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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, gender and socioeconomic developments in Guinea-Bissau since my report of 19 August 2019 ([S/2019/664](#)), as well as on progress in the United Nations transition process ahead of the drawdown and closure of UNIOGBIS.

2. During the reporting period, I appointed Rosine Sori-Coulibaly (Burkina Faso) as my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, effective 25 August. She assumed her duties in Bissau on 5 September. I also appointed Mamadou Diallo (Guinea) as my Deputy Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau and Resident Coordinator, effective 14 October. He assumed his duties in Bissau on 9 November.

II. Major developments

A. Political situation

3. Since my previous report, Guinea-Bissau has experienced positive political developments, with direct implications for long-term stability. Most notably, notwithstanding initial delays marked by political divisions within the National Assembly, the Government's programme was approved in mid-October. In addition, the presidential election was held peacefully within the legally mandated time frame in 2019, despite taking place in an atmosphere of deep mistrust and polarized positions among political actors. Recurrent political tensions highlighted by the opposition's endeavours to derail the electoral calendar and the attempt by the President, José Mário Vaz, to install a new government in late October threatened the country's stability and the unity of the governing alliance. The united response under



the leadership of the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) and the good offices of the international community were crucial in preventing a protracted political crisis and ensuring the conclusion of the electoral cycle. While the presidential election should represent a step towards stability, uncertainty still plagues the country and substantial challenges persist in the aftermath.

4. On 27 August, the Government submitted its programme to the National Assembly for consideration. Tensions between the majority coalition and the opposition began to rise steadily over the approval of the programme. The opposition also opposed the idea of the Government, led by the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde, PAIGC), organizing the election, and challenged the legality of the exercise to correct the voters' register. Against this backdrop, an ECOWAS high-level ministerial delegation was deployed to Bissau on 9 September to assess the implementation of the decisions taken at the fifty-fifth ordinary summit of its Authority of Heads of State and Government, held in Abuja on 29 June. In its final communiqué, the delegation stressed, *inter alia*, that the Government must remain in place until the presidential election was held and that, in the absence of consensus, the voters' register used for the legislative elections should be maintained for the presidential poll.

5. Similarly, a delegation from the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries visited Bissau from 12 to 14 September to urge all political actors to maintain the date of the presidential election and ensure a peaceful process. On 7 October, a joint mission of ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the United Nations to Bissau issued a joint communiqué, reiterating the need to maintain the current Government and the electoral calendar. In response, the Movimento de Alternância Democrática (Movement for Democratic Change, MADEM-G15) party held a press conference on 8 October, stating that the decision by ECOWAS to keep the Government in office until the presidential election was legally flawed. The Partido da Renovação Social (Party for Social Renewal, PRS) also issued a press release, requesting the international community to respect the sovereignty and Constitution of Guinea-Bissau.

6. The parliamentary opposition bloc repeatedly criticized the electoral process. On 10 September, MADEM-G15 and PRS reiterated their objection to the exercise to correct the voters' register. Both parties argued that the exercise lacked a legal basis and criticized the newly established position of Secretary of State for Electoral Management.

7. Following unsuccessful attempts, the National Assembly eventually held a plenary session on 15 October and approved the Government's programme, despite the boycott of the session by the opposition bloc.

8. Between 3 and 25 September, in preparation for the presidential election, the Supreme Court of Justice received 19 applications for candidacies, including from one female applicant. On 16 October, the Supreme Court published the list of the 12 qualified candidates. There were three independent candidates (José Mário Vaz (incumbent President), Carlos Gomes Júnior and Mutaro Intai Djabi) and nine candidates backed by political parties, namely Domingos Simões Pereira (PAIGC), Umaro Sissoco Embaló (MADEM-G15), Nuno Gomes Nabiam (Asssembleia do Povo Unido – Partido Democrático da Guiné-Bissau (United People's Assembly – Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau, APU-PDGB)), Idrissa Djaló (Partido da Unidade Nacional (Party for National Unity, PUN)), Mamadú Iaiá Djaló (Partido da Nova Democracia (New Democracy Party, PND)), António Afonso Té (Partido Republicano para a Independência e Desenvolvimento (Independent Republican Party for Development, PRID)), Gabriel Fernando Indi (Partido Unido Social

Democrático (United Social Democratic Party, PUSD)), Vicente Fernandes (Partido da Convergência Democrática (Democratic Convergence Party, PCD)) and Baciro Djá (Frente Patriótica de Salvação Nacional (Patriotic Front for National Salvation, FREPASNA)). Significantly, the main traditional opposition party, PRS, did not field a candidate, and no qualified women candidates were approved.

9. On 19 October, the National Electoral Commission held its first plenary session, with the participation of candidates' representatives, and conducted a draw to determine the order of the candidates' names on the ballot paper. Representatives of Mr. Vaz, Mr. Gomes Júnior, Mr. Gomes Nabiam and Mr. Embaló boycotted the session, citing the lack of clarity on the exercise to correct the voters' register. On 22 October, the Commission reconvened its plenary session and decided to proceed with the voters' register used for the legislative elections. On 24 October, it requested the four defaulting candidates to provide their photographs required for the ballot paper by 26 October. All four candidates complied, following confirmation by the Commission that the voters' register would later be audited by ECOWAS technical experts to guarantee its integrity.

10. With mounting tensions, in particular following the death of a protester in unclear circumstances during an opposition demonstration on 26 October, the President invited political parties with parliamentary representation for consultations on the political situation on 28 October. PAIGC, PND and União para a Mudança (Union for Change, UM) declined the invitation. Later that day, the President convened the Council of State, a 15-member advisory organ, for further consultations, following which he issued a decree dismissing the Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, citing the Constitution, in which it is stated that the President can dismiss the Government in the event of a severe political crisis that undermines the normal functioning of the institutions of the State.

11. On 29 October, the President appointed and swore in Faustino Fudut Imbali of PRS as the new Prime Minister. On the same day, ECOWAS issued a communiqué in which, inter alia, it stated that it deemed the decree dismissing Mr. Gomes from his role as Prime Minister to be illegal, reaffirmed its support for Mr. Gomes and his Government and stressed that all those who impeded the electoral process would be subject to sanctions. The African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union, as well as the Governments of Angola, France, Portugal, Spain and the United States of America, issued statements in support of the ECOWAS stance. At the national level, PAIGC, PUN and the Partido Democrático para o Desenvolvimento (Democratic Party for Development, PDD) issued separate statements, strongly condemning the President's actions. Youth organizations, the Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League, the Movement of Conscientious and Nonconformist Citizens and the National Civil Society Movement for Peace, Democracy and Development issued separate communiqués, echoing those sentiments.

12. From 27 to 30 October, the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2048 \(2012\)](#) concerning Guinea-Bissau and Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations, Anatolio Ndong Mba, visited Bissau to assess the political situation and the implementation of the sanctions regime in line with Council resolution [2048 \(2012\)](#). He encouraged relevant stakeholders to continue to respect the constitutional order, ensure a peaceful election and complete the handover of power to the future President.

13. In response to the worrying turn of events, on 29 October, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, General Biaguê Nan Tan, convened the Supreme Military Council, composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the army, the navy and the air force and the Chiefs of Divisions. On 30 October, he convened a meeting with the

leadership of all security institutions, including the public order police and national guard. During these meetings, he reiterated his orders for the military and security forces to refrain from all acts that violate the constitutional order.

14. Despite national and international condemnations, on 31 October, the President swore in his new Government, composed primarily of members of MADEM-G15, PRS and APU-PDGB. In his address, he stated that the new Government was formed based on a new parliamentary majority and was mandated to organize the presidential election on 24 November, without external interference, and to combat drug trafficking and fight corruption.

15. On 2 and 3 November, an ECOWAS ministerial delegation undertook a visit to Bissau. In its final communiqué, it reiterated its full support for the Prime Minister, Mr. Gomes, stressed the illegality of the decree dismissing the Government led by him, commended national security and defence forces for their neutrality and underscored that those who had taken decisions that impeded the holding of the presidential election would be subject to individual sanctions.

16. Nonetheless, the President convened the National Defence Council and a meeting with the commanders of the security forces, on 4 and 5 November, respectively, to discuss the implementation of his decision to replace the Government. During the meetings, the military and security forces reiterated their neutrality concerning the political crisis and advised the President against the use of force to carry out his decree.

17. On 6 November, ECOWAS demanded the resignation of all members of the “new government”, failing which individual sanctions would be applied. On 8 November, the new “Prime Minister”, Mr. Imbali, submitted his resignation. Furthermore, on 8 November, the ECOWAS Authority held an extraordinary session on Guinea-Bissau in Niamey, following which it reiterated its recognition of the Government led by Mr. Gomes and decided to strengthen the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) to address any challenges before, during and after the presidential election. The Authority also stated that any use of the armed or security forces to carry out illegal action would be considered a coup d’état and would result in the imposition of sanctions on those responsible. On the same day, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union pledged its support to ECOWAS for targeted sanctions against individuals and entities undermining efforts to achieve a lasting solution to the political and constitutional crisis.

18. The outcome of the ECOWAS extraordinary summit was criticized by opposition parties and political representatives as an infringement on national sovereignty. On 14 November, a delegation of ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff visited Bissau to assess options for the reinforcement of ECOMIB. The decision, based on the recommendation of the Chief of the General Staff of Guinea-Bissau, was to strengthen the police component, given its primary role in securing the election. Subsequently, a police unit of 140 elements from Togo was dispatched to Bissau in batches ahead of the election, to reinforce the capacity of ECOMIB to implement electoral security tasks.

19. The first round of the presidential election was held on 24 November, without any major incident. The poll targeted 761,676 registered voters in the nine regions. Voter turnout was 74.37 per cent. The election was observed by international missions from the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Nigeria, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States, and was also monitored by several civil society organizations, which all deemed the process to be credible and transparent. On 27 November, the National Electoral Commission released the provisional results for

the first round, with Mr. Pereira (PAIGC) and Mr. Embaló (MADEM-G15) as the lead contenders, with 40.13 and 27.65 per cent of votes, respectively; the results were confirmed as final on 2 December. Several candidates issued statements accepting the results.

20. Ahead of the second round, political alliances were formed in support of the two candidates. Mr. Pereira succeeded in gaining the support of small political parties and allies and of most of the candidates who had been unsuccessful in the first round. Meanwhile, Mr. Embaló received the support of Mr. Vaz, Mr. Nabiam of APU-PDGB, Mr. Gomes Júnior and the leader of PRS, Alberto Nambia.

21. The campaign for the second round was conducted from 13 to 27 December. Although it was devoid of any security incidents, it was characterized by a rise in inflammatory rhetoric that contributed to tensions and divisions across the country along ethno-religious lines. The second round of the election was held peacefully on 29 December, with voter turnout of 72.67 per cent.

22. The second round was observed by international missions from the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as African civil society groups, which issued statements, indicating that the electoral process had been carried out in a free, fair and credible manner. The process was also monitored by several national civil society organizations, which issued similar statements, affirming that it had been peaceful and credible without major incidents.

23. On 1 January 2020, the National Electoral Commission announced the provisional results, indicating that Mr. Embaló was the winner with 53.55 per cent of the votes cast, while Mr. Pereira obtained 46.45 per cent. On 3 January, the PAIGC candidate filed a complaint with the Supreme Court of Justice, challenging the results, claiming electoral fraud and requesting a recount. On 11 January, the Supreme Court stated that it could not rule on the “merits of the case” in the absence of the official minutes of the Commission’s plenary session, a document that contains the national tabulation and electoral operations, as well as protests and counter-protests presented by party representatives and the Commission’s decisions. The official minutes are considered a legal procedural requirement for completion of the electoral process, in accordance with the electoral law. On 14 January, the Commission convened a plenary session, which included candidates’ representatives, to consider the minutes and the national results tally. However, given the lack of consensus at the session, the Commission’s executive secretariat exercised its powers under the electoral law and approved the minutes. These were subsequently submitted to the Supreme Court and the two candidates. On 17 January, the Commission issued a press statement, outlining the steps taken to implement the Court’s decision and indicating its compliance with the legal requirements, having considered the provisional results as final. However, on the same day, the Supreme Court clarified its ruling, at the request of PAIGC, stating that compliance with the electoral procedures required the Commission to redo the national tabulation, with cumulative regional tabulations, prior to the announcement of the provisional results. On 24 January, the Supreme Court reiterated its directive to the Commission to redo the tabulation of the national results. On 30 January, an ECOWAS ministerial visit to Bissau recommended that the Commission verify the national tabulation of the second round by the regional electoral commissions, under the aegis of ECOWAS, in the presence of the candidates’ representatives, and that minutes of the verification process be prepared. It was specified that this verification process must be carried out no later than 7 February. The date for the handover ceremony to the future President is yet to be determined.

B. Security situation

24. Although the overall security situation remained relatively stable during the reporting period, it was overshadowed by persistent political tensions among political stakeholders, against the backdrop of worsening socioeconomic conditions that provoked frequent strikes by aggrieved workers in the education and public health sectors. A demonstration by opposition parties on 26 October allegedly led to the death of an opposition supporter.

25. To ensure the security of the presidential election, a joint command was established, composed of the police, the national guard, the armed forces and ECOMIB, with defined roles and activities. The armed forces served as the third line of security, after the police and the national guard. The reinforced ECOMIB forces continued to provide support to secure the electoral process.

C. Human rights situation

26. Notwithstanding sustained advocacy within the context of the United Nations transition plan in the country, Guinea-Bissau has yet to address past human rights violations and establish a national human rights institution compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

27. The reporting period was characterized by concerns regarding the right to freedom of expression, including the use of inflammatory speech, and freedom of assembly, including the use of excessive force by law enforcement agencies to disperse demonstrations. On 26 October, the police used force and tear gas to disperse an attempted protest called for by opposition groups, namely APU-PDGB, MADEM-G15 and PRS, leading to six verified injuries. The circumstances surrounding the death of an individual that same day are being investigated by the Prosecutor General. The Government has also requested an inquiry and expert opinion to be carried out by international experts, under the auspices of the United Nations, into the death.

28. Inflammatory language in the media, including on social media, sometimes amounting to hate speech and appeals to divisive religious sentiments, remained a concern during the electoral period.

D. Social, economic and humanitarian situation

29. Guinea-Bissau fell from 177 to 178 in the ranking of the 2019 edition of the *Human Development Report*, published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), based on data drawn since 2018. Poverty levels have stagnated in terms of education, income and health, with a life expectancy of 58 years. Gross domestic product per capita stood at \$622.10 in 2018, with a poverty rate of 69 per cent. Almost one third of children between the ages of 6 and 11 years have never been to school.

30. The economic situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile. The political environment has hampered the Government's ability to focus on the country's economic performance and on improving the living conditions of the population. The economy continues to rely heavily on the production of cashew nuts, which constitutes more than 90 per cent of its exports. Farm-gate prices fell below the 2019 reference price of 500 West African CFA francs (\$0.85) per kg.

31. The deterioration of public finances, on account of falling revenues and an increase in public spending, exacerbated the State's inability to meet its financial

obligations. In line with the criteria required for a new programme supported by the International Monetary Fund, the Government issued treasury bonds in October, which helped to clear the accumulated debt service arrears and support current expenditure.

32. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have focused efforts on strengthening the Ministry of Public Health and the delivery of nutrition services to vulnerable populations, including women, children and people living with HIV/AIDS. The Ministry of Public Health, supported by UNFPA and UNICEF, also addressed institutional weaknesses through the validation of a revised national policy on reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health on 12 September and of the strategic national HIV plan on 17 December.

33. Food insecurity and chronic malnutrition remain a challenge. It was revealed following a survey on food security and nutrition conducted by the Government in September, with WFP support, that 34.2 per cent of the rural population was food-insecure, showing a deterioration in the situation compared with 2016 (30 per cent), partly due to falling income from cashew nut sales. WFP continued to provide meals in over 850 primary schools in 2019, reaching 180,000 children, representing 10 per cent of the population. The Government, with technical assistance from WFP, published a law on school meals at the end of August 2019.

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

34. UNIOGBIS continued to implement its mandate in line with Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), focusing on the reprioritization of its tasks and planning for its phased drawdown, including through the implementation of joint programmatic activities with national partners and the United Nations country team, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

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

35. UNIOGBIS continued its engagement with key national and international partners in Guinea-Bissau to foster political dialogue and national reconciliation, lay the groundwork for the implementation of the institutional reforms envisaged in the Conakry Agreement and inform the United Nations transition plan. In this regard, my Special Representative held regular consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including the President of Guinea-Bissau, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, leaders of political parties, presidential candidates and representatives of civil society, highlighting their respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring social cohesion, stability and peacebuilding.

36. Furthermore, UNIOGBIS encouraged religious leaders to actively participate in peace dialogue initiatives. On 21 October, religious leaders discussed the political situation in the country and strategized on joint initiatives to facilitate dialogue among political stakeholders. On 31 October, they issued a joint statement, appealing for tolerance, respect for the rule of law, media professionalism and the collective

responsibility to ensure peace and social cohesion. In December, they also convened an ecumenical vigil, while undertaking quiet diplomacy initiatives with presidential candidates, to promote peace and stability throughout the campaign period.

37. As part of its efforts in support of political and institutional stabilization, and with financial assistance from the Peacebuilding Fund, UNIOGBIS provided support to the Organizing Commission of the National Conference towards the implementation of its mandate on peace and development in Guinea-Bissau. From 2 to 13 September, the Organizing Commission encouraged presidential candidates to commit themselves to reconciliation and the holding of the National Conference within the first year of their mandate.

38. The Peacebuilding Commission continued to serve as a platform to sustain international attention and mobilize support for development and peacebuilding priorities in Guinea-Bissau. Between 22 and 24 October, the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau country configuration of the Commission, Mauro Vieira (Brazil), visited Bissau to explore avenues to support the national peace and development agenda, as well as the implementation of key reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement. He met with the President, the Prime Minister, senior government officials and political party and civil society representatives.

39. A network of civil society organizations, supported by UNIOGBIS with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, held regional consultations and presented the results in December, articulating the common agenda of civil society on the reforms and the way forward for their implementation. A manual, in which indicators for monitoring reforms were defined, was also produced. These efforts contributed to the creation of conditions conducive to the implementation of the reforms after the electoral period.

B. 2019 presidential election

40. Joint international mediation efforts led by ECOWAS were critical in keeping the electoral calendar and process on track. An ECOWAS delegation conducted a pre-electoral assessment mission from 19 to 23 August to evaluate progress and assess challenges in the organization of the election. ECOWAS was particularly concerned with the deep distrust among national actors and the objections raised regarding the exercise to correct the voters' register. Furthermore, following the decision of the National Electoral Commission at its reconvened plenary session held on 22 October to use the same voters' register used for the legislative elections for the presidential poll, ECOWAS experts carried out an audit and reported that the voters' register was "intact and unaltered".

41. The Government developed a consolidated electoral budget of \$5.19 million to cover the activities of all State entities involved in the organization of the presidential election. In support of mobilizing funding for the electoral basket fund managed by UNDP for the 2018–2019 electoral cycle, UNIOGBIS and UNDP undertook several fundraising efforts with representatives of the international community in Bissau and Dakar. Guinea-Bissau contributed over \$700,000. The international community, namely Brazil, China, Japan and Portugal, as well as ECOWAS, the European Union, the West African Economic and Monetary Union and UNDP, responded positively by contributing \$3.59 million, in cash and in kind. Italy, Nigeria and the African Union have yet to disburse their pledges.

42. Between August 2019 and January 2020, my Special Representative and the President of the National Electoral Commission co-chaired eight meetings of the High-level Steering Committee on Elections, with the participation of the international community and electoral management bodies, to monitor progress of the electoral process. These meetings resulted in the strengthening of national

coordination and the harmonization of international partners' assistance, as well as in overcoming challenges affecting the smooth conduct of the election.

43. The United Nations integrated electoral team provided technical assistance and strategic advice to the national electoral management bodies, focusing on operations and logistical planning, budget preparation and management, and procurement. The United Nations regional electoral advisers supported the regional election commissions in implementing their operational activities and ensuring the effective use of donor resources.

44. UNIOGBIS provided technical assistance to the working group on women and social inclusion of the National Electoral Commission, to mainstream gender in the electoral process. This resulted, for the first time, in the adoption by the Commission on 18 October of a new gender policy to integrate gender into all programmes. The policy is aimed at identifying and reducing discrimination and barriers to the participation of women in all electoral operations and increasing their participation as voters, candidates, observers, representatives of political parties and Commission staff.

45. UNIOGBIS, with resourcing from the Peacebuilding Fund, supported the National Media Council in developing a code of conduct for the media coverage of elections. On 30 October, the code was signed by 20 media outlets and media associations. In addition, a media monitoring and fact-checking team was established within the Council to monitor media coverage of the elections, with technical support from UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund.

46. On 28 and 29 October, UNIOGBIS, UNFPA and UN-Women, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, organized a workshop for election campaign managers, candidates' representatives and communications officers, National Electoral Commission officials, the media and civil society actors, including women and youth representatives. In the workshop, guidance was provided on electoral campaign conduct and messaging, the electoral legal framework, campaign financing, political communication and conflict prevention during elections. Stakeholders' ability to strategize, encourage peaceful conduct during the campaign, promote gender mainstreaming and refrain from using hate speech was enhanced. By way of follow-up, UNIOGBIS and UNFPA, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, supported the radio and television broadcast of three live presidential debates, with the active participation of a group of 15 women and young people. These unprecedented interactive programmes with presidential candidates were lauded as a tangible step towards strengthening the democratic process, inclusivity and issue-based campaigns.

47. Six networks of civil society organizations, supported by UNIOGBIS, UNFPA, UN-Women and the European Union, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, developed an electoral code of conduct for the presidential election and established a civil society electoral monitoring cell to identify risks and threats to the electoral process. In this regard, 422 monitors were deployed across the country, including 181 women. The cell operated from 23 to 25 November for the first round of the election and from 28 to 30 December for the second round. Supported by UNIOGBIS, the national human rights defenders network (comprising 41 members, including 19 women) also monitored the human rights aspects of the electoral process. National and international stakeholders commended civil society initiatives for their significant contribution to a peaceful electoral environment.

C. Review of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau

48. Recurrent political tensions linked to the electoral preparations dominated the political sphere, effectively stalling the activities of the National Assembly. The unresolved impasse within the Assembly hampered its ability to focus on the review of the Constitution, among other activities. The investiture of new members of the parliament required the restructuring of the ad hoc commission for the revision of the Constitution for the development of a technical draft. Nonetheless, the UNIOGBIS team of experts charged with providing technical support for the revision of the Constitution continued to engage with members of the ad hoc commission.

49. Work on the annotated version of the Constitution, elaborated by the Faculty of Law of Bissau in 2018, continued with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. The annotated Constitution was discussed by civil society organizations, experts from the Faculty of Law and representatives of the National Assembly ad hoc commission, to develop synergies and establish a common agenda on the review. UNIOGBIS supported the development and publication of the annotated Constitution, as well as the printing of an illustrated poster about the Constitution. These efforts also contributed to defining a common strategy for a future inclusive process for consultations on the constitutional review.

D. Promotion and protection of human rights

50. Targeted training of trainers on human rights for the armed forces was conducted from 20 to 23 August for 30 officers, including 14 female officers, and trainers from the Ministry of Defence and the National Defence Institute.

51. UNIOGBIS also provided technical assistance to the Government, through the National Commission on Human Rights, for the elaboration of the State report to the third cycle of the universal periodic review, which was submitted on 1 October. In the final quarter of 2019, UNIOGBIS issued a report on the right to participate in political and public affairs, covering the period from January 2018 to July 2019.

52. In November, UNIOGBIS finalized a manual on human rights and elections and disseminated 300 copies to national monitors, international election observers, civil society organizations and the human rights defenders network as a tool for monitoring and observing the election. UNIOGBIS continued to enhance the early warning capacities of human rights defenders to identify and address possible human rights violations within the electoral context.

53. As a measure to mainstream human rights in key sectors and State institutions, in November, UNIOGBIS supported the National Institute of Education Development in finalizing pedagogical tools on education for global citizenship, human rights and peace in primary education. From 6 to 19 December, six trainers and 125 teachers were trained across the country.

E. Combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

54. In line with the UNIOGBIS mandate and the United Nations transition process, joint advocacy efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNIOGBIS resulted in the Government's renewed commitment to enhancing the national response mechanisms to combat drug trafficking and related crimes. Efforts to establish a case progression and management database in the country were accompanied by capacity-building activities for the Prosecutor General's office, the

judiciary police, the Attorney General's office and the courts, including the Supreme Court of Justice.

55. The study on the prevalence of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Guinea-Bissau, jointly commissioned by UNODC, UNDP and UNIOGBIS as part of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, was finalized on 16 November. The scope of the study encompasses the origins, transit routes and destinations of the illicit drug trade, to inform strategic decision-making at the national and subregional levels. With direct support from UNODC and UNIOGBIS, national authorities entered into bilateral intelligence-sharing and operational agreements with Brazil and Portugal, in addition to agreements signed in 2019 with the Gambia and Senegal.

56. The successful development of a strategic national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, as the road map for the justice, security and judicial institutions of Guinea-Bissau, demonstrated the country's commitment to national appropriation. In this regard, UNODC and UNIOGBIS provided the requisite technical and financial support for the development of the plan, the conduct of an assessment and the identification of vulnerable communities. The draft strategic plan was validated on 9 December by national stakeholders, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

57. UNODC and UNIOGBIS also continued to provide technical guidance to relevant law enforcement agencies to enhance their capacities to combat drug trafficking. Between 31 August and 2 September, United Nations technical support was provided to the judiciary police in the conduct of operation "Navara", which resulted in the seizure of 1,869 kg of cocaine, the arrest of 10 suspects (with 2 still at large) and the confiscation of vehicles, equipment and financial resources, as well as the freezing of bank accounts. The seizure is the largest so far in Guinea-Bissau, exceeding the 789 kg of cocaine seized during a previous operation on 9 March.

58. In order to enhance national capacities in drug trafficking surveillance at the seaport of Bissau, from 2 to 12 December, UNIOGBIS and UNODC, in collaboration with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, facilitated a course on maritime security and transnational organized crime for law enforcement officers.

59. UNODC and UNIOGBIS continued to strengthen the capacity of national law enforcement agencies and security institutions on border control and management by assisting with the deployment of a Mobile INTERPOL Network Database device and equipment, resulting in the enhanced capacity of key border posts in the detection of illegal trafficking. On 4 and 5 December, UNODC and UNIOGBIS facilitated simulation exercises with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) at the regional border post in the northern town of Djegue, for the detection of trafficking in drugs and human beings, stolen vehicles and illegal migration.

60. UNODC and UNIOGBIS support for the Airport Communication Project, in collaboration with INTERPOL, on enhanced intelligence-gathering, resulting in an increased number of drug seizures (a total of 2.67 tons of cocaine seized and 23 arrests made in 2019, compared with 33.678 kg seized and 23 arrests made in 2018), the prosecution of 14 cases and conviction and sentencing in 8 cases, with five trials still ongoing. In September, UNODC offered specialized training on countering drug trafficking and transnational organized crime for the judiciary police, the Transnational Crime Unit, the joint airport interdiction task force, the National Guard, the public order police, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the judiciary, with support from UNIOGBIS and the federal police of Brazil.

61. In December, with UNIOGBIS support, UNODC, in close cooperation with the Embassy of Brazil in Bissau, facilitated capacity-building by a judge from Brazil specialized in the adjudication of drug trafficking cases, to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Prosecutor General and the judiciary in dealing with high-profile cases.

F. Incorporating a gender perspective into peacebuilding

62. During the reporting period, key achievements included the high level of participation by women in the electoral process, the implementation by the National Electoral Commission of its gender policy for the presidential election, the reactivation of the Institute for Women and Children of the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Protection and the increasing engagement of government entities in gender policy and the women and peace and security agenda. The parity law of 2018 played a critical part in generating such momentum.

63. With the support of UNIOGBIS, UN-Women and UNFPA, and with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Protection organized six conferences in October and November on the theme of the female face of government. The initiative brought together several women in ministerial and leadership positions, civil society, professionals, young people and students, showcasing the unprecedented participation of women in Government. Strategies for empowering women and combating all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence were formulated, with key policy points addressed to women in ministerial positions. The conference series was broadcast by national and community radio stations and widely disseminated on social media.

64. UNIOGBIS, in coordination with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, and with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, provided technical support to the Institute for Women and Children for the development of an inter-institutional mechanism with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Protection, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Public Administration, to coordinate the response to sexual and gender-based violence and provide integrated support to victims.

65. Supported by UNIOGBIS, UNFPA and UNDP, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the Women Mediators Network engaged in conflict resolution efforts to address a long-standing land dispute between five villages in the São Domingos sector of the Cacheu Region. Between September and December, the Network and civil society partners conducted training programmes on peacebuilding with the communities and their leaders. National authorities worked in partnership with the dialogue. From 15 to 18 November, UNIOGBIS provided technical support for a training course for 20 local women leaders on the role of women in conflict management organized by the Network. Some 75 traditional leaders and representatives from the five villages met on 9 December to reach an agreement on the land dispute through traditional peacemaking mechanisms.

G. Mobilization, harmonization and coordination of international assistance

66. UNIOGBIS leadership convened and chaired regular meetings of international partners on the evolving political situation and to harmonize strategies, common messages and advocacy responses in support of the country's political stability before, during and after the presidential election. The international community's harmonized messaging and concerted responses reinforced the mediation efforts led by ECOWAS

to successfully de-escalate tensions. In particular, the group of five international partners in Bissau (ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the United Nations) coordinated their actions through joint initiatives and advocacy efforts to address political tensions and impress upon political actors the need to abide by the Conakry Agreement and respect the electoral calendar. Moreover, regular meetings of the High-level Steering Committee on Elections, co-chaired by my Special Representative and the President of the National Electoral Commission, were instrumental in maintaining a focus on the electoral process.

67. My Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, engaged with regional stakeholders and participated in the joint mission of ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the United Nations to Bissau on 7 October. He also travelled to Bissau for the first and second rounds of the presidential election in support of the good offices efforts of my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau.

68. On 27 September, my Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau briefed the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group for West and Central Africa, in Dakar, on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and explored areas for collaboration within the framework of the UNIOGBIS transition and drawdown in 2020. Follow-up action is being coordinated to discuss technical collaboration and joint planning in the elaboration of the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Guinea-Bissau.

69. On 14 January 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, travelled to Guinea-Bissau, where she met the outgoing President, the Speaker of Parliament, the two presidential candidates, the group of five and other partners to assess the political situation in the aftermath of the presidential election. During her meetings with national stakeholders, she appealed for calm, underscoring the need to accept the electoral outcome in accordance with the law, in the interest of national stability. She also called for political dialogue, national reconciliation and the urgent implementation of reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement.

H. United Nations transition plan and drawdown arrangements

70. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), based on a three-phase drawdown, the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau established the minimum requirements and goals to be achieved before the prospective closure of UNIOGBIS before the end of December 2020, namely: (a) the completion of elections within the legally mandated time frame in 2019; (b) the creation of conditions conducive to the implementation of the reform agenda and the integration of peacebuilding priorities into the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; and (c) the gradual drawdown and the transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and other partners.

71. The United Nations in Guinea-Bissau developed an integrated transition road map and calendar with benchmarks identified for the three goals, conducted a conflict analysis and identified a number of peacebuilding priorities and residual mandated tasks to be assumed by the United Nations country team, UNOWAS and other partners. UNIOGBIS engaged with the country team in the development of a conflict analysis and the Common Country Assessment to ensure the integration of peacebuilding priorities into the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2021–2025 and to advance implementation of

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals in Guinea-Bissau. These actions were undertaken to guarantee the adoption of coherent perspectives in developing a common United Nations vision on the way forward.

72. In order to support the United Nations transition and facilitate the seamless transfer of UNIOGBIS residual mandated tasks to partners, the Peacebuilding Fund mobilized \$4 million. The projects will be aimed at strengthening: (a) the United Nations country team's capacity to continue to support the reform agenda outlined in the Conakry Agreement, including the revision of the Constitution; (b) the capacities of UNODC in combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime; (c) the capacity of ECOWAS in Bissau to lead confidence-building measures and national dialogue with UNOWAS political facilitation and coordination of international action to support mediation efforts; (d) the rule of law capacity of UNDP to continue institutional capacity-building; and (e) national capacity on gender mainstreaming and on the subject of women and peace and security. These projects began in 2020 and will run for 24 months.

73. In order to ensure the involvement of regional organizations and international partners throughout the transition planning and implementation, my Special Representative conducted regional outreach visits to Abuja, Accra, Conakry, Dakar and Niamey to brief ECOWAS leaders, non-resident embassies accredited to Guinea-Bissau and the broader international community. The visits resulted in broader attention being given to the UNIOGBIS drawdown, while highlighting the need for continued strategic and political engagement, the continuation of peacebuilding and the sustaining of the peace agenda through development efforts in Guinea-Bissau.

74. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), in which the Council requested the closure of the four UNIOGBIS regional offices by 31 December 2019, the drawdown continued with the closure of the Buba, Bafatá and São Domingos regional offices in December 2019. The electoral phase having concluded, with the completion of the presidential election, UNIOGBIS will end the services of the electoral staff. Meanwhile, UNDP and other partners will continue to provide electoral support to the relevant electoral management bodies.

75. With a view to its prospective closure by December 2020, UNIOGBIS developed a drawdown plan, outlining key milestones for asset disposal, site closure, archives and records management and human resources reduction. The mission has also undertaken a physical inventory of its assets and preliminary steps to develop an asset disposal plan, including consultation with the United Nations country team on medical and security equipment. A procurement process is under way for outsourced waste management services to ensure responsible and sustainable disposal. UNIOGBIS also developed a provisional staff drawdown plan, indicating the phased departures of national and international personnel in July, October and December 2020.

IV. Cross-cutting issues

A. Integration within the United Nations system

76. During the second half of 2019, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team continued to work in a coherent and integrated manner. The Strategic Policy Group, composed of the Heads of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and UNIOGBIS Section Chiefs, agreed on strategies and modalities to advance the transition, including by identifying residual peacebuilding priorities and mapping the capacities of the country team against those tasks that UNIOGBIS will leave behind

at the various stages of the transition. The integrated transition task team, comprising UNIOGBIS, UNOWAS and the country team, held three meetings during the reporting period. It specifically focused on transition activities and validation, the formulation of the transition plan and calendar, the drawdown plan, the transfer of residual tasks and the preparation of the Peacebuilding Fund transition projects.

77. A United Nations integrated policy framework was developed to ensure that the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework incorporates peacebuilding priorities into the planning cycle for the period 2021–2025. A Programme Management Team was also established in mid-December under the leadership of my Deputy Special Representative and Resident Coordinator to strengthen the integrated efforts leading to the establishment of the Cooperation Framework.

B. Public information

78. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS produced eight radio programmes, reaching at least 100,000 people (data obtained through a media prevalence study). These programmes were focused on providing information about the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence and its new leadership, on the participation of women and young people participation in democracy and on informing the population about the electoral process, as well as on countering misinformation and misperceptions generated through media and social platforms.

79. UNIOGBIS assisted the National Council for Social Communication, with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, in drafting a code of conduct for media coverage of the presidential election and in re-establishing a media monitoring team to oversee its implementation by media outlets, including online media.

80. Between Democracy Day on 15 September and International Day of Peace on 21 September, UNIOGBIS organized meetings on democracy, elections and the rule of law with 200 members of the youth wings of political parties and university students. UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team launched the My World global survey in Guinea-Bissau, with over 20,000 responses collected by early December. Results indicate that peace and justice, education and health rank as the top three priorities. Targeted meetings with traditional leaders, businesses and other focus groups are being organized to collect results and provide a space for awareness-raising.

81. During the reporting period, UNIOGBIS issued seven press statements, organized one press conference and published 10 articles on its website and over 100 posts on Facebook, with 10,000 people reached on average by each post.

C. Staff safety and security

82. The overall security situation for United Nations personnel in Guinea-Bissau remained stable. Except for a few minor road traffic accidents and some reported cases of harassment and intimidation affecting some United Nations security management system personnel. No serious incidents involving staff injury or death were recorded during the reporting period. Security Management Team and United Nations country team meetings were held regularly to discuss security and safety and related issues.

83. In line with regulatory requirements, including on programme criticality and business continuity, efforts have continued to ensure that the overall United Nations security management system and related frameworks are in place for a proper assessment of mandated activities against levels of risks, with appropriate preventive

or remedial responses. During the reporting period, security simulation exercises were conducted based on possible security threat scenarios, in order to test the robustness of existing United Nations security plans and ensure the readiness of United Nations management and staff to respond in the event of an actual security threat. Training was provided to 295 United Nations personnel. UNIOGBIS also strengthened its relationship with national security forces and ECOMIB.

V. Observations and recommendations

84. The completion of the electoral cycle is a critical benchmark in the political and peace process in Guinea-Bissau. I congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau, the authorities, the political leadership, the electoral management bodies and civil society for ensuring a peaceful electoral process that will hopefully set the country on a path towards stability and socioeconomic development. I would like to commend the parties for resorting to legal means to resolve the dispute over the election results. I acknowledge that Mr. Vaz has completed his full term in office. I wish to commend the joint command for the provision of security during the presidential election and their efforts to ensure a peaceful environment.

85. I commend members of the international community for their generous support for the electoral process. Most importantly, I would like to highlight the critical role played by ECOWAS, through its successful mediation efforts, in supporting the aspirations of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

86. I urge the future President of Guinea-Bissau, members of parliament and all political stakeholders to work in a collaborative manner to enact the critical reforms envisioned in the ECOWAS road map, the Conakry Agreement and the stability pact. Renewed efforts should be focused on the implementation of the reform agenda in line with the communiqué issued at the ECOWAS extraordinary summit held on 8 November, in which the need to accelerate implementation of the constitutional reforms was stressed.

87. Notwithstanding the progress achieved, the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains unpredictable. The uncertainty about the majority coalition in the parliament and the persistent mistrust among the political actors will pose challenges to stability and the advancement of a non-partisan approach to the reform agenda. I reiterate my appeal to all political actors in Guinea-Bissau to put their country and the people's interests first and resolve their differences through constructive dialogue and respect for the rule of law.

88. The achievement of durable peace and development in Guinea-Bissau requires a transformative approach based on gender equality, youth engagement and respect for human rights. I encourage national authorities to renew efforts to build a culture of accountability at all levels of the State. Priority must be given to the establishment of an independent national human rights institution, in compliance with the Paris Principles, for the promotion and protection of human rights. Progress in human rights and gender mainstreaming represents a key component across the peacebuilding priorities identified in the framework of the United Nations transition in Guinea-Bissau. I call upon relevant national authorities and political stakeholders to promote and safeguard public and political participation, with special attention given to women and young people.

89. Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime continue to pose existential threats to long-term stability in Guinea-Bissau. The strengthening of land, maritime and air border control is critical in confronting this threat. The development and validation of the national action plan, as a road map for justice, security and judicial institutions in the fight against drug trafficking, is an important and welcome step

forward. The increase in drug seizures, arrests and the prosecution of drug-related cases, and the strengthened bilateral cooperation with the United Nations and other partners, demonstrate the national authorities' commitment to addressing this scourge. Consolidating the gains achieved thus far will require political will at the highest level and reinforced collaboration among relevant actors.

90. At the request of national authorities, the United Nations will continue to provide technical assistance for the implementation of the national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Further international and regional support for relevant judicial, justice and security institutions will be required. I urge the international community to intensify its support for the Government of Guinea-Bissau in its fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.

91. The conclusion of the electoral cycle represents the completion of the first of the three phases of the UNIOGBIS drawdown outlined in Security Council resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#). Full attention will now be directed towards the completion of subsequent phases, leading to the transfer of the mission's residual peacebuilding activities and its gradual drawdown and planned closure by 31 December 2020. In this context, national engagement and close collaboration with United Nations country team, UNOWAS and international partners remain critical.

92. To further bolster the integrated planning on transition, I recommend that UNIOGBIS and the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator conduct comprehensive capacity mapping of the United Nations country team, including non-resident country team members, which will be complemented by a vision and plan for its footprint after the closure of the mission. In that context, the finalization of the resource mobilization strategy and the deployment of staff based on the capacity gaps already identified remain a priority.

93. As the United Nations embarks upon transforming its presence in Guinea-Bissau, bearing in mind the need for a flexible approach to ensure a seamless transfer of responsibilities, I encourage closer cooperation between the Government and the United Nations to ensure national ownership of the process. For the closure of UNIOGBIS, I recommend that its liquidation start immediately following the mandate completion date of 31 December 2020, once all substantive staff have left the mission. It is important to align the timelines for the liquidation and for the United Nations country team in its decision-making related to assets and premises. UNIOGBIS will also continue its efforts to reduce the impact of its closure on the host country environment, in line with international and national laws and United Nations rules and regulations, ensuring the implementation of an environmental assessment of the remaining closing sites to ensure that all considerations are addressed.

94. I would like to commend the ECOWAS leadership, in particular the President of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, in his capacity as Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, and all international partners for their tireless efforts to achieve long-term peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. Sustained international engagement is crucial for peacebuilding and reforms in the post-electoral period. I also wish to commend the group of five international partners for their long-standing commitment to Guinea-Bissau, and to bilateral, regional and international partners for their substantial contribution to peacebuilding in the country.

95. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team, under the leadership of my Special Representative, Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, for their commitment and hard work, as well as for the progress made thus far in the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau.