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Guinea

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Head of State	President Lansana Conté
Head of government	Lansana Kouyaté (replaced Eugène Camara in March)
Death penalty	retentionist
Population	9.8 million
Life expectancy	54.8 years
Under-5 mortality (m/f)	145/149 per 1,000
Adult literacy	29.5 per cent

Security forces used excessive force against demonstrators. Over one hundred demonstrators were killed; many more were injured. Women were raped by military. Arbitrary detention and killings by security forces were reported. Torture and other ill-treatment of protesters and detainees were widespread. Journalists were arbitrarily detained.

Background

Against the background of a serious economic crisis, Guinea's two principal trade unions, supported by the main opposition parties, called a general strike in January. Demonstrations to demand change were organized in main towns, paralysing the entire country.

President Lansana Conté, who took power in 1984 following a coup d'état, attempted to suppress the movement by force. Throughout January, at the beginning of the movement, members of the security forces shot at peaceful demonstrators, killing dozens of people and injuring others. Despite this use of force and the arrest of some civil society leaders and trade unionists, the general strike continued and in late January the trade unions demanded the appointment of a consensus government.

In February, President Conté appointed Eugène Camara as Prime Minister. This provoked widespread protest on the grounds that Eugène Camara was closely linked to the President.

Clashes between the demonstrators and the security forces increased and a state of emergency was declared on 12 February. On 24 February, President Conté asked the National Assembly to extend the state of emergency, but it refused. The general strike was suspended on 27 February. A new government was appointed on 28 March. It contained no members of political parties and was solely composed of people drawn from the civil society.

In May, members of the armed forces took to the streets in the capital, Conakry, and other towns, demonstrating and firing into the air. At least 13 people were killed and others were injured by stray bullets. The soldiers were demanding payment of outstanding wages and the dismissal of certain high-ranking members of the army. The latter demand was successful.

An Independent Commission of Inquiry was established in May "charged with conducting investigations into grave human rights violations and offences committed during the strikes of June 2006 and January and February 2007".

Police and security forces Killings

More than 135 people, the majority of them unarmed, were killed by members of the security forces during demonstrations calling for the resignation of the President. In several instances, the security forces aimed at the vital organs of demonstrators and shot people in the back as they fled. Some members of the security forces also prevented people helping injured demonstrators.

- Abdoulaye Diallo was one of several demonstrators shot in the back as they tried to escape when the

security forces charged at protesters in January.

- An 18-year-old student from Kindia was shot in the back during an organized demonstration in February as he tried to go to help someone who had been injured.

Arbitrary detention

Dozens of people, including demonstrators and employees of a private radio station, were arrested for short periods of time by the security forces during the general strike. Some were tortured in custody.

- In July, Sidibé Keita, a member of an opposition party, was arrested and held for over a month. He was released without charge or trial.
- In December, Lansana Komara, a member of the executive bureau of the Rally of the Guinean People (Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée, RPG) was held for more than five days at the presidential palace where he was reportedly tortured and hung upside-down from the ceiling. He was later transferred to the military barracks PM III where he remained held without charge at the end of the year.

Torture and other ill-treatment

- In the Timbo district of Kankan, a teacher aged about 60 was arrested in January in the courtyard of his compound. No reason was given for the arrest, during which he was beaten in front of several people including his children. At the military camp, he was pinned to the ground by four gendarmes while a fifth beat him with his baton.
- A member of the Union of the Guinean Youth was arrested twice in February. He was beaten with rifle butts and police officers walked on him and kicked him in the chest while he was handcuffed with both arms behind his back. Officers tied both his elbows behind his back, inserted a baton between his arms, pulling on it at regular intervals to increase the pain.

Violence against women

During the period of general strike, a number of women were raped by soldiers or by masked men in military clothes.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression came under attack throughout the year. Journalists faced politically motivated and arbitrary detention and imprisonment.

In January, the Minister of Information ordered all private and community radio stations not to broadcast any material on the general strike.

- In February, the presidential guards arrested two people working for the radio station FM Liberty and looted the broadcasting centre. The soldiers accused the radio station of carrying out interviews which were critical of President Conté.

One of the employees, David Camara, was arrested by members of the security forces who threatened to kill him and stubbed a cigarette out on his neck. He was unconditionally released after two days.

- In February, two radio stations, Familia FM and Radio Soleil, stopped broadcasting, reportedly after receiving anonymous threats.

In August, a court in Conakry handed down suspended prison sentences to two private newspaper directors in connection with articles alleging corruption by a former government minister.

Death penalty

In April, 23 prisoners held on death row in Conakry civil prison (maison centrale) and Kindia high-security prison, east of Conakry, stated that they had been tortured or ill-treated at the time of arrests and during the first days of detention. Several bore visible marks of beatings or of prolonged restraints with ropes.

In June, the Guinean Minister of Justice and Human Rights, gave assurances that the government was opposed to the death penalty and that people on death row would not be executed.

Amnesty International visit/reports



Amnesty International delegates visited Guinea in April and held talks with the authorities.



Guinea : The killings must stop immediately (AFR 29/001/2007)



Guinea : Fundamental freedoms must not be jeopardized by the state of siege (AFR 29/002/2007)



[Guinea : “Soldiers were shooting everywhere” \(AFR 29/003/2007\)](#)



[Guinea : Security forces still a threat \(AFR 29/004/2007\)](#)