

Guinea-Bissau ready for 'peaceful, free and fair' legislative election on Sunday, says UN

After months of preparation, on the day before casting their ballots, Guinean voters are all set for a "peaceful, free and fair" national election, the United Nations said on Saturday.

With UN support, 21 parties are battling to hold, for four years, 102 seats in the National Assembly. Preliminary results are expected on Monday.

As required by electoral law, the 21 parties paused their activities on Saturday for a day of reflection. And while t-shirts continued to be distributed and worn by their supporters, not a sound of campaign promises or candidate speeches was heard.

Speaking to *UN News*, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), General Francis Behanzin, said that "everything is ready", the security situation "is OK" and the "campaign happened very well".

He said that the parties are talking to each other, calling it "a very good thing for democracy in West Africa".

Local election monitor in Guinea-Bissau., by Alexandre Soares.

"After the election," he concluded, "we will address the challenge of development".

Citing, among other things, donor fatigue in raising funds for the national election, Julia Alinho, head of public communications at the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), told *UN News* "Everything is ready in spite of all difficulties".

"We expect that it is peaceful, free and fair", she attested.

Gearing up

From the hotels in the capital, dozens of international observers from the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and others were sent to locations deemed important to the elections' success throughout the country.

The UN's technical support of the process included training 80 police officers, 400 members of civil society, 450 electoral officers and 120 journalists.

“Support of international community [is] vital and much appreciated for monitoring of free, fair and secure elections”, [David McLachlan-Karr](#), the UN Resident Coordinator there [tweeted](#) on Friday, saying that UNIOGBIS had briefed election observers from the AU, ECOWAS, CPLP, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Pre-election Security Council visit

Prior to the elections, the Security Council visited Guinea-Bissau last month to [monitor and evaluate](#) the crisis resolution process in this country.

While there, the delegation met with the Speaker of the National Assembly, the leaders of political parties, the President of the National Electoral Commission, the President of the Supreme Court and representatives of civil society, as well as with President José Mario Vaz.