

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Bureau de liaison de l'Union africaine en Guinée-Bissau B.P.370 Tel. +245- 325 64 70 Fax: +245-325 64 71

Gabinete de ligação da União africana na Guiné-Bissau C.P. 370 Tel. +245- 325 64 70 Fax: +245-325 64 71

PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION VISITS GUINEA-BISSAU

Bissau, 30 December 2011: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) Jean Ping, undertook a working visit to Guinea-Bissau, on 28 December 2011, following the armed incidents of 26 December 2011. In so doing, the Chairperson of the Commission intended both to convey the serious concern of the AU regarding the recurring crises affecting the country and to express its support to Guinea Bissau, as well as his continued commitment to support the efforts aimed at consolidating peace and stability and promoting sustainable development.

During his visit, the Chairperson of the Commission successively met with Mr. Raimundo Pereira, President of the National People's Assembly and acting President of the Republic, as well as with Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, the Prime Minister. He also held talks with Mr. Saliu Mamadu Djaló Pires, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities, Baciro Djá, Minister of National Defence, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Antonio Injai, and other members of the General Staff, as well as representatives of civil society. In addition, the Chairperson of the Commission met with members of the diplomatic corps.

During his discussions, the Chairperson of the Commission strongly condemned the acts that led to the armed incidents of 26 December. He urged all stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau to refrain from using violence, to resolve their disputes through exclusively peaceful means and in compliance with the laws of the land, and to abide scrupulously by the Constitution. In particular, he emphasized the absolute necessity of a permanent and inclusive dialogue, without which the deep roots of the crises facing Guinea Bissau will not be addressed.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomed the commitment of his interlocutors to respect the republican institutions and constitutional order. He took note of the solemn reaffirmation by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Antonio Injai, of the subordination of the military to the civilian authorities, and his request that the Chairperson of the Commission echo the apologies of the Guinea-Bissau armed forces to the international community for all serious disturbances in which its members were involved, disturbances that have hampered the country's progress towards democracy and development.



The Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the support of the AU to the process of reforming the defense and security sector, and called for the urgent launching of the Pension Fund, to which the UA will provide full support. He called on all stakeholders to create the conditions conducive to the immediate launching of the Pension Fund, which is a crucial part of the long term stabilization of Guinea Bissau. In this respect, he urged the partners to rapidly disburse the resources pledged. He made the commitment to spare no effort to mobilize AU Member States and the international partners, to rapidly improve the conditions of service of the Armed Forces, on the basis of the needs that the Government of Guinea-Bissau would submit, adding that he would ensure that AU's support to Guinea-Bissau would be increased and intensified.

In this context, the Chairperson of the Commission commended the contribution of international partners, and encouraged them to redouble their efforts, particularly in these challenging moments.

The Chairperson of the Commission deeply regretted not having been able, due to logistical constraints, to meet with the political parties, to seek their views on the recent events and the general situation in the country, particularly with regard to the next elections and the forthcoming National Conference for Peace and Reconciliation. He requested the AU Liaison Office in Bissau to meet them, as soon as possible, and to report back.