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15 September 2005

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Guinea: M'Bemba Bangoura, Governor of Conakry, particularly the length of his governorship and his ties to the Guinean president and the Party for Unity and Progress (PUP); the treatment of the Diakantés under his governorship; protection offered to them (September 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Appointed Governor of Conakry in 1996 (Aminata.com 2 Dec. 2004), M'Bemba Bangoura was transferred to the Faranah region at the end of November 2004 (ibid.; ANGOP 4 Dec. 2004; RPG Guinée 27 Nov. 2004), where he holds the same office (Aminata.com 2 Dec. 2004; *L'Observateur* n.d.).

According to the Angola Press Agency (ANGOP), M'Bemba Bangoura's transfer was met with [translation] "public and spontaneous euphoria" in Conakry (4 Dec. 2004). The same source described the former Conakry governor as [translation] "a megalomaniac" and accused him of having [translation] "targeted women" and of [translation] "striking terror" among the population (ANGOP 4 Dec. 2004). Moreover, in describing his eight year governorship of Conakry, one source indicated that M'Bemba Bangoura, with the backing of Guinean president Lansana Conté, [translation] "succumbed to abuses of power" and that [translation] "very few Conakry citizens were not directly or indirectly affected by his tactics in the last eight years" (Aminata.com 2 Dec. 2004).

Also, an article appearing on the Website of *L'Observateur*, a Guinean weekly, reported that, in Faranah, M'Bemba Bangoura continued to [translation] "irritate the public," especially when he imposed [translation] "forced contributions" in order to organize victory celebrations for the regional soccer team (n.d.).

With regard to his ties to the Guinean president and the Party for Unity and Progress (Parti de l'unité et du progrès, PUP), a statement from the Republican Front for Democratic Change (Front républicain pour l'alternance démocratique, FRAD), appearing on the Boubah Website, indicated that M'Bemba Bangoura is a [translation] "member of the PUP's Office of National Policy" (18 July 2005). The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) reported that M'Bemba Bangoura, then governor of Conakry, was "related to [President] Conté by marriage" and was the "force behind the campaign to extend the presidential mandate" (n.d.).

An article on the [translation] "tension" within the Guinean [translation] "presidential majority" appearing in the 5-11 October 2003 issue of *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* indicated that one of the two camps was led by Fodé Soumah, deemed [translation] "the PUP's national godfather," with support from, among others, M'Bemba Bangoura, [translation] "the thundering but very influential Governor of Conakry" (48; see also ICG 19 Dec. 2003, 10).

No information on the treatment of the Diakantés under M'Bemba Bangoura's governorship of Conakry could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée (RPG Guinée). 27 November 2004. "M'Bemba Bangoura n'est plus gouverneur de Conakry!" <<http://www.rpgguinee.org/defaultdetails.asp?offset=680&idactus=392>> [Accessed 8 Sept. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Europa World Year Book*, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Resource Centre country file.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International, ECOI, Human Rights Watch (HRW), IRIN, *Lance Magazine*, *Lynx Magazine*, ReliefWeb, United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate, United States Department of State.

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