

## **Guinea Short Brief**

### **I. Activity Summary: Peacebuilding in Guinea**

#### **Overview**

Two strongmen dominated Guinea since its independence from France in 1958, and both left a legacy of extreme personalization of power and the violent suppression of opponents. Sekou Touré, a radical and authoritarian Pan-Africanist, was Guinea's leader at independence. Guinea's second strongman leader (of twenty-four years) Lansana Conté, died in December 2008, sparking a power struggle for the presidency. Despite ailing for some time, Conté did not plan an orderly succession. Rather, he presided over a highly concentrated power structure and his death left a power vacuum and weak institutions. Despite politically-focused engagement from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and bilateral partners, the ensuing years included coups, violence tied to electoral politics – often low-level but spiking dramatically at times – and failed presidential assassination attempts. Ultimately, elections occurred in 2010 and 2015 that outsiders cited as credible, but that have not resolved Guinea's weak governance and political instability.

#### **Conté 1984 – 2008**

When Guinea's first strongman died, military officer Lansana Conté took advantage of the chaos that followed and staged a coup. He immediately disbanded parliament, suspended the constitution and outlawed political activity. He faced threats from coups and notoriously executed political opponents. With the fall of the Soviet Union, however, he was unable to fend off international calls for democratization and began to make concessions towards a multi-party democracy in the early 1990s. He stood for multiparty elections in 1993, 1998 and 2003, winning each time despite international allegations of rigged elections. In 2005, the political tides began turning. Alpha Condé, the head of the main opposition party, returned to Guinea and protests and riots against Conté's increasingly unpopular rule led to a brutal crackdown in which his security forces killed at least 90 people.<sup>[i]</sup> As Conté's health began to deteriorate in 2006, ever-greater calls for transition built in Guinea.<sup>[ii]</sup> ECOWAS, which had worked with Guinean troops in Sierra Leone and Liberia, made the tense situation in Guinea the primary topic of its January 2007 Third Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, and sent mediators.<sup>[iii]</sup>

Spillover from regional conflicts, especially the Sierra Leonean and Liberia civil wars, added both to instability in Guinea, and a lopsided military. In the early 2000s, Liberian forces attacked the forest region of Guinea, and Conté had recruited volunteers to fight alongside the Guinean army.<sup>[iv]</sup> These forces were never fully demobilized and many former combatants remained in Guinea.<sup>[v]</sup> Since 2000, irregular recruitment of soldiers and absorption of militias had bloated the Guinean military, increasing numbers from 10,000 in 2001 to 45,000 in 2010.<sup>[vi]</sup> At the same time, the army was becoming increasingly corrupt, top heavy and politically powerful—a deadly mix.<sup>[vii]</sup>

#### **Coups (2008, 2009) and International Responses**

When Conté died in December 2008, history seemed to repeat itself. The military seized power and Army captain Moussa Dadis Camara (known as Dadis) came to power promising swift presidential and

parliamentary elections. The army quickly consolidated power and militarized public administration throughout the country – only 3 out of 33 prefects were not replaced with military officers.<sup>[viii]</sup> The international community condemned the coup, and the AU suspended Guinea's membership.<sup>[ix]</sup> By September 2009, the AU threatened sanctions, reminding Dadis and all members of CNDD that they had sworn not to run for election and that elections would be scheduled before January 31, 2010.

The military coup only grabbed international headlines in September 2009 when security forces attacked protesters in the capital, killing over 150 demonstrators, injuring 1700, and perpetrating mass rape.<sup>[x]</sup> In the days that followed, soldiers attacked and looted neighborhoods throughout the capital that were known as opposition strongholds. On October 2, 2009, ECOWAS, with the support of the UN, sent then-president of Burkina Faso to mediate the crisis.<sup>[xi]</sup> At that point, despite promising to form a National Transitional Council (CNT), Dadis' government had made no further movement towards transition or elections and was not engaging with the Forces Vives – the umbrella group for opposition parties and civil society. The Forces Vives agreed to the mediation.

Following lobbying from the AU and ECOWAS, the United Nations established a Commission of Inquiry into the killings at the stadium, and encouraged both the mediation and swift elections.<sup>[xii]</sup> The Commission of Inquiry delivered its report in December 2009 and found there was evidence that crimes against humanity had been committed and that individual members of the junta were criminally responsible for some activities. It called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to be seized of the cases of crimes against humanity and set up a United National Council on Human Rights (UNCHR) office in Guinea.<sup>[xiii]</sup>

In January 2009, the UN also created the International Contact Group on Guinea, consisting of the UN, the AU, the EU, the World Bank, ECOWAS, other regional organizations and partner countries, including France, Morocco, Burkina Faso, the UK, and the United States.<sup>[xiv]</sup> Dadis' military junta continued to promise elections and reform, but was unable to gain the full support of the elite in Conakry or the population in the hinterland.

On December 3, 2009, just shy of one year after Dadis' coup, one of his bodyguards shot him in the head, nearly killing him. Dadis was evacuated to Morocco for emergency treatment and in his absence, a transitional government was established that prepared the way for elections. General Sekouba Konaté, a Dadis rival, took over as leader of the transitional government. The approximately year-long road from Dadis' bloodless coup to his near-assassination underscores the volatility and stakes of electoral politics in Guinea.

Konaté's rise to power provided an opening both for mediation and security sector reform (SSR). After receiving treatment in Morocco, Dadis arrived in Ouagadougou to participate in the ECOWAS mediation on January 12, 2010. This sparked tensions between Konaté's partisans, who favored a return to civilian rule, and Dadis' supporters who wanted Dadis to return to power.<sup>[xv]</sup> On January 15, the parties announced the Ouagadougou Accord, creating a unity government with a civilian prime minister decided on by the opposition and promising elections within six months.<sup>[xvi]</sup> The UN Security Council continued to support ECOWAS and AU mediation efforts, and welcomed the Ouagadougou Accords without fully engaging in the conflict.<sup>[xvii]</sup>

## 2010 Election

On June 27, 2010, Guinea organized and held multiparty presidential elections for the first time in its history. ECOWAS dispatched 200 observers and took the lead managing the transition and preparing for run-off elections on November 7, 2010.<sup>[xviii]</sup> Elections followed ethnic lines, with each contender rallying support from their respective ethnic groups.<sup>[xix]</sup> The first round results were announced almost a month later, and showed Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Force of Guinea (a primarily Fula ethnic coalition) with a commanding lead over Alpha Condé (a longtime political exile and leader of the anti-Fula coalition).

Guinea's Supreme Court declared Condé the winner in December 2010, however, and Diallo accepted their ruling, but peace did not immediately follow the elections. While ECOWAS declared the elections acceptable, international observers questioned the outcome.[\[xx\]](#)

Legislative and local elections followed the pattern of presidential elections and were hopelessly delayed. Only in September 2013, after nearly three years of delay, did Guinea finally hold legislative elections. UNOWA (United Nations Office for West Africa) mediation efforts played a key role in finally bringing these elections to fruition and EU observers were able to guarantee the legitimacy of the vote count.[\[xxi\]](#) Despite three years of preparation and international "support," violent demonstrations accompanied the polling.[\[xxii\]](#) Voting almost exclusively along ethnic lines, the 2013 elections were a warning to international actors that free, fair and peaceful elections would not be guaranteed in the 2015 presidential elections. In 2014, the Ebola crisis put a temporary damper on political protest as quarantines kept protestors off the street, but reconciliation and a stronger political process were not improved by the national crisis.

### **Election and Post-Election Support**

In general, the regional and international response to the coup, violence and delayed elections in Guinea was disjointed, slipshod and without the commitment obvious in interventions in neighboring countries, especially Liberia and Sierra Leone. Guinea's place as the world's largest bauxite producer, however, provides additional incentive for international actors to be engaged. In response to the coup and failure to hold elections, the international community established economic sanctions and both ECOWAS and the EU imposed arms embargos on Guinea.[\[xxiii\]](#)

The military's hold over all apparatus of power was a key barrier to mediation, democratization and peace. At the time, the International Crisis Group described the armed forces as "divided along ethnic and generational lines and notorious for indiscipline, human rights abuse, insubordination and criminality."[\[xxiv\]](#) ECOWAS and the UN focused their interventions on the military, encouraging SSR and pushing for lustration for junta members. Having concentrated power in the military over the last two presidents and unwilling to give up the benefits of patronage, the military resisted internal and external calls for reform.[\[xxv\]](#) Recognizing the pressing need for SSR, ECOWAS, the EU and the UN all came together for joint assessment of SSR needs towards the end of 2010.[\[xxvi\]](#)

Following the 2010 presidential elections, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) became involved in much-needed SSR in Guinea.[\[xxvii\]](#) Despite continued instability, however, peacebuilding in Guinea has been a relative success. Unlike its neighbor, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea has avoided descending into a narco-state, which was its likely fate at the time of the coup.[\[xxviii\]](#) Its history as a neo-patrimonial one-party state, however, continues to haunt its development, and corruption remains a significant hurdle to development.

### **2015 Presidential Elections**

Leading up to the October 2015 presidential elections, the Guinean government expressed its desire to restrict international involvement in the election. On August 20, 2015 there was a sign of good news as the government and opposition agreed to more opposition representation in local government and reforms to the National Electoral Commission.[\[xxix\]](#) Still, the incumbent (Condé) was declared the winner.[\[xxx\]](#) Elections were more peaceful than in 2010, but accusations of fraud by the opponent left room for further instability.

## **II. Key Issues, Dilemmas, and Lessons from Guinea**

### **1. Sanctions, Withdrawal of Aid, Coupled with Peacebuilding**

The EU, UN and ECOWAS are increasingly coupling sanctions on individual leaders and on countries as a whole and withdrawals of development aid and military and security assistance with peacekeeping. This trend is evident in Guinea. While the trend did not begin in either of these countries, this strategy's appearance in both crises indicates these targeted activities are likely to continue in the future.

## **2. Returning to Traditional Roles? International Organizations as Conveners**

Despite a proliferation of actors in Guinea, the roles of these international actors was remarkably traditional. There has been no shift towards robust peacekeeping or a multi-dimensional mission. Instead, good offices and acting as mediators, conveners and coordinators have dominated the roles of regional and international actors in the crisis. The UN has a traditional role as a convener due to its ability to bring together parties and coordinate actions. This more traditional role in providing good offices was successful in continuing dialogue between the Guinea government and the opposition. In addition to the UN, the AU and ECOWAS also served important roles convening civil society, the government and the opposition.

## **3. Rise of ECOWAS and Sub-Regional Peacekeeping and Mediation**

Regional actors, especially ECOWAS, seem to be coming in to their own with their interventions in Guinea, even as the AU has been uncharacteristically quiet. Instability in the region has caused instability in Guinea, but has also made ECOWAS eager to act aggressively, possibly to stop contagion. Sub-regional peace support operations are on the rise and Guinea is part of this trend.

## **4. Weak States and Institutions**

Despite a strong rule of law and SSR mandate, operating in a country with very weak rule of law and nearly non-existent institutions has set peacebuilding missions up to fail. In Guinea, international focus on SSR and elections failed to account for Guinea's lack of democratic history and did not address its lack of credible institutions. While the entire region is awash in regional and UN missions, it is impossible to reform institutions that exist in name only. With such slow political development, good offices seem to be wasted in such weak states. In Guinea, for example, there is no constitutional court to decide the legitimacy of recent election rules.<sup>[xxxii]</sup> Moreover, Guinea is one of the most corrupt countries in the world.<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> Reforming institutions in these states is a nearly impossible task and training missions are not enough to help these countries transition from decades of military rule to free and fair democracies free of patronage and ethnic divisions.

## **5. International Organizations Love Elections, Hate Election Violence**

Similar to other UN and AU missions in the region, notably Côte d'Ivoire, an outsized focus on holding free and fair elections has drawn attention away from institution building and rule of law. While elections are necessary for democracy, they are hardly sufficient. International organizations have developed wonderful expertise in holding elections, especially in fragile and post-conflict states, but translating these elections into stability has been far less successful. The 2010 elections in Guinea are a perfect example of this trend.

Guinea is also a good example of the concern about election violence in the region. In 2011, UNOWA, ECOWAS, UNDP, UNDP, the AU, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the EU organized a conference on elections and stability in Cape Verde leading to the Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa.

## **6. Unforeseen Circumstances: Ebola**

Since March 2014, Ebola has killed 2,500 people in Guinea. No new cases have been reported, however, since October 2015.<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> The virus has had far ranging economic and social impacts that will continue to effect peacebuilding and democratization. As international staff was evacuated, peacebuilding has taken a back seat to aggressive public health responses. With even greater divisions and betrayed trust from the epidemic, but new international attention, it is too soon to say how the Ebola outbreak will affect durable peacebuilding in the region.

### III. Guinea Literature Review

#### Reports/Scholarly Works:

**William Durch et al., “Understanding Impact of Police, Justice and Corrections Components in UN Peace Operations” (Washington, DC: The Stimson Center, June 26, 2012).**

**Final Communique, 8th Session of the International Contact group on Guinea (ICG-G), 12 Oct. 2009,**<http://reliefweb.int/report/guinea/eighth-session-international-contact-group-guinea-icg-g-final-communique>.

Requested UN set up a Commission of Inquiry after government killed 157 protestors in 2008.

**“Guinea’s Other Emergency: Organising Elections,” Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, December 14, 2014),**  
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/b106-guinea-s-other-emergency-organising-elections.pdf>.

Provides background and recommendations on how Guinea and the international community should be preparing for the October 2015 presidential elections.

**“Guinea: Military Rule Must End,” Africa Briefing (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 16, 2009)**

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/B066%20Guinea%20Military%20Rule%20Must%20End.pdf>.

Brief on increasing militarization following the coup. Recommendations for international and regional mediators to push the government toward giving up power and organizing swift, free and fair elections.

**“Guinea: Reforming the Army,” Africa Report (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, September 23, 2010)**

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/164%20Guinea%20---%20Reforming%20the%20Army.pdf>.

Report describes the pressing need for security sector reform in Guinea.

**NYU Center on International Cooperation, “West Africa,” in *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations* 2010-2013 (Lynne Rienner Publishers)**

<http://peaceoperationsreview.org/country-and-regional/west-africa/>.

**“Observing the 2010 Presidential Elections in Guinea: Final Report” (Atlanta: The Carter Center), accessed August 28, 2015, [http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace\\_publications/election\\_reports/guinea-2010-FinalReport.pdf](http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/guinea-2010-FinalReport.pdf)**

Carter Center final report on election observations in Guinea 2010.

**Gilles Olakounlé Yabi, “The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict,” (Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, September 2010)**

<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/07448.pdf>.

Discusses background of ECOWAS as regional peacebuilder, and its engagement with Guinea from 2007-2010.

### **UN, AU, and ECOWAS Official Documents, Agreements**

African Union. Communiqué. PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXXXVII) July 21, 2010.

African Union. Communique: 165 meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council on the situation in Guinea, PSC/PR/Comm(CLV). African Union. December 19, 2008.

ECOWAS. Regional Action Plan To Address The Growing Problem Of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organised Crimes And Drug Abuse In West Africa 2008-2011. <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/ecowasresponseactionplan.html>

Ouagadougou Joint Declaration. January 15, 2010.

United Nations. Report of the first review of the Statement of Mutual Commitments between the Government of Guinea and the Peacebuilding Commission (September 2011 to March 2012). PBC/6/GUI/3. June 19, 2012.

United Nations Office for West Africa, “Praia Declaration on Elections and Stability in West Africa,” May 20, 2011.

United Nations. Security Council. Statement by the President of the Security Council. S/PRST/2010/3. February 16, 2010.

United Nations. Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities. S/2009/189. April 8, 2009.

United Nations. Letter from the Secretary-General. S/2009/556. October 28, 2009.

---

[i] Chris McGreal, “Lansana Conté Profile: Death of an African ‘Big Man,’” *The Guardian*, December 23, 2008, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/23/lansana-conte-profile>.

[ii] “Guinea Profile - Timeline,” *BBC News*, accessed October 23, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13443183>.

[iii] Gilles Olakounlé Yabi, “The Role of ECOWAS in Managing Political Crisis and Conflict,” (Abuja: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, September 2010), <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/07448.pdf>.

[iv] “Guinea: Military Rule Must End,” Africa Briefing (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 16, 2009), 6, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/B066%20Guinea%20Military%20Rule%20Must%20End.pdf>.

[v] Ibid., 7.

[vi] “Guinea: Reforming the Army,” Africa Report (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, September 23, 2010), 1, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/164%20Guinea%20---%20Reforming%20the%20Army.pdf>.

[vii] “Guinea: Reforming the Army.”

[viii] “Guinea: Military Rule Must End,” 5.

[ix] Communique: 165 meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the situation in Guinea, PSC/PR/Comm (CLXV). African Union. December 19, 2008.

[x] “Guinea: Military Rule Must End,” 2.

[xi] United Nations. Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on enhancing mediation and its support activities. S/2009/189. April 8, 2009.

[xii] United Nations. Letter from the Secretary-General. S/2009/556. October 28, 2009.

[xiii] “Guinea | Department of Political Affairs,” accessed October 24, 2015, <http://www.un.org/undpa/africa/guinea>.

[xiv] Final Communique of the First Session of the International Contact Group on Guinea (Conakry: February 17, 2009).

[xv] United Nations. Security Council. Statement by the President of the Security Council. S/PRST/2010/3. February 16, 2010.

[xvi] Ouagadougou Accord. January 15, 2010.

[xvii] United Nations. Security Council. Statement by the President of the Security Council. S/PRST/2010/3. February 16, 2010.

[xviii] *Sarjo Camara Singhateh*, “West Africa: ECOWAS to Dispatch 200 Election Observers to Conakry,” (All Africa: June 16, 2010), <http://allafrica.com/stories/201006170378.html>.

[xix] “Guinea: avoiding ethnically-driven elections,” (Conakry: IRIN News, December 6, 2011), <http://www.irinnews.org/report/94405/guinea-avoiding-ethnically-driven-elections>.

[xx] Morgan Winsor, “Guinea Elections 2015: Guide to presidential candidates, key issues, voting process, voter security and when to expect results,” (International Business Times: October 10, 2015), <http://www.ibtimes.com/guinea-election-2015-guide-presidential-candidates-key-issues-voting-process-voter-2127129>.

[xxi] “Guinea’s Other Emergency: Organising Elections,” Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing (Dakar/Brussels: International Crisis Group, December 14, 2014), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/guinea/b106-guinea-s-other-emergency-organising-elections.pdf>.

[xxii] *Ibid.*, 1.

[xxiii] Pieter D. Wezeman and Noel Kelly, “Appendix 12A Multilateral Arms Embargoes, 2009,” in *SIPRI Yearbook 2010* (SIPRI, 2010), 467, <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2010/files/SIPRIYB201012A.pdf>.

[xxiv] “Guinea: Reforming the Army,” 1.

[xxv] *Ibid.*, i.

[xxvi] “Overview of DCAF’s Support to the European Union in the Area of Security Sector Reform” (Geneva: DCAF, January 2013); “Guinea: Reforming the Army,” 1.

[xxvii] United Nations. General Assembly Security Council. Draft statement of mutual commitments on peacebuilding in Guinea between the Government of Guinea and the Peacebuilding Commission. PBC/5/GU/L.1. September 15, 2011.

[xxviii] Dane F. Smith, “Guinea Inches Toward Stability,” *World Politics Review*, May 13, 2013, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/articles/12932/guinea-inches-toward-stability>.

[xxix] “Guinée : Un Consensus Politique Trouvé,” *BBC Afrique*, August 21, 2015, [http://www.bbc.com/afrique/region/2015/08/150821\\_guinee\\_deal](http://www.bbc.com/afrique/region/2015/08/150821_guinee_deal).

[xxx] Dionne Searcey, “Guinea president’s re-election confirmed despite fraud complaints,” (New York Times: November 1, 2015), <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/02/world/africa/guinea-president-alpha-conde-re-election-confirmed.html>.

[xxxi] “Guinea’s Other Emergency: Organising Elections.”

[xxxii] “Corruption Perception Index,” (Transparency International, 2014), <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014>. Guinea ranks 145/175, and Guinea-Bissau ranks 161/175.

[xxxiii] “Ebola Situation Report - 25 November 2015” (World Health Organization, November 25, 2015), <http://apps.who.int/ebola/current-situation/ebola-situation-report-25-november-2015>