



## STATEMENT ON GUINÉ BISSAU

MEDEL expresses its solidarity with the Prosecutors of Guinea Bissau, the *Sindicato dos Magistrados do Ministério Público da Guiné-Bissau* (SINAMP) and its president, who was suspended from his duties and prevented from earning his salary as a magistrate, because in the exercise of his functions he publicly denounced what constitutes a clear usurpation of functions by the former General Prosecutor of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

SINAMP is a member of the recently created *Association of Portuguese-Speaking Prosecutors*, along with SMMP (included are also the associations of Prosecutors from Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe).

In an investigation that is being conducted by the Judicial Police of Guinea-Bissau regarding drug trafficking, the General Prosecutor and some magistrates of the Public Prosecutor's Office were mentioned by some testimonies as being involved in the crime.

The General Prosecutor then decided, in defiance of the statutory rules in force and usurping the powers of the Superior Council of the Public Prosecutors, to suspend a magistrate of the Public Prosecutors' Office linked to the investigation.

In view of the facts, the national direction of SINAMP in Guinea-Bissau decided to mandate its President to issue a press release addressed to the media, denouncing the clear and unequivocal usurpation of powers by the General Prosecutor.

Following this press release, the president of SINAMP was suspended from exercising his functions as a magistrate and his salary was frozen by the General Prosecutor, which, apart from an usurpation of powers by the latter, **is a violation of freedom of expression and freedom of association.**

It is necessary to remind that the freedom of association has long been assumed as a dimension of human rights, recognized by the most relevant international regulations in the international system (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the ILO, to the International Covenants on civil and political, economic and social rights, passing through Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organization).

No union leader should be persecuted or object of retaliations for having acted in the exercise of his or her functions and in the defence of their associates.

The actions of the former General Prosecutor of Guinea-Bissau constitute a clear violation of the right to associativism and freedom of association, but also a clear violation of the autonomy of the Public Prosecutors Office in that country, and the independence of the magistrates.

MEDEL cannot fail to express its solidarity with the President of SINAMP of Guinea-Bissau and demands that legality and the rule of law in that country be quickly restored.

**Barcelona, 03 December 2022**