral Commission certified the unchallenged provisional results as final.

11. On 15 March, President Vaz addressed a letter to the President of PAIGC, Domingos Simões Pereira, congratulating the party on its electoral victory. He further conveyed his willingness to work in collaboration with all actors in Guinea-Bissau, prioritizing national interests. On the same day, PRS released a press statement congratulating PAIGC and emphasizing that the party would adopt a participatory approach towards the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of development in the country. On 16 March, MADEM-G15 also publicly accepted the results.

12. On 18 March, four of the six parties represented in the new Parliament – PAIGC, APU-PDGB, UM and PND – formalized an agreement to form a parliamentary coalition, thus securing an overall majority of 54 seats (out of 102) in Parliament. Meanwhile, on 12 March, MADEM-G15 and PRS had also signed an agreement to form a coalition in Parliament, making them the main opposition bloc in the National Assembly, with a combined total of 48 seats.

13. The investiture of the newly elected Members of Parliament took place on 18 April. Following the opening ceremony, the chairman of the ad hoc parliamentary transition board invited the Members of Parliament to elect members of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly, which serves as the secretariat of the Parliament. The six parties represented in Parliament submitted their respective candidates for the positions of President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, First Secretary and Second Secretary of the Executive Bureau. The election of the President of the National Assembly, Cipriano Cassamá of PAIGC, and the First Vice-President, Nuno Nabiam, leader of APU-PDGB, passed without incident. However, tensions subsequently flared over the election of the positions of Second Vice-President and First Secretary. The bid of Braima Camará, National Coordinator of MADEM-G15, for the position of Second Vice-President failed. Following unsuccessful arbitration, the President of the Electoral Commission of the National Assembly recommended that MADEM-G15 present an alternate candidate for the post, which the party rejected. Meanwhile, PAIGC and PRS disagreed on whether PRS was eligible to contest the position of First Secretary.

14. Tensions over the composition of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly exacerbated the existing rivalry between the majority coalition and the opposition. On 23 April, the President of the National Assembly convened a meeting with the leaders of the six political parties represented in Parliament to discuss the impasse, but failed to agree on a way forward. On 24 April, as a result of the voting controversy, Members of Parliament from PRS and MADEM-15 engaged in a walkout. The parliamentary majority proceeded to elect two candidates from PAIGC as First and Second Secretaries of the Executive Bureau, in the absence of the opposition. The position of Second Vice-President, earmarked for a candidate from MADEM-G15, as the second largest party in Parliament, was left vacant. Subsequently, the two parliamentary coalitions exchanged public accusations for violating the rules and regulations governing the election of members of the Executive Bureau.

15. On 25 April, the President of the National Assembly informed President Vaz by letter that the National Assembly had formally and legally constituted its Bureau (with

the post of Second Vice-President left vacant), noting that the new Parliament was ready to assume its functions. He further stated that conditions were in place for the President to announce the appointment of a new Prime Minister, paving the way for the formation of a new Government. The investiture of the new Parliament on 18 April subsequently entailed the appointment of a new Prime Minister. However, given the delay by the President in appointing a Prime Minister, Mr. Gomes continued as de facto caretaker Prime Minister until the appointment and swearing-in of a new Prime Minister.

16. In response to the political impasse in Parliament and the appointment of a new Prime Minister, a high-level ECOWAS ministerial delegation led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria was dispatched to Bissau on 30 April. In its final communiqué, the delegation called for the appointment of a Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government without delay; urged political actors to give up their intransigent positions and prioritize national interests; and urged the parliamentary groups to finalize the composition of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly in accordance with the results of the legislative elections.

17. On 14 May, thousands of supporters from the youth wings of PAIGC, APU-PDGB, UM and PND demonstrated in Bissau, demanding that President Vaz appoint a new Prime Minister. On 15 May, the Supreme Court of Justice rejected the petition for a temporary injunction filed by MADEM-G15 requesting the nullification of the proceedings that had established the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly. The Supreme Court highlighted procedural errors in the petition, including its inadmissibility, arguing that the applicant had unduly relied on a precautionary measure that was inapplicable to urgent and key proceedings, such as contesting electoral acts. The Court upheld that the ad hoc commission of the National Assembly, established to elect the members of its Executive Bureau, was a legitimate expression by the organs of sovereignty and was therefore legally constituted. On 16 May, MADEM-G15 held a press conference in Bissau dismissing the Supreme Court's ruling as null and void.

18. During a meeting held on 31 May, 8 of the 15 members of the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly voted to convene the first ordinary session of the tenth legislature from 11 June to 22 July. The vote was organized by the parliamentary majority. Members of Parliament from MADEM-G15 and PRS boycotted the vote, citing in explanation the unresolved dispute over the election of the Executive Bureau of the Assembly.

19. On 6 June, MADEM-G15, PRS and the Movimento de Apoio a JOMAV (Movement Supporting President Vaz) organized a peaceful demonstration in Bissau demanding respect for the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau and the internal regulations of the National Assembly. On 7 and 8 June, the youth and women's wings of the majority bloc in Parliament also held demonstrations requesting the appointment of a new Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government.

20. On 11 June, the tenth legislature convened its first ordinary session. However, tensions rose between the majority coalition and opposition blocs over the proposed agenda. The opposition insisted that priority be given to the election of the Second Vice-President and First Secretary of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly. As a result, the session was suspended for several hours, following which the initial agenda was approved by the 54 Members of Parliament from the majority bloc.

21. On 14 June, in line with the provisions of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau on the appointment of the Prime Minister, President Vaz held consultations with the six political parties represented in Parliament.

22. On 17 June, a delegation of the African Union Peace and Security Council visited Bissau, where it held meetings with national authorities and the Group of Five. The visit was a follow-up to the meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 11 June, at which the Council requested the dispatch of a mission to Bissau to assess the situation and suggest a way forward in support of ECOWAS efforts. At the end of its visit, the Peace and Security Council delegation confirmed that possible responses were being explored, including punitive measures, should the political impasse remain unresolved.

23. Also on 17 June, President Vaz addressed a letter to PAIGC seeking its proposal of a candidate for the position of Prime Minister. PAIGC responded on the same day, proposing its leader, Domingos Simões Pereira, as candidate. On 19 June, President Vaz declined the proposed candidate, requesting an alternate name. On 20 June, PAIGC enquired about the reasons for the rejection of its nominee. On 21 June, President Vaz replied, highlighting his prerogatives as guarantor of the functioning of State institutions and his assessment of the candidate as unsuited to the position of Prime Minister.

24. On 18 June, following consultations held with all 49 legally registered political parties in the country, as well as with the National Electoral Commission, President Vaz issued a decree setting 24 November 2019 as the date for the presidential election.

25. Amid rising tensions, ECOWAS deployed a high-level ministerial delegation to Bissau on 19 and 20 June, led by the Minister of State and Secretary-General of the Presidency of Guinea. Following consultations with political stakeholders, the delegation issued a communiqué, in which it welcomed the presidential decree setting the date for the presidential election; regretted the absence of a new Prime Minister and Government three months after the legislative elections; demanded the appointment of a new Prime Minister proposed by the majority party in Parliament and the formation of a new Government no later than by 23 June 2019; and encouraged parties to finalize the composition of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly. The communiqué further threatened sanctions against individuals and groups deemed to be obstructing the political process.

26. On 20 June, the National Coordinator of MADEM-G15 held a press conference announcing his decision to withdraw his candidacy for the position of Second Vice-President of the National Assembly. Later that day, the party nominated Member of Parliament Adja Satu Camara Pinto, who was subsequently elected on 25 June as the Second Vice-President of the Assembly. The coalition of MADEM-G15 and PRS boycotted the session, arguing that the issue surrounding the position of First Secretary of the Executive Bureau of the Assembly, claimed by PRS but occupied by a PAIGC candidate, should be resolved first.

27. On 21 June, PAIGC named the outgoing Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, as the party's alternate candidate for the post of Prime Minister. On 22 June, Mr. Gomes was sworn in by President Vaz as the new Prime Minister.

28. On 26 June, in a motion put forward by the majority bloc in Parliament, the National Assembly passed a resolution withdrawing the constitutional powers from the President and mandated its Speaker, Cipriano Cassamá, as interim President, arguing that the end of the term of the current presidency on 23 June 2019 implied a complete cessation of the constitutional mandate of President Vaz. On 27 June, MADEM-G15 and PRS issued communiqués condemning the resolution as unconstitutional. On 28 June, the Attorney General ordered the opening of a criminal case against the Speaker of the National Assembly and the leader of the PAIGC parliamentary bench, Califa Seide, for violating the rule of law by initiating the resolution.

29. The fifty-fifth ordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government took place on 29 June against the backdrop of controversy surrounding the legitimacy of the President and the absence of a Government. The Authority decided that: (a) President Vaz would appoint a new Government by 3 July on the basis of the proposition made by the Prime Minister; (b) the Government would engage in the preparation of the presidential election to be held on 24 November 2019; (c) the President would appoint a new Attorney General on the basis of consensus before 3 July; and (d) the President would remain in office until the next presidential election, leaving the full conduct of government affairs to the new Government, in line with the Constitution. The Authority also extended the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) for a period of six months, starting on 1 October 2019.

30. On 2 July, the Attorney General, Bacari Biai, submitted his resignation to President Vaz. On 3 July, President Vaz appointed Ladislau Embassa, member of the Supreme Court and President of the National Council for Social Communication, as the new Attorney General. On the same day, following intense consultations with the Prime Minister, President Vaz issued a presidential decree nominating the new Government, composed of 16 ministers (including 8 women) and 15 secretaries of State (including 3 women). All members of the new Government are from PAIGC and its allies. At the swearing-in ceremony of the new Government, the Prime Minister stated that the Government would focus on the critical socioeconomic situation, the country's strategic and operational plan, "Terra Ranka" and the organization of the presidential election. However, he regretted that the appointment of the Attorney General had not been achieved through consensus, as called for by ECOWAS.

31. On 4 July, reacting to the formation of the new Government, MADEM-G15 protested against the establishment of a Secretary of State for Electoral Management, claiming that it would provoke a new crisis and jeopardize the transparency of the presidential election. It also requested the establishment of an independent inclusive entity to oversee the production of voter lists.

B. Security situation

32. The general security situation remained relatively stable during the period under review. The armed forces have remained neutral and have not interfered with the constitutional order or ongoing political debates. However, the security situation could be adversely affected should the political tensions persist amid a worsening socioeconomic environment marked by strike action and long-standing claims by public servants.

33. On 30 May, at the height of the post-electoral dispute, which resulted in demonstrations by supporters of the two coalitions, the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, General Biaguê Na N'Tam, assured the public of the army's non-interference in the political crisis. He also addressed directives to section commanders and rank and file members of the armed forces, cautioning them to stay outside the political fray. Military leaders have also reportedly taken measures to control and maintain the discipline of military personnel, such as frequent meetings with the chain of command, messages delivered to country troops, troop exercises, intensive patrolling by units, restricted access to weapons and ammunition, and frequent professional and awareness training programmes. ECOMIB maintained its presence and vigilance in the country throughout the reporting period.

C. Human rights situation

34. During the reporting period, some progress was made in the prosecution of gender-based violence and in addressing intercommunal violence related to land disputes. However, no efforts were made to investigate past crimes, acts of impunity and other human rights violations, especially those associated with past military coups. The authorities have not yet taken any steps to establish the recommended independent national human rights institution, in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles).

35. The people of Guinea-Bissau freely exercised their right to vote in the legislative elections of 10 March 2019. However, approximately 2 per cent of the registered voters whose names did not appear on the final electoral lists could not vote following the decision of the National Electoral Commission and the agreement with the political parties not to create supplementary lists.

36. Allegations of censorship of the public television station prompted a partial strike by the station's staff union. On 2 April, the licence of a private radio station in Bafatá was suspended by the Governor of the Bafatá Region, Dumdu Sambu, allegedly for non-compliance with applicable regulations and for unduly criticizing him. The radio station was allowed to resume its broadcasts on 13 April.

37. Instances of targeted restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly were recorded. Between 8 February and 19 June, the police dispersed eight demonstrations, alleging non-compliance with the procedures required by law. Two demonstrations ended violently and one, planned for 27 February, was cancelled following the pre-emptive arbitrary arrests of 12 individuals, who were released following UNIOGBIS intervention. Excessive use of force by law enforcement officers was reported on 8 February in Bissau during a student demonstration, when a member of the anti-riot police shot a demonstrator in the arm. Four demonstrators were detained during demonstrations held on 7 and 13 June by the youth wings of PAIGC, APU-PDGB, UM and PND and by a students' confederation, respectively. The demonstrators were subsequently released following UNIOGBIS intervention.

D. Social and economic situation

38. The socioeconomic situation in the country continued to be fragile owing to a less-than-favourable cashew nut marketing campaign in 2018, institutional instability and a slight deterioration in public finances, in particular weak public revenue. This has raised concerns about the State's overall liquidity and financial sustainability and its ability to regularly pay civil and public service salaries.

39. On 30 March 2019, the cashew nut campaign in Guinea-Bissau began with a price of 500 CFA francs per kg set by the Government, which is higher than the base price of other cashew nut producers in the region, such as Benin (400 francs/kg) or Côte d'Ivoire (375 francs/kg). The high reference price and low global demand have resulted in fewer cashew nut transactions in Guinea-Bissau.

40. An International Monetary Fund mission that visited the country from 6 to 10 May confirmed the country's poor outlook in terms of economic performance, concluding that the national fiscal position remains under stress. Owing primarily to higher-than-planned expenditures, the government deficit in early 2019 was significantly larger than envisioned in the draft budget. The deficit also exceeded that of roughly the same period in 2018, reaching an estimated 5.1 per cent of gross domestic product. At the same time, public financing pressures have grown, resulting

in a rising balance of unpaid bills. Based on current trends, the financial gap for 2019 is estimated at 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

41. On a positive note, the planned investments for 2019 are expected to improve employment opportunities and the general macroeconomic climate. Noteworthy advances include the entry into production of the cement factory in Bissau, the conclusion of the construction of the Buba-Catió road, the development of key infrastructure and an interconnectivity line for the transmission of energy from the Kaleta and Sambangalou subregional hydropower plants, as part of the Gambia River Basin Development Organization energy interconnectivity project. With support from the World Bank and other development partners, a floating generator with a capacity of 35 MW was installed in Bissau as a transitional measure to supply electricity.

42. The fragile economic situation in the country led to heightened social tensions, culminating in a wave of strikes across all public administration sectors, including the Ministry of Economy and Finance. This had a negative impact on the Government's capacity for revenue collection and the delivery of health, education, judicial and transport services. Civil servants, teachers and medical employees have repeatedly called for improved working conditions and increased wages.

43. Meanwhile, a number of senior State officials have been implicated in scandals involving corruption and the diversion of finances. On 3 April, the national coordinator of the Judicial Police of Guinea-Bissau, Fernando Jorge Barreto Costa, informed the media that more than 100 tons of rice donated by the Government of China for vulnerable populations had been seized from locked warehouses in the city of Bafatá. It was alleged that the rice was being illegally repackaged for sale in the domestic market. On the same day, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nicolau Dos Santos, publicly denied the allegations and stated that the rice seized by the Judicial Police was being stored in a government-leased warehouse in Bafatá prior to its distribution to impoverished farmers.

44. On 16 May, the caretaker Prime Minister addressed a letter to President Vaz requesting the dismissal of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of the Interior for their alleged involvement in the rice scandal. The two ministers were also accused of attempting to interfere with the investigation led by the Judicial Police. The accused ministers publicly rejected the Prime Minister's allegations. On the same day, the Prime Minister authorized the distribution of 180 tons of the seized rice to members of the armed forces and war veterans. On 17 May, in response to the distribution, the Office of the Prosecutor General accused the Prime Minister of hiding "material truths and facts" in the case by authorizing the distribution of seized rice without the publication of the final report of the investigation being conducted by the Judicial Police.

45. The malaise in the Government resulting from the rice scandal peaked on 21 May, when the caretaker Prime Minister issued a statement indicating that to maintain the normal functioning of the Government and owing to the inappropriate behaviour of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of the Interior, the Inspectors-General of the two ministries would assume managerial responsibilities of their respective ministries and report directly to him.

III. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

46. UNIOGBIS continued to implement its mandate in accordance with Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), focusing on the reconfiguration and phased drawdown of the Mission, in addition to the implementation of its mandated priorities.

A. Implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the ECOWAS road map, political dialogue and a national reconciliation process, and the strengthening of democratic governance, including through urgent reforms

47. UNIOGBIS continued to support the authorities and political actors in Guinea-Bissau in implementing the provisions of the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the ECOWAS Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau and in fostering political dialogue and national reconciliation. Through the Group of Five in Bissau, UNIOGBIS encouraged political actors to engage in constructive dialogue to address the prevailing political and institutional crisis. The Organizing Commission of the National Conference, assisted by UNIOGBIS with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, presented its report to community leaders across all regions of the country, as well as the Dakar and Lisbon diaspora, and consulted them on advancing the national reconciliation process. The Mission provided technical and financial support to the parliamentary ad hoc commission for the revision of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau, as part of the efforts to undertake urgent reforms as outlined in the Conakry Agreement and the Stability Pact.

48. On 6 May, my Special Representative briefed the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in the country. He provided a briefing on the political, socioeconomic and human rights situation. He also touched on the issue of drug trafficking and organized crime, as well as the transition arrangements for the gradual drawdown and prospective closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December 2020. The Peacebuilding Commission issued a statement calling on the political stakeholders of Guinea-Bissau to sustain their commitment to the Conakry Agreement and urging them to organize the presidential election in 2019. It also called for the appointment of a new Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government in accordance with the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau.

49. From 13 to 24 May, UNIOGBIS partnered with a team of instructors from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre to organize the 2019 military observers predeployment course for Guinea-Bissau armed forces for 30 military officers (including 20 female officers) to enhance their knowledge of conduct and discipline, gender, human rights, the role of the military in democracy, and negotiation and mediation skills. The course aimed to empower the country's military advisers with skills for future participation in peacekeeping operations.

50. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to play a critical role in supporting political and institutional stabilization processes in Guinea-Bissau. Under the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio consisting of 10 projects worth \$10,998,327, UNIOGBIS supported the implementation of mutually reinforcing projects, including on dialogue, national reconciliation and the strengthening of the justice and media sectors. The projects contributed to making the legislative elections of 10 March 2019 more inclusive and participatory, as they provided training for women and youth candidates on the

elections, supported the monitoring of the elections by domestic observers in collaboration with the European Union, empowered the media to provide more objective and non-partisan reporting on the elections and financed multiple live radio broadcasts of meetings between the general public and political candidates.

B. Support provided for the legislative and presidential elections in 2019

51. Technical, financial and material support from the international community contributed significantly to the success of the legislative elections. Although the 2018–2019 project on support to the electoral cycle in Guinea-Bissau had proposed a budget of \$7.7 million for the basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the international community generously mobilized \$10.9 million (\$10.1 million in cash and \$0.8 million in kind) in support of the elections.

52. UNIOGBIS supported some civil society organizations that coordinated the drafting of the Code of Conduct and Electoral Ethics and monitored its implementation. The Code of Conduct, which was signed on 14 February by the political parties competing in the legislative elections, contributed to peaceful and credible elections.

53. UNIOGBIS and UNDP provided technical advice and expertise on operations and logistical planning to the National Electoral Commission through the United Nations Integrated Electoral Support Unit. The Electoral Support Unit organized a training-of-trainers programme for the regional electoral advisers, who in turn supported the regional electoral commissions in the planning, coordination and implementation of the regional polling operations. These interventions ensured the timely procurement and deployment of materials to all polling stations, enabling most of them to open on time on election day. This resulted in greater public confidence in the National Electoral Commission as an efficient and credible national institution. UNIOGBIS also assisted the National Electoral Commission in designing civic education and public information strategies and supported the signing of a code of conduct for the media in relation to coverage of the elections.

54. Between February and March, UNIOGBIS closely monitored the electoral campaigns of the political parties at rallies held in Bissau and at the regional level. On election day, UNIOGBIS established a situation room to monitor proceedings both in Bissau and in the regions. The situation room served as an integrated platform for exchanging accurate and real-time information on security, electoral management and political developments generated by the various UNIOGBIS components and other sources, including UNDP.

55. UNIOGBIS and UNDP continued to engage with the Government and the electoral management bodies through the High-Level Steering Committee on Elections regarding preparations for the presidential election. Two meetings were held in June and July, during which the need to develop a consolidated budget encompassing the electoral activities of the National Electoral Commission, the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process, the Supreme Court, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior was agreed on, in order to enable coordinated resource mobilization efforts.

C. Review of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau

56. UNIOGBIS continued to provide support to the constitutional reform process. Following the legislative elections of 10 March 2019 and delays in the formation of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly, as well as Assembly commissions, including the new ad hoc commission on the review of the Constitution, UNIOGBIS and the former ad hoc commission agreed to wait for the investiture of the new Members of Parliament and the restructuring of the ad hoc commission before progressing further. In addition, an annotated version of the current Constitution was finalized by the Faculty of Law of Amílcar Cabral University, with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund, and presented to civil society in May, to contribute to the consultations over the constitutional review.

D. Promotion and protection of human rights

57. During February 2019, UNIOGBIS, in collaboration with the National Network of Human Rights Defenders, trained 105 human rights defenders, including 57 women from the Bafatá, Oio and Quinara Regions. The training helped to raise awareness about the human rights dimension of the Stability Pact and the Code of Conduct and Electoral Ethics for the legislative elections and served as the basis for the trainees to undertake human rights monitoring in remote areas on election day. In April and May, UNIOGBIS conducted five more workshops in the Biombo, Bolama, Gabú, Oio and Tombali Regions for 175 human rights defenders, including 73 women. The workshops helped to establish a functional human rights early warning system coordinated by the Network, targeting locations where social and cultural beliefs and practices have been identified as strong causal factors of human rights violations.

58. UNIOGBIS, in partnership with the National Defence Institute, conducted four training sessions in April and May 2019 for 132 military officials, including 17 women, from the four military command zones (Bafatá, Bissau, Buba and Canchungo) to develop the capacity of members of the armed forces to conduct human rights training within their ranks. In June 2019, UNIOGBIS provided technical assistance to civil society organizations and the Government of Guinea-Bissau in drafting their submissions for the third cycle of the universal periodic review, which were due in January 2020. UNIOGBIS also continued to monitor the rights of persons deprived of liberty, conducting 26 visits to prisons and detention facilities. UNIOGBIS documented cases of 678 detainees (including 9 women), 161 of whom were under prolonged detention. UNIOGBIS advocacy efforts resulted in the release of 146 detainees. Together with other human rights actors, the Mission facilitated the release of 102 persons arrested during a student demonstration on 8 February.

E. Combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

59. Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime remain a threat to national stability and security in Guinea-Bissau. With the support and advocacy of UNIOGBIS, the Government increasingly demonstrated a renewed commitment to enhancing the national response mechanism to combat drug trafficking and related crimes.

60. In February 2019, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) organized a simulation exercise at the port of Bissau with the participation of judicial and law enforcement officers, civil society organizations and the International Organization for Migration, as well as experts from the Portuguese Prosecutor's Office, the Portuguese Immigration Services and the Portuguese Observatory on

Trafficking in Human Beings to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to respond to these crimes.

61. On 9 March, the Transnational Crime Unit, with technical support from UNIOGBIS and UNODC, arrested four suspects and seized 789 kg of cocaine, the largest ever cocaine seizure in Guinea-Bissau, allegedly prepared for travel by road to Mali. The seized drugs were incinerated with support from INTERPOL. Following the cocaine seizure, President Vaz reiterated his request for enhanced United Nations support to combat drug trafficking.

62. On 29 March, UNIOGBIS launched the Partnership Coordination Forum to serve as a platform for strengthening coordination and cooperation between relevant national actors and international partners towards an integrated framework to combat drug trafficking. Based on the Forum's recommendations, UNIOGBIS and UNODC supported the establishment of a judiciary working group to promote information-sharing and synergies between prosecutors and courts on cases, as well as a drug observatory working group to serve as an early warning platform for national civil society organizations helping to combat drug trafficking. The creation of the working groups has improved coordination among institutions, increased public awareness (including through radio broadcasts) and contributed to the identification of key priorities.

63. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS continued to strengthen the capacity of national law enforcement agencies and security institutions on border control and management-related issues. UNIOGBIS provided logistical support for the delivery of essential equipment to ensure the effective functioning of border and Judicial Police outposts to improve State control in the regions and in the Bijagós archipelago.

64. In May, the UNODC anti-corruption team initiated national consultations to enhance the integrity and accountability of, and cooperation between, law enforcement agencies, to ensure more effective investigations and prosecutions and strengthen cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime along the cocaine route linking Latin America, through West Africa, to Europe. The United Nations also published a research-based report on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau to provide necessary data and examine trends and root causes of drug trafficking from a national and regional perspective to better inform national operations and responses.

65. The co-location of United Nations experts within the Office of the Attorney General to support the prosecution of cases of drug trafficking and organized crime facilitated the trials of seven cases, leading to five convictions. It also raised awareness among judicial actors about the importance of fast-track trials and appropriate sentences for drug trafficking. UNIOGBIS and UNODC are also developing a practice manual on prosecutorial guidelines to support the work of prosecutors.

66. At the request of State authorities, the United Nations will continue to provide assistance, including in the development of a national strategic plan on drug trafficking, organized crime and related threats and the functioning of an interministerial coordination mechanism.

F. Incorporating a gender perspective into peacebuilding

67. UNIOGBIS continued to support the effective participation of women in national affairs within the framework of the women and peace and security agenda. In this regard, UNIOGBIS, in collaboration with the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Fund, contributed to strengthening the active involvement of women in civil society consultations and facilitation efforts.

68. In the area of political participation, UNIOGBIS support for the engagement of women to advance the application of the Parity Law on the Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-making Spheres, adopted in December 2018, constituted a central pillar of its gender-related work. The Parity Law stipulates a minimum representation of 36 per cent for women candidates on party lists for legislative and local elections. In this regard, the Mission advocated with political parties for, and sensitized women activists and candidates to, the opportunities offered by the Parity Law. From 12 to 16 February, UNIOGBIS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held a technical training workshop for 96 women and youth candidates to support their campaign efforts. However, notwithstanding these efforts, only 13 women (13 per cent of the total number of current Members of Parliament) were elected to the new Parliament, the same number as in the previous Parliament before the enactment of the Parity Law. A combination of factors led to this unfavourable outcome, including the lower placement of women candidates on party lists and the legislator's choice to allow non-compliant party lists to be admitted, albeit with financial penalties for the political parties concerned, such as the loss of fiscal exemptions. United Nations entities and partners, including women parliamentarians, conducted a lessons-learned exercise on 12 and 13 July to identify measures and develop legislative proposals to close loopholes in the Law.

69. On 25 April, UNIOGBIS launched an interactive dialogue with women leaders and members of political parties to gauge views on the political crisis and to explore possible facilitation initiatives to be led by women and young people. Subsequently, several interventions were initiated by women's groups, in particular by the Council of Women Facilitators, who met repeatedly with the President of Guinea-Bissau, the President of the National Assembly and political parties in Bissau to advocate for dialogue and respect for the Constitution.

70. From April to July, UNIOGBIS provided technical support to the Women Mediators Network to reinforce the skills of members in the areas of project development and mediation design, planning and action. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, a mapping of community conflict and mediation actors was conducted in six regions. The findings were presented to civil society partners engaged in local-level mediation, who have since joined efforts to reinforce the ability of the Network to contribute to gender-responsive peacebuilding.

71. On 7 May, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team met with the National Electoral Commission to discuss opportunities for mainstreaming gender into the work of the Commission. Consequently, the Commission established a gender team to evaluate gender-related statistical analysis and operational gaps to ensure inclusivity.

72. From 13 to 17 May, UNIOGBIS and UNFPA, through the Peacebuilding Fund, supported the participation of a seven-member delegation in a training-of-trainers course on conflict analysis, jointly led by ECOWAS, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Staff College. The participants have since used their skills to develop a gender-responsive analysis of the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau and peacebuilding planning.

73. On 12 June, in response to the political crisis, the Women's Council, with technical and financial support from UNIOGBIS, held an extraordinary forum on peace and stability, with the participation of 140 women representatives from 39 sectors of the nine regions of Guinea-Bissau, civil society and all the main political parties. The women participants agreed on key messages to promote peace and a way forward within the framework of the existing legal and constitutional provisions. On

13 June, the Women's Council presented its message to the National Assembly and to the President. On 18 June, the Women's Council was invited to attend a consultative meeting by a delegation of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which had been dispatched to the country following the 855th meeting of the Council on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, held on 11 June.

G. Mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance

74. UNIOGBIS leadership and the President of the National Electoral Commission co-chaired regular meetings of the High-Level Steering Committee on Elections, with the participation of the broader international community, to monitor the legislative electoral process, exchange information and coordinate the initiatives of national and international stakeholders. On 19 June, UNIOGBIS reactivated the High-Level Steering Committee to prepare a strategy for the upcoming presidential election, including for resource mobilization.

75. UNIOGBIS also convened and chaired regular meetings of international partners to discuss the evolving political situation, share concerns and exchange views on the need for collective efforts to support the country towards political stability. Moreover, the Group of Five met regularly to discuss and review developments in the country. The Group of Five also attended regular meetings with Prime Minister Gomes, the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process, the National Electoral Commission and the political parties on the technical and political challenges concerning the legislative electoral process. Following the legislative elections on 10 March 2019, the Group of Five also met on several occasions with PAIGC and its allies, MADEM-G15 and PRS, for consultations aimed at addressing the renewed tensions related to the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly.

76. On 10 May, UNIOGBIS hosted the thirty-fourth High-level Meeting of Heads of United Nations Missions in West Africa, organized by UNOWAS to exchange views on the political and security developments in the region and to coordinate responses, including in relation to the situation in Guinea-Bissau. In their final communiqué, the Heads of Missions welcomed the outcome of the parliamentary elections held on 10 March and expressed concern about the divisions surrounding the election of the Executive Bureau of the National Assembly, stressing the need for the timely appointment of a new Prime Minister as a critical step towards resolving the crisis. They urged the national authorities to complete the electoral cycle by organizing the presidential election before the end of 2019. Against the backdrop of the ongoing dispute within the National Assembly and the delay in appointing a new Prime Minister, my Special Representatives for Guinea-Bissau and for West Africa and the Sahel met separately with the President of Guinea-Bissau and the caretaker Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, to advocate for a rapid resolution of these outstanding issues.

H. UNIOGBIS transition plan: arrangements and preparations

77. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), which called for the prospective closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December 2020, a country-specific transition training course, organized by United Nations Headquarters, took place in Bissau on 24 and 25 April 2019 to provide guidance for the entire United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau on the policies and tools for planning and managing the transition in line with my planning directive on transition processes.

78. On 15 May, UNIOGBIS established an integrated transition task team, comprising members from the United Nations country team and UNOWAS, to coordinate and oversee the phased drawdown and handover of Mission work, including to national authorities and international partners. The task team is working with the support and guidance of the Integrated Task Force for Guinea-Bissau at United Nations Headquarters and its transition sub-working group established on 9 April to ensure a unified approach. A draft transition calendar and a matrix of detailed transition activities with a timeline monitoring mechanism will be developed jointly with the United Nations country team to guide key transition-related activities until the closure of the Mission. Following the formation of a new Government, the United Nations presence will engage closely with the relevant authorities on the transition plan and arrangements in order to ensure national buy-in.

79. On 21 June, UNIOGBIS closed its Bubaque regional office as a first step towards its progressive drawdown and closure of all regional offices by 31 December 2019, as requested by the Security Council in resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#).

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration of the United Nations system

80. During the second quarter of 2019, the United Nations development system and UNIOGBIS jointly embarked on a transition plan linking the drawdown and closure of UNIOGBIS with the planning and formulation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2021–2025. This will also serve as the integrated framework for the prospective closure of UNIOGBIS by December 2020. As part of the adopted road map for the formulation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the United Nations system in Guinea-Bissau will conduct a common country analysis from July to October 2019.

B. Public information

81. UNIOGBIS outreach efforts, through community meetings, radio broadcasts (in 12 local languages) and social media, supported by funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, yielded positive results, as evidenced by the quality of the public debate during the legislative elections. Private radio stations and newspapers steered the political debate towards political party programmes and mitigated the effects of inflammatory speech. Journalists working for State-owned media publicly denounced and resisted attempts to censor and manipulate them.

82. UNIOGBIS helped the National Council for Social Communication to establish a fact-checking team to trace and verify fake news. Furthermore, UNIOGBIS supported the National Electoral Commission and the Technical Support Office for the Electoral Process in the design of a communications strategy and assisted in producing information products.

83. On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, UNIOGBIS supported the first gala to recognize the work of the country's media, where the Union of Journalists and Technicians of Social Communication honoured journalists, politicians, artists and institutions for their ethical behaviour and contributions to democracy and citizenship.

C. Staff safety and security

84. The overall security situation for United Nations personnel in Guinea-Bissau remained stable. In the context of reported incidents, only a few minor road traffic accidents and loss of United Nations property were recorded involving United Nations security management system personnel.

V. Observations and recommendations

85. I believe that 2019 is a pivotal year for Guinea-Bissau to seize the opportunity to end the recurring cycle of political instability that has hampered socioeconomic development for years. The successful holding of the legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau on 10 March 2019, after the political and institutional impasse lasting three and a half years, is an important milestone in that regard. I welcome the appointment of the new Prime Minister and the new Government and am particularly pleased to note the increased number of women represented. I also take note of the date for the presidential election, set for 24 November 2019, and express the hope that all efforts will be made by the national authorities to ensure the timely holding of an inclusive, credible and peaceful presidential election that abides by the Parity Law on the Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-making Spheres. I also encourage international partners to provide the necessary financial support for the presidential election.

86. I would like to commend ECOWAS, in particular the role of President Muhammadu Buhari as former Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Group of Five in Bissau and all international partners for their tireless mediation efforts that have brought about the recent breakthrough in the political impasse. The sustained engagement by international partners will continue to be crucial ahead of the presidential election and beyond to ensure durable stability in the country. Nonetheless, the positive role of national political stakeholders in ensuring such stability cannot be overemphasized. The United Nations stands ready to continue its support for Guinea-Bissau.

87. I welcome the establishment of the new legislature and encourage the elected Members of Parliament to be mindful of their duties towards the people of Guinea-Bissau and to transcend individual and party interests for the sake of the collective interest and stability of the country. In this connection, I further encourage the political parties represented in Parliament to engage in constructive working relationships and partnerships. Collaborative leadership between the heads of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of power is also a requirement to revitalize and strengthen the State institutions, which have been seriously weakened by the long-standing political disputes in the country.

88. Durable peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau hinges on the implementation of key reforms. The signature of the Stability Pact by all the political parties on 14 February illustrates the consensus on the need for multidimensional reforms. The holding of the presidential election in November will complete the electoral cycle in Guinea-Bissau and enable the national authorities to devote their attention to enacting the reforms specified in the Conakry Agreement, including the revision of the Constitution, the electoral law and the law on political parties.

89. The seizure of a sizeable amount of cocaine on 9 March is testimony to the troubling scale of drug trafficking and should serve as a warning to national authorities and international partners on the need to curtail the use of the territory of Guinea-Bissau as a base for the trans-shipment of drugs and money-laundering. The success of the new Partnership Coordination Forum on countering drug trafficking

and transnational organized crime, of which UNIOGBIS is a member, is contingent on the political will of the national authorities and the provision of the required financial resources to relevant judicial, justice and security institutions. In this regard, I urge the new Attorney General and the Judicial Police designated to investigate all criminal offences to work together to address the destabilizing crimes of drug trafficking and organized crime.

90. I urge members of the international community to continue supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau in its fight against drug trafficking and organized crime to avoid losing momentum and reversing the progress achieved thus far. I call for support for national priorities requiring resources to: (a) counter maritime crime in the coastal waters and drug trafficking in the port of Bissau; (b) develop the national action plan; (c) strengthen the capacity of the Financial Investigation Unit to counter money-laundering and financial crimes; (d) enhance the investigation skills and build the capacity of prosecutors and judges; (e) promote ethics and integrity measures for law enforcement and judicial authorities; and (f) strengthen the legal and institutional anti-corruption framework.

91. The promotion of and respect for human rights remain crucial to sustaining peace and ensuring long-term stability and development in Guinea-Bissau. I encourage the national authorities to redouble efforts to build a culture of respect for human rights and accountability at all levels and in all institutions. The establishment of an independent national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights, in compliance with the Paris Principles, and ensuring the effectiveness of the interministerial commission on human rights to follow up on recommendations from regional and international human rights mechanisms are important steps and should remain a central goal for Guinea-Bissau.

92. I commend my Special Representative, the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team for the progress made thus far in planning for the transition of United Nations presence, ahead of the Mission's prospective closure by the end of 2020, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#). As we embark on this phase of reconfiguring the United Nations presence in the country, while recognizing the need to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities from UNIOGBIS to the United Nations country team, UNOWAS and other partners, I encourage closer cooperation between the newly formed Government and the Mission to ensure national ownership of the process.

93. I wish to express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team, under the leadership of my former Special Representative, José Viegas Filho, who completed his assignment on 18 May 2019, for their commitment and hard work, and to bilateral, regional and international partners for their significant contributions to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.