

ACTION

AG

COPY

DSG

cdL

FEB 19 2013

13-01503

OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Confidential

**CONSOLIDATED UPDATE ON GUINEA-BISSAU
(7 TO 13 FEBRUARY 2013)**

This update is limited to inputs received from the UN system by COB on Wednesday, 13 February 2013. Any relevant information received after the cut-off time and date would be included in the next reporting period.

I. THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND

1. On 7 February, at the request of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), UNIOGBIS convened a meeting with international partners during which the party provided its assessment of the ongoing transition and the way forward. The party used the opportunity to express concern that some national stakeholders, including the Social Renewal Party (PRS), were holding parallel meetings instead of supporting the work of the Parliamentary Commission. In addition, they proposed that the transitional period be extended for six-months until November 2013, as opposed to the 18 months earlier proposed by the PRS. Finally, they warned that they would not cooperate with the de facto authorities if the latter failed to include the party's members in the Transitional Government or take account of their proposal on the extension of the transitional period. The PAIGC held a separate meeting with representatives of African countries earlier in the week, which was facilitated by the African Union Office in Bissau.

2. On 7 February, the Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League (LGDH) launched its report on the human rights situation in the country for the period 2010 to 2012. In his speech on the occasion, the LGDH president, Luís Vaz Martins, underscored the importance of Parliament adopting a plan for the restoration of constitutional order within one year. The recommendations contained in the report include the creation of an international court to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for political assassinations "due to the manifest incapacity of the national authorities"; an amendment to the Constitution to allow for the independence of the Office of the Prosecutor General from the executive branch; and ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a step towards combating impunity in Guinea-Bissau and promoting access to justice.

3. On 8 February, the former Minister of Finance under the deposed government, Mr. João Mário Vaz Carlos, who had been arrested on 4 February following his return to the country, was brought before an investigating judge. He was released pending a further hearing on 11 February. No decision was taken as to whether any charges would be brought against him. Although the investigating judge did not consider the need to apply restrictive measures against the movements of Mr. Vaz Carlos, the Office of the Public Prosecutor asked him to surrender his passport, and required him to inform it of any absences from his residence for more than five days. During a press conference on the same day, the Transitional Government described its performance since May 2012 as positive. Transitional Prime Minister, Rui Duarte de Barros, said that the government's main goals included preparations for the holding of general elections, the payment of salaries and fighting impunity through reform of the defense, security, and justice sectors.

APR - 4 2013

POL/04/001

II. EFFORTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

4. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, arrived in Bissau on 13 February and assumed office. He has paid courtesy calls to the de facto authorities, including the President, Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Interior and Justice.

III. REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

5. On 11 February, the Special Representative of the President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Guinea-Bissau and the Transitional Government's Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence left for Abuja to attend meetings on the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Security Sector Reform (SSR) activities in Guinea-Bissau, which was signed between ECOWAS and the Transitional Government in November 2012. Implementation of the MoU is expected to be discussed during the ECOWAS Summit scheduled to take place from 27 to 28 February.

IV. OBSERVATIONS/ANALYSIS

6. The PAIGC's move to inform international partners of its assessment of the ongoing transition and the way forward, as well as its threats to discontinue cooperation with the de facto authorities if its demands are not met, is a clear sign that the party expects to reap benefits following the signing of the "Political Transition Pact" and the "Political Agreement" on 17 January. These expectations include influencing the re-framing of the transitional roadmap and a meaningful representation in a new transitional government. There are also concerns within the party that failure to obtain tangible benefits from signing the above agreements could increase tensions among those within the party who were initially opposed to signing the agreements. The PAIGC's preference of a shorter rather than a longer transitional period seems to be based on its fears that the population could lose sight of its past governance track record, which it sees as an important electoral argument. On the other hand, the opposing parties seem to be seeking a longer period to allow time to build their own governance credentials and to better organize themselves.

7. The lack of official justification for the replacement, on 7 February, of two of the four prosecutors of a Commission established within the Office of the Prosecutor General to investigate financial crimes, and the decision taken by the Prosecutor General to impose stringent measures on the movements of former Minister Vaz Carlos, in contradiction to the findings of the investigating judge, seem to lend credence to statements made by Mr. Vaz Carlos, that his arrest, and the proceedings against him are politically motivated. While some observers see the investigations as necessary to strengthen accountability, it is essential for the process to be conducted in conformity with applicable laws.