



Report

Guinea -- Junta Faces Criticism After Crackdown on Opposition Rally

Regional and international bodies have condemned Guinea's ruling National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) military junta after security forces killed upward of 100 civilians attending an anti-junta rally in Conakry on 28 September. The violence occurred when political parties and trade unions defied the junta's protest ban and staged the rally to oppose the possible candidacy of CNDD Chairman Moussa Dadis Camara in the January 2010 presidential election.^a

Regional reaction to the crackdown has been swift, with groups harshly condemning the violence and calling on Camara to uphold his pledge from December 2008 not to run for president. The leading West African regional body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), suspended Guinea.^b

- In an interview with Voice of America (VOA), political director of ECOWAS, Abdelfatau Musah, said that ECOWAS was "disgusted" with the violence in Guinea and urged Camara not to run in the election. In addition, he said that ECOWAS does "not rule out military intervention" if violence continues, according to VOA on 29 September.¹
- On 29 September, Jean Ping, chairman of the African Union (AU) Commission, said that he "strongly condemns the indiscriminate firing" on civilians and other reported human rights violations, in a statement broadcast on French Government-owned RFI. Ping also called upon Camara to respect his "commitment" to not run for president.²

France, the UN, the EU, and other international bodies also condemned the junta's crackdown, and France has already suspended military aid to the junta.

- According to AFP, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said on 29 September that France has suspended military ties with Guinea after the "savage and bloody" crackdown on opposition protesters and that the government is reviewing its entire package of bilateral aid to Guinea.³
- On 28 September, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon released a statement condemning the security forces' "excessive use of force" and called on the CNDD to "respect its earlier commitments" not to participate in upcoming elections, according to the UN News Centre.⁴
- Javier Solana, EU high representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), condemned the "use of force used to disperse demonstrators," according to the official website of the EU, consilium.europa.eu, on 29 September.⁵

^a For more information on Camara's possible candidacy, see the 3 March OSC Report, **Guinea -- Concern About Junta's Commitment to Elections** (AFP20090303427001).

^b The AU had suspended Guinea's membership in January after the December 2008 coup (www.africa-union.org).

- The International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G)^c expressed "grave concern about the delays in the electoral process and the continuing deterioration in the political, human rights, and security situations in Guinea." According to the ICG-G communique posted to the website of the reliable African Press Organization on 28 September, the group also called on Camara to "reaffirm his commitment [not to be a presidential candidate] through a formal document" and said that the group would meet in October to review its position on Guinea.⁶

Background on Violence

An influential coalition of trade unions and political parties, the Guinean Active Forces Forum, called for the rally at a local stadium on 28 September to oppose the possible candidacy of Camara, in the planned January 2010 presidential election, according to AFP.⁷ The rally went ahead despite a CNDD ban on the rally, and security forces attempting to bar entry into the stadium. After protesters forced their way through, security forces surrounded the stadium and opened fire on the demonstrators, killing "at least 87," according to medical sources, while the Guinean Human Rights Organization put the death toll at 157, according to AFP.^{8 9} Two prominent opposition leaders, former Prime Ministers Cellou Dalein Diallo and Sidya Toure, were reportedly injured and are currently receiving treatment in a clinic under military control, according to AFP.¹⁰

^c In February, regional and international organizations established a contact group to follow up on the political situation in Guinea. Members include the AU, the UN, the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF), the EU, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), according to the AU website (www.africa-union.org).

¹ [Online Publication | Peter Clotey | Voice of America (VOA) | ECOWAS Condemns Guinea Violence | 29 September 2009 | | <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2009-09-29-voa6.cfm> | 29 September 2009 | Voice of America (VOA) office in Dakar]

² [OSC | | AFP20090930950012 | 30 September 2009 | | AU urges Guinean junta leader to respect pledges | | (U) | (U) | Paris Radio France Internationale in French -- government-owned radio, under the management of the Ministry of Culture, aimed at an international audience]

³ [OSC | | EUP20090929950031 | 29 September 2009 | | France freezes military cooperation with Guinea after protest deaths | | (U) | (U) | Paris AFP (Domestic Service) in French -- domestic service of independent French press agency]

⁴ [Online Publication | | UN | Statement Attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Guinea | 28 September 2009 | | <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=4115> | 29 September 2009 |]

⁵ [Internet Site | | Council of the European Union | Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, concerned with the situation in Guinea | 29 September 2009 | | http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/110339.pdf | 30 September 2009 |]

⁶ [Internet Site | | Africa Press Organization | Seventh Session of the International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G) Final Communique | 28 September 2009 | | <http://appablog.wordpress.com/2009/09/28/seventh-session-of-the-international-contact-group-on-guinea-icg-g-final-communique/> | 30 September 2009 |]

⁷ [OSC | | AFP20090927309003 | 27 September 2009 | | Guinea: Junta Moves To Ban Opposition Rally | | (U) | (U) | Paris AFP (World Service) in English -- world news service of the independent French news agency Agence France Presse]

⁸ [OSC | | AFP20090927309003 | 27 September 2009 | | Guinea: Junta Moves To Ban Opposition Rally | | (U) | (U) | Paris AFP (World Service) in English -- world news service of the independent French news agency Agence France Presse]

⁹ [OSC | | AFP20090929646001 | 29 September 2009 | | Guinea: Opposition Says Troops Killed at Least 157 in Stadium Bloodbath | | (U) | (U) | Paris AFP (World Service) in English -- world news service of the independent French news agency Agence France Presse]

¹⁰ [OSC | | AFP20090928309003 | 28 September 2009 | | Guinea: At Least 10 Killed, Opposition Activists Injured in Demonstration | | (U) | (U) | Paris AFP (World Service) in English -- world news service of the independent French news agency Agence France Presse]