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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdou ABARRY, Permanent
Representative of Niger to the Nations, on behalf of the A3+1**

**Briefing of the Security Council on the situation in Guinea-
Bissau**

New York, 10 August 2020

Mr. President,

It is with deep emotion that I would like to inform the Council that a cowardly attack, perpetrated by individuals on motorcycles, took place yesterday in Kouré, a locality 60 km from Niamey.

During that attack, eight human lives were unfortunately lost - two Nigerien and six French.

Following this serious incident, the Nigerien Defense and Security Forces, supported by elements of the Barkhane Force and the US Special Forces, organized the pursuit which resulted, for the time being, in the arrest of one of the alleged assailants.

On this painful occasion, I would like, on behalf of the President of the Republic, the Government and the people of Niger, to express my very sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and the people of France, who have been so deeply affected.

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the A3+1, namely South Africa, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Niger, to commend the efforts to normalize the political situation in Guinea-Bissau and to thank our briefers, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau; Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. M. Joao Genesio, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for the quality of their presentations, which reflect their respective commitment to support the efforts to solve the current political crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

At this time, when the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) nears its closure, due to be completed by 31 December 2020, I would like to congratulate Ms. Sori-Coulibaly and her

entire team for their good offices efforts, which have greatly helped all parties in Guinea-Bissau to resolutely engage in a process to end the crisis.

On behalf of the A3+1, we hope that the significant progress achieved thus far will be extended, including in terms of peacebuilding, by UNOWAS and the United Nations Country Team in Guinea-Bissau.

Indeed, despite the political challenges, progress has been made in terms of downsizing of the Office, including the identification of peacebuilding priorities, which should be pursued jointly by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Country Team.

Mr. President,

Since the end of the electoral process in Guinea Bissau in December 2019, ECOWAS has remained constantly engaged in the search for a lasting solution to the political and institutional crisis in that country.

At this juncture, I would like to commend the sustained commitment of international partners, including the Group of Five, which has made it possible to strengthen the process of stabilizing the political situation in Guinea-Bissau.

I would also like to commend the role and positive impact of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB), whose mandate is coming to an end, following the completion of the electoral process and the gradual normalization of the political situation in that country.

The A3+1 welcomes the establishment of the tripartite Integrated Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism composed of ECOWAS, UNIOGBIS and UNOWAS to support the political and UN transition processes in Guinea-Bissau.

It is clear that Guinea-Bissau is today at a crossroads. As a result, it needs our collective accompaniment and support more than ever.

It is in that spirit that ECOWAS, in its communiqué of 22 April 2020, recognized the victory of Mr. Umaro Sissoko Embaló and urged him to appoint a Prime Minister and establish a new Government by 22 May 2020 at the latest.

In the same communiqué, President Embaló was asked to initiate a reform process with a view to adopting a new constitution to be submitted to a referendum within six months to ensure the country's lasting institutional stability.

In that regard, we welcome the establishment of a Constitutional Review Commission, composed of experienced Bissau Guinean jurists, to lead that process.

The recent approval by the majority of members of parliament of the programme of the new Government should enable the appointment of a Prime Minister to continue the implementation of the programme until a Government of national unity is put in place.

We welcome the proposal of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, to establish a high-level platform to accompany the much-needed reforms in the country needs. Coordination of the many international and regional efforts in Guinea-Bissau is crucial at this stage.

Despite all the efforts that we have commended above, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has struck Guinea Bissau has greatly slowed the pace of implementation of the various reforms under way, as some of the actors have themselves tested positive for the virus.

We encourage the Guinea-Bissau authorities, who have the primary responsibility for ensuring the security of the population, as well as all political actors, to work together to mitigate this threat at this critical time.

The A3+1 welcomes the decision of the West African Health Organization (WAHO), a specialized agency of ECOWAS, to send health kits to all

member countries, including Guinea-Bissau, as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

As I said earlier, Guinea-Bissau is at a crossroads. Indeed, the holding of elections alone cannot resolve the many challenges facing the country. As we transition to a new configuration of UN presence in Guinea-Bissau, we call on the international community to support national initiatives in the context of peacebuilding, particularly in the area of sustainable development, including food security and rural development. The strengthening and modernization of democratic institutions and the reform of the judicial sector are areas where substantial support should be provided. The A3+1 supports the expansion of gender-responsive and youth-focused socio-economic development actions that ensure the participation of diverse Bissau-Guineans.

We congratulate Ambassador Ronaldo Costa FILHO, for the excellent work done by the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, in this regard.

With regard to the issue of drug trafficking, while we are concerned about a possible resurgence of this dangerous phenomenon after the progress made recently through the significant seizures made in March and September 2019, and the condemnation of those involved, we must recognize that Guinea-Bissau is neither a producer nor a consumer of these illicit narcotics.

Guinea-Bissau is quite simply a victim of a situation that is beyond its control, owing to its fragility in terms of the lack of surveillance and monitoring equipment on its many islands, a fragility that is unfortunately accentuated by its political instability.

Today more than ever, the international community should provide greater support to Guinea-Bissau in all areas likely to strengthen its capacity to address this scourge.

In this regard, the A3+1 welcomes the consistent support provided by UNODC in the framework of capacity building for actors engaged in the

fight against illicit drug trafficking and the gateway crimes of terrorism and organized crime, such as corruption and money laundering.

We remain convinced that, through the mobilization of substantial financial resources, Ms. Wally's Office will reinforce the important work it is already doing in that regard.

This could be through increased support to Guinea Bissau in the implementation of its National Strategic Action Plan, adopted in December 2019.

In conclusion, the promotion and protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law are essential for peace, security, development and political stabilization in Guinea Bissau.

To this end, we encourage the defense and security forces of Guinea-Bissau to observe strict neutrality with regard to the ongoing political process, as they have done until now.

I THANK YOU.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1- Though we understand that from a humanitarian point of view, the former Prime Minister, Aristide Gomes, can benefit from the protection of the United Nations Office; why is he allowed to still claim the status of Prime Minister and to intervene in the political arena in this capacity?

2- A Constitutional Review Commission, composed of Bissau-Guinean legal experts has been set up, can you tell us then why the Guinean League of Human Rights (LGDH), Tiniguena, an NGO versed in the defense of biodiversity, the Faculty of Law of Bissau and UNIOGBIS, launched on August 5, 2020, the first annotated version of the present Constitution of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Was this done in agreement with the government?

3- Can the Special Representative tell us some positive actions taken by the current government and how to reinforce them?