



STATEMENT BY THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is deeply concerned about recent political developments in Guinea Bissau, including information on an attempted coup aimed at undermining State institutions and, the creation of artificial obstacles to the ongoing electoral process for the presidential elections due to be held on 24 November 2019, street protest which left one person dead and others injured, and most recently the issuance of the presidential decree on 28 October 2019 dissolving the current government which emerged from the legislative elections of 10 March 2019 and recognised by ECOWAS at the 55th Summit of Heads of State and Government.

2. ECOWAS hereby encourages the authorities to continue ongoing investigations to identify the perpetrators of such acts against institutional order and fish out those responsible for the situations that led to the death of a protester and caused many serious injuries.

3. With regard to Presidential Decree No. 12/2019 of 28 October 2019 dissolving the current Government of Guinea Bissau led by Prime Minister Aristides Gomes, which is clearly illegal, ECOWAS recalls that this was part of the decisions of the ECOWAS Summit of 29 June 2019, following

- i) the end of the term of office of the President of the Republic on 23 June 2019;
- ii) the absence of a legitimate government more than three (3) months after the legislative elections of 10 March 2019;
- iii) the inherent risk of a constitutional vacuum.

Against this backdrop, the Summit decided to entrust the full conduct of government affairs to the newly formed government, pursuant to the Constitution of Guinea Bissau, until the presidential elections.

4. Therefore, ECOWAS reiterates **its full support to the Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes and** his government and urges them to press ahead with preparations for the effective conduct of the presidential elections on 24 November 2019. It is worth recalling, in this context, the following important steps that have been taken:

- i) The decision to use the voter's register resulting from the legislative elections of 10 March 2019;
- ii) The finalisation of the list of candidates for the presidential election.

5. Thus, there is no justification for stopping the electoral process three weeks before the election. This act can throw the country into a chaotic situation.

6. The presidential election will help complete the electoral cycle and restore peace and stability.

7. ECOWAS therefore urgently appeals to all stakeholders to continue their activities under the leadership of the current government in light of the upcoming presidential elections on 24 November 2019.

8. ECOWAS hereby encourages the Defence Forces and the Police to maintain order and security needed for the functioning of the Institutions and for the peaceful conduct of the election campaign.

9. ECOWAS and other partners who have been committed for many years to Guinea Bissau's return to stability and peace shall not accept any action that can compromise peace and stability in the country.

10. Therefore, all those who, in any way, interfere with the smooth continuation of the ongoing electoral process in view of the presidential elections of 24 November 2019 will be subject to sanctions.

11. Lastly, ECOWAS will continue to work with its partners, including the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the CPLP, to find lasting solutions for the stability and development of Guinea Bissau.



Done in Abuja, this 29th day of October 2019

ECOWAS MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE