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الاتحاد الأفريقي African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights		UNIÃO AFRICANA Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme & des Peuples
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Press Statement on the Coup d'Etat in Guinea Bissau

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) is following with concern the reports of a coup d'état against the legitimate political institutions in place in Guinea Bissau. The African Commission is deeply alarmed by reports that the whereabouts of the outgoing Prime Minister Mr. Carlos Gomes Junior, the Interim President H.E. Raimundo Pereira and the army chief of staff General Antonio Indjai are currently unknown. The Commission is also concerned by reports that members of the national army have taken control of the ruling party headquarters, the national radio and subsequently paralyzed the country.

The African Commission notes that this coup d'état is directed against the ongoing electoral process which would ultimately give Guinean people the opportunity to freely choose their leaders. The coup constitutes a serious violation of the human rights of people in Guinea Bissau, including in particular the right to liberty and security, and the right to participate freely in government, as guaranteed in Article 6 and 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Further, the African Commission notes that the attempted coup d'état is a violation of the principles of the African Union (AU), more so Article 4(p) of the AU Constitutive Act and Article 3(10) African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, to which Guinea Bissau is a State Party, both of

which call for “condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments.”

The African Commission strongly condemns this coup d’état, which clearly constitutes a violation of human and peoples’ rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and in regional and international human rights instruments.

The Commission calls for an immediate restoration of democratic governance and constitutional order in the country and for an immediate release of all political leaders arbitrarily detained incommunicado.

Further the African Commission calls on the AU, ECOWAS and the international community, to ensure the immediate restoration of the interim government and resumption of the electoral process, particularly the preparations for the April 29 runoff presidential elections.

Banjul, The Gambia, 13 March 2012