



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

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## Summary

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

The junta appointed a civilian prime minister and has promised to hold presidential and legislative elections by late 2009. However, some observers fear that rivalries within the CNDD, Dadis Camara's lack of national leadership experience, and administrative and logistical challenges could indefinitely delay the transfer of power to a democratically elected civilian administration. Guinea has never undergone a democratic or constitutional transfer of power since gaining independence in 1958, and Dadis Camara is one of only three persons to occupy the presidency since that time. Dadis Camara has presented himself as a reformer who is leading a CNDD crackdown on corruption and international drug trafficking, both of which had grown significantly under Conté. Junta leaders also initially stated that large international corporate mineral concession contracts would be reviewed and potentially cancelled or reallocated, and several contracts were temporarily suspended.

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

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

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## **The Current Situation: Overview**

Guinea is a socio-economically impoverished but mineral-rich West African country, about the size of Oregon, that has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil. Issues of interest to Congress include stability and governance in West Africa; counter-narcotics in Guinea and neighboring countries; Guinea's natural resource wealth and extractive industries; and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>1</sup> Over the past two decades, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability in a sub-region that has witnessed multiple armed conflicts. Guineans entered a new period of political uncertainty on December 23, 2008, however, when a group of junior and mid-ranking military officers seized power a day after the death of longtime president and former military leader Lansana Conté. Conté had been ill for many years – reportedly a combination of diabetes, heart problems, and possibly leukemia – and rarely appeared in public.

The junta, calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD, after its French acronym), dissolved the legislature, banned political and trade union activity, and suspended the constitution. The junta spokesman, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, previously a relatively unknown figure, was subsequently named president, reportedly following a contentious debate among rival CNDD elements. Dadis Camara is the third person ever to occupy the presidency in Guinea since it became independent in 1958. The country has never undergone a democratic or constitutional transfer of state power since that date.<sup>2</sup>

On December 30, the CNDD appointed a civilian prime minister, Kabiné Komara, a banker and experienced financial technocrat, but he is perceived as wielding little decision-making power.<sup>3</sup> The junta has promised to hold presidential and legislative elections by late 2009. Some observers, however, fear that a lack of capacity in electoral organization, divisions within the CNDD, and junta members' possible unwillingness to leave power may delay or prevent the transfer of power to a democratically elected civilian administration. Dadis Camara, who presents himself as a reformer, has moved to crack down on corruption and international drug trafficking, both of which had grown significantly under Conté. While many Guineans and members of the international community agree that such reforms are needed, serious concerns have arisen over the CNDD's handling of these issues. Additional concerns have arisen over the junta's adherence to human rights norms and the rule of law.

## **International Reactions to the Coup**

Donors, including the European Union, the United Nations, France, and the United States, condemned the coup and called for elections and a return to civilian-led government. The regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) each suspended Guinea's membership in response to the coup d'état, but did not impose further

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<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on Guinea, focusing on governance, stability, and then-recent political protests.

<sup>2</sup> Guinea gained independence under the leadership of Ahmed Sékou Touré, a pan-Africanist and self-described revolutionary socialist. In April 1984, he was succeeded by Col. (later, General) Lansana Conté, who led a junta that took power in a coup d'état after Touré died while receiving medical treatment in the United States. See Appendix for background on Guinean history and politics.

<sup>3</sup> Agence France Presse (AFP), "Guinea: Military Junta Names Banker as new Prime Minister," December 30, 2008 via Open Source.

punitive measures, such as sanctions, on the CNDD or its members. An International Contact Group on Guinea was formed in January 2009; members include the ECOWAS Commission and Chair, the AU Commission and Chair of its Peace and Security Council, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the European Union, the Mano River Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of Francophonie, the U.N. Secretariat, and the permanent and African members of the U.N. Security Council (including the United States).<sup>4</sup> The International Contact Group has held several meetings in Conakry with the junta, civil society groups, and political parties, and has urged the CNDD to uphold its agreement to organize elections by the end of 2009. Guinea's foreign relations are discussed in further detail below.

## **U.S. Response to the Coup**

The United States condemned the coup and has repeatedly called for “a return to civilian rule and the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections as soon as possible”<sup>5</sup>; it does not recognize the CNDD as the legitimate government of Guinea. The Bush Administration announced in early January 2009 that the United States would suspend bilateral aid to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance, in line with congressional directives.<sup>6</sup> In practice, all security assistance has been suspended, while most development assistance and other non-military aid has been unaffected by the suspension. The United States also signaled its opposition to the junta by prohibiting the U.S. Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires from meeting personally with junta members. The restriction does not apply to other Embassy officials. In a digital video press conference in Conakry in late January 2009, Phillip Carter, then the State Department's Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and a previous U.S. ambassador to Guinea, warned that a failure to hold elections and restore civilian rule by year's end would “jeopardize the United States' long-term bilateral relationship with Guinea.”<sup>7</sup>

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

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and security; and socio-economic and institutional development.<sup>8</sup> Ensuring a transition to a democratically elected, civilian-led government is now the focus of U.S. governance concerns.

Counternarcotics issues are a relatively recent area of engagement, as Guinea, among other countries in the region, has emerged as a reported transshipment point for cocaine en route from South America to Europe. This development has implications for U.S. security interests, as some of the beneficiaries of this trade are believed by analysts to include South American drug

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<sup>4</sup> Commissions of the AU and ECOWAS, *Statement of the Consultative Meeting on the Situation in the Republic of Guinea*, January 30, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> *AFP*, “After Coup, U.S. Halts Aid to Guinea,” January 7, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) bars direct assistance “to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree,” with the exception of democracy promotion and humanitarian assistance. The provision is commonly referred to as “Section 508,” a reference to previous appropriations legislation.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Embassy News Digest, January 29, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> In 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing on Guinea, focusing on governance, stability, and then-recent political protests.

syndicates that are the target of U.S. military or law enforcement counternarcotics operations. Such organizations may include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a U.S.-designated terrorist entity. Drug trafficking also threatens to undermine U.S. foreign policy goals in Africa, such as the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, legitimate economic growth, state institution-building, and other foreign aid program goals set out in the U.S. Foreign Assistance Framework.

Guinea's extractive industry sector is of financial and strategic interest to the United States. In addition to gold, diamonds, uranium, and potential oil and gas reserves, Guinea possesses an estimated 27% or more of global reserves of bauxite, a key component of aluminum.<sup>9</sup> Guinea provided 16% of U.S. bauxite and alumina imports between 2004 and 2007,<sup>10</sup> and several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea. The large U.S.-based multinational aluminum firm Alcoa, for instance, is a major shareholder in the *Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee*, a bauxite mining and export partnership with the Guinean state, while the much smaller U.S. energy firm Hyperdynamics holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration.<sup>11</sup>

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

Guinea's relative stability has had several key implications for the United States. First, Guinea has not, to date, been the source of a significant challenge to U.S. international peace and security policies. This is notable in a region where U.S. diplomatic efforts and substantial humanitarian assistance have at times been devoted to ending or mitigating the effects of conflict. Second, Guinea has been able to act as a humanitarian partner to the United States by hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflicts in neighboring states. Guinea was also able to help prevent a regional spill-over of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia by repelling attacks on its territory by factions from Sierra Leone and Liberia backed by former President Charles Taylor of Liberia. Following these attacks, which took place in 2000 and 2001, the U.S. military trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger unit to shore up border security. At the same time, Guinean government policy has presented both confluences with and challenges to U.S. objectives in the region, in the form of Guinean intervention in the civil wars in Liberia and in Guinea-Bissau.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Geological Survey, *2009 Bauxite and Alumina Survey*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Further information on Alcoa is available at <http://www.alcoa.com/guinea/en/home.asp>; see Thomas Pearmain, "Hyperdynamics Divests of U.S. Oil Assets to Fund Guinea Operations," *Global Insight*, May 5, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Former President Conté's government hosted former Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah after he was deposed by a junta, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, in 1997. Guinea's government also reportedly permitted the Liberian anti-Taylor rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) to maintain rear bases in southern Guinea, supplied LURD with arms, and periodically provided tactical military assistance to it, such as cross-border mortar and helicopter air fire support. Guinea also intervened militarily in Guinea-Bissau's civil war in 1998 on behalf of the late former president, Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. On LURD, see CRS Report RL32243, (continued...)

Guinean socio-economic and state institutional development are also long-term U.S. policy objectives. Prior to the coup, Guinea was a recipient of U.S. bilateral aid, notably humanitarian assistance and funding for the promotion of democracy and good governance. In response to the coup, the United States suspended all bilateral assistance that did not fall into either of these latter categories, including military and counternarcotics assistance. U.S. policy issues and interests are covered in further detail elsewhere in this report.

## Background

Figure I. Map of Guinea



Lansana Conté, who came to power in a military coup in 1984, 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

(...continued)

*Liberia: Transition to Peace*, by Nicolas Cook.



decline in average living standards, the co-option of power by members of Conté's inner circle of businessmen and politicians, and increasing signs of public dissatisfaction. Guinea's health sector and national infrastructure are very poor, even by regional standards, and Guinean standards of living are among the worst in the world.<sup>13</sup> Conté's supporters, on the other hand, argued that his leadership prevented Guinea from experiencing the kind of armed civil conflict and political instability that have afflicted its neighbors. While Guinea held several general elections under Conté, democratic gains under his leadership were limited, and power remained concentrated in his hands. Further aspects of Conté's rule are discussed in the **Appendix**, which provides historical background on Guinea.

## **The Conté Regime: Final Years**

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

Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando parachutist unit (known as the BATA). Mutinous troops exchanged fire with members of the presidential guard, and several people were reportedly killed, and dozens wounded, by stray bullets.<sup>14</sup> After a week of unrest, Conté met with mutiny leaders, and the government agreed to pay salary arrears of \$1,100 to each soldier, sack the defense minister, and grant promotions to junior officers, ending the uprising.<sup>15</sup> Contrary to mutineers' demands, much of the top military hierarchy remained in place until Conté's death; they were subsequently dismissed by the CNDD, key members of which have claimed to have played key roles in the 2008 mutiny.<sup>16</sup>

Many analysts were concerned about the risk of ethnic or intra-military violence and instability, as well as the potential impact on Guinea's fragile neighbors, should Conté die in office. Others, however, argued that Guineans' historically strong sense of national identity and social cohesion meant that such a scenario was unlikely.<sup>17</sup> Under either scenario, it was widely agreed that the

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<sup>13</sup> See e.g. U.N. Development Program (UNDP), "Guinea: 2007/2008 Human Development Report," at [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_GIN.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_GIN.html).

<sup>14</sup> Kissy Agyeman, "Tension Mounts in Guinea in Wake of Army Revolt," *Global Insight*, May 29, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Saliou Samb, "Guinea Settles Army Pay Dispute With Mass Promotion," Reuters, June 14, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Claude Pivi, a CNDD member and junior officer who was promoted to Minister of Presidential Security in January 2009, styled himself the leader of the Camp Alpha Yaya mutiny. Pivi also led the crackdown on the police uprising, according to witnesses. After he became president, Dadis Camara stated he had played a key role in the mutiny and in the negotiations that ended it.

<sup>17</sup> Social Science Research Council (SSRC), *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 2.

National Assembly, judiciary, and opposition parties lacked sufficient cohesion, political power, or popular legitimacy to ensure a constitutional succession.<sup>18</sup> A post-Conté military coup was predicted by many observers, but it was unclear what military faction, if any, might prevail, as the armed forces were reportedly divided along ethnic and generational fault lines. It was also unclear whether a military seizure of power would permit a return to civilian rule and constitutional governance. International concerns over potential instability heightened with reports that trafficking activities were being facilitated or directly undertaken by highly placed government officials, members of the military, and Conté associates.

## **The December 2008 Coup**

By 2008, President Conté's death in office had been anticipated for several years, following his long struggle with illness. In the early hours of December 23, 2008, his death was announced on national television. Under Guinea's constitution, National Assembly Speaker Aboubacar Somparé should have assumed power as head of state, with presidential elections organized within 60 days. On television, Somparé – flanked by Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souaré and military chief of staff Gen. Diarra Camara – requested that the Supreme Court declare the presidency vacant and install Somparé as interim president.

Instead, within hours, a military junta calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) announced that it had taken power in a coup. In a communiqué broadcast on the national radio and television station, a junta spokesman, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, announced that the CNDD had “decided to end the agony of the Guinea people” by seizing power and aborting Somparé's constitutional succession.<sup>19</sup> The junta dissolved the constitution and the National Assembly, banned political and union activity, and promised elections within two years.

The coup leaders justified their decision to overthrow the government on the basis that Guinea's ruling elite had provided poor leadership. In the broadcast announcing the coup, Dadis Camara stated that the incumbent regime had permitted the systematic “embezzlement of public funds, general corruption, impunity established as method of government, and anarchy in the management of state affairs” leading to “a catastrophic economic situation.” He also cited as justification a pattern of national poverty, despite the existence of abundant natural resources, the rise of drug trafficking, and diverse other crimes and patterns of poor governance.<sup>20</sup>

It was initially unclear whether the CNDD represented the military as a whole, or merely a faction. In interviews with the international press, Somparé, Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, and military chief of staff Gen. Diarra Camara condemned the coup “attempt” and claimed the CNDD did not represent the majority of the armed forces.<sup>21</sup> Many feared that the

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<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the National Assembly had arguably played the role of a vital check on executive power in February 2007, when legislators refused to extend a military state of siege that had provided cover for a massive crackdown on anti-government demonstrators.

<sup>19</sup> CNDD, “Communiqué Numéro 1,” Radio-Télévision Guinéenne (RTG), December 23, 2008; see “Guinea” Army Dissolves Cabinet, Suspends Constitution After President's Death,” [statement by the Guinean army], Conakry Radio Guinée Internationale, December 23, 2008 via Open Source.

<sup>20</sup> “Guinea: Army Dissolves Cabinet...” via Open Source.

<sup>21</sup> International television and radio interviews monitored by Arieff in Conakry.

standoff between the two factions could escalate into violence.<sup>22</sup> Instead, on the afternoon of December 24, reportedly following tense internal negotiations, the CNDD announced that the junta spokesman Dadis Camara had been chosen as president.<sup>23</sup> Dadis Camara paraded into downtown Conakry, where he was greeted by cheering crowds. Guineans' positive response to the CNDD appeared to be due to widespread dissatisfaction with Somparé, senior military staff, and other figures seen as representing the Conté era, along with relief that the coup had been carried out without bloodshed.<sup>24</sup> Many Guineans also viewed the incumbent government as lacking legitimacy.<sup>25</sup> In a television broadcast on December 25, Prime Minister Souaré and members of his cabinet, along with the military chief of staff, pledged to support the junta.

## The CNDD

As of early 2009, the CNDD had 33 members, including 6 civilians. Military members were drawn mainly from the Army. The CNDD's composition is multi-ethnic, but key posts appear split between ethnic Malinké and *Forestiers*, a collective term for members of several small ethnic groups based in southeast Guinea.<sup>26</sup> Many believe that several military factions had envisioned carrying out a coup upon Conté's death, and that CNDD leaders were able to unite these factions through negotiation and promises of patronage. While the coup initially united several disparate elements of the military, many believe the junta could be susceptible to violent purges or a countercoup.<sup>27</sup> The junta's stability appears to rest on a precarious balance of power among its key members. In particular, the relationship between Dadis Camara and Defense Minister Sékouba Konaté is a source of frequent speculation among Guineans and members of the diplomatic community.<sup>28</sup> Konaté, one of the most powerful military officers in Guinea at the time of the coup (as commander of the elite BATA airborne commando unit), was not included in the initial list of CNDD members that was broadcast on the evening of December 23, which some interpret as evidence of tense negotiations during the coup.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Witnesses suggested that the CNDD controlled Camp Alpha Yaya (Conakry's largest military base) and the main Radio-Télévision Guinéenne (RTG) offices, while "loyalist" soldiers who did not support the coup initially retained control of Camp Almamy Samory Touré (where the senior military leadership was based) and a subsidiary RTG station. On December 24, the CNDD accused the former government of importing mercenaries in a bid to regain power. (The claim did not appear to be borne out by events.)

<sup>23</sup> RFI, "Guinean Putschists Said Still Debating Choice of Leader," December 23, 2008 and AFP, "Guinea: Analysts Say Divisions Within Military Explain Attempted Coup," December 23, 2008, via Open Source.

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

<sup>25</sup> In explaining their aversion to a constitutional succession led by Somparé, many pointed out that the National Assembly's five-year mandate had expired in late 2007, and that the constitution had been amended in 2001 in a disputed referendum. For a critical analysis of this argument, see SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 2-3.

<sup>26</sup> SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 11; SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 4.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Cheikh Yérim Seck, "Jusqu'ou' Ira Sékouba Konaté?," *Jeune Afrique*, March 8-14, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Arieff monitoring of Radio-Télévision Guinéenne broadcasts, December 23, 2008.

### **Moussa Dadis Camara: Profile**

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

### **Centralization of Power**

Upon taking power, the CNDD immediately took steps to assert its authority, for instance by suspending civilian regional administrators and replacing them with military commanders. As the main public face of the CNDD, Dadis Camara has further sought to centralize power and neutralize potential opposition, both to the CNDD and to his dominant leadership within it. As previously noted, the CNDD-appointed civilian prime minister, Kabiné Komara, is viewed as having little decision-making power, and CNDD members directly control key government functions. Komara's cabinet was named in January 2009 by presidential decree, with 10 of 29 cabinet posts held by military officers, most CNDD members.<sup>30</sup> Many lack experience in public affairs. The CNDD also created several new ministerial-level positions and appointed members of the military or close civilian associates to fill them. Several key ministries, including security, defense, and finance, and the governor of the Central Bank, have been attached to the presidency.

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

Many analysts contend that Dadis Camara's actions since the coup are intended to “exert strong executive powers.”<sup>31</sup> However, this has raised concerns that “a CNDD belief that it alone can solve the country's myriad problems” may overestimate the CNDD's technical and leadership capacities, and may not reflect the needs and demands of the population.<sup>32</sup> Supporters have argued that “the pitiful state of the country called for an iron hand able to turn things around.”<sup>33</sup>

In some cases, the CNDD has responded to demands for broad public input into the transition process. For example, the electoral calendar was proposed by a broad coalition of political parties and civil society groups and is supported by international donors. At the same time, doubts have arisen over the CNDD's willingness to stand by its commitments, particularly with regard to delegating government functions to civilians and organizing elections according to schedule.

<sup>30</sup> *Guineenews*, “La Liste Complète des Membres du Gouvernement de Kabiné Komara,” January 14, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Country Report: Guinea*, March 2009: 13.

<sup>32</sup> International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 8.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Cote (Guinea Chief of Party for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems [IFES]), “Guinea's Opportunity,” March 24, 2009, <http://www.ifes.org>.

## Counter-Narcotics Efforts

The CNDD has initiated populist moves to crack down on corruption and drug trafficking. These measures appear designed to signal a break with the Conté regime, enhance the junta's popularity, and respond to international and domestic concerns that Guinea, among other countries in the region, had become a transshipment hub for cocaine en route from Latin America to Europe during the final years of the Conté regime. CNDD actions appear to rely on the “naming and shaming” of alleged wrongdoers, rather than advancing institutional reform. At least 20 high-profile individuals, including top Conté officials, senior police officers, the former chief of the armed forces, and a son and brother-in-law of the late president have been arrested since February on drug trafficking allegations.<sup>34</sup> Dadis Camara personally interrogated alleged traffickers on national television, in some cases eliciting detailed “confessions.” Many international observers and Guineans have welcomed the attempt to pursue powerful figures in the former regime. However, concerns have arisen over a lack of due process in these cases, and some of the arrests appear to have been politically selective. Few members of the military have been pursued, despite indications of involvement by members of the military in the drug business.<sup>35</sup> Dadis Camara has promised that accused drug traffickers will receive a fair trial. This may prove difficult, however, given corruption and a lack of capacity among the Guinean judiciary and the fact that many of those accused have already been prompted to confess to crimes on television.

CNDD anti-drug efforts have concentrated power in the presidency and sidelined civilian-led anti-drug agencies in favor of the military.<sup>36</sup> The CNDD created a new presidentially-controlled agency, the State Secretariat for Special Services, to curb drug and human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime. It is headed by an active-duty military officer, Capt. Moussa Tiegboro Camara (no relation to Dadis Camara). While issues targeted by the Secretariat are of concern to international policy makers, the new agency's legal mandate and authorities have not been clearly defined, and the CNDD has not publicly outlined how the agency is meant to interact with the judiciary or police.<sup>37</sup> Tiegboro Camara reportedly relies on a corps of gendarmes and soldiers for enforcement.<sup>38</sup> This has raised due process and human rights concerns, and some military elements participating in anti-drug efforts have been accused of abuses of power.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Conté's son Ousmane, a military officer, admitted to involvement in trafficking, but denied being a “kingpin.” See Rukmini Callimachi, “In TV confessions, curtain lifted on a narcostate,” Associated Press (AP), March 14, 2009; AFP, “Son of Guinea's late president confesses to drugs trafficking,” February 26, 2009; Amadou Toure, “Society: ‘Biggest’ drug trafficker's presence in Conakry: Police DG gives ‘orders’,” *Guineenews*, May 5, 2007 via BBC Monitoring Africa; AP, “20 Indicted on Drug Charges in Guinea,” June 13, 2009, among others.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Claude Pivi – now Minister for Presidential Security – is widely believed to have connections to the drug trade, but has not been cited as part of the crackdown. E.g. *Guinée58*, “La Justice Show du Jurisconsulte Dadis,” February 25, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> The police anti-narcotics bureau, known as OCAD, was criticized in the past for being allegedly infiltrated by drug traffickers. However, the agency's track record reportedly improved after a new director was appointed in late 2008.

<sup>37</sup> In June, Tiegboro Camara reportedly called on the Guinean population to “burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed,” noting that prisons were already overcrowded. Reuters, “Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief,” June 2, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Rein in Soldiers,” April 27, 2009.

## Anti-Corruption Efforts

The CNDD has taken a number of populist measures designed to portray the junta as a break with the Conté government. In particular, the CNDD has announced it will review the mining code and all current mining and prospecting licenses, conduct an audit of the Conté government and all foreign companies operating in Guinea, and initiate the privatization of water, energy, and telecommunications firms.<sup>40</sup> The judiciary has not played a lead role in anti-corruption initiatives under the CNDD, which has so far emphasized making an example of high profile figures from Conté's administration rather than initiating institutional reform.

Starting in January, the CNDD established a committee to audit firms and individuals accused of having embezzled public funds, dodged tax payments, or entered into corrupt government contracts under Conté. The committee, headed by Defense Minister Sékouba Konaté, has questioned mining and telecommunications executives, government contractors, businessmen, and former government officials. Some of the accused were publicly interrogated on national television, including by Dadis Camara himself. Several had previously been cited during audits of public institutions carried out by former Prime Minister Lansana Kouyaté, who headed the government between February 2007 and May 2008.<sup>41</sup> Many Guineans welcomed the audits as an attempt to reign in corruption. At the same time, some have expressed concern that the audits are extra-judicial and could be politically motivated or extortionary.<sup>42</sup>

## Mining Sector Reform

Guinea's economy relies heavily on primary commodity exports, notably bauxite (used to produce aluminum), gold, diamonds, uranium, and iron ore. Guinea is thought to have the world's largest bauxite reserves, and joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations have historically provided about 80% of Guinea's foreign exchange.<sup>43</sup> Soon after seizing power, the CNDD said it would revise the mining code, renegotiate mining contracts, and crack down in corruption in the mining sector.<sup>44</sup> In March, the CNDD auditing committee accused four former mining ministers of embezzling millions of dollars from the Guinean state. The former ministers were detained for several days after appearing before the committee; they were released only after agreeing to repay allegedly stolen funds.<sup>45</sup> The CNDD has reportedly stated it hopes to recover an additional \$100 million in back-taxes from mining companies.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Oxford Analytica, "Guinea: Junta under conflicting transition pressures," April 9, 2009. In Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perception Index, Guinea placed 173 out of 180 countries.

<sup>41</sup> Kouyaté was appointed as a reformist to stem nationwide anti-government protests in January-February 2007. See Appendix for further background.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. *Aminata.com*, "Les Audits à la Guinéenne: De la parade tout trouvée aux inquiétantes maladresses," February 2, 2009. The International Crisis Group expressed concern that "the process is more about getting hard cash for the new regime than re-introducing the rule of law." *The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 6.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Guinea." The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinea (CBG) is a joint venture in which 49% of the shares are owned by the Guinean Government and 51% by an international consortium led by Alcoa and Rio Tinto-Alcan.

<sup>44</sup> A revision of mining contracts had been initiated shortly before Conté's death with the help of international financial institutions, though no results were publicly announced.

<sup>45</sup> The African Union expressed concern over the apparently extra-judicial nature of the arrests. Saliou Samb, "Guinea Ex-Ministers Freed, Say Will Repay Cash," Reuters, April 1, 2009; AFP, "African Union Expresses Concern Over Arrests," March 26, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> *GuinéeActu*, "Audit des Sociétés Minières en Guinée: L'Etat compte recouvrir plus de 500 milliards GNF," March (continued...)

Dadis Camara has appeared at times to take unpredictable actions related to mining oversight, such as publicly threatening to close or take over various mining projects. He has also forced several mining projects to close down for days or weeks at a time. These actions have reportedly sparked fears among international investors concerned for the security of their assets.<sup>47</sup> Analysts contend that a global fall in primary commodity prices and a decrease in funding available for foreign direct investment have weakened the junta's bargaining position, causing some firms to consider withdrawing entirely from Guinea.<sup>48</sup> Recent reports suggest the CNDD may attempt to ease investor fears, though the junta reportedly "has minimal experience or technical capacity to review contracts with some of the world's largest mining firms."<sup>49</sup>

## Human Rights and Rule of Law

Upon Conté's death, one veteran observer noted that "the army that General Conté has bequeathed his country knows little of the role and methods that it would need to employ in a democratic state respectful of its citizens' most basic rights."<sup>50</sup> Since the coup, human rights advocates and members of the international community have expressed growing concern over violations of human rights and the rule of law, including arbitrary arrests and detentions.<sup>51</sup> Military officers accused of plotting against the CNDD and officials accused of corruption or involvement in drug trafficking have been detained without charge. Security forces have been accused of looting private homes and businesses in Conakry, as well as other abuses of power. Human Rights Watch reported in April that "soldiers in groups numbering up to 20 have raided offices, shops, warehouses, medical clinics, and homes in broad daylight as well as at night... [and] have stolen cars, computers, generators, medicines, jewelry, cash, mobile phones, and large quantities of wholesale and retail merchandise, among other items."<sup>52</sup> Victims include both Guineans and foreigners.

In separate incidents, soldiers raided the homes of a political party leader, Cellou Dalein Diallo (in January 2009) and a prominent trade union activist, Rabiadou Sera Diallo (in March). In the former case, the CNDD claimed that the raid was carried out by rogue soldiers; in the second, the CNDD contended that the raid was carried out during a routine anti-drug operation.<sup>53</sup> In May, in an apparent response to criticism by Human Rights Watch and others, Dadis Camara promised security sector reform and ordered hundreds of soldiers to publicly commit to ending criminal behavior.<sup>54</sup> However, it is unclear that these statements have had an impact on military behavior.

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<sup>47</sup> EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 16; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Ruler Worries Miners," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Saliou Samb, "Aluminium Slump Adds to Guinea Woes After Coup," Reuters, February 20, 2009; Ougna Camara, "La Révision des Conventions Pourrait Nuire au Secteur Minier Guinéen," *Les Afriques*, March 4, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Oxford Analytica, "Guinea: Government softens stance toward miners," May 1, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> Gilles Yabi, "Le Pire Cadeau Empoisonné de Conté à Son Pays: Une armée à la fois dangereuse et incontournable," *AllAfrica.com*, January 7, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. International Contact Group on Guinea, "Communiqué," June 19, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> HRW, "Guinea: Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009.

<sup>53</sup> *Guineeactu.com*, "Perquisition Chez la SG de la CNTG : Le Capitaine Tiègboro et Raby s'expliquent," March 5, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Saliou Samb, "Guinea Soldiers Vow En Masse to End Crime Wave," Reuters, April 29, 2009; Saliou Samb, "Guinea (continued...)"

The CNDD has created several new agencies with undefined legal mandates, and has appeared to sideline the role of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law. The formation of a State Secretariat in Charge of Disputes sparked protests by human rights advocates and a strike by members of the Guinean bar association, which contended that “citizens and lawyers are regularly summoned to the military base... where they appear before the Secretariat or before the president in person as part of ostensibly judicial procedures.” Bar members termed these proceedings “pseudo-trials.”<sup>55</sup> The Secretariat was abolished in June, in apparent response to such criticisms. Advocates have also raised concerns over an apparent rise in vigilante attacks, particularly after the head of the newly created State Secretariat for Special Services called on the Guinean population to “burn all armed bandits who are caught red-handed,” noting that prisons were already overcrowded.<sup>56</sup>

### **Alleged Abuses by CNDD Members During Conté's Presidency**

Guinean and international advocates believe some CNDD members may have been responsible for human rights abuses under Conté. These include individuals who were in a position of command responsibility during nationwide anti-government protests in January and February 2007, when Guinean security forces allegedly opened fire on demonstrators and committed other serious abuses against civilians.<sup>57</sup> Dadis Camara promised to revive an official inquiry into alleged abuses by security forces during the protests, which stagnated under Conté; however, little progress appears to have been made.

The inclusion of Claude Pivi in the CNDD, and his promotion in January to Minister for Presidential Security, has provoked particular concern. Pivi rose to national prominence in May 2008, when he portrayed himself as the leader of a mutiny by junior army officers. He is a widely feared figure in Conakry, and is believed by many to have personally overseen the reported killing of police officers in June 2008 (during a military-led crackdown on a police mutiny in Conakry) and the torture of a group of civilians the following November.<sup>58</sup> Pivi is also believed by many Guineans and some members of the diplomatic community to have ties to the drug trade.

### **Press Freedom**

Guinea's media are relatively diverse, and represent a variety of views. However, local media outlets are largely concentrated in Conakry: newspapers rarely circulate outside the capital, most private FM radio stations have a small broadcast radius, and internet access is confined to urban

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Junta Chief Says to Reform Army, Seeks Help,” Reuters, May 10, 2009.

<sup>55</sup> AFP, “Guinée: ‘Graves violations des droits de l’Homme’ (ordre des avocats),” May 15, 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Reuters, “Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief,” June 2, 2009.

<sup>57</sup> See HRW, “Guinea: Plan Elections and Hold Rights Abusers Accountable,” January 21, 2009. An investigation by a coalition of local human rights organizations concluded that 186 people were killed and over a thousand injured during the protests. In addition, human rights activists allege that security forces engaged in arbitrary arrests, mistreatment of detainees, and rape. See Coalition Pour la Défense des Victimes des Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les Violations Commises en République de Guinée Pendant les Evénements de Janvier et Février 2007*, November 2007; and HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> In November 2008, Pivi reportedly ordered the torture of several Cameroonian nationals whom he claimed had damaged his car; the incident was reported in the Guinean press and by members of the diplomatic community.



centers. Adult literacy is under 30%.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, much of the population has access to shortwave radio, including international news broadcasts focusing on Africa. The CNDD tightly controls the national television station – the only locally broadcast channel – which often airs hours of footage of Dadis Camara at a time. State-owned media have reportedly been barred from covering political party activities.<sup>60</sup> While there have been few overt attempts to restrict the private press since the coup, local journalists report widespread self-censorship and a lack of access to official information. Dadis Camara has appealed to local journalists to “support” the CNDD, and is said to have offered money in exchange for favorable coverage. Many journalists fear retaliation by Presidential Security Minister Claude Pivi, who reportedly harassed and threatened several local journalists prior to Conté’s death for critical coverage.<sup>61</sup>

## Transition Process

The CNDD has committed to overseeing democratic elections and a transition to civilian power. In March, the CNDD publicly announced its acceptance of a timetable for national elections recommended by a coalition of political parties and civil society groups. At the same time, some believe the junta’s centralization of power and certain actions by Dadis Camara could indicate an unwillingness to leave power.

## Elections Preparations and Timeline

Legislative and presidential elections are slated to take place, respectively, in October and December 2009. The International Contact Group on Guinea has urged the junta to abide by this timetable, which was proposed by a broad coalition of political parties and civil society groups.<sup>62</sup> The Obama Administration has expressed support for these planned elections; in its *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, the Administration stated that “for the first time ever, Guinea has the opportunity to hold credible elections,” and that “despite deteriorating political conditions, the United States sees reason for hope.”<sup>63</sup>

The total budget for legislative and presidential elections is projected to be over \$38 million dollars. As of early July 2009, the United States had pledged \$5.3 million, the largest single contribution. Other pledges have come from the European Union, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. In late June, after the International Contact Group on Guinea criticized the CNDD for failing to provide promised funds, the Guinean government disbursed the equivalent of \$3 million toward the electoral process. The total projected contribution of the Guinean Government is approximately \$9 million. A significant funding shortfall nevertheless continues to exist.<sup>64</sup>

Some Guineans and international observers are concerned that elections may be delayed due to a lack of administrative capacity and a possible unwillingness by some junta members to leave power. Many also fear that the CNDD could seek to influence the outcome of elections and that

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<sup>59</sup> CIA World Factbook.

<sup>60</sup> AFP, “Guinée: Un meeting d’un parti d’opposition empêché dans l’Est,” June 18, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Guinean media analyst, June 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Reports suggest that Guinean political leaders are nevertheless divided as to the appropriate length of the transition.

<sup>63</sup> *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, May 2009.

<sup>64</sup> As of early July, donor pledges totaled just over \$12.76 million. Information provided by USAID, July 6, 2009.

the military “may try to maintain its influence over the country’s political system.”<sup>65</sup> Dadis Camara has at times publicly suggested he may campaign for president or seek to delay elections. In early June, the head of the military reportedly declared on television that Guinea was not ready for presidential elections and that “the people” wanted the vote delayed. Soon after, Dadis Camara acknowledged that preparations were behind schedule and appeared to question the agreed-upon timetable.<sup>66</sup> In response, the coalition of Guinean political parties and civil society groups refused to attend a meeting convened by Dadis Camara and sharply criticized a “considerable delay” in election preparations.<sup>67</sup>

The organization of elections is being overseen by the Ministry for Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). However, these agencies’ mandates remain unclear.<sup>68</sup> Voter registration and the revision of voting lists, processes that had begun before Conté’s death, were ongoing at the time of writing. Plans to create a “National Transition Council” (CNT) to oversee constitutional and legal reforms in the lead-up to elections have stalled.<sup>69</sup> Constitutional revisions are expected to be passed either by presidential decree or via a referendum, which could further delay the time-table for elections.

## **Parties and Candidates**

Conté’s political party, the Party for Unity and Progress (PUP), fractured following the president’s death, and it is not expected to garner significant support in a popular vote. Parties expected to compete in elections include a handful of former opposition parties as well as dozens of new parties formed after Conté’s death. Even long established parties are generally perceived as having an ethnic or regional base, and as having little organizational capacity beyond their leaders’ recognition. These leaders’ electoral potential is difficult to assess, since Conté ran essentially unopposed in Guinea’s most recent presidential election, in 2003, amid an opposition boycott. Since the CNDD takeover, several youth groups have emerged in support of Dadis Camara. Some believe these groups may represent a CNDD strategy to overpower traditional political parties and foster the impression of broad popular support for Dadis Camara to remain in power. It is unclear what role, if any, such organizations may play in an electoral campaign.

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

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<sup>65</sup> EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, March 2009: 15.

<sup>66</sup> French Foreign Affairs Ministry, “Guinée: Point de presse du porte-parole du Quai d’Orsay,” June 18, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> AFP, “Guinée: 6 mois après le putsch, ‘la transition dans l’impasse,’ (partis et syndicats),” June 22, 2009. International Contact Group on Guinea, “Communiqué,” June 19, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Arieff interview with Guinea elections expert, May 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Many local politicians and civil society groups had supported the formation of a transitional legislature. In April, the CNDD issued a decree establishing a 117-member CNT drawn from political parties, unions, civil society, and security forces. Under the decree, the CNT was vested with only consultative powers and was made formally subordinate to the CNDD. Due to protests by civil society and political parties, the CNDD agreed to revise the CNT’s structure and mandate. In its June 19 statement, the International Contact Group criticized the failure to establish a CNT.

## Economic Issues

Guinea has significant mineral resources, including gold, diamonds, uranium, and an estimated 27% or more of global bauxite (aluminum ore) reserves. Guinea may also have oil and gas reserves, and has significant hydro-electric and agricultural potential. Prior to the coup, Guinea's natural resources sector was set to expand, partly in response to increasing global commodity prices. In early December 2008, the African Development Bank had announced the approval of a \$200 million loan to partly finance a \$6.3 billion bauxite mining and alumina refinery project in Guinea. The project was reportedly expected to be the largest ever investment in the country.<sup>70</sup> However, the global economic crisis, perceived political instability, and populist threats by the junta to close or seize corporate mining projects are reportedly causing mining investment projects to be delayed or canceled.<sup>71</sup> The future of a \$6 billion iron ore project, operated by the multi-national company Rio Tinto, is also uncertain.<sup>72</sup>

As previously noted, several U.S.-based firms operate in Guinea, notably Alcoa, which owns a 45% share of a partnership that is the majority shareholder in the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee (CBG), which is co-owned by the government of Guinea. CBG mines bauxite in Guinea's southwest and operates a port for drying and shipping bauxite to refineries outside the country.<sup>73</sup> The smaller U.S.-based energy company Hyperdynamics holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration, though recent reports indicate competition over exploration licenses is increasing.<sup>74</sup> The CNDD has not publicly altered any mining agreements with U.S.-based firms to date. However, it has reportedly threatened in one instance to review the concession rights of a U.S.-based company – Global Alumina – unless a planned alumina refinery is completed.<sup>75</sup>

## Socio-Economic Conditions

Despite its resources, living standards in Guinea are among the worst in the world.<sup>76</sup> Access to running water and electricity is rare, even in Conakry and other urban centers. The World Health Organization lists Guinea as a “country under surveillance” with respect to possible complex humanitarian emergency needs.<sup>77</sup> According to figures released by the United Nations in May 2009, the rate of chronic malnutrition increased over the last two years, from 34.8% to 36.2%;

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<sup>70</sup> EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 17.

<sup>71</sup> EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, June 2009; Lydia Polgreen, “As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

<sup>72</sup> The Conté administration had previously challenged Rio Tinto's control over the venture by unilaterally awarding the northern half of the concession to BSG Resources Guinea. Neil Ford, “Junta Uncertainty Clouds Guinea Mining Sector,” *African Business*, February 1, 2009; Andrea Hotter, “Guinea Mulls Independent Simandou Inquiry: Rio,” *Dow Jones Newswires*, March 5, 2009.

<sup>73</sup> More information is available at <http://www.alcoa.com/guinea/en/home.asp>.

<sup>74</sup> Gene Kliwer, “Guinea Exploration Under Way in Earnest,” *Offshore*, June 2008; *Africa Energy Intelligence*, “Guinea: Madison on Lookout for Projects,” February 11, 2009.

<sup>75</sup> EIU, “Guinea Industry: Captain Camara takes action against mining companies,” June 1, 2009. More information on Global Alumina's operations in Guinea is available at [http://www.globalalumina.com/about\\_overview.php](http://www.globalalumina.com/about_overview.php).

<sup>76</sup> U.N. Development Program statistics at [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_GIN.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_GIN.html).

<sup>77</sup> World Health Organization, *Africa Weekly Emergency Situation Update*, March 23, 2009.

8.3% of Guinean children are thought to suffer from serious malnutrition.<sup>78</sup> The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.6%.<sup>79</sup>

The CNDD has promised to improve living conditions. However, reports suggest government finances have been depleted due to corruption and mismanagement, a drop in the collection of import duties, the recent fall in mineral commodity prices, and the freezing of some foreign aid.<sup>80</sup> Most observers project that state revenues will further decline in the near future, due to the global economic crisis and a decrease since 2008 in bauxite revenues, on which Guinea's economy depends. Poor living conditions helped spark nationwide anti-government protests in 2007, and some analysts fear that the perception of continued economic decline could lead to further unrest.

## **The Impact of the Coup on Guinea's Foreign Relations**

Guinea is a member of regional bodies including the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Mano River Union (a sub-regional grouping), and the Sahelo-Saharan regional grouping CEN-SAD. Major donor countries, along with regional organizations, the United Nations, and the European Commission, publicly condemned the coup and called for elections and a return to civilian-led government. As discussed above, an International Contact Group on Guinea has been formed, including representatives of regional and international organizations. The Contact Group has held several meetings in Conakry with members of the junta, civil society groups, and political parties, at which it has urged the CNDD to uphold its agreement to organize elections by the end of 2009.

### **Regional Reactions**

ECOWAS and the AU, both of which have policies against accepting non-constitutional changes of power, condemned the coup and suspended Guinea's membership in their organizations, though neither has moved to impose sanctions.<sup>81</sup> Neighboring governments have been cautious in responding to the coup, particularly as some fear that instability in Guinea could destabilize their own countries. At the same time, Libyan leader Muammar al Qadhafi — who currently chairs the AU — and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade have publicly argued that the CNDD should be recognized and supported by the international community.<sup>82</sup> The CNDD has engaged in

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<sup>78</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Information Bulletin May 2009*.

<sup>79</sup> CIA World Factbook.

<sup>80</sup> EIU, "Guinea Economy: Government faces fiscal crisis," June 1, 2009. The EIU has elsewhere noted that "the poor quality of fiscal reporting in Guinea makes it difficult to estimate the size of the fiscal deficit" (EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 8).

<sup>81</sup> ECOWAS Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance, December 2001, Article 1(b) and (c); and Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4(p).

<sup>82</sup> Qadhafi was appointed head of the AU for 2009. Wade praised the "bloodless" nature of the CNDD coup, and called on the junta to organize democratic elections. AFP, "Guinée: Le Président Wade réaffirme, depuis Conakry, son soutien à la junte," January 7, 2009; *Africa Energy Intelligence*, "Kadhafi Soutient les Putschistes," January 28, 2009. See also WANEP, *Transitional Crisis in Guinea; Coup d'Etat: Its Inevitability, Legitimizing Factors & Lessons for Africa*, December 28, 2008: 5-8.

diplomatic outreach to neighboring states, and has claimed to receive private reassurances of support from regional leaders.<sup>83</sup>

## **Impact on Donor Relations**

Major donors include the United States, France, and the EU. As of early July, the United States, Japan, the EU, France, Germany, and Spain had pledged financial support for Guinea's elections. Many donors do not recognize the CNDD, and some, including the United States and the EU, have suspended selected assistance to the Guinean government pending democratic elections.<sup>84</sup> In February 2009, the European Commission stated of its assistance programs to Guinea that "[n]ew contracts are, in principle, only signed for humanitarian aid, aid benefiting directly the population and measures in support of the transition process," and initiated consultations with Guinea under the framework of Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement to "determine the appropriate measures to be taken as far as cooperation is concerned."<sup>85</sup>

France, Guinea's former colonial power, has continued bilateral aid to the Guinean government, while calling for elections to be held as soon as possible. French aid includes a 2006-2010 bilateral development assistance program worth €100 million (\$140.7 million) and a military cooperation program worth €400,000 (\$563,000) over the same period, in addition to programs related to agriculture and food security, education, water and sanitation, and governance.<sup>86</sup> China has reportedly backed away from expected funding for major infrastructure projects, due to the global economic slowdown as well as perceived political instability in Guinea.<sup>87</sup>

## **Multilateral Assistance**

Development assistance and anti-poverty programs administered by multilateral organizations have been affected by the coup. Following the coup, the World Bank stopped disbursing loans designated for programs related to health, transportation, education, and other sectors, leaving \$200 million in outstanding loans, while awaiting further assessment of whether disbursements may continue.<sup>88</sup> The International Monetary Fund-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was due to provide additional government financing in 2009, has not advanced since Conté's death.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, in May 2009, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

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<sup>83</sup> Saliou Samb, "Guinea Junta Woos Neighbours to Avoid Isolation," Reuters, December 31, 2008.

<sup>84</sup> *EU Business*, "EU Imposes Aid Conditions on Guinea Junta," March 16, 2009. The EU initially stated it would not suspend aid; see U.N. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "Guinea: Regional, international condemnation spreads," January 12, 2009.

<sup>85</sup> European Commission, "Answer given by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission," E-0219/09EN, February 2, 2009. The Cotonou Partnerships Agreement, which governs relations between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), requires that signatories respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and thus places political conditions on development cooperation. Article 96 of the Agreement provides for a process of consultations between signatories when one party asserts that these requirements are not being met.

<sup>86</sup> A French government official who spoke to CRS stated that bilateral disbursements to the Guinean government had not been disrupted, but that France was closely monitoring how funds were spent.

<sup>87</sup> Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> 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>89</sup> The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing (continued...)

allocated a first tranche of \$6 million in support of programs in Guinea.<sup>90</sup> The United States does not contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

## **U.S. Assistance and Policy Issues**

As previously discussed, the United States condemned the CNDD coup and suspended all U.S. bilateral assistance to Guinea, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance, in line with congressional directives.<sup>91</sup> While most programs that require working directly with central government agencies are subject to the aid suspension, a few are not; exceptions include some health and education projects. Programs that involve working with district and municipal administrators who were elected in 2005 local elections are likewise exempt; the United States held that these elections, “though flawed, were Guinea’s best-conducted elections ever.”<sup>92</sup>

U.S. officials have indicated that free and fair elections must take place in order for the aid suspension – which affects some development and all security assistance – to be lifted. At the same time, the Obama Administration has stated that “despite deteriorating political conditions, the United States sees reason for hope” in Guinea.<sup>93</sup> The Peace Corps program has not been suspended following the coup, nor have public diplomacy programs such as educational and cultural exchanges.

Some argue that the extent and outline of the aid suspension is ill-advised. Some critics contend that some aid, and security assistance programs in particular, should be continued in the interest of regional stability.<sup>94</sup> There has also been debate over the continuation of democracy and good governance programs, which have not been suspended to date. Instead, funding related to election preparation is set to increase given the time-line for holding general elections by the end of 2009. Detractors are concerned that the continuation of any aid may send a mixed signal and could prolong the CNDD’s tenure in power.<sup>95</sup> A central question for policy makers is to what extent bilateral programs such as security assistance are primarily designed to enact U.S. policy priorities, or to serve as incentives for good behavior on the part of the beneficiary government.

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(...continued)

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

<sup>90</sup> The Peacebuilding Fund generally provides support to countries emerging from conflict. Most recipients to date have been African countries, including Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. More information is at <http://www.unpbf.org/index.shtml>.

<sup>91</sup> The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) bars direct assistance “to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree,” with the exception of democracy promotion and humanitarian assistance. The provision is commonly referred to as “Section 508,” a reference to previous appropriations legislation.

<sup>92</sup> *FY2008 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

<sup>93</sup> *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, May 2009.

<sup>94</sup> Arieff interviews with members of the donor community, Conakry, March 2009.

<sup>95</sup> E.g., Mike McGovern, “Exceptional Circumstances and Coups d’Etat,” SSRC blog *African Arguments*, February 3, 2009.

## **Elections and Democracy Promotion**

Both the timeline and administration of elections are issues for the international community. As discussed above, many continue to question Dadis Camara's commitment to leaving power.<sup>96</sup> Some fear civilian agitation in response to electoral delays: a recent analysis concluded that Guinea's political stability "rests on the new military junta keeping its promise to hold presidential elections soon, otherwise its broad coalition of support could quickly unravel."<sup>97</sup> Others are concerned that the longer the CNDD remains in power, the more vulnerable it might be to factionalization or a counter-coup.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, some new political groups and members of civil society support a longer transition period leading up to elections, either to seek more time to organize or to grant the CNDD more time to implement reforms. Some fear that the electoral period could turn violent, and that elections should not be rushed before appropriate legal and security frameworks are in place. In June, the army chief of staff reportedly appeared on national television and instructed the CNDD that "Guinea is not ready to organize presidential and parliamentary elections this year. The people want you to accept a postponement."<sup>99</sup>

U.S. democracy and governance assistance is expected to increase in the lead-up to elections; these programs are not currently affected by the suspension in U.S. aid. (Democracy and governance programs in Guinea are funded as part of U.S. development assistance, other aspects of which will be discussed below.) The Obama Administration's FY2010 request for democracy and governance funding represents a significant increase over FY2009: \$7.14 million compared to \$2.57 million.<sup>100</sup> The United States is the largest single donor to the electoral process, having pledged \$5.3 million (as of July 2009) toward a total electoral budget of over \$38 million dollars.<sup>101</sup> U.S. electoral assistance is expected to fund training and technical assistance to Guinea's National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), training for electoral agents including poll workers, training for political parties and candidates, voter education, civil society and media election monitoring and oversight, and the provision of electoral materials.<sup>102</sup> U.S. officials have not publicly outlined what, if any, criteria might be required with respect to the continuation or suspension of electoral assistance or democracy and governance programs.

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

U.S. security assistance to Guinea prior to the coup focused on ensuring Guinea's continued stability in a region scarred by armed conflict, and on Guinea's reported role as an international drug trafficking transit hub. In 2002, the U.S. military trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger battalion following incursions from fighters backed by then-Liberian president Charles Taylor. At

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<sup>96</sup> *AFP*, "Guinée: La junte confirme qu'elle 'ne se présentera pas' aux élections," May 10, 2009; *The Economist*, "He Sounds Modest. But For How Long?" May 9, 2009; EIU, "Guinea Politics: Soldiering on?" May 11, 2009.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Magnowski and Saliou Samb, "Analysis-Guinea Stability Rests on Election Promise," Reuters, May 5, 2009.

<sup>98</sup> SSRC, *Policy Approaches to the Current Situation in Guinea*, March 2009: 1.

<sup>99</sup> Reuters, "La Guinée N'Est Pas Prête à des Elections en 2009, Selon l'Armée," June 8, 2009.

<sup>100</sup> *2010 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, May 2009.

<sup>101</sup> U.S. electoral assistance is expected to be funded from several accounts, including FY 2008 carryover Development Assistance, FY2009 Development Assistance, and Elections and Political Processes funds, according to USAID. Other donors that have pledged support for Guinea's elections are the European Union, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. As discussed above, in late June, the Guinean government provided the equivalent of \$3 million toward the electoral process. A significant shortfall in donor funds nonetheless continues to exist.

<sup>102</sup> Information provided by USAID.

the same time, concerns over alleged human rights abuses by the Guinean military have, at times, restricted military training programs. In appropriations legislation passed in 2008 and 2009, Congress restricted International Military Education and Training (IMET) assistance in Guinea to “Expanded” IMET, which emphasizes human rights and civilian control of the military.<sup>103</sup>

All security assistance to Guinea is currently suspended, including military training programs, counter-narcotics programs, and the provision of maritime security equipment. Prior to the coup, Defense Department and State Department officials had informally planned a potential budget totaling over \$100 million over three years, starting in FY2009. The bulk of this funding would have supported maritime and air space security and monitoring capacity-building programs and regional peacekeeping training under the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA) and through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The State Department had additionally requested \$100,000 for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) counter-narcotics programs in FY2009, the first time such funding had been requested for Guinea; the FY2010 budget request is for \$110,000. The Obama Administration has stated that Guinea’s military is “an important element in ensuring regional stability,” and indicated that if the aid suspension is lifted, U.S. military assistance will work “to promote maritime safety and security in West Africa” and “will also focus on counter-narcotics activities.”<sup>104</sup>

Some believe these priorities are important enough to consider waiving the suspension of some military assistance programs, particularly as Dadis Camara has appealed for international assistance in fighting the narcotics trade and other transnational threats.<sup>105</sup> The argument has also been made that training programs aimed at professionalizing Guinea’s armed forces are needed to ensure that the military will cease to interfere in Guinean politics in the future. Others maintain that security assistance programs are inappropriate in the context of a military-led government. Some additionally question the CNDD’s commitment to reforming Guinea’s security sector and to cracking down on alleged participation by the military in the drug trade.<sup>106</sup>

## **Development and Related Assistance**

The CNDD has promised to improve living conditions for Guineans, which are among the worst in the world. However, government finances are reportedly very low due to corruption, mismanagement, and the suspension of some foreign aid.<sup>107</sup> Some argue that development aid programs should not be suspended at the expense of Guinea’s citizenry. At the same time, the junta has appointed allies to head key ministries including economy and finance, and at the head of the customs service and the central bank, which has raised concerns “over their capacity to provide a credible overall policy strategy” for the Guinean economy.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7070).

<sup>104</sup> *FY2010 Congressional Budget Justification for International Operations*, May 2009.

<sup>105</sup> *GuinéeNews*, “Le CNDD Demande le Soutien et l’Appui Technique de la Communauté Internationale pour Lutter Contre le Trafic de Drogue,” February 3, 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Arieff interviews with human rights researchers, Conakry, February 2009.

<sup>107</sup> EIU, “Guinea Economy: Government faces fiscal crisis,” June 1, 2009. The EIU has noted elsewhere 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>108</sup> EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 15.



The majority of programs administered by USAID have been categorized as humanitarian or democracy and governance assistance, and as such have not been affected by the aid suspension. Funding for suspended programs has been discontinued in some cases, while in others, it has been reprogrammed toward non-suspended activities. Health and education programs have been classified as humanitarian assistance and therefore generally exempted from suspension, even when they involve working directly with national government counterparts. In practice, suspended programs mainly include those related to the environment and natural resource sector. Table I, below, shows changes to USAID programs in Guinea as a result of the coup. Some changes reflect the non-extension of programs that had been completed at the time of the coup.

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

It is likely that many of the same goals that defined U.S. development priorities prior to the coup will continue to be pursued if democratic elections occur, with a significant increase in economic development funds.<sup>109</sup> In its *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*, the Obama Administration stated that “U.S. assistance to Guinea can play an important role in supporting popular calls for greater democracy, good governance, better social services, and improved economic opportunity, all of which should bolster stability.”

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<sup>109</sup> The Administration requested \$6.55 million for economic growth programs for FY2010, compared to \$1.75 million requested for FY2009; this funding is on hold pending elections.

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

(Programs unaffected by the coup are not shown. )

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

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

**Source:** USAID

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

## **Appendix. Touré and Conté Regimes: Historical Background**

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

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

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

Touré’s government was strongly nationalist and espoused a non-ethnic, unified Guinean identity. The Bureau Politique National, the country’s highest decision-making body, included members of each of Guinea’s major ethnic groupings. At the same time, members of the president’s extended family held key state positions and reportedly wielded significant power behind the scenes. Additionally, some government programs disproportionately affected certain regions. For example, the “demystification” campaign of the mid-1960, which sought to eradicate “backwards” cultural practices, mainly targeted the diverse ethnic groups of Guinea’s southeastern Forest region,<sup>110</sup> while in 1976 the regime specifically targeted members of the Fulbe (Peulh) ethnic group after Touré announced that he had discovered a Fulbe “plot” to destabilize the country. Overall, state-sponsored repression affected Guineans of all ethnicities, including members of Touré’s own Malinké ethnic group.

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

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<sup>110</sup> The many ethnic groups who predominantly reside in the Forest region, of which the largest are Kissi, Guerzé (also known as Kpelle), and Toma (Loma), have acquired an ethno-regional identity, known in Guinea as *Forestier*.

government schemes purportedly led by counter-revolutionary Guineans and conducted regular purges of the civilian and military bureaucracies. The PDG also instilled a pervasive culture of surveillance and secrecy. A civilian militia was created for public security and to check the power of the military. Several thousand Guineans are believed to have disappeared in government detention under Touré, though precise figures are not available.<sup>111</sup> As many as a third of Guinea's population (some two million people) fled the country during the Touré era, though many left for predominantly economic, rather than explicitly political, reasons.<sup>112</sup> Many long-time observers suggest that Guineans, even those born after Touré's death in 1984, remain deeply influenced by the PDG regime, similar to the populations of post-socialist states in eastern Europe.<sup>113</sup>

## **Guinea under Lansana Conté**

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

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

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

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<sup>111</sup> There has never been a comprehensive independent investigation into the PDG's detention practices. The Association of Camp Boiro Victims, a Conakry-based organization that seeks the rehabilitation of former detainees and the disappeared, believes as many as fifty thousand Guineans may have died in detention, though international researchers generally cite a lower number. Amnesty International estimated that 2,900 prisoners had disappeared in Guinea between 1958 and 1982 (Amnesty International, *Emprisonnement, 'Disparitions' et Assassinats Politiques en République Populaire et Révolutionnaire de Guinée*, Paris: Editions Francophones d'Amnesty International). One historian estimates 2,500 disappeared during Touré's presidency (Maligui Soumah, *Guinée de Sékou Touré à Lansana Conté*, Paris: L'Harmattan, p. 21).

<sup>112</sup> A. O. Bah et al, "Les Guinéens de l'Extérieur: Rentrer au pays?" *Politique Africaine* 36 (Dec. 1989): 22.

<sup>113</sup> For example, the anthropologist and Guinea expert Mike McGovern has written that "remnants [of Touré's regime] persist in bureaucratic habits such as the strict surveillance of foreigners on Guinean territory... and citizens' habits such as that of looking to the State to solve all problems, in lowering for example the price of merchandise such as gasoline and rice, or further in omnipresent rhetoric... considering merchants as greedy saboteurs rather than as entrepreneurs "naturally" seeking to conserve their operating margins amid market fluctuations. A certain nostalgia for the Touré era is equally perceptible, even if that period was one of suffering and privations." "Sékou Touré Est Mort," *Politique Africaine* 107 (Oct. 2007): 134-5.

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

### **Tenuous Democratization**

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

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

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

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

to support the conduct of the election or deploy election observers because of doubts over the transparency of the election.<sup>114</sup> In 2004, the Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH, in French) issued a report, titled “Guinea: A Virtual Democracy with an Uncertain Future,” that sharply criticized the government’s regular suppression of political freedoms and targeting of opposition groups.<sup>115</sup>

## **Regional Instability**

Starting in the late 1980s, each of Guinea’s neighbors experienced one or more internal conflicts—notably Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d’Ivoire. Conté’s government was an active participant in many of these conflicts, supporting various government and non-government actors in neighboring countries and reportedly serving as a conduit for arms. For example, Conté sent troops to neighboring Guinea-Bissau in 1998 to shore up his ally President Bernardo “Nino” Vieira amid a military uprising, while throughout Liberia’s successive conflicts (1989-2003), Conté provided backing for groups opposed to his regional nemesis, Charles Taylor.<sup>116</sup>

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

Conté meanwhile presided over a weakening of central state structures. In its waning years, Conté’s government was reportedly divided into factions controlling different areas of the government, economy, military, and even nominal opposition and civil society groups. NGOs and international media portrayed a country whose leader was unable “to control the day-to-day operations of government.”<sup>117</sup> Concerns over factionalization in the administration and military heightened with reports that President Conté, who declined to institutionalize his succession and who did not often appear in public, was terminally ill. Starting in 2003, the International Crisis Group warned that Guinea was at serious risk of a civil war or military coup.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> IFES, “Of Interest,” Election Profile (Guinea), at <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=402>.

<sup>115</sup> IRIN, “Guinea: Rights Group Slams ‘Caricature of Democracy,’” April 14, 2004. See also Maligui Soumah, *Guinée: La démocratie sans le peuple*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006.

<sup>116</sup> In particular, Conté reportedly provided logistical support and a rear base on Guinean territory for the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) in the late 1990s, and later supported Liberians United For Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), a rebel faction that proved instrumental in unseating Taylor in 2003.

<sup>117</sup> International Crisis Group, *Stopping Guinea’s Slide*, 2005: 10.

<sup>118</sup> International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d’une fin de règne*, 2003: i.

## Relations with the Military

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

The Conté era was also marked by repeated military mutinies spurred by demands for higher pay, more frequent promotions, and an end to the perceived monopolization of military patronage networks by a small handful of high-ranking officers. In response to these challenges, Conté cultivated the Presidential Guard (also known as the *Bataillon Autonome de Sécurité Présidentielle*, or BASP), an elite force based in Conakry and commanded directly by the presidency.<sup>119</sup> Conté also expended significant state resources on military salaries and benefits such as subsidized rice for Guinean troops. Numerous officers were forced to retire in late 2005 following the mass promotion of about 1,000 non-commissioned and commissioned officers. In 2007, the government more than doubled army salaries after soldiers rioted in dissatisfaction at their low salaries following their role in quelling nationwide strikes. These moves were generally seen as decreasing resources available to such public goods as education and infrastructure. The International Crisis Group noted that "pay increases, along with waves of recruitment in 2007-2008, ate into the state's fragile finances. But far from satisfying the troops, they generated an expectation that violent protests would bear fruit."<sup>120</sup>

Conté's administration generally refrained from enforcing military discipline in connection with alleged abuses of civilians, fostering what many Guineans and international observers see as a culture of impunity. In 2006, Human Rights Watch issued a report that Guinea's security forces routinely employed arbitrary arrest, torture, assault and occasionally murder to fight crime and perceived government opponents.<sup>121</sup> An official commission of inquiry into security forces' killings of demonstrators in 2006 and 2007 had stagnated at the time of Conté's death in 2008. The last wave of protests in Conakry before Conté's death took place in November 2008; at least four people reportedly died when security forces opened fire with live ammunition.

## Growing Pressure for Reform

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

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<sup>119</sup> Conté's personal guard also reportedly included a portion of the roughly 800 elite commandos known as the Rangers who were trained in border protection by a United States military cooperation program in 2001-2002 (International Crisis Group, *Guinée: incertitudes autour d'une fin de règne*, 2003: 12; Arieff interview with security specialist, Conakry, February 2009).

<sup>120</sup> International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The transition has only just begun*, March 2009: 4.

<sup>121</sup> HRW, *The Perverse Side of Things: Torture, Inadequate Detention Conditions, and Excessive Use of Force by Guinean Security Forces*, April 22, 2006.



unprecedented nationwide anti-government protests. These protests, which were supported by major political opposition parties and civil society groups, caused significant political unrest in urban centers. In response, the military opened fire on protesters and launched a harsh crackdown, particularly in urban centers and notably in Conakry, the capital. Confrontations between troops and largely unarmed demonstrators resulted in 186 civilian deaths, while hundreds were injured, beaten, or extra-judicially detained, and dozens tortured or raped, according to an investigation by local human rights groups.<sup>122</sup> Martial law was imposed in February, during which time Human Rights Watch reported that security forces in Conakry “went house-to-house, breaking down doors, and looting everything of value inside, including cell phones, cameras, and money.”<sup>123</sup>

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

Kouyaté managed a few significant successes, such as an audit of some government institutions and the renegotiation of a debt-relief agreement with the IMF. His attempts to initiate sweeping reforms of public institutions, however, stalled. Many attributed his failures to machinations by Conté’s inner circle, Conté’s refusal to accord to Kouyaté the power to make real changes, and public’s disillusionment with the prime minister’s perceived pursuit of his own political agenda.<sup>124</sup> Quality of life across Guinea continued to decline, and a promised official probe into abuses by security forces during the strikes stagnated. The unions, which had enjoyed broad public support during the strikes, waned in influence due to Kouyaté’s lackluster performance and rumors of internal splits and corruption among union leaders.<sup>125</sup> A presidential decree in May 2008 sacking Kouyaté and replacing him with a close Conté ally and businessman, Ahmed Tidiane Souaré, met with little protest.

## **Military Divisions and Restiveness**

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

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<sup>122</sup> Coalition pour la Défense des Victimes des Événements de Janvier et Février 2007 en République de Guinée, *Rapport sur les violations commises en République de Guinée pendant les événements de Janvier et Février 2007* (Nov. 2007): 4. See also HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

<sup>123</sup> HRW, “Guinea: Security Forces Abuse Population Under Martial Law” [press release], February 15, 2007.

<sup>124</sup> E.g. International Crisis Group, *Guinée: Garantir la poursuite des réformes démocratiques*, 2008; Kissy Agyeman, “President Replaces Consensus Prime Minister in Guinea,” *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, May 21, 2008; and Michelle Engeler, “Guinea in 2008: The Unfinished Revolution,” *Politique Africaine* 112 (Dec. 2008).

<sup>125</sup> Arieff interviews, Conakry, February 2009.

### *The 2008 Junior Officer Mutiny*

Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando parachutist unit (known as the BATA). Mutinous troops demanding back wage payments and rice subsidy increases took control of Alpha Yaya, took the army chief of staff hostage, and pillaged shops and private homes in Conakry. They demanded that the chief army quartermaster and the defense minister be fired and that Guinea's generals, who were reportedly seen by the mutineers as blocking opportunities for promotion and monopolizing lucrative patronage networks, be retired.<sup>126</sup> Mutiny leader Claude "Coplan" Pivi also told local media that the mutineers sought the rehabilitation of soldiers who were punished for abuses during the 2007 strikes.<sup>127</sup> Mutiny leaders exchanged fire with members of the presidential guard, and several people were reportedly killed, and dozens wounded, by stray bullets.<sup>128</sup> After a week of unrest, Conté met in person with the mutineers' leaders, and the government agreed to pay salary arrears of \$1,100 to each soldier, sack the defense minister, and grant promotions to junior officers, ending the uprising.<sup>129</sup> Much of the top military hierarchy, however, remained in place until Conté's death, but were subsequently dismissed by the CNDD, key members of which have claimed to have played key roles in the May 2008 mutiny.<sup>130</sup>

In mid-June 2008, police officers in Conakry attempted to launch their own mutiny over alleged non-payment of back-wages and a failure to implement pledged promotions. Military troops led by Pivi crushed the police uprising, culminating in a bloody shoot-out at a police headquarters in the upscale Camayenne neighborhood that left at least four police officers dead, according to an official tally. Pivi's troops also reportedly laid siege to and looted police facilities throughout Conakry, and the police counter-narcotics unit was also ransacked and its records destroyed.<sup>131</sup> The confrontations reportedly left a rift in relations between the police and the army, and established Pivi's reputation as a well-known and much-feared figure in Conakry.<sup>132</sup> These events reportedly allowed junior officers to gain control of substantial portions of state armaments and, given past incidents of violent military indiscipline, placed in question security conditions in Conakry. There were also reports that some military elements employed these weapons in common crimes targeting civilians.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Saliou Samb, "Guinea Meets Soldiers' Demands To End 2-Day Mutiny," Reuters, May 27, 2008; RFI, "Guinean Soldiers Demand Retirement Of Army Generals," May 29, 2008 via BBC Monitoring.

<sup>127</sup> *BBC Monitoring*, "Guinea: Mutiny leader explains reasons behind action [from *GuinéeNews*]" June 8, 2008.

<sup>128</sup> Kissy Agyeman, "Tension Mounts in Guinea in Wake of Army Revolt," *Global Insight*, May 29, 2008.

<sup>129</sup> Saliou Samb, "Guinea Settles Army Pay Dispute With Mass Promotion," Reuters, June 14, 2008.

<sup>130</sup> Claude Pivi, a CNDD member and junior officer who was promoted to Minister of Presidential Security in January 2009, styled himself the leader of the Camp Alpha Yaya mutiny. Pivi also led the crackdown on the police uprising, according to witnesses. After he became president, Dadis Camara stated he had played a key role in the mutiny and in the negotiations that ended it.

<sup>131</sup> E.g. *Aminata.com*, "Affrontements Entre Policiers Et Militaires—La Bande De Pivi Et Des Gardes Présidentielles," June 17, 2008; and Pascal Fletcher, "Bauxite-Exporter Guinea Faces Drugs Trade Threat-UN," Reuters, July 12, 2008.

<sup>132</sup> Many Conakry residents believe that Pivi possesses powers that make him bulletproof. Anxiety over Pivi's activities peaked in November, when Pivi reportedly ordered the arrest and torture of a group of Cameroonian nationals he suspected of having damaged his car. (E.g. *La Lance* newspaper, November 26, 2008.)

<sup>133</sup> International Crisis Group, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, March 2009: 16.

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