

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Guinea

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-1</td> <td>5</td> <td>+6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>1</td> <td>6</td> <td>+5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td colspan="3">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td colspan="3">Yes</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	-1	5	+6	Democ:	1	6	+5	Autoc:	2	1	-1	Durable:	0			Tentative:	Yes			
Score:	2009	2010	Change																						
Polity:	-1	5	+6																						
Democ:	1	6	+5																						
Autoc:	2	1	-1																						
Durable:	0																								
Tentative:	Yes																								
SCODE	GUI	CCODE	438	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	2	4	5	3	4																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
2 February 2010			21 December 2010																						
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution		1990																							
Executive(s)		President Alpha Condé, directly elected 21 December 2010, 52.5%																							
Legislature		Unicameral: People's National Assembly (114 seats; 38 directly elected, 76 proportionally elected; most recent elections 30 June 2002) <i>Note: The legislature was dissolved by the 23 December 2008 military coup. On 8 February 2010, the ruling military junta established the National Transition Council (CNT) as a consultative body during the transition to civilian government; it is comprised of 101 members representing the military, political parties, civil society, trade unions, and professional organizations. New legislative elections have been postponed several times and are currently scheduled to take place on 29 December 2011.</i>																							
Judiciary		Court of Appeal																							

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)

Between 1958 and 1984 Guinea was dominated by the leadership of President Sekou Toure. Embracing a program that mixed pan-Africanism with Marxist ideology, President Toure banned opposition parties and brutally repressed dissenting voices to his autocratic rule. The current president, Lansana Conté, led a successful military coup in Guinea following Toure's death in 1984. In the early 1990s, in an effort to garner the support of the international financial community, Conté's military government ushered in a

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

protracted liberalization of the political system under the guidance of the Transitional Committee for National Recovery. Facing increasing political unrest in the country by pro-democracy forces, Conté was forced to hold democratic elections in 1993. The presidential elections of 1993 and 1998, which were both won by Conté, were plagued by allegations of voter fraud and government repression. A military coup attempt in 1996 was violently put down.

A former member of the ruling Central Committee in the times when Guinea was West Africa's "showcase of Marxism," Conté has largely retained the old regime's administrative standards and practices and kept high-ranking officials of the former regime in some key posts. With the full support of the security forces, Conté has used the institutions of democracy to legitimize his personalistic rule in the eyes of the international community. However, democracy in Guinea is a mere facade as Conté has shown no intention of relinquishing power and continues to tightly circumscribe opposition political activity. In 2001, Conté circumvented the democratic constitution by holding a popular referendum that sought to abolish the two-term limit on presidential authority. According to government figures, over eighty-seven percent of the population participated in the referendum of 11 November 2001 and over ninety-eight percent of the ballots cast in this referendum were in favor of allowing Conté to run for a third term in office. The opposition, which called for a boycott of the referendum, disputed the results of the poll and called on the international community to impose sanctions on the Conté regime. International observers indicated that only 20% of the population participated in the referendum and have roundly criticized the government's use of force against its opponents.

Presidential elections were held on 21 December 2003 and, to the surprise of no one, Lansana Conté was once again declared the winner. Winning a reported ninety-five percent of the vote, Guinea's ailing head of state was sworn in for another seven-year term in late January 2004. This election, like the electoral contests of 1993 and 1998, was roundly criticized by domestic and international observers as fraudulent. The poll was boycotted by most opposition parties (most of whose candidates had already been ruled ineligible to stand for office) and the results were clouded by accusations of electoral fraud and vote rigging. Fearing the prospects for a potential coup prior to the electoral contest, President Conté had warned the army in October 2003 against any covert political action against the regime. Dozens of junior officers were secretly arrested in the months leading up to the election. While the government claimed more than ninety percent turnout for the polls, impartial observers place that figure at closer to 15% of the voting age population. Since 2004 President Conté's health steadily declined due to chronic diabetes, and his practices of replacing disloyal government ministers and ignoring the calls of powerful domestic groups generated increasingly strong and unified opposition. After a failed assassination attempt in January 2005, popular protests in 2005-06 over elections and labor relations, and a general strike and military mutinies in 2007, it seemed that Conté's hold on power was growing increasingly tenuous.

President Conté died in office on 22 December 2008 and within hours of the official announcement of his death soldiers under the command of Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara seized control of the government in a military coup. The government was dissolved, the constitution was suspended, and a military junta was established, the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), with Camara named president. Camara promised free and fair elections within two years. While Camara allowed civilian opposition groups to operate in the country, other political reforms were slow to emerge as Camara began to centralize control around himself and his political allies. In August 2009 Camara, who had initially stated that he would not hold office in the new democratic order, suggested that he might run for president in 2010. While the CNDD continued to press forward with plans to hold elections, it became increasingly clear in 2009 that Camara was going to seek to retain his position of power by manipulating the electoral process in his advantage. As opposition forces began to resist Camara's political efforts to subvert the democratic process, he increasingly responded with force. In late September 2009 soldiers loyal to Camara violently broke up a meeting of 50,000 opposition members who had assembled in a soccer stadium in the capital city to protest Camara's decision to run for president. Over 160 were killed in this incident.

In the wake of the brutal massacre, as international condemnation of the Camara government intensified, on 3 December 2009 Lieutenant Abubakar Toumba Diakite, an aide to the president, shot Camara in the head. Diakite, who had been involved in the September massacre, feared that Camara was going to force him to take the blame for the violence. Camara survived his injuries but was forced to remain in exile in Burkina Faso. The Minister of Defense under Camara, General Sekouba Konate, assumed the position as head of the CNDD.

On 21 January 2010 the CNDD announced that it would hand over power to a provisional civilian government in anticipation of democratic elections to be held later in the year. General Sekouba Konaté, leader of the junta, appointed Jean-Marie Doré as prime minister of the provisional government on 26 January 2010 and on 8 February 2010 a consultative body, the National Transition Council (CNT) was established until legislative elections could be held. In March the interim government declared that first-round presidential balloting would take place on 27 June 2010. This ballot took place in a relatively open, transparent and peaceful manner, marking the first “free” election in the country’s history. When the votes were officially revealed on 20 July, Cellou Dalein Diallo was awarded the most votes with 43.69%. Alpha Condé came in second with 18.25% (although he alleged that over 600,000 votes had been stolen from him during the tabulation process). In the run up to the run off balloting, violent clashes between supporters of Diallo and Condé broke out in early September 2010, leading the government to suspend all political rallies. Much of the political violence surrounding the second-round ballot was due to the ethnic divide that these two candidates represent: while Condé has his base of support in the Malinké community, Diallo has his support among the Peulh (or Fulani) ethnic group. While the Peulh have economic dominance in the country, no member of the group has been president of the country. By contrast, the Malinké have been heavily represented among the country’s military rulers. After postponing the second-round vote on three different occasions, the election finally took place on 7 November 2010. On 3 December 2010 Guinea’s ex-prime minister Cellou Dalein Diallo conceded defeat to Alpha Condé after the Supreme Court failed to confirm his allegation of fraud in the November 2010 ballot. According to official results, Condé was declared the victor in the contest with 52.52% of the vote and was inaugurated on 21 December 2010.

Executive Constraints: Substantial Limitations (5)

Former-President Conté referred to himself as “a peasant farmer with the head of a military man” and remained both the army’s commanding general and the country’s nominally-elected president until his death in December 2008. Not surprisingly, the country’s armed forces played a dominant role in the conduct of governance in Guinea. Horizontal accountability in Guinea was limited as loyalists to the president dominated both the judicial and legislative branches of government. In the first multi-party legislative elections held in 1995 the pro-presidential Party of Unity and Progress (PUP) took over sixty percent of the National Assembly seats. More recent elections, held in 2002, did not significantly change the composition of the National Assembly; PUP controls eighty-five of the 114 seats in the Assembly.

Under Conte’s leadership, the PUP dominated all three branches of government. However, opposition parties on occasion were able to persuade PUP legislators, including the National Assembly leadership, to vote with the opposition on specific legislative matters. On the 2001 referendum, for example, the Speaker of the National Assembly voiced his strong opposition to the referendum, arguing that national referendums can only be called by legislative approval and not by presidential decree. The controversial referendum, which according to the government was approved by a landslide margin, only further consolidated the powers of the executive branch. In addition to increasing the president’s mandate from five to seven years and abolishing term limits, the president was afforded the ability to appoint both national judges and local government officials, further reducing any institutional constraints on the executive.

Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara, a junior military officer, rose to political power in the waning years of President Conte’s life. Conte was looking for support within the military for the ascension of his son to power after his death. Many senior members of the military had rejected this idea, instead supporting General Toto Camara (no relation), a senior military officer, to assume control of both the party and the country after the passing of the elderly president. In an effort to consolidate power in the family, Conte and his son, Ousmane, used their control of state funds to support Camara and a 400-member military force loyal to him. Camara, however, was more interested in his own accretion of power rather than with the perpetuation of a Conte dynasty. In the wake of Conte’s death, Camara used his newly acquired powers to threaten to lay siege to the capital city if he was not made head of state. The senior members of the military agreed but forced Camara to agree to step down in due course. Camara had no intention of doing so.

As Camara began to distance himself from his promise to step down from power, tensions within the military began to increase and Camara arrested many senior member of the ruling junta. Camara, however, was never able to fully consolidate his authority within the power structure of Guinean politics. While Camara actively sought to remove his mentor, General Konate, as defense minister, he was unable to do so. Camara was forced to accept the continued power of General Konate within the ruling CNDD even though he actively sought to establish a power base outside of the military establishment. Feeling

increasingly threatened by Konate's institutional power, on 4 January 2009 Camara established an elite commando unit designed to protect him and secure his authority. In addition, Camara became increasingly reliant on a handful of street-level commanders in the capital city, each with their own personal armies, to maintain his hold on power. Camara's rise to power ultimately ended as quickly as it began. With the attempted assassination on his life and his subsequent exile from the country, Camara's power base has weakened considerably (although he remains popular in his south-eastern Forestiere region). His successor, General Konaté sought to repair relations between the junta and the rest of the military by removing Camara supporters from positions of power and by disbanding and relocating the military factions that supported his rule. It is too early to characterize the nature of constraints that will define executive authority for the civilian administration that took office in December 2010, particularly until a new legislature has been elected and seated. New legislative elections have been postponed repeatedly since the 2008 military coup and are now set for 29 December 2011.

Political Participation: Political Liberalization or Democratic Retrenchment: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)

Guinea is both a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. The Fulani, Malinke and Soussou ethnic groups constitute over seventy-five percent of the total population and eight distinct languages are widely used in the country. Over the past two decades, members of President Conté's own minority ethnic group, the Soussou (eleven percent of the population), have increasingly come to dominate the public sector. This ethnic bias has contributed to the declining popularity of President Conté and the increasing fractionalization of the country into competing ethnic-based factions. This ethnic factionalization has been increasingly evident in the military in recent years and represents a significant threat to the social stability of the country. Following a coup attempt in 1984, Conte recruited heavily from his Soussou ethnic group to reduce the dominance of Malinke officers in the military. Camara also utilized an ethnic equation in organizing military factions to protect his rule. Moreover, most military commanders seek junior soldiers from the same ethnic group.

Under Conté's leadership, the government has sought to restrict the effective mobilization of pro-democracy groups through the systematic use of coercion, the selective distribution of state patronage and the active manipulation of the electoral process. The presidential elections of 1998 and 2003, which were believed to be more transparent and fair than the deeply flawed 1993 electoral contest, nevertheless, were marred by civil unrest, widespread and diverse irregularities that tended to favor the incumbent and included the arrest and detention of major opposition candidates during the vote-counting process. Moreover, in municipal elections the government continued to dominate the electoral process, refusing to appoint an independent electoral commission until 2000, when a threatened opposition boycott resulted in a compromise, struck by forming the High Council for Electoral Affairs composed of representatives from many parties that was granted limited authority. The subsequent elections have remained deeply flawed, with the opposition making credible charges of government intimidation, fraud, and manipulation.

Government obstruction of electoral reforms has also contributed to the opposition boycotts of parliamentary elections. In 2001, eight opposition parties, under the umbrella of the Movement Against the Referendum and for Democracy (MORAD), announced that they would not participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections, citing that the lack of security and slow progress on political reforms as undermining the democratic character of these elections. President Conté agreed to postpone the legislative elections to allow for further consultation with the opposition. Moreover, in an effort to garner legitimacy for the upcoming elections, President Conté agreed to release one of his primary political opponents, Alpha Condé, from jail. Despite these positive trends, the legislative elections, finally held in June 2002, did not represent a breakthrough for democracy in Guinea. While dozens of parties participated in these elections, several major parties continued to boycott the process, including Alpha Condé's RPG, and PUP thoroughly dominated the election results.

From 2005 through 2007 Conté faced an increasingly mobilized opposition, which came to a head with a general strike in January 2007. On 10 February, after announcing the appointment of a new lead minister in the government, the strike turned into widespread popular protests and demands for Conte's resignation. The government's initial violent response to the protests resulted in some 200 deaths. Conte ordered a state of emergency in response to the unrest, but was met with an army mutiny in the capitol city of Conakry, and was ultimately thwarted by his own legislature, which denied his request to extend the state of emergency beyond his initial order. On 27 February Conté agreed to labor union demands to appoint their nominee for prime minister, and the strike ended. Troubles for Conte continued however, most notably with another military mutiny on 2 May 2007, once again over salary demands. Conté again

was forced to compromise; between 12 and 15 May Conté agreed to increase the military pay scale, and replaced the secretary of defense and his immediate subordinates.

Border security and refugees have also posed serious problems for the small country. In the first months of 2001, border security was aggravated by hit-and-run raids into Guinean territory from Sierra Leone and Liberia by anti-government guerillas. A hitherto unknown group called “Guinea Democratic Forces Rally” claimed responsibility for the attacks. Contributing to the political unrest in the southwest of the country was the large refugee population residing in Guinea due to wars in bordering countries Liberia and Sierra Leone. Insecurity in this region has diminished substantially with the ending on regional conflicts and international engagement in curbing the “blood diamond” trade and associated weapons and contraband smuggling operations organized by the Charles Taylor regime in Liberia. West Africa continues to be a major staging area for drug trafficking from producers in Latin America to consumers in Europe. The death of President Conté in 2008 and the recent transition to Guinea’s first elected, civilian administration has not been simple nor smooth. Rivalry between Guinea’s two largest ethnic groups, the Malinké and Peulh, has resulted in several violent clashes in the run up to and aftermath of the runoff presidential election in late 2010 and, most recently, during preparations for legislative elections scheduled for 29 December 2011.