



# Guinea: Background and Relations with the United States

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## Summary

The past two years have seen a series of dramatic changes in Guinea's political landscape, a new experience for a country that had only two presidents in the first 50 years after independence in 1958. In June 2010, Guineans voted in their country's first presidential election organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. Longtime exiled opposition leader Alpha Condé, who had previously never served in government, was declared the winner after a much-delayed run-off poll in November. Condé's inauguration in December 2010 brought an end to two years of military rule and, many hope, to over 50 years of authoritarianism. Many Guineans, investors, and foreign diplomats also expect the election to provide a stepping-stone toward reforming state institutions and implementing the rule of law, which are considered prerequisites for private sector growth and increased respect for human rights. At the same time, ethnic violence and reported abuses by security forces, both before and after the run-off vote, point to underlying problems within Guinea's security sector and exposed socio-political divides that may prove challenging for the new administration to overcome.

A former French colony on West Africa's Atlantic coast, with a population of about 10 million, Guinea is rich in natural resources but its citizens are afflicted by widespread poverty. While Guinea has experienced regular episodes of internal political turmoil since independence in 1958, it was considered a locus of relative stability during much of the past two decades, during which each of its six neighbors suffered armed internal conflicts. Still, democratic progress was limited, and popular discontent with the government rose along with instability within the outsized and fractious armed forces. International policymakers continue to view Guinea's stability as key to preserving security gains in neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone, while a resurgence of violence in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire in recent months threatens the sub-region anew.

Guinea has significant mineral deposits, notably comprising a quarter or more of global bauxite (aluminum ore) reserves, and U.S. companies are involved in the extractive industries sector. Chinese investment, though longstanding, appears to be on the rise and has sparked international and internal controversy.

U.S. policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics issues; security sector reform; economic interests; regional peace and stability; and socioeconomic and institutional development. Following the 2008 military coup, the United States identified Guinea's political transition as a key policy goal in West Africa and made significant financial and diplomatic contributions toward the success of Guinea's election process. Selective U.S. bilateral aid restrictions, which were imposed in connection with the coup, have been lifted in the wake of the successful transfer of power to a civilian-led administration. U.S. policymakers have indicated support for the resumption of bilateral security assistance and for security sector reform, but the levels and types of U.S. assistance may be weighed against other regional and policy priorities. Congress may play a role in guiding U.S. engagement with Guinea through the authorization, appropriation, and oversight of U.S. programs and policies. Guinea-focused legislation introduced during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress included H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen) and S.Res. 345 (Boxer).

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## Overview

Guinea is a former French colony in West Africa, about the size of Oregon, which has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil. Despite its wealth in natural resources, Guinea's development indicators are poor even by regional standards, and living conditions are among the worst in the world.<sup>1</sup> During much of the past two decades, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability in a sub-region that has witnessed multiple armed conflicts. However, Guinea's political outlook plunged in late 2008, when a military junta took power following the death of longtime President Lansana Conté. Under military rule, Guinea saw a rise in insecurity and suffered from the erratic leadership of junta leader Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara. Dadis Camara was shot by a security aide in December 2009, paving the way for a military-led transitional government and, eventually, elections.

In June 2010, Guineans voted in the country's first presidential election organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. Longtime exiled opposition leader Alpha Condé was declared the winner after a much-delayed run-off poll in November. His inauguration in December brought an end to two years of military rule and, many hope, to over 50 years of authoritarianism. Legislative elections are expected within the next year, though an electoral timeline has not been set.

As Guinea's first freely elected president, Alpha Condé faces tremendous expectations from Guinea's impoverished population as well as vast challenges. The pre- and post-electoral periods were afflicted by violence, some of it ethnically tinged, which revealed latent tensions and damaged the social fabric in Conakry and other ethnically mixed areas. State institutions, including the judiciary, military, law enforcement agencies, and civilian bureaucracy, are in disarray. Guinea's economy, already very weak, has been severely impacted by political instability and the suspension of multilateral financial assistance (now on its way to being restored). Condé has identified security sector reform, agricultural development, mining sector reform, and transitional justice as among his policy priorities. While observers view these goals as laudatory, the capacity and political will of Condé's administration remain untested. Some analysts also point to the issue of justice as potentially divisive and destabilizing, particularly when it comes to the potential pursuit of exiled former junta leader Dadis Camara and other members of the military, who are potential targets of an ongoing International Criminal Court investigation.

### Guinea at a Glance

<b>Population:</b> 10.3 million (2010 est.)
<b>Gross Domestic Product (GDP):</b> \$3.8 billion (2008)
<b>GDP Per Capita:</b> \$350 (2008)
<b>Age Structure:</b> 0-14 years 43%, 15-64 years 54%, 65+ years 3%
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b> Peul (Fulbe/Fulani) 40%, Malinké (Mandingo) 30%, Soussou 20%, smaller ethnic groups 10%
<b>Religions:</b> Muslim 85%; Christian 8%; indigenous beliefs
<b>Languages:</b> French (official); local languages
<b>Life Expectancy at Birth:</b> 57.6 years (2010 est.)
<b>Infant Mortality:</b> 63 deaths/1,000 live births (2010 est.)
<b>HIV/AIDS Adult Prevalence:</b> 1.6% (2007 est.)
<b>Adult Literacy:</b> 29.5% (2003 est.)
<b>Natural Resources:</b> bauxite [aluminum ore], iron ore, diamonds, gold, uranium, hydropower, fish, salt
<b>Major Trading Partners:</b> India, China, France, Netherlands, Spain, Russia, Germany, United States, Belgium, Ukraine
<i>Sources: CIA World Factbook; World Bank</i>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g., U.N. Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2010*, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>.

The United States, which played a key role in Guinea's political transition by isolating the military junta that came to power in 2008 and supporting the electoral process that led to the successful 2010 vote, is now set to weigh further support for Guinea's democratic and socio-economic development against other policies and priorities. Congress may guide U.S. engagement with Guinea through its authorization and appropriation of foreign assistance and its oversight of executive branch policies and programs.

Issues of interest to Congress may include:

- U.S. foreign aid programs, including aid for good governance and security assistance and cooperation;
- Guinea's democratic trajectory and prospects for institutional reforms;
- the role of Guinea's military and prospects for security sector reform;
- counter-narcotics and transnational organized crime;
- Guinea's natural resource wealth and related U.S. investments; and
- Guinea's potential impact on regional stability.

#### **Alpha Condé: Guinea's Newly Elected President**

Alpha Condé, 73, has spent most of the past forty years in exile, largely in France. Prior to his inauguration in December 2010, Condé had never served government. A lawyer by training, Condé was an opponent in exile of Guinea's founding president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, and in 1971 was sentenced in absentia for seeking to overthrow the state. He founded the Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (Rally of the Guinean People, RPG)—Guinea's first registered opposition party—in the early 1990s, and challenged then-President Lansana Conté in presidential elections in 1993 (Guinea's first multi-party vote) 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. Condé is a member of the Malinké (Mande) ethnic group, which is concentrated in Guinea's northeast and is thought to constitute the president's base; Condé also drew cross-ethnic support, notably from the Soussou and Forestier ethnic communities, during the campaign.

## **U.S. Interests in Guinea**

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics issues; security sector reform; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and stability; and socioeconomic and institutional development. Ensuring a transition to a democratically elected, civilian-led government was identified as a primary focus of U.S. policy following the 2008 military coup. The United States also aims to ensure that instability in Guinea does not spill over into fragile neighboring states, such as Liberia, where the United States has invested heavily in that country's post-war recovery and security. Guinea's extractive industry sector is also 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, and Guinea provided 16% of U.S. bauxite and alumina imports between 2004 and 2007.<sup>2</sup> Several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea and face possible growing competition from other

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, *2009 Bauxite and Alumina Survey*.

foreign investors in Guinea, notably from China.<sup>3</sup> U.S. interest has also arisen over Guinea's identity as a historically moderate, majority-Muslim country in a region affected by violent extremism.

## **Recent Congressional Actions**

Several pieces of legislation related to Guinea were introduced during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. These included H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen), *Condemning the violent suppression of legitimate political dissent and gross human rights abuses in the Republic of Guinea*, passed by the House on January 20, 2010; and S.Res. 345 (Boxer), *A resolution deploring the rape and assault of women in Guinea and the killing of political protesters on September 28, 2009*, passed by the Senate on February 22, 2010. Several Members criticized the CNDD following a violent military crackdown in September 2009.<sup>4</sup> In March 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee convened a hearing on the political situation in Guinea following the eruption of mass anti-government demonstrations earlier that year.<sup>5</sup>

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Section 7008, Title VII, Division F of P.L. 111-117, signed into law on December 16, 2009), states that "none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to titles III through VI of this Act shall be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree," with an exemption for "assistance to promote democratic elections or public participation in democratic processes." The prohibition covers bilateral economic assistance, international security assistance, multilateral assistance, and export and investment assistance; humanitarian aid is generally exempt. The Act (Section 7070) also restricts International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs in Guinea to Expanded IMET (E-IMET), which emphasizes respect for human rights and civilian control of the military. These and other provisions have been carried over in subsequent continuing appropriations legislation (P.L. 111-242, signed into law on September 30, 2010, and P.L. 111-290, signed into law on December 4, 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> The large U.S.-based multinational aluminum firm Alcoa, for instance, is a major shareholder in the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée, a bauxite mining and export partnership with the Guinean state, while a much smaller U.S. energy firm, Hyperdynamics, holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration. Hyperdynamics, a Texas-based oil prospecting firm, holds exploration rights in Guinea under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) signed with the Guinean government in 2006. The Guinean government later disputed the terms of the PSC, and in 2009 Hyperdynamics was forced to rescind all but 36% of its original acreage in exchange for confirmation of the validity of its remaining concession. The firm has indicated it will continue oil exploration activities within the remaining area.

<sup>4</sup> "Statement of Senator Russ Feingold on Guinean Soldiers Firing Into an Opposition Rally," September 29, 2009; Office of Congressman Howard Berman, "Guinea's Military Leaders, Tarnished by Violence, Should Allow for Free and Fair Elections, Berman Says," October 8, 2009; Yvette D. Clarke, "Movement of Guinean Women in the United States," October 28, 2009, Congressional Record, Page E2648; Letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, signed by Senators Russ Feingold, Richard G. Lugar, Jeanne Shaheen, Johnny Isakson, Barbara Boxer, James M. Inhofe, Patrick J. Leahy, Sam Brownback, Robert P. Casey Jr., Benjamin Cardin, Mary L. Landrieu, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, and Roland W. Burris, October 15, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, *Prospects for Peace in Guinea*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., March 22, 2007 (Washington: GPO).

## Background

Figure I. Map of Guinea



Source: CRS

For 26 years following independence from France in 1958, Guinea was ruled as a one-party, socialist “revolutionary” state under the charismatic but repressive leadership of Ahmed Sékou Touré. Following Touré’s death in 1984, Colonel (later, General) Lansana Conté came to power in a military coup d’état. 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, competition for influence among members of the senior bureaucracy and elite business sectors, the disintegration of state institutions, and increasing signs of public dissatisfaction. Conté’s supporters, however, argued that his leadership prevented Guinea from experiencing the kind of brutal armed civil conflict that has afflicted many of its neighbors. While Guinea held several general elections under Conté, democratic gains were limited, and power remained concentrated in the hands of Conté and his shifting inner circle of businessmen and politicians.

A growing number of formerly rare strikes and demonstrations erupted starting in 2006. They were spurred 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. These peaked with a general strike and nationwide anti-government demonstrations in

early 2007 which nearly brought the country to a halt and pushed Conté to propose a series of reforms, many of which were never implemented. Divisions and unrest 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 unit, the BATA. In June 2008, military troops crushed an attempted police mutiny 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 near downtown Conakry.

Many analysts predicted a military coup if Conté were to die in office. However, it was unclear what faction or individuals might prevail, as the military was reportedly deeply divided along ethnic and generational lines. Analysts also debated whether Guinea risked significant ethnic violence, which could potentially spread to neighboring states, or whether Guineans' historically strong sense of national identity and social cohesion meant that such a scenario was unlikely. International concerns over potential instability heightened with reports that drug trafficking activities were being facilitated or directly undertaken by government officials, members of the military, and Conté associates.

## **The Rise of the CNDD Military Junta**

On December 23, 2008, a military junta seized power after Conté died following a long illness. The junta, which called itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD, after its French acronym), appointed as president a previously little-known military officer, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara. A member of the southeastern Guerzé (also known as Kpelle) ethnic group, Dadis Camara was a member of the elite BATA airborne commando unit and had served as director of Army fuel supplies, a reportedly powerful position that helped him build a base of support among the rank-and-file. Other powerful CNDD members included Gen. Sekouba Konaté, former commander of the BATA, who was named defense minister, and Gen. Mamadouba Toto Camara, the most senior CNDD officer in terms of rank, who was named security minister. The CNDD's composition was ostensibly multi-ethnic, but many key posts appeared split between ethnic Malinké and "Forestiers," a collective term for a constellation of small ethnic groups (including the Guerzé) who tie their roots to Guinea's rain-forested southeast and have historically been politically marginalized at the national level.

Upon assuming power, the CNDD immediately took steps to assert its authority, for instance by suspending civilian regional administrators and replacing them with military commanders. The CNDD also created several new ministerial-level positions, headed by members of the military or close civilian associates. Several key ministries, including security, defense, and finance, and the governor of the Central Bank, were attached to the presidency. Signs of fault lines within the military soon emerged, heightening concerns over potential intra-military violence. Several military officers were purged from the junta or imprisoned in 2009 on accusations of plotting against Dadis Camara or other leaders. In July 2009, Gen. Mamadouba "Toto" Camara, security minister and the most senior CNDD officer, was assaulted by members of the presidential guard.<sup>6</sup>

Dadis Camara initially committed to overseeing free and fair elections and a "peaceful transition" to a civilian-led government within a year, agreeing to a timetable set by a broad coalition of

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<sup>6</sup> BBC News Online, "Troops Crawl After Guinea Attack," July 24, 2009; United Nations, *Contingency Plan Conakry*, August 2009; AFP, "Guinée: Une ONG Redoute une 'Dérive Dictatoriale,' Dénonce la Torture," August 12, 2009.



political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups known as the *Forces Vives* (“Active Forces”). He also promised that neither he nor any CNDD member would run for office. However, elections were repeatedly postponed. Dadis Camara indicated that he might choose to run for president, compounding suspicions that junta members were reluctant to leave power.

## The September 28 Protests and International Criminal Court Investigation

On September 28, 2009, security forces opened fire on tens of thousands of protesters who had gathered peacefully in and around an outdoor stadium in Conakry to protest repeated election delays and Dadis Camara’s perceived intention to run for president. A Human Rights Watch investigation concluded that the crackdown was “premeditated” and that soldiers and gendarmes—including members of the Presidential Guard and of the CNDD’s anti-drug and anti-crime unit, both of which ostensibly answered to the presidency—had directly fired on the stadium crowd and stabbed those fleeing with knives and bayonets.<sup>7</sup> At least 150 people were killed and over 1,000 wounded in the crackdown, and several opposition leaders who had planned to address the crowd were assaulted and threatened.<sup>8</sup> According to numerous reports, soldiers also assaulted and raped dozens of women, including in full view of military commanders. In the days following the protests, lootings and abuses continued, and sporadic confrontations and extrajudicial detentions were reported.

The report of a United Nations (U.N.) commission of inquiry confirmed 156 deaths, 109 instances of sexual violence, “hundreds of other cases of torture or of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment,” and dozens of extrajudicial arrests. The commission concluded that the crackdown may have constituted “crimes against humanity” and recommended a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>9</sup> Although Dadis Camara condemned the violence, he denied responsibility, contending that the opposition was at fault and that he was not in full command of the armed forces.<sup>10</sup> In October, the chief prosecutor for the ICC announced he was opening a “preliminary examination” of the situation.<sup>11</sup> The ICC examination remains ongoing.

## Dadis Camara’s Exit and Growing Instability

The September 2009 violence presaged rising insecurity in Conakry and fears of a breakdown in military command and control. International condemnation also catalyzed latent fractures within the junta. On December 3, 2009, Dadis Camara was shot in the head by a commander in his presidential guard, Aboubacar “Toumba” Diakité, who had been cited in the U.N. investigation as

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<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea*, December 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Many believe the death toll to have been significantly higher, and reports indicate that the military engaged in a systematic cover-up by removing bodies from the site and burying them in mass graves. See HRW, *Bloody Monday*, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry Mandated to Establish the Facts and Circumstances of the Events of 29 September 2009 in Guinea*, December 29, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Agence France Presse (AFP), “Guinea Under Fire After Scores Killed in Opposition Crackdown,” September 28, 2009; Agence Guinéenne de Presse, “Discours A La Nation du Chef de l’Etat,” November 3, 2009; *Jeune Afrique*, “Massacres du 28 Septembre: Dadis a-t-il été l’instigateur?” September 30, 2009; AFP, “Massacre en Guinée: Dadis Camara Ne Se Reconnaît ‘Aucune Responsabilité,’” October 4, 2009; Adam Nossiter, “Guinea Seethes as a Captain Rules at Gunpoint,” *The New York Times*, October 3, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> ICC Office of the Prosecutor, “ICC Prosecutor Confirms Situation in Guinea Under Examination,” October 14, 2009.

a key instigator of the September 28 violence. Dadis Camara was evacuated to Morocco to receive medical care; he subsequently traveled to Burkina Faso, where he remains in exile.

The shooting and subsequent power vacuum coincided with reports of rising ethnic tensions and instability within the CNDD and wider armed forces. Reports indicated that the CNDD was recruiting and training irregular fighters as militias in camps located near Conakry, and referred to rising arms imports and the presence of foreign mercenaries.<sup>12</sup> Targeted killings were reported in Conakry, including at least one government official. Fears of imminent conflict caused some Guineans, rights advocates, and diplomats to call for a regional intervention force.

## **Formation of a Transitional Government**

In January 2010, following weeks of uncertainty after the shooting of Dadis Camara, CNDD Defense Minister Gen. Sekouba Konaté assumed executive powers as interim president. On January 15, 2010, Dadis Camara, Konaté, and ECOWAS mediator Blaise Compaoré (president of Burkina Faso) announced a new political agreement.<sup>13</sup> The *Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou* provided for the formation of a unity government headed by Konaté, with a prime minister chosen from the civilian opposition. The signatories also agreed to hold a presidential election within six months, in which members of the CNDD, the unity government, and the security forces would be barred from running as candidates.<sup>14</sup>

*Forces Vives* spokesman Jean-Marie Doré was named prime minister on January 19, and in February he appointed a 34-person cabinet composed of a mix of CNDD members and civilians. In early March, a National Transition Council (CNT) was inaugurated as a quasi-legislative body, with 155 members representing political parties, trade unions, civil society groups, and other socio-economic demographics.<sup>15</sup> The CNT drafted a new constitution and a new electoral code, which were promulgated by presidential decree. Dadis Camara has declined to return to Guinea, and he publicly supported the transitional government and progress toward elections.<sup>16</sup>

As interim president, Konaté moved to build donor and regional support, and made multiple state visits to neighboring countries and to France. Using a combination of patronage and force, he also consolidated power within the armed forces. He closed down militia training camps and arrested, co-opted, or otherwise sidelined a number of military commanders seen as loyal to Dadis Camara and other potential rivals. In early July, Konaté granted mass promotions to much of the military's officer corps, in what was widely viewed as a reward to soldiers for refraining from intervening in the vote. Konaté received widespread praise for instituting greater discipline and control within the military, and for stemming military abuses against civilians. However, his actions largely

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Moncrieff, "Repression and Violence Are a Danger to the Whole Region," *The Independent*, September 30, 2009; *Beeld* (South Africa), "Secretive Mails Sent to Recruits," October 18, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated," October 27, 2009; Reuters, "Foreign Gunmen Helped Guinea Crackdown—Witnesses," October 3, 2009; BBC, "'Big Guns' Herald Guinea's Crisis," October 31, 2009; Ed Butler, "Guinea's Military Junta Imports Millions of Dollars Worth of Arms Despite Embargo," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> In October 2009, ECOWAS had appointed Compaoré to mediate between the CNDD and the civilian opposition *Forces Vives* coalition.

<sup>14</sup> "Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou," State Department Office of Language Services, January 2010.

<sup>15</sup> *Guineenews*, "Liste Complète des Membres du CNT," March 8, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> *Guineenews*, "Moussa Dadis Camara S'Adresse au Peuple de Guinée Depuis Ougadougou," June 14, 2010.

focused on internal command issues and did not necessarily pave the way for greater civilian oversight under an eventual elected government.

## **Elections**

On June 27, 2010, Guineans went to the polls to select from among 24 presidential candidates. The vote was historically significant because it was the first national election in Guinea's history organized by an independent commission, and the first not to feature an incumbent government candidate. Campaigning was largely peaceful, though there were a few isolated incidences of violent confrontations between supporters of opposing candidates.<sup>17</sup> No candidate won more than 50% of the vote, necessitating a run-off election. The two candidates who won the most votes in the June poll—making them adversaries in the run-off election—were Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party, who won 43.7% of the vote, and Alpha Condé of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party, who won 18.3%.

International and domestic election monitoring groups praised the June vote as an important step in Guinea's hoped-for democratic transition, though they also observed severe logistical challenges—such as shortages of election materials, a lack of polling stations in some areas, insufficient poll-worker training, and problems with the distribution of voter cards.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Supreme Court nullified all votes cast in several major population centers. The U.S.-based Carter Center, which fielded an election observation mission, stated it was “concerned by the Court's exclusion of these almost 900,000 votes with no justification of or explanation for doing so”; the Center contended that this “resulted in a de facto disenfranchisement of approximately one third of the electorate without adequate justification.”<sup>19</sup> The final participation rate among registered voters was 52%, compared to 77% reported in provisional results. Several candidates, including Condé and third-place rival Sidya Touré, contested the results; these challenges were overturned by the Supreme Court.

After a series of delays related to logistical challenges, politicized wrangling over election administration, and a dispute over the leadership of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), a run-off vote between Diallo and Condé was held on November 7, 2010. Election observers noted that many deficiencies recorded during the first round—such as insufficient election materials, too few polling stations in some regions, and a lack of training for many poll workers—were corrected prior to the run-off vote. However, there were still some logistical deficiencies. International election observers were largely positive in their initial, preliminary statements following the vote.<sup>20</sup>

The November poll represented a contest between two candidates with starkly contrasting political histories and bases of support. Condé was a longtime opposition leader who had lived in exile during most of Guinea's post-independence history, while Diallo was a former prime minister who was at one time seen as close to Guinea's former president, Lansana Conté. The

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<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., AFP, “One Dead in Guinea Election Clash,” June 25, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> The Carter Center, “The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election,” *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> The Carter Center, “Guinea's Transitional Elections Marked by Peaceful Voting; Commitment to Transparency in Final Results Is Important [Preliminary Statement],” November 9, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; European Union (EU), “Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Presidential Elections in the Republic of Guinea,” November 8, 2010.

vote was nonetheless perceived by many, in part, as an ethnic contest between Guinea's two largest ethnic groups: the Peul (Fulbe/Fulani), who were seen as constituting Diallo's base, and the Malinké (Mandingo), seen as constituting Condé's base. The run-off vote was preceded by incidents of ethnic violence, reportedly including attacks against ethnic Peuls in several majority-Malinké areas in northeastern Guinea. These attacks caused population displacements and led Diallo's party to contend that it was unable to field election observers in those areas out of security concerns; this, in turn, became a bitter point of contention between the two candidates.

On November 15, the CENI announced that provisional results showed a victory by Condé, with about 52.5% of the vote against 47.5% for Diallo. Participation was roughly 67% percent nationally. Diallo initially challenged the results and claimed that they were tainted by fraud, particularly in two districts affected by ethnic violence just prior to the vote. Unrest erupted in Conakry and in areas that had supported Diallo's candidacy, largely in the northern Fouta Djallon region (see "Election Violence," below). However, Diallo conceded to Condé after the Supreme Court certified the results, and the security situation has since been relatively quiet.

## **Election Administration**

Elections were organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), which was created in 2007 as an oversight body, part of a series of reforms agreed to under Conté. The interior ministry (known in Guinea as the MATAP), which was previously responsible for organizing elections, played a secondary role by assisting the CENI with logistics. The presidential election cost an estimated \$36.1 million, not including voter registration and related costs.<sup>21</sup> Major donors included the European Union, the United States, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain; the U.N. Development Program played a coordinating role. China also reportedly contributed, for example through the donation of motorcycles for the transportation of electoral materials and other equipment.

The legal framework for the elections consisted of a new constitution and electoral law promulgated by decree in April and May 2010. While both contained improvements over previous frameworks—such as the institution of term limits, guarantees as to the CENI's independence, and the introduction of a single-ballot system—implementation was reportedly inconsistent, in part due to the short time-line prior to the vote. In addition, several deadlines required under the electoral law were not respected, for example, with regard to the determination of polling station locations and the development of new voting procedures.<sup>22</sup>

## **Election Violence**

Delays associated with the organization of the run-off vote provoked violence between party supporters, at times along ethnic lines, in mid-September and mid-October. In October, a wave of violence in urban centers across the country appeared to be sparked by allegations that Peul vendors had poisoned RPG supporters at a political rally.<sup>23</sup> In the northeastern towns of Siguiri

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<sup>21</sup> USAID responses to CRS query, November 2010.

<sup>22</sup> The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election; Urges Continued Calm in Post-Election Period," June 29, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> AFP, "Guinée: Violences Contre des Peuls Dans la Ville de Siguiri (Témoins)," October 23, 2010. These allegations were publicly repeated by senior RPG officials.

and Kouroussa, witnesses characterized the violence as ethnically motivated, with majority-Malinké populations (perceived as largely supporting the RPG) reportedly targeting Peul residents and shopkeepers, resulting in thousands of displacements soon before the vote. (New polling stations were later set up so that these displaced persons could vote in areas to which they had fled.)

While the violence did not immediately escalate into wider reprisal attacks, the incidents in Siguiri and Kouroussa became a central grievance of the UFDG party. Contending that its party representatives were unable to observe the vote in those areas due to intimidation, the UFDG called on the electoral commission to nullify the Siguiri and Kouroussa results—amounting to some 200,000 votes, or more than the total separating Diallo from Condé in provisional results.<sup>24</sup>

Violence again erupted after the November 15 announcement of Condé's victory, this time in Conakry and the Diallo strongholds of Labé and Pita. Initially, violence was reportedly instigated between civilians of (perceived) opposing political sympathies in ethnically mixed neighborhoods. On November 17, interim president General Sékouba Konaté declared a “state of emergency,” and the military joined in security patrols along with police and members of the Special Force for the Security of the Election Process (FOSSEPEL), a newly created election security force. Reports indicated that security forces engaged in abuses during the crackdown, including targeted attacks against Diallo supporters and ethnic Peuls.<sup>25</sup> The independent think-tank International Crisis Group warned that “Guinea’s political and military leaders and the international community must take urgent measures to halt widespread attacks against defenseless civilians and to prevent political tensions from degenerating into large-scale ethnic violence and regional instability.”<sup>26</sup> The security situation has been relatively stable since November 19.

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<sup>24</sup> Guineenews, “Résultats Officiels Présidentielle 2010 (CENI),” at <http://www.guineenews.org>.

<sup>25</sup> HRW, “Guinea: Witnesses Describe Security Force Excesses,” November 29, 2010; International Crisis Group (ICG), “Conflict Risk Alert: Guinea,” November 18, 2010; U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Violence and State of Emergency in Guinea,” November 2010. As of November 18, at least seven people had been reported killed in the post-election clashes.

<sup>26</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), “Conflict Risk Alert: Guinea,” November 18, 2010.

### The FOSSEPEL: A New Election Security Force

In May 2010, a new, 16,000-member Special Force for the Security of the Election Process (FOSSEPEL) was created to protect polling stations and the tabulation of results, along with ensuring basic crowd-control functions. Members were ostensibly recruited from existing police and gendarme personnel, and were commanded by the gendarmerie chief of staff. They were equipped with riot gear but not permitted to carry firearms, though in practice, many reportedly did. France and Spain assisted in training FOSSEPEL members, with participation from Mali. A State Department-funded contractor also provided assistance (see "Security Assistance and Counter-Narcotics Cooperation," below).

Reports on the FOSSEPEL's performance, particularly during the run-off vote, were mixed. In early November, Human Rights Watch reported that it had received

numerous credible reports of misconduct by policemen and gendarmes serving with FOSSEPEL, including beatings and assaults on party supporters.... Based on the reports, some members of the security unit used the [election-related] unrest as a pretext to loot shops and commit criminal acts, including theft of mobile phones, money, and other goods.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, some observers noted that police and gendarmes were less likely to be implicated in abuses than members of the military who had previously ensured urban security during times of unrest. The FOSSEPEL's future mandate and composition, following the completion of elections, is unclear.

## The Economy

Guinea boasts bountiful natural resources, including over a quarter of the world's reserves of bauxite (aluminum ore) and sizable deposits of high-grade iron ore, diamonds, gold, and uranium. Guinea may also have oil and gas reserves. It also has significant hydro-electric and commercial agricultural potential. The economy relies heavily on mineral exports; joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations have historically provided about 80% of Guinea's foreign exchange.<sup>28</sup> Since late 2008, the global economic recession, political instability, and the government's erratic governance of and contractual interference in the mining sector have negatively affected Guinea's mining output and caused major investment projects to be delayed or canceled.<sup>29</sup> Still, a number of new mining agreements, albeit some that are controversial, have been signed since 2008. As of late 2010, Guinea appeared to be enjoying a rise in mining production and a slight economic recovery following negative growth in 2009.<sup>30</sup>

While Guinea's economic potential is considerable, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is estimated at only \$386.<sup>31</sup> Over 70% of the workforce is employed in (largely subsistence) agriculture.<sup>32</sup> Limited national infrastructure, periodic labor strikes, corruption, and political instability are considered to pose barriers to long-term growth. Lack of capacity and the poor quality of education are also hindrances; the rate of children enrolled in school is reported to have

<sup>27</sup> HRW, "Guinea: Ensure Restraint by Security Forces During Elections," November 5, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> State Department, "Background Note: Guinea." The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), for example, 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.

<sup>29</sup> See EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, June 2009; Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Ruler Worries Miners," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009; Reuters, "Guinea Bauxite Income Seen Down 60 Pct in 2010," September 28, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> *Africa Mining Intelligence*, "Conakry: Mining Output Climbing," December 1, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank development indicators database; CIA world factbook.

<sup>32</sup> World Bank development indicators database.

declined since 2007.<sup>33</sup> Reports suggest government finances have been depleted in recent years due to corruption and mismanagement, a drop in the collection of import duties, declining global mineral commodity prices, misguided monetary policy, and the freezing of some donor budgetary support after the 2008 military coup.<sup>34</sup> Guinea's external debt burden—\$3.1 billion in 2008 according to the World Bank—is also considerable (see “Multilateral Aid,” below).

## **Socioeconomic Conditions**

Guinea's living standards are among the world's worst: it was ranked 156 out of 169 countries assessed on the U.N. Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index for 2010.<sup>35</sup> Access to running water and electricity is rare, including in Conakry and other urban centers; shortages of basic goods, including petrol, cooking gas, and staple food commodities, are common. Though agriculturally fertile, Guinea is periodically subject to food insecurity. According to figures released by the United Nations in May 2009, the rate of chronic malnutrition increased over the previous two years, from 34.8% to 36.2%; 8.3% of Guinean children are thought to suffer from serious malnutrition.<sup>36</sup> The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.6%.<sup>37</sup> Annual health expenditures per capita amount to only \$26, according to the World Bank. The World Health Organization considers Guinea to be a “country under surveillance” with respect to potential complex humanitarian emergency needs.<sup>38</sup> The suspension of some non-emergency donor assistance reportedly negatively affected the provision of humanitarian aid in some parts of Guinea.<sup>39</sup> Poor living conditions helped spark nationwide anti-government protests in 2007, and some fear that continued economic decline could lead to further unrest.

## **Recent Mining Sector Developments**

President Condé has identified mining sector reform as a policy priority, and has stated that he will review certain mining contracts and seek to double Guinea's stake in mining projects.<sup>40</sup> A number of new mining agreements were signed in the first half of 2010, during the transitional government. Such deals have come under criticism from some Guinean politicians and civil society groups who contend that the terms are opaque and that the transitional government did not have the right to conclude significant sovereign agreements prior to elections.

In 2009, the government's unpredictable actions under Capt. Dadis Camara, who publicly threatened to close or nationalize various mining projects, sparked fears among international investors concerned about the security of their assets.<sup>41</sup> For example, in April 2009, the Guinean

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<sup>33</sup> VOA, “Overcrowding, Stalled Reform Keep Guinea's Children Out of School,” May 13, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> IMF and World Bank programs were suspended in early 2009 but are en route to being reinstated following the 2010 presidential election. Private sector analysts note 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).

<sup>35</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 2010*, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/chapters/en/>.

<sup>36</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Information Bulletin May 2009*.

<sup>37</sup> CIA World Factbook.

<sup>38</sup> World Health Organization, *Africa Weekly Emergency Situation Update*, February 8, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> IRIN, “Guinea: Climbing Out of the Donor Funding Gap,” July 28, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Reuters, “Guinea Seeks to Double Share in Mining Projects,” January 24, 2011.

<sup>41</sup> 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, (continued...)

government reclaimed ownership of an alumina refinery that the Russia-based aluminum producer RusAl had purchased from the state in 2006, reportedly for \$19 million. Dadis Camara accused RusAl and former government officials of corruption and declared the sale void, a decision later upheld by a Guinean court. The junta subsequently valued the refinery at \$257 million and accused RusAl of failing to pay significant taxes and royalties. RusAl has repeatedly stated that the refinery was legitimately acquired; negotiations over its status are ongoing.<sup>42</sup>

Another case of disputed foreign asset ownership centers around the multinational mining company Rio Tinto. In August 2009, Rio Tinto announced it would pull its equipment from an anticipated \$6 billion iron ore project in southeastern Simandou after the CNDD indicated it would uphold a decision made under Conté to award half of Rio Tinto's concession to another company, BSG Resources Guinea, a subsidiary of Israeli businessman Benny Steinmetz's BSG Resources (BSGR). Rio Tinto has rejected the decision and pledged to fight it in court. In March 2010, Rio Tinto and China's state-run mining firm Chinalco signed a \$1.35 billion deal in which Chinalco was said to acquire a 47% stake in the Simandou venture. However, Guinean transitional authorities indicated they did not recognize the deal and warned Rio Tinto that it risked incurring further losses.<sup>43</sup> The warning may have stemmed from fears among some officials who benefited from the transaction that a new elected government would revise the decision.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, the transitional government approved a joint venture between BSGR and the Brazilian mining company Vale pertaining to the portion of the Simandou reserve claimed by BSGR. The terms of the Vale deal reportedly remain opaque.<sup>45</sup>

In October 2009, the Guinean government announced a \$7 billion mining and infrastructure agreement with a Hong Kong-based firm, the China International Fund (CIF), in partnership with the Angolan state-owned conglomerate Sonangol. Previously, following the December 2008 coup, China had appeared poised to abandon prior plans to invest in major infrastructure projects in Guinea due to perceived political instability and weak global commodity markets.<sup>46</sup> While the CIF, which has been linked to multi-billion dollar deals in Angola and other African countries, is ostensibly a privately owned company, an investigative report released in July 2009 by the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission found that "key personnel have ties to Chinese state-owned enterprises and government agencies."<sup>47</sup> Chinese officials maintain that the company's "actions have no connection with the Chinese government." The deal has been criticized by donors and the Guinean opposition.

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<sup>42</sup> Reuters, "Guinea Court Reclaims Friguia From RUSAL," September 10, 2009; *Ria Novosti*, "Guinea Demands \$430 Mln from Russia's RusAl in Alumina Business Dispute," January 27, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, September 2010.

<sup>44</sup> *Africa Confidential*, "Mine Not Yours," June 25, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, September 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> USCC, *The 88 Queensway Group*. See also *Africa-Asia Confidential*, "Blood and Money in the Streets: China's Business Ties to the Loathed Camara Junta Could Quickly Backfire," October 20, 2009; Christopher Bodeen, "China-Guinea Deal Highlights Africa Business Ties," AP, October 24, 2009.



## Security Issues and the Rule of Law

While Guinea was considered an anchor of regional stability during much of the past two decades, it is now considered by most observers to be a potential vector of insecurity. Guinea's fractious military, periodic political unrest, poorly policed borders, endemic corruption, and weak state institutions have fed concerns over the potential spillover of instability into fragile post-conflict neighboring countries, such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire. A reported hub for illicit narcotics trafficking and other forms of transnational crime, Guinea is also potentially vulnerable to transnational threats such as terrorist financing and maritime piracy.

Having been governed by authoritarian regimes since independence, Guinea has never experienced the effective rule of law. It is among the world's most corrupt countries, ranking 164 out of 179 countries assessed on Transparency International's 2010 *Corruption Perceptions Index* (tying with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kyrgyzstan, and Venezuela). Judicial and law enforcement capacity is reportedly very low and further compromised by corruption and political interference.<sup>48</sup> Such weaknesses have reportedly contributed to a high incidence of vigilante justice, which was overtly encouraged under the CNDD.<sup>49</sup> Security forces have frequently been accused of looting homes and businesses in Conakry, carrying out extra-judicial arrests, targeting perceived opponents, and other abuses of power.<sup>50</sup>

## Drug Trafficking

Counternarcotics issues are a relatively recent area of concern to U.S. policy-makers, as Guinea, among other countries in the region, has emerged as a reported transshipment hub for cocaine en route from South America to Europe.<sup>51</sup> Senior officials and members of the armed forces are believed by Guineans and the diplomatic community to have ties to the drug trade.<sup>52</sup> In June 2010, President Obama designated Ousmane Conté, a son of the late president, as a "drug kingpin," freezing any U.S. assets held by Conté and prohibiting any transactions with him by persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction.<sup>53</sup> Conté was arrested by the CNDD in February 2009, but he was released from detention in July 2010.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> According to the State Department's 2009 Human Rights Report, Guinea's "judicial system was endemically corrupt.... Budget shortfalls, a shortage of qualified lawyers and magistrates, and an outdated and restrictive penal code limited the judiciary's effectiveness."

<sup>49</sup> Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), *Rapport d'Enquêtes sur les Événements de N'Zérékoré du Début 2010*, February 23, 2010 (CRS translation from French); AFP, "Guinée: 'Graves violations des droits de l'Homme' (ordre des avocats)," May 15, 2009; Reuters, "Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief," June 2, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> HRW, "Guinea: Plan Elections and Hold Rights Abusers Accountable," January 21, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009; *Guineeactu.com*, "Perquisition Chez la SG de la CNTG : Le Capitaine Tiègboro et Raby s'Expliquent," March 5, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> See CRS Report R40838, *Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy*, by Liana Sun Wyler and Nicolas Cook.

<sup>52</sup> *Africa Confidential*: "Guinea: A Popular Putsch, So Far," January 23, 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Conté, who had been imprisoned in Guinea on drug-related accusations since February 2009, was released by Guinean authorities in mid-July 2010. Further details on the scope of the "kingpin" designation, made under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Title VIII, P.L. 106-120), are discussed in U.S. Treasury, *Narcotics: What You Need to Know about U.S. Sanctions Against Drug Traffickers*, July 15, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> BBC Online, "Guinea: Ex-President's Son Ousmane Conte Freed on Bail," July 16, 2010.

Soon after taking power, Dadis Camara initiated populist moves to crack down on drug trafficking. These measures appeared designed to signal a break with the Conté regime, enhance the junta's popularity, and respond to international pressure. CNDD actions largely relied on the "naming and shaming" of alleged wrongdoers, rather than advancing institutional reform. At least 20 high-profile individuals, including top Conté officials, senior police officers, the former chief of the armed forces, and three sons and a brother-in-law of the late president were arrested in 2009 on drug trafficking allegations. Dadis Camara personally interrogated several alleged traffickers on national television, in some cases eliciting detailed "confessions." While many Guineans welcomed the attempt to pursue powerful figures in the former regime, concerns arose over a lack of due process, and some arrests appeared to be politically selective.

The CNDD's anti-drug efforts concentrated power in the presidency and sidelined civilian-led anti-drug agencies in favor of the military. Dadis Camara created a new agency, the State Secretariat for Special Services, to focus on drug and human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime. A military officer, Moussa Tiegboro Camara, was appointed to head the agency, with a corps of gendarmes and soldiers for enforcement. The agency's legal mandate and authorities were not clearly defined, notably vis-à-vis the judiciary or police. This raised further due process and human rights concerns, and some troops participating in anti-drug efforts were accused of abuses of power.<sup>55</sup>

## The Guinean Military: A Key Security Challenge

Nearly all observers point to Guinea's bloated and undisciplined military as a central cause of political instability.<sup>56</sup> The military has been implicated in high-level corruption, multiple coup attempts, mutinies, and gross human rights abuses, including the violence of September 2009 (see "The September 28 Protests and International Criminal Court Investigation," above) and the shooting of over 100 unarmed anti-government demonstrators in early 2007.<sup>57</sup> Military officers implicated in abuses are perceived as benefiting from near-complete impunity from judicial sanction. The armed forces are also reportedly divided along ethnic, generational, and factional lines; such divisions grew further entrenched under the CNDD.<sup>58</sup> In the eyes of some, the armed forces serve largely as a vehicle for corruption and patronage rather than national defense. At the same time, military salaries and other benefits serve as a vital safety net for a deeply impoverished population.

Following the CNDD coup and throughout 2009, abuses by security forces reportedly escalated, while discipline and the effectiveness of the military chain of command deteriorated. While many credit transitional leader Gen. Konaté with improving military discipline in 2010, the potential for abuses remains high. Some contend that a broad-based truth and reconciliation process is needed to address public perceptions of the armed forces and allegations of abuses stretching back to the post-colonial period. However, repeated attempts by civil society groups to push for official investigations into crimes and human rights abuses by members of the military have not succeeded. In addition to perceived impunity from the law and lack of discipline, key factors seen

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<sup>55</sup> HRW, "Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, ICG, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, Africa Report N°164, September 23, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> See HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> *La Lettre du Continent*, "Un Chef, Une Armée, Des Clans!" October 8, 2009.

as challenges associated with security sector reform include a lack of civilian control and oversight; an overweening size (Guinea's military, estimated at over 30,000 personnel, is one of the region's largest despite a population of only 10 million); an undefined mandate; and the incomplete integration of irregular recruits.<sup>59</sup>

## Foreign Relations

The successful conduct of elections in 2010 has opened the way for Guinea to renew its relationships with donors and regional organizations. The 2008 coup caused Guinea's membership in the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to be suspended; membership in both organizations has now been restored. Guinea's membership in the Organization of Francophone Countries (OIF) has also been lifted. The International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G), an ECOWAS- and AU-led entity that was formed to coordinate international policy toward Guinea following the 2008 coup, disbanded in mid-February 2011.

Many donors, including the United States (see "U.S. Relations") and the European Union (EU), suspended some bilateral assistance programs after the coup; these suspensions have now been lifted.<sup>60</sup> Relations with Russia, a longtime diplomatic partner, were negatively affected during Dadis Camara's leadership by a dispute over rights to an aluminum refinery claimed by RusAl (see "Recent Mining Sector Developments"); there are some indications that the dispute may be resolved under the current government.<sup>61</sup> Economic and diplomatic ties with China, another longtime partner, appear to be increasing, a continuing trend over the past several years.

## Relations with Neighboring States

Engagement with neighboring governments will presumably evolve with the new administration of President Alpha Condé. Guinea's ties with many neighboring states were tense under former President Conté, as Guinea played an active role in supporting various factions in the Sierra Leone and Liberia civil wars. Conté also contributed troops to ECOWAS peacekeeping missions in both countries as part of ECOWAS' Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). Guinean relations with Liberia deteriorated significantly after Charles Taylor was elected president of Liberia in 1997: Conté reportedly provided logistical support and rear bases to anti-Taylor rebels, while Taylor-backed militia fighters launched attacks on Guinean border towns in 2000 and 2001. Relations between the two countries have improved enormously since Taylor's departure in

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<sup>59</sup> For further analysis on Guinea's security sector, see CRS Report R41200, *Guinea's New Transitional Government: Emerging Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff. See also Joint Mission of ECOWAS, the AU, and the United Nations for Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Guinea, *Rapport d'Évaluation du Secteur de la Sécurité en République de Guinée*, May 2010; and ICG, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> The violent military crackdown of September 2009 also prompted attempts by donors to isolate members and key associates of the CNDD junta: the EU and AU announced targeted sanctions, and the EU, AU, and ECOWAS imposed an arms embargo. The United States announced targeted travel restrictions. The EU indicated in late 2010 that it would lift sanctions and aid restrictions if the election was successful; the embargo is also reportedly likely to be lifted. (Guineenews, "Guinea: EU Links Resumption of Aid to Democracy," via BBC Monitoring, September 25, 2010; AFP, "EU to Extend Guinea Sanctions Awaiting Vote," October 21, 2010.)

<sup>61</sup> *Africa Mining Intelligence*, "Conakry: Would-Be Suitors Eye Dian Dian Bauxite," February 16, 2011.

August 2003.<sup>62</sup> Guinea also hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees from regional conflicts, most of whom have now returned to their countries of origin, although a new influx of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire has accompanied that country's political crisis since late December 2010.

Conté's government forged close ties with President Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire and the late President João Bernardo Vieira of Guinea-Bissau. In 1998, Guinea and Senegal sent troops to Guinea-Bissau to support Vieira against a military mutiny, while Guinea-Bissau reportedly sent military reinforcements to support Conté during anti-government demonstrations in early 2007.<sup>63</sup>

## **U.S. Relations**

The Obama Administration congratulated Guinea "on the successful completion of its first democratic presidential election" and congratulated Alpha Condé on his victory, stating hopes that "it is only the first step on the road to democratic transition and civilian rule."<sup>64</sup> President Obama also expressed "appreciation for the way in which Cellou Dalein Diallo gracefully accepted the outcome of the election."<sup>65</sup>

Prior to the 2008 coup, the United States maintained cordial relations with Guinea. The Administration subsequently condemned the coup and stated that the primary U.S. objective was to assist "peaceful, democratic change" in Guinea.<sup>66</sup> In response to the September 2009 military crackdown, senior U.S. officials called for CNDD leaders to step down. The State Department also imposed targeted travel restrictions on certain members of the CNDD, members of the government, and associates.<sup>67</sup> The U.S. Peace Corps program was suspended in October 2009; the program had previously been halted for six months in 2007 due to insecurity in connection with the January-February 2007 general strikes and anti-government protests. The Fulbright exchange program was also suspended.

Following the formation of the transitional government in January, U.S. officials signaled approval of Interim President Konaté's leadership, and strongly praised the June elections as peaceful and "historic."<sup>68</sup> In August, Konaté was granted a diplomatic visa to visit the United States; however, the trip has yet to take place. The United States repeatedly called for elections to take place according to schedule, amid multiple delays, and condemned the violence that erupted

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<sup>62</sup> Taylor stepped down amid a rebel assault on Liberia's capital, Monrovia, and is currently on trial in The Hague before the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

<sup>63</sup> For background on Guinea's involvement in neighboring conflicts, see Arieff, "Still Standing: Neighbourhood Wars and Political Stability in Guinea," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, 3 (September 2009).

<sup>64</sup> State Department, "U.S. Statement on Alpha Condé's Presidential Victory in Guinea," December 3, 2010.

<sup>65</sup> AFP, "Obama Congratulates Guinea on 'New Democratic Era,'" December 22, 2010.

<sup>66</sup> *FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

<sup>67</sup> Adam Nossiter, "U.S. Envoy Protests Violence in Guinea," *The New York Times*, October 7, 2009; U.S. Fed News, "Guinea Violence 'Vile Violation' of Human Rights, Clinton Says," October 9, 2009; Congressional Quarterly Transcript, "Secretary of State Clinton Holds Press Conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi," October 6, 2009; State Department, "Guinea: Travel Restrictions," October 29, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> AFP, "Obama Calls for Peaceful Guinea Run-Off Vote," July 7, 2010; U.S. Embassy Conakry press statement, via Guineenews, July 8, 2010.

in response to the November announcement of provisional results, calling on supporters of both candidates to remain calm and exercise legal forms of redress for election-related grievances.<sup>69</sup>

## **U.S. Assistance**

In January 2009, the United States suspended bilateral aid in response to the coup, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance. In practice, security assistance was suspended, while most non-military aid fit into permitted categories. While this policy broadly conformed to congressional directives included in annual appropriations legislation, legal restrictions on assistance to post-coup governments were not triggered.<sup>70</sup> Election assistance, which was largely funded out of the Development Assistance account and exempted from the restriction, increased in FY2009. (Correspondingly, the Obama Administration's FY2012 Development Assistance request represents a decrease from FY2009 and FY2010 levels.)

A \$32 million USAID-funded umbrella project initiated in 2007, *Projet Faisons Ensemble*, is 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.

It seems likely that many of the same goals that previously defined U.S. aid priorities will continue to be pursued now that a transition to elected, civilian-led government has occurred. The Obama Administration stated in its FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations that "assuming a credibly elected, civilian government is in place ... U.S. assistance in FY2011 will focus on fostering more effective law enforcement and judicial systems, greater democracy, good governance, better health services, and improved economic opportunity." At the same time, the Obama Administration's FY2011 budget request, which included an increase in several security assistance-related accounts, has been preempted by continuing appropriations legislation that has largely kept aid funding levels flat. Under P.L. 111-322 (Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Extensions Act, 2011, signed into law on December 22, 2010), the Obama Administration can provide Guinea aid at FY2010 levels until March 4, 2011, or the passage of superseding FY2011 appropriations legislation.

## **Elections-Related Assistance**

Programs supporting Guinea's electoral process were not affected by the suspension of U.S. aid. The Obama Administration's FY2011 request for democracy and governance funding was for roughly \$5.53 million, and an estimated \$8.639 million was appropriated for democracy and governance programs in FY2010. U.S. support for Guinea's electoral process was largely implemented through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID programmed roughly \$6.85 million in FY2008 and FY2009 funds for electoral assistance programs, making the United States the second-largest donor to the election process after the

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<sup>69</sup> State Department, "Post-Election Violence in Guinea [press release]," November 17, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-117, Title VII, Division F, Section 7008) barred 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 assistance. Such provisions, which have been included in annual appropriations legislation since at least 1985, are often referred to as "Section 508" sanctions. However, the State Department determined that the December 2008 coup in Guinea did not trigger the provision because the deposed government had not been "duly elected." (State Department response to CRS query, March 2010.)

European Union.<sup>71</sup> U.S. programs included the provision of electoral equipment and materials; training and technical assistance for Guinea's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), electoral agents and poll workers, and political parties and candidates; voter education; civil society and media election monitoring and oversight; an international election observation mission implemented by the Carter Center.

## **Security Assistance and Counter-Narcotics Cooperation**

Security assistance was suspended in connection with the 2008 military coup. However, the suspension was partially rolled back upon Gen. Konate's assumption of power in early 2010, and several new security assistance programs were initiated. In June 2010, the State Department began training a new, 75-member presidential security detail, funded by approximately \$1.6 million in Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds. The Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) also funded a resident advisor to act as a consultant on elections security and broader police reform issues, implemented through the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). The State Department funded two experts' participation in an ECOWAS-led assessment of Guinea's security sector, and intends to obligate up to \$200,000 in IMET funds for courses for military officials and civilians on topics including civil-military relations, military justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

The Obama Administration has indicated that the United States will resume security assistance programs following the transition to democratic rule. In March 2010, a U.S. delegation representing the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Defense Department met with Guinean officials in Conakry to discuss potential U.S. support for security sector reform (SSR), and State Department officials indicate that SSR continues to be viewed as a policy priority. State Department officials have also indicated the possibility of assisting Guinean troops who may deploy to Somalia as peacekeepers.<sup>72</sup>

Prior to the 2008 coup, Guinea benefitted from IMET, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), "Section 1206" programs, and other U.S. assistance aimed at enhancing security forces' capabilities and professionalism.<sup>73</sup> Before aid was suspended, U.S. officials had informally planned a wide range of programs, many focusing on maritime security and counter-narcotics. In 2002, the United States trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger unit to shore up border security after Liberian-backed incursions in 2000-2001. Human rights concerns have periodically limited military training programs, and Congress has restricted IMET assistance in Guinea to "Expanded" IMET, which emphasizes human rights and civilian control of the military.<sup>74</sup>

## **Multilateral Aid**

Multilateral development assistance, concessional loans, and anti-poverty programs were halted by the coup. In 2009 the World Bank stopped disbursing roughly \$200 million in outstanding

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<sup>71</sup> Information provided by USAID, November 2010.

<sup>72</sup> CRS interview with State Department officials, July 2010.

<sup>73</sup> Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2006 (P.L. 109-163), as amended and extended, provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military and foreign maritime security forces for counter-terrorism and other purposes.

<sup>74</sup> Most recently, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (P.L. 111-117, Division F, Title VII, Section 7070). These provisions were carried over in subsequent continuing appropriations legislation.

loans designated for programs related to health, transportation, education, and other sectors, due to political uncertainty following the coup as well as Guinea's subsequent failure to make sufficient payments on its existing loans.<sup>75</sup> The International Monetary Fund-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was due to provide additional government financing in 2009, was halted after Conté's death.<sup>76</sup> The IMF and other International Financial Institutions are currently renewing their programs in Guinea; in January 2011, the World Bank and African Development Bank, respectively, announced the renewal of loans and a new grant for rural electrification.

**Table I. Selected Bilateral Aid by Account**  
\$ thousands

	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011 (req.)	FY2012 (req.)
DA	5,529	2,400	2,576	14,518	10,277	6,000
GHCS— USAID	7,844 [Child Survival and Health]	8,458	8,200	7,500	7,500	7,500
Food Aid (P.L. 480)	4,093	2,993	2,501	0	0	-
IMET	331	246	0	0	40	100
PKO	0	0	0	1,600	0	0
INCLE	0	0	100	0	500	0
Section 1206	5,800 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>b</sup>	0	0	-	-

**Notes:** DA=Development Assistance; GHCS=Global Health and Child Survival; IMET=International Military Education and Training; PKO=Peacekeeping Operations; INCLE=International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; Section 1206=Defense Department funds authorized under Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2006, as amended and regularly extended, for use in training and equipping foreign military and foreign maritime security forces for certain specific purposes.

**Source:** State Department, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2009-FY2011 and Executive Budget Summary FY2012; CRS Report RS22855, *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress*, by Nina M. Serafino.

- a. Guinea received a portion of a \$5.8 million maritime security assistance that was divided among 15 countries.
- b. Guinea was initially intended to receive a portion of a \$10.9 million regional maritime security package for FY2008, but its allocation was redirected after the 2008 military coup.

<sup>75</sup> Arieff interview with World Bank officials, May 2009 and February 2010. 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.

<sup>76</sup> 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).

## **Outlook**

Guinea is likely to continue to interest U.S. policymakers for its role in transnational security issues and regional stability, its economic potential, and its recent democratic transition. The 2010 elections were viewed as a success by the international community (though they were accompanied by significant domestic discord), and the country's outlook has greatly improved from a year ago, when Guinea was beset by deep political uncertainty and fears of imminent civil conflict. However, the election period also exacerbated certain societal tensions and raised the stakes for the electoral victor. Inter-ethnic relations—historically perceived as relatively harmonious in Guinea though subject to political manipulation and occasional violent confrontation—have deteriorated, and the full implications of recent violence have yet to be assessed. Newly elected president Alpha Condé faces tremendous expectations from Guinea's impoverished population as well as vast challenges: the election did not alter the underlying causes of Guinea's instability, notably economic stagnancy, dysfunctional or near-nonexistent institutions, and the military's opaque structure and overweening size. The United States, which played a key role in Guinea's political transition, is set to weigh further support for Guinea's democratic and socio-economic development against other regional policies and priorities.

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