

## Guinea: Military Rule Must End

### I. OVERVIEW

The killing of at least 160 participants in a peaceful demonstration, the rape of many women protestors, and the arrest of political leaders by security forces in Conakry on 28 September 2009 showed starkly the dangers that continued military rule poses to Guinea's stability and to a region where three fragile countries are only just recovering from civil wars. The military junta, the National Council for Democracy and Development (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement, CNDD), is denying its evident responsibility and playing for time by offering what it calls a "national union government" to opposition parties. But with the mood on the streets hardening against the junta, worse trouble is likely unless combined domestic and international pressure is applied to force the soldiers from power.

The international community swiftly condemned the killings and demanded an immediate investigation. On 2 October, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) named President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso to mediate the crisis. The killings came only ten days after the African Union (AU) had stated its intention to place sanctions on the junta if its leader, Dadis Camara, did not confirm in writing by 17 October that neither he nor any member of the CNDD will stand in presidential elections that are now scheduled for 31 January 2010.

The violence came amid rising tensions connected to Dadis Camara's apparent determination to seek the presidency and followed a breakdown in dialogue over the democratic transition process. The junta had blocked creation of a National Transitional Council (Conseil national de transition, CNT), the large consultative body that was to be a key element in the transition process as agreed in March, and temporarily banned political discussions on state media. Political party and civil society leaders had become targets of military intimidation and harassment. The breakdown in dialogue reinforced a belief that the streets were the only available space for the people to express views on the transition process.

Since taking control in December 2008 within hours of the death of Guinea's long-time autocrat, Lansana Conté, the army has steadily tightened its grip on power. It has

militarised the public administration, used state resources to establish CNDD support groups across the country and formed ethnic militias. It has fuelled tensions most notably in the highly volatile southern region, Guinée Forestière, where it has gathered thousands of ex-combatants and former volunteers with combat experience. While the army has a collective interest in staying in power, the militia recruitment attests to the mistrust between junta leaders and other sections of the military. This is of great concern, since any violent breakdown within the military could mean civil war for Guinea and destabilise its neighbours via refugee flows into Mali, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, arms flow into Côte d'Ivoire, and cross-border movements of ex-combatants and refugee communities along the Liberian and Sierra Leone frontiers.

The tragic events of 28 September underline the necessity of crafting an exit strategy for the junta, so as to rescue the democratic transition and establish the conditions necessary for free and fair elections. The next steps are:

- ❑ The junta should take into account that the large majority of citizens will not accept another military regime, and its attempt to remain in power is likely to plunge the country into civil war or anarchy. It should stand aside now and make way for a civilian transitional government that includes a large representation from the Forces Vives – the umbrella group of opposition parties and civil society – and accept the ECOWAS offer to mediate negotiation of a dignified exit for itself.
- ❑ Members of the junta should explicitly and irrevocably drop any plans to stand for elections in any form and accept the terms of a comprehensive security sector reform process. This involves in the first place returning to barracks and taking measures to enforce discipline and address impunity among the troops. This could pave the way for more comprehensive security sector reform, including professionalising the army and creating a more capable civilian police force.
- ❑ President Compaoré's mediation on behalf of ECOWAS should focus on obtaining acceptance by the CNDD of the AU election ultimatum and designing the terms for top officers' departure from power.
- ❑ ECOWAS should consider sending a military mission to Guinea, possibly at chief of staff level, to assess

the requirements for stabilising the country, disarming all militias, providing security for the elections and launching a comprehensive program of security sector reform. This mission could also include a civilian political monitoring component.

- The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings should consider conducting an urgent mission to Guinea with a view to beginning forensic investigations into the 28 September events, and other international partners should provide financial and political support to national human rights organisations that are collecting information on the ground about the crimes committed.
- If the junta digs in, the international community should isolate the junta regime, starting by imposing tough targeted sanctions on CNDD members and their key supporters. The AU and concerned partners such as France, the U.S. and the European Union (EU) should simultaneously offer help to neighbouring countries for implementation of the sanctions and start contingency planning with ECOWAS forces for a rapid regional military intervention should Guinea slide into further violence.

## II. 28 SEPTEMBER

### A. THE KILLINGS AND RAPES

In the early hours of 28 September 2009, security forces opened fire on people gathered at the Conakry stadium. The demonstration had been organised by opposition parties to protest against the increasingly evident intention of Dadis Camara to stand for the presidency in the 31 January 2010 election.<sup>1</sup> As party leaders were about to address the crowd of 50,000, armed men in uniform entered the stadium, closed all gates and started shooting.<sup>2</sup> The killings occurred both inside the stadium and in the streets around it as people fled.

Human rights groups in Guinea have estimated the death toll at 160, with perhaps 1,700 injured.<sup>3</sup> Government

officials claimed the death toll was 57, only four from gun-shots, the others from a stampede. In light of numerous eyewitness accounts, their claim lacks any credibility. There are also numerous documented accounts of widespread sexual violence by members of the security forces against women, including beating, stripping and gang rape.<sup>4</sup> Many party leaders were likewise severely beaten and had their homes pillaged.<sup>5</sup> A senior journalist who covered the events claimed that party heads were specifically targeted.<sup>6</sup> Abuses continued later on the 28th and the following day, as security forces looted some neighbourhoods in suburbs of the capital. On 2 October, security personnel prevented participation in the funeral ceremony at Conakry's central mosque in honour of the dead, leading to further clashes with opposition supporters during which tear gas was used and Friday prayers were disrupted.<sup>7</sup>

Key individuals close to Dadis Camara from the parachute regiment (Bataillon autonome des troupes aéroportées, BATA) were actively involved in the killings.<sup>8</sup> There are also indications of involvement by irregular militia, most likely Liberian nationals. A civil society leader who was present told Crisis Group he heard armed, uniformed men give commands in Liberian Pidgin English.<sup>9</sup> Other witnesses, including political party leaders,

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VOA News, 1 October 2009 and various Agence France-Presse articles. To verify these numbers, Crisis Group spoke with a representative from the Guinean Human Rights Organisation (Organisation guinéenne des droits de l'homme, OGDH) on 6 October, who claimed the organisation had recorded 160 deaths and 1,700 injured. These numbers were based on both claims by family members who had identified bodies and OGDH hospital visits. However, OGDH has continued to take family and victim testimony, so the actual number of deaths and injuries is likely to be greater.

<sup>4</sup>Crisis Group telephone interviews, journalist, member of the Forces Vives, 28 September 2009. See "UN Security Council concerned about Guinea", VOA News, 30 September 2009; "Amid the bloodbath, harrowing tales of rape", France 24, 5 October 2009; "In a Guinea seized by violence, women as prey", *The New York Times*, 5 October 2009.

<sup>5</sup>Crisis Group telephone interviews, political party member, 28 September 2009. See also "Guinea's capital fades into a ghost town after soldier's rampage", *The New York Times*, 30 September 2009.

<sup>6</sup>Crisis Group telephone interview, *L'Aurore* journalist, 29 September 2009.

<sup>7</sup>Crisis Group telephone interview, member of Forces Vives, 5 October 2009.

<sup>8</sup>Crisis Group telephone interviews, OGDH member, 29 September 2009. See also "Guinea army bayoneted victims", BBC, 29 September 2009; "In Guinean hospital, wounded attest to military attack", *The New York Times*, 1 October 2009.

<sup>9</sup>Crisis Group telephone interview, members of Forces Vives who were at the scene, 29 September 2009. See also "Former

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<sup>1</sup>For details of the formation of the military junta and its first months in power, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°58, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Begun*, 5 March 2009.

<sup>2</sup>"Guinea's capital fades into a ghost town after soldiers' rampage", *The New York Times*, 30 September 2009.

<sup>3</sup>The most commonly cited figure for the number killed in these incidents is 157. See, for example, "Opposition claims 157 dead after army fires on protesters", Radio France Internationale (RFI), 29 September 2009; "Guinea massacre toll put at 157", BBC, 29 September 2009; "Guinea opposition cautious about military call for government of national unity",

have reported that some of those involved were not regular soldiers.

The events of 28 September were the latest and worst in a series of violent crackdowns by the security forces over the last few years. In February 2007, similar events led to more than 100 deaths.<sup>10</sup> While the 2007 violence was sparked by a general strike, the underlying causes, as well as the *modus operandi* of the security forces, were similar to recent events. The Guinean population, desperate for democratic change and an end to economic misery, is prepared to take to the streets in spite of the dangers, while the security forces are ready to use lethal force to terrify the population and maintain themselves in power.

## B. REACTIONS AND AFTERMATH

The international community swiftly condemned the 28 September killings and called for an international investigation into the events and the immediate release of political party leaders.<sup>11</sup> The UN Security Council reiterated its call for Dadis Camara and the CNDD to respect their prior commitment not to stand in the elections. The president of the ECOWAS Commission, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, called the incidents “unacceptable”, while the presidents of neighbouring Senegal, Liberia and Sierra Leone expressed serious concern. The French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner referred to “outrageous” events and urged for an intervention force to protect citizens against the military. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed deep outrage and called for appropriate action to be taken against the junta.<sup>12</sup> On 2 October ECOWAS designated President Compaoré of Burkina Faso to mediate the crisis.

The majority of Guineans expressed shock and dismay over the killings and sexual abuse. Domestic human rights organisations described the incidents as horrific. Although the military is notorious for atrocities against ci-

vilians, the latest affair has reinforced the call to address impunity within the armed forces.<sup>13</sup> Opposition leaders viewed it as confirmation that the junta is prepared to use violence to keep power. They called for an international investigation into the killings and demanded an international force to provide security for citizens and the electoral process.<sup>14</sup>

The junta’s reaction has been largely incoherent. In his first statement, Dadis Camara expressed sympathy for those killed.<sup>15</sup> The CNDD subsequently issued a communiqué blaming the opposition parties and uncontrollable elements within the military and calling for the suspension of all subversive political gatherings. Appearing on national television and on international radio following the events, he appeared visibly shaken and claimed not to be in control of an army that had “taken him hostage”.<sup>16</sup> The regime announced the establishment of a national commission comprising the government, political parties and civil society groups to investigate the killings. However, the Forces Vives refused to participate in what it called a farce.<sup>17</sup> The involvement of persons close to the junta leadership in the 28 September events and the sheer scale of the abuses make the claim that they were the work of uncontrollable elements of the military hard to believe.

In a subsequent interview, Dadis Camara blamed party leaders, who, he said, went ahead with the demonstrations in defiance of authority and complained about lawlessness in the military and his inability to control the entire army.<sup>18</sup> In another interview, his aide de camp denied that he had led the military unit that orchestrated the killings and argued that he had orders to stop military

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PM Touré calls for action against security forces”, RFI, 30 September 2009.

<sup>10</sup> See Crisis Group Africa Report N°121, *Guinea: Change or Chaos*, 14 February 2007.

<sup>11</sup> See “UN Security Council concerned about Guinea”, VOA News, 30 September 2009.

<sup>12</sup> “Clinton: Guinea’s leaders should step down”, Reuters, 6 October 2009; “Guinea to probe rally shooting”, Reuters, 8 October 2009. There are indications that views on the junta among decision makers in Paris have been divided, with some advocating a more favourable line. See “Patrick Balkany flingue le Quai d’Orsay”, *La Lettre du Continent*, 24 September 2009. The outrage caused by the 28 September events may have allowed those in Paris who favoured a harder line to re-take the initiative.

<sup>13</sup> On that impunity, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°52, *Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms*, 24 June 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Crisis Group telephone interviews, political party leaders in Conakry, 29 September 2009; Crisis Group meetings with senior UN officials, Dakar, 29 September 2009. See “Mémorandum à l’intention de Son Excellence le Président Blaise Compaoré, Facilitateur de la crise guinéenne”, Forces Vives, Conakry, 5 October 2009.

<sup>15</sup> “Corpses on show at independence day rally”, RFI, 2 October 2009.

<sup>16</sup> “Déclaration du CNDD et du Gouvernement”, 30 September 2009; “I’m a hostage of the army, says Guinean leader”, RFI, 1 October 2009.

<sup>17</sup> See “Les forces vives rejettent toute participation à la commission d’enquête nationale”, [www.guineenews.org](http://www.guineenews.org), 9 October 2009. The Forces Vives forum is the coordinating organ of the coalition of civil society organisations and political parties that decided to collaborate with the CNDD on the transition process. It is a legally-constituted body headed by two individuals representing respectively the political parties and civil society groups; see “Mémorandum”, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> See “I’m a hostage of the army”, op. cit.

personnel from disrupting the demonstration.<sup>19</sup> Since coming to power, however, the junta leaders have tolerated if not encouraged growing impunity and indiscipline in the army, and they are in any case responsible for the behaviour of their troops.<sup>20</sup>

It is highly unlikely that domestic political forces will back down on their demand that no one from the junta contest the presidential election. Opposition leaders dismissed the government's 30 September proposal that a national unity government oversee the transition process, asserting that under current circumstances, dialogue with the CNDD is impossible, and such a government would not work.<sup>21</sup> One party chief called the offer a diversionary tactic.<sup>22</sup> On 5 October, the Forces Vives demanded dissolution of the CNDD and creation of a transitional arrangement to supervise establishment of a unity government. Similarly, the Forces Vives the next day made acceptance of their election demand a precondition to participation in the Ouagadougou talks proposed by President Compaoré.<sup>23</sup>

### III. THE DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT

#### A. BREAKDOWN IN POLITICAL DIALOGUE

In the initial stages of the transition from the Conté dictatorship, the Forces Vives and the international community accepted the good faith of the junta on the basis of an agreed framework, including the creation of a National Transitional Council (Conseil national de transition, CNT). This led to difficult but ongoing discussions. However, in the months leading up to the 28 September killings, these broke down due to the junta leaders' obstructive attitude that included blocking the creation of the CNT, closing political space and intimidating political party and civil society leaders.<sup>24</sup> This led the opposition to break off talks and look to the streets as a way of demonstrating its popular support and putting pressure on the junta.

The first key element in the transition program as formulated in March 2009 was the junta's declaration that no CNDD member would contest the elections. On 15

April 2009 in Kaloum, however, Dadis Camara publicly expressed his right to stand for president, the first sign of his reluctance to honour this pledge.<sup>25</sup> The opposition considered distribution by the CNDD regime and its leader of government posts, rice, vehicles and business contracts to supporters and pro-junta youth groups as efforts to buy support for Dadis Camara's eventual candidacy.<sup>26</sup> Most political party leaders came to view the issue of that candidacy as the main obstacle in the transition process.

The second key element in that process was to be the CNT. Although its method of operation was initially agreed, its exact powers and, in particular, composition became a major source of disagreement.<sup>27</sup> Dadis Camara tried to inflate the membership unilaterally from the 163 originally agreed with the Forces Vives, to 244. The proposed additional members had little independent base and were expected to be loyal to the junta.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the CNT was never started, and the transition essentially stalled.

Preparations for the elections were well underway prior to the collapse of dialogue, with voter registration successfully completed by mid-April. But the ambitions of the junta leader overshadowed these developments. Opposition parties judged that free and fair elections were inconceivable if Dadis Camara was a candidate and the junta remained in power. The regime would be unlikely to accept adverse results, and any attempt to rig the process or the vote count could be expected to lead to his election and consequent chaos.

Intimidation and harassment of political party and civil society leaders caused further tension. For example, on 18 June the convoy of Cellou Dalein Diallo, head of the UFDG opposition party, was stopped, and his scheduled

<sup>19</sup> See "Toumba Jakitay: sur les événements du 28 Septembre", [www.guineenews.org](http://www.guineenews.org), 7 October 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Crisis Group Report, *The Transition Has Only Begun*, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> "Guinea opposition cautious about military call for government of national unity", VOA News, 1 October 2009.

<sup>22</sup> "Guinea opposition rejects junta unity call", Reuters, 1 October 2009.

<sup>23</sup> See "l'ultimatum des forces vives", RFI, 7 October 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Crisis Group interviews, political party leaders, members of civil society, Conakry, 16-17 September 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Crisis Group interview, leader, Union of Republican Forces (Union des forces républicaines, UFR), Conakry, 18 September 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Crisis Group interviews, youth leader, National Council of Guinean Civil Society Organisations (Conseil national des organisations de la société civile guinéenne, CNOSCG) Conakry, 16 September 2009; leader of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée, UFDG), 17 September 2009. Since Crisis Group pointed to the consolidation of military power across the administration in its March 2009 briefing, the junta has continued to allocate key positions to close allies. For example, the minister for territorial administration and political affairs, who is co-responsible for organisation of the elections, is said to be a cousin of Dadis Camara.

<sup>27</sup> Crisis Group interviews, UFR leader, 18 September 2009; UFDG leader, 17 September 2009; spokesperson for Forces Vives, 17 September 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Crisis Group interviews, UFR leader, Conakry, 18 September 2009; UFDG leader, Conakry, 17 September 2009.

political meeting in Kérouane was cancelled by the governor of the region, on orders from Conakry.<sup>29</sup> Several hours later, some 50 soldiers forced Diallo and his entourage out of Kankan. Prior to this, Dadis Camara had, on a number of occasions, threatened Diallo on the telephone. On one occasion, Diallo was taken to Camp Alpha Yaya, where he was interrogated by Dadis Camara. Other civil society and political party leaders have given similar accounts of intimidation, including how armed men have searched for them in their homes. On 14 September, political programs were suspended on state media.<sup>30</sup>

## B. SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES

Public administration has been militarised across the country. All but three of 33 prefects have been replaced by military officers. Of the 350 sub-prefects, 50 are also military, as are all eight regional governors.<sup>31</sup> These junta appointees have been mobilising local support for Dadis Camara and the CNDD through the creation of pro-junta support groups and youth organisations that have emerged in almost all the provinces. A credible source told Crisis Group that the sub-prefects in Guinée Forestière (the forest region) were ordered to tolerate no political meetings except those in support of the junta leader.

Members of these support groups describe Dadis Camara as a liberation leader, along the lines of such West African soldier-politicians as Rawlings of Ghana and Amadou Toumani Touré of Mali.<sup>32</sup> They have organised football tournaments in honour of the CNDD and receptions to host visiting junta figures.<sup>33</sup> They have also been ferried to Conakry to provide visible support to the junta leaders and to help fill the national congress hall, for example during the International Contact Group meeting on 3 September.

The multiplication of youth associations and support groups has caused alarm in civil society.<sup>34</sup> In Boké, civil society leaders put out a press release urging members to desist from taking part in the activities of such entities.<sup>35</sup> Crisis Group interviews have confirmed the widespread suspicion that these groups regularly receive financial largesse from the junta.<sup>36</sup> That they can be a strongly destabilising influence was shown in Macenta in August, when disputes over the distribution of 100 million Guinean francs (\$20,000) donated by the defence minister to youth groups resulted in a serious brawl and confrontations between youths and local authorities.<sup>37</sup>

In Guinée Forestière, CNDD political mobilisation has led to an increase in tension between that southern province's communities. Dadis Camara's supporters have played on the sense of exclusion from power of his Forestier ethnic group. In some cases this has taken on highly inflammatory aspects, for example when Moussa Keita, the CNDD's permanent secretary, in a visit to Nzérékoré in July 2009, framed the political debate as "Dadis ou la mort" ("Dadis or death"). This statement and its implicit reference to past inter-communal violence, was interpreted as an attempt to mobilise people on an ethnic basis.<sup>38</sup> This is particularly worrying in urban centres, where Forestier groups are mixed with large communities of Malinké and Fulani, many of whom are currently leading the campaign against the junta leader's electoral ambition.

The ethnic volatility has an important historical dimension. The region has witnessed several periods of conflict, memories of which are still vivid in the minds of inhabitants. In the early 1990s, the late President Conté used a discourse of ethnic division to gather support in the new multiparty context. In 1991, during a visit just after municipal elections, he made the highly inflammatory argument that non-indigenous groups did not have a right to a leading role in the region's politics and highlighted the alleged threat they posed. The Malinké felt particularly targeted, especially as Conté's main

<sup>29</sup> Crisis Group interview, UFDG leader, Conakry, 17 September 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Conakry various dates. Another example is the mayor of Nzérékoré, who supports an opposition party. On 1 July 2009, he was dismissed by the prefect for having made too overt a display of his opposition party loyalty – this despite the prefect not officially having the power to dismiss him. Crisis Group interview, the former mayor, 13 September 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Crisis Group interviews, member, Conseil préfectoral des organisations de la société civile, Faranah, 15 September 2009; trade unionist, Mamou, 16 September 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Crisis Group interview, member of "Dadis doit rester" ("Dadis must stay") movement, Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Crisis Group interview, CNDD support group spokesperson, Guekédou, 6 September 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Crisis Group interviews, numerous pro-CNDD youth groups, Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009; Sigueri, 1 September 2009; Kankan, 2 September 2009.

<sup>35</sup> See "Situation des membres des bureaux des OSC dans les activités politiques", circular letter, Boké, 26 September 2009. Crisis Group interview, CNOSCG member, Boké, 22 September 2009.

<sup>36</sup> In Kankan for example, a member of the Mouvement de jeunes patriotes pour le soutien du CNDD told Crisis Group on 2 September 2009 that it has been receiving financial support from the prefect's office.

<sup>37</sup> Crisis Group interview, president, Comité d'unité et de paix de Macenta, Macenta, 14 September 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Crisis Group interview, civil society leader, Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009.

opponent at the time was a Malinké, Alpha Condé. His remarks also ignited ethnic clashes between the Guerza and the Konianké that led to several deaths in the Nzérékoré region.<sup>39</sup> While an NGO director working on conflict prevention in the region characterised the more recent ethnic clashes in 2004 and 2006 as less destructive, the pattern of intercommunal violence suggests the dangers of political mobilisation CNDD-style.<sup>40</sup>

Following the attack of then Liberian President Charles Taylor's forces in Guinée Forestière in 2000-2001, Conté recruited, trained and armed volunteers to fight beside the regular army. Most of these youths, who eventually numbered about 6,000, never went through a formal disarmament process. They have since constituted a major source of social unrest in the region. The rise in crime has been attributed to this incomplete disarmament and lack of legitimate opportunities for ex-volunteers.<sup>41</sup>

The majority of those Conté recruited to fight against Charles Taylor were based in Macenta and eventually integrated into militias that were involved in the Liberian civil war – first ULIMO (United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy) and later LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy). Most of these ex-combatants, now widely referred to as “*les enfants associés*” (the associated children), are scattered across the region, with a large concentration in the suburbs of Horoya-Angola and Wesso in Nzérékoré.<sup>42</sup> Alongside a small number of Liberians, most of these ex-combatants are from the Manian ethnic group in Macenta. Some 600 were taken into the regular army, and 540 were selected for skills training financed by the

EU at the Community Development University (Université pour le développement communautaire de Guinée) in Nzérékoré, but about 3,000 eligible candidates have been left out of the program.<sup>43</sup>

CNDD support groups, in particular youth groups, are also springing up in other regions. Unlike Guinée Forestière, where CNDD support groups are driven by ethno-regional affiliations, they are promoted from above, usually by the prefect or the governor.<sup>44</sup> For example, in places like Mamou, Faranah, Kankan, Siguiri and Boké, they are seen as a conduit to attract development financing and the junta's goodwill.<sup>45</sup> In Faranah, a public servant at the prefect's office spoke of the speed with which money can be obtained to organise events in honour of the CNDD.<sup>46</sup> In Mamou, a leading unionist told Crisis Group the prefect called a meeting urging civil society to be part of the local CNDD support group.<sup>47</sup>

However, initial sympathy for the junta due to its stance against corruption and criminality has faded, particularly in light of Dadis Camara's political ambitions. The support groups now face concerted opposition from regional chapters of Forces Vives, as well as from ordinary Guineans who dislike military rule.

### C. THE MILITARY DIMENSION

Fractures within the junta, whether along ethnic lines or just between individuals and factions, and the instability they cause is another reason why the junta should not remain in power.<sup>48</sup> The events of 28 September and the creation of ethnic militias offer further demonstra-

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<sup>39</sup> In Guinée Forestière, there are two broad social categories: the forest groups, principally the Guerza, Toma, Kissi and Mano; and the Mandingoes, made up of Malinké, Konianké, Kouranko and Manian. The Konianké and the Malinké speak similar dialects and consider themselves indigenes of Nzérékoré though it is claimed they hail from Beyla. Crisis Group interviews, director, Pacem in Terris, Nzérékoré, 13 September 2009; human rights worker, Nzérékoré, 14 September 2009. See “Conflits ethniques en Guinée Forestière”, Pacem in Terris, Nzérékoré, document made available to Crisis Group, September 2009; and Crisis Group Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 December 2003, pp. 20-22.

<sup>40</sup> A senior political figure claimed that if Dadis Camara stands in the elections, his Guerza ethnic group may fight groups opposed to his candidacy, sparking violence similar to 1991. Crisis Group interview, member, Assembly of the Guinean People (Rassemblement du peuple guinéen, RPG) 7 September 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Crisis Group interviews, former officer, USAID conflict prevention project for youths, Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009; human rights worker, Nzérékoré, 14 September 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Crisis Group interviews, ex-combatants, Nzérékoré, 8 September 2009.

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<sup>43</sup> Crisis Group interview, president, Université pour le développement communautaire de Guinée, Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009. Guinée Forestière is where much of the instability originates, due partly to its ethnic composition and partly to its proximity to Liberia's and Cote d'Ivoire's instability. Crisis Group Africa Report N°94, *Stopping Guinea's Slide*, 14 June 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Crisis Group interviews, CNOSCG member, Mamou, 16 September 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Crisis Group interviews, member, Fédérations Artisanes, Mamou, 16 September 2009; member, civil society group, Faranah, 15 September 2009; president, Fassola Sabati youth association, Seguiri, 1 September 2009; member, “Dadis doit partir” association, Kankan, 2 September 2009; member, Association de patriotes pour le développement du Kankan et soutien du CNDD, Kankan, 2 September 2009; member, CNOSCG, Boké, 22 September 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Crisis Group interview, civil servant, Faranah, 15 September 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Crisis Group interviews, member, CNOSCG, Mamou, 16 September 2009.

<sup>48</sup> See Crisis Group Briefing, *The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, op. cit.

tions. Ethnic militias, recruited to lend the CNDD support and with over 2,000 members, are being trained at a base at Kaliah, five kilometres from Forecariah and around 100km from Conakry.<sup>49</sup> The recruits told Crisis Group they were being trained by white expatriates to maintain order during the elections.<sup>50</sup>

The defence minister, Sekouba Konaté, a key figure in the current power structure, has important connections with rebel and militia groups from Guinea's and Liberia's recent past. He has built up substantial connections within the military and business community over the years and has reportedly gained considerable control over the award of government contracts.<sup>51</sup> For example, the contract awarded to an American company SCS Hyperdynamics to share offshore oil exploration, was done with his support.<sup>52</sup>

Konaté was appointed by Conté to oversee operations of the LURD rebels in Macenta due to his experience in the Liberian and Sierra Leone conflicts. He has strong ties with the LURD leadership and rank and file and is currently tightly linked to Aisha Damate Conneh, an important figure in that organisation to whose house in Conakry he provides protection. He has also helped secure jobs for ex-LURD combatants at the Cellcom phone company.<sup>53</sup> These links may shed some light on the reported presence of Liberians among the armed men who attacked and killed protesters on 28 September. In addition, several credible sources claim that Konaté, or people acting for him, have been involved in recruiting young men from his Malinké ethnic group to join the contingent at the Kaliah military training centre.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>This centre, originally a camp for Sierra Leone refugees, was transformed in 2008 into a Gendarmerie training facility. Credible sources in Nzérékoré told Crisis Group young boys, some ex-volunteers, have been ferried out by buses at night. Forecariah residents confirmed seeing buses loaded with young boys heading towards the Kaliah training bases. Crisis Group interviews, member, political section, Assembly of the Guinean People (Rassemblement du peuple guinéen, RPG), Nzérékoré, 7 September 2009; human rights worker, Nzérékoré, 14 September 2009; CNOSCG member, Forecariah, 20 September 2009.

<sup>50</sup>Crisis Group interviews, recruits, military personnel, residents, Forecariah, 20 September 2009. The white expatriates, whom residents believed to be Ukrainian, stay at Hotel Bafila in Forecariah from where they commute to Kaliah daily.

<sup>51</sup>Crisis Group interviews, journalist, Conakry, 18 September 2009.

<sup>52</sup>See "Exploration pétrolière par SCS/Hyperdynamics", *L'Aurore*, 7 September 2009. Crisis Group interview, government official, Conakry, 19 September 2009.

<sup>53</sup>Cellcom is also prominent in Liberia. Crisis Group interview, journalist, Conakry, 18 September 2009.

<sup>54</sup>Crisis Group interview, senior political figure, Conakry, 17 September 2009.

Such details indicate that junta members are recruiting militias from their own ethnic groups, or from pools of young men who have previously been involved in militia activity.<sup>55</sup> At one level, this appears to be a concerted action by the junta to develop loyal forces it can use in the streets of Conakry and other major towns. However the ethnic coloration, combined with the clear tensions within the junta, suggest that divisions inside the military over the spoils of power pose a serious risk to national stability. This is in the first instance factional: current tensions in the military are not a purely ethnic phenomenon. But the ethnic aspect could potentially act as an instability multiplier in the event of further breakdown.

The risks are exacerbated by the arrests of military officers. Since the CNDD took power in December 2008, there have been systematic detentions of senior officers believed to have been close to Conté and who still enjoy some support within the army.<sup>56</sup> Although members of the security forces are being paid on time, the CNDD distributes additional favours to its cronies, leading to a dangerous feeling of exclusion among others, of all ranks. For example, lower-ranking soldiers complained to Crisis Group of being posted to border checkpoints because the regime regards them as loyal to the former regime.<sup>57</sup>

After 28 September, Dadis Camara's position within the military looks more fragile. For the head of a junta to openly declare that he has lost control of an army that is "holding him hostage"<sup>58</sup> points to a potential general breakdown in law and order. It is also indicative of the leadership's lack of trust in its armed forces. Reports of a dispute the evening of 7 October between junta members at the Alpha Yaya military camp that was barely contained point to the persistence of tensions.<sup>59</sup>

#### IV. DANGERS FOR THE REGION

Continued violence has potential regional implications, given the interlinked history of conflict in the Mano River area. Guinea played a pivotal role in the Liberian and Sierra Leone conflicts, and particularly in the creation of the ULIMO and LURD insurgencies in Liberia. Some links forged then are re-emerging. The defence

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<sup>55</sup>For details of the ethnic lines of division in the junta see *La Lettre du Continent*, 8 October 2009.

<sup>56</sup>Crisis Group interview, lawyer, Conakry, 18 September 2009.

<sup>57</sup>Crisis Group interviews, military personnel, Kouremali border post, August 2009; Nongowa border post, September 2009; security personnel, Diéké checkpoints, September 2009.

<sup>58</sup>See "I'm a hostage of the army", *op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup>Crisis Group telephone interview, journalist, 7 September 2009.



minister's LURD ties have been detailed above. The recent visit of the spokesman of Forces Nouvelles, the former Ivorian insurgency, to Conakry and his pro-junta statements, indicated possible new regional alliances.<sup>60</sup> These raise serious concerns, as Côte d'Ivoire prepares for difficult elections while its north is still largely under military control of Forces Nouvelles zone commanders, who have developed increasing autonomy from former rebel leader, now prime minister, Guillaume Soro.<sup>61</sup>

Some play down the importance of these regional links from the "nomad wars" of the 1990s. For example, a former LURD spokesperson said the movement has been disbanded, with most senior members now in business and politics, and expressed doubt ex-members retain strong links with Guinean counterparts.<sup>62</sup> But Guinée Forestière, once host to ULIMO and LURD, remains volatile, with its thousands of ex-combatants and former military volunteers.<sup>63</sup> It also shares borders with Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, all just emerging from civil wars.

Liberia and Sierra Leone are relatively calm, with no reports of significant frontier movement.<sup>64</sup> Although the reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia has been a mixed success, the ex-fighters in border towns pose no immediate threat to either country's security.<sup>65</sup> In northern Liberia, for example, the Foundation for African Development Aid/Libyan African Investment Portfolio (ADA-LAP) agriculture project gives useful employment to over 500 youths in Foya district, mostly ex-combatants.<sup>66</sup> However, security personnel at the Sierra Leone-Guinea border (Yenga) claimed there has been a heavy security presence on the Guinean side since the CNDD came to power.<sup>67</sup> This points to a danger of military rule in Guinea – that the junta may ferment in-

stability or the impression of it to justify retaining control. Its 12 July 2009 warning of an imminent attack by armed groups massing at the borders demonstrated the danger. Previous regimes have been able to use neighbours' instability and frequent invasions to bolster support.<sup>68</sup> The junta is aware of the gains it might get from regional threats, real or imagined.

Although senior UN officers in Liberia see no immediate security threat, they are concerned over Guinea.<sup>69</sup> Security officials said, "if there are tensions ... there is going to be a spill-over". For them, the transition poses a grave challenge, the critical element of which is Dadis Camara's position.<sup>70</sup> Though the Sierra Leone and Liberia presidents have expressed concern over Guinea, particularly following the 28 September events, they are reluctant to play a leading role in stabilising the country. A senior minister told Crisis Group they were nervous about the reaction of the junta if it is boxed into a corner by sanctions.<sup>71</sup>

## V. AN EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE JUNTA

### A. PHASE 1: NEGOTIATING AN END TO MILITARY RULE

The 28 September events have underlined that the military's departure from power must be the international community's priority for Guinea. The junta will undoubtedly play for time, hoping the outrage will subside. But the AU ultimatum that Dadis Camara and other junta members must declare in writing by 17 October that they will not stand for election is a minimum to maintain. Their immediate departure in favour of a civilian transitional government would be preferable.

ECOWAS has mandated President Compaoré to negotiate a way out of the crisis. His mission should focus on an exit strategy for the junta and the terms of the January 2010 elections, which should be free from any military involvement.

<sup>60</sup> See "Sidiki Konaté, ce que Dadis Camara m'a dit sur les avions de Gbagbo", *Le Patriote*, 14 September 2009.

<sup>61</sup> See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, *Côte d'Ivoire: What's Needed to End the Crisis*, 2 July 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Crisis Group interview, former LURD spokesperson, Monrovia, 11 September 2009.

<sup>63</sup> Crisis Group interview, director, Pacem in Terris, 13 September 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Crisis Group interviews, Foya border posts, September 2009; Yenga border post, Koindu, September 2009.

<sup>65</sup> See Crisis Group Africa Report N°148, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, 13 January 2009, Appendix D.

<sup>66</sup> The Foundation for African Development Aid was originally an NGO responsible for training ex-combatants in livelihood skills. It merged with Libyan African Investment Portfolio to form an entity that invests in agriculture. Its biggest project is in Foya, on the Liberian side of the border. Crisis Group interview, ADA-LAP official, Foya, 5 September 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Crisis Group interview, Yenga border post, September 2009.

<sup>68</sup> See Alexis Arieff, "Still standing: neighbourhood wars and political stability in Guinea", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, September 2009, pp 331-348.

<sup>69</sup> Crisis Group interviews, security personnel in Liberia and Sierra Leone, 4-5 September 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Crisis Group interviews, security officials, Monrovia, 11 September 2009.

<sup>71</sup> Crisis Group interview, senior government minister, Monrovia, 10 September 2009.



A national or international enquiry into responsibility for the 28 September killings, while a laudable longer-term aim, is unlikely to make headway as long as the military is in power. In the meantime, however, the international community should give targeted support to the human rights groups that are doing the vital and dangerous work on the ground of documenting witness accounts. The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings should begin forensic investigations and recommend how to prevent more killings, including prosecutions of culprits.

It needs to be made clear that if the junta resists, it can expect sanctions and isolation. Given the fragile position of the junta leadership and the chances of further violence, it is possible that some members may be persuaded to accept an exit strategy as in their best interests. The Forces Vives have made clear their refusal to negotiate anything with the junta but its exit from power. This is understandable: Compaoré's mediation should focus on how, not whether, the military is to leave, and on the mechanisms to free the elections from military interference. He also needs to focus on concrete ways for returning the country's regional administration to civilian rule and on halting militia recruitment.

The CNDD should accept leaving power now. However, it may try to compromise by accepting the AU ultimatum but refusing to comply with the Forces Vives to leave power immediately. If so, the international community will have to engage substantially to secure the electoral process from military interference. To prevent efforts at indefinite delay, it should, led by the AU, set 31 January 2010 as the deadline for the junta to leave power regardless of whether elections are held on that date as scheduled.

ECOWAS should negotiate with the junta, possibly at chief of staff level,<sup>72</sup> in order to send a military observer mission, the focus of which should be on putting a stop to the recruitment and training of militias and the presence of irregulars in the Guinean armed forces. The mission should also assess the security needs of the transition and make further recommendations to ECOWAS heads of state. Even if Dadis Camara and most junta members agree to step aside, there will remain the tasks of returning the military to barracks and instilling discipline in the army and order on the streets. A major international effort will be required to secure each stage of the transition process. An ECOWAS/AU/UN mission should also be sent to evaluate the requirements for the badly-needed security system reform and start necessary planning.

While the technical aspects of election preparations are relatively well advanced, making it possible for the vote to be held as scheduled if the military steps aside, the security aspects will still pose a huge challenge and may require a rethinking of the timetable. Equally, civilian candidates remain hampered by their associations with the former regime and by their too prominent ethnic coloration. While the return to civilian rule and the democratic learning curve have to start, and the sooner the better, the weakness of political parties needs to be addressed in the longer term to avoid any repetition of the events of December 2008.

The Forces Vives have demanded an international intervention force to protect Guinean civilians.<sup>73</sup> In current circumstances a major contingent is neither feasible nor desirable. However, the events of 28 September, as well as the dangers inherent in the recruitment of militia across the country, call for an international response, as they clearly pose a grave threat not only to the security of Guinea, but also her neighbours.

ECOWAS and the UN Office in West Africa (UNOWA) should put at President Compaoré's disposal experts on the Guinea situation to provide technical assistance. This would help accelerate the mediation process and avoid lapses usually associated with such mandates.

## B. PHASE 2: ISOLATION AND SANCTIONS

If concerted pressure fails to bring compliance with the AU election demand, a harder line will be needed. The junta should then be isolated and sanctioned. Those who have tried to work with it would need to accept that the approach could no longer be expected to lead to a credible transition.<sup>74</sup> If Dadis Camara does stand for the presidency, for example, the international community should end support for the election – it cannot afford to finance a farce.

In that eventuality, travel bans and asset freezes should be imposed on CNDD members as well as associates – politicians and businessmen – with key supporting roles or involvement in such activities as militia recruitment. AU sanctions should be backed up by a UN Security Council resolution if possible, but at least be implemented also by the EU and U.S. Contingency planning should already be started by Western governments to help Senegal, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire control the smuggling of oil, diamonds, essential commodities and weapons in and out

<sup>72</sup>The ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff already meet regularly, so would be well placed to push this through.

<sup>73</sup>See "Mémorandum", op. cit.

<sup>74</sup>As indeed some have already done. See "Un ministre décide de présenter sa démission", RFI, 12 October 2009.

of Guinea; multinational corporations involved in bauxite extraction should be warned to stop all payments to the junta and all extraction activities or themselves face international sanctions.

Countries or international companies which have been considering investing in Guinea's mining sector should take into account that military rule presents a serious risk to the country's stability and therefore to that of their investments and staff. In addition, given the junta's chaotic style of governing the country it is likely that their contracts will be reviewed in any case should new leadership come in, whether civilian or different military strongmen. They should desist from such investments until civilian rule is restored.<sup>75</sup>

The international community should also support efforts of the Forces Vives to maintain pressure on the junta, with an eye on the eventual establishment of a civilian transitional government. As with the political parties, there remain many questions over whether the Forces Vives are a fully representative body, but they have shown courage and increasing coherence in standing up to the military in recent months and should be backed.

It is possible, though not at this stage inevitable, that the situation will deteriorate seriously if the military hangs on to power but begins to fragment. The international community also needs to make contingency plans for this, including how to help Guinea's neighbours avoid destabilising effects. The over-the-horizon guarantees for Sierra Leone should be reviewed between the government in Freetown, ECOWAS and the UK.<sup>76</sup> The UN Security Council should acknowledge that the situation in Guinea poses a considerable threat to its neighbours and factor this into its current plans to draw down the

peacekeeping force in Liberia.<sup>77</sup> Those responsible for deployments in that country should prepare for the eventuality of trouble spilling over the border and adjust the composition of their units accordingly.

Finally, the UN, AU and ECOWAS should start contingency planning for a possible rapid intervention in Guinea in the event the army breaks up, the country divides between warring ethnic factions and a battle begins for Conakry. Guinea must not be allowed to descend into the chaos that Sierra Leone and Liberia recently experienced. Not only would those countries face the risk of renewed destabilisation, but preventing the deaths of thousands of civilians at the hands of ethnic militias would justify a robust political and, if necessary, military response.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The 28 September killings in Conakry showed again the dangers that continued military rule pose to the stability of Guinea and the sub-region and thus underlined the urgent necessity to devise an exit strategy for the junta regime. Dadis Camara's presidential ambitions – evident in his use of state resources to buy support and intimidate opposition leaders – are a grave risk for the transition process. The recruitment of ethnic and foreign militias and the increasing signals of his inability to control the army raise serious concerns over intra-military tensions.

Getting the junta leader to renounce politics and establish the conditions for free and fair elections is critical for the ECOWAS mediation. Engaging the military should not, however, overshadow the need to address the 28 September killings. The national investigation commission is unlikely to identify the culprits without international involvement. Likewise, the international community should start thinking about its options in the event the mediation collapses. Unless urgent and concerted efforts are made by both the Forces Vives and the international community to wrest the transition process away from the military, further violence threatens first Guinea, then a neighbourhood that is just beginning to recover from years of civil war.

**Dakar/Brussels, 16 October 2009**

<sup>75</sup> Many foreign companies, including substantial Russian and Chinese interests, are heavily dependent on Guinea's reserves of bauxite (used to make aluminium), which are the world's biggest. Since the 28 September killings, the Guinean government has talked up possible investment in its mining sector, undoubtedly as a way of countering any impression of international isolation. Reports indicate that a Hong Kong-based firm, part-owned by Angola's national oil company SONANGOL, is preparing a major investment fund for Guinea. The sum reported (\$1.6 billion) is significant, although it is not yet clear how realistic it is. See "Guinea: Gunning down Democracy", *Africa Confidential*, 9 October 2009; and "Guinea boasts of deal with Chinese company", *The New York Times*, 13 October 2009.

<sup>76</sup> The "over the horizon" guarantee is the arrangement between the UK and Sierra Leone following the 2000 British intervention that London would send support if there was renewed danger of destabilisation.

<sup>77</sup> The plans for drawdown can be found in UN Security Council Resolution 1885 (2009). Regional stability is already one of the benchmarks to be taken into account.

## APPENDIX A

### MAP OF GUINEA



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