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GUINEAN HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE



## PRE-SESSION OF THE UPR OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN GUINEA-BISSAU

Geneva - February 18, 2025

### 1. BRIEF PRESENTATION.

Honorable representatives of different states present in this room  
Dear fellow members of civil society organizations present here.

Ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Edmar Nhaga, I represent the Guinea-Bissau Human Rights League, a non-governmental organization for the defense, protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms, founded on August 12, 1991. On behalf of the Guinean League for Human Rights and myself, we thank you for the opportunity to be at this pre-session to share with you the human rights situation in Guinea-Bissau.

### 2. OBJECT OF THE DECLARATION

The specific themes of our declaration will be Civil and Political Rights and Corruption, with a special focus on the Freedoms of Assembly, Expression, Demonstration, Freedom of the Press and Corruption in the Judiciary.

### 3. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS: Freedoms of Assembly, Expression, Demonstration, Freedom of the Press.

Between 2020 and 2024, Guinea-Bissau faced serious violations of the right to life and physical integrity, with a significant increase in homicides. An attack on the Government Palace in 2022, classified as a coup attempt resulted in 11 deaths. The government ignored court orders to

release unjustly detained suspects, some of whom ended up dying in the following this illegal detention.

There were also 47 murders in 2022 as a result of justice and impunity, affecting mainly young people and men.

There has been a growing crackdown on pluralism and fundamental freedoms, with the political opposition being persecuted and attacked. Opposition leaders face threats, violence and travel restrictions, while the Security Forces are being used to disperse, assault and tear gas the activities of political parties opposed to the installed regime.

Freedom of the press and expression is facing severe, unprecedented restrictions, with 13 more cases of attacks by the Rapid Intervention Police and Presidential Guards on journalists and the media between 2020 and 2024. There have been arrests and physical attacks on media organizations and the imposition of high fees for private and community radio licenses. In addition, more than seven kidnappings and brutal beatings of journalists, politicians and political activists were documented during this period.

Freedom of expression is severely restricted, with more than 17 attempts at peaceful demonstrations were repressed.

Trade union freedom has also come under attack, with arrests and threats against union leaders and the banning of demonstrations against the rising cost of living. The Secretary General of the National Union of Guinean Workers - Central Trade Union (UNTG-CS), and members of its leadership, received anonymous threats of beatings and death. In addition, armed and hooded individuals carried out night-time patrols to intimidate them in their homes. They were forcibly evicted from the union headquarters by police forces, and a new leadership loyal to the current regime was installed.

These situations reflect a significant decline in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

### **Recommendations:**

In view of these concerns, we recommend the following to the State of Guinea-Bissau:

- Lift immediately a suspension illegal of freedom of demonstration decreed by the government on January 15, 2009. 2024, as well to revise during the next legislature Law No. 3/92 of April 6, the assembly and demonstration law whose preliminary draft has been deposited in the National People's Assembly;

- Train security agencies and judicial authorities on human rights and appropriate legal practices to guarantee the protection of citizens' rights and prevent abuses, establishing clear protocols for dealing with reports of abuse and ensuring that are strictly followed;
- Establish and implement research over the next 18 months of all allegations of human rights violations, guaranteeing that those responsible are identified and held accountable in accordance with the law, setting up independent investigation commissions and ensuring that they have adequate resources for their operations.
- Revision of the Law on Freedom of the Press;
- Create a Media Regulation Authority that, from among other powers, would have to issue Licenses and Permits to the ;
- Strengthen legal protection for journalists, activists and opponents politicians, ensuring that they can operate freely without fear of reprisals;

#### **4. CORRUPTION**

Corruption is a major threat to the Guinean judicial system, affecting the administration of justice and the institutions in charge of fighting it. In the last cycle, there were three recommendations on the subject from countries such as South Africa, Sierra Leone and Belgium.

Political interference and illegal practices, such as bribery and selling positions, compromise the integrity of the courts and the Ministry of Interior, resulting in injustices that favor the powerful and undermine the population's trust in the system. The judiciary's lack of independence from political and economic powers, including pressure in the appointment of key positions, exacerbates the perception that the system is more aligned with partisan and financial interests than with justice.

There is a growing consensus on the need for in-depth reforms to strengthen the independence of the system, fight corruption and increase transparency.

**Recommendation:**

The following are recommended measures to combat this scourge:

- Combat and drastically reduce all forms of corruption by 2026 in all spheres of public administration, promoting transparency;
- Approve the Witness Protection Law, the preliminary draft of which has been deposited, within the first 12 months of the next legislature in the People's National Assembly;

I really appreciate your attention, thank you very much!