

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

7 May 2014

GIN104870.E

Guinea: Ethnic composition of police and military forces; treatment of Peul by authorities, including police and military, and in cases where a Peul individual requires state protection; information on Camp Makambo, including location and purpose (2009-May 2014)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Background

1.1 Ethnic Composition of the Country

Sources report that the Peul ethnic group [also known as Peulh, Peuhl, Pel, Fulbe, Fula, Fulani, Fulah, Ffulde] makes up 40 percent of the population of Guinea; the Malinké [also known as Mandingo] ethnic group, 30 percent; the Soussou ethnic group, 20 percent; and smaller ethnic groups, 10 percent (US 11 Apr. 2014; UN n.d., para 14). Sources report that the Peul people largely populate Middle Guinea, the Malinké are mainly located in Upper Guinea, the Soussou are mostly in coastal areas of Guinea (ibid.; US 27 Feb. 2013, 27), while urban centres such as Conakry are "ethnically heterogenous" (ibid.). According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*, interethnic marriage is not "taboo" or prohibited (ibid.). For detailed information on interethnic marriages between the Peul and Malinké groups, please refer to Response GIN102575.E.

1.2 Demonstrations of 28 September 2009

In 2009, President Moussa Dadis Camara [who had gained power in a December 2008 coup (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 6)] went back on a pledge not to run in the 2010 presidential elections (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 6; UN 18 Dec. 2009, para. 50). This sparked opposition parties and civil society groups to organize demonstrations against the Camara government, culminating in a rally at Conakry stadium on 28 September, 2009 (ibid.; Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 6).

A 2009 UN commission of inquiry found that, under the regime of President Camara, members of the presidential guard, national gendarmerie, specialized police units, civilian militias, and police were responsible for "crimes against humanity" for actions taken against protesters on 28 September 2009 at the Conakry stadium (UN 18 Dec. 2009, para. 200). According to the commission's report, 156 people were killed or disappeared, and 109 cases of sexual violence and rape were confirmed, while "dozens" of people were tortured at military camps, including Camp Koundara [now named Makambo] (ibid., para. 70). The commission states that "demonstrators at the stadium came from all of the country's ethnic groups" and were fired upon "indiscriminately" (ibid., para.176). The commission states that it received "a large number of reports that aggressors were specifically targeting" Peul, but at the same time, other "victims" reported that aggressors stated they had to be "punished" for supporting Cellou Dalein Diallo [of the Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée, UFDG] (ibid.). The commission notes that the Dadis Camara junta believed that the UFDG represented the "greatest political threat" (ibid.). Similarly, Human Rights Watch reports that several detainees told them that "security forces holding them made reference to their ethnicity and perceived support for opposition candidates" (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 84-85). According to one detainee interviewed by Human Rights Watch, the military said they were going to kill all the Peul (ibid., 85). The UN commission of inquiry found that "a certain group was targeted more than others," but could not confirm, however, "whether this discrimination was based on the victims' ethnicity ... or their political affiliation" (UN 18 Dec. 2009, para. 176).

1.3 Political-Electoral Behaviour

Sources report that, during the 2010 presidential elections, people of the Malinké ethnic group largely supported Alpha Condé [of the Rassemblement populaire guinéen, RPG (*PHW* 2013, 569)] and people of the Peul ethnic group largely supported Cellou Dalein Diallo (AP 3 Dec. 2010; US 24 May 2012, 15; *PHW* 2013, 572). Alpha Condé won the 2010 presidential elections with 52.5 percent to Diallo's 47.5 percent (AP 3 Dec. 2010). According to the *Political Handbook of the World (PHW)*, the election of Condé "ended years of military rule," though the results were challenged by the opposition, who cited "voter intimidation and electoral fraud" (*PHW* 2013, 572). Sources report that violence broke out between the groups (ibid.; Human Rights Watch 29 Nov. 2010). The Supreme Court ratified the results on 2 December 2010 (*PHW* 2013, 572).

In 2011, government security forces reportedly used excessive force when responding to political and opposition protests (US 24 May 2012, 2, 13; ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 22, 24). This was also reported during 2012 (US 19 Apr. 2013, 1, 3).

In 2013, Guinea held legislative elections, in which the governing coalition took 66 seats and the opposition took 58 seats (The Canadian Press 13 Jan. 2014). The Canadian Press reported in January 2014 that President Condé subsequently formed a 34-member cabinet, which did not include any opposition members (21 Jan. 2014). For detailed information about the treatment of members of the opposition party UFDG, please refer to Response GIN104033.

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the International Federation for Human Rights (Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme, FIDH) in Guinea stated that in Guinea, political parties facilitate the power and influence of their ethnic group (17 Apr. 2014). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Senior Researcher for West Africa for Human Rights Watch indicated that the political and social environment in Guinea in 2013 was "characterized by extreme levels of ethnic tension," as ethnic groups "struggled to control the political machinery of the state as well as economic revenue streams," while tensions appear to have been "encouraged" by the political elite of both Malinké and Peul ethnic groups (24 Apr. 2014). According to the US *Country Reports 2013*, the "ethnic group in charge of the government has traditionally used its power to discriminate against its rivals and to suppress [their] political and economic activities," noting that "discrimination by members of all major ethnic groups was evident in private sector hiring patterns, ethnic segregation of urban neighborhoods, and ethnically divisive rhetoric during political campaigns" (27 Feb. 2014, 27).

2. Ethnic Composition of Security Forces, Including Police and Military

Official statistics about the ethnic composition and regional ethnic variation of police and military forces could not be found amongst the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information may be useful.

The Associated Press (AP) reported in December 2010 that the Guinean armed forces were, at that time, "largely Malinké" (3 Dec. 2010). Similarly, according to a 2010 article from the African news portal Afrik-News, the military was "said to be majority Malinké" (16 Nov. 2010).

According to International Crisis Group's 2010 report *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, "factionalism" in the military is "most evident" along ethnic lines, as successive regimes have "pushed members of [their] ethnic group into the army," which has "created rivalries" and given "privileged access" to promotions (23 Sept. 2010, 18). Similarly, in a chapter about Guinea in *Security Sector Governance in Francophone West Africa*, a book published in 2011 by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), an international foundation that has among its objectives the reform of the security sector (DCAF n.d.), the author writes that "training and career development for Guinean soldiers is not linked to their competence, since recruitment and advancement are based on ethnic affiliation or allegiance to the existing regime" (ibid. 2011, 104). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the representative of FIDH indicated that, historically, with each successive administration, people are recruited to the military from the administration's political support base, which is generally from the same ethnic group as the president (17 Apr. 2014).

The representative of FIDH indicated that, within the city of Conakry, all ethnic groups are represented in the ranks of the police force (17 Apr. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that the head of the national gendarmerie is General Ibrahima Baldé, who is a member of the Peul ethnic group (RADDHO 28 Apr. 2014; International Crisis Group 22 Apr. 2014).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a senior researcher for the West Africa section of the International Crisis Group indicated that all ethnicities are represented within the security forces, with a "strong" Malinké presence in both senior and operational-command personnel, although other ethnicities are also present (22 Apr. 2014). The Senior Researcher for Human Rights Watch indicated that the recruitment of 2,000 gendarmes under Alpha Condé "favours" the Malinké (24 Apr. 2014). According to International Crisis Group, some observers say that President Condé has "prioritized the recruitment of Malinké for the presidential guard" (23 Sept. 2011, 10). Two sources report that the presidential guard is headed by Claude Pivi, who has been accused of involvement in abuses committed by security forces on 28 September 2009 (ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 33; International Crisis Group 22 Apr. 2014).

3. Treatment of Members of the Peul Ethnic Group by Authorities

3.1 2010 to 2012

According to Human Rights Watch, in the course of election-related protests and violence in 2010, some members of the security forces reportedly used "ethnic slurs" against Peul people and "collaborated" with government supporters looting and stealing from those perceived as opposition supporters (29 Nov. 2010). A report on the use of torture in Guinea was released in 2011 by four human rights NGOs, including Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture (ACAT-France), a Christian organisation that assists people in detention around the world and fights against cruel treatment, torture, capital punishment, disappearances, war crimes, and crimes against humanity (ACAT-France n.d.). In the report, it is stated that during protests in 2010 and 2011, people from the Peul community were perceived to be

"pro-opposition" by security forces, and were sometimes subjected to violence, ethnic slurs and pillaging of homes and shops by members of the security forces (ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 22, 24). *Country Reports 2012* reports that, in 2012, "security force personnel used violence to quell demonstrations and punish participants and leaders, resulting in deaths and numerous injuries" as well as the disappearances of two UFDG members (US 19 Apr. 2013, 2-3).

3.2 2013

Sources report that there was a series of opposition demonstrations held in Conakry throughout 2013, which turned violent as a result of clashes between opposition demonstrators, pro-government supporters, and security forces (ibid. 27 Feb. 2014, 14-15; UN 11 Feb. 2014, para.4, para. 11). Opposition marches and government-organized counter-demonstrations in February, March, and May caused "scenes of violence that resulted in serious injuries and considerable material damage on both sides" (ibid., para. 24). The Senior Researcher at Human Rights Watch indicated that approximately 30 people were killed in 2013 in protest-related violence, noting that "those killed during the course of violent protests have been a combination of security forces, opposition protesters (the majority [of those killed]), and government supporters" (24 Apr. 2014). Hundreds of people were reportedly injured (UN 11 Feb. 2014, para 4; US 27 Feb. 2014, 15). According to the UN, 2 security force members died, 31 demonstrators were killed (23 of whom were shot) and 750 people were injured (11 Feb. 2014, para. 4). The Senior Researcher of the International Crisis Group indicated that the majority of protesters killed have been Peul (22 Apr. 2014). Two sources indicate that the army was not called in for support in 2013, and police and gendarmes conducted crowd control (US 27 Feb. 2014, 15; Human Rights Watch 24 Apr. 2014).

The UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported that after a 23 May 2013 opposition protest over legislative elections became violent, "men in gendarmes uniforms and civilian clothing ransacked" houses and some members of both Peul and Malinké groups relocated due to the tension (UN 7 June 2013). Al Jazeera reports that government troops, in the course of protests, were "accused by residents of Peuhl dominated areas of looting, vandalism, and random shootings" and more than 10 opposition protesters died in confrontations (31 May 2013). France 24 reports that, during the same protest in May, police took part in ransacking and looting in an "opposition-dominated" district of Conakry (28 May 2013). The Senior Researcher on West Africa for Human Rights Watch indicated that, with respect to security-force actions during 2013 protests,

very serious problems, including some instances of excessive use of force against demonstrators supporting the opposition and the commission of acts of criminality (extortion, bribe taking, and outright theft and banditry) remain. ... On several occasions in 2013, when political supporters of *both* the ruling party and opposition were engaged in street battles, the security forces disproportionately and on a few occasions arbitrarily arrested, detained and mistreated and physically abused opposition supporters (over supporters of the government). (24 Apr. 2014)

According to a June 2013 public statement issued by Amnesty International (AI) and ACAT-France, in the course of regular street demonstrations by the opposition since the end of February 2013, "looting and pillaging" were reported in "so-called" Peul neighbourhoods while security forces "did not prevent" the activities and some became involved in them (AI and ACAT-France 11 June 2013). The statement describes a "disproportionate use of force" and "lack of impartiality" in the maintenance of order during protests (ibid.). According to a 2014 joint submission to the UN Committee Against Torture by ACAT-France and four Guinean human rights NGOs, which does not make reference to ethnicity, security and defense forces have reportedly used [translation] "torture and mistreatment to punish and humiliate political opponents and their supporters when suppressing protests or public assemblies" (ACAT-France et al., [2014], 5). The Senior Researcher for West Africa at International Crisis Group indicated that, since Condé became president, [translation] "Peuls are perceived (and often consider themselves) to be the most resolute adversaries" of Alpha Condé, and "are treated more harshly by members of the security forces, who feel they are allowed to behave this way" (International Crisis Group 22 Apr. 2014). The Senior Researcher also

indicated that certain professions in which Peul people are more numerous, such as shop-owners and taxi drivers, have been particularly exposed to this treatment (ibid.). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Guinean chapter of Lawyers Without Borders (Avocats sans frontières, ASF), indicated in the context that political parties mainly consist of a "community" support base, opposition protesters are often perceived or interpreted as "Peul opposition" and most of the "victims and people arrested in protests are often of the Peul ethnic group" (ASF 2 May 2014).

4. State Protection

The national police have regional offices "throughout the country" and seven stations within Conakry, according to a 2009 UN report (UN 18 Dec. 2009, para. 30). The same report indicates that "it appears that in practice the National Police has lost much of its authority in the city of Conakry to the National Gendarmerie and the anti-drug and organized crime Special Services unit" (ibid., para. 31). According to an article by the IRIN, "impunity" by police is seen by Guineans as pervasive throughout the country; Guineans reportedly have "little faith in the police as protectors," and according to an EU official, Guinean police "lack competent and trained personnel, whether for public security, legal matters, or maintaining order" (ibid. 17 Sept. 2013). According to the FIDH representative, the police force is extremely weak with few resources and a small budget (17 Apr. 2014).

According to the Senior Researcher at Human Rights Watch, "the level of professionalism of the police, gendarmes and security forces in Guinea can be characterized as very low, and consequently, all ethnic groups are targeted for exploitation and extortion by these forces (Human Rights Watch 24 Apr. 2014). She noted, however, that during times of protest, demonstration, and political tension, people of Peul ethnicity "receive inconsistent police protection" and "members of the Peul community appear to have less confidence in the political will of their government and security forces to protect them equally," noting that those in Conakry "suffer the worst abuses" (ibid.). The Senior Researcher further observed that

[t]here is continued evidence of a lack of political neutrality by the security forces, notably when responding to election related and political violence. This has on numerous occasions been in evidence when members of the security forces used ethnic slurs against members of the Peuhl ethnic group, collaborated with civilian mobs from ethnic groups that largely supported the ruling party, and looted and stole property from people who were perceived to have supported the opposition. During demonstrations, police and gendarmes will crackdown on Peul and opposition neighbourhoods, but will stand by while ruling party supporters engage in criminal activity at protests such as looting, or they may engage in criminal activity such as looting alongside party supporters. There is clear evidence of a partisan response to protests on the part of security forces, who did not provide protection equally, or responded inconsistently. (ibid.)

According to correspondence from a representative of the Guinean chapter of the African Assembly for the Defence of Human Rights (Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme, RADDHO), an NGO that, among other things, collects and distributes information about human rights in Africa (RADDHO, n.d.), [translation] "there are deviations" in the behavior of the gendarmerie, but, in his view, "there is no special treatment" for any particular ethnic group and "no special protection" is offered to the members of the Peul ethnic group (ibid. 28 Apr. 2014). He also indicated, however, that "the capacity of the state to protect the [Guinean] population and their property must be increased because the issues of security and access to justice are major concerns of the population" (ibid.).

Country Reports 2013 reports that, during the course of 2013, "[g]endarmes and police killed some protestors" and no investigations were conducted by the government (US 27 Feb. 2014, 15). The 2014 UN report on the situation of human rights in Guinea during 2013 indicates that the government has taken "little action" in investigating and punishing perpetrators of the 2013 protest violence (11 Feb. 2014, para. 11-12). The Senior Researcher at Human Rights Watch indicated the "near total absence of accountability" for serious abuses committed by members of the security forces both in the years before Condé, and to a much lesser extent, those committed since, stating that "the failure to hold members of the security services accountable has contributed to the perception that they are above the law" (24

Apr. 2014). According to the Senior Researcher at International Crisis Group, members of the security forces have been arrested by the government and even convicted for violence linked to protests, during which several dozen protesters, mostly Peul people, were killed; however, they have not been punished or sanctioned (22 Apr. 2014). *Country Reports 2013* states that "impunity" in the police and security apparatus "remained a widespread problem" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 9).

5. Treatment of People Arrested and Detained

Without providing further detail, the 2014 UN report on the situation of human rights in Guinea says that the "systematic use of torture and ill-treatment against persons in detention, police custody, or held at control posts" was noted, including the 10-day detention of 33 people arrested in September 2013 for "public order disturbances" and taken to Soronkony military camp, 700 km from Conakry (11 Feb. 2014, para. 14, note 3). According to the UN report, "victims" of the disturbances say they "were not linked to the electoral context" (*ibid.*). Regarding infractions of the law, and without referring to ethnicity, the report to the UN Committee Against Torture by ACAT-France and the four Guinean NGOs reports that, among police and gendarmes, the use of [translation] "arbitrary arrest," "arbitrary detention," and "mistreatment" to extract confessions, violence and sometimes "torture" against arrested suspects, are a common practice (ACAT-France et al. 2014, 5). According to a 2013 study on the Guinean justice system by AfriMAP [the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (Open Society Foundations n.d.)] and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), two programs of the Open Society Foundations, police are underpaid and badly equipped, and have committed abuses including cruel treatment, arbitrary detention, and homicide (Open Society Foundations Sept. 2013, 62, 63).

6. Legal Aid

According to a 2011 Human Rights Watch report, there are no legal aid clinics in Guinea, and the NGOs that assist victims in accessing free legal aid do so "intermittently," and as a result, "victims are discouraged from taking their cases to court" (Human Rights Watch May 2011, 42). Furthermore "a detainee whose right to legal defense is not met by the State has no obvious recourse to a known legal aid clinic or group" (*ibid.*). The Open Society Foundations study indicates that, in practice, legal assistance in Guinea is not available, and interferes with the provision of fair trials and the right to representation (Open Society Foundations Sept. 2013, 67). Two sources indicate that there are reportedly less than 200 lawyers for all of Guinea (*ibid.*; Human Rights Watch May 2011, 42). The Open Society Foundations study notes that, due to the lack of witness and victim protection, witnesses to crimes often prefer to remain silent, a [translation] "difficulty" noted in cases such as those associated with the events of 28 September 2009 (Open Society Foundations Sept. 2013, 69-70). According to *Country Reports 2013*, the judicial system is "endemically corrupt" and judicial officials "routinely required bribes" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 20).

7. Camp Koundara [Camp Makambo]

Sources report that Camp Koundara was renamed Camp Makambo [also known as Camp Joseph Makambo Loua] (International Crisis Group 24 Apr. 2014; Camara et al. 2014, 108) in late 2009 (*ibid.*). Sources report that Camp Makambo is located in Conakry (AFP 3 Dec. 2009; Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 2; RADDHO 28 Apr. 2014), in the district of Conakry called Kaloum (*ibid.*), near the presidential palace (ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 25).

7.1 Treatment of Detainees in 2009

Human Rights Watch and the UN report that some protesters demonstrating at Conakry stadium on 28 September 2009 against the

Moussa Dadis Camara regime [Dadis and many of his military officials were from the ethnic Forestier groups (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 28, note 43)] were detained by security forces and taken to Koundara military camp (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 84; UN 18 Dec. 2009, 2, para. 70). According to Human Rights Watch, approximately 25 people, mostly men, were detained by security forces at Camp Koundara for as many as 15 days in some cases, and several Peul detainees remarked that security forces "made reference to their ethnicity and perceived support for the opposition" (December 2009, 85). The UN Commission of Inquiry and Human Rights Watch stated that victims at Camp Koundara were subjected to torture (Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 85; UN 18 Dec. 2009, 2). Both sources also indicated that detainees were released only after paying sums of money to the police, gendarmes, and soldiers holding them (*ibid.*, para. 131; Human Rights Watch Dec. 2009, 84).

7.2 Activities at Camp Makambo, 2010-2013

Two sources report that the presidential guard is based at Camp Koundara [now Makambo] (ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 33; International Crisis Group 22 Apr. 2014). The representative of RADDHO indicated that, since 2010, Camp Makambo has been used as a barracks to train new recruits of the presidential guard (28 Apr. 2014). According to the 2011 report by ACAT-France and three other groups, two military colonels and a captain were arrested for attempting to foment a coup d'État against Alpha Condé and were, as of the 2011 report, imprisoned at Camp Makambo (ACAT-France et al. Nov. 2011, 26). *Country Reports 2013* reported that "the government denied access to prison advocacy groups and international organizations" at military prisons (US 27 Feb. 2014, 6).

Further information on the nature and purpose of activities occurring at Camp Makambo between 2010 and 2013 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Sources: Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Organisation guinéenne de défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, International Committee of the Red Cross in Conakry. The following organizations could not provide information within the time constraints of this Response: Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture (ACAT-France) in Guinea, les Mêmes droits pour tous in Conakry. The Open Society Initiative for West Africa in Conakry, and a professor of political science at the Centre d'études diplomatiques et stratégiques in Paris were unable to provide information for this Response.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential*; Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project; African Commission on Human and People's Rights; BBC; campboiro.org; Centre d'études des mondes africains; Ecoi.net; Frontline Defenders; *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*; Genocidewatch.org; Guinea – Ministry of Defence; GuineaOYE; guineelibre.com; Guineenews.org; guineepresse.info; guineeweb.org; *Human Rights Quarterly*; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; International Committee of the Red Cross; Interpol; *Jeune Afrique*; *Kaloum Presse*; Landinfo; Minorities at Risk Project; Minority Rights Group International – Peoples Under Threat 2014 Database; Physicians for Human Rights; Small Arms Survey; Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée; UN – Human Rights Council, Refworld; US – Embassy of the United States in Conakry.

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