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# Security Council Press Statement on Guinea-Bissau

The following Security Council press statement was issued on 31 March by Council President Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom):

The members of the Security Council are following closely the situation in Guinea-Bissau. They were briefed on 28 March 2012 by Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and by Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and heard a statement by the Representative of Guinea-Bissau.

The Security Council emphasizes the need to uphold and respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Guinea-Bissau.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the smooth conduct of the first round of the presidential election on 18 March and commended the people of Guinea-Bissau for their peaceful participation in the democratic process. The members of the Security Council welcomed the financial and technical support provided by Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners, including through provision of electoral observers for the first round of the election. They further welcomed the conclusions of the various observers' missions that the first round of elections was conducted in a free and fair manner.

The members of the Security Council took note of the results released by the National Electoral Commission, as well as the announcement of a run-off election between candidates Carlos Gomes Júnior and Koumba Yalá. The members of the Security Council urged the political parties to engage in dialogue on preparations for the run-off election. The members of the Security Council called upon all political leaders and their supporters to exercise restraint and to refrain from any action that could hamper the electoral process and to resolve their disputes in accordance with the constitutional framework in line with the relevant African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) legal instruments.

The members of the Security Council recognized the role of international partners, especially the African Union, ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking

Countries (CPLP), in supporting national efforts for peacebuilding and reconciliation. In this context, the Council took note of the announcement of a joint mission by the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations to Guinea-Bissau. The members of the Security Council encouraged the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue using his good offices to support national efforts aimed at the holding of peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections.

The members of the Security Council underscored the importance of successful conclusion of the presidential and legislative elections to achieving progress on critical peacebuilding priorities in Guinea-Bissau, in particular on security sector reform, including demobilization of military and police, socio-economic development, fighting impunity and drug trafficking, and taking forward the national dialogue on reconciliation. The members of the Security Council urged Guinea-Bissau's national authorities to continue addressing these issues, and the United Nations, as well as the international community, to continue supporting Guinea-Bissau's national authorities to achieve these aims.

The members of the Security Council emphasised the need for the national authorities in Guinea-Bissau to bring those responsible for any acts of election-related violence to justice. The members of the Security Council reiterated that the Government of Guinea-Bissau bore the primary responsibility for ensuring the security of its population and creating an atmosphere conducive to the peaceful conduct of the elections. They urged the defence and security forces to respect civilian oversight and control of the military, the constitutional order and the rule of law.