

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002953/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
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(15 July 2026)

Subject: Arbitrary preventive arrest of the leader of the opposition in Guinea-Bissau, Domingos Simões Pereira

On 10 July 2026, the winner of the 2023 elections in Guinea-Bissau, Domingos Simões Pereira, was once again arrested, on the basis of fabricated accusations of his being responsible for an attempted coup d'état. In reality, the former president, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, defeated in those elections, staged his own deposition, using a coup-plotting military junta that is currently leading the country to circumvent the popular vote and retain his influence over the nation's destiny.

On 30 August 2026, a new Constitution and a new electoral law, drafted by the coup plotters, will be put to a referendum; if approved, they will open the door for the return of the former president.

The EU has concrete means at its disposal to exert political pressure on the authorities in Guinea-Bissau. On 18 December 2025, a European Parliament resolution demanded 'the immediate review of bilateral agreements', requested the 'release of opponents', and the 'application of targeted sanctions to those responsible for the democratic breakdown'.

What measures has the EU taken so far to implement Parliament's calls, and what other measures will it take, as a matter of urgency, to restore constitutional order and secure the immediate release of Domingos Simões Pereira and other political prisoners?

Submitted: 15.7.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(7 August 2026)

Since the start of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the EU has remained in close contact with relevant stakeholders. The EU Delegation in Bissau issued two *notes verbales* requesting access to the detained opposition leader.

Several diplomatic demarches also called for the release of all persons held extrajudicially, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and a swift return to constitutional order.

On 23 July 2026, the opposition leader was released after nearly eight months of detention. The EU welcomed his release on humanitarian grounds and his transfer to Portugal for medical care.

The EU also reiterated readiness, in coordination with Team Europe, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, to support efforts aimed at restoring constitutional order and fostering an inclusive political process.

The EU is closely following the announcement of a referendum on 30 August 2026 on a new Constitution and electoral law. Uncertainty remains regarding the announced legislative elections of 6 December 2026. The EU calls for free, transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

Throughout the crisis, the EU has maintained its support to the people of Guinea-Bissau through programmes on health, education, agriculture, fisheries, human rights, gender equality and environmental protection.

The EU's engagement is based on a pragmatic approach that seeks to safeguard the EU's interests, while remaining firmly anchored in its core values, including democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Restrictive measures remain an important foreign policy instrument. However, any decision to adopt, amend or lift sanctions lies with the Council.
