

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	68
Land:	Guinea
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	. Report 2010
Udgivet:	28. maj 2010
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	23. juni 2010

Title	Amnesty International Report 2010 - Guinea
Publisher	Amnesty International
Country	Guinea
Publication Date	28 May 2010
Cite as	Amnesty International, <i>Amnesty International Report 2010 - Guinea</i> , 28 May 2010, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c03a827c.html [accessed 10 June 2010]



Amnesty International Report 2010 - Guinea

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Head of state: Sékouba Konaté (replaced Moussa Dadis Camara in December)

Head of government: Kabiné Komara

Death penalty: retentionist

Population: 10.1 million

Life expectancy: 57.3 years

Under-5 mortality (m/f): 157/138 per 1,000

Adult literacy: 29.5 per cent

Security forces extrajudicially executed more than 150 peaceful demonstrators and injured more than 1,500 others in a stadium during a protest; dozens of women were raped in public. Torture and other ill-treatment were widespread. Dozens of people were arbitrarily detained, including at secret locations. The security forces continued to enjoy impunity for human rights violations. Human rights defenders and journalists faced threats and intimidation.

Background

In January, ECOWAS endorsed the decision taken by the AU and suspended Guinea until the country reestablishes constitutional order. President Moussa Dadis Camara, head of a military junta that seized power in late 2008, promised to hold elections in 2009 and pledged that neither he nor any member of the National Council for Democracy and Development (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement, CNDD) would run for the presidency. The CNDD's popularity dwindled when it became clear in February that President Camara was reluctant to keep his promise.

After the 28 September stadium massacre (see below), ECOWAS and the EU imposed an arms embargo on Guinea. Targeted sanctions against members of the junta were also imposed by the AU and EU.

In December, President Camara was wounded in an assassination attempt; General Sékouba Konaté replaced him on an interim basis.

Excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions

Security forces routinely used excessive and unnecessary lethal force against peaceful demonstrators. No sanctions were taken against those responsible for unlawful killings. On several occasions, CNDD members encouraged people to lynch suspected thieves.

- In August, one person was killed and two were seriously wounded in Kamsar when the security forces broke up demonstrations against water and electricity shortages.
- On 28 September, more than 150 people were extrajudicially killed and over 1,500 injured when the security forces violently repressed a peaceful demonstration in Conakry. Thousands of demonstrators assembled in a stadium in response to a call by a coalition of political parties, trade unions and civil society organizations to protest against the participation of President Camara in the presidential elections planned for January 2010. The junta had banned the demonstration.
- On 30 September, a soldier dragged a man along the main road in Bomboli before stabbing him to death. His body was left on the road.
- Also on 30 September, in the district of La Cimenterie, Conakry, soldiers wearing red berets, who were looking for an alleged opposition supporter, stabbed to death his 75-year-old mother.

Impunity

The security forces continued to enjoy impunity. A national commission of inquiry, set up in 2007 to investigate grave human rights violations in 2006 and 2007, did not conduct any investigations.

In October, the UN Secretary-General established an International Commission of Inquiry (ICI), endorsed by the AU and ECOWAS, to investigate the grave human rights violations, including rape, committed by Guinean security forces in September. In December, the ICI submitted its report to the UN Secretary-General. The report was not officially made public. The ICI found that it was reasonable to conclude that the crimes committed on 28 September and in the immediate aftermath may constitute crimes against humanity. It also concluded that there were sufficient grounds to attribute criminal responsibility to some individuals, including President Camara; Commander Moussa Tiégboro Camara, Minister of the Special Services responsible for combating drug trafficking and organized crime; and Lieutenant Aboubacar Chérif Diakité, the President's aide-de-camp and commander of his personal bodyguards.

In October, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) launched a preliminary examination to determine whether the violations of 28 September fell within the court's jurisdiction. The same month the junta set up a national commission of inquiry, which was boycotted by local civil society organizations.

Torture and other ill-treatment

Torture and other ill-treatment, including rape, sustained beatings and stabbings, were routinely committed by the security forces. Detainees were also held incommunicado at secret locations.

- Soldiers arrested in January (see below) were beaten upon their arrival in the military barracks on Kassa Island. They were undressed and were forced to lie down with their hands tied behind their back, and then trampled and beaten.
- People arrested after the September stadium massacre were tortured in secret detention. People searching for the bodies of their relatives or friends were

arrested and beaten in military camps.

Violence against women

Sexual violence, including rape, was prevalent, especially after 28 September.

- Dozens of women told Amnesty International that they had been raped in public on 28 September in the stadium by soldiers, including the Presidential Guard. Medical records from Conakry's Donka hospital indicated that at least 32 women protesters were raped. Several women who were arrested and transferred to a health centre after they had been raped were subsequently re-arrested. They were then held for five days, drugged and again raped by security forces.
- The body of a woman arrested on 28 September was returned to her family a few days later showing signs of sexual violence as well as burn marks from an iron.
- At least two women who testified before the ICI received death threats after the departure of the UN delegation in early December.

Human rights defenders

Well-established civil society groups, including the Guinean Human Rights Organization (Organisation Guinéenne des droits de l'homme, OGDH) and the National Council of Civil Society Organizations, continued to work for human rights, despite the risks, threats and intimidation.

Following the 28 September events, the OGDH was regularly attacked on the national radio and television.

- Mouctar Diallo, Vice-President of the Observatoire national des droits de l'homme (ONDH), Guinea's national human rights commission, was arrested on 26 November. He was held at the Alpha Yaya military barracks in Conakry before being transferred to the detention centre PM III (Poste militaire III). He was not charged or allowed a visit by a lawyer. The authorities informed Amnesty International that Mouctar Diallo was accused of a state security offence.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions

Dozens of people were arbitrarily arrested and detained. The number of people arrested on 28 September remained unknown.

- In January, at least 12 soldiers, including military officers, were arrested and held without charge at the Alpha Yaya military barracks. Most had worked for former President Lansana Conté. They were allowed some family visits but no access to a lawyer. In August, 11 were transferred to a detention centre on Kassa Island. The men were only wearing underwear and were tied with ropes. On Kassa, they were tortured and ill-treated (see above) and denied family visits. On 5 December, they were transferred to Conakry central prison and on 27 December to premises run by the security forces' Rapid Intervention Brigade. They had not been charged by the end of the year.
- Four soldiers, including military officers, were arrested in April and held on Kassa Island without charge until their release in December.
- In the run-up to the 28 September demonstration, members of the Autonomous Battalion of Airborne Troops were deployed in several districts of Conakry, including Bomboli, Hamdalaye, Mapoto and Enco 5. On 29 September, they raided Bomboli and arrested people in their homes and on the streets. They beat some of those they arrested and put them in the boots of vehicles.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression, particularly for journalists reporting on anti-government demonstrations or considered hostile by the CNDD, continued to be routinely restricted. Journalists working for private radio stations were intimidated and threatened; some adopted self-censorship by playing music to avoid raids.

- In August, Diarougba Baldé, a journalist with the Kibarou website, was arrested while covering a demonstration against the CNDD. He was released a few hours later.
- On 28 September, Moctar Bah and Amadou Diallo, respectively correspondents of the France-based RFI and the UK-based BBC radio stations, were threatened and assaulted by the security forces while covering a rally against the CNDD. Soldiers forced them to their knees in front of dead bodies. Their personal belongings were confiscated and their equipment was smashed.

Amnesty International visit/reports

- An Amnesty International delegation visited Guinea in November to carry out research and hold talks with the authorities.
- Guinea: What has happened to the civilians and soldiers of whom there is no news? (AFR 29/006/2009)
- Guinea: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review (AFR 29/007/2009)
- Guinea: Details of violence emerge – Amnesty calls for international commission of inquiry, 30 September 2009
- Guinea: Call for suspension of military and police weapons transfers, 8 October 2009
- Guinea: Evidence of new arrests, harassment and illegal detentions by security forces, 3 December 2009

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