



Please note that the original statement was delivered in Portuguese. This is an unofficial translation by Deepl.



*4th RPU info cycle, Joint statement between AJPDH and ICO
Pre-session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Republic Guinea-Bissau,*

Ladies and gentlemen

My name is Biro Embaló, President of the Youth Association for the Promotion and Defense Human Rights in Guinea-Bissau (AJPDH), based in the capital Bissau. AJPDH is a non-profit organization that aims to promote and defend human rights in all their manifestations, established in 2014.

Today, I present the conclusions and recommendations of our report for the stakeholders' UPR, presented in collaboration with the International Organization of Communities (ICO), an independent international organization working to protect and empower minority rights.

Introduction

The AJPDH and ICO presentation to the RPU on Guinea-Bissau, which contains more than 30 ethnic groups, highlights the prominence of intersectional discrimination for minority as well as marginalized groups, in particular the Fula, in areas such as gender (GBV), access education, linguistic prejudice and economic marginalization.

1. Development

➤ Minority groups in Guinea-Bissau


The population of Guinea-Bissau is diverse, with a large part of the population made up of by ethnic groups such as the Fula (15-20%) and the Bijagós (10%). Political instability and the difficulties of economic growth have meant that the central government has been unable to allocate sufficient resources to solve the main problems faced by minority groups, such as economic marginalization, environmental rights, the right to education and health problems such as FGM.

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The Fula ethnic group is made up of semi-nomadic pastoralists who face conflicts with the farming communities over land use. In Guinea-Bissau, the Fulas live mostly in rural areas, speak Fula and the Guinean national language, and their language is a central element of their ethnic identity. 

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invest in micro-projects and skills development programs for women, especially in rural and traditional areas where they often face limitations in accessing the labor market;
2. Include marginalized communities, such as the Bijagós, in the national decision-making process on land and environmental policies;
3. Guarantee free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for all development projects that affect local communities.

➤ Right to Education

Access to education for the Fula community has been a persistent challenge, because most Fula children face difficulties in accessing quality education. This is exacerbated by the lack of educational infrastructure in some regions, sectors and remote villages, a shortage of teachers, a lack of sufficient material and teaching resources, and lack of commitment from the government. In rural areas, where many communities are located, the number of schools is limited, especially in the Gabu region, where some administrative sectors still don't have high schools, i.e. 10th to 12th grades.

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Recommendations :

- *Developing public policies for educational inclusion that meet the needs ethnic communities, as well as creating schools in rural areas to facilitate access to quality education;*
- *Fully implement the "6-6 Program" to ensure that young people in rural areas complete primary and secondary education;*
- *Expanding access to education for linguistic and ethnic minorities through bi-lingual education initiatives;*
- *Provide additional resources and training for teachers working in marginalized areas.*

➤ Social inequality, gender and children's rights

The Bissau-Guinean government has continued its work to improve the laws that guarantee women's rights, such as the adoption of CEDAW. , according to the MICS 2018 study, 52% of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 have been subjected to some form of FGM, with the rate varying up to 87% (Bafatá) and 96% (Gabú).

In addition, due to a lack of opportunities and serious government engagement, gender disparities continue to exist for women, with significant wage gaps in the labor market, limited access to assets and inadequate protection of these assets. Very few women own the land they farm, which is a significant problem given that Guinea-Bissau's economy is largely agricultural.

As a result of non-compliance with the parity law, female representation also remains low in all political and social spheres in Guinea-Bissau.

Child trafficking continues to pose a serious risk in Guinea-Bissau, particularly the trafficking of Guinean boys for forced labor and street vending,

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in agriculture and begging in Senegal; as well as a high incidence of trafficking involving Guinean women, who are exploited in the sex trade and domestic servitude.



Recommendations

- *Strictly enforce the laws that criminalize Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), especially in regions with high prevalence such as Gabu and Bafatá;*
- *Implement initiatives aimed at improving land ownership rights and economic opportunities for women;*
- *Provide law enforcement agencies with resources to effectively combat child trafficking;*
- *Increasing female political representation to meet the 36% quota required by the 2018 law.*

Geneva, January 18, 2025.

Sincerely
Biro Embaló
/ The President of AJPDH /

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