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Guinea: In Brief

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Summary

Guinea is one of three countries most affected by the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which has affected the country's economy, social relations, food security, and politics. A former French colony on West Africa's Atlantic coast with a population of about 11 million, Guinea is rich in natural resources, but poverty is widespread. President Alpha Condé, a former opposition leader, was voted into office in 2010 in Guinea's first ever presidential election organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. His inauguration brought an end to a turbulent period of military rule that followed the death in 2008 of longtime leader Lansana Conté (who himself came to power in a military coup).

As president, Condé has focused on containing the political influence of the military and improving economic governance, including by overhauling the mining code. However, state institutions remain weak; living conditions remain overwhelmingly poor; ethnic tensions have risen; and opposition activists accuse Condé of authoritarian tendencies. Political unrest appears likely ahead of presidential elections scheduled for October 2015, in which Condé is seeking a second term. Local-level elections have been repeatedly delayed and are the subject of a stand-off between the government and opposition over electoral procedures.

U.S. engagement in Guinea is focused on health assistance, military professionalization, counter-narcotics issues, and concerns about regional peace and stability. Following the 2008 military coup, the United States identified Guinea's political transition as a key policy goal in West Africa and made significant diplomatic and financial contributions toward the success of Guinea's 2010 election process. U.S. bilateral aid is now overwhelmingly focused on health issues. Guinea's large mineral deposits, including the world's largest known reserves of bauxite (an ore used in producing aluminum), represent potential strategic and commercial interests for U.S. actors. Guinea's extractive industries have also drawn recent attention from the U.S. Department of Justice for potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Congress plays a role in shaping U.S. engagement through its authorization and appropriation of aid funding, and its oversight of U.S. policies and aid programs. The FY2015 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 113-235) restricts Guinea's ability to receive International Military Education and Training (IMET) assistance, except for certain purposes. Similar restrictions have been contained in previous annual foreign aid appropriations measures. The FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-81) authorized Guinea, among several West African countries, to receive Defense Department-administered counter-narcotics assistance. During the 111th Congress, two resolutions condemning a massacre of civilian protesters in the capital, Conakry, in September 2009, passed their respective chambers: H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen) passed in the House; and S.Res. 345 (Boxer) passed in the Senate.

See also CRS Report R43807, *FY2015 Funding to Counter Ebola and the Islamic State (IS)*, coordinated by (name redacted); CRS In Focus IF10022, *The Global Health Security Agenda and International Health Regulations*, by (name redacted); and CRS Report R43736, *Ebola Virus Disease (Ebola or EVD): Experts List*, by (name redacted).

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Introduction

During the 1990s and early 2000s, Guinea was considered a locus of relative stability as civil conflicts raged in neighboring Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. However, Guinea subsequently came to be viewed as a potential source of regional instability due to its fractious and sometimes restive military, periodic political unrest, ethnic tensions, and the rise of transnational drug trafficking and maritime piracy. Poor governance, corruption, weak or nonexistent infrastructure, and other factors have prevented Guinea's population from benefiting from its rich natural resource endowments, and average living conditions are poor even by regional standards in West Africa.¹

The ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa has highlighted stark gaps in Guinea's healthcare infrastructure. It has also cast a spotlight on deep mistrust between local communities and historically absent or abusive state institutions. Such tensions are particularly evident in the remote southeast "Forest" region, where the epidemic reportedly originated in December 2013. However, now that dwindling Ebola cases are concentrated in the capital, Conakry, and along the coast, communities in those areas have also resisted Ebola education and treatment campaigns.

The outbreak has affected Guinea's economy, social relations, and politics. Previously, Guinea had seen a relative increase in stability since elections in 2010 brought an end to two years of turbulent military rule. Longtime opposition leader Alpha Condé was elected president in the country's first ever open elections organized by an independent electoral commission. As president, Condé has enacted economic reforms and has largely confined the military to the barracks. Critics, however, accuse him of ruling unilaterally, and his time in office has been characterized by severe political tensions. The Ebola crisis, at its height, led to a hiatus of political demonstrations and protests. However, as the urgency of the crisis has faded, political leaders have turned to a dispute over the timetable and appropriate sequencing for presidential and local elections, currently scheduled for October 2015 and early-to-mid-2016, respectively.

In 2010, significant election-related violence along ethnic lines revealed latent tensions and damaging the social fabric in ethnically mixed areas. These events left scars that continue to affect political dynamics. At the local level, in the Forest region, tensions between ethnic Malinkés (who trace their heritage to northeastern Guinea) and diverse groups viewed as the area's indigenous inhabitants (known collectively as Forestiers) also spark periodic violence.² Ethnic differences sometimes map onto religious identity, particularly in the Forest region, but religion alone is not a major factor in national politics.³

The United States played a key role in Guinea's 2010 political transition by isolating the military junta and providing high-level support for elections. U.S. bilateral aid has since decreased, and is overwhelmingly focused on health. Congress has appropriated funds for U.S. aid to Guinea, including for Ebola response, and some Members have periodically expressed interest in Guinea's political stability, democratic trajectory, human rights record, and role in regional security.

¹ Guinea ranked 179 out of 187 countries assessed on the U.N. Human Development Index in 2014.

² For example, hundreds of Forest region residents were killed in ethnic clashes in July 2013. See *GuineeActu.info*, "Nzérékoré: un an après les violences intercommunautaires, la justice traîne toujours les pas," July 16, 2013.

³ Guinea's population is about 85% Muslim and 15% Christian or followers of indigenous beliefs. Malinké and Peul communities are both Muslim. There are sizable Christian communities in the Forest; in Conakry; and on the coast.

Figure I. Guinea at a Glance



Source: CRS graphic. Basemap created by (name redacted) from Department of State Boundaries (2011); Esri (2013); TomTom (2013); and DeLorme (2013). Fact information from CIA World Factbook, International Monetary Fund, and UNAIDS. Figures refer to 2014 estimates unless otherwise indicated.

Background

The past seven years have seen dramatic political changes for a country that previously had had two presidents since independence from France in 1958. In 2008, President Lansana Conté, who came to power in a military coup in 1984, died after a long illness. Mid-ranking military officers seized power upon his death, initiating a period of chaotic state decision-making. Popular opposition to the junta grew, and the security forces violently attacked peaceful protesters at a stadium in Conakry in September 2009, killing over 150 people and raping over 100. This sparked international condemnation. In December, Junta leader Captain Moussa Dadis Camara

was shot and wounded by a member of his personal guard. His departure into exile paved the way for a military-led transitional government formed in early 2010 with international backing. A new constitution was drafted and adopted in May 2010 by a National Transitional Council (CNT).

In June 2010, Guineans voted in their country's first presidential elections organized by an independent electoral commission and without an incumbent candidate. Former Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo came in first but did not get enough votes to avert a run-off against Alpha Condé, which took place in November. The two candidates had widely divergent political backgrounds: Diallo was widely seen as a political insider, while Condé was a longtime opposition activist who had lived in exile during most of Guinea's post-independence history. The vote was nevertheless perceived by many as a contest between Guinea's two largest ethnic groups: the Peul, seen as constituting Diallo's base, and the Malinké, seen as Condé's.

Condé ultimately benefitted from cross-ethnic support, in part because other groups apparently feared political consolidation by the already economically influential Peul community. (There has never been a Peul president in Guinea, but Peuls are prominent in domestic and regional commerce.) International election observers ultimately concluded that the overall conduct of the elections was acceptable, while noting concerns regarding logistical shortcomings, delays between the first and second rounds of voting, political polarization, and election-related violence.⁴ Diallo contested but ultimately accepted the results. Some opposition activists continue to claim that Condé's 2010 electoral victory itself was illegitimate.

Legislative elections held in 2013 allowed an elected parliament to replace an appointed, quasi-legislative body created under the junta. The election process was contentious, however, and the ability of opposition groups to participate in legislative deliberations has not eased political polarization (see "Politics" below).

President Alpha Condé

Alpha Condé, 74, spent nearly 40 years in exile, largely in France, where he was a law professor. He founded Guinea's first registered opposition party, the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), in the early 1990s, and unsuccessfully ran against then-President Lansana Conté in 1993 (Guinea's first multi-party vote) and 1998. Both elections were marred by irregularities and reported fraud. Following the 1998 election, Condé was imprisoned for allegedly trying to leave the country "illegally" and attempting to overthrow the government. He was released in 2001 on a presidential pardon. Condé and the RPG boycotted the 2002 legislative election and the 2003 presidential election. Condé is a member of the Malinké ethnic group, which is concentrated in Guinea's northeast; he also drew cross-ethnic support during the presidential campaign, notably from Soussou (coastal) and Forestier ethnic communities.

Politics

Guinea's political system concentrates substantial power in the presidency. President Condé has arguably deepened this tendency through the elevation of presidential advisors and a pattern of unilateral decision-making. Although Condé appears to have consolidated political power, he has not been able to fulfill campaign promises to raise living standards, and analysts periodically express concerns about political stability. Condé's leading opponent remains Cellou Dalein

⁴ See, e.g., The Carter Center, *Observing the 2010 Presidential Elections in Guinea: Final Report*, which concluded that "the presidential election process was basically consistent with Guinea's international and regional obligations for genuine democratic elections. Nevertheless, there remains much more work to be done to ensure the continued development of democratic institutions and professional, neutral, and respected election administration in Guinea."

Diallo, his top rival in 2010, who leads the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party and the opposition block in parliament.

Political dynamics in 2015 have been dominated by entrenched disputes over the upcoming electoral cycle. In early 2015, the national electoral commission (CENI, after its French acronym) scheduled the presidential election for October 2015 and local elections for 2016. Opposition leaders, however, assert that a 2013 political agreement between the government and opposition requires local elections to be held before the presidential vote. They accuse Condé's administration of politicizing the CENI and seeking to manipulate the electoral process—including through the appointment of partisan individuals to replace elected local-level officials.

The opposition withdrew its representatives from parliament in March 2015 in protest against perceived political interference in election preparations and staged multiple anti-government protests in April-May, several of which turned violent. An investigation by Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that on numerous occasions, security forces responding to the protests used excessive force, engaged in theft and banditry, and employed "ethnic slurs" against opposition supporters.⁵ HRW also reported that protesters engaged in criminal conduct. In response, the Guinean government blamed these issues on a lack of training.⁶ The protests have also exhibited a new trend of civilian-on-civilian violence, often along ethnic lines.

Many Guineans view the crux of national politics as a power-struggle between Guinea's two largest ethno-regional communities, the Peul and Malinké, with other communities forced to choose sides or else face political irrelevance. Given Condé's past electoral success in Malinké areas and Diallo's in Peul areas, the presidential contest is thus expected to be hard-fought in the melting pot of Conakry and in potential "swing districts," such as the ethnic Soussou-dominated coastal region and the ethnically diverse Forest region in the southeast. Perhaps as a result of ethno-regional calculations, in June 2015, Diallo's UFDG announced an electoral alliance with former military junta leader Moussa Dadis Camara, a Forestier, who is in exile in Burkina Faso. Soon after, the Guinean government—after years of delay—brought criminal charges against Dadis Camara for the massacre of protesters by security forces in 2009, while he was president. Whether Dadis Camara will return to Guinea is a matter of intense speculation.

Legislative elections were held in September 2013, following the aforementioned political agreement, which was brokered by the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General for West Africa and backed by the European Union (EU). The elections were initially supposed to take place in 2011 but had been repeatedly delayed due to a dispute over electoral procedures. The elections were widely viewed as a key step in Guinea's political transition, and the EU had conditioned the full resumption of its development aid on completing them.⁷ The lead-up to the vote was violent, however, and the opposition contested the results.⁸ Condé's RPG won a plurality of seats (53 out of 114), which, in coalition with smaller parties in the ruling Rainbow Alliance, allowed it to control a slim majority of 59 seats.

⁵ HRW, "Guinea: Security Force Excesses, Crimes," July 30, 2015.

⁶ AFP, "Guinée: accusé d'usage excessif de la force, le gouvernement se défend," August 4, 2015.

⁷ For background on the standoff over the legislative elections, see International Crisis Group (ICG), *Guinea: A way out of the election quagmire*, February 2013.

⁸ In the run-up to the 2013 vote, the opposition held multiple protests against perceived problems with the process. At least 50 demonstrators and two law enforcement officers were reportedly killed in protest-related clashes. (Figures from HRW, "Guinea: Security Force Excesses, Crimes," July 30, 2015.)

The State Department’s annual human rights report lauded the 2013 elections as “the first competitive and inclusive legislative elections in the country’s history.”⁹ However, EU election observers criticized both technical shortfalls and the overall political climate. For example, EU observers stated that “the transmission of results suffered from a lack of transparency” and reported that a number of problems had “a negative impact on the quality of operations and lessened public confidence in electoral administration,” including “the absence of detailed data on the revision of the electoral registry, the release of provisional voter lists that had not been purged or corrected, the unilateral and tardy announcement of a new map of polling stations that did not conform to legal requirements, concerns regarding the contractor in charge of the electoral registry, the inversion of key steps in the process, and the removal of proxy voting a week before the polls.”¹⁰ EU observers also criticized aspects of Guinea’s legal electoral framework.

The Economy

Guinea boasts bountiful natural resources, including the world’s largest known reserves of bauxite (aluminum ore); sizable deposits of high-grade iron ore, diamonds, gold, and uranium; and potential offshore oil and gas reserves. It also has significant hydroelectric and commercial agricultural potential. The economy relies heavily on mineral exports, notably joint-venture bauxite mining and alumina operations. Extractive industries are estimated to account for over 30% of gross domestic product (GDP).¹¹ Over three-quarters of the labor force, however, works in the largely subsistence-focused agricultural sector.

Economic hardship has contributed to periodic unrest, including general strikes in 2007 that turned into a national anti-government protest movement. Economic growth has been buffeted by regional instability and swings in global mineral prices, and growth rates of 2%-4% per year from 2010 to 2013 were insufficient to reduce poverty or improve living standards. Since 2014, Ebola has substantially reduced growth and investment, with a slight recession projected in 2015.¹² President Condé has worked to attract greater foreign investment, particularly in the mining and electrification sectors. Investors nonetheless face sharp obstacles, including electricity shortages, poor infrastructure, and a lack of skilled workers.

Condé’s administration has improved macroeconomic stability by addressing key aspects of poor economic governance under past regimes—such as unsustainable spending and the printing of extra currency to meet budget shortfalls, which caused high inflation. Condé’s reforms secured \$2.1 billion in debt relief in 2012 under the World Bank- and International Monetary Fund (IMF)-managed Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.¹³ As a result, Guinea’s debt decreased from 100% of GDP in 2010 to 37% in 2014.¹⁴ The reforms also enabled the restoration of international financial institution aid, which had been suspended due to payment arrears and policy concerns.

⁹ State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*, February 27, 2014.

¹⁰ Mission d’observation électorale de l’Union européenne, *Guinée: Rapport Final, Elections législatives 28 septembre 2013*; CRS translation.

¹¹ World Bank, “total natural resource rents” (% of GDP), 2012 latest available; at data.worldbank.org.

¹² IMF, Regional Economic Outlook database, April 2015.

¹³ IMF, “IMF and World Bank Announce \$2.1 Billion Debt Relief for Guinea,” September 26, 2012.

¹⁴ IMF World Economic Outlook database, April 2015.

Selected Issues

Governance and Human Rights

The State Department’s 2014 human rights report identified the following as the most “serious” human rights concerns: “life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; denial of fair trial; and violence and discrimination against women and girls, including forced and early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.”¹⁵ The report also documented security force abuses, including killings and use of excessive force against civilians, as well as limitations on political and civil rights, including the detention of “political prisoners,” restrictions on freedoms of press and assembly, and “corruption at all levels of government.”

Guinea has arguably never experienced the effective rule of law. According to the State Department’s human rights report, “the judicial system lacked independence and was underfunded, inefficient, and overtly corrupt.”¹⁶ The 2010 constitution contains a number of provisions aimed at improving the functioning of political institutions and protecting human rights, but implementation has been slow and incomplete.¹⁷

The military and other state security forces were implicated in allegedly systematic and widespread abuses against civilians during large political demonstrations in 2007 and 2009. A Human Rights Watch investigation of security forces’ actions during post-election unrest in November 2010 found that the security forces “demonstrated a lack of neutrality in responding to the political and ethnic violence, and for targeting members of the Peuhl [Peul] ethnic group,” possibly because the latter were seen as opposition supporters.¹⁸ Security forces’ actions during more recent protests have also resulted in civilian deaths and injuries.

Some Guinean activists contend that a truth and reconciliation process is needed to address allegations of state-backed human rights abuses stretching back to Guinea’s first post-independence regime.¹⁹ The Guinean government, a U.N. Commission of Inquiry, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have each conducted investigations into the 2009 brutal crackdown on civilian demonstrators, also known as the “stadium massacre.”²⁰ A Guinean Panel of Judges has interviewed victims, sought to locate mass graves, and summoned senior officials and military officers. In 2013, charges were brought against several key commanders—but only one low-level gendarme has been tried and convicted, and some of those who face charges have retained high-level state posts.²¹ The ICC has so far refrained from initiating prosecutions while the Guinean justice system is pursuing cases, although it continues to monitor the situation.

¹⁵ State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014*, June 25, 2015.

¹⁶ The report adds that “Budget shortfalls, a shortage of qualified lawyers and magistrates, an outdated and restrictive penal code, nepotism, and ethnic bias limited the judiciary’s effectiveness... Domestic court orders were often not enforced.” *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013*, op. cit.

¹⁷ See Open Society Foundations, *Guinée: Le secteur de la justice et l’Etat de droit*, September 2013.

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Guinea: Witnesses Describe Security Force Excesses,” November 29, 2010.

¹⁹ For analysis of how Guinea’s troubled history and ethnic tensions affect debates over transitional justice, see Arieff and Mike McGovern, “‘History is stubborn’: Talk about Truth, Justice, and National Reconciliation in the Republic of Guinea,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55(1), January 2013.

²⁰ See HRW, *Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces*, December 17, 2009.

²¹ State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014*, June 25, 2015; HRW, *Waiting for Justice*: (continued...)

The Role of the Military

Guinea's civilian-military balance has long been fragile. Prior to President Condé's election in 2010, the country was ruled for 26 years by presidents who came to power in military coups. Successive army mutinies, a pattern of serious human rights abuses against civilians, and the incomplete integration of waves of irregular recruits significantly undermined the military's reputation, and the 2008 military coup revealed serious internal divisions along generational, ethnic, and factional lines.²² The military is disproportionately large by regional standards (estimated at over 45,000 personnel in 2010), with an aging force and a corps of officers that far outweighs the number of enlisted soldiers.²³

President Condé has leveraged a combination of strategic appointments, promotions, and forced retirements to exercise control over the armed forces. Condé's home came under armed attack in July 2011, reportedly by disgruntled soldiers, after which several prominent officers were arrested or dismissed. There have not been episodes since then to suggest high-level civil-military tensions. The police and relatively professional gendarmes, not the military, have led the security response to recent protests in Conakry, lessening the potential for military abuses.

Condé has pledged to prioritize security sector reform (SSR), for which the United States has provided support (see "Foreign Assistance" below). In November 2011, Condé announced the retirement of over 4,000 soldiers and paramilitary officers, with U.N. assistance to finance the cost of severance. However, overarching attempts to develop a coherent national security strategy and to tailor the mandate and size of the various services accordingly have advanced slowly, if at all, and civilian oversight of the defense sector budget and management remains limited.

Drug Trafficking

Guinea, among other countries in the region, is a transshipment hub for cocaine en route from South America to Europe.²⁴ The junta that seized power in 2008 initiated populist moves to crack down on drug trafficking, but these were politically selective, neglected due process, and empowered security agencies associated with a lack of accountability. Some analysts posit that narcotics flows have increased in recent years, with a Reuters investigation in 2014 reporting that traffickers may have relocated to Guinea from Guinea-Bissau following the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency arrest of a top Guinea-Bissau military commander in 2013. The report also found that traffickers are operating in Guinea "with the protection of senior civilian, military and police officials."²⁵ The head of the country's top counter-narcotics agency is an individual

(...continued)

Accountability before Guinea's Courts for the September 28, 2009, Stadium Massacre, Rapes, and Other Abuses, December 2012; ICC, "Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the 28 September 2009 events in Conakry, Guinea," September 26, 2014; and ICC, *Report on Preliminary Examination Activities 2014*, December 2, 2014.

²² See ICG, *Guinea: Reforming the Army*, September 23, 2010.

²³ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), *Rapport d'évaluation du secteur de sécurité en Guinée*, joint mission with the African Union and United Nations, May 2010.

²⁴ See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, February 2013; State Department, *2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*.

²⁵ Reuters, "Insight: Surge in cocaine trade undermines Conde's bid to revive Guinea," January 31, 2014.

implicated in the September 2009 security force massacre of protesters in Conakry, potentially complicating international cooperation efforts.

The Mining Sector

Guinea's economy and budget depend on mineral exports, but erratic government decision-making and regulatory uncertainty have historically constituted serious concerns for mining firms. President Condé has identified mining sector reform as a priority, and in 2011 his administration promulgated a new mining code, amending it in 2013 in response to industry input.²⁶ The code increases the required ownership stake for the Guinean government in all mining projects; introduces new procedures for obtaining mining permits; and raises taxes on mineral exports, among other provisions.²⁷ Industry reactions have varied between strident criticism and a wait-and-see attitude. In February 2013, the government published all mining contracts online, an unprecedented move. The decision led Guinea to be determined "compliant" with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international effort to foster open and accountable management of natural resource revenues.²⁸

The government has revoked some mining contracts pursuant to investigations into alleged mining sector corruption. Notably, in 2013, it revoked a large iron ore concession acquired in 2008 by Benny Steinmetz Group Resources (BSGR), a firm headed by Israeli businessman Benny Steinmetz. The concession was located in the Simandou region of southeastern Guinea, one of the world's largest untapped, high-grade iron ore deposits. BSGR had subsequently entered into a lucrative joint venture with the Brazil-based mining company Vale.²⁹

BSGR's acquisition of its concession is also subject to a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Foreign Corrupt Practices Act investigation. An alleged BSGR surrogate was arrested by the United States in 2013 and, more recently, U.S.-based assets were seized that allegedly belonged to the widow of former Guinean president Conté, who has reportedly cooperated with DOJ.³⁰ BSGR has vigorously contested the loss of its concession, accusing the Condé administration of corrupt motivations, and has appealed for international mediation. The firm has also sought to undermine President Condé's legitimacy, including by circulating allegations that the election that brought him to office was rigged.³¹

²⁶ The U.S.-based organization Revenue Watch and international financier George Soros reportedly assisted with the drafting process.

²⁷ *Code Minier de la République de Guinée*, September 9, 2011, as amended in April 2013.

²⁸ See <https://eiti.org/Guinea>.

²⁹ The concession had been granted to BSGR after being stripped from the British-Australian multinational corporation Rio Tinto. In 2011, Rio Tinto agreed to accept the loss of half of the concession—which it had previously challenged—and reacquired the rights to develop the remaining blocs in exchange for a \$700 million one-time payment to the Guinean government. David Winning, "Rio and Guinea Settle Mine Fight," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 25, 2011.

³⁰ *United States v. Frederic Cilins*, filed on April 15, 2013; see <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa/cases/cilinsf.html> and *100 Reporters*, "Feds Seize \$1 Million in Real Estate from Informer in Steinmetz Probe," November 27, 2014. For background, see Patrick Radden Keefe, "Buried Secrets: How an Israeli billionaire wrested control of one of Africa's biggest prizes," *The New Yorker*, July 8, 2013. Steinmetz and other critics of President Condé have contested the latter article's portrayal of both the case and of Condé's motives in pursuing it.

³¹ Bloomberg, "Steinmetz Claims Dozens Aware of Guinea Vote Rigging," September 5, 2014.

U.S. Relations and Aid

According to the State Department, “U.S. policy seeks to encourage Guinea’s democratic reforms, its positive contribution to regional stability, and sustainable economic and social development.”³² The Obama Administration hailed the 2013 legislative elections as “a positive advance in Guinea’s democratic development,” and called for “fortifying the National Assembly, constructing a transparent judiciary, and preparing for 2015 Presidential elections.”³³ The Administration has also continued to call for those responsible for the 2009 massacre of protesters during the military junta to be brought to justice.³⁴

The Obama Administration congratulated Guinea in 2010 “on the successful completion of its first democratic presidential election” and congratulated President Condé on his victory, expressing hopes that “it is only the first step on the road to democratic transition and civilian rule.”³⁵ As a result of that election, U.S. aid restrictions related to the 2008 military coup were lifted,³⁶ and Guinea’s eligibility for trade preferences under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was restored. President Condé, along with three other West African presidents who had been democratically elected, met with President Obama at the White House in 2011.

The Ebola crisis has led to new U.S. aid and engagement, along with a change in immigration regulations for Guinean nationals residing in the United States. In November 2014, citing the Ebola crisis, the Secretary of Homeland Security designated Guinea for “Temporary Protected Status” for a period of 18 months, under Section 244(b)(1)(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The designation allows eligible resident Guinean nationals to remain in the United States.³⁷

Guinea’s large mineral deposits represent potential strategic and commercial interests for U.S. actors.³⁸ Several U.S.-based resource firms operate in Guinea and face competition from other foreign investors.³⁹ Guinea’s extractive industries have also drawn attention from the U.S. Department of Justice for potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) of 1977. As noted above (“The Mining Sector”), DOJ is pursuing at least one such case related to the acquisition of a Guinean iron ore concession by Benny Steinmetz Group Resources (BSGR).

³² State Department, “U.S. Relations with Guinea,” Fact Sheet, January 23, 2014.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ U.S. State Department, Office of the Spokesperson, “Fifth Anniversary of Massacre at Pro-Democracy Rally in Guinea,” September 28, 2014.

³⁵ State Department, “U.S. Statement on Alpha Condé’s Presidential Victory in Guinea,” December 3, 2010.

³⁶ At the time, the State Department determined that the 2008 military coup did not trigger a legal provision contained in that year’s foreign aid appropriations act that bars certain types of aid to the government of any country in which a “duly elected head of government” has been overthrown by a military coup or decree—arguing that the previous administration had not been “duly elected.” However, the executive branch imposed as a matter of policy aid restrictions that corresponded to those that would have been triggered by the provision. A similar provision has appeared in appropriations measures since at least 1985.

³⁷ Federal Register, “Designation of Guinea for Temporary Protected Status,” November 21, 2014.

³⁸ Guinea provides about 22% of U.S. bauxite (aluminum ore) imports, for example, making it the second-largest source of such imports after Jamaica. U.S. Geological Survey, “Bauxite and Alumina,” 2013.

³⁹ The large U.S.-based multinational aluminum firm Alcoa, notably, is a major shareholder in the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée, a bauxite mining and export partnership with the Guinean state. A much smaller U.S. energy firm, Hyperdynamics, holds a license for a large offshore oil exploration concession.

A U.S.-based firm, Hyperdynamics, is reportedly also under DOJ scrutiny for potential FCPA violations in connection with its acquisition of an offshore oil concession in Guinea.⁴⁰

Foreign Assistance

U.S. bilateral aid to Guinea is predominantly focused on health assistance (**Table 1**), in addition to separate Ebola-related programs. Total U.S. bilateral aid allocations for Guinea (not counting food aid) trended downward following the 2010 elections, but the Administration has requested a slight increase in FY2016, including \$6 million in Development Assistance (DA) for agricultural programs. In contrast to previous years, no DA was requested in FY2015 or allocated in FY2015.

Table 1. U.S. Bilateral Aid, Selected Accounts
appropriations, \$ thousands, not adjusted for inflation

	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015 (req.)	FY2016 (req.)
DA	14,518	7,000	5,700	2,003	0	0	6,000
Global Health ^a	7,500	17,469	17,500	17,880	17,850	17,500	17,000
IMET	0	48	57	279	397	240	240
PKO ^b	1,600	0	0	0	580	0	0
FMF	0	0	400	190	200	0	0
INCLE	0	500	0	0	0	0	0
P.L. 480 Title II (food aid)	0	0	0	0	3,014	0	0
TOTAL	23,618	25,017	23,657	21,600	22,041	17,740	23,740

Source: State Department Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations (FY2012-FY2016)

Notes: DA=Development Assistance; IMET=International Military Education and Training; PKO=Peacekeeping Operations; FMF=Foreign Military Financing; INCLE=International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; PKO=Peacekeeping Operations.

Table does not reflect aid provided through regionally or globally managed programs, funding for Ebola response, or funding administered by entities other than the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

- Refers to the Global Health and Child Survival (GHCS) account (FY2010-FY2011) and Global Health Programs (GHP) account (FY2012-FY2015).
- Additional PKO has been provided through regionally managed programs in FY2011-FY2015, including in support of security sector reform and Guinea's U.N. peacekeeping deployment to Mali.

In addition to what is shown in **Table 1**, nearly \$98 million in U.S. FY2014 and FY2015 funding has been devoted to date to responding to Ebola in Guinea, in addition to other Ebola-related regional funding.⁴¹ Also in addition to bilateral allocations, the State Department has provided

⁴⁰ *African Energy*, "Tullow Declares Force Majeure Ahead of Planned Well in Guinea," March 13, 2014.

⁴¹ U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *West Africa – Ebola Outbreak*, Fact Sheet #40, FY2015, July 21, 2015. Much of the Ebola-related funding drawn from non-emergency annual appropriations and expended prior to the passage of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235) may be reimbursed (continued...)

over \$6 million to support security sector reform in Guinea since 2010, using Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funds.⁴² Guinean troops have also received U.S. training and equipment in support of their deployment to the U.N. peacekeeping operation in Mali, under the State Department's Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, also funded through PKO. International financial institutions, which receive significant U.S. support, separately provide significant financing and technical aid to Guinea.

Recent Congressional Actions

The FY2015 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 113-235, Division J, Section 7042 [e]) restricts Guinea's ability to receive International Military Education and Training (IMET) assistance for purposes other than "training related to international peacekeeping operations and expanded IMET," with a further exception for maritime security assistance. Expanded IMET, or E-IMET, focuses on encouraging respect for human rights and civilian control of the military. Similar restrictions have been contained in previous annual appropriations measures. The FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-81) authorized Guinea, among several West African countries, to receive Defense Department-administered counter-narcotics assistance. During the 111th Congress, two resolutions condemning the "stadium massacre" of protesters in 2009 passed their respective chambers: H.Res. 1013 (Ros-Lehtinen) passed in the House; and S.Res. 345 (Boxer) passed in the Senate.

Outlook

The United States played a key role in Guinea's 2010 transition to an elected, civilian government. That transition led to a significant improvement in Guinea's security situation and political stability. Still, the election and its aftermath created new political tensions that have contributed to, and fed off of, ethnic divisions. Such tensions are likely to increase further ahead of presidential elections scheduled for October 2015. Guinea may continue to interest U.S. policymakers for its role in regional security, its economic potential, and its recent democratic transition—but generally, U.S. policy attention faded substantially after 2010. The Ebola outbreak has prompted new concerns, accompanied by substantial resource commitments for affected countries. The outbreak is impacting Guinean politics and society, with potentially serious implications for the country's prosperity and future stability.

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from emergency funds appropriated under P.L. 113-235.

⁴² State Department Congressional Notification, September 2014.

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