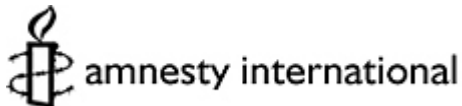


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Amnesty International Report 2009 - Guinea

Head of state: Moussa Dadis Camara (replaced Lansana Conté in December)

Head of government: Kabiné Komara (replaced Ahmed Tidiane Souaré in December, who replaced Lansana Kouyaté in May)

Death penalty: retentionist

Population: 9.6 million

Life expectancy: 54.8 years

Under-5 mortality (m/f): 163/144 per 1,000

Adult literacy: 29.5 per cent

There were protests against shortages in water and electricity, the rise in prices of basic commodities, and the lack of education and health care facilities. Security forces used excessive force against protesters. Revolts erupted, led by unpaid soldiers and police, and several civilians were killed in clashes between mutinous soldiers and presidential guards.

Torture and other ill-treatment continued to be widespread. The Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate grave human rights violations was not able to operate. Independent journalists were subject to intimidation, harassment and arbitrary arrest.

Background

President Lansana Conté, who had ruled Guinea for more than 24 years, died on 22 December. Immediately after his death, a military junta led by Moussa Dadis Camara seized power and promised to organize a presidential election in 2010. Under the Constitution, the President of the National Assembly assumes power until elections, to be held within 60 days. The coup was welcomed by most Guineans, including members of civil society, but was condemned by the international community, including the African Union which suspended Guinea. The military junta appointed Kabiné Komara as Prime Minister.

In May and June, armed revolts led by soldiers and police demanding payment erupted in the capital city of Conakry, in Nzérékoré and in Kindia. Mutinous soldiers clashed with presidential guards and soldiers detained the deputy army chief when he tried to negotiate. During the protests, several people were killed by stray bullets and dozens

were wounded. Most of the victims were civilians, including one woman in Kindia. No official inquiry was opened into the killings. In June, police demanding back pay fired into the air and took at least 10 police chiefs hostage. They were subsequently released.

Commission of Inquiry

The Commission of Inquiry set up in 2007 to investigate grave human rights violations committed in 2006 and 2007 did not conduct any investigations. In May, the Commission's President accused the government of freezing its financial support. In a statement at the UN in October, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions expressed concern at the lack of progress and the failure to assure funding or to put in place a witness protection mechanism. He stated that the situation had all the hallmarks of a Commission being used to distract attention and promote impunity.

Excessive use of force

The security forces used excessive force against demonstrators in and around Conakry and in Boké who were protesting against the high cost of basic commodities, including rice. At least five people were killed and around 20 injured after the security forces clamped down on demonstrations.

- In October, Abdoulaye Cissé, a 13-year-old boy, and one other person were killed by the security forces during demonstrations.
- Two people were killed and seven others were seriously injured when security forces broke up demonstrations in Mambya, near Kindia in October. The demonstrators were protesting against the lack of electricity, water, schools and health centres.
- In October, security forces extrajudicially executed one of the suspected organizers of demonstrations in Boké. Karamba Dramé, President of a youth group in Khoréra, near Boké, was shot dead in Khoréra by soldiers wearing red berets. They had come especially from Conakry, after they had identified him through his mobile phone.

No official inquiry was opened into the killings during the year.

Arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment

Torture and other ill-treatment continued to be widespread and systematic during and after arrests. In September and October, shortly after the demonstrations in Conakry and Boké, more than 10 people were arrested and held for a few days without charge. During their detention in Boké, the detainees were held in a tiny cell, surrounded by excrement and urine, and were lashed with rubber straps by soldiers. The detainees were forced to count, and if they made a mistake, to resume at zero. Aboubakar Fofana, a student, fell into a coma as a result of lashings by soldiers and was admitted to hospital in Boké.

Freedom of expression – the media

Independent journalists were subject to intimidation, harassment and arbitrary arrest. There were restrictions on freedom of speech and of the press, particularly when the authorities were criticized.

- In August, Lansana Babara Camara, a journalist with La Guinée Actuelle, a

privately owned newspaper, was assaulted by a member of the Autonomous Presidential Security Battalion while inquiring about a visit by President Conté to Kindia.

- In October, Facely Traoré, a reporter for Familia FM, a privately owned radio station, was arrested and briefly held in the police Criminal Investigation Department. The journalist was arrested while investigating the arrest of two policemen accused of stealing two bags of rice.

In October, the National Communication Council lifted all penalties on newspapers. The only newspaper banned at that time was La Vérité which had published an article critical of an unnamed government minister.

Death penalty

More than 26 prisoners remained on death row in Conakry civil prison and Kindia high security prison, east of Conakry.

Three people – Boubacar Sidy Diallo, Moustapha Bangoura and Naby Camara – were sentenced to death during the assize court session in Conakry in November and December.

In December, Guinea abstained on a UN General Assembly resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

Amnesty International reports

- Guinea: Excessive use of force and torture following demonstrations against the high cost of living (20 November 2008)

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