



Guinea: Background and Relations with the United States

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Summary

The past two years have seen a series of deep changes in Guinea's political landscape, a new experience for a country that had only two presidents in the first 50 years after independence in 1958. In June 2010, Guineans voted in the country's first presidential election organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. A presidential run-off poll was held in early November, but provisional results have yet to be certified by the Supreme Court. The election is expected to bring an end to two years of military rule, which began after a junta seized power in December 2008 following the death of Guinea's long-time president, Lansana Conté. Many Guineans and foreign diplomats also expect the election to provide a stepping-stone toward reforming state institutions and implementing the rule of law, considered a prerequisite for greater private sector investment and increased respect for human rights. At the same time, the election has sparked incidents of ethnic violence and reported abuses by security forces that could threaten the political transition.

A former French colony on West Africa's Atlantic coast, with a population of about 10 million, Guinea is rich in natural resources but characterized by widespread poverty and limited socioeconomic development. While Guinea has experienced regular episodes of internal political turmoil, it was considered a locus of relative stability during much of the past two decades, a period during which each of its six neighbors suffered armed internal conflicts. At the same time, democratic progress was limited, while popular discontent with the government rose along with instability within the sizable armed forces.

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics issues; security sector reform; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and stability; and socioeconomic and institutional development. The United States suspended some development aid and all security assistance to Guinea in the wake of the 2008 coup. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) 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; nor were U.S. contributions toward Guinea's electoral process. In response to a military crackdown on opposition supporters in September 2009, the United States called for Dadis Camara to step down and announced targeted travel restrictions against National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) members and selected associates. After a military-led transitional government was formed in January 2010, some U.S. restrictions on security assistance were rolled back, and bilateral aid is expected to increase if the transition to elected government is completed.

Guinea-focused legislation in the 111th Congress has included H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen) and S.Res. 345 (Boxer). This report focuses on recent events, U.S.-Guinea bilateral relations, and U.S. policy and assistance. For further analysis, see CRS Report R41200, *Guinea's New Transitional Government: Emerging Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff.

Contents

Recent Developments.....	1
Overview	2
U.S. Interests in Guinea.....	2
Recent Congressional Actions	3
Background	4
The Rise of the CNDD.....	5
The September 28 Protests and International Criminal Court Investigation	6
Dadis Camara’s Exit and Growing Instability	7
Formation of a Transitional Government	7
Elections	8
The Vote: June-November 2010	8
Election Violence.....	10
The FOSSEPEL: A New Election Security Force	11
The Economy.....	11
Socioeconomic Conditions	12
Recent Mining Sector Developments.....	12
Security Issues and the Rule of Law.....	14
Drug Trafficking	14
The Guinean Military: A Key Security Challenge.....	15
Foreign Relations	16
U.S. Relations	17
Foreign Aid.....	18
Elections and Democracy Promotion.....	18
Security Assistance and Counter-Narcotics Cooperation.....	18
Multilateral Aid.....	19
Outlook.....	20

Figures

Figure 1. Map of Guinea	4
-------------------------------	---

Tables

Table 1. Selected Bilateral Aid by Account	20
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Contacts

Author Contact Information	21
----------------------------------	----

Recent Developments

On November 7, 2010, a presidential run-off vote was held between Alpha Condé, of the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) party, and Cellou Dalein Diallo, of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party, the two candidates who had garnered the most votes in Guinea's June 2010 presidential election. The run-off was held because none of the 24 candidates who competed in the June election won over 50% of the vote.

On November 15, Guinea's national electoral commission announced that provisional results showed Condé to be the winner, with about 52.5% of the vote, against 47.5% for Diallo, but the results will not become final until they are certified by Guinea's Supreme Court, which has until November 23 to do so.¹ Diallo refused to accept the provisional results after they were announced, and violence again broke out, particularly in Conakry and in the Diallo strongholds of Labé and Pita in the northern Fouta Djallon region. On November 17, interim President General Sékouba Konaté declared a "state of emergency" pending Supreme Court confirmation of the provisional results. Some reports indicated that security forces engaged in abuses during the crackdown, including targeted attacks against Diallo supporters.² On November 18, the independent think-tank International Crisis Group warned that "Guinea's political and military leaders and the international community must take urgent measures to halt widespread attacks against defenseless civilians and to prevent political tensions from degenerating into large-scale ethnic violence and regional instability."³

The November poll represented a contest between two candidates with starkly contrasting political histories and bases of support. Condé is a long-time opposition leader who lived in exile during most of Guinea's post-independence history, while Diallo is a former prime minister who also held a variety of ministerial portfolios during the government of Guinea's former president, Lansana Conté. The vote was nonetheless perceived by many, in part, as an ethnic contest between Guinea's two largest ethnic groups: the Peul (Fulbe/Fulani), who are seen as constituting Diallo's base, and the Malinké (Mandingo), seen as constituting Condé's base. The run-off vote was preceded by incidents of ethnic violence, reportedly including systematic attacks against ethnic Peuls in several majority-Malinké areas in northeastern Guinea.

¹ Scott Stearns, "Guinea State of Emergency Contingent on Certifying Election Results," Voice of America (VOA), November 18, 2010.

² Ougna Camara, "Guinean Armed Forces Deployed as U.S. Condemns Post-Election Violence," Bloomberg, November 18, 2010. As of November 18, at least seven people had been reported killed in the post-election clashes.

³ International Crisis Group (ICG), "Conflict Risk Alert: Guinea," November 18, 2010.

Overview

Guinea is a former French colony in West Africa, about the size of Oregon, which has experienced regular episodes of political turmoil. Despite its wealth in natural resources, Guinea's development indicators are poor even by regional standards, and standards of living are among the worst in the world.⁴ During much of the past two decades, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability in a sub-region that has witnessed multiple armed conflicts.

Guinea is currently governed by a transitional government of national unity made up of civilians and members of a military junta, the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), that seized power in December 2008, following the death of Guinea's long-time president, Lansana Conté. The transitional government was formed under an agreement signed by the CNDD's two top leaders in January 2010. A key component of the agreement was that Guinea would hold presidential elections in June, in which no member of the junta or government would be a candidate.

Guinea at a Glance

Population: 10.3 million (2010 est.)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): \$3.8 billion (2008)

GDP Per Capita: \$350 (2008)

Ethnic Groups: Peul (Fulbe/Fulani) 40%, Malinke (Mandingo) 30%, Soussou 20%, smaller ethnic groups 10%

Religions: Muslim 85%; Christian 8%; indigenous beliefs

Languages: French (official); local languages

Life Expectancy at Birth: 57.6 years (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS Adult Prevalence: 1.6% (2007 est.)

Adult Literacy: 29.5% (2003 est.)

Natural Resources: bauxite [aluminum ore], iron ore, diamonds, gold, uranium, hydropower, fish, salt

Major Trading Partners: India, China, France, Netherlands, Spain, Russia, Germany, United States, Belgium, Ukraine

Sources: *CIA World Factbook*; *World Bank*

U.S. Interests in Guinea

U.S. interests and associated policy challenges in Guinea center on democratization and good governance; counternarcotics issues; security sector reform; bilateral economic interests and relations; regional peace and stability; and socioeconomic and institutional development.⁵ Ensuring a transition to a democratically elected, civilian-led government is currently a focus of U.S. governance concerns, as is ensuring that political instability in Guinea does not spill over into fragile neighboring states, such as Liberia. Guinea's extractive industry sector is also of financial and strategic interest to the United States: in addition to gold, diamonds, uranium, and potential oil and gas reserves, Guinea possesses an estimated 27% or more of global reserves of bauxite, a key component of aluminum, and Guinea provided 16% of U.S. bauxite and alumina imports between 2004 and 2007.⁶ Several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea and face

⁴ See e.g., U.N. Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2010*, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>.

⁵ In particular, in the final years of Conté's tenure, U.S. concern had focused on issues of governance, political stability and succession, and democratization prospects, notably following the Conté administration's violent suppression of a general strike in 2007 and in light of Conté's long-reported ill health. See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, *Prospects for Peace in Guinea*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 22, 2007 (Washington: GPO).

⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, *2009 Bauxite and Alumina Survey*.

possible growing competition from other foreign investors in Guinea, notably from China.⁷ U.S. interest has also arisen over Guinea's identity as a historically moderate, majority-Muslim country in a region affected by violent extremism.

Issues of interest to Congress may include:

- the appropriation and oversight of U.S. foreign assistance;
- Guinea's democratic trajectory and prospects for state institutional and legal reforms;
- the role of Guinea's military and its subordination to civilian political leadership;
- counter-narcotics and transnational organized crime;
- Guinea's natural resource wealth and related U.S. investments; and
- Guinea's potential impact on regional stability.

Recent Congressional Actions

Several pieces of legislation related to Guinea were introduced during the 111th Congress. These include H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen), *Condemning the violent suppression of legitimate political dissent and gross human rights abuses in the Republic of Guinea*, passed by the House on January 20, 2010; and S.Res. 345 (Boxer), *A resolution deploring the rape and assault of women in Guinea and the killing of political protesters on September 28, 2009*, passed by the Senate on February 22, 2010. Several Members criticized the CNDD following a violent military crackdown in September 2009.⁸ In March 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee convened a hearing on the political situation in Guinea and the eruption of mass anti-government demonstrations earlier that year.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Section 7008, Title VII, Division F of P.L. 111-117, signed into law on December 16, 2009), states that "none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to titles III through VI of this Act shall be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree," with an exemption for "assistance to promote democratic elections or public participation in democratic processes." The prohibition covers bilateral economic assistance, international security assistance, multilateral assistance, and export

⁷ 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 a much smaller U.S. energy firm, Hyperdynamics, holds the largest single license for offshore oil exploration. Hyperdynamics, a Texas-based oil prospecting firm, holds exploration rights in Guinea under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) signed with the Guinean government in 2006. The Guinean government later disputed the terms of the PSC, and in 2009 Hyperdynamics was forced to rescind all but 36% of its original acreage in exchange for confirmation of the validity of its remaining concession. The firm has indicated it will continue oil exploration activities within the remaining area.

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

and investment assistance; humanitarian aid is generally exempt. The act (Section 7070) also restricts International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs in Guinea to Expanded IMET (E-IMET)—emphasizing respect for human rights and civilian control of the military. These and other provisions were carried over in the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, which was signed into law as P.L. 111-242 on September 30, 2010.

Figure I. Map of Guinea



Background

For 26 years following independence from France in 1958, Guinea was ruled as a one-party, quasi-socialist state under the charismatic but repressive leadership of Ahmed Sékou Touré. Following Touré's death in 1984, Colonel (later, General) Lansana Conté came to power in a military coup d'état. Conté oversaw some economic and political reforms, but his critics accused him of stifling Guinea's democratic development while allowing corruption and nepotism to flourish. The final years of Conté's rule were marked by a decline in average living standards, the co-optation of power by members of Conté's inner circle of businessmen and politicians amid the disintegration of state institutions, and increasing signs of public dissatisfaction. Conté's supporters, however, argued that his leadership prevented Guinea from experiencing the kind of brutal armed civil conflict that has afflicted many of its neighbors. While Guinea held several

general elections under Conté, democratic gains were limited, and power remained concentrated in the president's hands.

Starting in 2006, growing public discontent with economic stagnation and high inflation, the slow pace of promised democratic reforms, extensive corruption, and Conté's semi-autocratic leadership spurred a growing number of formerly rare strikes and protests. These peaked with nationwide anti-government demonstrations in early 2007. Divisions and unrest within the military, often over pay and slow rates of promotion, also grew. Particularly notable was a May 2008 uprising led by junior army officers at Camp Alpha Yaya, the largest military base in Conakry and the headquarters of the army's elite commando unit known as the BATA. In June 2008, military troops crushed an attempted police mutiny over alleged non-payment of back-wages and a failure to implement pledged promotions. This culminated in a bloody shoot-out at a police headquarters that left at least four police officers dead, according to an official tally.

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

The Rise of the CNDD

On December 23, 2008, a military junta seized power after Conté died following a long illness. The junta, which called itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD, after its French acronym), appointed as president a previously little-known military officer, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara. A member of the southeastern Guerzé (also known as Kpelle) ethnic group, Dadis Camara was a member of the elite BATA airborne commando unit and had served as director of Army fuel supplies, a reportedly powerful position that helped him build a base of support among the rank-and-file. Other powerful CNDD members included Gen. Sekouba Konaté, former commander of the BATA, who was named defense minister, and Gen. Mamadouba Toto Camara, the most senior CNDD officer in terms of rank, who was named security minister. The CNDD's composition was ostensibly multi-ethnic, but many key posts appeared split between ethnic Malinké and *Forestiers*, a collective term for a constellation of small ethnic groups (including the Guerzé) who tie their roots to Guinea's rain-forested southeast and have historically been politically marginalized at the national level. Only a small number of junta members were Peuls, who make up the largest ethnic block within Guinea's population but have historically not played a major role in the senior military hierarchy.

Upon assuming power, the CNDD immediately took steps to assert its authority, for instance by suspending civilian regional administrators and replacing them with military commanders. The CNDD also created several new ministerial-level positions, headed by members of the military or close civilian associates. Several key ministries, including security, defense, and finance, and the governor of the Central Bank, were attached to the presidency. Signs of fault lines within the military soon emerged, heightening concerns over potential intra-military violence. Several

military officers were purged from the junta or imprisoned in 2009 on accusations of plotting against Dadis Camara or other leaders. In July 2009, Gen. Mamadouba “Toto” Camara, security minister and the most senior CNDD officer, was assaulted by members of the presidential guard.⁹

Dadis Camara initially committed to overseeing free and fair elections and a “peaceful transition” to a civilian-led government within a year, agreeing to a timetable set by a broad coalition of political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups known as the *Forces Vives* (“Active Forces”). He also promised that neither he nor any CNDD member would run for office. However, in August 2009, the CNDD postponed elections until early 2010. Dadis Camara also indicated that he might choose to run for president, compounding widespread suspicions that junta members were reluctant to leave power.

The September 28 Protests and International Criminal Court Investigation

On September 28, 2009, security forces opened fire on tens of thousands of protesters who had gathered peacefully in and around an outdoor stadium in Conakry to protest repeated election delays and Dadis Camara’s perceived intention to run for president.¹⁰ A Human Rights Watch investigation concluded that the crackdown was “premeditated” and that soldiers and gendarmes—including members of the Presidential Guard and of the CNDD’s anti-drug and anti-crime unit, both of which ostensibly answered to the presidency—had directly fired on the stadium crowd and stabbed those fleeing with knives and bayonets.¹¹ At least 150 people were killed and over 1,000 wounded in the crackdown, and several opposition leaders who had planned to address the crowd were assaulted and threatened.¹² According to numerous reports, soldiers also assaulted and raped dozens of women openly in public, including in full view of military commanders. In the days following the protests, lootings continued and sporadic confrontations and extrajudicial detentions were reported in several opposition strongholds in Conakry.

The report of a United Nations (U.N.) commission of inquiry confirmed 156 deaths, 109 instances of sexual violence, “hundreds of other cases of torture or of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment,” and dozens of extrajudicial arrests. The commission concluded that the crackdown may have constituted “crimes against humanity” and recommended a referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹³ In October, the chief prosecutor for the ICC announced he was opening a “preliminary examination” of the situation.¹⁴ Although Dadis Camara condemned the violence, he denied responsibility, contending that the opposition was at fault and that he was not in full command of the armed forces.¹⁵

⁹ BBC News Online, “Troops Crawl After Guinea Attack,” July 24, 2009; United Nations, *Contingency Plan Conakry*, August 2009; AFP, “Guinée: Une ONG Redoute une ‘Dérive Dictatoriale,’ Dénonce la Torture,” August 12, 2009.

¹⁰ Associated Press (AP), “Guinea Soldiers Shoot Dead at Least 10 Protesters,” September 28, 2009; Adam Nossiter, “Over 100 Protesters Killed in Guinea,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2009.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea*, December 2009.

¹² Many believe the death toll to have been significantly higher, and reports indicate that the military engaged in a systematic cover-up by removing bodies from the site and burying them in mass graves. See HRW, *Bloody Monday*, op. cit.

¹³ *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry Mandated to Establish the Facts and Circumstances of the Events of 29 September 2009 in Guinea*, December 29, 2009.

¹⁴ ICC Office of the Prosecutor, “ICC Prosecutor Confirms Situation in Guinea Under Examination,” October 14, 2009.

¹⁵ Agence France Presse (AFP), “Guinea Under Fire After Scores Killed in Opposition Crackdown,” September 28, (continued...)

Dadis Camara's Exit and Growing Instability

The September 2009 violence presaged rising insecurity in Conakry and fears of a breakdown in military command and control. At the same time, international condemnation catalyzed latent fractures within the junta. On December 3, 2009, Dadis Camara was shot in the head by a commander of his presidential guard, Aboubacar "Toumba" Diakité, who had been cited in the U.N. investigation as a key instigator of the September 28 violence. Dadis Camara was evacuated to Morocco to receive medical care; he subsequently traveled to Burkina Faso, where he remains in exile.

The shooting and subsequent power vacuum coincided with reports of rising ethnic tensions and instability within the CNDD and wider armed forces. Reports also indicated that the CNDD was recruiting hundreds of irregular fighters and training them as militias in camps located near Conakry, and referred to rising arms imports and the presence of foreign mercenaries.¹⁶ Several targeted killings were reported in Conakry, including at least one government official.¹⁷ Fears of imminent conflict caused some Guineans, human rights groups, and foreign diplomats to call for a regional intervention force.

Formation of a Transitional Government

In January 2010, after several weeks of uncertainty following the attack on Dadis Camara, CNDD Defense Minister Gen. Sekouba Konaté assumed executive powers as interim president. On January 15, 2010, Dadis Camara, Konaté, and ECOWAS mediator Blaise Compaoré (president of Burkina Faso) announced a new political agreement.¹⁸ The *Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou* provided for the formation of a unity government headed by Konaté, with a prime minister chosen from the civilian opposition. The signatories also agreed to hold a presidential election within six months, in which members of the CNDD, the unity government, and the security forces would be barred from running as candidates.¹⁹

Forces Vives spokesman Jean-Marie Doré was named prime minister on January 19, and in February he appointed a 34-person cabinet composed of a mix of CNDD members and civilians. In early March, a National Transition Council (CNT) was inaugurated as a quasi-legislative body, with 155 members representing political parties, trade unions, civil society groups, and other

(...continued)

2009; Agence Guinéenne de Presse, "Discours A La Nation du Chef de l'Etat," November 3, 2009; *Jeune Afrique*, "Massacres du 28 Septembre: Dadis a-t-il été l'instigateur?" September 30, 2009; AFP, "Massacre en Guinée: Dadis Camara Ne Se Reconnaît 'Aucune Responsabilité,'" October 4, 2009; Adam Nossiter, "Guinea Seethes as a Captain Rules at Gunpoint," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2009.

¹⁶ Richard Moncrieff, "Repression and Violence Are a Danger to the Whole Region," *The Independent*, September 30, 2009; *Beeld* (South Africa), "Secretive Mails Sent to Recruits," October 18, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated," October 27, 2009; Reuters, "Foreign Gunmen Helped Guinea Crackdown—Witnesses," October 3, 2009; BBC, "'Big Guns' Herald Guinea's Crisis," October 31, 2009; Ed Butler, "Guinea's Military Junta Imports Millions of Dollars Worth of Arms Despite Embargo," *The Guardian*, November 3, 2009.

¹⁷ Reuters, "Guinea Sees New Violence After Protest Crackdown," October 23, 2009; RFI via BBC Monitoring, "Twelve Opposition Supporters Said Killed in Guinea's 'Targeted Killings,'" October 23, 2009.

¹⁸ In October 2009, ECOWAS appointed Blaise Compaoré to mediate between the CNDD and the opposition *Forces Vives* coalition.

¹⁹ "Joint Declaration of Ouagadougou," State Department Office of Language Services, January 2010.

socio-economic demographics.²⁰ The CNT drafted a new constitution and a new electoral code, which were promulgated by presidential decree. Dadis Camara has declined to return to Guinea, and he publicly supported the transitional government and progress toward elections.²¹

As interim president, Konaté moved to build donor and regional support, and made multiple state visits to neighboring countries and to France. Using a combination of patronage and force, he also consolidated power within the fractious armed forces. He closed down militia training camps and arrested or otherwise sidelined a number of military commanders seen as loyal to Dadis Camara and other potential rivals.²² In early July, Konaté granted mass promotions to much of the military's officer corps, in what was widely seen as a reward to soldiers for refraining from intervening in the vote. Konaté received widespread praise for instituting greater discipline and control within the military, and for stemming military abuses against civilians. However, his actions have largely focused on internal command issues and have not necessarily paved the way for greater civilian oversight under an eventual elected government.

Elections

The transitional government's clearest accomplishment to date has been the organization of presidential elections, as required under the Ouagadougou declaration. Elections were organized by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), which was created in 2007 as an oversight body, part of a series of reforms agreed to under Conté. The interior ministry (known in Guinea as the MATAP), which was previously responsible for organizing elections, played a secondary role by assisting the CENI with logistics. The presidential election cost an estimated \$36.1 million, not including voter registration and related costs.²³ Major donors included the European Union, the United States, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain; the U.N. Development Program played a coordinating role. China also reportedly contributed, for example through the donation of motorcycles for the transportation of electoral materials and other equipment.

The legal framework for the elections consists of a new constitution and electoral law promulgated by decree in April and May 2010. While both contained improvements over previous frameworks—such as the institution of term limits, guarantees as to the CENI's independence, and the introduction of a single-ballot system—implementation was reportedly inconsistent, in part due to the short time-line prior to the vote. In addition, several deadlines required under the electoral law were not respected, for example, with regard to the determination of polling station locations and the development of new voting procedures.²⁴

The Vote: June-November 2010

On June 27, 2010, Guineans went to the polls to select from among 24 presidential candidates. The vote was historically significant because it was the first national election in Guinea's history

²⁰ Guineenews, "Liste Complète des Membres du CNT," March 8, 2010.

²¹ Guineenews, "Moussa Dadis Camara S'Adresse au Peuple de Guinée Depuis Ougadougou," June 14, 2010.

²² Reuters, "Guinea Says Arrests Mutinous Pro-Camara Soldiers," April 2, 2010.

²³ USAID responses to CRS query, November 2010.

²⁴ The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election; Urges Continued Calm in Post-Election Period," June 29, 2010.

organized by an independent commission, and the first not to feature an incumbent government candidate. Campaigning was largely peaceful and reportedly characterized by messages of national unity and respect, though there were a few isolated incidences of violent confrontations between supporters of opposing candidates.²⁵ According to official results reported by the Supreme Court on July 20, no candidate won more than 50% of the vote, necessitating a run-off election. The two candidates who won the most votes in the June poll—making them adversarial contestants in the run-off election—were Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party, who won 43.7% of the vote, and Alpha Condé of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party, who won 18.3%.

In many ways, Diallo and Condé represent contrasting political profiles: Diallo served as a cabinet minister and prime minister under Conté, while Condé was a longtime Conté opponent and has spent much of the past 40 years in exile in France. They also represent Guinea's two largest ethnic groups: the Peul (Diallo), and the Malinké (Condé). Diallo's experience in government and Condé's outsider status were both thought to carry positive and negative aspects in terms of their electability. At the same time, ethnicity was also widely expected to play a decisive role in the outcome of the election.

International and domestic election monitoring groups praised the vote as an important step in Guinea's hoped-for democratic transition, though they also observed severe logistical challenges—such as shortages of election materials, a lack of polling stations in some areas, insufficient poll-worker training, and problems with the distribution of voter cards.²⁶ In addition, the final official election results nullified all the votes cast in several major population centers. The U.S.-based Carter Center, which fielded an election observation mission, stated it was “concerned by the Court's exclusion of these almost 900,000 votes with no justification of or explanation for doing so”; the center contended that this “resulted in a de facto disenfranchisement of approximately one third of the electorate without adequate justification.”²⁷ The final participation rate among registered voters was 52%, compared to 77% reported in provisional results.

Several candidates, including Condé and third-place rival Sidya Touré, contested the results; these challenges were overturned by the Supreme Court. In September, the then-president of the CENI, Ben Sékou Sylla, was convicted of election fraud in absentia; at the time, Sylla was in France receiving medical treatment, and he died soon after the verdict was announced. The details of the case against Sylla remained unclear and appeared to be affected by procedural irregularities.

After a long series of delays related to logistical challenges, politicized wrangling over election administration, and a dispute over the leadership of the CENI, a run-off vote between Diallo and Condé was scheduled for November 7, 2010. Election observers noted that many deficiencies recorded during the first round—such as insufficient election materials, too few polling stations in some regions, and a lack of training for many poll workers—were corrected prior to the run-off vote. The distribution of voting cards was nonetheless reportedly incomplete by the time of

²⁵ E.g., AFP, “One Dead in Guinea Election Clash,” June 25, 2010.

²⁶ The Carter Center, “The Carter Center Commends Guinea's Historical Election,” *op. cit.*

²⁷ The Carter Center, “Guinea's Transitional Elections Marked by Peaceful Voting; Commitment to Transparency in Final Results Is Important [Preliminary Statement], November 9, 2010.

voting.²⁸ International election observers were largely positive in their initial, preliminary statements following the vote.²⁹

On November 15, the CENI announced that provisional results showed a victory by Condé, with about 52.5% of the vote, against 47.5% for Diallo. Participation was roughly 67% percent nationally, according to provisional results. Diallo, however, refused to accept the results—which must be confirmed by the Supreme Court—and claimed that they were tainted by fraud, particularly in two districts affected by ethnic violence just prior to the vote (see “Election Violence,” below).³⁰ Prior to the vote, both candidates had pledged to form a unity government no matter which one won the election, and Condé has reportedly stated that he is prepared to form such a government, possibly one that would include a role for Diallo.³¹

Election Violence

Delays associated with the organization of the run-off vote provoked violence between party supporters, at times along ethnic lines, in mid-September and mid-October. In October, a wave of violence in urban centers across the country appeared to be sparked by allegations that Peul vendors had poisoned RPG supporters at a political rally.³² In the northeastern towns of Siguiiri and Kouroussa, witnesses characterized the violence as ethnically motivated, with majority-Malinké populations (perceived as largely supporting the RPG) reportedly targeting Peul residents and shopkeepers, resulting in thousands of displacements soon before the vote. (Special polling stations were later set up so that these displaced persons could vote in areas to which they had fled.)

While the violence did not immediately escalate into wider reprisal attacks, the incidents in Siguiiri and Kouroussa became a key grievance of the UFDG party. Contending that its party representatives were unable to observe the vote in those areas due to intimidation, the UFDG called on the electoral commission to nullify the Siguiiri and Kouroussa results—amounting to some 200,000 votes, or more than the total separating Diallo from Condé in provisional results.³³ Violence again erupted after the November 15 announcement of Condé’s victory, this time in Conakry and the Diallo strongholds of Labé and Pita. On November 17, interim president General Sékouba Konaté declared a “state of emergency,” and the military joined in security patrols along with police and members of the Special Force for the Security of the Election Process (FOSSEPEL), a newly created election security force.

²⁸ The Carter Center, “Guinea’s Transitional Elections Marked by Peaceful Voting...” *op. cit.*

²⁹ *Ibid*; European Union (EU), “Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Presidential Elections in the Republic of Guinea,” November 8, 2010.

³⁰ AP, “Guinea Election Victor Celebrates, Country Tense,” November 16, 2010; Ougna Camara, “Guinean Presidential Candidate Will Challenge Result,” Bloomberg, November 16, 2010.

³¹ U.N. IRIN, “Guinea: The Waiting Game - State of Emergency,” November 19, 2010

³² AFP, “Guinée: Violences Contre des Peuls Dans la Ville de Siguiiri (Témoins),” October 23, 2010. These allegations were publicly repeated by senior RPG officials.

³³ Guineenews, “Résultats Officiels Présidentielle 2010 (CENI),” at <http://www.guineenews.org>.

The FOSSEPEL: A New Election Security Force

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

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

numerous credible reports of misconduct by policemen and gendarmes serving with FOSSEPEL, including beatings and assaults on party supporters.... Based on the reports, some members of the security unit used the [election-related] unrest as a pretext to loot shops and commit criminal acts, including theft of mobile phones, money, and other goods.³⁴

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

The Economy

Guinea boasts a wide array of natural resources, including up to half of the world’s reserves of bauxite (aluminum ore) and sizable deposits of high-grade iron ore, diamonds, gold, and uranium. Guinea may also have oil and gas reserves, and has significant hydro-electric and agricultural potential. The economy relies heavily on mineral exports; joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations have historically provided about 80% of Guinea’s foreign exchange.³⁵ However, the global economic crisis, political instability, and the government’s erratic governance of and contractual interference in the mining sector have negatively affected Guinea’s mining output and caused major investment projects to be delayed or canceled.³⁶ Still, a number of new mining agreements, albeit some that are controversial, have been signed since 2008.

While Guinea’s economic potential is considerable, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is estimated at only \$386, and GDP growth was negative in 2009.³⁷ Over 70% of the workforce is employed in (largely subsistence) agriculture.³⁸ Limited national infrastructure, periodic labor

³⁴ HRW, “Guinea: Ensure Restraint by Security Forces During Elections,” November 5, 2010.

³⁵ State Department, “Background Note: Guinea.” The Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinea (CBG), for example, is a joint venture in which 49% of the shares are owned by the Guinean Government and 51% by an international consortium led by Alcoa and Rio Tinto-Alcan.

³⁶ EIU, *Country Report: Guinea*, June 2009; Lydia Polgreen, “As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009; Andrea Hotter, “Guinea Ruler Worries Miners,” *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009; Reuters, “Guinea Bauxite Income Seen Down 60 Pct in 2010,” September 28, 2009.

³⁷ World Bank development indicators database; CIA world factbook.

³⁸ World Bank development indicators database.

strikes, corruption, and political instability are considered to pose barriers to growth. A lack of capacity and the poor quality of national education are also hindrances; the rate of children enrolled in school is reported to have declined since 2007.³⁹ Reports suggest government finances have been depleted due to various factors, including corruption and mismanagement, a drop in the collection of import duties, declining global mineral commodity prices, misguided monetary policy, and the freezing of some donor budgetary support after the 2008 military coup.⁴⁰ Guinea's external debt burden—\$3.1 billion in 2008 according to the World Bank—is also considerable.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Guinea's living standards are among the world's worst.⁴¹ Access to running water and electricity is rare, including in Conakry and other urban centers; shortages of basic goods, including petrol, cooking gas, and staple food commodities, are common. Though agriculturally fertile, Guinea is periodically subject to food insecurity. According to figures released by the United Nations in May 2009, the rate of chronic malnutrition increased over the previous two years, from 34.8% to 36.2%; 8.3% of Guinean children are thought to suffer from serious malnutrition.⁴² The adult prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 1.6%.⁴³ Annual health expenditures per capita amount to only \$26, according to the World Bank. The World Health Organization considers Guinea to be a "country under surveillance" with respect to potential complex humanitarian emergency needs.⁴⁴ At the same time, the suspension of some non-emergency donor assistance reportedly negatively affected humanitarian aid in some parts of Guinea.⁴⁵ Poor living conditions helped spark nationwide anti-government protests in 2007, and some fear that continued economic decline could lead to further unrest.

Recent Mining Sector Developments

A number of new mining agreements were signed in the first half of 2010, during the transitional government. Such deals have come under criticism from some Guinean politicians and civil society groups who contend that the terms are opaque and that the transitional government did not have the right to conclude significant sovereign agreements prior to elections.⁴⁶ Both presidential contenders, Cellou Dalein Diallo and Alpha Condé, have committed to a review of all mining contracts to determine whether they are sufficiently beneficial to the Guinean state.

In 2009, the government's unpredictable actions under Capt. Dadis Camara, who publicly threatened to close or nationalize various mining projects, sparked fears among international

³⁹ VOA, "Overcrowding, Stalled Reform Keep Guinea's Children Out of School," May 13, 2010.

⁴⁰ IMF and World Bank programs were suspended in early 2009. 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). Ama Egyaba Baidu-Forson, "IMF Expresses Concern Over Guinea's Financial Situation," IHS Global Insight, March 30, 2010.

⁴¹ See e.g., U.N. Development Program (UNDP), "Guinea: 2007/2008 Human Development Report."

⁴² U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Information Bulletin May 2009*.

⁴³ CIA World Factbook.

⁴⁴ World Health Organization, *Africa Weekly Emergency Situation Update*, February 8, 2010.

⁴⁵ IRIN, "Guinea: Climbing Out of the Donor Funding Gap," July 28, 2010.

⁴⁶ Reuters, "INTERVIEW-Guinea Opposition Says Vale Iron Deal Invalid," May 4, 2010; EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, September 2010.

investors concerned about the security of their assets.⁴⁷ For example, in April 2009, the Guinean government reclaimed ownership of an alumina refinery that the Russia-based aluminum producer RusAl had purchased from the state in 2006, reportedly for \$19 million. Dadis Camara accused RusAl and former government officials of corruption and declared the sale void, a decision later upheld by a Guinean court. The junta subsequently valued the refinery at \$257 million and accused RusAl of failing to pay significant taxes and royalties. RusAl has repeatedly stated that the refinery was legitimately acquired; negotiations over its status are ongoing.⁴⁸

Another case of disputed foreign asset ownership centers around the multinational mining company Rio Tinto. In August 2009, Rio Tinto announced it would pull its equipment from an anticipated \$6 billion iron ore project in southeastern Simandou after the CNDD indicated it would uphold a decision made under Conté to award half of Rio Tinto's concession to another company, BSG Resources Guinea, a subsidiary of Israeli businessman Benny Steinmetz's BSG Resources (BSGR). Rio Tinto has rejected the decision and pledged to fight it in court. In March 2010, Rio Tinto and China's state-run mining firm Chinalco signed a \$1.35 billion deal in which Chinalco was said to acquire a 47% stake in the Simandou venture. However, Guinean authorities said they did not recognize the deal.⁴⁹ The leadership of the transitional government has reportedly warned Rio Tinto to publicly accept the transfer of part of its concession, or else incur further losses. The warning may stem from fears among some officials who benefited from the transaction that a new elected government would revise the decision.⁵⁰ At the same time, the transitional government approved a joint venture between BSGR and the Brazilian mining company Vale pertaining to the portion of the Simandou reserve claimed by BSGR. The terms of the Vale deal reportedly remain opaque.⁵¹

In October 2009, the Guinean government announced a \$7 billion mining and infrastructure agreement with a Hong Kong-based firm, the China International Fund (CIF), in partnership with the Angolan state-owned conglomerate Sonangol. Previously, following the December 2008 coup, China had appeared poised to abandon prior plans to invest in major infrastructure projects in Guinea due to perceived political instability and weak global commodity markets.⁵² While the CIF, which has been linked to multi-billion dollar deals in Angola and other African countries, is ostensibly a privately owned company, an investigative report released in July 2009 by the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission found that "key personnel have ties to Chinese state-owned enterprises and government agencies."⁵³ Chinese officials maintain that the company's "actions have no connection with the Chinese government." The deal has been criticized by donors and the Guinean opposition.

⁴⁷ EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, March 2009: 16; Andrea Hotter, "Guinea Ruler Worries Miners," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2009; Reuters, "Analysis-Guinea RUSAL Dispute Sends Warning Sign to Miners," September 16, 2009.

⁴⁸ Reuters, "Guinea Court Reclaims Friguia From RUSAL," September 10, 2009; *Ria Novosti*, "Guinea Demands \$430 Mln from Russia's RusAl in Alumina Business Dispute," January 27, 2010.

⁴⁹ EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, September 2010.

⁵⁰ *Africa Confidential*, "Mine Not Yours," June 25, 2010.

⁵¹ EIU, *Guinea: Country Report*, September 2010.

⁵² Lydia Polgreen, "As Chinese Investment in Africa Drops, Hope Sinks," *The New York Times*, March 25, 2009.

⁵³ USCC, *The 88 Queensway Group*. See also *Africa-Asia Confidential*, "Blood and Money in the Streets: China's Business Ties to the Loathed Camara Junta Could Quickly Backfire," October 20, 2009; Christopher Bodeen, "China-Guinea Deal Highlights Africa Business Ties," AP, October 24, 2009.

Security Issues and the Rule of Law

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

Having been governed by authoritarian regimes since independence, Guinea has never experienced the effective rule of law. It is among the world's most corrupt countries, ranking 168 out of 180 countries assessed on Transparency International's 2009 *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Judicial and law enforcement capacity is reportedly very low and further compromised by corruption and political interference.⁵⁴ Such weaknesses have reportedly contributed to a high incidence of vigilante justice, which was even encouraged under the CNDD.⁵⁵ Security forces have frequently been accused of looting homes and businesses in Conakry, carrying out extra-judicial arrests, targeting perceived opponents, and other abuses of power.⁵⁶

Drug Trafficking

Counternarcotics issues are a relatively recent area of concern to U.S. policy-makers, as Guinea, among other countries in the region, has emerged as a reported transshipment hub for cocaine en route from South America to Europe.⁵⁷ Senior officials and members of the armed forces are believed by Guineans and the diplomatic community to have ties to the drug trade.⁵⁸ In June 2010, President Obama designated Ousmane Conté, a son of the late president, as a "drug kingpin," freezing any U.S. assets held by Conté and prohibiting any transactions with him by persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction.⁵⁹ Conté was arrested by the CNDD in February 2009, but he was released from detention in July 2010.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ According to the State Department's 2009 Human Rights Report, Guinea's "judicial system was endemically corrupt.... Budget shortfalls, a shortage of qualified lawyers and magistrates, and an outdated and restrictive penal code limited the judiciary's effectiveness."

⁵⁵ Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), *Rapport d'Enquêtes sur les Événements de N'Zérékoré du Début 2010*, February 23, 2010 (CRS translation from French); AFP, "Guinée: 'Graves violations des droits de l'Homme' (ordre des avocats)," May 15, 2009; Reuters, "Burn Armed Robbers, Says Guinea Crime Chief," June 2, 2009.

⁵⁶ HRW, "Guinea: Plan Elections and Hold Rights Abusers Accountable," January 21, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009; *Guineeactu.com*, "Perquisition Chez la SG de la CNTG : Le Capitaine Tiègboro et Raby s'Expliquent," March 5, 2009; HRW, "Guinea: Respect Rights of Opposition," August 31, 2009.

⁵⁷ See CRS Report R40838, *Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy*, by Liana Sun Wyler and Nicolas Cook.

⁵⁸ *Africa Confidential*: "Guinea: A Popular Putsch, So Far," January 23, 2009.

⁵⁹ Conté, who had been imprisoned in Guinea on drug-related accusations since February 2009, was released by Guinean authorities in mid-July 2010. Further details on the scope of the "kingpin" designation, made under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Title VIII, P.L. 106-120), are discussed in U.S. Treasury, *Narcotics: What You Need to Know about U.S. Sanctions Against Drug Traffickers*, July 15, 2010.

⁶⁰ BBC Online, "Guinea: Ex-President's Son Ousmane Conte Freed on Bail," July 16, 2010.

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

The CNDD's anti-drug efforts concentrated power in the presidency and sidelined civilian-led anti-drug agencies in favor of the military. Dadis Camara created a new agency, the State Secretariat for Special Services, to focus on drug and human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime. A military officer, Moussa Tiegboro Camara, was appointed to head the agency, with a corps of gendarmes and soldiers for enforcement. The agency's legal mandate and authorities were not clearly defined, notably vis-à-vis the judiciary or police. This raised further due process and human rights concerns, and some troops participating in anti-drug efforts were accused of abuses of power.⁶¹

The Guinean Military: A Key Security Challenge

Nearly all observers point to Guinea's bloated and undisciplined military as a central cause of political instability.⁶² The military has been implicated in high-level corruption, multiple coup attempts, mutinies, and human rights abuses, including the abuses of September 2009 and the shooting of over 100 unarmed anti-government demonstrators in early 2007.⁶³ Military officers implicated in abuses are perceived as benefiting from near-complete impunity from judicial sanction. The armed forces are also divided along ethnic, generational, and factional lines; such divisions reportedly grew further entrenched under the CNDD.⁶⁴ In the eyes of some, the armed forces serve largely as a vehicle for corruption and patronage rather than national defense. At the same time, military salaries and other benefits serve as a vital safety net for a deeply impoverished population.

Following the CNDD coup and throughout 2009, abuses by security forces reportedly escalated, while discipline and the effectiveness of the military chain of command were seen as deteriorating. While many credit Konaté with improving military discipline since January, the potential for abuses remains high. Some contend that a broad-based truth and reconciliation process is needed to address public perceptions of the armed forces and allegations of abuses stretching back to the post-colonial period. Repeated attempts by civil society groups to push for official investigations into crimes and human rights abuses by members of the military have not succeeded. In addition to perceived impunity from the law and lack of discipline, key factors seen as challenges associated with security sector reform include a lack of civilian control and

⁶¹ HRW, "Rein in Soldiers," April 27, 2009.

⁶² See, for example, ICG, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, Africa Report N°164, September 23, 2010.

⁶³ See HRW, *Dying for Change: Brutality and Repression by Guinean Security Forces in Response to a Nationwide Strike*, April 24, 2007.

⁶⁴ *La Lettre du Continent*, "Un Chef, Une Armée, Des Clans!" October 8, 2009.

oversight; an overweening size (Guinea's military, estimated at over 30,000 personnel, is one of the region's largest despite a population of only 10 million); an undefined mandate; and the incomplete integration of irregular recruits.⁶⁵

Foreign Relations

Guinea's relations with donors and neighboring countries are currently circumspect and restricted, given uncertainty over the country's future trajectory and leadership. The African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) both suspended Guinea's membership following the 2008 CNDD coup. President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Libya's Muammar al Qadhafi, who was then chairman of the AU, nevertheless expressed initial support for the CNDD. Many donors, including the United States (see "U.S. Relations," below) and the European Union (EU), suspended some bilateral assistance programs after the coup. Relations with Russia, a longtime diplomatic partner, have reportedly been negatively affected by a dispute over rights to an aluminum refinery claimed by RusAl (see "Recent Mining Sector Developments," above). Economic and diplomatic ties with China, another longtime partner, appear to be increasing.

The violent military crackdown of September 2009 prompted further attempts by donors to isolate the CNDD government. In October 2009, the EU and AU announced targeted sanctions against CNDD members and certain associates; the EU, AU, and ECOWAS additionally imposed an arms embargo.⁶⁶ The United States announced targeted travel restrictions. France suspended military aid; previously, it had been one of the only donors to continue such aid to the CNDD.⁶⁷ (France resumed bilateral cooperation programs, including military assistance, in February 2010.)

Since the formation of the transitional government in January, donors and regional organizations have moved toward normalizing relations, particularly in anticipation of a transition toward an elected government. On July 23, the AU announced that Guinea would deploy a battalion to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), although the status and likelihood of such a deployment are unclear.⁶⁸ The EU has reportedly tied the resumption of aid and the end of sanctions to the completion of democratic elections.⁶⁹

Guinea has had historically tense relations with many of its neighbors. Guinea played an active role in supporting various factions in the Sierra Leone and Liberia civil wars, and contributed troops to ECOWAS peacekeeping missions in both countries as part of ECOWAS' Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). Guinean relations with Liberia deteriorated significantly after Charles Taylor was elected president of Liberia in 1997: Conté reportedly provided logistical

⁶⁵ For further analysis on Guinea's security sector, see CRS Report R41200, *Guinea's New Transitional Government: Emerging Issues for U.S. Policy*, by Alexis Arieff. See also Joint Mission of ECOWAS, the AU, and the United Nations for Security Sector Reform in the Republic of Guinea, *Rapport d'Évaluation du Secteur de la Sécurité en République de Guinée*, May 2010; and ICG, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, op. cit.

⁶⁶ Reuters, "West African Leaders Impose Arms Embargo on Guinea," October 17, 2009; *Europolitique*, "UE/Guinée: L'UE Adopte des Sanctions Contre la Guinée"; AU Peace and Security Council Communiqué, October 29, 2009.

⁶⁷ AFP, "France Condemns 'Violent Repression' in Guinea," September 28, 2009; Reuters, "Clash Toll in Guinea Soars, France Cuts Aid," September 29, 2009.

⁶⁸ AFP, "Guinea to Send Troops to AU Force in Somalia," July 23, 2010.

⁶⁹ *Guineenews*, "Guinea: EU Links Resumption of Aid to Democracy," via BBC Monitoring, September 25, 2010; AFP, "EU to Extend Guinea Sanctions Awaiting Vote," October 21, 2010.

support and rear bases to anti-Taylor rebels, while Taylor-backed militia fighters launched attacks on Guinean border towns in 2000 and 2001. Relations between the two governments have improved enormously since Taylor's departure in August 2003.⁷⁰ Guinea also hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees from regional conflicts, most of whom have now returned to their countries of origin.

Conté's government forged close ties with President Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire and the late President João Bernardo Vieira of Guinea-Bissau. In 1998, Guinea (along with Senegal) sent troops to Guinea-Bissau to support Vieira against a military mutiny, while Guinea-Bissau reportedly sent military reinforcements to support Conté during anti-government demonstrations in early 2007.⁷¹

U.S. Relations

The Obama Administration has stated that the primary U.S. objective is to assist "peaceful, democratic change" in Guinea.⁷² The United States condemned the 2008 military coup and called for a return to civilian rule and the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections as soon as possible. Prior to the coup, the United States had maintained cordial relations with Guinea. In response to the September 2009 military crackdown, senior U.S. officials called for CNDD leaders to step down. The State Department also imposed targeted travel restrictions on certain members of the CNDD, members of the government, and associates.⁷³ Peace Corps assistance was suspended in October 2009; the program had previously been halted for six months in 2007 due to insecurity in connection with the January-February 2007 general strikes and anti-government protests. The Fulbright exchange program was also suspended.

Since the formation of the transitional government in January, U.S. officials have signaled approval of Interim President Konaté's leadership, and strongly praised the June elections as peaceful and "historic."⁷⁴ In August, Konaté was granted a diplomatic visa to visit the United States; however, the trip has yet to take place. The United States repeatedly called for elections to take place according to schedule, amid multiple delays, and condemned the violence that erupted in response to the November announcement of provisional results, calling on supporters of both candidates to remain calm and exercise legal forms of redress for election-related grievances.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Taylor stepped down amid a rebel assault on Liberia's capital, Monrovia, and is currently on trial in The Hague before the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

⁷¹ For background on Guinea's involvement in neighboring conflicts, see Arieff, "Still Standing: Neighbourhood Wars and Political Stability in Guinea," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, 3 (September 2009).

⁷² *FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations*.

⁷³ Adam Nossiter, "U.S. Envoy Protests Violence in Guinea," *The New York Times*, October 7, 2009; U.S. Fed News, "Guinea Violence 'Vile Violation' of Human Rights, Clinton Says," October 9, 2009; Congressional Quarterly Transcript, "Secretary of State Clinton Holds Press Conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi," October 6, 2009; State Department, "Guinea: Travel Restrictions," October 29, 2009.

⁷⁴ AFP, "Obama Calls for Peaceful Guinea Run-Off Vote," July 7, 2010; U.S. Embassy Conakry press statement, via Guineenews, July 8, 2010.

⁷⁵ State Department, "Post-Election Violence in Guinea [press release]," November 17, 2010.

Foreign Aid

In January 2009, the United States suspended bilateral aid in response to the coup, with the exception of humanitarian and democracy-promotion assistance. In practice, security assistance was suspended, while most non-military aid fit into permitted categories. While this policy broadly conformed to congressional directives included in annual appropriations legislation, legal restrictions on assistance to post-coup governments were not triggered.⁷⁶ Election assistance, which is largely funded out of the Development Assistance account and exempt from the restriction, increased in FY2009. A \$32 million USAID-funded umbrella project initiated in 2007, *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.

It seems likely that many of the same goals that previously defined U.S. aid priorities will continue to be pursued if a transfer to civilian, elected leadership occurs. In its FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, the Obama Administration stated that “assuming a credibly elected, civilian government is in place ... U.S. assistance in FY2011 will focus on fostering more effective law enforcement and judicial systems, greater democracy, good governance, better health services, and improved economic opportunity.”

Elections and Democracy Promotion

Programs supporting Guinea’s electoral process are not affected by the suspension of U.S. aid. The Obama Administration’s FY2011 request for democracy and governance funding is for roughly \$5.53 million, and an estimated \$8.639 million was appropriated for democracy and governance programs in FY2010. U.S. support for Guinea’s electoral process will be largely implemented through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID programmed roughly \$6.85 million in FY2008 and FY2009 funds for electoral assistance programs, making the United States the second-largest donor to the election process after the EU.⁷⁷ 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

Security assistance—which was relatively large compared to other countries of comparable size in the region—was suspended in connection with the 2008 military coup. However, several new security assistance programs were initiated in 2010. In early June 2010, the State Department

⁷⁶ The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-8, Division H, Title VII, section 7008) barred direct assistance “to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree,” with the exception of democracy promotion assistance. A substantively identical provision was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-117, Title VII, Division F, Section 7008). Such provisions, which have been included in annual appropriations legislation since at least 1985, are often referred to as “Section 508” sanctions. However, the State Department determined that the December 2008 coup in Guinea did not trigger the provision because the deposed government had not been “duly elected.” (State Department response to CRS query, March 2010.)

⁷⁷ Information provided by USAID, November 2010. U.S. programs included the provision of electoral equipment and materials; training and technical assistance for Guinea’s National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), electoral agents and poll workers, and political parties and candidates; voter education; civil society and media election monitoring and oversight; an international election observation mission implemented by the Carter Center.

initiated the training of a new, 75-member presidential security detail, funded by approximately \$1.5 million in Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds. The Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) also funded a resident advisor to act as a consultant on elections security and broader police reform issues, through the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). The State Department also funded two experts' participation in an ECOWAS-led assessment of Guinea's security sector, and intends to obligate up to \$200,000 in IMET funds for courses for military officials and civilians on topics including civil-military relations, military justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

The Obama Administration has indicated that the United States will resume a broad array of security assistance programs if the transition to an elected civilian government is completed.⁷⁸ In March 2010, a U.S. delegation representing the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Defense Department met with Guinean officials in Conakry to discuss potential U.S. support for security sector reform. State Department officials have also indicated the possibility of assisting Guinean troops who may deploy to Somalia as peacekeepers.⁷⁹

Prior to the 2008 coup, Guinea benefitted from IMET, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), "Section 1206" programs, and other U.S. assistance aimed at enhancing security forces' capabilities and professionalism.⁸⁰ Before aid was suspended, U.S. officials had informally planned a wide range of programs, many focusing on maritime security and counter-narcotics. In 2002, the United States trained an 800-person Guinean Ranger unit to shore up border security after Liberian-backed incursions in 2000-2001. Human rights concerns have also periodically limited military training programs, and Congress has restricted IMET assistance in Guinea to "Expanded" IMET, which emphasizes human rights and civilian control of the military.⁸¹

Multilateral Aid

Multilateral development assistance, concessional loans, and anti-poverty programs were affected by the coup. In 2009 the World Bank stopped disbursing roughly \$200 million in outstanding loans designated for programs related to health, transportation, education, and other sectors, due to political uncertainty following the coup as well as Guinea's subsequent failure to make sufficient payments on its existing loans.⁸² The International Monetary Fund-led Heavily Indebted

⁷⁸ *FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.*

⁷⁹ CRS interview with State Department officials, July 2010.

⁸⁰ Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2006 (P.L. 109-163) provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military and foreign maritime security forces for counter-terrorism and other purposes. Guinea was one of 15 beneficiary countries of an FY2007 Africa regional Section 1206 program. Planned FY2008 Section 1206 funding for Guinea was redirected in 2009 following the military coup.

⁸¹ Most recently, in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (P.L. 111-117, Division F, Title VII, Section 7070).

⁸² Arieff interview with World Bank officials, May 2009 and February 2010. The World Bank classifies Guinea as one of the world's 78 poorest countries, which qualifies Guinea for loans through the Bank's International Development Association (IDA). IDA lends money (credits) on concessional terms, meaning that credits have no interest charge and repayments are stretched over 35 to 40 years, including a 10-year grace period. IDA also provides grants to countries at risk of debt distress.

Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was due to provide additional government financing in 2009, has not advanced since Conté's death.⁸³

Table I. Selected Bilateral Aid by Account

\$ thousands

	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010 (est.)	FY2011 (req.)
TOTAL	17,797	14,206	13,377	22,018	18,317
Development Assistance	5,529	2,400	2,576	14,518	10,277
Global Health and Child Survival—USAID	7,844 [Child Survival and Health]	8,458	8,200	7,500	7,500
Food Aid (P.L. 480)	4,093	2,993	2,501	0	0
International Military Education and Training	331	246	0	0	40
Foreign Military Financing	0	0	0	0	0
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	0	0	100	0	500

Source: State Department, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2009-FY2011

Outlook

Guinea is likely to continue to interest U.S. policymakers for its role in transnational security issues and in regional stability, its economic potential, and its hoped-for democratic transition. The country's outlook has improved, in some ways, from early January 2010, when Guinea was beset by deep political uncertainty and fears of imminent civil conflict. However, the election period has also exacerbated certain societal tensions and raised the stakes for the electoral victor. Inter-ethnic relations—historically perceived as relatively harmonious in Guinea though subject to political manipulation and occasional violent confrontation—have deteriorated, and the full implications of recent ethnic violence have yet to be assessed. Although the transitional government brought a measure of stability, notably by reigning in the military, its leadership has not altered the underlying causes of Guinea's instability, including economic stagnancy and the military's opaque structure and overweening size. The handling of the transition to a newly

⁸³ The HIPC Initiative is a comprehensive approach to debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries pursuing IMF- and World Bank-supported adjustment and reform programs. At the time of the coup, the program was on track. Reaching the HIPC "completion point" would grant Guinea an estimated relief of \$2.2 billion and reduce debt service by approximately \$100 million the first year (Arieff interview with IMF official, May 2009).

elected government could prove decisive for the country's future trajectory. Any number of potential factors, including negotiations between the two presidential candidates, delays in the transition, regional developments, continued economic hardship, military divisions, and ethnic tensions, could spark renewed insecurity and corresponding challenges to U.S. policy goals.

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