

Republic of Guinea: an analysis of current drivers of change

Ana Larcher Carvalho

March 2011

Executive Summary

Since gaining independence from France in 1958, Guinea has remained relatively stable and has never experienced violent conflict. Until the bloodless military coup of 2008, it had had only two governments: the socialist administration of Sékou Touré (1958-1984) and the liberal regime of Lansana Conté (1984-2008). Despite some moves towards a more democratic system, including the adoption by referendum of a new constitution in 1990, the latter years of the Conté government were marked by bad governance, human rights violations, weak rule of law and impunity. This was compounded by the prolonged illness of the president, whose fitness to govern was widely doubted, and by 2003 there were fears that Guinea could become yet another failed state.

The military junta headed by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara that assumed power following Conté's death in December 2008 promised a transition to democracy but hopes were shattered on 28 September 2009 when a peaceful demonstration was brutally suppressed, leaving 150 people dead. Nevertheless, when Dadis Camara was replaced by General Sékouba Konaté following an assassination attempt, transitional institutions were established to pave the way for elections. Despite political turmoil and technical challenges, Alpha Condé, a longstanding opposition leader, was elected president in December 2010 after what were considered to be the first ever credible elections in Guinea.

Successful transition

The successful transition was seen as proof of Guinean society's commitment to peace, democracy and social justice. However, social tensions, arising from both structural factors and the positions being taken by the main actors, remain and may pose obstacles or challenges to the building of democracy and social peace.

This analysis examines key factors (both structural and dynamic) that could influence change or cause instability in Guinea: the forces and processes at work on the ground, the chances of resolving issues that arise, and the challenges and potential pitfalls that lie ahead. It includes information based on interviews conducted with government officials, bilateral partners and donors, multilateral organisations, NGOs, academics and the media in Conakry in May 2010.

Potential problems

Guinea has no history of ethnic violence but ethnic divisions were exploited by some politicians during the recent elections and some fear that further ethnic tensions will surface in the future. How to address this issue, which is linked to the power structure in Guinea, will be a challenge and requires political maturity from party leaders.

Democratisation will inevitably mean dismantling existing power structures and is thus another potential source of destabilisation.

Success in achieving democratisation and better governance is contingent on the economic situation. It will be difficult to plan and implement reforms that adequately address society's demands; the size of the task and the time frame needed to implement them cannot be underestimated.

Serious tension between the new government and civil society is likely in the future: social expectations are extremely high and the difficult economic and social conditions may once again fuel popular discontent. It is essential that participation and dialogue platforms between government and civil society remain open, especially in times of crisis, so that social consensus for the difficult tasks ahead can be found. Such platforms have proven effective in the past and may be instrumental in preventing a return to more authoritarian forms of government.

Impunity and redress for past human rights violations will also be a major challenge for the new president. He has announced the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission but no details are so far available. However, combating impunity in the long term will require reforming the deficient justice system as well as the security and defence sectors. The army, which for decades was the strongest institution in Guinea, has become destabilised for a number of reasons and an increase in the proliferation of light weapons and drug trafficking in urban areas further complicates the security situation.

Increasingly difficult living conditions – which include rising food and fuel prices, a stagnant economy resulting mainly from the overall decline in commodity prices in the past century and Guinea's growing debt burden – mean that,

even though it is a resource-rich country, it is undergoing a deep economic and financial crisis. The growth in commodity prices (particularly bauxite) over the past few years may reverse this trend but finding ways to improve competitiveness, attract investment and stimulate the development of a private sector capable of ensuring growth and promoting exports are major tests for which there are no clear strategies.

Lastly, while Guinea's relations with its neighbours are currently stable, the spillover effects of nearby conflicts, such as the current one in Ivory Coast, continue to pose a serious risk of regional instability.

Recommendations

The author argues that, although international institutions and donors have a role to play in helping Guinea address these issues, change must be driven from within. Interventions should therefore be planned with that in mind and ensure that national actors have ownership of any planned projects. Donor coordination is also crucial and the possible delegation of responsibility to another donor should be considered. An important contribution could also be made by supporting regional mechanisms for peacebuilding. Given the increasing strength of civil society in Guinea, efforts should be made to support its involvement in dialogue as a means of preventing factional divisions between political parties. Regarding security sector reform, lessons should be learned from other countries in order to avoid uncoordinated donor-led projects. Improving economic development means improving governance and new donors could consider providing technical support for existing governance projects. Lastly, continued reliance on the extraction of natural resources and Guinea's extremely heavy debt burden are also issues that need to be addressed.

Ana Larcher Carvalho is a researcher and lecturer at the Centre for African Studies, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE-IUL), in Lisbon, Portugal. Her research focuses on the planning and evaluation of development aid and the impact of external intervention on African societies. She teaches undergraduate and master's courses on project evaluation and African development. She has experience as a consultant, having led projects on behalf of several United Nations (UN) organisations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union, the African Development Bank (ADB) and others in various African countries.

Acknowledgments

The fieldwork for this paper was conducted with the assistance of Aboubacar Camara in Conakry. The author also wishes to thank Sílvia Roque, researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, for her comments, and all the interviewees who provided information during the research phase.

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Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AI	Amnesty International
AU	African Union
CECIDE	Centre for International Trade and Development
CENI	National Independent Electoral Commission
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahelo-Saharan States
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMC	Civil Military Committee
CNDD	National Council for Democracy and Development
CNT	National Unity Government
CNTG	National Confederation of Guinean Workers
COI	Commission of Inquiry
CONAG-DCF	National Coalition of Guinea for the Rights and Citizenship of Women
Ecomog	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
Ecosap	Ecowas Small Arms Programme
Ecowarn	Ecowas Early Warning and Response Network
Ecowas	Economic Community of West African States
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFHR	International Federation of Human Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ICG-G	International Contact Group for Guinea
MATAP	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs
MRU	Mano River Union
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODHR	Observatory for Democracy and Human Rights
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OIF	International Organisation of la Francophonie
PSC	Peace and Security Council (AU)
PRS	poverty reduction strategy
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
REFAMP-Guinée	Réseau des Femmes Africaines Ministres et Parlementaires de Guinée
REFMAP	Réseau des Femmes du Fleuve Mano pour la Paix
RPG	Rally of the Guinean People
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SSR	security sector reform
UFDG	Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
USTG	Trade Union of Guinean Workers
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

The road to democracy

Historical context

Guinea has remained relatively stable since gaining independence in 1958 despite having endured shock waves from the conflicts in neighbouring Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. It has never experienced violent conflict and had until recently been seen as a source of stability in West Africa. Until the bloodless military coup of 2008, it had had only two governments: the socialist administration of Sékou Touré (1958-1984) and the liberal regime of Lansana Conté (1984-2008). Following the coup, the military ruled for two years, including a transition period culminating in the election of a new president in 2010.

The striking feature of Guinea's post-colonial history was its decision to vote "No" in the 1958 referendum on whether to join the French Community. Guinea was the only French colony to reject de Gaulle's offer to become a member. This gave the nation a sense of pride which still resonates today. However, as a result of its decision, Guinea became isolated from France, which immediately severed all ties with the former colony, as well as from the west and, to a certain extent, also from its neighbours: France withdrew economic aid from Guinea and refused to enter into trade partnerships with it, thereby making it also more difficult for it to trade with other former colonies.

Under Sékou Touré, from 1958 until his death in 1984, Guinea went down the path of African socialism with its emphasis on a centralised political and economic system and non-alignment. As time went on, the Sékou Touré administration hardened, eventually turning into a dictatorship that ruthlessly suppressed civil liberties.

On coming to power in 1984, Lansana Conté introduced economic liberalism and promised to gradually introduce democratic principles, culminating in the endorsement of a new constitution in a 1990 referendum. The democratic process was, however, challenged following flawed elections in 1998 and the approval of a constitutional amendment in 2001 allowing the president's term of office to be extended.

From then on, the further deterioration of what were already diffident steps towards democracy, combined with a growing economic crisis, resulted in social unrest which was severely crushed by the state, thus indicating a return to an authoritarian regime. Instability was compounded by the prolonged illness of the president who was considered by some as no longer fit to govern. In 2003, analysts began to warn about the risk of instability and of Guinea becoming the next failed state.¹

Military coup

Lansana Conté's death in December 2008 led to a military coup, as anticipated by many analysts. A military junta, the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), promised a transition to democracy but hopes were shattered on 28 September 2009 when a peaceful demonstration was brutally suppressed, leaving 150 people dead, many wounded or disappeared and the reported raping of

women, causing widespread consternation. After being shot in an assassination attempt, CNDD president Captain Moussa Dadis Camara was replaced by General Sékouba Konaté, his vice-president, and transitional institutions were established to prepare elections.

An International Contact Group for Guinea (ICG-G), led by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) and comprising the key international actors, played an important role in sidelining Dadis Camara and in helping to defuse the situation by reopening dialogue between government and civil society and setting the transition process on track.

Successful transition to democracy

During the transition period, and despite political turmoil and technical challenges, General Konaté remained committed to elections. The electoral process was long, with two rounds held in June and November 2010 respectively. Alpha Condé, a long-standing opposition leader and head of the Rally of

In 2003 analysts began to warn about the risk of Guinea becoming the next failed state.

¹ Paul Melly, "Guinea: Early warning analysis", United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Emergency and Security Services, WRITENET Paper No. 19, 1 August 2003, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,WRITENET,,GIN,,3f5d7e26d,0.html>, accessed 31 January 2011.

the Guinean People (RPG), was eventually elected president in December 2010. It was considered to be the first credible election in Guinea², even though clashes took place between supporters of different candidates along ethnic lines, fuelled by politicians, and Condé's closest rival, Cellou Dalein Diallo, mounted a legal challenge alleging fraud. However, despite fears of escalating violence, the situation calmed down after Condé's victory was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

The successful transition was seen as proof of the Guinean society's commitment to peace, democracy and social justice; it was a new page in the country's history. However, social tensions, arising from both structural factors and the positions taken by the main actors, remain and may lead to societal conflict and pose obstacles or challenges to the building of democracy and social peace.

The focus of this analysis is to examine key factors (both structural and dynamic) that may influence change and be a source of instability in Guinea, the forces and processes at work on the ground, the chances of resolving the issues that may arise and the challenges and potential pitfalls that lie ahead. It includes a series of interviews conducted with government officials, bilateral partners and donors, multilateral organisations, NGOs, academics and the media in Conakry in May 2010.

Drivers of change and potential sources of tension

The quest for stability

Governance and political crisis

Ever since independence, progress towards political pluralism in Guinea has been slow. The approval of the constitution in 1990 paved the way for multi-party elections but, credible elections were never held. Power has been concentrated in the hands of a political elite, the military and a small group of businessmen, and there is a history of state repression and corruption. Following independence, Guinea developed its own human resources with which to

build its public administration. However, in recent years, appropriation of public resources and the concentration of power in the hands of Conté's ethnic group, together with patrimonial relations between state and business representatives, have eroded public confidence in the system.³

Multi-party elections were held on several occasions while Conté was in power but opposition parties always contended that they were rigged and most of them were boycotted. Opposition leaders were allegedly often harassed and arrested and denied media access. The situation worsened after 2001 when the constitution was amended to extend the president's term of office from five to seven years. This was seen as an indication that Conté wanted to remain in power for life, especially following two very hotly contested elections, the 2002 parliamentary election and the 2003 presidential election. During this period economic governance worsened and the country's political, social and economic stability came under threat.

From 2003 onwards, and mainly as a result of social protest and international pressure, several "consensus" prime ministers were brought in to bring credibility to the government and some agreement was reached, especially with regard to elections and treatment of the opposition. In 2003, a memorandum signed by 33 parties paved the way for a political dialogue which proved to be critical in dealing with the governance crisis.⁴ Considerable improvement was achieved in the 2005 local elections, which were organised with the support of the international community, and political dialogue between the government and the opposition led to the establishment of a consensual agreement in 2006 in preparation for the 2007 parliamentary elections.

Reforms

Several attempts were made to introduce reforms to improve social and political governance, including the decentralisation of power and the implementa-

2 BBC News, "Guinea country profile", 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1032311.stm, accessed 26 January 2011.

3 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Note sur la situation politique, sociale et économique en Guinée", July 2007, http://www.gn.undp.org/Docs/Briefing_Note_juillet2007.pdf, accessed 31 January 2011.

4 West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), "Tackling the crisis in Guinea: prioritizing the priorities", WARN Policy Brief, 27 October 2009, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=109293>, accessed 31 January 2011.

tion of IMF-supported macroeconomic reform. For instance, in 2005, Cellou Dalein Diallo, a consensus prime minister called in to manage social unrest, attempted to introduce several reforms⁵ and in 2008, a broadly inclusive government was formed. Such reforms have, however, been difficult to implement, in particular because many of them threaten vested interests.

Progress in democratisation was equally slow and the situation deteriorated even further with the economic crisis of 2006/07 and the ensuing emergence of a social movement led by the trade unions (motivated by both political and economic concerns). A consensus prime minister was appointed in 2007 but was soon replaced and the 2007 elections were repeatedly postponed. Conté's behaviour was seen as erratic and as an indication that he lacked control of the situation.⁶ As a consequence, there was a serious political and governance crisis when the junta took over in December 2008.

Cleavages along ethnic lines could become a problem in the future.

Initially the junta promised that presidential elections would be held for which they would not run. Rumours that Dadis Camara would stand prompted an opposition demonstration on 28 September 2009 which was brutally repressed by the security forces and eventually led to Dadis Camara's removal from office.

General Konaté, who became interim president, showed a great commitment to ensuring a transition to civilian rule and in 2010 the first elections deemed to be "free and fair" were held. Longstanding opposition leader Alpha Condé defeated Cellou Dalein Diallo of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) and was declared president in December 2010.

However, during the two rounds of election, there were several clashes between supporters of the two parties. After the National Independent Electoral

Commission (CENI) announced the provisional results giving victory to Condé in November 2010, the violence escalated, this time around with the alleged involvement of the security forces. After the final result was confirmed and despite fears that there would be further violence, the situation calmed down. Cellou Diallo insisted that the second round had been marred by fraud but in the end accepted the result.⁷

Potential for ethnic tensions

The danger that cleavages along ethnic lines, promoted by politicians to gain support, could become a problem in the future remains. Guinea has no history of ethnic violence but some believe that ethnic tensions may surface after this election. One potential source of ethnic division might be a sense of injustice on the part of the Peul who have never had one of their own in power, an issue which has been exploited by politicians.⁸ Relations between the different groups were strained under the rule of Dadis Camara who filled government positions with his own Forestier group and Malinké. By some accounts, the September 2009 killings and rapes had an ethnic dimension: the protesters who ended up as victims were mainly Peul and, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), several witnesses reported that the security forces made specific comments against the Peul.⁹

Aware of the tensions, Konaté, a Malinké himself, asked interim prime minister, Jean-Marie Doré, to form a government that took account of ethnic balance. However, during the 2010 election campaign, ethnic tensions increased. The leaders of the main parties, divided along ethnic lines, tried to turn the two main ethnic groups (Malinké and Peul) against each other. Violent clashes occurred after the first round and both sides accused each other of specifically targeting the other ethnic group. Condé prom-

5 Hodson, "A conflict analysis of the Mano River region: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone", 2005, <http://www.actionaid.org/docs/mano%20river%20conflict.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2011.

6 Michelle Engeler, "Guinea in 2008: The unfinished revolution", *Politique africaine*, No. 112, December 2008, <http://www.politique-africaine.com/numeros/pdf/conjonctures/112087.pdf>, accessed 31 January 2011.

7 France24.com, "Conde sworn in as first democratically elected president", 21 December 2010, <http://www.france24.com/en/20101221-alpha-conde-sworn-guinea-first-democratically-elected-president>, accessed 27 January 2011.

8 Touré was Malinké, Conté was Soussou, Dadis Camara is Forestier and Condé is Malinké. Touré was accused of persecuting other groups, Condé of giving key government posts to his own ethnic group and Dadis Camara of recruiting military mainly from his own region.

9 HRW, "Bloody Monday. The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea", New York, 17 December 2009, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/12/16/bloody-monday-0>, accessed 31 January 2011.

ised to form a national unity government to ease ethnic tensions but the opposition candidate linked him to the ethnic violence that occurred during the campaign.

The potential for ethnic manipulation is linked to the effects of other kinds of interests such as client networks, conflicting interest groups and other types of allegiances. How to address this issue and find ways to promote some sort of balance between the different claims will be a challenge for Guinea in the future. Political maturity will be needed from party leaders through the use of consensus mechanisms, dialogue, negotiation and alliances to unite the forces of change.

Finding solutions to the issue is related more generally to the structure of power in Guinea. Outcomes depend on the strength and capacities of conflicting interest groups and how the different groups play out against each other after the elections. If no balance of power can be found, it could mean a breakdown in government and/or a breakdown of authority within the army that could lead the country into a deep and perhaps violent crisis.

The consequences of democratisation

Further risk is presented by the difficulty of implementing reforms and the potential for instability they represent: democratisation also means dismantling the existing power structure and that is a challenge for any new government. Democratisation processes are a source of destabilisation as they threaten established interests groups: they threaten military access to resources, the dismantling of monopolies and tax exemptions may come at a cost to businessmen, and decentralisation poses a threat to the political elite. The fight against corruption and the development of income-generating strategies also require profound and difficult reforms.

Finally, success in achieving democratisation and better governance is contingent on the economic situation. The difficulty in planning and implementing reforms that adequately address society's demands is a major challenge. The size of the task and the time frame needed to implement such reforms cannot be underestimated. In the past, political change was stalled because of the economic and financial crisis which in 2007 led the unions to organise a se-

ries of strikes calling for higher salaries and other labour benefits. Political change will be difficult to achieve without economic growth.

Civil society and human rights

Civil society unrest

The slow pace of democratisation combined with the rising cost of living during Lansana Conté's rule led to mounting tension between the government and civil society. In 2006, the emergence of a social movement, led by the Trade Union of Guinean Workers (USTG) and the National Confederation of Guinean Workers (CNTG), that was able to effectively mobilise against the regime became apparent. In 2006 and 2007 this movement organised a series of strikes which were severely repressed. Leading figures were arrested and mistreated and the security forces used indiscriminate violence, leaving many dead. Nevertheless, the movement had several victories, the appointment of Lansana Kouyaté, an independent reformist prime minister, in 2007 being one of them. However, what appeared to be a revolution was soon reversed by presidential counterstrikes.¹⁰ Kouyaté was removed and strikes and riots continued during 2008.

Democratisation and better governance are contingent on the economic situation.

The opposition movement became even stronger after the junta took power and organised itself into the *Forces Vives de Guinée*. At first civil society welcomed the junta, believing that they would save them from poverty and economic mismanagement¹¹, but tension later began to mount when the military entrenched themselves in the government. Following the violence of September 2009, dialogue between *Forces Vives* and the government broke down.

As tension increased, the international community appointed Blaise Compaoré as a mediator in order to re-launch dialogue and facilitate a smooth tran-

¹⁰ Engeler, "Guinea in 2008: The unfinished revolution", 2008.

¹¹ Kalie Syllah & Charles Kojo VanDyck, "Guinea at a Crossroads: Opportunities for a More Robust Civil Society", West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), WacSeries Vol. 1 Num 4, January 2010, [http://www.wacsi.org/images/public2/0n38183Guinea%20at%20a%20Crossroads%20\(WACSERIES\).pdf](http://www.wacsi.org/images/public2/0n38183Guinea%20at%20a%20Crossroads%20(WACSERIES).pdf), accessed 31 January 2011.

sition to democracy. As a result of a conference held in Ouagadougou, General Konaté was appointed interim president and institutions were set up to ensure the transition. Representatives of civil society were given key roles in the transitional institutions: the prime minister of the National Unity Government (CNT), Jean Marie Doré, was the former leader of *Forces Vives* and Hadji Rabiato Diallo, the Secretary General of the CNTG and a key personality in the trade union movement, was appointed president of the CNT.

Dialogue platforms between government and civil society need to be kept open.

During the transition period, splits appeared between the political parties, civil society organisations and personalities for a number of reasons, including self and group interests and disagreements about how the transition should proceed or how to establish a democratic system. However, despite some tensions, the transition institutions managed to find sufficient consensus to successfully lead the country into elections. But what role will civil society organisations play in Guinea's future?

The role of civil society

Over the past few years, the power of the social movements has grown considerably. Their ability to organise improved as they gained more popular and international support and they became strong enough to challenge the established power, as shown in 2010. Political dialogue between government, opposition and civil society was critical in addressing the political crisis during the final days of military rule and the transition to democracy.

Free and fair elections and the establishment of a new government, however, may not be enough to restore social peace. There is a risk of serious tension between the new government and civil society in the future: social expectations are extremely high and the difficult economic and social conditions may once again fuel popular discontent. It is essential that participation and dialogue platforms between government and civil society remain open in the future, especially in times of crisis, in order to find social consensus for the difficult tasks ahead. These platforms of dialogue that have proven effective in the past may be instrumental in preventing a return to more authoritarian forms of government.

How civil society and political parties mobilise themselves and participate in the quest for constructive solutions is crucial to the success of the new democracy in Guinea. Civil society has

strong social, traditional and religious roots but also comprises youth groups, labour unions, women's groups, cooperatives and self-help associations as well as NGOs concerned with democracy and human rights issues. These groups can play an important role in the quest for peaceful solutions.

However, civil society groups are also subject to competing claims and proposals. During the transition, there were alleged divisions along regional and ethnic lines and between rival personalities within the opposition groups. The neutrality of civil society groups may also be questioned "taking into consideration the history of patron-client relationships among politicians and senior government officials".

These actors need to be strengthened so that they can play a constructive role in bringing about change. However, greater knowledge of civil society in Guinea and the history and nature of civil society organisations and their relations with the state is required. Building an effective civil society is a long-term undertaking.

Human rights violations and impunity

Guinea's human rights record is not good. Touré's regime was severely criticised for its persecution of political opponents. Camp Boiro, the largest political prison built in 1962, is still for many the symbol of the unpunished crimes committed by the regime against its citizens.¹² Under Conté, the situation vastly improved but reports of abuses continued. As social unrest increased following the events of 2006, the number of abuses reported by HRW, the ICG and Amnesty International (AI), among others, escalated. A number of accusations were made against the security forces by international human rights organisations, in particular for excessive use of force,

12 Amnesty International (AI), "Guinea: "You did not want the military, so now we are going to teach you a lesson": The events of 28 September 2009 and their aftermath", <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR29/001/2010/en/ab0336e0-1ce8-4110-9203-302798ae21d0/afr290012010en.pdf>, accessed 31 January 2011.

the use of torture and killings. An independent investigative committee was set up to investigate the 2006-2007 events but it has been slow to act. It is reported that the Guinean state has nevertheless taken some steps to compensate some of the victims. Victims of abuses committed by the security forces during several outbreaks of violence from the past have come together to seek justice.

However, the violence unleashed during the events of September 2009 was more shocking than that used on previous occasions. For example, the 28 September crackdown on opposition protesters gathered in a stadium resulted in the deaths of between 150 and 200 people as well as numerous instances of rape and sexual offences against women, thousands of injuries

and the arbitrary arrest of demonstrators and opposition party leaders.

Addressing impunity and preventing human rights abuses is a complex process.

The UN set up an International Commission of Enquiry (COI) to investigate the events and its report indicated that several members the military junta were responsible for the crimes committed. The COI recommended that they be tried before the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹³ The ICC carried out a preliminary investigation and stated that the killings constituted a crime against humanity, and that the ICC would continue with its investigation.¹⁴ In February 2010, the interim prime minister told the press that Guinea's judiciary was incapable of trying those suspected of perpetrating the military violence of 28 September 2009, leaving open the possibility of the ICC being requested by the government to take up the matter at a later date.

In parallel, the government set up a National Commission of Inquiry which, in February 2010, concluded that Lieutenant Diakité (the aide accused of trying to murder Captain Dadis Camara) was solely responsible and that all suspects should be tried before

Guinean courts. This was seen as an attempt to shift blame from the government and to once again ensure impunity.

At the time, there were different views about how these human rights violations should be dealt with. Some regarded prosecution as the only way to render people accountable; others believed that doing so could further threaten Guinea's security.¹⁵ The critical issue was to determine to what extent a particular action, whether it be prosecution by the ICC or by another court, would achieve greater social stability. Some believed that a solution based on a reconciliation process, which would not rule out prosecuting those responsible for any crimes committed, would be more conducive to peace than criminal prosecution alone.¹⁶

How to deal with past crimes?

The problem has changed with the departure from power of the junta and the election of the first civilian government but how to deal with past crimes will remain a challenge. It should be borne in mind that such crimes include not only the 28 September 2009 massacre but also human rights abuses and criminal offences committed in previous years. Apart from any grievances arising from the crimes committed, the sense of impunity surrounding such levels of repression and brutality is a divisive element within Guinean society. In his speech at Condé's inauguration, General Konaté focused on the need to end impunity and injustice and exhorted Condé to honour the memory of the victims. This was a reminder of how critical it is to address this problem.

Addressing impunity and preventing further human rights abuses from occurring is a complex process. In the years that preceded Conté's death, his government made some attempts to address human rights abuses in the country, as demonstrated by the creation of a National Directory for Human Rights and the establishment of an Observatory for Democracy and Human Rights (ODHR), the Civil Military Committee (CMC) and the Committee against the Proliferation and Use of Small Arms. However, the impact

13 For further details, see UN Security Council, Update Report No. 3, *Peace Consolidation in West Africa: Guinea*, 11 January 2010, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.gKWLeMTIsG/b.5717287/k.14FF/Update_Report_No_3brPEACE_CONSOLIDATION_IN_WEST_AFRICA_GUINEAbr11_January_2010.htm, accessed 27 January 2011.

14 ICC reports on Guinea are available at: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menu/ICC/Structure+of+the+Court/Office+of+the+Prosecutor/Comm+and+Ref/Guinea/>, accessed 27 January 2011.

15 Newstime Africa, "ICC's Intent on Prosecution is a Big Threat to Guinea's Security", 20 January 2010, <http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/10476>, accessed 27 January 2011.

16 WANEP, "Tackling the crisis in Guinea: prioritizing the priorities", 2009.

of these initiatives was limited.¹⁷ The current status of these institutions and the possibilities of building on them could be explored. If deemed adequate, they should be properly funded and staffed to ensure they are made fully operational.¹⁸

Condé has said he will set up a truth and reconciliation commission to heal the wounds of ethnic and political violence but so far there are no details of how it will work. It will reportedly follow the South African model and human rights groups are believed to welcome the move. Its establishment will not preclude criminal prosecution for those who are responsible for serious crimes. It is also not yet clear what course of action the ICC will take. The situation certainly needs to be re-examined in the light of the recent elections.

Impunity also stems in part from the weakness of the justice system which has inadequate resources, lacks independence and is plagued by corruption. Strengthening the judiciary will consequently be an important element in combating impunity in the long term. Finally, addressing impunity means reforming the security and defence sectors, as discussed below.

Security issues

The military as a source of violence and insecurity

Both the armed forces, in particular the army, and the security forces (the gendarmerie and police) are seen as a source of violence as they have reportedly acted brutally against the population on several occasions, leaving many dead. There have also been reports of extrajudicial executions, rape, arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment.¹⁹ The situation became particularly serious under the military junta as the regime hardened, culminating in the violence of 28 September 2009. The crimes committed that day were alleg-

edly carried out with the approval of commanding officers and political authorities and, as such, constitute state violence. Abuses continued after that and excessive force was reportedly used to put down demonstrations following the first round of the 2010 elections.

In addition to the state's excessive use of force, in recent years order and discipline within the forces seem to have broken down for several reasons. The military has traditionally been the strongest institution in Guinea and for decades the stability of the country has relied on it. However, a series of events may have led to the army's destabilisation. Conté's strategy of pitting groups and individuals against each other has increased competition among members of the forces.

Promotions made on the basis of loyalty have meant that soldiers have been appointed to higher positions than their superior officers, thus breaking down respect for the hierarchy. This has been suggested as one of the reasons why Dadis Camara, who was a captain, did not control the army. Ethnic divisions may also have become more important as different groups have found their support base along these lines. Dadis Camara recruited extensively from the Forest Region in an army dominated by the Soussou (Conté's ethnic group). The divisions within the army which are accentuated by the struggle to protect parochial interests constitute a serious potential source of instability.

Since 2005 there have been several attempted mutinies by young members of the armed forces and police demanding better living conditions, the payment of salary arrears and the replacement of some high-ranking officers. They provoked serious concern and involved attacks on commanding officers and virtually direct clashes between soldiers and elite troops. Dadis Camara was involved the revolts and was instrumental in the negotiations with Conté to end the crisis following the uprisings of spring 2007.²⁰ However, discipline and respect for superior officers deteriorated again after that.

Divisions within the army are a serious potential source of instability.

17 BEFORE, "Etude portant sur les Perspectives de Revalorisation des Forces de Défense et de Sécurité de la Guinée", January 2010, http://beforeproject.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/etude-sur-la-revalorisation-de-la-fds-de-la-guinee_final-20042010.pdf, accessed 31 January 2011.

18 HRW, "Letter to Guinea's Transitional Government on Redress for Victims of Stadium Massacre", 4 October 2010. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/03/03/letter-guineas-transitional-government-redress-victims-stadium-massacre>, accessed 31 January 2011.

19 See reports from Amnesty International, available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/guinea>, and Human Rights Watch, available at http://www.hrw.org/en/publications/reports?filter0=*ALL*&filter1=104, both accessed 28 January 2011.

20 Le Point, "Guinée : Moussa Dadis Camara, ce capitaine inconnu autoproclamé président", 26 December 2008, <http://www.lepoint.fr/actualites-sport/2008-12-26/portrait-guinee-moussa-dadis-camara-ce-capitaine-inconnu/1712/0/302407>, accessed 28 January 2011.

Breakdown in order

A breakdown in order within the ranks may have been one of the reasons for the undisciplined behaviour of the security and defence forces, the extortion of bribes and the systematic “preying on civilians”. This breakdown may also lead to a growing inability on the part of the security forces to maintain internal security – for which the army also has some responsibility – as well as to a rise in general urban crime. An increase in the proliferation of light weapons and drug trafficking in urban areas further complicates the security situation. There are several reports documenting the importance of drug trafficking in West Africa, and Guinea is believed to be an important transit point for hard drugs. The instability and divisions within the government and the military are seen as a good opportunity for drug cartels to penetrate factions within these institutions. In addition, the past ten years has seen the emergence of numerous militias and irregulars who contribute to instability and violence in the country: they were reportedly present during the September 2009 massacre.

To address some of the structural problems at the root of the complaints made by the military and defence forces, efforts have been made to build and redesign gendarmerie and police infrastructures, purchase new equipment, and recruit more police trainees in order to increase the officer to population ratio. More importantly, reorganising the defence and security sectors – one of the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry – is seen as crucial for redressing the situation. The previous government had started working with the UN and Ecowas to reform the security sector. The CMC, which has outposts in each of the 33 prefectures, has been consulted to assess needs.²¹

Reform of the army will be a key issue for the new government. The international community may also want to be involved in this process. However, any attempt at reform should consider the potential negative effects of a breakdown in this institution. A critical factor influencing whether or not violence will erupt in Guinea will be the attitude, role and cohesion of the army, and this will depend on how long the immediate shared interests of the army are able to overcome divisions both between the ranks and between ethnic groups. While he was interim

president, Konaté initiated a reform process and has been praised for his work, showing that reform can be conducted from within.

Reconciliation between civilians and the military is also seen as a priority but will depend in part on how the crimes of the past are handled. The drug trade is seen as a serious threat that has to be taken into account in any strategy for addressing the problems in the country.

Spill-over effects from conflicts elsewhere in the region still pose a risk to Guinea.

Spillover from neighbouring conflicts

Relations with neighbouring countries and the regional war dynamics are of crucial importance. Guinea was directly involved in conflicts in neighbouring countries, both via the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (Ecomog) and through proxy forces. Rebel incursions into Guinean territory fuelled “a fear of invasion”²² and led to an increase in military spending which is considered to be one of the causes of the country’s economic problems at the beginning of the decade.²³ The army still operates along the borders.

Spillover effects from these conflicts included huge refugee flows, illegal arms trafficking, the cross-border flow of combatants, an illegal trans-border economy and economic interests founded on personality and the relationships between elites. Some of these effects remain; for instance, the large numbers of refugees still present in Guinea are a source of tension in the south of the country.

Guinea’s political relations with its neighbours are now stable. The election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as president of Liberia in 2005 was seen as a good augur for regional stability. Relations with Sierra Leone have been stable despite a border dispute over the ownership of a village and the associated boundary line. A major concern at the moment is the disputed presidential election in Ivory Coast which has already caused over 4000 refugees to flee to neighbouring countries, prompting fears of regional insecurity.

²² Interviews with public officials, Conakry, June 2010.

²³ Interview with a public official from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Conakry, June 2010

²¹ Interview with a security sector expert, Conakry, June 2010.

Economic factors

Poor living conditions and access to basic services

Living conditions for the population are increasingly difficult. Guinea's development indicators are poor despite reported improvements between 1984 and 2005. However, growth has slowed down and the country is falling behind its neighbours.²⁴ It ranks 156 of 169 on the 2010 UNDP²⁵ Human Development Index. Over 50% of the population reportedly lives below the poverty line.²⁶ Basic services, such as electricity and water supply, are poor and youth unemployment widespread.

World increases in food and fuel prices during 2006-2007 fuelled inflation and led to sharp increases in the price of basics. For the ordinary Guinean the price of rice, the main staple, is the key factor influencing living standards and the ability of most Guineans to access basic necessities.²⁷ Rising food prices led to rice riots in Conakry in July 2004 as well as the strike movement of 2006-2007.

Guinea is falling behind its neighbours in terms of economic growth.

There is a sense that people are no longer willing to accept the lack of equity in the distribution of resources.²⁸ People expect the next government to solve their problems,

starting with food, water and electricity but also health and education. Promises made by politicians reinforce those expectations. However, whether it is possible to fulfill them (and it may well not be) will almost certainly become a source of tension between citizens and the government in the very near future.

24 Agence Française de Développement (AFD), "Document Cadre de Partenariat France-Guinée (2006-2010)", http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/pays-zones-geo_833/guinee_349/france-guinee_1148/presentation_4305/document-cadre-partenariat-france-guinee-2006-2010_38290.html, accessed 31 January 2011.

25 The latest available figures can be found at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>, accessed 28 January 2011.

26 UNPBF, "Plan prioritaire Guinée" 17 April 2009, <http://www.unpbf.org/docs/Guinea-Priority-Plan-FR.pdf>, <http://www.unpbf.org/docs/Guinea-Priority-Plan-EN.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2011.

27 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook: Guinea", Washington, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gv.html>, accessed 31 January 2011.

28 Interviews with academics, public officials and development experts, Conakry, June 2010.

Stagnant economy

Guinea is undergoing a severe economic crisis which is mainly the result of the overall decline in commodity prices (especially bauxite) in the past century, leading to a reduction in state revenue, failing government services and a decline in the real value of people's income. To achieve the economic growth that is required to improve living standards is the biggest challenge for Guinea.

Although Guinea is a resource-rich country, it is experiencing a deep economic and financial crisis. It has agriculture and hydropower but its main assets are mineral resources (bauxite, iron, diamond and gold reserves). It is one of the world's biggest producers and exporters of bauxite, the raw material from which aluminium is extracted. It has a large share of the world's bauxite reserves, with estimates ranging from 30%²⁹ to 50%³⁰. Mining is Guinea's largest single foreign exchange earner but has not been fully exploited. Foreign companies, including Canadian Global Alumina, Russian Rusal and British Rio Tinto, have been operating in the country for a long time. However, some argue that investment in the country remains low because of corruption, poor governance and instability.

The recent growth in commodity prices, and more specifically bauxite, may have positive effects but, as a producer of raw materials for industry, Guinea is prone to the pitfalls of the "natural resource curse", namely dependency on and vulnerability to price volatility. In addition, the income derived from the export of raw materials is low (not comparable, for instance, with oil revenues). There are plans to develop a transformation industry but at present there is only one company transforming bauxite.

Guinea's debt burden

In the 1990s, the economy grew by 4% annually but has slowed down significantly since 2002 as a result of both internal and external factors, including those mentioned above. In 2000, Guinea had made satisfactory progress toward reaching the decision point

29 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), "Travel and Living Abroad – Guinea: Country Information", London, 2010, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/guinea/?profile=economy>, accessed 31 January 2011.

30 CIA, "The World Factbook: Guinea", 2010.

under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and, in 2002, a poverty reduction strategy (PRS) was approved by donors. However, that same year, on grounds of bad economic governance, aid was suspended, together with IMF and World Bank projects and debt relief instruments (donors such as the European Union (EU) and France also followed suit). The situation was compounded by regional instability. The costs of participating in the resolution of regional wars and of repelling rebel incursions in 2000-2001, together with the more than one million refugees the country received, imposed a heavy financial burden on Guinea and, during that period, it struggled under the burden of economic isolation.³¹

By 2005, the situation was looking promising as donors began to come back: world market gold prospects were good, large scale bauxite transformation projects were being planned, prospects for iron exploration in the Forest region were encouraging, and several large dam projects were considered a priority. Between 2003 and 2007, Guinea worked closely with technical advisors from the US Treasury, the World Bank and the IMF and returned to a funded programme in 2007. World increases in the price of food and fuel in 2006-2007, however, reversed the positive trend and caused inflation to increase sharply. The international financial crisis also affected Guinea by reducing prices and demand for commodities.

According to the IMF, by 2008 Guinea had made a great deal of progress: “Guinea’s external position has started to improve, reflecting the pursuit of strict fiscal and monetary policy since April 2007 and the strong international assistance that the country has received. On the structural front, important progress has been made on strengthening economic governance, including publication of the audited accounts of the central bank and launching an action plan to improve public finance management”.³²

The debt burden on the state is increasing while state revenue is in decline.

However, despite this, Guinea has still not reached the HIPC completion point and consequently cannot benefit from debt relief initiatives. The debt burden on the state is increasing while state revenue is in decline.³³ The challenges to the country’s economy, which include, in addition to ensuring macro-economic stability, finding ways to improve competitiveness, attract investment and stimulate the development of a private sector capable of ensuring growth and promoting exports, are, especially in the context of a global crisis, major tests for which there are no clear strategies.

The scramble for natural resources

One important aspect is to examine the role of “conflict” economies and the exploitation of natural resources in fostering competition for access to financial resources. There are many established international companies in Guinea, but its untapped potential means that it remains an attractive destination for many international players in what is seen by some as the “new scramble” for Africa’s mineral, petroleum and gas resources. EU-led economic sanctions have been preventing European interests from grabbing a share of the deals and the field is now open to Chinese players. According to a recent report, Chinese interests have come close to taking over Guinea’s economy entirely.³⁴

One of the greatest challenges for Guinea is how to produce more value out of its mineral resources, attracting investment from mining companies and making the mining sector competitive, while at the same time ensuring that the right dividends from the exploitation of natural resources revert to the country and that these are used for development purposes and not appropriated by interest groups. Recommendations for addressing this problem include revising both the legal framework (mining agreements, tender procedures, a harmonised social responsibility code) and the institutional framework (capacity building for the Ministry of Mines and Directorates, auditing and monitoring) and improving

31 WANEP, “Guinea and the Challenge of Political Uncertainty and Looming Socio-Economic Implosion”, WARN Policy Brief, 31 July 2006, http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93&Itemid=7, accessed 31 January 2011.

32 International Monetary Fund (IMF), “Statement by an IMF Mission to the Republic of Guinea”, Press Release No. 08/232, 2 October 2008, Washington, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2008/pr08232.htm>, accessed 31 January 2011.

33 Interviews with public officials, Conakry, June 2010.

34 Daniel Balint-Kurti, “Guinea: Bought by Beijing”, *The World Today*, Volume 66, Number 3, March 2010, Chatham House, London, <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/twt/archive/view/-/id/2002/>, accessed 31 January 2011.

technical capabilities and governance, for instance by publishing Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) reports.³⁵ However, although an adequate policy framework and good accountability procedures may be important, they are not sufficient to address the bigger challenge of defining an economic development strategy.

International actors and development aid

International Contact Group for Guinea

International attention turned to Guinea when the junta took power in December 2008 but it was the September 2009 events which really raised international concern and prompted questions about the causes of the conflicts in the country and the potential role of the international community. One of the international community's main concerns regards the spillover effects Guinea's instability may have on the region and the impact it may have on Europe's security because of irregular migration and drug trafficking. Since the coup, the international community has intervened politically, mainly through concerted action via the International Contact Group for Guinea (ICG-G) led by the African Union (AU) and Ecowas. The ICG-G was established in 2009 with a broad membership.³⁶

The September 2009 violence prompted international outrage followed by a series of punitive measures, including asset freezing and arms embargos. Despite some conflicting interests on the part of international players and different positions on how to bring those responsible to account (France called for international intervention while others insisted on ICC action although some believed that would lead to further instability), the ICG-G has managed to show a unified voice in settling the conflict.

35 Ibrahima Soumah, *Les mines de Guinée. Comment cela fonctionne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2010.

36 Co-chaired by Ecowas and the AU Commission, it includes the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Mano River Union, the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF), the European Union (EU), the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the UN, the Chair of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Chair of Ecowas, as well as the African members and permanent members of the UN Security Council. The ICG-G also includes the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa (Said Djinnit). Key partner countries, eg, Burkina Faso, France, Morocco, the UK and the US, also participate in the meetings.

The ICG-G played an important role in mediating the conflict between the government and civil society and in initiating the process of transition to constitutional order through, in particular, the organisation of elections. All development aid – except that earmarked for humanitarian actions, human rights and support to the transition process – was suspended following the September 2009 events.

Political relations

The main regional actor in Guinea is Ecowas and the UN is the key multilateral institution. Important players in Guinea are France, the US, the EU and China. Other African countries, especially Morocco, Senegal and Libya, also have interests in the country. Senegal and Libya, for instance, supported the coup while others condemned it.

Ecowas, working in tandem with the AU, was instrumental in resolving the conflict in Guinea and led the ICG-G in addressing the crisis. The ICG-G was very active at all stages of the conflict resolution process. It supported the establishment of the UN Commission of Inquiry into the September 2009 events and called for reform of the security and defence forces and political transition. High level delegations from the ICG-G accompanied the efforts to reach a compromise in the political crisis.

Following the military coup both the AU and Ecowas suspended Guinea from their respective organisations until constitutional order was restored. After the 28 September massacre, Ecowas imposed an arms embargo and appointed Blaise Compaoré to mediate the conflict. His role was to bring the CNDD and the *Forces Vives de Guinea* together and to reach a political agreement to end the crisis that had started with the coup by Dadis Camara. As a result of this mediation process, in January 2010 the Joint Ouagadougou Declaration transferring power to a civilian administration was signed by Dadis Camara and Konaté. Ecowas continued to be actively involved by monitoring preparation of the elections and supported the electoral process by raising funds for work on capacity building with the electoral commission (CENI), the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP), civil society and other bodies.



Another key player in the ICG-G is the UN which has an important role in the mediation process. It is also part of an Ecowas-AU-UN working group that will address the issue of security sector reform. At Security Council level, the main concern was the potential destabilisation of the Mano River Region. However, there was no consensus about what action would be appropriate and how far to go in endorsing the findings of the International Commission of Inquiry (COI) which investigated the 28 September events. The different positions of international actors were apparent in the negotiations that took place at the level of the Security Council, with some taking a more balanced approach (Russia and China) and others (France, the UK, the US and Brazil) taking a more forceful stance and condemning impunity.³⁷ The US was closely involved in the political process that led to the sidelining of Dadis Camara.³⁸

The neighbouring countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, which could be directly affected by instability in Guinea, are concerned about how the situation there develops. Liberia's president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf played an important role in committing the ICG-G and Ecowas to helping Guinea through the electoral process in June 2010. She is said to have been instrumental in restoring political stability to Guinea³⁹ and has also taken steps to invigorate the role of the Mano River Union (MRU), which she sees as an important organisation for promoting peace and security in the region.

Development aid in Guinea

Few donors work bilaterally in Guinea, most contributions being made through the UN system or the EU. The World Bank and the IMF are key partners of the Republic of Guinea and are responsible for monitoring macro-economic performance, implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and other development projects. The UN and the EU also have a key role. UN agencies are

involved in work on the three pillars of the PRSP.⁴⁰ UNDP has been very active in promoting good governance. Humanitarian assistance is provided by several other UN agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Guinea is receiving assistance from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) to support political dialogue, the strengthening of the rule of law and security sector reform (SSR). On the recommendation of the COI, the UN Human Rights office established a new country office in Guinea. The EU concentrates on infrastructural development and has projects to support urban development, governance, decentralisation, the justice sector and civil society.

Liberia's President Sirleaf instrumental in restoring political stability in Guinea.

The main bilateral donors include France, the US, Germany, Japan and, more recently, Spain. They all focus their actions on priority sectors that are in line with government priorities. France, with several governance projects, is the key actor, together with the US and Canada. German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) provides support for the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP, thus having an indirect intervention in all sectors. It also supports the prefectural offices in developing performance criteria and guidelines for the operation of these structures. The UK provides preventative humanitarian assistance and supports national NGOs. Spain has had a more important role recently since entering into cooperation agreements on migration in 2006 involving the provision of development aid to create jobs. It is doing so in the context of the Spain-Ecowas migration plan.⁴¹ As part of its Africa Plan 2009-2012, Spain is working with Ecowas to

37 UN Security Council, "Update No. 1, Guinea", 4 March 2010.

38 Newstime Africa, "Morocco says no to US demands to arrest Dadis Camara", 10 January 2010, <http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/10195>, accessed 28 January 2011.

39 Government of the Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, "Prez. Sirleaf Seeks Strong MRU Secretariat As Minister Konneh Delivers Special Message To Guinea", 29 March 2010, http://www.mopea.gov.lr/press.php?news_id=45, accessed 28 January 2011.

40 Guinea has developed several strategic documents which serve as policy guidance for donor intervention: the "Guinée Vision 2010" (1998), the PRSS (2002) and now the PRSS II. The first highlighted the need for reform, improvement of economic performance and the need for civil society participation. The poverty reduction strategy (PRSP II 2007-2010) defines three pillars: (1) improvement of good governance and institution building, (2) economic growth and employment, and (3) access to social services. There are also several sector strategy documents at different stages of development, including the National Capacity Building and Governance Programme.

41 IPS, "Spain's new drive to extend its interests in Africa", 29 January 17 March 2010, <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50697>, accessed 29 January 2011.

boost regional economic integration. The intention is to help build the capacity of African states so that they can access world markets. Holding the EU Presidency also gave Spain a more important role during the transition process.

Development partners also intervene by providing financial support to international NGOs. NGOs work in partnership with a number of national⁴², regional and multilateral organisations involved in conflict resolution. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has been working in Guinea since 1991 and has completed several studies and provided technical assistance to several electoral stakeholders, including the CENI. Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an implementing partner of a UNPBF project to “encourage youth to be non-violent actors of change”. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is a sub-regional organisation that seeks to strengthen peacebuilding capacities. It has local representation in Guinea and has worked mainly in Haute Guinea and Guinea Forestière on promoting democracy and citizenship. It also collaborates with Ecowas in the context of its Early Warning and Response Network (Ecowarn).

The unintended consequences of external interventions need to be thoroughly researched.

BEFORE, a project set up by swisspeace and the Alliance for Peacebuilding as a conflict prevention mechanism, has organised workshops and also completed an analysis of the security forces. It is working in partnership with IFES and Femmes Africa Solidarité on the role of mediation in the context of elections. (It has also collaborated with the Carter Centre, WANEP, the Center for Security Studies (ETH-Zurich) and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs). Several others, including the ICG, International Alert and HRW, work on advocacy and human rights issues. The International Federation of Human Rights (IFHR) is supporting national NGOs in addressing human rights violations.

42 For example, Le Réseau des Femmes Africaines Ministres et Parlementaires de Guinée (REFAMP-GUINEE) and Le Réseau des Femmes du Fleuve Mano pour la Paix (REFMAP).

Recommendations

Impact of donor intervention should be assessed

The recent elections are seen as a new page in the history of Guinea.⁴³ However, elections are accompanied by changes that bring instability because of alterations to the power structure, the existence of a stronger civil society in Guinea and the difficulties any new government has in delivering its electoral promises and meeting the people’s expectations: improvements in their economic situation and access to affordable food, water, electricity, health and education. Any external interference in these processes will have a profound impact and must therefore be thought through and planned very carefully. Guinea has had less donor intervention than other countries and a “donor rush” could have negative effects. Any new donor in Guinea should evaluate not only the impact of individual projects but also the cumulative impact of several interventions by many donors.⁴⁴

Political change cannot be pushed through

Particular care should be taken when planning interventions linked to conflict resolution, SSR, governance and democratisation. External actors have different and often conflicting interests which may have an impact on the internal reorganisation of power. The possible unintended consequences should be thoroughly researched. A careful balance must be struck between external pressure and internal processes for fostering political change. Although the ICG-G is recognised as having an important role in helping to solve the crisis, it was felt that it exerted too much pressure with regard to some issues, such as approval of the constitution and the date of the elections.⁴⁵

Change processes must be internally driven. Guinea has had a “history of proud independence” ever since Sékou Touré said “No”. Guineans are convinced that they can change their country’s situation on their own. A certain degree of independence from international community influence has also been

43 Interviews with international cooperation experts, a journalist and academics, Conakry, June 2010.

44 Ulrich Schiefer, *Integrated Evaluation of Change. A new perspective for planning and evaluation in multiple intervention environments*, Lisbon, Periploi, [http://repositorio-iul.iscte.pt/bitstream/10071/1570/3/Schiefer,%20U.%20\(2008\)%20Integrated%20Evaluation%20of%20Change.pdf](http://repositorio-iul.iscte.pt/bitstream/10071/1570/3/Schiefer,%20U.%20(2008)%20Integrated%20Evaluation%20of%20Change.pdf), accessed 31 January 2011.

45 Interviews with public officials, Conakry, June 2010.

possible due to the fact that the government has had sufficient revenue from natural resources to enable the political and military class to survive. Interventions should be planned with that in mind.

National ownership must be ensured

Principles such as ownership are also paramount. This is a principle adhered to by the international community but difficult to put into practice. As regards reforms and projects, all too often very good documents are developed but not appropriated by the actors involved and are therefore not useful tools for driving change.⁴⁶ How exactly to ensure ownership of the intended reform projects has to be investigated but it requires processes to be genuinely led by national actors. External actors should also question and challenge their work all the time “accepting the open nature of development which includes the fallibility of their policy recommendations”.⁴⁷

International agreements, such as the Paris Declaration and the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour, should also be put into practice. Interventions should be in line with the country policy documents as well as the government’s programme. This is, however, not enough as ownership of certain documents, such as the PRSP, is often questioned.⁴⁸ Important lessons can be drawn from rules of engagement in fragile states. In Guinea, external aid was suspended following the coup. In 2003, donor engagement was also withdrawn because of governance problems. The rules of engagement for fragile countries call for the continuity of support, arguing that conditionality that seeks to exert pressure in order to improve governance may in fact bring further destabilisation to the country concerned.

Donor coordination is crucial

Donor coordination is crucial because competition between donors causes instability in a weak government that is unsure of what it wants.⁴⁹ Coordination

has been poor in Guinea but a new dynamic is emerging. A matrix of donor intervention is being developed⁵⁰ under UN coordination and some thematic groups have been formed. More structured interventions can be devised by investing in strategic sector plans. Such a plan has been developed for the education sector and a common fund set up to finance it. Health is expected to be the next sector where this approach will be followed. Aid modalities, such as budget support, signal more trust in the national administration and a move towards the establishment of partnerships rather than donor-driven projects. Regarding budget support, however, lessons should also be learned from other countries where the bureaucracy associated with this particular aid modality is raising questions as to how much it is fulfilling its role.

Concentration is another strategic choice which most small donors are also following in an effort to make a difference. GIZ, for instance, invests in the development and testing of concepts which can then be generalised by the government, if they agree with the proposed model. GIZ has drawn up a poverty atlas which identifies areas and sectors where assistance is most needed and can thus also guide donor intervention.

Delegating cooperation to another bilateral or multilateral donor may be a strategy for new donors. The UNPBF is supported by donor contributions and could be an instrument for donor engagement. The new office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in Guinea is supported by donor contributions. (Norway is supporting a staff member for this office.)

Coordination with civil society

Development aid could also be delivered through NGOs operating in Guinea who are engaged in human rights promotion, democracy, good governance, gender equality and social and economic development. International organisations such as IFES, SFCG and Femmes Africa Solidarité receive funding from European governments and development agencies. The UNPBF also has projects which have NGOs as executing agencies. Such is the case for IFES and SFCG. A number of regional and national civil

46 Interview with a technical cooperation expert, Conakry, June 2010.

47 Elísio Macamo, “Political Governance In Mozambique - Final report (for DFID-Mozambique)”, June 2006, <http://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/pics/d70313.pdf>, accessed 31 January 2011.

48 Interview with a technical cooperation expert, Conakry, June 2010.

49 Interview with EU officials, Conakry, June 2010.

50 Interview with UNDP representative, Conakry, June 2010.

society organisations – such as WANEP, the National Coalition of Guinea for the Rights and Citizenship of Women (CONAG-DCF) and the Centre for International Trade and Development (CECIDE) (which is carrying out projects with UNDP funding) – are already making a difference and could benefit from further support or be designated as executing agencies for specific projects.

Support for regional peacebuilding mechanisms

An important contribution could be made by supporting regional mechanisms for peacebuilding, in particular Ecowas. The latter has played an important role in resolving the crisis in Guinea, showing its growing importance and capabilities. There are several mechanisms through which it takes action in Guinea: via the ICG-G, the office of the Ecowas Ambassador to Guinea, and the protocols signed between member states, namely the protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peace-keeping and security and its supplementary protocol on good governance. Several workshops on these protocols have been held in Guinea.⁵¹ The mechanisms relating to conflict prevention and resolution include, among others, Ecowarn, the peace exchange forum and the Ecowas Small Arms Programme (Ecosap).

Considering the strength that civil society has gained in recent years and the important role that dialogue between the parties plays in addressing the governance issue, supporting civil society with a view to maintaining dialogue and avoiding factional divisions should be one of the main areas of intervention. It is a difficult area and one that is often neglected when giving support to political parties. Some work has been carried out on the democratisation of political parties by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) but much remains to be done.⁵² Political parties can, in fact, be sources of tension or stability. One suggestion is to build on common issues by addressing, for instance, citizenship issues which affect both the north and south.

SSR will be a critical area of intervention in Guinea but donor proliferation may be a danger. An AU-ECOWAS-UN mission has already done some work

in this field and prepared a strategy document. The EU has deployed experts to make a diagnostic study and plan interventions in the sector. NGOs and research organisations are also involved in this process. Lessons should be learned from SSR in other countries (especially from the recent experience in Guinea-Bissau) in order to avoid uncoordinated donor-led projects.⁵³

Economic development is critical

Finally, economic development is a critical area. Guinea's economy has stagnated because of the international crisis and governance problems. Efforts to improve governance include the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which is supported by a number of governments, including Norway. New donors could consider providing technical support for national implementation of the initiative. Guinea asked for its EITI candidate status to be suspended because of the political situation but in the meantime work on implementation is continuing in the country. Direct support should be coordinated with the work being done by other donors. Another contribution could be in the field of corporate social responsibility. Most companies already have their own local programs but tensions with local communities regarding the distribution of mining revenues remain high.⁵⁴

Supporting regional mechanisms for peacebuilding could be an important contribution.

Addressing governance is not, however, the only issue. Stagnation also stems from continuing reliance on a development model that depends on the extraction of natural resources.

A number of important questions need to be asked: What development model should Guinea choose? How can the mining resources be used to generate enough revenue to contribute to the sustainability of the state? How are Economic Partnership Agreements affecting Guinea's competitive position in the world market? The debt issue also has to be addressed: the state has an extremely heavy burden of debt. Relations with the Bretton Woods institutions need to be resumed in order to address this problem.⁵⁵

⁵³ Interview with a security sector expert, Conakry, June 2010.

⁵⁴ Interview with a technical cooperation expert, Conakry, June 2010.

⁵⁵ Interviews with a public official at the Ministry of Commerce and Finances and with EU officials in Conakry, June 2010.

⁵¹ Interview with a public official, Conakry, June 2010.

⁵² Interview with an academic, Conakry, June 2010.

Further Reading

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List of interviewees

Sophie Aubert, First Counsellor, French Embassy.

Moletah Bah, Journalist, Radio France Internationale (RFI).

Siaka Bakayoko, Resident Representative, The World Bank Group.

Ibrahima Barry, Secretary General, Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Mamadou Barry, Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Comelia Batchi, Principal Technical Adviser, GIZ.

Aboubacar Camara, Field Research Assistant.

Almany Kabèlè Camara, Minister Adviser to the President, Presidency of the Republic of Guinea.

Karamokoba Camara, Principal Adviser, Ministry of Economy and Finance.

General Lamine Cissé, Former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Ecowas-AU Security Sector Reform Mission.

Hadja Mabinty Condé, Deputy National Director, Direction nationale de l'intégration africaine.

Elisabeth Côté, Representative, IFES.

Mamadou Alpha Diallo, Technical Adviser responsible for implementation of the project to support the poverty reduction strategy, GIZ.

Thierno Aliou Diaourné, Minister, Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Renaud Galand, Senior Adviser, Justice, International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT).

Ramon Sarro, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon.

Author: Ana Larcher Carvalho

Editor: Marion Marshrons

Managing editor: Fionnuala Ní Eigearthaigh

Design: Juan Pelegrín

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The Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre

Norsk ressurscenter for fredsbygging (Noref)

P.O. Box 2947 Tøyen, N-0608 Oslo, Norway

Website: www.peacebuilding.no

E-mail: info@peacebuilding.no