



# Provide Guinea-Bissau with a new constitution to strengthen the rule of law and stability

## Summary

After the 2014 elections, the National People's Assembly (NPA) set up an ad hoc committee on constitutional reform. Little progress had been made before the commission found itself paralysed, like the whole NPA, by the 2015 political crisis. The current Basic Law lacks clarity and precision in a number of important areas, starting with the delineation of the powers and clarification of competencies of the organs of state. The country needs a constitution that is designed to prevent political deadlocks, promote effective institutions and make the state more efficient and fair in its delivery of services to the people.

### Key recommendations

- ▶ Review the Constitution to prevent political obstacles and promote effective institutions.
- ▶ Clarify the notion of a 'serious crisis hindering the normal functioning of institutions'.
- ▶ Clarify the criteria for the dissolution of the government by the President of the Republic in order to reduce the risk of governmental instability.
- ▶ Allow the President of the Republic to preside over the Council of Ministers only in special circumstances and at the invitation of the Prime Minister.
- ▶ Take into account the need for the government to have majority support in the National People's Assembly when choosing the Prime Minister.
- ▶ Clarify the respective powers of the President of the Republic and the government, particularly with regard to appointments to senior institutional, civilian and military posts.
- ▶ Strengthen the Council of State in its composition and skills and ensure that the President of the Republic consider its opinions in decision-making.

This note focuses on the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau, traces the historical evolution that led to the text in force, identifies the main issues that need fairly substantial changes and formulates proposals that would finally acknowledge and realise the collective recognition of the need to revise the Basic Law.

### Between constitutional stability and political instability

In its 44 years as an independent state within its present borders (1973–2018), and despite many crises, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau has seen formal constitutional continuity, with three Constitutions:

- The Constitution of 24 September 1973 (or *Boé*), in force until 1980;
- The Constitution of 16 May 1984, which provided for a presidential and somewhat authoritarian regime; and
- The Constitution of 26 February 1993, which marked the end of the constitutional transition that began in 1991 and which was amended in 1995 and 1996.<sup>1</sup>

There were also two other constitutional texts, whose implementation was aborted mainly for political reasons: that of 10 November 1980, which led to the military coup of 14 November; and that of 5 April 2001, which the then President of the Republic, Kumba Yalá, refused to promulgate.

Constitutional stability has not led to political and institutional stability. Repeated coups, political assassinations and civil war have undermined the functioning of institutions. This situation, generated by various power struggles, has not allowed the adoption of reforms aimed at stabilising the country. Most constitutional revisions have been made to neutralise political opponents or to better consolidate the status quo.

The constitutional revision of 1993 brought about a major change by introducing a semi-presidential regime

At the beginning of the 1990s, signs of a possible democratic opening appeared in Guinea-Bissau. The second extraordinary congress of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) of January–February 1991 adopted the principle of a multiparty system. This opening became official in May 1991 with the revision of the 1984 Constitution by the NPA. The repeal of Article 5, which established the PAIGC as 'the leading political force of society and the state', formalised the end of the single party system and the Framework Law on Political Parties was adopted.

Other reforms, including on the functions of institutions and the nature of the regime, were also adopted. The constitutional revision of 1993 brought about a major change: it introduced a semi-presidential regime. In 1994, three years after the introduction of the multiparty system, the first elections were held. At

the institutional level, Guinea-Bissau is now entering a phase of democratic consolidation marked by the adoption of a semi-presidential regime based on the Portuguese model.

## Constitutional weaknesses and possible reforms

### The acknowledged need for a new Basic Law

The adoption of the semi-presidential regime in 1993 aimed to bring an end to governmental instability and the almost unlimited power accorded to President João Bernardo Vieira through the use of constitutional amendments. It is thus a hybrid regime, combining characteristics of both the presidential and the parliamentary system. Based on the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, it aims to create balance and collaboration between the key institutions that constitute the organs of state: the President of the Republic (Articles 62–72), the NPA (Articles 76–95), the government (Articles 96–104) and the courts (Articles 119–125).

The semi-presidential regime in Guinea-Bissau is entrenched in the Constitution through the organisation and functioning of political power

The semi-presidential regime in Guinea-Bissau is entrenched in the Constitution by several articles on the organisation and functioning of political power. Its implementation has, however, been the source of many crises, notably owing to divergent interpretations of the Constitution, in particular of the role and powers of the executive branch (the President and the Prime Minister) and the other institutions.

Although politicians and civil society leaders acknowledge that the repeated political crises were the result not of an inadequate constitution but rather of the behaviour of political and institutional actors, they recognise that the Basic Law lacks clarity in a number of important areas. They also point out that the Constitution was designed to allow former president Vieira, who benefited from his historical legitimacy as the hero of the war for independence, to retain a hold on power.<sup>2</sup>

There is broad consensus on the need to revise the current Constitution, especially since a text ready for promulgation had been drafted in 2001. President Yalá had refused to promulgate this text, and the political situation thus did not allow the amendment process to be completed. After the 2014 elections, the NPA set up an ad hoc committee on constitutional reform. It made very little progress before being paralysed, like the entire NPA, by the political crisis of 2015.

This committee's frame of reference is the 2001 text, which incorporated amendments aimed at correcting the most serious weaknesses of the Constitution. These amendments should be re-examined in the light of the



GUINEA-BISSAU HAS KNOWN  
THREE CONSTITUTIONS

- CONSTITUTION OF *BOÉ* OF 24 SEPTEMBER 1973
- CONSTITUTION OF 16 MAY 1984
- CONSTITUTION OF 26 FEBRUARY 1993

successive crises since then and with the aim of providing the country with a constitution designed to prevent political deadlocks, promote effective institutions and make the state more effective and fair in the delivery of services to the people.

### Remove ambiguities regarding the organisation and functioning of political power

There is agreement that the articles of the Constitution that need clarification concern the delineation of the powers, roles and responsibilities of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, and in particular the appointment of the Prime Minister; the dual political responsibility of the government to the President and the NPA; the convening of the Council of Ministers by the President; and the composition and powers of the Council of State.

- *The appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation of the government*

The appointment of the Prime Minister by the President of the Republic is done 'taking into account the results of the elections and after consulting the parties present at the NPA' (Article 98 of the Constitution). By giving the party or coalition of parties that won the elections the power to appoint the Prime Minister, the Constitution underlines the legitimacy of the ballot box.

### The Constitution underlines the legitimacy of the ballot box for the appointment of the Prime Minister

Two scenarios may arise after parliamentary elections. If a party, or a coalition of parties, obtains an absolute majority in the NPA, the Prime Minister is appointed by that majority and the President is required to appoint him, even if the Constitution does not explicitly prescribe it. The formation of the government is also the responsibility of the majority party or majority coalition. Ministers and secretaries of state are appointed by the President at the recommendation of the Prime Minister.<sup>3</sup> In this situation, the risk of the Assembly's rejecting the government's programme or voting in favour of a motion of censure is minimal. The result is a level of governmental stability that can only be challenged in the event of tensions within the majority party or coalition.

Governmental stability is less guaranteed if no party or coalition obtains an absolute majority in the NPA. It is the responsibility of the party or coalition with a relative majority to choose the Prime Minister as proposed by the President. The formation of a parliamentary coalition then becomes necessary for the formation of a government. This scenario poses a risk of governmental instability because the survival of the government depends on the stability of a parliamentary majority composed of parties or coalitions that had not partnered in the elections.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION AND MAJOR REVISIONS

##### BOÉ CONSTITUTION OF 24 SEPTEMBER 1973

- PAIGC, single party
- Three institutions of the republic: Council of State, whose president is the head of state; Council of Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of State; and National People's Assembly

##### CONSTITUTION OF 16 MAY 1984

- Adoption of a presidential regime
- Single-party regime strengthened
- Replacement of the Council of Commissioners with a government
- Elimination of the post of Prime Minister

##### CONSTITUTION OF 26 FEBRUARY 1993

- End of the constitutional transition that started in 1991
- Adoption of a semi-presidential regime
- Search for balance between the main branches of state (President of the Republic, Prime Minister, National Assembly and courts)



To avoid this pitfall, the choice of Prime Minister should take into account the necessity of the government's having the support of a majority in the NPA, which approves the agenda of any new government. Cape Verde, the country in the region closest to Guinea-Bissau in terms of its history and constitutional culture, offers an interesting example. The Cape Verde Constitution provides that 'the Prime Minister is appointed by the President of the Republic, after consultation with the political forces sitting in the National Assembly, and taking into account the results of the elections, the possible existence of a political majority and possibilities of unions or alliances'.<sup>4</sup>

This option underlines the need for the President to consider the existence of a political majority or the ability of political forces to form a majority supporting the government. In the absence of an absolute majority after the elections, those parties that have the capacity to form post-election alliances for a parliamentary majority will have to propose a Prime Minister to the President. It is then incumbent on the latter to demonstrate a responsible attitude resulting in a choice of Prime Minister who has the broadest political base, following mandatory consultations of the political forces represented in the NPA.

- *The political responsibility of the government to the President of the Republic*

The government is politically accountable to Parliament and the President of the Republic (Article 103 of the Constitution). While political accountability to the NPA is a

defining characteristic of modern democratic regimes, the responsibility of the government and the Prime Minister to the President of the Republic is debatable. This provision is inherited from the Constitution of Portugal, which provides for dual liability.

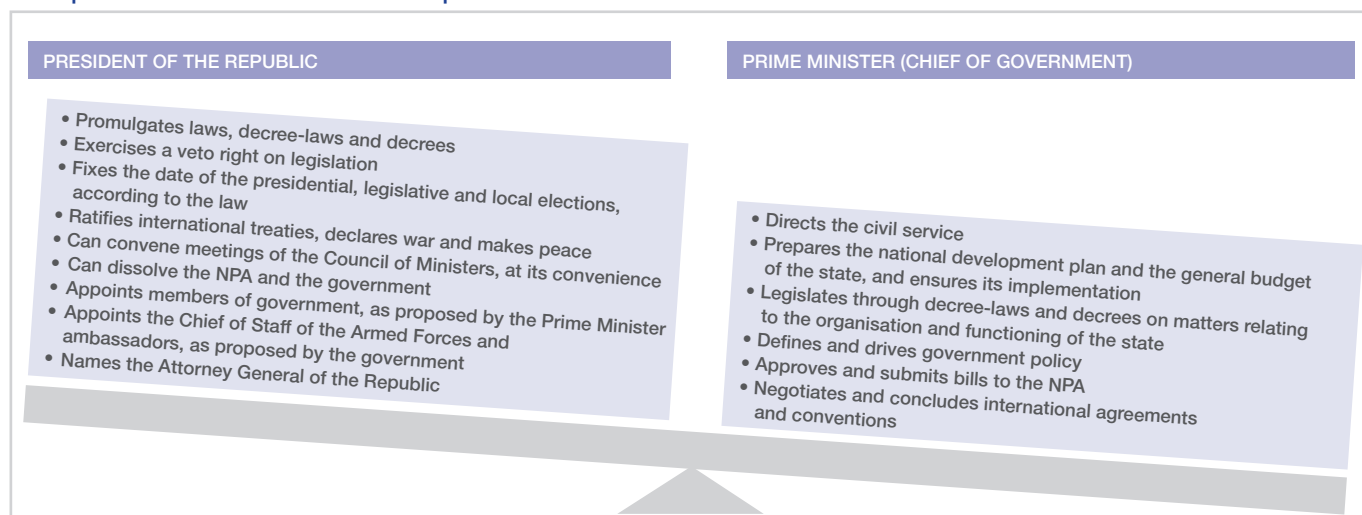
This responsibility allows the President to dismiss the government 'in the event of a serious crisis preventing the normal functioning of institutions' (Article 104, paragraph 2 of the Constitution). Similarly, the Portuguese Constitution states that 'the President may dismiss the government only when it becomes necessary to do so to ensure the normal functioning of democratic institutions and after first consulting the Council of State'.

Governmental stability is less guaranteed if no party or coalition obtains an absolute majority in the NPA

The Bissau-Guinean Constitution provides as a single circumstance that of a serious political crisis that prevents the normal functioning of institutions. Often subject to misinterpretation or abuse, this provision should be clarified. Assessing what impedes the normal functioning of institutions should be the responsibility of the institution responsible for ensuring compliance with the Constitution, namely the Supreme Court of Justice.

In a semi-presidential regime, crises preventing the proper functioning of institutions emanate either from Parliament or from tensions within the executive. In the first case,

## Main powers of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister



such crises frequently result in a vote on a motion of censure or a motion of no confidence in the National Assembly, or in the National Assembly's refusal to approve the government programme. The President is then required to dismiss the government (and the Prime Minister) or to dissolve the Parliament to allow the organisation of early parliamentary elections.

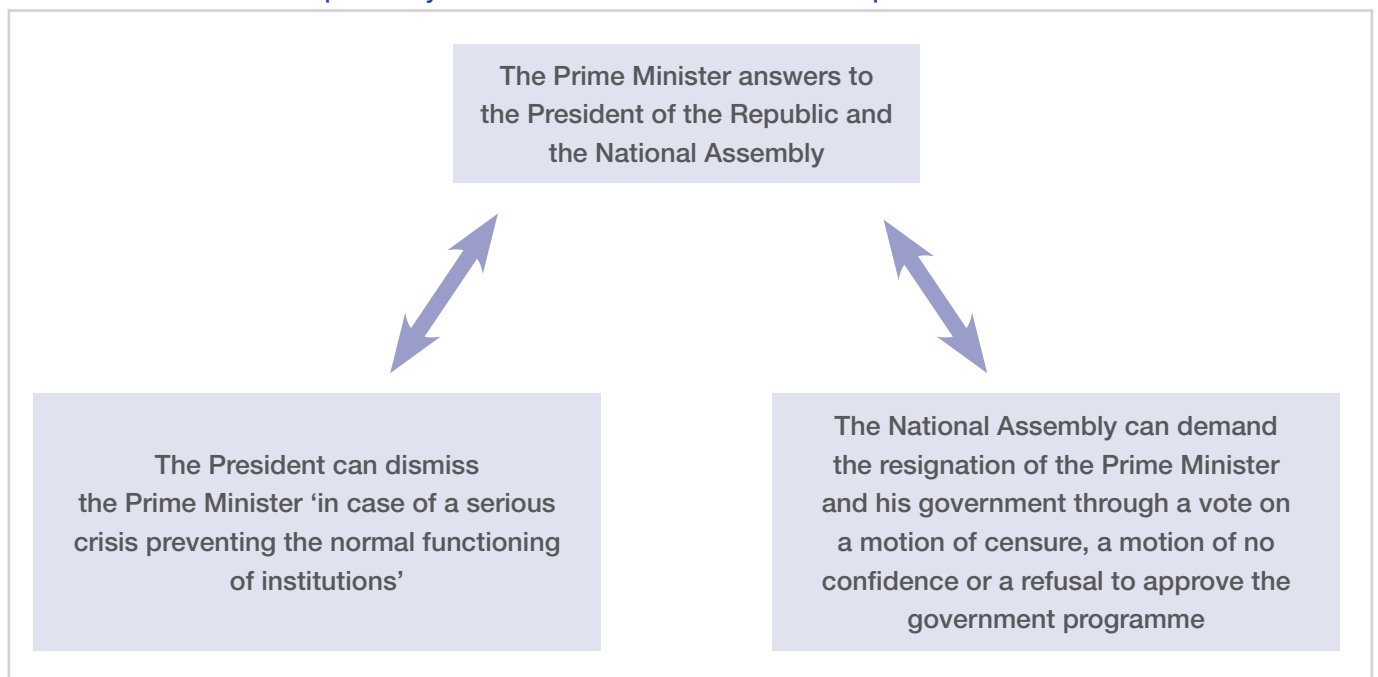
Assessing what impedes the normal functioning of institutions should be the responsibility of the institution responsible for ensuring compliance with the Constitution

To end governmental instability, the dissolution of the government by the President should be set out in detail. Cape Verde could once again serve as an inspiration. There the Prime Minister is accountable to the Assembly,<sup>5</sup> and the 'President of the Republic can decide the resignation of the government if a motion of censure is approved, after consulting the parties represented in the National Assembly and the Council of the Republic [the equivalent of the Council of State]' (Article 214 of the Constitution). The President can therefore dismiss the government only after a vote on a motion of censure by the Assembly and after mandatory political consultations. The conditions for the dismissal of the Prime Minister and his government by the President, elected by universal suffrage in Cape Verde as in Guinea-Bissau, are therefore very strict.

- *The convocation of the Council of Ministers*

The provision allowing the President of the Republic to convene the Council of Ministers at his convenience (Article 68 M of the Constitution) is a violation of

#### The Prime Minister's dual responsibility to the NPA and the President of the Republic



the principle of the separation of powers enshrined in the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau (Article 59, paragraph 2). This provision is a source of tension, as it inserts the President into the day-to-day running of the state. It also fuels conflict between the majority party and the President over the authority of the executive.

The Portuguese Constitution originally allowed the President of the Republic to convene and preside over the Council of Ministers. This provision has since been removed, owing to its ability to fuel tensions. Currently, the Portuguese Head of State can preside over the Council of Ministers only at the invitation of the head of government.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in Cape Verde, the President of the Republic may preside over the Council of Ministers only 'at the request of the Prime Minister' (Article 147).

Most observers of Guinea-Bissau's political life believe that the same provision should be adopted to clarify the respective powers of the President and the Prime Minister in relation to the government and the implementation of general state policies. It is the Prime Minister who should preside over the Council of Ministers; the President should preside over the Council only in special circumstances and only at the invitation of the head of government.

- *The composition and powers of the Council of State*

The Council of State is an advisory organ whose main function is to advise the President of the Republic in the exercise of his powers on questions concerning the proper functioning of the state. It is composed of representatives of the organs of state (the President of the NPA, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court), parties represented in the NPA and five citizens appointed by the President of the Republic.<sup>7</sup> Chaired by the latter, the Council of State has two types of competencies: specific and general.

With regard to specific competencies, it may state its opinion on the dissolution of the NPA, the declaration of a state of emergency and siege, and a declaration of war.<sup>8</sup> It is not mandatory for the President of the Republic to take into account the conclusions adopted by the Council. Among its general competencies, the Council may advise the President on any other matter of importance to the nation. Article 104 N° 2 of the Constitution also provides for a consultation of the

Council of State and parties present at the ANP by the president when it comes to the dissolution of the government.

The constitutional text drafted in 2001 proposes changes to the composition and powers of the Council of State. According to the proposed changes, the Council's members would include the Ombudsman and former Presidents of the Republic who had not been removed from office. As for powers, the text provides that the Council of State should be consulted when the President wishes to dismiss the government, as is already the case in the dissolution of the NPA.

To end governmental instability, the dissolution of the government by the President should be set out in detail

The changes proposed in the 2001 text are steps in the right direction, in particular regarding consultation with the Council of State in the event of a desire to dissolve the government. The dissolution of the organs of state, the NPA or the government should only occur in exceptional circumstances, and the requirement of prior consultation of a body comprising the highest state authorities should help to ensure an appreciation of these exceptional circumstances. Although opinions are not binding upon the President of the Republic, the views of other state representatives and the general interests of the nation should have an influence on his decision.

As regards general competencies, the new Constitution could provide for the mandatory consultation of the Council of State on convening a national referendum, as well as for determining the dates of presidential and legislative elections and national referendums.

It would be useful, before determining the new composition of the Council of State, to consider what has been adopted in other countries with a comparable constitutional tradition, such as Portugal and Cape Verde.

- *The powers and competencies of the President of the Republic and the government*

Relations between the President of the Republic and the government are the most obvious source of misunderstanding, tension and, at times, serious

## Highlights of Guinea-Bissau's political life

- **24 September 1973:** Independence proclamation by PAIGC
- **10 September 1974:** Recognition of independence by Portugal
- **14 November 1980:** Military coup by João Bernardo Vieira against President Luís Cabral
- **16 May 1984:** Adoption of a new Constitution reinforcing a single-party system
- **8 May 1991:** Adoption of the Framework Law on Political Parties, establishing a multiparty system
- **26 February 1993:** Adoption of a new Constitution establishing the semi-presidential regime
- **7 August 1994:** João Bernardo Vieira wins the presidential election
- **7 June 1998:** Outbreak of civil war
- **1 November 1998:** Abuja Peace Agreement signed between government and military junta
- **7 May 1999:** João Bernardo Vieira's overthrow by General Ansumane Mané
- **16 January 2000:** Kumba Yalá wins the presidential election
- **5 April 2001:** Adoption of a new Constitution not promulgated by Kumba Yalá
- **14 September 2003:** Coup by General Veríssimo Correia Seabra
- **24 July 2005:** João Bernardo Vieira wins the presidential election
- **5 August 2008:** Dissolution of the National People's Assembly
- **1 March 2009:** Assassination of Tagme Na Waie
- **2 March 2009:** Assassination of President João Bernardo Vieira
- **26 July 2009:** Malam Bacai Sanhá wins the presidential election
- **9 January 2012:** President Sanhá dies in Paris
- **12 April 2012:** Coup by General Mamadu Turé Kuruma
- **19 April 2012:** Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo appointed as transitional president
- **20 May 2014:** José Mário Vaz wins the presidential election
- **13 August 2015:** Dissolution of Domingos Simões Pereira's government and beginning of political crisis
- **10 September 2016:** Signing of the Bissau roadmap to end the crisis
- **14 October 2016:** Signing of the Conakry Agreement

political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. These relationships, and behind them these two organs of state's determination to assert their authority over one another, regularly create deadlocks.

Clarification of the terms of appointment of the Prime Minister, the conditions for the dismissal of the government and the conditions under which the President may lead the Council of Ministers, is essential. But a revision of the relevant constitutional provisions must be accompanied by a review and clarification of the respective powers and competencies of the President, the Prime Minister and the government.

The dissolution of the organs of state, the NPC or the government should only occur in exceptional circumstances

Specific attention should be paid to the power to make appointments to institutions and to the highest civil and military positions. In semi-presidential regimes comparable to that of Guinea-Bissau, such as Portugal and Cape Verde, most appointments are made by the president, based on proposals put forward by the government. The authority of the president lies in his ability to remain removed from the day-to-day management of the state and to constitute, along with the government, the NPA and the courts, acting as a source of balance with the power to moderate tensions between political forces.

## Create a constitutional jurisdiction to ensure compliance with the Constitution

Given the recurrent political and institutional crises and the personalisation of institutions to the detriment of their delivery of service to the people, it seems essential to strengthen the mechanism for protecting the principles of the Constitution. The creation of a Constitutional Court dedicated to the protection of the spirit and the letter of the Constitution should contribute greatly.

In countries with such a court, it has two main functions: to review the constitutionality of laws and to interpret laws. It provides the general criteria that should guide the actions of public authorities. Its other functions are related to ensuring respect for the electoral framework during elections and sometimes to regulating political parties.

The establishment of a court with such a jurisdiction would preserve the principle whereby all powers are subjected to the rule of law, while ensuring that legislation conforms to the Constitution. In Guinea-Bissau, the Supreme Court rules over matters generally vested with a constitutional court. However, it is not endowed with the flexibility to effectively fulfil the mission of regulating and interpreting legislation.

The recommendation on the creation of a Constitutional Court should be accompanied by an in-depth reflection on its composition, the mode



of appointment of its members, the duration of their tenure, the terms of its referral, which should be open to any citizen, and guarantees of independence. It is not the existence of a Constitutional Court in itself that would strengthen the rule of law but rather its capacity to remain above partisan political considerations and to deliberate independently by following the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

There are many examples of constitutional jurisdictions from which Guinea-Bissau can draw inspiration. While no model for the composition and appointment of constitutional judges can in itself guarantee their independence, this can be facilitated by demanding criteria in terms of the experience and morality of judges, their appointment by several organs of state (the National Assembly and possibly the President of the Republic) and a long-term and non-renewable tenure.

### **Clarify the terms of revision of the Constitution and provide for referendums**

The current Constitution gives only the National Assembly the prerogative to propose and adopt revisions to the Basic Law. It was in this context that a Constitutional Review Commission was set up after the last legislative elections, but was then paralysed by the political deadlock.

The National Assembly, as the representative of the people, must remain the paramount organ in any process of constitutional revision. But the possibility of organising a referendum should be foreseen after a qualified majority has adopted a draft or a proposal for a constitutional amendment by the NPA.

The establishment of a constitutional court would preserve the principle whereby all powers are subjected to the rule of law

A referendum could be necessary to validate a constitutional revision that would touch on fundamental points duly identified in the Constitution. In this case, a qualified majority vote in the Assembly (two-thirds or three-fourths) is required.

To respect the spirit and tradition of the country's institutions, in which the NPA plays a crucial role, the referendum should remain an exceptional procedure that cannot be used by the President of the Republic and/or the government without prior legislative approval and a qualified majority vote in the NPA.

### **Strengthen the independence of the judiciary and create the conditions for its effective functioning**

Justice reform is dealt with in a note dedicated to this subject. In the context of drafting a new Constitution, beyond reaffirming the principle of judiciary independence, the status of the Attorney General of the Republic,



A REFERENDUM COULD BE NECESSARY TO VALIDATE A CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

an important institution in the functioning of the justice system and in citizens' perception of the separation of executive and judicial powers, should be reviewed and defined.

The appointment and dismissal of the Attorney General take place at the discretion of the President of the Republic.<sup>9</sup> Given that the Public Prosecutor is the primary authority in the criminal system, this presidential power undeniably lessens the Attorney General's independence of action and that of all the magistrates falling under the Public Prosecutor, taking into account the judicial hierarchy. The President's appointment of the Attorney General should further be determined by specific criteria relating to professional experience and validation by the National Assembly. The position's independence could also be strengthened by the introduction of a term of office during which the Public Prosecutor cannot be removed.

### **Include in the Constitution a chapter on the organisation of elections**

The current Constitution provides little detail on the organisation of elections. It does not mention the National Electoral Commission (CNE) or its mandate. Since the last revision of the Constitution in 1996 the electoral framework has undergone many changes, whose main principles deserve to be reflected in a new Constitution.

Electoral legislation is discussed in detail in the note on reform of the electoral law. A new Constitution should, in a chapter devoted to elections, set out the main principles regulating the organisation of elections. The legislature would retain the power to make technical changes based on electoral experiences.

The most important legal provisions on the NEC should be constitutionalised to prevent the electoral framework from being affected by partisan considerations



THE PRESIDENT'S  
APPOINTMENT OF THE  
ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOULD  
BE FURTHER DETERMINED

In contexts marked by a high level of mistrust among parties and political actors regarding those public administrative functions subject to the authority of the government, it seems reasonable to delegate the entire organisation of elections to an independent body such as the NEC, and offer strong legal guarantees that it will have the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate.

The NEC as an institution should be explicitly recognised in the Constitution as the independent body in charge of electoral processes and referendums, with a clarification of its composition and the methods of appointing its members. It is therefore a question of constitutionalising the most important legal provisions on the NEC to prevent the electoral framework from being affected by partisan considerations.

As for the Constitutional Court, it would be necessary to determine the mode of appointment and the duration of the term of office of the president and the senior leaders of the NEC, in order to reduce the risk of dependence on the

government and other political and institutional actors. The NEC would, together with the Constitutional Court, become a paramount institution in the preservation of the fundamental principles of democracy, by ensuring transparency and fairness in the organisation of elections, and the validity of presidential, legislative and local election results, as well as of referendums.

## Conclusion

The process of revising the Constitution should not be limited to a formal exercise dominated by technical and legal considerations. It must allow social forces to draw upon the main lessons from the country's evolution since independence. It offers an opportunity to place the future of the Bissau-Guinean youth at the centre of concerns, as they pay a high price for political and institutional instability. The proposed approach to the reforms must be ambitious to generate real interest from all of the country's social forces, in all regions and in all communities.

## Notes

- 1 A Sylva, *As Constituições da Guiné-Bissau. Que constitucionalismo?*, UNIOGBIS/FDB, 3-4/12/2010, 2.
- 2 Interviews with political and civil society actors, Bissau, April–June 2017.
- 3 Constitution of Guinea-Bissau Republic, Article 98, paragraph 2.
- 4 Cape Verde Constitution, Article 206.
- 5 Acts leading to the resignation of the government are specified: a) the beginning of a new legislature and the dissolution of the National Assembly; b) the acceptance by the President of the Republic of the Prime Minister's request for resignation; c) the death or permanent physical or psychological incapacity of the Prime Minister; d) the absence of submission of his programme to the approval of the National Assembly and the absence of presentation, at the same time as the programme, of a question of trust concerning the general policy which it plans to implement; e) the rejection of a motion of trust; f) the approval of two motions of censure in the same legislature.
- 6 Portuguese Constitution, Article 133, paragraph i.
- 7 Constitution of Guinea-Bissau Republic, Article 74, paragraph 1-p.
- 8 *Ibid.*, Article 75.
- 9 *ibid.*, Article 68, paragraph p.

### Methodological note

This note is part of a series of six analytical notes on the reforms that Guinea-Bissau needs in order to return to stability, and which are also proposed in the October 2016 Conakry Agreement. The first notes are respectively about the reform of the Constitution, the reform of the electoral law, the reform of the Framework Law on Political Parties, the reform of the defence and security sector and the reform of the judiciary. The sixth and final note summarises the main recommendations presented in the notes as a whole. These publications are the result of field

research and analysis conducted from March 2017 to January 2018 by a team of researchers from the Dakar office of the Institute for Security Studies, with the support of experts from Guinea-Bissau, the region and internationally. They were developed at the request of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to facilitate discussions on these reforms among the forces of political and civil society in Guinea-Bissau.

## About UNIOGBIS

The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) was established in 2009 by Security Council resolution 1876, of 26 June 2009. The current mandate of UNIOGBIS, as specified in resolution 2404 of 28 February 2018, focus on the following priorities: i) supporting the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and facilitating an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process; ii) supporting, through good offices, the electoral process to ensure inclusive, free and credible legislative elections in 2018; and iii) supporting national authorities in expediting and complementing the review of the Constitution. The Mission is also mandated to assist, coordinate and lead international efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and enhance the capacity of state organs, promote and protect human rights, support the combat against drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, mainstream gender in peacebuilding efforts, and mobilize, harmonize and coordinate international assistance with view to upcoming elections.

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