



Guinea's 2008 Military Coup and Relations with the United States

Alexis Arieff

Analyst in African Affairs

Nicolas Cook

Specialist in African Affairs

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Summary

Guinea is a Francophone West African country on the Atlantic coast, with a population of about 10 million. It is rich in natural resources but characterized by widespread poverty and limited socioeconomic growth and development. While Guinea has experienced regular episodes of internal political turmoil, it was considered a locus of relative stability over the past two decades, a period during which each of its six neighbors suffered one or more armed internal conflicts. Guinea entered a new period of political uncertainty on December 23, 2008, when a group of junior and mid-level military officers seized power, hours after the death of longtime president and former military leader Lansana Conté. The junta, calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD, after its French acronym), named as the interim national president a previously relatively unknown figure, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara.

The junta appointed a civilian prime minister, promised to hold presidential and legislative elections, and stated that its members would not become candidates in those elections. In August 2009, however, the elections were postponed from late 2009 to early 2010 and Dadis Camara publicly suggested that he may run for president, contradicting his repeated previous pledges not to prolong his presidential tenure and the CNDD ban on its members running for office. Some fear that rivalries within the CNDD, tension between Dadis Camara's supporters and those who oppose his candidacy, and substantial economic challenges could pose further threats to Guinea's stability. Guinea has never undergone a democratic or constitutional transfer of power since gaining independence in 1958, and Dadis Camara is one of only three persons to occupy the presidency since that time. While he has presented himself as a reformer who is leading a crackdown on corruption and international drug trafficking, serious concerns have arisen over the CNDD's handling of these issues and over the junta's adherence to human rights norms and the rule of law. Junta leaders have also stated that large international corporate mineral concession contracts would be reviewed and potentially cancelled or reallocated, prompting concerns among foreign investors in Guinea.

The United States condemned the coup and suspended some bilateral development aid and all security assistance to Guinea, signaling a hiatus in what had been a cordial bilateral relationship during much of the Conté period. Prior to the coup, U.S. officials had informally planned a potential three-year security assistance budget totaling over \$100 million, the bulk of which would have supported maritime security programs and regional peacekeeping training. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s governance and humanitarian assistance programs, which comprised a substantial portion of the U.S. aid budget in Guinea before the coup, were not affected by the suspension. Both the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suspended Guinea's membership in response to the coup, but did not place sanctions on the CNDD. There is disagreement within Guinean political circles and among members of the international community over the relative utility and effects of suspending aid and, more generally, about what policies should define foreign governments' and multilateral bodies' relations with the junta.

This report analyzes developments since the military's seizure of power in December 2008, Guinea's relations with the United States, and U.S. policy in the wake of the coup. It also provides background on Guinean history and politics.

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Recent Developments

September 28 Protests

On September 28, 2009, security forces opened fire with live ammunition on a crowd of some 50,000 civilian protesters who had gathered in and around an outdoor stadium near the center of Conakry.¹ The demonstration was organized by opposition political parties to protest statements by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara—the head of the military junta that took power in December 2008, the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD)—indicating he might run for president in national elections scheduled for 2010. Several major political leaders were in the stadium and planned to address the crowd. Demonstrators reportedly chanted, “We want true democracy” and held signs reading “Down with the Army in Power.”² CNDD authorities had earlier attempted to ban the protest from taking place. Four days earlier, tens of thousands of protesters had reportedly demonstrated against Camara when he traveled to Labe, the main city in central Guinea and an opposition stronghold, though no violent confrontations were reported.³

While state authorities reported 57 mortalities as a result of the confrontations, the Guinean Organization for Human Rights (OGDH) reported that at least 157 people were killed, many by bullets, while over 1,000 were wounded. The OGDH toll is based on a survey of hospitals, and many believe the death toll to be significantly higher. Several reports contended that CNDD commanders had ordered bodies to be taken to military camps rather than the morgue.⁴ Witnesses reported that soldiers—many wearing red berets and thought to be members of the Presidential Guard—directly fired on the stadium crowd, stabbed those fleeing with knives and bayonets, and molested and raped women openly in public.⁵ Military and police officers also reportedly carried out lootings and rapes in residential areas of Conakry during the melee. There also were reports that women were detained in police stations and military camps. Several local journalists were reportedly assaulted and had their equipment smashed by soldiers. Protesters set fire to a police station in apparent response to the crackdown.⁶

By September 29, protesters had largely dispersed, and troops were said to be patrolling Conakry's main roads. However, looting by soldiers continued and sporadic confrontations were reported in several opposition strongholds in Conakry. Witnesses said at least three civilians were killed in such confrontations.⁷

¹ September 28 is a national holiday in Guinea, commemorating Guinea's decision in 1958 to declare independence from France.

² Associated Press (AP), “Guinea Soldiers Shoot Dead at Least 10 Protesters,” September 28, 2009; Adam Nossiter, “Over 100 Protesters Killed in Guinea,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2009.

³ AFP, “20,000 in Guinea Demo Against Coup Leader,” September 24, 2009.

⁴ BBC, “Guinea Bans ‘Subversive’ Meetings,” September 30, 2009; and AFP, “Guinea Under Fire After Scores Killed in Opposition Crackdown,” September 28, 2009.

⁵ Reuters, “Guinea Death Toll Jumps to 157-Rights Group,” September 29, 2009; AP, “Guinea Protest Death Toll Climbs to 100: Doctor,” September 29, 2009; AFP, “Women Raped in Guinea Crackdown: NGO,” September 29, 2009; BBC News Online, “Guinea Army ‘Bayoneted Victims,’” September 29, 2009.

⁶ Agence France Presse (AFP), “‘Dozens Killed’ in Guinea Anti-Junta Demonstration,” September 28, 2009.

⁷ CRS interviews with Conakry residents, September 29, 2009; Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Calme Tendu Après la Sanglante Répression,” September 29, 2009.

Guinea's security forces have a history of using excessive force against anti-government demonstrators, notably during massive nationwide protests in early 2007, which resulted in some 186 civilian deaths, according to local human rights groups.⁸ The crackdown in response to the September 28 protest was the deadliest since then.

Opposition Leaders Injured, Arrested

At least six opposition leaders—Cellou Dalein Diallo and his deputy Amadou Bah Oury, François Lonsény Fall, Sidya Touré, Jean-Marie Doré, and Mouctar Diallo—were reportedly injured, and at least three were beaten by soldiers. Diallo, Touré, and Fall were reportedly then arrested and taken to the Alpha Yaya Diallo military camp, where the CNDD headquarters is based.⁹ They were eventually taken to a hospital, where they were temporarily barred from communicating with the media.¹⁰ The leaders' homes were reportedly looted by soldiers in their absence, and at least one was sprayed with machine gun fire.¹¹ According to statements later made to the international press, Diallo said he was beaten by soldiers who threatened to kill him. Touré said he had witnessed “complete disorder and total anarchy,” while Fall accused the military of crimes against humanity.¹²

International Reactions

Philip J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, stated that the United States is

deeply concerned about the general breakdown .. of security in Conakry, and we encourage the Guinean Government to exercise restraint and ensure the safety and security of all Guineans and foreign nationals. We're very concerned about violations of basic human rights and call upon the regime to release all political prisoners.¹³

A State Department release said the United States would monitor “the extralegal actions of the military and government.”¹⁴ AFP also quoted an unnamed senior US official as stating that the United States was calling on the CNDD “to conduct a credible investigation and, if warranted by the facts, punish any official responsible for the excessive use of force.”¹⁵ U.S. Senator Russ Feingold released a statement condemning “this blatant and violent repression” and urging Dadis Camara “to abide by his pledge not to run in the elections scheduled for January.”¹⁶

⁸ Coalition pour la Défense des Victimes des Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les violations commises en République de Guinée pendant les événements de Janvier et Février 2007* (Nov. 2007): 4. See also HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

⁹ RFI, “Calme Tendu Après la Sanglante Répression,” September 29, 2009. See Appendix 1 for profiles of selected Guinean political party leaders.

¹⁰ AFP, “Guinée: Trois Opposants Ayant Été Hospitalisés ont Regagné Leur Domicile,” September 29, 2009.

¹¹ AFP, “Guinée: Les maisons de deux opposants pillées par des militaires (témoins),” September 28, 2009.

¹² RFI, “Calme Tendu Après la Sanglante Répression,” September 29, 2009.

¹³ State Department, “Daily Press Briefing,” September 29, 2009.

¹⁴ Reuters, “U.S. Condemns ‘Brazen’ Guinea Crackdown,” September 29, 2009.

¹⁵ AFP, “US ‘Deeply Concerned’ on Guinea, Urges Restraint,” September 28, 2009.

¹⁶ “Statement of Senator Russ Feingold on Guinean Soldiers Firing Into an Opposition Rally,” September 29, 2009

France condemned “the violent repression exercised by the army against the opposition and civil society during a peaceful demonstration,” called on the CNDD to “listen to the Guinean people’s legitimate aspiration to democratically choose their leaders,” and announced the suspension of military aid.¹⁷ The United Nations and the European Union (EU), as well as the governments of Great Britain and Belgium, also condemned the crackdown; the EU called for an investigation and was said to be looking at additional targeted measures that could be taken against those responsible for the violence.¹⁸ The UN Security Council, chaired by U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice, urged Guinean authorities to “put an end to the violence, bring the perpetrators to justice [and] release all political prisoners, opposition leaders and individuals who are being denied due process under the law.”¹⁹

The African Union (AU) Commission released a statement condemning “the indiscriminate firing on unarmed civilians” and noting “the personal responsibility and accountability of the perpetrators of the killings and other violations of human rights.” The Commission also noted that the repression “occurred in a context marked by serious uncertainties and setbacks in the process for the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea” and reaffirmed a previous threat by the AU Peace and Security Council to impose sanctions on Dadis Camara and other CNDD members if they violated prior commitments not to run for office in upcoming elections, scheduled for 2010.²⁰ ECOWAS condemned the repression of the protest and called for an international commission of inquiry.²¹

Human rights organizations condemned the Guinean military and Dadis Camara. Corinne Dufka, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch, said the killings were “shocking even by the abusive standards of Guinea’s coup government.”²² Alioune Tine, head of the regional human rights organization RADDHO, warned, “If Camara maintains his desire to be president, we are heading to an open conflict in this country.”²³ Gilles Yabi, a former Guinea analyst with the International Crisis Group, said that the protest “is only the beginning of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations we can expect in the next few months.”²⁴

CNDD Statements

In his first public comment following the killings by security forces on September 28, Dadis Camara told a Senegalese radio station that he was “disgusted” when told about the violence and stated that it had occurred beyond his control.²⁵ In a subsequent written statement released by the CNDD, the junta referred to those killed as “innocent victims” and committed to

¹⁷ AFP, “France Condemns ‘Violent Repression’ in Guinea,” September 28, 2009; Reuters, “Clash Toll in Guinea Soars, France Cuts Aid,” September 29, 2009.

¹⁸ European Union, “Presidency Statement on the Violent Events in Conakry, Republic of Guinea,” September 29, 2009; AFP, “Londres Condamne le Bilan ‘Choquant’ de la Répression en Guinée,” September 29, 2009; AFP, “Guinée: La Belgique Plaide Pour des Sanctions ‘Additionnelles’ de l’UE,” September 30, 2009; Reuters, “Clash Toll in Guinea Soars, France Cuts Aid,” September 29, 2009.

¹⁹ VOA News, “UN Security Council Concerned About Guinea,” September 30, 2009.

²⁰ African Union, “AU Commission Expresses Grave Concern Over Situation in Guinea,” September 29, 2009.

²¹ ECOWAS, “ECOWAS Condemns Acts of Repression in Guinea,” September 29, 2009.

²² Human Rights Watch, “Security Forces Unlawfully Kill Dozens of Protesters,” September 29, 2009.

²³ Reuters, “Guinea Forces Kill 14 in Crackdown-Group,” September 28, 2009.

²⁴ BBC, “Guinea Army ‘Bayoneted Victims,’” September 29, 2009.

²⁵ AFP, “Guinea Under Fire After Scores Killed in Opposition Crackdown,” September 28, 2009.

investigating the “tragic events.”²⁶ At the same time, the CNDD declined any responsibility for the killings, contending that security forces had been deployed “to prevent public unrest and to guarantee the security of individuals and belongings.” The junta maintained that opposition leaders had “unilaterally” organized a protest that risked “compromising public order” despite CNDD orders, and that the majority of those who died had been killed by asphyxiation in the stampede, not by bullets. The statement also accused “certain political leaders” of attempting to “compromise the smooth organization of the transition and to sap the foundations of national unity.” Dadis Camara separately declared two days of national mourning.²⁷ Dadis Camara also declared two days of national mourning for the victims and issued a prohibition on “any gathering from whatever side and nature and with subversive character.”²⁸

²⁶ Government of Guinea, Press Release, September 29, 2009, via Guineenews.

²⁷ AP, “Guinée: Camara Décrète Deux Jours de Deuil National,” September 30, 2009.

²⁸ BBC, “Guinea Bans ‘Subversive’ Meetings,” September 30, 2009.

Background

Figure I. Map of Guinea



Guinea is a socioeconomically impoverished but mineral-rich West African country, about the size of Oregon, which has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil. Over the past two decades, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability in a sub-region that has witnessed multiple armed conflicts. Until December 2008, Guinea was ruled by President Lansana Conté, who came to power in a military coup in 1984. Conté oversaw some economic and political reforms, but his critics accused him of stifling Guinea's democratic development while allowing corruption and nepotism to flourish.

The final years of Conté's rule were marked by a decline in average living standards, the co-optation of power by members of Conté's inner circle of businessmen and politicians, and increasing signs of public dissatisfaction. Guinea's health sector and national infrastructure are very poor, even by regional standards, and Guinean standards of living are among the worst in the

world.²⁹ Conté's supporters, however, argued that his leadership prevented Guinea from experiencing the kind of armed civil conflict and political instability that have afflicted its neighbors. While Guinea held several general elections under Conté, democratic gains under his leadership were limited, and power remained concentrated in his hands. For several years prior to his death, Conté reportedly suffered from a combination of diabetes, heart problems, and possibly leukemia, and rarely appeared in public. His critics contended that his illness and increasing reclusiveness rendered him incompetent for the presidency. Further aspects of Conté's rule are discussed in the **Appendix B**, which provides historical background on Guinea.

U.S. Interests in Guinea

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and security; and socioeconomic and institutional development.³⁰ Ensuring a transition to a democratically elected, civilian-led government is now a focus of U.S. governance concerns. Issues of interest to Congress may include stability and governance in West Africa; counternarcotics; Guinea's natural resource wealth and extractive industries; and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.³¹

Counternarcotics issues are a relatively recent area of engagement, as Guinea, among other countries in the region, has emerged as a reported transshipment point for cocaine en route from South America to Europe. This development has implications for U.S. security interests, as some of the beneficiaries of this trade are believed by analysts to include South American drug syndicates that are the target of U.S. military or law enforcement counternarcotics operations. Such organizations may include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a U.S.-designated terrorist entity. Drug trafficking also threatens to undermine U.S. foreign policy goals in Africa, such as the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, legitimate economic growth, state institution-building, and other foreign aid program goals set out in the U.S. Foreign Assistance Framework.

Guinea's extractive industry sector is of financial and strategic interest to the United States. In addition to gold, diamonds, uranium, and potential oil and gas reserves, Guinea possesses an estimated 27% or more of global reserves of bauxite, a key component of aluminum.³² Guinea provided 16% of U.S. bauxite and alumina imports between 2004 and 2007,³³ and several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea. The large U.S.-based multinational aluminum firm Alcoa, for instance, is a major shareholder in the *Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee*, a bauxite mining and export partnership with the Guinean state, while the much smaller U.S. energy firm Hyperdynamics holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration.³⁴ The CNDD has not

²⁹ See e.g. U.N. Development Program (UNDP), "Guinea: 2007/2008 Human Development Report," at http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_GIN.html.

³⁰ In 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on Guinea, focusing on governance, stability, and then-recent political protests.

³¹ In 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on Guinea, focusing on governance, stability, and the general strike that took place earlier that year.

³² U.S. Geological Survey, *2009 Bauxite and Alumina Survey*.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Further information on Alcoa is available at <http://www.alcoa.com/guinea/en/home.asp>; see Thomas Pearmain, "Hyperdynamics Divests of U.S. Oil Assets to Fund Guinea Operations," *Global Insight*, May 5, 2009. In September (continued...)

publicly altered any mining agreements with U.S.-based firms to date. However, it has reportedly threatened in one instance to review the concession rights of a U.S.-based company—Global Alumina—unless a planned alumina refinery is completed.³⁵

A broader U.S. interest in Guinea is the maintenance of political stability and peace, both in Guinea itself and in the surrounding sub-region. In contrast to Guinea, each of its six neighbors—most notably Sierra Leone and Liberia—have suffered armed civil conflicts over the past two decades. These conflicts were sparked by such factors as adverse socioeconomic development conditions; often volatile ethnic, regional, and leadership rivalries; and corruption and other abuses of state power and resources. While the Guinean state faces similar challenges, it has survived multiple threats to its institutional authority and integrity, contrary to the predictions of some analysts. Reflecting Guinea's perceived role in regional stability, U.S. security assistance prior to the coup included military training for participation in peacekeeping missions as well as programs aimed at bolstering maritime security.

Guinea's relative stability has had several key implications for the United States. First, Guinea has not, to date, been the source of a significant challenge to U.S. international peace and security policies. This is notable in a region where U.S. diplomatic efforts and substantial humanitarian assistance have at times been devoted to ending or mitigating the effects of conflict. Second, Guinea has been able to act as a humanitarian partner to the United States by hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflicts in neighboring states. Guinea was also able to help prevent a regional spillover of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia by repelling attacks on its territory by factions from Sierra Leone and Liberia backed by former President Charles Taylor of Liberia. Following these attacks, which took place in 2000 and 2001, the U.S. military trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger unit to shore up border security. At the same time, Guinean government policy has presented both confluences with and challenges to U.S. objectives in the region, in the form of Guinean intervention in the civil wars in Liberia and in Guinea-Bissau.³⁶

Guinean socioeconomic and state institutional development are also long-term U.S. policy objectives. Prior to the December 2008 coup, Guinea was a recipient of U.S. bilateral aid, notably humanitarian assistance and funding for the promotion of democracy and good governance. In response to the coup, the United States suspended all bilateral assistance that did not fall into either of these latter categories, including military and counternarcotics assistance.

(...continued)

2009, Hyperdynamics signed a memorandum of understanding with the Guinean government that reaffirmed the validity of Hyperdynamics' concession and its right to carry out exploration on 36% of its acreage. *Scandinavian Oil & Gas Magazine*, "Hyperdynamics Signs MoU With Guinea Government," September 15, 2009; *Africa Energy Intelligence*, "Hyperdynamics Wins at Last," September 23, 2009.

³⁵ EIU, "Guinea Industry: Captain Camara takes action against mining companies," June 1, 2009. More information on Global Alumina's operations in Guinea is available at http://www.globalalumina.com/about_overview.php.

³⁶ Former President Conté's government hosted former Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah after he was deposed by a junta, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, in 1997. Guinea's government also reportedly permitted the Liberian anti-Taylor rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to maintain rear bases in southern Guinea, supplied LURD with arms, and periodically provided tactical military assistance to it, such as cross-border mortar and helicopter air fire support. Guinea also intervened militarily in Guinea-Bissau's civil war in 1998 on behalf of the late former president, Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. On LURD, see CRS Report RL32243, *Liberia: Transition to Peace*, by Nicolas Cook.

The Conté Regime: Final Years

Conté maintained a careful balance between political and military factions, never publicly cultivated a designated successor, and generally brooked little public opposition to his rule. The president typically co-opted political opponents and suppressed protests by force or deflated them with pledges of food and fuel subsidies or policy reforms, which were often only partially fulfilled. Conté's final years were beset by growing public discontent with economic stagnation and high inflation; the slow pace of promised democratic reforms; extensive corruption; and Conté's semi-autocratic leadership. This spurred a growing number of formerly rare strikes and protests, some violent. These protests, together with Conté's ill health and reclusiveness, also led to power struggles within the cabinet and Conté's inner circle. Legislative elections were due to take place in 2007, but were repeatedly delayed, leaving the National Assembly with an expired mandate. Divisions and restiveness within the military, often over pay and slow rates of promotion, also grew.

Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando parachutist unit (known as the BATA). Mutinous troops exchanged fire with members of the presidential guard, and several people were reportedly killed, and dozens wounded, by stray bullets.³⁷ After a week of unrest, Conté met with mutiny leaders, and the government agreed to pay salary arrears of \$1,100 to each soldier, sack the defense minister, and grant promotions to junior officers, ending the uprising.³⁸ Contrary to mutineers' demands, much of the top military hierarchy remained in place until Conté's death; they were subsequently dismissed by the CNDD, key members of which have claimed to have played key roles in the 2008 mutiny.³⁹ In mid-June 2008, military troops crushed an attempted mutiny by police officers in Conakry over alleged non-payment of back-wages and a failure to implement pledged promotions. This culminated in a bloody shoot-out at a police headquarters that left at least four police officers dead, according to an official tally.

From 2005 onwards, many analysts were concerned about the risk of ethnic or intra-military violence and instability, and the potential impact on Guinea's fragile neighbors, should Conté die in office. Others, however, argued that Guineans' historically strong sense of national identity and social cohesion meant that such a scenario was unlikely.⁴⁰ Despite such differences in perspective, it was widely agreed that the National Assembly, judiciary, and opposition parties lacked sufficient cohesion, political power, or popular legitimacy to ensure a constitutional succession.⁴¹ A post-Conté military coup was predicted by many observers, but it was unclear what military faction, if any, might prevail, as the armed forces were reportedly divided along ethnic and generational fault lines. It was also unclear whether a military seizure of power would permit a

³⁷ Kissy Agyeman, "Tension Mounts in Guinea in Wake of Army Revolt," *Global Insight*, May 29, 2008.

³⁸ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Settles Army Pay Dispute With Mass Promotion," Reuters, June 14, 2008.

³⁹ Claude Pivi, a CNDD member and junior officer who was promoted to Minister of Presidential Security in January 2009, styled himself the leader of the Camp Alpha Yaya mutiny. Pivi also led the crackdown on the police uprising, according to witnesses. After he became president, Dadis Camara stated he had played a key role in the mutiny and in the negotiations that ended it.

⁴⁰ Social Science Research Council (SSRC), *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 2.

⁴¹ On the other hand, the National Assembly had arguably played the role of a vital check on executive power in February 2007, when legislators refused to extend a military state of siege that had provided cover for a massive crackdown on anti-government demonstrators.

return to civilian rule and constitutional governance. International concerns over potential instability heightened with reports that trafficking activities were being facilitated or directly undertaken by highly placed government officials, members of the military, and Conté associates.

The December 2008 Coup

In the early hours of December 23, 2008, President Conté's death, following a long illness, was announced on national television. Under Guinea's constitution, National Assembly Speaker Aboubacar Somparé was mandated to assume power as head of state, with presidential elections organized within 60 days. On television, Somparé—flanked by Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souaré and military chief of staff Gen. Diarra Camara—requested that the Supreme Court declare the presidency vacant and install Somparé as interim president.

Instead, within hours, a military junta calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) announced that it had taken power in a coup. In a communiqué broadcast on the national radio and television station, a junta spokesman, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, announced that the CNDD had “decided to end the agony of the Guinea people” by seizing power and aborting Somparé's constitutional succession.⁴² The junta dissolved the constitution and the National Assembly, banned political and union activity, and promised elections within two years.

The coup leaders justified their decision to overthrow the government on the basis that Guinea's ruling elite had provided poor leadership. In the broadcast announcing the coup, Dadis Camara stated that the incumbent regime had permitted the systematic “embezzlement of public funds, general corruption, impunity established as method of government, and anarchy in the management of state affairs” leading to “a catastrophic economic situation.” He also cited as justification a pattern of national poverty, despite the existence of abundant natural resources, the rise of drug trafficking, and diverse other crimes and patterns of poor governance.⁴³

It was initially unclear whether the CNDD represented the military as a whole, or merely a faction. In interviews with the international press, Somparé, Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, and military chief of staff Gen. Diarra Camara condemned the coup “attempt” and claimed the CNDD did not represent the majority of the armed forces.⁴⁴ Many feared that the standoff between the two factions could escalate into violence.⁴⁵ Instead, on the afternoon of December 24, reportedly following tense internal negotiations, the CNDD announced that the junta spokesman Dadis Camara had been chosen as president.⁴⁶ Dadis Camara paraded into downtown Conakry, where he was greeted by cheering crowds. Guineans' positive response to the

⁴² CNDD, “Communiqué Numéro 1,” Radio-Télévision Guinéenne (RTG), December 23, 2008; see “Guinea” Army Dissolves Cabinet, Suspends Constitution After President's Death,” [statement by the Guinean army], Conakry Radio Guinée Internationale, December 23, 2008 via Open Source.

⁴³ “Guinea: Army Dissolves Cabinet...” via Open Source.

⁴⁴ International television and radio interviews monitored by Arieff in Conakry.

⁴⁵ Witnesses suggested that the CNDD controlled Camp Alpha Yaya (Conakry's largest military base) and the main Radio-Télévision Guinéenne (RTG) offices, while “loyalist” soldiers who did not support the coup initially retained control of Camp Almamy Samory Touré (where the senior military leadership was based) and a subsidiary RTG station. On December 24, the CNDD accused the former government of importing mercenaries in a bid to regain power. (The claim did not appear to be borne out by events.)

⁴⁶ RFI, “Guinean Putschists Said Still Debating Choice of Leader,” December 23, 2008 and AFP, “Guinea: Analysts Say Divisions Within Military Explain Attempted Coup,” December 23, 2008, via Open Source.

CNDD appeared to be due to widespread dissatisfaction with Somparé, senior military staff, and other figures seen as representing the Conté era, along with relief that the coup had been carried out without bloodshed.⁴⁷ Many Guineans also viewed the incumbent government as lacking legitimacy.⁴⁸ In a television broadcast on December 25, Prime Minister Souaré and members of his cabinet, along with the military chief of staff, pledged to support the junta.

International Reactions to the Coup

Donors, including the European Union, the United Nations, France, and the United States, condemned the coup and called for elections and a return to civilian-led government. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) each suspended Guinea's membership but did not impose further punitive measures, such as visa restrictions or asset freezes, on the CNDD or its members. An International Contact Group on Guinea was formed in January 2009; members include the ECOWAS Commission and Chair, the AU Commission and Chair of its Peace and Security Council, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the European Union, the Mano River Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of Francophonie, the U.N. Secretariat, and the permanent and African members of the U.N. Security Council (including the United States).⁴⁹ The International Contact Group has held several meetings in Conakry with the junta, civil society groups, and political parties. It has focused on overseeing the electoral calendar, and on urging Dadis Camara to refrain from running for president.

U.S. Responses to the Coup

The United States condemned the coup and has repeatedly called for "a return to civilian rule and the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections as soon as possible."⁵⁰ The Bush Administration announced in early January 2009 that the United States would suspend bilateral aid to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance, in line with congressional directives.⁵¹ In practice, all security assistance has been suspended, while most development assistance and other non-military aid has been unaffected by the suspension. The United States also signaled its opposition to the junta by prohibiting the U.S. Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires from meeting personally with junta members. The restriction does not apply to other

⁴⁷ Arieff interviews, Conakry, December 24-26, 2008. While there is little public opinion data available, reports suggest Assembly Speaker Somparé, Conté's constitutional successor, was deeply unpopular. In 2005, the International Crisis Group reported that "Not one person consulted by Crisis Group expressed the desire for Somparé to take over. Once an ardent member of Sékou Touré's PDG party, he is often described as a Touré-era holdover, useful to the PUP primarily because of his tendency toward demagoguery and authoritarianism." (*Stopping Guinea's Slide*, 2005: 8.)

⁴⁸ In explaining their aversion to a constitutional succession led by Somparé, many pointed out that the National Assembly's five-year mandate had expired in late 2007, and that the constitution had been amended in 2001 in a disputed referendum. For a critical analysis of this argument, see SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 2-3.

⁴⁹ Commissions of the AU and ECOWAS, *Statement of the Consultative Meeting on the Situation in the Republic of Guinea*, January 30, 2009.

⁵⁰ AFP, "After Coup, U.S. Halts Aid to Guinea," January 7, 2009.

⁵¹ The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) bars direct assistance "to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree," with the exception of democracy promotion and humanitarian assistance. The provision is commonly referred to as "Section 508," a reference to previous appropriations legislation.

Embassy officials. In a digital video press conference in Conakry in late January 2009, Phillip Carter, then the State Department's Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and a previous U.S. ambassador to Guinea, warned that a failure to hold elections and restore civilian rule by year's end would "jeopardize the United States' long-term bilateral relationship with Guinea."⁵²

The CNDD

As of early 2009, the CNDD had 33 members, including six civilians. Military members were drawn mainly from the Army. The CNDD's composition is multi-ethnic, but key posts appear split between ethnic Malinké and *Forestiers*, a collective term for members of several small ethnic groups based in southeast Guinea.⁵³ Many believe that several military factions had envisioned carrying out a coup upon Conté's death, and that CNDD leaders were able to unite these factions through negotiation and promises of patronage. While the coup initially united several disparate elements of the military, many believe the junta could be susceptible to violent purges or a countercoup.⁵⁴ The junta's stability appears to rest on a precarious balance of power among its key members. In particular, the relationship between Dadis Camara and Defense Minister Sékouba Konaté is a source of frequent speculation among Guineans and members of the diplomatic community.⁵⁵ Konaté, one of the most powerful military officers in Guinea at the time of the coup (as commander of the elite BATA airborne commando unit), was not included in the initial list of CNDD members that was broadcast on the evening of December 23, which some interpret as evidence of tense negotiations during the coup.⁵⁶

Moussa Dadis Camara: Profile

Moussa Dadis Camara, Guinea's military leader, was born in 1964 near the southeastern city of Nzerekoré, in the Forest Region of Guinea near the border with Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. He is a member of the Guerzé (also known as Kpelle) ethnic group, which accounts for under 10% of Guinea's population and since independence has held little influence over Guinean politics. He is also Christian in a country that is over 85% Muslim. Dadis Camara graduated from Guinea's national university and entered the Army in 1990, spending time in Germany in the 1990s in the course of both civilian and military training courses. As a military officer, he joined the elite BATA airborne commando unit, serving in the logistics wing. Shortly before Conté's death, he was promoted to director of fuel supplies for the Army, a reportedly lucrative and powerful position that helped him build a base of support among the rank-and-file. He is believed to have played a role in a May 2008 junior officer mutiny.

Centralization of Power

Upon taking power, the CNDD immediately took steps to assert its authority, for instance by suspending civilian regional administrators and replacing them with military commanders. As the main public face of the CNDD, Dadis Camara has further sought to centralize power and neutralize potential opposition, both to the CNDD and to his dominant leadership within it. The

⁵² U.S. Embassy News Digest, January 29, 2009.

⁵³ SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4.

⁵⁴ E.g. International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 11; SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4.

⁵⁵ E.g. Cheikh Yérim Seck, "Jusqu' où Ira Sékouba Konaté?," *Jeune Afrique*, March 8-14, 2009.

⁵⁶ Arieff monitoring of Radio-Télévision Guinéenne broadcasts, December 23, 2008.

CNDD-appointed civilian prime minister, Kabiné Komara, is viewed as having little decision-making power, and CNDD members directly control key government functions. Komara's cabinet was named in January 2009 by presidential decree, with 10 of 29 cabinet posts held by military officers—most of them CNDD members, and many lacking experience in public affairs.⁵⁷ The CNDD also created several new ministerial-level positions and appointed members of the military or close civilian associates to fill them. Several key ministries, including security, defense, and finance, and the governor of the Central Bank, have been attached to the presidency.

Many analysts contend that Dadis Camara's actions since the coup are intended to "exert strong executive powers."⁵⁸ However, this has raised concerns that "a CNDD belief that it alone can solve the country's myriad problems" may overestimate the CNDD's technical and leadership capacities, and may not reflect the needs and demands of the population.⁵⁹ Supporters have argued that "the pitiful state of the country called for an iron hand able to turn things around."⁶⁰

Intra-Military Friction

Some signs of internal dissent within the military have emerged since the CNDD takeover. After being named president, Dadis Camara ordered 22 generals—nearly the entire senior military leadership under Conté—into retirement. Many were later arrested, according to news reports, primarily based on accusations of plotting against the CNDD. In January 2009, two CNDD officers were sacked for unclear reasons, and in April, as many 20 military officers, including a CNDD member, were reportedly arrested in a crackdown on an alleged counter-coup attempt.

In July 2009, General Mamadouba "Toto" Camara, who is Security Minister and the most senior CNDD member in terms of military rank, was assaulted by members of the presidential guard. While Dadis Camara apologized and ordered presidential guard members to beg for forgiveness, the incident heightened fears among some observers that the CNDD may be vulnerable to internal fractures that could lead to intra-military violence on a large scale.⁶¹

In August, reports surfaced in the media that 11 military officers detained since the December 2008 coup had been secretly transferred to a penal colony on an island offshore from Conakry, and that some may have been tortured. A regional human rights organization reported that "arrests in the ranks of the Army and the practice of torture in the sinister detention camp on the Island of Kassa are intensifying"; the group additionally raised concerns that benefits accrued by those close to the junta leader were creating "frustration" among other military factions, and that "heavy distrust" persisted between members of the police and the army.⁶²

⁵⁷ *Guineenews*, "La Liste Complète des Membres du Gouvernement de Kabiné Komara," January 14, 2009. Cabinet membership has shifted since January, but military officers and close associates of CNDD members continue to control key posts.

⁵⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Country Report: Guinea*, March 2009: 13.

⁵⁹ International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 8.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Cote (Guinea Chief of Party for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems [IFES]), "Guinea's Opportunity," March 24, 2009, <http://www.ifes.org>.

⁶¹ BBC News Online, "Troops Crawl After Guinea Attack," July 24, 2009; United Nations, *Contingency Plan Conakry*, August 2009.

⁶² AFP, "Guinée: Une ONG Redoute une 'Dérive Dictatoriale,' Dénonce la Torture," August 12, 2009.

Counter-Narcotics Efforts

The CNDD has initiated populist moves to crack down on corruption and drug trafficking. These measures appear designed to signal a break with the Conté regime, enhance the junta's popularity, and respond to international and domestic concerns that Guinea, among other countries in the region, had become a transshipment hub for cocaine en route from Latin America to Europe during the final years of the Conté regime. CNDD actions appear to rely on the “naming and shaming” of alleged wrongdoers, rather than advancing institutional reform. Over 20 high-profile individuals, including top Conté officials, senior police officers, the former chief of the armed forces, and a son and brother-in-law of the late president have been arrested since February on drug trafficking allegations.⁶³ Dadis Camara personally interrogated alleged traffickers on national television, in some cases eliciting detailed “confessions.” Many international observers and Guineans have welcomed the attempt to pursue powerful figures in the former regime. However, concerns have arisen over a lack of due process in these cases, and some of the arrests appear to have been politically selective. Dadis Camara has promised that accused drug traffickers will receive a fair trial. This may prove difficult, however, given corruption and a lack of capacity among the Guinean judiciary, and the fact that many of the accused have already been prompted to confess to crimes on television.

CNDD anti-drug efforts have concentrated power in the presidency and sidelined civilian-led anti-drug agencies in favor of the military.⁶⁴ The CNDD created a new presidentially controlled agency, the State Secretariat for Special Services, to curb drug and human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime. It is headed by an active-duty military officer, Capt. Moussa Tiegboro Camara (no relation to Dadis Camara). While issues targeted by the Secretariat are of concern to international policy makers, the new agency's legal mandate and authorities have not been clearly defined, and the CNDD has not publicly outlined how the agency is meant to interact with the judiciary or police.⁶⁵ Tiegboro Camara reportedly relies on a corps of gendarmes and soldiers for enforcement.⁶⁶ This has raised due process and human rights concerns, and some military elements participating in anti-drug efforts have been accused of abuses of power.⁶⁷

In September 2009, an alleged cocaine trafficking and money laundering kingpin who was extradited to the United States from Romania was accused of trafficking operations in Conakry, among other international locales. According to the Manhattan U.S. Attorney, the individual, Jesus Edouardo Valencia-Arbelaez, told a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) source in November

⁶³ Conté's son Ousmane, a military officer, admitted to involvement in trafficking, but denied being a “kingpin.” See Rukmini Callimachi, “In TV confessions, curtain lifted on a narcostate,” Associated Press (AP), March 14, 2009; AFP, “Son of Guinea's late president confesses to drugs trafficking,” February 26, 2009; Amadou Toure, “Society: ‘Biggest’ drug trafficker's presence in Conakry: Police DG gives ‘orders’,” *Guineenews*, May 5, 2007 via BBC Monitoring Africa; AP, “20 Indicted on Drug Charges in Guinea,” June 13, 2009, among others.

⁶⁴ The police anti-narcotics bureau, known as OCAD, was criticized in the past for being allegedly infiltrated by drug traffickers. However, the agency's track record reportedly improved after a new director was appointed in late 2008.

⁶⁵ In June, Tiegboro Camara reportedly called on the Guinean population to “burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed,” noting that prisons were already overcrowded. Reuters, “Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief,” June 2, 2009.

⁶⁶ Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Rein in Soldiers,” April 27, 2009.

2008 that his organization “enjoyed land support and a private military airfield in Guinea Conakry ... where the Organization could deliver cocaine shipments originating in Venezuela.”⁶⁸

Allegations of Cross-Border Threat

In mid-July 2009, the CNDD stated that the military had been placed on high alert because armed groups organized by international drug cartels were plotting to attack Guinea from border regions in Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Liberia. The CNDD added that the Guinean armed forces reserved the right to pursue such groups into the interior of neighboring countries.⁶⁹ Neighboring countries denied hosting any armed groups hostile to Guinea, and many Guineans appeared to believe the announcement could be a diversion.⁷⁰

Chemical Precursors Found

In late July, the CNDD announced the discovery in Conakry of hundreds of pounds of chemicals that it said could be used for making drugs or bombs. A fact-finding mission sent by the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) concluded that some of the chemicals were precursors used in making drugs such as ecstasy while others were “solvents commonly used in the processing of cocaine and heroin.” The UNODC called the seizure “the best evidence yet for clandestine laboratory activity” in West Africa.⁷¹ At the same time, no drugs were seized at the sites where chemicals were found. The CNDD agency charged with counter-narcotics announced it had arrested 11 people in connection with the chemicals and other drug seizures, including Moussa Conté, a son of the late president Lansana Conté. (Another Conté son, Ousmane, has been in prison since February in connection with other drug trade-related accusations.)

Anti-Corruption Efforts

The CNDD initially took a number of populist measures designed to portray the junta as a break with the Conté government. In particular, the CNDD announced it would review the mining code and all current mining and prospecting licenses, conduct an audit of the Conté government and all foreign companies operating in Guinea, and initiate the privatization of water, energy, and telecommunications firms.⁷² The judiciary has not played a lead role in anti-corruption initiatives under the CNDD, which has so far emphasized making an example of high profile figures from Conté’s administration rather than initiating institutional reform.

In January 2009, the CNDD established a committee to audit firms and individuals accused of having embezzled public funds, dodged tax payments, or entered into corrupt government contracts under Conté. The committee, headed by Defense Minister Sékouba Konaté, has

⁶⁸ DEA Public Affairs, “Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Extradition of Leader of International Drug-Trafficking and Money-Laundering Organization,” September 3, 2009.

⁶⁹ Transcript of CNDD statement on July 12, 2009, obtained by CRS.

⁷⁰ AFP, “Guinea Army on Alert After Attack Threats: Junta,” July 12, 2009, and “Guinea Junta Threatens Doubters with Arrest,” July 14, 2009. The African Union reportedly criticized the CNDD for seeking to divert attention from delays in electoral preparations.

⁷¹ UNODC, “Evidence of Clandestine Laboratory Activity in West Africa,” July 31, 2009.

⁷² Oxford Analytica, “Guinea: Junta under conflicting transition pressures,” April 9, 2009. In Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perception Index, Guinea placed 173 out of 180 countries.

questioned mining and telecommunications executives, government contractors, businessmen, and former government officials. Some of the accused were publicly interrogated on national television, including by Dadis Camara himself. Several had previously been cited during audits of public institutions carried out by former Prime Minister Lansana Kouyaté, who headed the government between February 2007 and May 2008.⁷³ Many Guineans welcomed the audits as an attempt to reign in corruption. At the same time, some have expressed concern that the audits are extra-judicial and could be politically motivated or extortion-related.⁷⁴

Mining Sector Reform

Soon after seizing power, the CNDD said it would revise the mining code, renegotiate mining contracts, and crack down in corruption in the mining sector.⁷⁵ In March, the CNDD auditing committee detained four former mining ministers of embezzling millions of dollars from the Guinean state, releasing them after they agreed to repay allegedly stolen funds.⁷⁶ Guinea's economy relies heavily on primary commodity exports, notably bauxite (used to produce aluminum), gold, diamonds, uranium, and iron ore. Guinea is thought to have the world's largest bauxite reserves, and joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations have historically provided about 80% of Guinea's foreign exchange.⁷⁷

Dadis Camara has appeared at times to take unpredictable actions related to mining oversight, such as publicly threatening to close or take over various mining projects. He has also forced several mining projects to close down for days or weeks at a time. In August 2009, the multinational mining company Rio Tinto announced it would pull its equipment from an iron ore project in Simandou earlier valued at \$6 billion, reportedly after the CNDD indicated it would uphold a decision made under Conté to unilaterally award half of Rio Tinto's concession to another company, BSG Resources Guinea.⁷⁸ In September, a Guinean court canceled the 2006 sale of an alumina refinery to Russia's RUSAL company, following which the Guinean government asserted it now fully owned the refinery. The decision followed months of allegations by the CNDD that the original sale was made by corrupt officials at far less than market value.⁷⁹

⁷³ Kouyaté was appointed as a reformist to stem nationwide anti-government protests in January-February 2007. See Appendix for further background.

⁷⁴ See e.g. *Aminata.com*, "Les Audits à la Guinéenne: De la parade tout trouvée aux inquiétantes maladroites," February 2, 2009. The International Crisis Group expressed concern that "the process is more about getting hard cash for the new regime than re-introducing the rule of law." *The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 6.

⁷⁵ A revision of mining contracts had been initiated shortly before Conté's death with the help of international financial institutions, though no results were publicly announced.

⁷⁶ The African Union expressed concern over the apparently extra-judicial nature of the arrests. Saliou Samb, "Guinea Ex-Ministers Freed, Say Will Repay Cash," Reuters, April 1, 2009; AFP, "African Union Expresses Concern Over Arrests," March 26, 2009.

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Guinea." The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinea (CBG) is a joint venture in which 49% of the shares are owned by the Guinean Government and 51% by an international consortium led by Alcoa and Rio Tinto-Alcan.

⁷⁸ Robert Guy Matthews, "Mining Giants Are Forced to Lessen Global Ambitions," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2009. See also Neil Ford, "Junta Uncertainty Clouds Guinea Mining Sector," *African Business*, February 1, 2009; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Mulls Independent Simandou Inquiry: Rio," *Dow Jones Newswires*, March 5, 2009; David Robertson, "Guinea Accuses Rio Tinto of Threat to Civil Peace," *The Times* (London), July 23, 2009.

⁷⁹ Reuters, "Guinea Court Reclaims Friguia from RUSAL," September 10, 2009.

RUSAL contested the court's decision, and the Russian government accused Guinean authorities of attempting to "expropriate UC RUSAL's property."⁸⁰

These actions have reportedly sparked fears among international investors concerned for the security of their assets.⁸¹ Analysts contend that a global fall in primary commodity prices and a decrease in funding available for foreign direct investment have weakened the junta's bargaining position, causing some firms to consider withdrawing entirely from Guinea.⁸² Recent reports suggest the CNDD may attempt to ease investor fears, though the junta reportedly "has minimal experience or technical capacity to review contracts with some of the world's largest mining firms."⁸³

Transition Process

The CNDD has committed to overseeing democratic elections and a transition to civilian power. At the same time, some believe the junta's centralization of power, certain actions by Dadis Camara, and limited progress in advancing electoral administration preparations could indicate an unwillingness by junta members to leave power.

Election Delay

In March 2009, the CNDD agreed to an elections timetable proposed by a broad coalition of political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups known as the *forces vives*, in which both legislative and presidential elections would take place before year's end.⁸⁴ However, in August 2009, the CNDD postponed presidential and legislative elections until January and March 2010, respectively. The decision was ostensibly taken in response to the findings of an ad-hoc committee, which was appointed by the junta but which included representatives of a national coalition of major political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups. This coalition, known as the *forces vives* ("active forces"), has served as the main domestic civilian entity engaged in negotiations with the junta over Guinea's transition from military rule. The postponement of the two elections occurred amid indications of strong public dissatisfaction with the CNDD's leadership and increased economic hardship.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Reuters, "Guinea Court Reclaims Friguia from RUSAL," September 10, 2009, "RUSAL Lays Claim to Seized Guinea Alumina Refinery," September 11, 2009, and "Russia Says Guinea Alumina Ruling Could Damage Ties," September 11, 2009. A Guinean government delegation was said to be planning to travel to Moscow in October to decide the fate of the refinery. AFP, "Russia May Back Guinean Junta in Return for Business Ties: Report," September 29, 2009.

⁸¹ EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 16; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Ruler Worries Miners," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009; Reuters, "Analysis-Guinea RUSAL Dispute Sends Warning Sign to Miners," September 16, 2009.

⁸² Saliou Samb, "Aluminium Slump Adds to Guinea Woes After Coup," Reuters, February 20, 2009; Ougna Camara, "La Révision des Conventions Pourrait Nuire au Secteur Minier Guinéen," *Les Afriques*, March 4, 2009.

⁸³ Oxford Analytica, "Guinea: Government softens stance toward miners," May 1, 2009.

⁸⁴ While the *forces vives* have been the main domestic civilian entity engaged in negotiating with the CNDD over Guinea's transition to military rule, the coalition's components – which include political parties expected to compete against each other in elections – do not necessarily share a single political perspective.

⁸⁵ IRIN, "Guinea: 'Yesterday Was Better Than Today,'" August 24, 2009.

Potential Dadis Candidacy

After the election postponement was announced, Dadis Camara indicated on several occasions that he may run for president. His statements contradicted his own repeated previous pledges not to remain in power and a prior CNDD ban on the candidacy of any CNDD member.⁸⁶ While Dadis Camara has not officially announced that he will run for the presidency—stating, instead, that he “might or might not stand”—he has repeatedly asserted his right to stand for election, stating that “no one can stop me” from entering the presidential race and that his potential candidacy is “in the hands of God.”⁸⁷ Dadis has also rejected domestic and international criticism of his decision to potentially run for the presidency. In mid-September, a new political party, the Rally for the Defense of the Republic (RDR), was formed to support Dadis Camara’s candidacy.⁸⁸

Reactions

Dadis Camara’s indications that he may enter the presidential race and the CNDD’s decision to postpone the elections have provoked concern and criticisms among many Guineans, African leaders, and major donors. The *forces vives* coalition called on Guineans to reject any attempt by the junta leader to run for president, and announced that they would boycott a meeting convened on August 31 by the junta due to their “categorical opposition” to Dadis Camara’s candidacy.⁸⁹

The U.S. embassy in Conakry stated in a press release that the United States was “disappointed” by the election postponements and warned that “any candidacy on the part of any CNDD member or CNDD-appointed ministers, including the Prime Minister, would undermine transparency and credibility.”⁹⁰ France called on Dadis Camara to respect his earlier commitments that neither junta members, nor the civilian prime minister appointed by the junta, would run for office.⁹¹ In early September, speaking for the International Contact Group on Guinea, ECOWAS Executive Secretary Mohamed Ibn Chambas called on Dadis Camara to “resist all temptations” to run for president.⁹² In a September 17 statement, the AU Peace and Security Council condemned “the repudiation by Captain Dadis Moussa Camara ... of his commitment that neither Captain Moussa Dadis Camara and the other members of the CNDD, nor the Prime Minister, will be candidates for the presidential election,” and threatened to impose sanctions within a month on Dadis Camara and any other individuals “whose activities are in contravention of those commitments.”⁹³ Opposition leaders applauded the AU statement.⁹⁴

⁸⁶ Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Guinea Junta Leader Says May Run for Presidency in 2010 Poll,” via BBC Monitoring, August 20, 2009; Reuters, “Guinea Rejects U.S. Call for Junta-Free Election,” August 23, 2009.

⁸⁷ AFP, “Guinée/Présidentielle: la Candidature de Camara ‘Entre les Mains de Dieu,’” August 20, 2009; AFP, “Guinea Junta Chief Says He May Run in Polls,” August 24, 2009; Reuters, “Guinea Bans Political Debates on Radio and TV,” September 3, 2009.

⁸⁸ AFP, “Guinea Party Backs Junta Leader for President Despite Sanctions,” September 19, 2009.

⁸⁹ AFP, “Guinée: Les ‘Forces Vives’ Boycoteront une Réunion Convoquée par la Junte,” August 29, 2009.

⁹⁰ State Department [U.S. Embassy-Conakry], “Delay of Guinean Elections,” August 20, 2009. At a session of the UN Human Rights Council, the United States reportedly called on the leaders of “unconstitutional governments” in Guinea and Madagascar to step down. AllAfrica.com, “U.S. Calls on Malagasy, Guinea Leaders to Step Down,” September 24, 2009.

⁹¹ AFP, “Paris Appelle Dadis et Sa Junte A Ne Pas Se Présenter A la Présidentielle,” August 24, 2009.

⁹² AFP, “Guinée/Présidentielle: Le Groupe de Contact Appelle Camara A Ne Pas Se Présenter,” September 3, 2009.

⁹³ AU, “Communiqué of the 204th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council,” September 17, 2009.

⁹⁴ AFP, “Guinée: l’Opposition Approuve les Sanctions Prônées par l’Union Africaine,” September 19, 2009.

Dadis rejected criticisms of his possible candidacy, as well as the *forces vives*' call for him not to run, stating that "if the *forces vives* want to stop me from being a candidate, they have understood nothing of democracy."⁹⁵ In response to U.S. criticism, the CNDD accused the United States of "a blatant act of interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Guinea."⁹⁶

Several pro-Dadis youth groups, such as *Dadis Doit Rester* ("Dadis Must Stay"), have been formed and have held demonstrations calling for Dadis to remain in office. These groups are seen by some as part of a CNDD strategy to retain power by cultivating a youth constituency and marginalizing traditional political parties. On August 31, a group of local government officials, including mayors, district administrators, and rural community development councilors, declared that Dadis Camara "is our candidate and thus the candidate of the people," at the meeting convened by the junta. Although these were mostly officials elected in district and municipal elections in 2005, some saw the meeting as having been staged.⁹⁷

Simultaneously, youths opposed to Dadis have organized a group called *Dadis Doit Partir* ("Dadis Must Go") and staged several demonstrations in early September in Conakry's impoverished suburbs—the site of frequent anti-government protests under former President Lansana Conté—including a protest in front of the U.S. Embassy. In one of these demonstrations, a gendarme was reportedly killed in clashes between young demonstrators and security forces.⁹⁸

Election Administration

The organization of elections is being overseen by the Ministry for Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). However, these agencies' mandates remain unclear.⁹⁹ Voter registration and the revision of voting lists, processes that had begun before Conté's death, were ongoing at the time of writing.

International concerns over a possible Dadis candidacy and the elections delay were preceded by earlier international warnings that electoral preparations by the CNDD were not on track. In July, the African Union (AU) criticized Guinea for its "lack of significant progress" in preparing for elections. France's Minister for Cooperation, Alain Joyandet, warned during an August visit to Conakry that "the later the elections are, the more civil peace is threatened."¹⁰⁰ Many observers agree that the longer the CNDD remains in power, the more vulnerable it may become to violent public opposition, factionalization, or a counter-coup.¹⁰¹

The total budget for legislative and presidential elections is projected to be over \$38 million dollars. As of early July 2009, the United States had pledged \$5.3 million, the largest single

⁹⁵ AFP, "Guinea Opposition Calls on Junta Chief Not to Run for President," August 23, 2009.

⁹⁶ Government of Guinea, "Communiqué de la Direction de la Communication du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de la République de Guinée," August 22, 2009, via Guineenews.

⁹⁷ E.g. AFP, "Guinée: Convoqués A Conakry, les Elus Locaux Prient Dadis d'Etre Candidat," August 31, 2009.

⁹⁸ Guineenews, via BBC Monitoring, "One Gendarme Killed in Demo Against Junta Chief's Candidacy in 2010 Poll," September 1, 2009.

⁹⁹ Arieff interview with Guinea elections expert, May 2009.

¹⁰⁰ Statement by African Union Peace and Security Council, July 10, 2009; *5ème Réunion du Groupe de International de Contact sur la Guinée (GIC-G)*, "Final Communiqué, July 16-17, 2009; AFP, "France Ready to Help Guinea Stage Post-Coup Polls," August 4, 2009.

¹⁰¹ SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 1.

contribution. Other pledges have come from the European Union, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. In late June, after the International Contact Group on Guinea criticized the CNDD for failing to provide promised funds, the Guinean government disbursed the equivalent of \$3 million toward the electoral process. Additional Guinean government funds that were designated by Conté's administration for use in legislative elections are also expected to be applied toward current preparations. A significant funding shortfall nevertheless continues to exist.¹⁰² The Obama Administration has expressed support for elections in Guinea, stating in its *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations* that "for the first time ever, Guinea has the opportunity to hold credible elections," and that "despite deteriorating political conditions, the United States sees reason for hope."¹⁰³

Political Parties

Conté's political party, the Party for Unity and Progress (PUP), fractured following the president's death, and it is not expected to garner significant support in a popular vote. Parties expected to compete in elections include a handful of former opposition parties as well as dozens of new parties formed after Conté's death. Even long established parties are generally perceived as having an ethnic or regional base, and as having little organizational capacity beyond their leaders' recognition. These leaders' electoral potential is difficult to assess, since Conté ran essentially unopposed in Guinea's most recent presidential election, in 2003, amid an opposition boycott.

Some political parties and civil society groups have advocated constitutional changes that would, among other things, reinstitute an age ceiling of 70 years for presidential candidates. A similar provision was removed from the constitution in 2001 as part of a controversial constitutional revision that underpinned Conté's ability to remain in office. Such a change would reportedly have the effect of disqualifying two prominent politicians, Alpha Condé and Jean-Marie Doré.

Transitional National Council

In early August, the CNDD issued a decree establishing a National Transitional Council (CNT, its French acronym), a mostly civilian, quasi-legislative body which the *forces vives* coalition and the International Contact Group on Guinea had called for. The CNT has 244 members, with representatives of political parties, trade unions, the judiciary, religious orders, youth organizations, the media, and other groups, as well as 10 representatives of the military.¹⁰⁴ It remains unclear what the CNT's role will be in governance and decision-making.

Human Rights and Rule of Law

Upon Conté's death, one observer noted that "the army that General Conté has bequeathed his country knows little of the role and methods that it would need to employ in a democratic state

¹⁰² As of early July, donor pledges totaled just over \$12.76 million. Information provided by USAID, July 6, 2009.

¹⁰³ *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, May 2009.

¹⁰⁴ CNDD, "Ordonnance... Portant Organisation et Attributions du Conseil National de la Transition (CNT)," via Guineenews, August 14, 2009.

respectful of its citizens' most basic rights."¹⁰⁵ Since the coup, human rights advocates and members of the international community have expressed growing concern over violations of human rights and the rule of law, including arbitrary arrests and detentions.¹⁰⁶ Military officers accused of plotting against the CNDD and officials accused of corruption or involvement in drug trafficking have been detained without charge. Security forces have been accused of looting private homes and businesses in Conakry, as well as other abuses of power. Human Rights Watch reported in April 2009 that "soldiers in groups numbering up to 20 have raided offices, shops, warehouses, medical clinics, and homes in broad daylight as well as at night... [and] have stolen cars, computers, generators, medicines, jewelry, cash, mobile phones, and large quantities of wholesale and retail merchandise, among other items."¹⁰⁷ Victims reportedly include both Guineans and foreigners. In September, defense lawyers for individuals detained in connection with cocaine trafficking contended their clients were suffering "degrading and humane" treatment in prison.¹⁰⁸

In separate incidents, soldiers raided the homes of a political party leader, Cellou Dalein Diallo (in January 2009) and a prominent trade union activist, Rabiadou Sera Diallo (in March). In the former case, the CNDD claimed that the raid was carried out by rogue soldiers; in the second, the CNDD contended that the raid was carried out during a routine anti-drug operation.¹⁰⁹ In May, in an apparent response to criticism by Human Rights Watch and others, Dadis Camara promised security sector reform and ordered hundreds of soldiers to publicly commit to ending criminal behavior.¹¹⁰ However, it is unclear that these statements have had an impact on military behavior. In August 2009, Human Rights Watch reported that opposition politicians and a human rights activist who had criticized Dadis Camara had been the target of threats and intimidation.¹¹¹

The CNDD has created several new agencies with undefined legal mandates, and has appeared to sideline the role of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law. The formation of a State Secretariat in Charge of Disputes sparked protests by human rights advocates and a strike by members of the Guinean bar association, which contended that "citizens and lawyers are regularly summoned to the military base ... where they appear before the Secretariat or before the president in person as part of ostensibly judicial procedures." Bar members termed these proceedings "pseudo-trials."¹¹² The Secretariat was abolished in June, in apparent response to such criticisms. Advocates have also raised concerns over an apparent rise in vigilante attacks, particularly after the head of the newly created State Secretariat for Special Services called on the Guinean population to "burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed," noting that prisons were already overcrowded.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ Gilles Yabi, "Le Pire Cadeau Empoisonné de Conté à Son Pays: Une armée à la fois dangereuse et incontournable," *AllAfrica.com*, January 7, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. International Contact Group on Guinea, "Communiqué," June 19, 2009.

¹⁰⁷ HRW, "Guinea: Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ AFP, "Guinea Prisoners Suffer 'Inhumane' Treatment: Lawyers," September 13, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ *Guineeactu.com*, "Perquisition Chez la SG de la CNTG : Le Capitaine Tiègboro et Raby s'expliquent," March 5, 2009.

¹¹⁰ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Soldiers Vow En Masse to End Crime Wave," Reuters, April 29, 2009; Saliou Samb, "Guinea Junta Chief Says to Reform Army, Seeks Help," Reuters, May 10, 2009.

¹¹¹ Human Rights Watch, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009.

¹¹² AFP, "Guinée: 'Graves violations des droits de l'Homme' (ordre des avocats)," May 15, 2009.

¹¹³ Reuters, "Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief," June 2, 2009.

Election-Related Harassment

As signs of public dissatisfaction with the CNDD have increased, the CNDD has increasingly attempted to intimidate its domestic opponents. A political party leader and former government official was arrested and briefly held by soldiers in early August, and soldiers reportedly sought to arrest another party leader later the same month.¹¹⁴ Human Rights Watch has also reported that opposition politicians, along with a human rights activist who had criticized Dadis Camara, have been the targets of CNDD threats and intimidation.¹¹⁵

Alleged Abuses by CNDD Members During Conté's Presidency

Guinean and international advocates believe some CNDD members may have been responsible for human rights abuses under Conté. These include individuals who were in a position of command responsibility during nationwide anti-government protests in January and February 2007, when Guinean security forces allegedly opened fire on demonstrators and committed other serious abuses against civilians.¹¹⁶ Dadis Camara promised to revive an official inquiry into alleged abuses by security forces during the protests, which stagnated under Conté; however, little progress appears to have been made.

The inclusion of Claude Pivi in the CNDD, and his promotion in January to Minister for Presidential Security, has provoked particular concern. Pivi rose to national prominence in May 2008, when he portrayed himself as the leader of a mutiny by junior army officers. He is a widely feared figure in Conakry, and is believed by many to have personally overseen the reported killing of police officers in June 2008 (during a military-led crackdown on a police mutiny in Conakry) and the torture of a group of civilians the following November.¹¹⁷ Pivi is also believed by some Guineans and members of the diplomatic community to have had ties to the drug trade.

Press Freedom

Guinea's media are relatively diverse, and represent a variety of views. However, local media outlets are largely concentrated in Conakry: newspapers rarely circulate outside the capital, most private FM radio stations have a small broadcast radius, and internet access is confined to urban centers. Adult literacy is under 30%.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, much of the population has access to shortwave radio, including international news broadcasts focusing on Africa. The CNDD tightly controls the national television station—the only locally broadcast channel—which often airs

¹¹⁴ Guineenews, "Interpellation d'Aboubacar Sylla," August 5, 2009, and "Arrestation Manquée de Mouctar Diallo de NFD," August 27, 2009.

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009.

¹¹⁶ See HRW, "Guinea: Plan Elections and Hold Rights Abusers Accountable," January 21, 2009. An investigation by a coalition of local human rights organizations concluded that 186 people were killed and over a thousand injured during the protests. In addition, human rights activists allege that security forces engaged in arbitrary arrests, mistreatment of detainees, and rape. See Coalition Pour la Défense des Victimes des Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les Violations Commises en République de Guinée Pendant les Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007*, November 2007; and HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

¹¹⁷ In November 2008, Pivi reportedly ordered the torture of several Cameroonian nationals whom he claimed had damaged his car; the incident was reported in the Guinean press and by members of the diplomatic community.

¹¹⁸ CIA World Factbook.

hours of footage of Dadis Camara at a time. State-owned media have reportedly been barred from covering political party activities.¹¹⁹

Local journalists report widespread self-censorship and a lack of access to official information. Dadis Camara has appealed to local journalists to “support” the CNDD, and is said to have offered money in exchange for favorable coverage. Many journalists fear Presidential Security Minister Claude Pivi, who reportedly harassed and threatened several local journalists prior to Conté’s death for coverage that was allegedly critical of the late president’s regime.¹²⁰ Events throughout 2009 appear to bear out such fears. The CNDD reportedly has detained journalists on multiple occasions for reasons that have not been publicly explained or that relate to alleged press criticisms of the CNDD.¹²¹

In August and September 2009, there was an uptick in such incidents. The CNDD reportedly undertook a series of overt actions aimed curtailing the free exchange of information and press coverage relating to politics and, in particular, rising opposition to a possible Dadis Camara presidential candidacy:¹²²

- In late August, the CNDD ordered that a cell phone text message circulating in Conakry be blocked by cell phone operators. The message reportedly urged Guineans “to resist a proposal” that Dadis Camara enter the race for the presidency. These firms responded by suspending all SMS (Short Message Service) services for several days, an action that the *Forces Vives* coalition condemned as “an affront to freedom of expression.”¹²³
- Several days later, a local journalist, Diarouga Baldé, was reportedly arrested and interrogated by a Guinean police anti-riot unit, the Mobile Intervention and Security Force (CMIS), after taking photos at a boisterous demonstration by the *Dadis Doit Partir* youth pressure group. Baldé was later released.¹²⁴
- In early September 2009, in the face of rising opposition to a possible presidential run by Dadis and in apparent response to mounting criticism of the CNDD, the CNDD-controlled media regulatory agency, the National Communications Council (CNC), banned call-in shows and other programs of a “political” on private radio stations. Members of the Union of Free Radio and

¹¹⁹ AFP, “Guinée: Un meeting d’un parti d’opposition empêché dans l’Est,” June 18, 2009.

¹²⁰ Interview with Guinean media analyst, June 2009.

¹²¹ The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), among other international human rights and press freedom organizations, has been particularly active in calling international attention to alleged press abuses in Guinea. MFWA is a regional association of journalists and human rights advocates that promotes freedom of expression. See, for instance, MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Soldiers Brutalise Journalist, Briefly Detain Him,” March 20, 2009; MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Journalist and Family Held Incommunicado,” June 5, 2009; MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Journalist Arrested, Detained Incommunicado,” August 13, 2009; MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Cameraman Detained Briefly and His Film Destroyed,” January 14, 2009; MFWA, “Guinea Alert: TV Journalist Suspended Indefinitely,” April 8, 2009; and MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Two National Radio Journalists Unfairly Suspended,” February 20, 2009.

¹²² See International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), “IFJ Condemns Threats on Freedom of Expression in Guinea,” September 4, 2009; and HRW, “Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition,” August 31, 2009.

¹²³ HRW, “Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition,” August 31, 2009; and MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Military Authorities Censor Telecom Operators,” August 31, 2009.

¹²⁴ Baldé is the managing editor of the online news forum <http://www.kibarou.com>. HRW, “Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition,” August 31, 2009; and MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Another Journalist Detained By The Military, Released Without Charge,” August 31, 2009.

Television Stations of Guinea (URTELGUI), an association of radio professionals established in March 2009, vowed not to comply with the order, which it views as a violation of freedom of expression.¹²⁵

- In late September two local correspondents of international media, including Agence France-Presse, Radio France Internationale, and the BBC, went into hiding “after being threatened and roughed up by soldiers” for “having ‘betrayed’ the military to the international community by describing the extremely violent dispersal” of the anti-Dadis Camara demonstration on September 28.¹²⁶

Economic Issues

Guinea has significant mineral resources, including gold, diamonds, uranium, and an estimated 27% or more of global bauxite (aluminum ore) reserves. Guinea may also have oil and gas reserves, and has significant hydro-electric and agricultural potential. Prior to the coup, Guinea's natural resources sector was set to expand, partly in response to increasing global commodity prices. In early December 2008, the African Development Bank announced the approval of a \$200 million loan to partly finance a \$6.3 billion bauxite mining and alumina refinery project in Guinea. The project was reportedly expected to be the largest ever investment in the country.¹²⁷ However, the global economic crisis, perceived political instability, and populist threats by the junta to close or seize corporate mining projects are reportedly causing mining investment projects to be delayed or canceled.¹²⁸ Many observers believe the Guinean government is facing severe fiscal challenges due to corruption, mismanagement, and the scaling back of international investment. Guinean officials acknowledged in September 2009 that government revenues from the largest bauxite consortium, CBG, would likely fall by 60% in 2010 due to lower prices and export volumes.¹²⁹

Socioeconomic Conditions

Despite its resources, living standards in Guinea are among the worst in the world.¹³⁰ Access to running water and electricity is rare, even in Conakry and other urban centers. The World Health Organization lists Guinea as a “country under surveillance” with respect to possible complex humanitarian emergency needs.¹³¹ According to figures released by the United Nations in May 2009, the rate of chronic malnutrition increased over the last two years, from 34.8% to 36.2%;

¹²⁵URTELGUI, “Déclaration de l'Union des Radiodiffusions et Télévisions Libres de Guinée,” August 31, 2009 via <http://www.guineepresse.info>; MFWA, “Guinea Alert: Media Regulator Censors Private Radio Stations,” September 4, 2009; and Guineenews.org, “Une Union des radios et Télévisions Libres Créée en Guinée,” March 24, 2009.

¹²⁶Reporters Without Borders, “Two reporters for Foreign Media Go Into Hiding After Getting Death Threats,” September 30, 2009.

¹²⁷EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 17.

¹²⁸EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, June 2009; Lydia Polgreen, “As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

¹²⁹Reuters, “Guinea Bauxite Income Seen Down 60 Pct in 2010,” September 28, 2009, and “Factbox-Guinea's Major Mining Operations,” September 16, 2009. CBG is thought to account for some 80% of Guinea's mining income.

¹³⁰U.N. Development Program statistics at http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_GIN.html.

¹³¹World Health Organization, *Africa Weekly Emergency Situation Update*, March 23, 2009.

8.3% of Guinean children are thought to suffer from serious malnutrition.¹³² The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.6%.¹³³

The CNDD has promised to improve living conditions. However, reports suggest government finances have been depleted due to corruption and mismanagement, a drop in the collection of import duties, the recent fall in mineral commodity prices, and the freezing of some foreign aid.¹³⁴ Most observers project that state revenues will further decline in the near future, due to the global economic crisis and a decrease since 2008 in bauxite revenues, on which Guinea's economy depends. Poor living conditions helped spark nationwide anti-government protests in 2007, and some analysts fear that the perception of continued economic decline could lead to further unrest.

The Impact of the Coup on Guinea's Foreign Relations

Guinea is a member of regional bodies including the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union (a sub-regional grouping), and the Sahelo-Saharan regional grouping CEN-SAD. Donor countries, along with regional organizations, the United Nations, and the European Commission, publicly condemned the coup and called for elections and a return to civilian-led government. As discussed above, an International Contact Group on Guinea has been formed, including representatives of regional and international organizations. The Contact Group has held several meetings in Conakry with members of the junta, civil society groups, and political parties, at which has focused on the timeline for national elections.

Regional Reactions

ECOWAS and the AU, both of which have policies against accepting non-constitutional changes of power, condemned the coup and suspended Guinea's membership in their organizations, though neither has moved to impose sanctions.¹³⁵ Neighboring governments have been cautious in responding to the coup, particularly as some fear that instability in Guinea could destabilize their own countries. At the same time, Libyan leader Muammar al Qadhafi—who currently chairs the AU—and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade initially publicly argued that the CNDD should be recognized and supported by the international community.¹³⁶ The CNDD has engaged

¹³² U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Information Bulletin May 2009*.

¹³³ CIA World Factbook.

¹³⁴ EIU, "Guinea Economy: Government faces fiscal crisis," June 1, 2009. The EIU has elsewhere noted that "the poor quality of fiscal reporting in Guinea makes it difficult to estimate the size of the fiscal deficit" (EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 8).

¹³⁵ ECOWAS Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, December 2001, Article 1(b) and (c); and Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4(p).

¹³⁶ Qadhafi was appointed head of the AU for 2009. Wade praised the "bloodless" nature of the CNDD coup, and called on the junta to organize democratic elections. However, Wade has been more critical of the CNDD in recent statements. AFP, "Guinée: Le Président Wade réaffirme, depuis Conakry, son soutien à la junte," January 7, 2009; *Africa Energy Intelligence*, "Kadhafi Soutient les Putschistes," January 28, 2009; RFI, "Senegalese Leader Warns International Community Over Guinea," September 20, 2009, via BBC Monitoring. See also WANEP, *Transitional* (continued...)

in diplomatic outreach to neighboring states, and has claimed to receive private reassurances of support from regional leaders.¹³⁷

Impact on Donor Relations

Major donors include the United States, France, and the EU. As of early July, the United States, Japan, the EU, France, Germany, and Spain had pledged financial support for Guinea's elections. Many donors do not recognize the CNDD, and some, including the United States and the EU, have suspended selected assistance to the Guinean government pending democratic elections.¹³⁸ In February 2009, the European Commission stated of its assistance programs to Guinea that "[n]ew contracts are, in principle, only signed for humanitarian aid, aid benefiting directly the population and measures in support of the transition process," and initiated consultations with Guinea under the framework of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement to "determine the appropriate measures to be taken as far as cooperation is concerned."¹³⁹ In July 2009, the European Union concluded consultations with Conakry, deciding to place Guinea under "surveillance" for two years and to maintain the suspension of development aid pending concrete steps toward a transition to democracy. An EU statement concluded that despite Guinean authorities' commitments, EU authorities remained "preoccupied by the slow pace in implementing the road-map" toward elections.¹⁴⁰

France, Guinea's former colonial power, has continued bilateral aid to the Guinean government, while calling for elections to be held as soon as possible. French aid includes a 2006-2010 bilateral development assistance program worth €100 million (\$140.7 million) and a military cooperation program worth €400,000 (\$563,000) over the same period, in addition to programs related to agriculture and food security, education, water and sanitation, and governance.¹⁴¹ China has reportedly backed away from expected funding for major infrastructure projects, due to the global economic slowdown as well as perceived political instability in Guinea.¹⁴²

(...continued)

Crisis in Guinea; Coup d'Etat: Its Inevitability, Legitimizing Factors & Lessons for Africa, December 28, 2008: 5-8.

¹³⁷ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Junta Woos Neighbours to Avoid Isolation," Reuters, December 31, 2008.

¹³⁸ *EU Business*, "EU Imposes Aid Conditions on Guinea Junta," March 16, 2009. The EU initially stated it would not suspend aid; see U.N. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "Guinea: Regional, international condemnation spreads," January 12, 2009.

¹³⁹ European Commission, "Answer given by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission," E-0219/09EN, February 2, 2009. The Cotonou Partnerships Agreement, which governs relations between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), requires that signatories respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and thus places political conditions on development cooperation. Article 96 of the Agreement provides for a process of consultations between signatories when one party asserts that these requirements are not being met.

¹⁴⁰ AFP, "L'UE Met la Guinée Sous Surveillance Pour 2 Ans, Maintient le Gel de l'Aide," July 27, 2009; Agence Europe, "EU/Guinea: EU is Ready to Gradually Resume Cooperation Subject to Tangible Progress in Transition to Democracy," July 31, 2009; AFP, "Sous Pression, la Junte Guinéenne Accepte une Présidentielle en Janvier," August 18, 2009, CRS translation.

¹⁴¹ A French government official who spoke to CRS stated that bilateral disbursements to the Guinean government had not been disrupted, but that France was closely monitoring how funds were spent.

¹⁴² Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

Multilateral Assistance

Development assistance and anti-poverty programs administered by multilateral organizations have been affected by the coup. Following the coup, the World Bank stopped disbursing loans designated for programs related to health, transportation, education, and other sectors, leaving \$200 million in outstanding loans, while awaiting further assessment of whether disbursements may continue.¹⁴³ The International Monetary Fund-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was due to provide additional government financing in 2009, has not advanced since Conté's death.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, in May 2009, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund allocated a first tranche of \$6 million in support of programs in Guinea.¹⁴⁵

U.S. Assistance and Policy Issues

In response to the coup, the United States suspended bilateral assistance to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance, in line with congressional directives.¹⁴⁶ U.S. officials have indicated that free and fair elections must take place in order for the aid suspension, which affects some development and all security assistance, to be lifted. At the same time, the majority of programs administered by USAID have been categorized as either humanitarian or democracy and governance assistance, and as such have not been affected by the suspension. While most programs that require working directly with central government agencies are subject to the suspension, a few are not; exceptions include some health and education projects. Programs that involve working with district and municipal administrators who were elected in 2005 local elections are likewise exempt; the United States held that these elections, "though flawed, were Guinea's best-conducted elections ever."¹⁴⁷ The Peace Corps program has not been suspended following the coup, nor have public diplomacy programs such as educational and cultural exchanges.

Some argue that the extent and outline of the aid suspension is ill-advised. Some critics contend that some aid, and security assistance programs in particular, should be continued in the interest of regional stability.¹⁴⁸ Detractors are concerned that the continuation of any aid may send a

¹⁴³ The World Bank classifies Guinea as one of the world's 78 poorest countries, which qualifies Guinea for loans through the Bank's International Development Association (IDA). IDA lends money (credits) on concessional terms, meaning that credits have no interest charge and repayments are stretched over 35 to 40 years, including a 10-year grace period. IDA also provides grants to countries at risk of debt distress.

¹⁴⁴ The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs. At the time of the coup, the program was on track. Reaching the HIPC "completion point" would grant Guinea an estimated relief of \$2.2 billion and reduce debt service by approximately \$100 million the first year (Arieff interview with IMF official, May 2009). Part of the reason the program has been halted is that it relies heavily on funds from donors (EIU, *Guinea Country Report*, June 2009: 18).

¹⁴⁵ The Peacebuilding Fund generally provides support to countries emerging from conflict. Most recipients to date have been African countries, including Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. More information is at <http://www.unpbf.org/index.shtml>. The United States does not contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

¹⁴⁶ The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) bars direct assistance "to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree," with the exception of democracy promotion and humanitarian assistance. The provision is commonly referred to as "Section 508," a reference to previous appropriations legislation.

¹⁴⁷ *FY2008 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

¹⁴⁸ Arieff interviews with members of the donor community, Conakry, March 2009.

mixed signal and could prolong the CNDD's tenure in power.¹⁴⁹ A central question for policy makers is to what extent bilateral programs such as security assistance are primarily designed to enact U.S. policy priorities, or to serve as incentives for good behavior on the part of the beneficiary government.

Elections and Democracy Promotion

Both the timeline and administration of elections are issues for the international community. U.S. democracy and governance assistance is expected to increase in the lead-up to elections; these programs are not currently affected by the suspension in U.S. aid. (U.S. democracy and governance programs in Guinea are funded through development assistance, other aspects of which will be discussed below.) The Obama Administration's FY2010 request for democracy and governance funding represents a significant increase over FY2009: \$7.14 million compared to \$2.57 million.¹⁵⁰ The United States is the largest single donor to the electoral process, having pledged \$5.3 million as of July 2009 toward a total electoral budget of over \$38 million dollars.¹⁵¹ U.S. electoral assistance is expected to fund training and technical assistance to Guinea's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), training for electoral agents including poll workers, training for political parties and candidates, voter education, civil society and media election monitoring and oversight, and the provision of electoral materials.¹⁵² U.S. officials have not publicly outlined what, if any, criteria might be required with respect to the continuation or suspension of electoral assistance or democracy and governance programs.

Security Assistance and Counter-Narcotics Cooperation

U.S. security assistance to Guinea prior to the coup focused on ensuring Guinea's continued stability in a region scarred by armed conflict, and on Guinea's reported role as an international drug trafficking transit hub. In 2002, the U.S. military trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger battalion following incursions from fighters backed by then-Liberian president Charles Taylor. At the same time, concerns over alleged human rights abuses by the Guinean military have, at times, restricted military training programs. In appropriations legislation passed in 2008 and 2009, Congress restricted International Military Education and Training (IMET) assistance in Guinea to "Expanded" IMET, which emphasizes human rights and civilian control of the military.¹⁵³

All security assistance to Guinea is currently suspended, including military training programs, counter-narcotics programs, and the provision of maritime security equipment. Prior to the coup, Defense Department and State Department officials had informally planned a potential security assistance budget totaling over \$100 million over three years, starting in FY2009. The bulk of this

¹⁴⁹ E.g., Mike McGovern, "Exceptional Circumstances and Coups d'Etat," SSRC blog *African Arguments*, February 3, 2009.

¹⁵⁰ *2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, May 2009.

¹⁵¹ U.S. electoral assistance is expected to be funded from several accounts, including FY 2008 carryover Development Assistance, FY2009 Development Assistance, and Elections and Political Processes funds, according to USAID. Other donors that have pledged support for Guinea's elections are the European Union, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. As discussed above, in late June, the Guinean government provided the equivalent of \$3 million toward the electoral process. A significant shortfall in donor funds nonetheless continues to exist.

¹⁵² Information provided by USAID.

¹⁵³ Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7070).

funding would have supported maritime and air space security and monitoring capacity-building programs and regional peacekeeping training under the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA) and through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The State Department had additionally requested \$100,000 for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) counter-narcotics programs in FY2009, the first time such funding had been requested for Guinea; the FY2010 budget request is for \$110,000. The Obama Administration has stated that Guinea's military is "an important element in ensuring regional stability," and indicated that if the aid suspension is lifted, U.S. military assistance will work "to promote maritime safety and security in West Africa" and "will also focus on counter-narcotics activities."¹⁵⁴

Development and Related Assistance

The CNDD has promised to improve living conditions for Guineans, which are among the worst in the world. However, government finances are reportedly very low due to corruption, mismanagement, and the suspension of some foreign aid.¹⁵⁵ Some argue that development aid programs should not be suspended at the expense of Guinea's citizenry. At the same time, the junta has appointed allies to head key ministries including economy and finance, and at the head of the customs service and the central bank, which has raised concerns "over their capacity to provide a credible overall policy strategy" for the Guinean economy.¹⁵⁶

Funding for suspended programs has been discontinued in some cases, while in others, it has been reprogrammed toward non-suspended activities. Health and education programs have been classified as humanitarian assistance and therefore generally exempted from suspension, even when they involve working directly with national government counterparts. In practice, suspended programs mainly include those related to the environment and natural resource sector. **Table 1**, below, shows changes to USAID programs in Guinea as a result of the coup. Some reflect the non-extension of programs that had been completed at the time of the coup.

A \$23 million, three-year USAID-funded umbrella project, known as *Projet Faisons Ensemble*, has continued. Considered to be an innovative approach to development assistance in a fragile state, *Faisons Ensemble* aims to bolster governance at the local level to achieve better outcomes in health, education, agriculture, and other sectors. Components that involved working directly with national government counterparts have been discontinued, with the exception of education and health programs; funds for these components have been reprogrammed.

It is likely that many of the same goals that defined U.S. development priorities prior to the coup will continue to be pursued if democratic elections occur, with a significant increase in economic development funds.¹⁵⁷ In its *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, the Obama Administration stated that "U.S. assistance to Guinea can play an important role in

¹⁵⁴ FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for International Operations, May 2009.

¹⁵⁵ EIU, "Guinea Economy: Government faces fiscal crisis," June 1, 2009. The EIU has also noted that "the poor quality of fiscal reporting in Guinea makes it difficult to estimate the size of the fiscal deficit." EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 8.

¹⁵⁶ EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 15.

¹⁵⁷ The Administration requested \$6.55 million for economic growth programs for FY2010, compared to \$1.75 million requested for FY2009; this funding is on hold pending elections.

supporting popular calls for greater democracy, good governance, better social services, and improved economic opportunity, all of which should bolster stability.”

Table I. Changes to USAID Programs in Guinea as a Result of the Coup

(Programs unaffected by the coup are not shown.)

Activity	Implementer	Budget	Funding To Date	National Government Counterpart	Mission Actions to Comply with Suspension
Peace and Security					
Shared Security: Pilot Project that supports dialogue between military and civilians, regional workshops on conflict prevention, and defense and security forces training.	Learning Center for International Business	\$50,000	\$50,000	Yes	Closeout; no extension.
Governing Justly and Democratically					
E-Governance: Modernize Government of Guinea infrastructure and capacity in information and communications technology.	Office of the Prime Minister; GAMA Concept	\$530,000	\$530,000	Yes	Closeout; no extension.
Faisons Ensemble: Umbrella project to support government performance, decentralization, and anti-corruption efforts. (Only components of Faisons Ensemble affected by the aid suspension are listed in this table. Unaffected elements include programs supporting health, education, and agriculture.)	Consortium led by Research Triangle Institute (RTI)	\$7,176,000 ^a	\$6,166,000	Yes; these elements have been suspended.	<p>The grantee is instructed to suspend all work with national government institutions outside the health and education sectors. The grantee will continue assistance that supports other actors in advancing Guinea's democratic process.</p> <p>Funding for suspended activities has been reprogrammed for assistance that remains approved.</p> <p>Because Faisons Ensemble is an umbrella project also covering health and education – which are considered humanitarian assistance and therefore not subject to suspension – the project will continue to engage the national government in activities related to these sectors (funding accounted for under “Investing in People”).</p>

Activity	Implementer	Budget	Funding To Date	National Government Counterpart	Mission Actions to Comply with Suspension
Investing in People					
New Start: Basic Education	None	\$1 million had been budgeted for FY2009.	0	N/A	USAID/Guinea will not receive these funds. ^b
Economic Growth					
Transboundary Protection of Biodiversity and Livelihood Improvement in Guinea and Sierra Leone: Promotes co-management of forests by communities and improved agricultural techniques.	International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) and Center for International Forest Research (CFOR)	\$454,000; also supported by USAID/EGAT and USAID/WA	Not known. ^c	No	USAID/Guinea has suspended support to non-regional aspects of this program.
Institutional Capacity Building for Natural Resource Management: Funds a U.S. Forest Service Conakry-based consultant to build capacity of the National Direction of Waters and Forests (DNEF) and local communities for sustainable management of natural resources.	U.S. Forest Service	\$110,000; central funding from USAID/WA regional "Steward" program to oversee activities within W. Africa region as a whole.	Not known.	Yes	USAID/Guinea has suspended all work with the National Direction of Waters and Forests. The U.S. Forest Service consultant will continue assistance that focuses on the West Africa regional program.
Property Rights and Alluvial Diamond Development Pilot Program: Focus on land and property rights aspects of strengthening Kimberley Process certification.	Associates in Rural Development (ARD)	\$2,400,000	\$1,261,087	Yes	USAID/Guinea has suspended this program.

Source: USAID

- a. *Projet Façons Ensemble* was budgeted at \$23 million over three years, starting in 2006. The amount cited in this table reflects the component of the project related to democracy and governance.
- b. Educational programs in Guinea have generally been classified as humanitarian assistance; it is therefore unclear whether the decision not to fund this program was directly related to the coup.
- c. Information not provided by USAID.

Appendix A. Profiles of Selected Guinean Political Party Leaders¹⁵⁸

Alpha Condé, Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (Rally of the Guinean People, RPG)

The RPG is believed to be Guinea's largest political party, and Condé is a potential front-runner for the presidency, though he has been criticized for living overseas during much of Guinea's recent history. Condé is a member of the Malinké ethnic group, which is concentrated in Guinea's northeast, but is believed to draw some cross-ethnic support. A former exiled opponent of founding president Ahmed Sékou Touré during Guinea's first republic, Condé challenged Lansana Conté in presidential elections in 1993 (Guinea's first multiparty election) and 1998. He received 19% and 16% of the vote in these elections, respectively; both elections were marred by reports of irregularities and fraud. Following the 1998 election, Condé was arrested for trying to leave the country "illegally" and attempting to overthrow the government. He was sentenced to five years in prison in 2000, but released in 2001 on a presidential pardon. Condé and the RPG boycotted the 2002 legislative election and the 2003 presidential election.

Sidya Touré, Union des Forces Républicaines (Union of Republican Forces, UFR)

Touré served as prime minister from 1996 to 1999. Many Guineans credit him with initiating government reforms as head of a relatively technocratic government appointed by Conté amid a faltering economy. A member of the tiny Diakhanké ethnic group, Touré is believed to benefit from significant cross-ethnic appeal. However, his personal popularity is thought to far outshine his party's ability to garner votes in a legislative contest. Touré's base is in Conakry, both because he is from the coast and because his time as prime minister is remembered as a period in which government services in the capital, such as running water and electricity, noticeably improved. In 2004, Touré was accused of plotting a coup; many believe the charges were politically motivated.

Cellou Dalein Diallo, Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, UFDG)

Diallo held several ministerial portfolios starting in the 1990s, and served as prime minister from late 2004 until mid-2006. He was appointed to head the UFDG in 2007, succeeding founder Mamadou Bâ (who had garnered over 24% of the vote in the 1998 presidential election); Bâ had earlier led a split from the Union pour le Progrès et le Renouveau (Union for Progress and Renewal, UPR).¹⁵⁹ In January 2009, members of the military raided Diallo's Conakry home and accused him of hiding weapons and recruiting "mercenaries." The junta later denounced the raid and claimed it was the work of rogue soldiers. Diallo is credited by the international community with overseeing local council elections in December 2005, which were thought to be Guinea's most free and fair (despite some flaws), but he has also been dogged by corruption allegations and the perception that he was too close to Conté. Diallo and the UFDG are seen as relying primarily on an ethno-regional base among Guinea's Peuhl (Fulbé) community of the northern Fouta Djallon region.

¹⁵⁸ The following profiles are drawn from Arieff interviews, news reports, and International Crisis Group publications.

¹⁵⁹ Led by Ousmane Bah, the UPR was the largest opposition bloc in the National Assembly, with 20 seats, before the legislature was dissolved by the CNDD. However, the last legislative elections were boycotted by the RPG. The UPR's electoral appeal is untested following its fragmentation.

Jean-Marie Doré, Union pour le Progrès de la Guinée (Union for Guinean Progress, UPG)

A longtime opponent of Conté and former close associate of Sékou Touré, Doré ran for president in 1998 but garnered less than 2% of the vote. Since the coup, he has served as spokesman of the “Forces Vives” coalition of political parties and civil society groups that proposed the electoral calendar. Doré is a member of the Guerzé ethnic group, to which Dadis Camara also belongs and, like Dadis Camara, is Christian. The UPG won three seats in the National Assembly in 2002 legislative elections.

François Lonsény Fall

A career diplomat and former Guinean representative to the United Nations, Fall served as foreign minister for two years and prime minister for two months in 2004. He was praised by many Guineans for choosing to resign as prime minister because, he said, he could no longer work with Conté. Fall remained abroad after his resignation and worked for the U.N. as the Secretary-General's special envoy for Somalia, Burundi, and the Central African Republic; his time in exile is thought to detract from his popularity. He returned to Guinea in March to launch a presidential campaign.

Lansana Kouyaté, Parti de l'Espoir pour le Développement National (Party for Hope and National Development, PEDN)

A career diplomat, Kouyaté was appointed to serve as a “consensus” prime minister in early 2007 amid attempts to end nationwide anti-government protests. Kouyaté's appointment was initially met with widespread optimism, and he reportedly benefited from enormous popularity during his first months in office. However, despite some successes, such as an audit of government institutions and the renegotiation of international debt-relief agreements, his attempts to initiate sweeping institutional reforms stalled. In May 2008, Conté's decision to sack Kouyaté via presidential decree met with little organized protest. Kouyaté left the country, but returned in early 2009 and founded his own party in April.

Appendix B. Touré and Conté Regimes: Historical Background

Ahmed Sékou Touré and the Guinean “Revolution” (1958-1984)

Alone among France’s African colonies, Guinea gained independence in 1958 after Guineans overwhelmingly voted for immediate sovereignty rather than membership in the self-governing but neocolonial French Community. Ahmed Sékou Touré, a trade unionist and militant anti-colonialist, spearheaded the movement for independence, which caused France to precipitously withdraw all aid and remove many physical assets, such as port equipment. After the break with France, Guinea’s fledgling government received significant technical and economic assistance from the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. While adopting a radical anti-Western public stance, Guinea nevertheless also accepted aid from the United States which, seeking to counter Soviet influence, sponsored a Peace Corps program and provided other assistance. U.S. companies also maintained investments in Guinea, notably in the mining sector.

Touré’s Parti Démocratique de Guinée (PDG) – Guinea’s sole political party at the time – centralized control over all aspects of political, economic, and cultural life. The economic system and national educational program were ostensibly designed to eradicate all traces of Western colonial and neo-colonial influence. External travel for Guineans was restricted, while foreigners’ entry and movements within Guinean territory were strictly monitored. Touré allowed foreign multinational firms to form joint ventures with the government to mine and process Guinea’s large bauxite reserves through the use of industrial enclaves largely unlinked to the local economy. Nonetheless, enormous economic hardship was the norm for nearly all Guineans, especially after Touré attempted to ban all private trade in the mid-1970s. Broad opposition to such policies, which was catalyzed by the 1977 “Market Women’s Revolt,” led to an easing of economic control and other reforms during the late 1970s. After this point, Guinea turned increasingly toward the West for financial and technical aid.

Touré’s government was strongly nationalist and espoused a non-ethnic, unified Guinean identity. The Bureau Politique National, the country’s highest decision-making body, included members of each of Guinea’s major ethnic groupings. At the same time, members of the president’s extended family held key state positions and reportedly wielded significant power behind the scenes. Additionally, some government programs disproportionately affected certain regions. For example, the “demystification” campaign of the mid-1960, which sought to eradicate “backwards” cultural practices, mainly targeted the diverse ethnic groups of Guinea’s southeastern Forest region,¹⁶⁰ while in 1976 the regime specifically targeted members of the Fulbe (Peulh) ethnic group after Touré announced that he had discovered a Fulbe “plot” to destabilize the country. Overall, state-sponsored repression affected Guineans of all ethnicities, including members of Touré’s own Malinké ethnic group.

The first two decades of Touré’s presidency were marked by increasingly repressive practices as Touré claimed that France and other neo-colonial powers were engaged in a “permanent plot” to undermine the Guinean “Revolution.” The government regularly denounced various anti-

¹⁶⁰ The many ethnic groups who predominantly reside in the Forest region, of which the largest are Kissi, Guerzé (also known as Kpelle), and Toma (Loma), have acquired an ethno-regional identity, known in Guinea as *Forestier*.

government schemes purportedly led by counter-revolutionary Guineans and conducted regular purges of the civilian and military bureaucracies. The PDG also instilled a pervasive culture of surveillance and secrecy. A civilian militia was created for public security and to check the power of the military. Several thousand Guineans are believed to have disappeared in government detention under Touré, though precise figures are not available.¹⁶¹ As many as a third of Guinea's population (some two million people) fled the country during the Touré era, though many left for predominantly economic, rather than explicitly political, reasons.¹⁶² Many long-time observers suggest that Guineans, even those born after Touré's death in 1984, remain deeply influenced by the PDG regime, similar to the populations of post-socialist states in eastern Europe.¹⁶³

Guinea under Lansana Conté

Sékou Touré died during heart surgery in the United States in March 1984, leaving no clear successor and a government with little popular support. In early April, a military junta calling itself the Military Committee of National Recovery (*Conseil Militaire de Redressement National*, CMRN) took power in a bloodless coup. Colonel (later General) Lansana Conté, a senior officer and former member of the French colonial military, soon emerged as the leader of the CMRN.

The coup leaders suspended the constitution, disbanded Touré's ruling party (executing several of its formerly most powerful members), banned all political activity, and ruled by decree. However, the CMRN also relaxed the level of repression and initiated a few improvements in human rights, including shuttering the prison block at Camp Boiro, a notorious military base in Conakry that served as a detention center for Guineans accused by Touré of anti-government activities.

In July 1985, while attending a regional conference, Conté faced a coup attempt by a rival CMRN member, Diarra Traoré, an ethnic Malinké who had served as Vice President following the coup but who had later been demoted. The putsch was suppressed by pro-Conté troops. Purges of putative anti-Conté military elements, including military trials and executions of accused coup participants, followed, as did vigilante attacks on ordinary Malinkés and looting of their businesses. Such acts were publicly praised by Conté. These events were seen as lessening the influence of Malinkés within the military and state institutions, but they also highlighted ethnic divisions in Guinea and politicized ethnic identity among the President's fellow Soussou people.

¹⁶¹ There has never been a comprehensive independent investigation into the PDG's detention practices. The Association of Camp Boiro Victims, a Conakry-based organization that seeks the rehabilitation of former detainees and the disappeared, believes as many as fifty thousand Guineans may have died in detention, though international researchers generally cite a lower number. Amnesty International estimated that 2,900 prisoners had disappeared in Guinea between 1958 and 1982 (Amnesty International, *Emprisonnement, 'Disparitions' et Assassinats Politiques en République Populaire et Révolutionnaire de Guinée*, Paris: Editions Francophones d'Amnesty International). One historian estimates 2,500 disappeared during Touré's presidency (Maligui Soumah, *Guinée de Sékou Touré à Lansana Conté*, Paris: L'Harmattan, p. 21).

¹⁶² A. O. Bah et al, "Les Guinéens de l'Extérieur: Rentrer au pays?" *Politique Africaine* 36 (Dec. 1989): 22.

¹⁶³ For example, the anthropologist and Guinea expert Mike McGovern has written that "remnants [of Touré's regime] persist in bureaucratic habits such as the strict surveillance of foreigners on Guinean territory... and citizens' habits such as that of looking to the State to solve all problems, in lowering for example the price of merchandise such as gasoline and rice, or further in omnipresent rhetoric... considering merchants as greedy saboteurs rather than as entrepreneurs "naturally" seeking to conserve their operating margins amid market fluctuations. A certain nostalgia for the Touré era is equally perceptible, even if that period was one of suffering and privations." "Sékou Touré Est Mort," *Politique Africaine* 107 (Oct. 2007): 134-5.

As president, Conté steadily consolidated power. In seeking to resurrect the devastated economy, Conté pursued a pragmatic program of economic liberalization and reforms, including, for example, currency devaluation, a floating foreign exchange system, allowances for the creation of agricultural markets, and the privatization of state firms. Though Guinea remained somewhat economically isolated and strongly nationalist, Conté's reforms led to improvements in foreign relations and aid cooperation with donors. This included a moderate rise in U.S. assistance. In 2006, the government authorized Guinea's first private radio stations, making the country the last in West Africa to allow private broadcasting. The move ended a state radio monopoly in place since 1958, and was seen as complying with government agreements to relax regulation of political expression.

Tenuous Democratization

The ostensible need to ensure state security in the wake of the 1984 coup gave Conté latitude to extend his control over the state administrative and security apparatus. The president ruled by decree for nearly a decade. In December 1990, a new constitution, drafted by a transitional CMRN legislative body, was approved by popular referendum. Though it foresaw a five-year transition to elections, the constitution gave the president wide-ranging decision-making and governance powers. It also created the basis for a highly personalized regime based around the presidency, manned by officials drawn from across Guinea's ethnic groups but drawing heavily from the President's Soussou ethnicity. In 1991, Conté dissolved the CMRN, replacing it with a Transitional National Recovery Commission, which promulgated laws based on the constitution and was charged with overseeing a transition to electoral democracy.

In 1992, Conté legalized multi-party politics, but political activity was placed under strict state regulation. While donor countries, including the United States, provided technical assistance in support of this process, they did not extensively financially back the transformation or subsequent elections, due to apprehensions about limitations on popular participation under the system being created. Guinea's first presidential election, held in December 1993, was won by Conté, who garnered 52% of the vote. Conté won re-election in December 1998 and 2003. Guinea has held two multi-party legislative elections, in 1995 and in 2002. Conté's ruling Party of Unity and Progress (PUP) won both, taking 76 and 91 of the 114 seats in each respective election. Legislative elections were due to take place again in 2007, but were repeatedly delayed, leaving the National Assembly with an expired mandate.

Most of these elections were characterized by credible reports of irregularities and manipulation favorable to Conté and the PUP. Varying, though often extensive, levels of political unrest, election violence, state harassment and detention of opposition leaders, and coercive suppression of opposition political activities, were common threads. In 1998, the main opposition leader, Alpha Condé, was imprisoned following the vote. In 2001, a PUP-sponsored referendum aimed at extending Conté's time in office was passed by a putative 98% vote margin, amid low turnout and an opposition boycott, anti-referendum protests, a crackdown by security forces on opposition parties, and strong international criticism of the effort. It extended the presidential term from five to seven years and removed term and presidential candidate age limits, among other measures, extending Conté tenure.

In December 2003, Conté, who did not campaign because of his ill health, was re-elected with a reported 96.63% of the vote with only nominal opposition, following the Guinean Supreme Court's disqualification of six presidential candidates from the race on technical grounds and in the face of an election boycott by key opposition parties. The European Union reportedly refused

to support the conduct of the election or deploy election observers because of doubts over the transparency of the election.¹⁶⁴ In 2004, the Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH, in French) issued a report, titled “Guinea: A Virtual Democracy with an Uncertain Future,” that sharply criticized the government’s regular suppression of political freedoms and targeting of opposition groups.¹⁶⁵

Regional Instability

Starting in the late 1980s, each of Guinea’s neighbors experienced one or more internal conflicts—notably Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d’Ivoire. Conté’s government was an active participant in many of these conflicts, supporting various government and non-government actors in neighboring countries and reportedly serving as a conduit for arms. For example, Conté sent troops to neighboring Guinea-Bissau in 1998 to shore up his ally President Bernardo “Nino” Vieira amid a military uprising, while throughout Liberia’s successive conflicts (1989-2003), Conté provided backing for groups opposed to his regional nemesis, Charles Taylor.¹⁶⁶

In September 2000, Conté’s support for anti-Taylor rebels, along with ethnic tensions, played into a series of armed attacks along Guinea’s borders with Sierra Leone and Liberia. These attacks lasted several months, and terrorized residents of the southeastern Forest region in particular. A self-described Guinean rebel spokesman whose identity remains unknown claimed responsibility for the attacks and said they were aimed at forcing Conté to step down. Most observers believe the attacks were instigated by Liberia’s then-president, Charles Taylor, and carried out by members of Sierra Leone’s RUF rebel movement, Liberian militias, and some Guinean fighters. The Guinean military eventually quashed the assailants, using extensive aerial bombardment of villages suspected of harboring the rebels and the help of hastily formed village militias and Liberian rebel fighters opposed to Taylor.

Conté meanwhile presided over a weakening of central state structures. In its waning years, Conté’s government was reportedly divided into factions controlling different areas of the government, economy, military, and even nominal opposition and civil society groups. NGOs and international media portrayed a country whose leader was unable “to control the day-to-day operations of government.”¹⁶⁷ Concerns over factionalization in the administration and military heightened with reports that President Conté, who declined to institutionalize his succession and who did not often appear in public, was terminally ill. Starting in 2003, the International Crisis Group warned that Guinea was at serious risk of a civil war or military coup.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ IFES, “Of Interest,” Election Profile (Guinea), at <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=402>.

¹⁶⁵ IRIN, “Guinea: Rights Group Slams ‘Caricature of Democracy,’” April 14, 2004. See also Maligui Soumah, *Guinée: La démocratie sans le peuple*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006.

¹⁶⁶ In particular, Conté reportedly provided logistical support and a rear base on Guinean territory for the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) in the late 1990s, and later supported Liberians United For Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), a rebel faction that proved instrumental in unseating Taylor in 2003.

¹⁶⁷ International Crisis Group, *Stopping Guinea’s Slide*, 2005: 10.

¹⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d’une fin de règne*, 2003: i.

Relations with the Military

Although he arrived in power via a military coup, Conté had a complex relationship with Guinea's armed forces. The military benefited from significant socioeconomic privileges, but served as the target of purges and surveillance from a president who feared a military uprising. Conté faced many coup attempts, notably in 1996, when dissident officers shelled the presidential palace and briefly detained the president himself. The stand-off was reportedly diffused when the mutinous troops failed to agree on who should take over power upon Conté's dismissal. In 2005, an armed attack on the president's motorcade was followed by mass arrests.

The Conté era was also marked by repeated military mutinies spurred by demands for higher pay, more frequent promotions, and an end to the perceived monopolization of military patronage networks by a small handful of high-ranking officers. In response to these challenges, Conté cultivated the Presidential Guard (also known as the *Bataillon Autonome de Sécurité Présidentielle*, or BASP), an elite force based in Conakry and commanded directly by the presidency.¹⁶⁹ Conté also expended significant state resources on military salaries and benefits such as subsidized rice for Guinean troops. Numerous officers were forced to retire in late 2005 following the mass promotion of about 1,000 non-commissioned and commissioned officers. In 2007, the government more than doubled army salaries after soldiers rioted in dissatisfaction at their low salaries following their role in quelling nationwide strikes. These moves were generally seen as decreasing resources available to such public goods as education and infrastructure. The International Crisis Group noted that "pay increases, along with waves of recruitment in 2007-2008, ate into the state's fragile finances. But far from satisfying the troops, they generated an expectation that violent protests would bear fruit."¹⁷⁰

Conté's administration generally refrained from enforcing military discipline in connection with alleged abuses of civilians, fostering what many Guineans and international observers see as a culture of impunity. In 2006, Human Rights Watch issued a report that Guinea's security forces routinely employed arbitrary arrest, torture, assault and occasionally murder to fight crime and perceived government opponents.¹⁷¹ An official commission of inquiry into security forces' killings of demonstrators in 2006 and 2007 had stagnated at the time of Conté's death in 2008. The last wave of protests in Conakry before Conté's death took place in November 2008; at least four people reportedly died when security forces opened fire with live ammunition.

Growing Pressure for Reform

Popular anger at Conté's regime grew in the later years of his regime. In mid-2006 and again in early 2007, a coalition of trade unions organized a series of general strikes in response to long-standing and widespread public dissatisfaction with economic stagnation, inflation of about 30%, the slow pace of promised political reform and democratization, and Conté's semi-autocratic presidential exercise of power. In January and February 2007, a general strike spiraled into

¹⁶⁹ Conté's personal guard also reportedly included a portion of the roughly 800 elite commandos known as the Rangers who were trained in border protection by a United States military cooperation program in 2001-2002 (International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d'une fin de règne*, 2003: 12; Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009).

¹⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The transition has only just begun*, March 2009: 4.

¹⁷¹ HRW, *The Perverse Side of Things: Torture, Inadequate Detention Conditions, and Excessive Use of Force by Guinean Security Forces*, April 22, 2006.

unprecedented nationwide anti-government protests. These protests, which were supported by major political opposition parties and civil society groups, caused significant political unrest in urban centers. In response, the military opened fire on protesters and launched a harsh crackdown, particularly in urban centers and notably in Conakry, the capital. Confrontations between troops and largely unarmed demonstrators resulted in 186 civilian deaths, while hundreds were injured, beaten, or extra-judicially detained, and dozens tortured or raped, according to an investigation by local human rights groups.¹⁷² Martial law was imposed in February, during which time Human Rights Watch reported that security forces in Conakry “went house-to-house, breaking down doors, and looting everything of value inside, including cell phones, cameras, and money.”¹⁷³

In late February, the strikes were brought to an end in talks mediated by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The unions agreed to call off strikes in exchange for several concessions from Conté, including the appointment of a Prime Minister with some executive powers from a list of candidates pre-approved by unions and civil society groups. Conté’s selection of Lansana Kouyaté, a former diplomat, was widely welcomed.

Kouyaté managed a few significant successes, such as an audit of some government institutions and the renegotiation of a debt-relief agreement with the IMF. His attempts to initiate sweeping reforms of public institutions, however, stalled. Many attributed his failures to machinations by Conté’s inner circle, Conté’s refusal to accord to Kouyaté the power to make real changes, and public’s disillusionment with the prime minister’s perceived pursuit of his own political agenda.¹⁷⁴ Quality of life across Guinea continued to decline, and a promised official probe into abuses by security forces during the strikes stagnated. The unions, which had enjoyed broad public support during the strikes, waned in influence due to Kouyaté’s lackluster performance and rumors of internal splits and corruption among union leaders.¹⁷⁵ A presidential decree in May 2008 sacking Kouyaté and replacing him with a close Conté ally and businessman, Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, met with little protest.

Military Divisions and Restiveness

Conté, a former general, depended on the military to enforce his rule, and closely controlled the Ministry of Defense and other security agencies. Nevertheless, he faced several alleged putsches, some attributed to military officers. In 1996, a military mutiny spawned a coup attempt that reportedly nearly overthrew the president, and in 2005 the president’s motorcade came under fire as he drove through Conakry. In addition, as his tenure waned, the military became increasingly divided along ethnic and generational lines, and in recent years there were several military protests — some violent — mostly over pay, working conditions, and military rank promotions.

¹⁷² Coalition pour la Défense des Victimes des Événements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les violations commises en République de Guinée pendant les événements de Janvier et Février 2007* (Nov. 2007): 4. See also HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

¹⁷³ HRW, “Guinea: Security Forces Abuse Population Under Martial Law” [press release], February 15, 2007.

¹⁷⁴ E.g. International Crisis Group, *Guinée: Garantir la poursuite des réformes démocratiques*, 2008; Kissy Agyeman, “President Replaces Consensus Prime Minister in Guinea,” *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, May 21, 2008; and Michelle Engeler, “Guinea in 2008: The Unfinished Revolution,” *Politique Africaine* 112 (Dec. 2008).

¹⁷⁵ Arieff interviews, Conakry, February 2009.

The 2008 Junior Officer Mutiny

Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando parachutist unit (known as the BATA). Mutinous troops demanding back wage payments and rice subsidy increases took control of Alpha Yaya, took the army chief of staff hostage, and pillaged shops and private homes in Conakry. They demanded that the chief army quartermaster and the defense minister be fired and that Guinea's generals, who were reportedly seen by the mutineers as blocking opportunities for promotion and monopolizing lucrative patronage networks, be retired.¹⁷⁶ Mutiny leader Claude "Coplan" Pivi also told local media that the mutineers sought the rehabilitation of soldiers who were punished for abuses during the 2007 strikes.¹⁷⁷ Mutiny leaders exchanged fire with members of the presidential guard, and several people were reportedly killed, and dozens wounded, by stray bullets.¹⁷⁸ After a week of unrest, Conté met in person with the mutineers' leaders, and the government agreed to pay salary arrears of \$1,100 to each soldier, sack the defense minister, and grant promotions to junior officers, ending the uprising.¹⁷⁹ Much of the top military hierarchy, however, remained in place until Conté's death, but were subsequently dismissed by the CNDD, key members of which have claimed to have played key roles in the May 2008 mutiny.¹⁸⁰

In mid-June 2008, police officers in Conakry attempted to launch their own mutiny over alleged non-payment of back-wages and a failure to implement pledged promotions. Military troops led by Pivi crushed the police uprising, culminating in a bloody shoot-out at a police headquarters in the upscale Camayenne neighborhood that left at least four police officers dead, according to an official tally. Pivi's troops also reportedly laid siege to and looted police facilities throughout Conakry, and the police counter-narcotics unit was also ransacked and its records destroyed.¹⁸¹ The confrontations reportedly left a rift in relations between the police and the army, and established Pivi's reputation as a well-known and much-feared figure in Conakry.¹⁸² These events reportedly allowed junior officers to gain control of substantial portions of state armaments and, given past incidents of violent military indiscipline, placed in question security conditions in Conakry. There were also reports that some military elements employed these weapons in common crimes targeting civilians.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Meets Soldiers' Demands To End 2-Day Mutiny," Reuters, May 27, 2008; RFI, "Guinean Soldiers Demand Retirement Of Army Generals," May 29, 2008 via BBC Monitoring.

¹⁷⁷ *BBC Monitoring*, "Guinea: Mutiny leader explains reasons behind action [from *GuinéeNews*]" June 8, 2008.

¹⁷⁸ Kissy Agyeman, "Tension Mounts in Guinea in Wake of Army Revolt," *Global Insight*, May 29, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ Saliou Samb, "Guinea Settles Army Pay Dispute With Mass Promotion," Reuters, June 14, 2008.

¹⁸⁰ Claude Pivi, a CNDD member and junior officer who was promoted to Minister of Presidential Security in January 2009, styled himself the leader of the Camp Alpha Yaya mutiny. Pivi also led the crackdown on the police uprising, according to witnesses. After he became president, Dadis Camara stated he had played a key role in the mutiny and in the negotiations that ended it.

¹⁸¹ E.g. *Aminata.com*, "Affrontements Entre Policiers Et Militaires—La Bande De Pivi Et Des Gardes Présidentielles," June 17, 2008; and Pascal Fletcher, "Bauxite-Exporter Guinea Faces Drugs Trade Threat-UN," Reuters, July 12, 2008.

¹⁸² Many Conakry residents believe that Pivi possesses powers that make him bulletproof. Anxiety over Pivi's activities peaked in November, when Pivi reportedly ordered the arrest and torture of a group of Cameroonian nationals he suspected of having damaged his car. (E.g. *La Lance* newspaper, November 26, 2008.)

¹⁸³ International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 16.

Author Contact Information

Alexis Arieff
Analyst in African Affairs
aarieff@crs.loc.gov, 7-2459

Nicolas Cook
Specialist in African Affairs
ncook@crs.loc.gov, 7-0429