

Supporting the democratic process in Guinea-Bissau

Thank you, Mr President. Let me start by thanking SRSB Ms Sori-Coulibaly and Ambassador Filho for their briefings, which set out clearly the achievements that Guinea-Bissau has made, but also some of the challenges which remain.

I'd also like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Niger to this Council. As current chair of ECOWAS, Niger has a vital role to play in supporting the democratic process in Guinea Bissau.

Mr President, the peaceful holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2019 were significant steps forward in Guinea-Bissau's political transition. We commend the Guinea-Bissau authorities and people on this progress, and we welcome the ongoing neutrality of Guinea-Bissau's military and security forces in the political process.

We are concerned, however, by the political instability we have seen following the election. The uncertainty that this creates risks undermining the democratic process and damaging public confidence in the electoral system. We call on all political actors to work together to resolve the situation as quickly as possible so that a new government can be inaugurated and focus on the important work of consolidating democracy and providing development and stability for its people, as per the 2016 Conakry agreement and the ECOWAS Roadmap.

Mr President, the United Kingdom appreciates the supporting role played in Guinea-Bissau by UNIOGBIS, the Peacebuilding Commission, the UN Country Team and other UN bodies and offices, which have helped build a more robust and inclusive political environment. We thank Ms Sori-Coulibaly for her work and will continue to provide our full support to her in carrying out her mandate.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the key role played by ECOWAS and the "Group of Five" in holding political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau to account. We trust they will remain as engaged and vigilant throughout the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

Given the recent progress, the UK supports the drawdown of UNIOGBIS by December 2020 and we are confident the steps are underway to ensure a smooth transition. It is important that key tasks are handed over to UN agencies or other actors, such as the UN Country Team on Development and the UNODC on drugs trafficking and transnational crime, and that these agencies are sufficiently resourced to accept the tasks.

As UNIOGBIS draws down, the good offices of Mr Chambas, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNOWAS, will be increasingly important in accompanying Guinea-Bissau on the path to greater political stability. The Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund will also play a helpful role in ensuring the continuity of support for peacebuilding tasks.

It is vital that political stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau continue to engage positively with the UN good offices and sustain their commitment to the reform agenda until the Conakry agreement has been fully implemented.

Mr President, in conclusion, we hope that the political progress achieved in recent years can be maintained to carry Guinea-Bissau out of its past into a stronger, more stable, more democratic future. The primary responsibility for delivering this lies with the Bissau Guinean government. The United Kingdom, along with the international community, will continue to monitor the situation and work with the government in support of this objective.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Heavy rain increases South East flood-risk](#)

Before and after picture shows blockage on the River Stour near Ashford cleared by Environment Agency field teams

The Environment Agency is warning communities that persistent heavy rain could lead to an increased risk of flooding across South East England over the next few days.

The forecast heavy rain could cause surface water flooding in local communities, and see a rise in river levels, and travel disruption as roads and rail lines may be affected.

At 4.30pm today, Friday, there were 53 alerts across the South East, where flooding is possible, and one warning, at Barcombe Mills in East Sussex, which mean flooding is expected. With further rainfall forecast, this figure is likely to go up.

Maria Herlihy, duty manager for the Environment Agency, said:

“Heavy downpours are expected across the South East on Friday night and into the weekend, which could lead to surface water flooding and significant travel disruption.

“Current forecasts indicate a heightened risk of flooding in parts of Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. The Environment Agency is making preparations to operate flood defences, flood storage reservoirs and to issue flood warnings and advice and to those at risk ahead of the incoming weather.

“Our teams have been out on the ground checking flood defences, clearing debris from rivers, and will continue to support other agencies to reduce the impacts of the heavy rain. We will issue flood alerts and warnings where

necessary.

“We urge the public to prepare to take action when at risk of flooding, even if a temporary barrier is in place. There are a number of things you can do to prepare for flooding to keep yourself and your family safe. Find out if your home is at risk, sign-up for flood warnings and be ready to take action. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/flood or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

“People should remain vigilant, check their flood-risk and plan to stay safe. We urge people to stay away from swollen rivers and not to walk or drive through flood water as just 30cm/12ins of flowing water is enough to move your car.”

People on Twitter can follow updates on flood-risk on the Environment Agency’s South East and national accounts, @EnvAgencySE and @EnvAgency.

All media enquiries 0800 141 2743 E-mail us at communications_se@environment-agency.gov.uk Follow us on Twitter at @EnvAgencySE

Notes to editors: Flood alerts indicate that people should be aware. Flood warnings mean that flooding is expected and people should take action to stay safe. A severe flood warning means that there is a risk to life – people should take immediate action and follow the advice of the emergency services.

[Northleigh House School: warning notice](#)

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1. 14 February 2020

DfE removed the regulatory action on 29 November 2019.

2. 25 June 2019

First published.

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev: warning notice

Published 3 December 2018

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1. 14 February 2020

DfE removed the regulatory action on 28 November 2019.

2. 3 December 2018

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North London Rudolf Steiner School: warning notice

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1. 14 February 2020

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