



## PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

### **Guinea Bissau election well conducted, peaceful and orderly with low turnout after an electoral process tainted by violations of human rights and a climate of fear and intimidation**

**Bissau, 30 June 2009**

*The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) has been in the country Bissau since 6 June 2009 by invitation of the National Election Commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições, CNE) and the government of Guinea Bissau. The EU EOM is headed by Johan Van Hecke, Member of the European Parliament, and is composed of 21 observers from 14 EU member countries. The observers covered all nine regions of the country to assess the electoral process in accordance with international principles for democratic elections and laws of Guinea Bissau. On election day, the observers visited 83 polling stations in 18 of the 27 constituencies (círculos eleitorais) to observe voting and counting. The EU EOM is currently observing the consolidation process and will remain in the country to follow post-election activities and to observe a second round, if necessary. A final report containing an overall assessment and recommendations will be issued within two months after the completion of the election process. The EU EOM is independent in its findings and conclusions, and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, commemorated at the United Nations, New York, in October 2005.*

---

### **Preliminary Conclusions**

- Election day was peaceful and orderly, and voters could freely exercise their franchise. Voting and counting were well administered at the polling station level despite minor irregularities like improper sealing of ballot boxes and some inconsistencies in closing procedures.
- The presence of candidates' representatives during voting and counting in all polling stations visited contributed to enhance the transparency of the process, and offset the absence of domestic observers which is still not allowed by law. No complaints were filed during the different stages of the election.
- The electoral process was conducted under a satisfactory legal framework that guaranteed citizens and candidates the capacity to enjoy their fundamental freedoms and broad political rights, although improvements can be introduced in the future.
- The CNE administered the electoral process in a professional, independent and impartial manner. Some deficiencies in the electoral process observed by EU EOMs in past elections, such as a timely release of international and governmental funds in support of the electoral administration, seemed to have substantially improved and no complaints were received or reported to the EU EOM by election officials. Election preparations were generally carried out on time and according to the electoral calendar.

*This statement is available in Portuguese and English but only the English version is official*

- The three-week electoral campaign was generally held in a peaceful and orderly manner. The climate of insecurity and fear observed mainly in the capital, Bissau, may have contributed to the voters' apathy and lack of enthusiasm during the campaign compared to past elections and to a possible increase in the level of abstention. However, it did not seem to have interfered with the campaign activities or limited the capacity of candidates to convey their messages and of voters to express their preferences.
- Gifting, or vote buying, was reported to the EU EOM as a common practice by some candidates, as well as the use of state resources for campaign purposes and the open participation of public officials in the campaign in favor of a candidate.
- The legal framework generally provides for democratic elections and respects fundamental rights for the conduction of polls in line with international principles. Civil and political freedoms, such as freedom of movement, of assembly, of association and the right to vote and to stand as a candidate are guaranteed by law and widely respected by the national stakeholders and electoral actors.
- The climate of fear, impunity and intimidation after the killings of 5 June might still affect the normal development of the electoral process by impacting negatively on the proper functioning of the legal institutions when dealing with electoral issues.
- The legal requirements for registration of candidates are reasonably in line with international good practices. The framework for registration is clearly established by law providing the opportunity to rectify technicalities, submit missing or incomplete documentation and to challenge disqualification.
- The legal framework generally respects fundamental political and civil rights. However, it lacks provisions for the voting of Guineans abroad (Diaspora) in presidential elections. Consequently, an estimated 200,000 Guineans eligible to vote were disenfranchised. Also, when opting for the no updating of the 2008 voters' register, the electoral officials also left out of the process thousands of eligible voters who did not register during the short period of registration for the past election and those who reached the legal age to vote after that.
- The absence of government financial support created an imbalance during the electoral campaign in detriment of many independent and smaller parties' candidates who were unable to match the organizational capacity and financial power of the most influential candidates. The candidates' incapacity to effectively deploy delegates to all regions and the country's high illiteracy levels impacted negatively on the candidates' ability to efficiently scrutinize the poll. The situation was worsened by the legal impediment to civil society participation in domestic observation.
- For a population estimated now in almost 1.6 million inhabitants, an electoral population of 593,557 voters, or around 40 percent, may be acceptable but it's under the 50 percent average commonly used as a threshold for other developing countries.
- Only one woman was among the 13 presidential candidates. Despite their massive presence in rallies and political meetings, and being majority in the electoral population, there was an inadequate female representation in all executive positions in the national and regional election commissions. In the CNE plenary, which includes an all-male permanent secretariat, there was only one woman among the delegates' representatives and other non-permanent members.

*This statement is available in Portuguese and English but only the English version is official*

- In line with recommendations made by past EU EOMs, civic education campaigns included discussion and messages reflecting the concern with voting based on religion or ethnicity. The conduct of a peaceful and nonviolent campaign and the acceptance of election results as a sign of democratic maturity were also repeated subjects during the campaign and part of a code of conduct signed by most of candidates.
- The public and private media covered the electoral process in a generally neutral tone. Freedom of the press was fully respected, despite the editor of one newspaper being summoned to explain the publication of unofficial versions of the 5 June killings. However, the harsh financial and technical difficulties faced especially by the state owned media impacted negatively on its ability to offer a full coverage of the campaign and delayed the airing of free airtime programs. The private media was able to maintain their readers adequately informed about the electoral process, with different levels of balance but with the same neutral tone of their public counterparts. Some media outlets, however, bypassed the legal prohibition of publishing or airing campaign ads by disguising them as current information.

---

## Preliminary Findings

---

### BACKGROUND

---

The presidential election on 28 June 2009 was called after the assassination of President João Bernardo “Nino” Vieira on 2 March 2009, and it was held less than six months after the election of the new members of the Popular National Assembly (ANP). In the Guinean semi-presidential system, with no vice-president, ANP’s president, Raimundo Pereira, became the interim president of Guinea Bissau. A total of 11 candidates, out of 20 who originally requested their nomination, went after the votes of 593,557 citizens registered in the nine regions of the country. Guineans went to the polls to elect their sixth president since the end of the civil conflict in May 1999, and the three main contenders had already served their country as president, two as interim presidents (Malam Bacai Sanhá and Henrique Rosa) and one as president elected (Kumba Yalá) , deposed before the end of his mandate. There is no elected president in the history of Guinea Bissau who served his full mandate.

The country, already shocked by the death of president “Nino” Vieira, hours after the killing of the chief of staff of the armed forces, general Tagme Na Waie, was again shaken by a series of events that brought a climate of insecurity, intimidation and fear to the country in general and to the electoral process in particular. On 5 June, one of the presidential candidates, a former minister for territorial administration, major Baciro Dabó, was killed after what was officially explained by the State Intelligence Services (*Serviços de Informação do Estado*, SIE) as an attempt to resist a detention order. The same night, Helder Proença, an ex-defense minister and close to another presidential candidate, was also killed for the same reason. Both were members of the ANP representing the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), currently in power. A former prime minister, Faustino Imbalí, was also arrested by persons in military uniform on the same day and has not been in contact with his family ever since; the SIE director had the same fate after refusing to sign a statement on the reasons for the 5 June deaths and arrests. Another presidential candidate, Pedro Infanda, withdrew from the race alleging a lack of security conditions. The president of the Supreme Court of Justice (*Supremo Tribunal de Justiça*, STJ) and the Attorney General were also blank of threats and intimidation forcing them to leave their residences for security reasons.

The events, however, did not affect the start of the electoral campaign on 6 June or the date of the election, which was confirmed by President Pereira. The CNE, though, considered that such events

*This statement is available in Portuguese and English but only the English version is official*

dramatically affected the peaceful and harmonious climate indispensable to an active and inclusive electoral campaign. The European Union Election Observation Mission, through a statement read by its Chief Observer during a press conference on 16 June, identified two main concerns: the fragile security situation and the absence of a level playing field among the candidates. Several candidates, in contacts with the EU EOM, expressed concerns not only regarding their own security, but also about the inexistence of financial support and the use of state resources for electoral purposes. They also believe that the situation of the media, financially unable to adequately cover the electoral process, harmed both candidates and voters: candidates couldn't properly reach the voters and voters couldn't find the adequate information to make their choices.

The military, who have traditionally exercised power beyond their constitutional mandate, assured publicly the existence of security conditions for holding the elections and a peaceful environment. However, a climate of tense calm persisted in the capital, Bissau, although not as intense in the interior. It was also noticed a general disinterest and lack of enthusiasm among voters during the electoral campaign; the few shows of support to candidates and parades of trucks and cars were limited and involved groups of militants of the main political parties, and rallies seemed to attract people more for the caps and t-shirts given away than a real interest to hear the candidates.

When the main governmental and legislative functions are being fulfilled on a provisional basis (the president of the republic, the chief of the armed forces and the president of the legislature are all interims), the election was fundamental to bring continuity, institutional normalization and legitimization of the leadership of the country.

This is the third electoral process observed by the European Union in Guinea Bissau, after the presidential election in 2005 and the legislative election in 2008.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

---

The legal framework in Guinea Bissau generally provides for democratic elections although improvements can be introduced for future elections. Governed by the Constitution of 1984 (last amended in 1996) along with a set of four main electoral laws,<sup>1</sup> the legal framework respects fundamental rights and provides for the conduct of democratic polls in line with international principles for democratic elections. Civil and political freedoms, such as freedom of movement, of assembly, of association and the right to vote and to stand as a candidate are guaranteed by law and widely respected by national stakeholders and parties. Access to participation in all aspects of public life, as well as equal rights and opportunities for women and men in regard to elections, is broadly reflected in the legal framework.

Guinea Bissau is politically organized under a semi-presidential system with a president of the republic, a Popular National Assembly (*Assembleia Nacional Popular*, ANP) and a government headed by a prime minister. The president is directly elected by absolute majority (50 percent plus one vote) for a five-year mandate and can be reelected for one term; the 100 members of the ANP are elected for a four-year mandate under a proportional system, and the prime minister is named by the president of the republic according to the election results and party composition of the assembly<sup>2</sup>. While the legal framework generally respects fundamental rights, it lacks provisions for the voting of the Diaspora (Guineans residing in Europe and Africa) in presidential elections. It is estimated that around 200,000 Guineans were eligible to vote and consequently disenfranchised. It also prohibits domestic electoral observation leaving it up to

---

<sup>1</sup> Law on Voter Registration, Law on the Election of the President and the National Popular Assembly, Law on the National Election Commission and Law on International Election Observation.

<sup>2</sup> Article 68/g of the Constitution.

political parties the monitoring of the electoral process. The political parties' incapacity to effectively deploy delegates to all polling stations and the country's high illiteracy levels impact negatively on the parties' ability to effectively scrutinize the poll.

Other shortcomings of the legal framework that should be addressed include the CNE's lack of normative power regarding the updating of electoral regulations and its financial dependency on governmental budgetary support. Additionally, there is a need to reconcile the electoral law with the Constitution to avoid conflicts, like the timeframes for holding of elections, and to adapt these timeframes to the real organizational capacity of the electoral administration and to clarify the ambiguities of the law.

## **INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

---

Democratic benchmarks for good electoral practice mainly revolve around principles as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 25 of the International Covenant for Civil and Political rights (ICCPR) of 1966: *periodic elections, universal and equal suffrage; right to stand for public office; right to vote; and genuine elections allowing for the free expression of the will of the people*. Guinea Bissau has signed the ICCPR and is a party to the UDHR, the African Charter on Human Rights, the African Chart on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Although the ICCPR was adopted by the Popular National Assembly<sup>3</sup> in 1989, the ratification instrument was not deposited to the United National since Guinea Bissau does not appear in the UN database as a party to this treaty.<sup>4</sup>

## **ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

---

The National Election Commission, supported by nine Regional Election Commissions, administered the electoral process in a professional, transparent, independent and impartial manner, despite financial, technical and operational shortcomings inherent to the structural weaknesses of the CNE. Technical and operational preparations were carried out on time according to electoral calendar. The electoral preparation activities were almost fully financed by international contributions, including €2.4 million from the European Union, with an overall cost of US\$4,965,709 (approximately €3.8 million), and some small government contributions.

The CNE trained 13,420 election officials in all nine regions of the country, both for polling and counting activities in the 2,686 polling stations (*mesas de assembleia de voto*, MAVs). In addition, more than 2,600 civil security agents (*agentes de protecção*) were trained and deployed to assist in providing a peaceful voting atmosphere. A large civic education campaign, involving the CNE, the media, civil society and international organizations helped raise public awareness of voting rights, the importance of voting and accept results, and election procedures. Some deficiencies in the electoral process observed by EU EOMs in past elections, such as a timely release of international and governmental funds in support of the electoral administration, seemed to have substantially improved and no complaints were received or reported to the EU EOM by the election officials.

The main problem faced by the CNE during the electoral preparations involved the printing of ballots, which at a certain point threatened to postpone the election. PAIGC's candidate Malam Bacai Sanhá staunchly opposed the ballot which includes the photo and name of the candidate killed and also of the one who withdrew his candidacy. After two CNE plenary sessions and talks with government and electoral

---

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 3/89

<sup>4</sup> International Federation for Human Rights, *The Observatory*, October 2008.

*This statement is available in Portuguese and English but only the English version is official*

officials, he finally conformed to the use of the ballot —however, still criticizing the ballot with the inclusion of the two candidates— accepting the arguments that a reprint was technically and financially impossible and that it might result in the postponement of the election. Votes given to the two candidates will be considered null.

Issues like the importance to vote, and of not risk having the vote null by voting on the two candidates that appear on the ballot but are not participating in the contest anymore, the secrecy of the ballot, the need to take good care of the voter cards and not destroy them or sell them<sup>5</sup> were stressed in the voter education programs and found great receptivity in messages through the radio, TV, printed media and via non-governmental organizations working close to rural populations. In line with recommendations made by past EU EOMs, civic education campaigns included discussion and messages reflecting the concern with voting based on religion or ethnicity. The conduct of a peaceful and nonviolent campaign and the acceptance of election results as a sign of democratic maturity were also repeated subjects during the campaign and part of a code of conduct signed by most of candidates.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

---

The electoral law on voter registration (Law 2/98) requires the update of the voters list on a yearly basis, during the months of January and February, and allows for the permanent validity of the voter register. There was no update of the voters' list for the early presidential election, although voters were able to replace their voters' cards and change their addresses. The CNE is using the same voters' register for the 2008 legislative election produced after a new and short registration process in July 2008. Although the CNE considered that the short period of time between the legislative and the presidential election made it unnecessary, and difficult, to update the voters' registry, in fact many new voters could not register as well as others who were unable to register during the 21-day period in 2008. For a population estimated now in almost 1.6 million inhabitants, an electoral population of around 40 percent may be acceptable but it's under the 50 percent average commonly used as a threshold for other developing countries.

Voter registration falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Administration, while overall supervision of the process lies with the National Election Commission. Within the ministry, it is up to the Secretariat for Territorial Administration and its Technical Cabinet for Electoral Support (GTAPE) to organize and implement voter registration activities. The ministry further delegates the implementation of the voter registration to the National Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC).

GTAPE and INEC issued copies of cards to a total of 13,022 voters during approximately 30 days in April and May. A total of 593,765 persons were to vote eligible on 28 June. Out-of-country registration was also not conducted by the Guinean diplomatic representations. The only a formal complaint against the use of the 2008 voters' registry, and no updating, was rejected by the STJ on procedural grounds.<sup>6</sup> Yearly updates of the registry and a permanent voter registry is a good practice in many countries. The CNE and CREs should have the property of the voters' register and be responsible for all stages and the entire process of registration.

## CANDIDATES REGISTRATION

---

---

<sup>5</sup> After the killing of independent candidate Baciro Dabó many voters tore up their voter cards in protest; it was also a practice in past elections selling the voter card.

<sup>6</sup> The STJ rejected the complaint by the independent candidate Paulo Mendonça since it violated the civil code for not being submitted and represented by a lawyer.

A total of 11 candidates ran for president of Guinea Bissau. If no candidate obtain an absolute majority (50 percent plus one vote), there will be a second round 21 days after the official announcement of the results. The original 20 candidacy requests submitted to Supreme Court of Justice (*Supremo Tribunal de Justiça*, STJ) were reduced to 13 due to public position incompatibility and irregularities in the presentation of party and personal documents or certificates of citizenship<sup>7</sup>. One candidate, Pedro Infanda, appealed and managed to reverse a disqualification decision, although he later withdrew his candidacy.<sup>8</sup> Independent Henrique Rosa, had his candidacy disputed by another candidate alleging his father was a Portuguese citizen; the STJ rejected the claim on the basis that Rosa presented three witnesses, as required by law, to attest the Guinean origin of his father despite his Portuguese nationality.

Legal requirements for the registration of candidates are reasonably in line with international good practices. The framework for candidate's registration is clearly established by law providing the opportunity to rectify technicalities, submit missing or incomplete documentation and to challenge disqualification.

## **CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT**

---

The three-week long period of a timid electoral campaign started on 6 June and was conducted mostly in a peaceful and orderly way despite the violent incidents that preceded it and the raise in negative tone during the last days of the campaign, when a few candidates started exchanging accusations about the responsibility for the current political and economic situation of the country. However, there were no incidents since the events of 5 June, and candidates were free to hold rallies and meetings without limitations to their freedom of speech and movement, although a few told the EU EOM they still felt intimidated by the hose events. With the election drawing near, life in the capital returned to normal. Voters were also free to attend political rallies free of harassment and in a peaceful way. The EU EOM has not observed or received reports of major incidents involving electoral activities, besides minor cases of destruction of some campaign materials. The climate of insecurity and fear observed mainly in the capital, Bissau, may have contributed to the voters' apathy and lack of enthusiasm compared to past elections and to an increase in the level of abstention. However, it did not seem to have interfered with the campaign activities or limited the capacity of candidates to convey their messages and of voters to express their preferences.

The three main candidates (PAIGC's Malam Bacai Sanhá, PRS's Kumba Yalá and the independent Henrique Rosa) concentrated their campaign in the nine electoral regions. The eight other candidates faced difficulties that limited their activities mainly to Bissau, and few extended their campaign to interior; the reasons, as told to the EU EOM, went from personal incapacity to raise funds to the lack of financial support from the government.<sup>9</sup> The absence of government financial support created an imbalance in detriment of the independent and smaller parties' candidates who were unable to match the organizational capacity and financial power of the most influential candidates. The campaign was based mostly on posters glued to the walls in the urban areas, and door-to-door campaigning seemed to be the favorite strategy of candidates. The EU EOM identified the lack of a level playing field, and the security conditions, as its main concerns during the electoral process<sup>10</sup>. Besides the lack of financial means to carry out their campaigns, most of the candidates also denounced the use of state resources by the PAIGC

---

<sup>7</sup> The Constitution establishes (Article 63) that to be a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic a person must be at least 35 years of age, holding all political and civil rights, and be a citizen by birth and son or daughter of Guinean born parents.

<sup>8</sup> He was initially rejected after the STJ regarded his nomination invalid by being against the party statutes requiring approval of the entire leadership. He succeeded by proving that he had the required support from the Ecological Protection League (LIPE).

<sup>9</sup> The law (Article 47 of the Electoral Law) says that the state should financially support the candidates and their electoral campaign, however "according to its means." Since the government couldn't finance the electoral process, funded entirely by the international community (including €2.4 million from the European Union), there were no conditions to finance the candidates.

<sup>10</sup> See the Chief Observer statement on 16 June 2009 at [www.eueombissau.com](http://www.eueombissau.com).

candidate and his supporters. EU EOM observers received reports of official vehicles and boats being used by campaign supporters of the PAIGC candidate, including the prime minister in his travels to the regions. Gifting, or vote buying, was a commonly observed practice across the country. It is not unusual for candidates to offer gifts (rice, bicycles, zinc roof plates and other goods) to the chief of *tabancas* (a group of traditional family units), a practice that also carries with it the availability of financial resources.

Candidates seemed to have generally observed their commitment to a Code of Conduct signed on 30 May 2009 by eight of the then 11 contestants<sup>11</sup> in which they promised not to use violence or acts of intimidation by their supporters, improper language or make false or unsupported accusations during the electoral campaign. Some candidates heated up their campaigns during the last few days with accusations of wrongdoing and incompetence directed at the PAIGC. However, in general, the tone of the campaign has been positive with candidates concentrating their speeches on how they plan to bring stability and development to the country; a very different approach when compared to the 2008 legislative elections when they exchanged daily accusations of corruption and of links with drug trafficking. They also committed themselves to accept the results and, in case of disagreements, to resort to legal means.

## **MEDIA ENVIRONMENT**

---

Freedom of press is in general fully respected in Guinea Bissau. However, the editor of one newspaper was summoned to explain the publication of unofficial versions of the 5 June killings. Public and private media still face financial and technical constraints that reduce their capacity to cover the activities of all candidates, restricting coverage to the most influential candidates and limiting the ability of Guineans to receive an adequate flow of information to make an informed choice.

UNOGBIS supported the media with a two-day seminar for journalists on electoral coverage and ethics, and provided equipment and cash for purchase of fuel to private and public media. Civic and voter education radio and TV spots produced by the CNE were broadcast by the electronic media (state and private radio, community radio stations and state TV), improving the understanding of the electoral process by the population.

According to EU EOM media monitoring results, the public and private media covered the electoral process in a generally neutral tone although with different levels of balance among the three most influential candidates. All eleven presidential candidates had free access to state radio *Rádiodifusão Nacional (RDN)* and state television *Televisão da Guiné-Bissau (TGB)* according to election regulations. RDN started airing daily free airtime programs dedicated to the political parties (*Tempo de Antena*) from the date the Interim President confirmed the 28 of June as the Election Day.

Publishing or broadcasting electoral propaganda on private media during the campaign period is prohibited by law (Article 45 of the Electoral Law). However, private media outlets broadcasted and published paid airtime either disguised as hard news or overtly as official information (*Comunicados* or press releases). *Rádio Bombolom* and *Radio Pindjiguiti* aired a political add of candidate Malam Bacai Sanhá. The press regulatory agency *Conselho Nacional de Comunicação Social (CNCS)*, although aware of the plight of journalists and the media in general, issued a directive (*Directiva Genérica(No1/2009)*) reminding journalists and media in general of their rights and obligations.

## **GENDER**

---

<sup>11</sup> Among the three main candidates, only Henrique Rosa didn't sign the document, as well as Serifo Baldé, Aregado Mantenque and Ibraima Djaló.

---

Only one woman, Francisca “Zinha” Vaz Turpin, ran for president among the other 10 male candidates. She was a member of the ANP (1994-1998) for the Guinea Bissau Resistance – Bafatá Movement (RGB-MB) and president of the Municipal Chamber of Bissau. During the government of Kumba Yalá (2000-2003) she was a political advisor with cabinet rank and founded the Guinean Patriotic Union (UPG). There has been no open activity from the civil society groups that during the past legislative election were active in promoting quotas for women in the ANP and an increasing participation of women in the Guinean political life. There are no women in the CNE secretariat, and only one female is among its non-permanent members.

EU EOM observers noticed, however, a massive presence of women during rallies and political meetings in the regions, where they were poorly represented among local electoral administration officials. However, a substantial number of women were present as members of the polling staff. Women comprise near 53 percent of the total registered electorate; the adult female illiteracy rate is above 70 percent. Having less access to education and being more likely to live in poverty than men, women are undoubtedly politically disadvantaged when it comes to be included in party lists and in political decision making structures. The government includes five women among its 22 ministers.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

---

Civil society has had an intense and active role in the electoral process, despite its financial and legal limitations to following it properly. The election law on observation only provides for international observers and political parties and candidates’ delegates to observe the election process. Despite the restrictions on domestic observation, civil society organizations have developed a positive and pro-active attitude towards supporting actions to reduce instances of political violence during the election period. Also, different groups organized informal monitoring teams in support of the election administration by voluntarily offering to pass on information regarding potential shortcomings involving distribution of materials or instances of tension or disturbances during election day. Civil society groups, in cooperation with local authorities and the CNE, organized civic education programs, which undoubtedly facilitated the dissemination of a message of tranquility, order and peace regarding the campaign period, the poll and the post electoral period.

## VOTING

---

The election was held in a peaceful and orderly manner, and there were no significant irregularities or incidents observed or reported to the EU EOM observers. The presence of candidates’ delegates at all polling stations contributed to the transparency of the process. The EU EOM observed 83 polling stations in the urban and rural zones of 18 of the 27 constituencies (*círculos eleitorais*) in eight of the nine regions of the country. EU EOM observers evaluated the process as good or satisfactory<sup>12</sup> in 98 percent of observed polling stations. Voting activities started at 07:00 hours and were conducted in a calm, orderly manner, without tensions, although with a lower turnout compared to the 2008 legislative election, estimated between 57 and 65 per cent in the polling stations visited by the EU EOM observers. The polling stations generally opened on time and the lack of election material in a few polling stations was not a major problem.

There were no complaints lodged in the polling stations visited. Secrecy of the vote was respected in all polling stations observed, with few exceptions due to the positioning of the booth. Polling staff generally followed voting procedures (checking for inked finger, entry of voters’ numbers, punching of voters’ cards,

---

<sup>12</sup> Ratings were poor, satisfactory and good.

*This statement is available in Portuguese and English but only the English version is official*

inking of fingers) but in almost half of the polling stations observed the ballot boxes were not properly sealed. There was some confusion about the sealing of the ballot boxes and in some cases polling officials thought the boxes should be sealed at closing of voting; however, the presence of candidates' delegates avoided any possible irregularities or tampering with the boxes. Security in the polling stations was lax since in more than 25 percent of the *assembleias de voto* observed there were no civil security agents. However, there were no incidents or cases of intimidation observed or reported to the EU EOM.

Women, who comprise more than half of the electorate (53 percent), had a strong participation in voting and in the polling stations; more than 40 percent of the members of the staff of the polling stations visited by the EU EOM were women, although few were presiding the *assembleia de voto*.

## COUNTING

---

Polling stations closed at 17:00 hours in the same quiet and orderly atmosphere observed during the day, and voters could freely exercise their franchise. EU EOM observers rated the closing and counting procedures as satisfactory or good in 95 percent of the polling stations visited. In 90 percent of the cases the number of ballots matched with the total number of voters checked in the registry and/or entered in the manual voters' list. Although counting was carried out according to established procedures in the polling stations observed, there were minor inconsistencies in the closing procedures in 12 percent of the *assembleias de voto* visited: spoiled or contested ballots were not put in the envelopes, manual voters' lists were not closed and signed by the polling staff and parties' delegates, number of voters checked in the registry did not match number on the manual voters' list, and sensitive materials were not properly packaged for transport to the Regional Election Commissions (CREs).

Parties' delegates were present in all polling stations contributing to a higher transparency of the process. Delegates signed the tallying sheets, or *Actas de Apuramento*, in all polling stations observed by the EU EOM and also received a copy of the *Acta Síntese*, which was in turn posted at the premises of the polling station. There were no complaints formally filed during the closing and counting process. International observers were present in 20 percent of the polling stations visited.

The EU EOM will observe the consolidation of results at CRE and CNE levels as well as the official announcement of the results.

The EU EOM wishes to express its appreciation to the National Election Commission of Guinea Bissau and the Guinean authorities for their cooperation and assistance during the course of the observation. The mission is also grateful to the International Organization for Migration and the Delegation of the European Commission in Guinea Bissau for their support.

For further information, please contact:

Claudia Aranda, Media Analyst and Press Officer, 245 6245544

[www.eueomgbissau.org](http://www.eueomgbissau.org)