



# The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

## Guinea Bissau




United Nations  
Peacebuilding



MAY 2020

### PBF Investments in

**TOTAL**  
APPROVED  **\$45 M**

**CURRENT**  
PORTFOLIO  **\$12.3 M**

### Focusing on

-  Youth and women empowerment
-  National Reconciliation, political dialogue

### Partners



Interpeace

## PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Guinea-Bissau has experienced persistent instability, with recurring political crises and tensions between the civilian and military leadership. Since August 2015, Guinea-Bissau has been facing another cycle of institutional crisis and political instability. After a brief period of national peacebuilding efforts under the Government's Terra Ranka program in 2014, disagreements between key political players paralyzed the implementation of urgent reforms and made cooperation between international partners and the Government, including the work of the PBF Executive Committee, extremely difficult.

The peaceful conduct of legislative and presidential elections in 2019 represents a critical step towards the consolidation of democracy in Guinea-Bissau and offers a privileged opportunity for the country to focus on the implementation of its development priorities and key reforms. However, obstacles remain in consolidating peacebuilding gains, which require the continuous attention of the international community.

The international community, led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has provided strong support to the political process and the national reform agenda, in particular under the "Guinea-Bissau P5" formula (the African Union (AU), the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), ECOWAS, the European Union (EU), and the UN).

## PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT

Guinea-Bissau entered the formal agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2007. Chaired by Brazil, the PBC Guinea-Bissau Configuration has focused on supporting the government in addressing its reform agenda and challenges impeding stability and long-term development. More recently, the Commission has focused on the implementation of the 2016 Conakry Agreement to help bring the country out of its long political and institutional crisis.



## ■ PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

As of February 2020, the PBF is funding nine projects, amounting to \$12.3 million, covering different, mutually reinforcing sectors: dialogue and national reconciliation, strengthening of the formal and informal justice sectors, women and youth empowerment, strengthening professional and conflict-sensitive media reporting, supporting the fight against transnational crime, and supporting the systemic reforms agreed in the Stability Pact of 2019.

Over the last two years, the Fund's support to the civil society groups, in particular women's groups, has strengthened their capacity and voice and helped in the negotiation and signing of the Stability Pact in February 2019, ensuring continued respect of the ECOWAS brokered Conakry Agreement by all political actors. The Fund also helped to bring the voices of vulnerable and marginalized groups from the countryside to decision-makers in the capital.

The PBF projects also contributed to the peaceful holding of legislative and presidential elections in March and November 2019 through domestic monitoring of the polls together with the local authorities. With the PBF support a women situation center of civil society elections monitors was activated and deployed across the country for the legislative elections, giving greater credibility to the electoral process. The PBF also supported targeted campaigns encouraging women to vote, contributing to exceptional results on women's participation, which outnumbered that of men.

The Fund also supported a media fact-checking team during the elections, monitoring media for hate speech or fake news. Moreover, with the Fund's support, the first professional journalism course was created and the first Women's Radio was established in Bafata, which helped to defuse tensions in one of the most disputed electoral regions.

The PBF projects have focused on supporting bottom-up approaches, through strengthening the capacity of the civil society and local partners in order to foster more inclusive dialogue and institutions and to hold political parties to account with regards to their decisions, including their adherence to the Conakry Agreement. As such, an important lesson from the PBF support to Guinea Bissau over the years has been the importance of working through civil society partners, especially when the government institutions are paralyzed. Another lesson is the need for shorter more flexible projects in contexts of high political volatility and risk.

## ■ LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward the PBF will continue to support the transition from UNIOGBIS and the capacity of the UN Country Team to support the key residual peacebuilding priorities after the Mission withdrawal.

## ■ ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The Fund may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations.

The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to peacebuilding opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.