



COUNTRY INFORMATION BULLETIN

GUINEA

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Introduction

1.1 This Bulletin has been produced by the Country Information and Policy Unit, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information about Guinea obtained from a wide variety of recognised sources. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.

1.2 This Bulletin has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum / human rights determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum / human rights claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3 The Bulletin is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4 This Bulletin and the accompanying source material are publicly disclosable. Paper copies of the sources that are not available in electronic format have been distributed to nominated officers in Asylum Caseworking Directorate and all Presenting Officer Units.

General situation

2.1 In late November early December 2003, a number of army officers, and former army officers were arrested. Some of these were quite senior, and others had close links to prominent political figures. [1][2][3]

2.2 No reasons were given for these arrests, but it was suspected that they were in connection with a planned coup. In early November 2003, President Lansana Conté had accused elements of the military of plotting a coup prior to the

presidential elections on 21 December 2003. All those detained were reported to have been released prior to the elections, and there are no reports that the Guinean authorities have taken any further action. [3][4]

Presidential Election

3.1 The presidential elections in Guinea were held on 21 December 2003. These were generally peaceful, with no incidents of serious violence being reported. [5][6]

3.2 There were two candidates, President Conté of the ruling Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès, Party of Unity and Progress, (PUP) and Mamadou Bhoie Barry of the Union for National Progress (UNP). The UNP is a small pro-Government party, and Mamadou Barry's candidacy was widely seen as a ploy to legitimise the election. Opposition parties boycotted the election, criticising the electoral procedure, restrictions on their access to the media, and the PUP's use of state funds to support President Conté's campaign. The opposition's reservations regarding the way the election was organised were widely shared both inside and outside Guinea, and in light of these misgivings there were no independent international observers. [6][7]

3.3 President Conté was re-elected for a seven-year term, winning 95.6% of the vote. The ruling party claimed that over 80% of those eligible to vote voted, a figure disputed by opposition parties. There appears to have been irregularities in the registration of voters prior to the election, and there are good grounds to believe that the Guinean Government manipulated the result. The opposition parties have expressed the view that the election was flawed, and have not accepted the result. [6][7][8]

3.4. President Conté has diabetes and a heart condition, and is in poor health. He is reported to be having difficulty walking, and had to cast his vote from his official car. On 19 January 2004, he was sworn in as president, but his health has given cause for concern as to whether he will be able to complete his term in office. [6][7][9]

Sources

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