

Title	Calm returns to Guinea-Bissau after disturbances - UN
Publisher	UN News Service
Country	Guinea-Bissau
Publication Date	28 December 2011
Cite as	UN News Service, <i>Calm returns to Guinea-Bissau after disturbances - UN</i> , 28 December 2011, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4f0aaf002.html [accessed 5 December 2012]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Calm returns to Guinea-Bissau after disturbances - UN

Calm has returned to Guinea-Bissau and the Government is functioning normally two days after a group of military officers attacked the army headquarters in an attempt to seize weapons, a spokesperson for the United Nations peacebuilding mission in the country said today.

“The situation is calm... the Government is also functioning, and today Guinea-Bissau received the visit of the African Union [AU] Commission’s President, Jean Ping,” said Vladimir Monteiro, spokesperson for the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

Mr. Ping met with the national authorities and international partners, including UN representatives, to discuss the situation, particularly tPeople are working, public transports are functioning, but at the same time there are several statements at civil society level, for example, regarding the 26 December events.he peacebuilding process and security sector reform, Mr. Monteiro said in an interview with UN Radio.

“People are working, public transports are functioning, but at the same time there are several statements at civil society level, for example, regarding the 26 December events. We also have some political parties taking a stand on what happened,” he added.

Mr. Monteiro cited a Government statement which said that a group of soldiers had on Monday attacked the armed forces headquarters in a bid to seize weapons. The group also attacked the offices of the chief-of-general staff. A number of security and defence officials were arrested following Monday’s events, and there are reports that some civilians have also been taken into custody, he said.

UNIOGBIS officials have been in touch with the national authorities to seek a complete explanation of that exactly happened. They have also met with representatives of the international community in the country to discuss how to address the situation, according to Mr. Monteiro.

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon yesterday condemned the use of force to settle differences in Guinea-Bissau and called for the respect of the lawful civilian authorities in the West African country.

Mr. Ban, in a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, encouraged the country’s authorities to respect due process in the investigation of the reported events, saying he is following the situation. He reaffirmed the support of the UN to the peacebuilding process in the country.

“The primacy of the lawful civilian authorities according to the constitution must be respected,” the statement noted.

A week ago the Security Council renewed UNIOGBIS' mandate until February 2013 to consolidate peace and stability and urged the Government and other political actors to work together towards that goal.

Established by the Council in 2009, UNIOGBIS is tasked with promoting stability in Guinea-Bissau, which has been beset by coups and political instability since independence.

Last month, Joseph Mutaboba, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS, told the Council that while Guinea-Bissau has made important progress, including in police reform, it is vital that the country presses ahead with other challenges such as the launch of a pension fund for ex-military and security personnel and improving the judicial sector.

Mr. Mutaboba added that it is important to build on recent gains as the country prepares for legislative elections next year.

Guinea-Bissau is one of five countries on the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission - along with Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Liberia - set up in 2005 to help countries emerging from conflict make an irreversible transition from war to sustainable peace.
