



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice Guinea

Guinea – GIN35987 – Foulah/Fulani –
Opposition Groups

15 January 2010

Preliminary Note

The Foulah ethnic group in Guinea is described by several names which are spelt in various ways:

The Fulani (also known as the Foulah, Peulh, Peul, Fulfulde, or Fulbe) are an ethnic group of sub-Saharan Africa who live in 17 states and number almost 30 million people.¹

The Foulah of Guinea generally adhere to the Islamic faith:

Muslims comprise a majority in all four major regions of the country. Christians are most numerous in Conakry, in the south, and in the eastern Forest Region. Christians also reside in all large towns except those in the Fouta Djallon region in the middle of the country, where Islam is deeply intertwined with Pular (or Fulani or Peuhl) culture and society. Indigenous religious beliefs are most prevalent in the Forest Region.²

1 Please provide information on the treatment of the Foulah ethnic group in Guinea.

The following French historical analysis of 31 December 2008 states that in the past there has been tribal friction and the Peul (Foulah) had been accused of plotting against the government of Lansana Conté who was the past dictator who ruled from 1984 until December 2008.

Since then, the country is under the leadership of the new coup leader, Moussa Dadis Camara:

Après Touré et Conté voilà donc l'heure des Camara. Parce qu'en Guinée, ces noms signifient beaucoup de choses. Ils marquent les limites entre ethnies (Soussou, Malinké, Peul, Nalou etc.) Dès que le nom du nouveau putschiste est connu, tout un groupe issu de sa communauté se rallie à lui et se dit que son heure est arrivée. (After Touré and Conté, now it is Camara's hour. Because in Guinea, these names signify many things. They establish ethnic boundaries (Soussou, Malinké, Peul, Nalou etc.). As soon as the new coup leader's name is known, a group from his community will rally around him and believe that its hour has come.)

...

Pendant le règne de Lansana Conté, les Soussou ont reproduit le vieux schéma comme l'éternel « complot peul » pour éliminer tous les leaders et cadres de ce groupe. (During the reign of Lansana Conté, the Soussou reintroduced the old scheme against the eternal 'peul plot' so as to eliminate all leaders and cadres of this group.)³

¹ Cerný, V; Hájek, M; Bromová, M; Cmejla, R; Et al, 2006, 'mtDNA of Fulani Nomads and their Genetic Relationships to Neighboring Sedentary Populations', Human Biology, Vol. 78, 1February - Attachment 1.

² US Department of State 2009, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2009– Guinea*, October, Section 1. Religious Demography - Attachment 2

³ 'La Guinée entre espoir et déception - Un pays béni, un peuple maudit' 2008, *All Africa*, 31 December – Attachment 3.

According to M Jalloh, a researcher with the International Crisis Group, there are concerns that there will be further ethnic clashes now:

The fear is that if there is a clash between Dadis and Sekouba [the two top military leaders], there will be a battle for Conakry, and in the Forest region, there will be an ethnic cleansing by Dadis's group of the Malinke and Fulani traders who are against Dadis," says Jalloh.⁴

Further recent incidents involving the Foulah are contained in the response to Question 2.

2 Are members of the Foulah ethnic group regarded as supporters of the opposition in Guinea?

A report of 27 June 2000 makes mention that the Foulah have long been involved in the opposition:

l'alliance CODEM, qui regroupe les principales formations d'opposition, (the main opposition group belong to the CODEM alliance)

...

L'alliance CODEM s'attend à des victoires importantes de l'opposition dans les montagnes du Fouta Jallon, fief de Bab Mamadou, sur le territoire de l'ethnie Fula.

(The CODEM [**Researcher's note:** Coordination of the Democratic Opposition (Coordination de l'opposition démocratique, CODEM) alliance expects great results for the opposition in the mountains of Fouta Jallon, which is Bab Mamadou's stronghold, and is the territory of the Fula ethnic group)⁵

A report of 10 March 2006 notes the long-standing conflict between the Susu and Foulah ethnic group:

Sacked Guinean prime minister, Cellou Dalein Diallo, refuted claims that he is under house arrest and told IRIN that his 11 years in government were a testament to his loyalty to the president.

...

Some of Diallo's supporters who had gathered at the former prime minister's home this week, told IRIN that they believed Diallo was the victim of an ethnic row. Diallo is from the Foulah ethnic group, while many of Conte's ministers are from his minority Susu ethnic group. "The president's men played the tribal card," said one Diallo supporter who declined to be named. "And on this occasion, they won."⁶

The Stadium Massacre and its Aftermath

In a report of 27 October 2009, Human Rights Watch stated that the massacre which took place on 28 September 2009 targeted the Peuhl (Foulah). Opposition groups had attempted to seek government permission to conduct a peaceful rally in a stadium but were violently assaulted by government troops; among the troops were the 'red berets' of the Presidential Guard soldiers; they were dressed in full camouflage uniform and were wearing red berets

⁴ Blackwell, R. and Baldauf, S. 2009, 'Can Guinea avoid a violent power struggle?', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 December – Attachment 4.

⁵ 'Guinée/Municipales - L'opposition accuse le pouvoir de fraude' 2000, *Reuters*, 27 June - Attachment 5

⁶ 'Guinea: Sacked prime minister speaks out' 2006, IRIN, 10 March – Attachment 6.

(refer to Footnote 8. p 28). They were commanded by Lieutenant Abubakar “Toumba” Diakité, who was at the time Dadis Camara’s personal aide de camp and chief bodyguard and who later attempted to assassinate Camara:

Ethnic Dimension

During interviews, many Guineans expressed shock at the apparent ethnic nature of the violence, which threatens to destabilize the situation in Guinea further. The vast majority of the victims were from the Peuhl ethnic group, which is almost exclusively Muslim, while most of the commanders at the stadium – and indeed key members of the ruling CNDD, including Camara, the coup leader – belong to ethnic groups from the southeastern forest region, which are largely Christian or animist.

Witnesses said that many of the killers and rapists made ethnically biased comments during the attacks, insulting and appearing to target the Peuhl, the majority ethnicity of the opposition supporters, and claiming that the Peuhl wanted to seize power and needed to be “taught a lesson.” Human Rights Watch also spoke with witnesses to the military training of several thousand men from the southeast forest region at a base near the southwestern town of Forécariah, apparently to form a commando unit dominated by people from ethnic groups from the forest region.

Many of the Peuhl victims reported being threatened or abused on account of their ethnicity. For example, one woman who was gang raped by men in uniform wearing red berets described how her attackers referred repeatedly to her ethnicity: “Today, we’re going to teach you a lesson. Yes, we’re tired of your tricks... we’re going to finish all the Peuhl.” A young man detained for several days in the Koundara military camp described how a red beret put a pistol to his head and said, “You say you don’t want us, that you prefer Cellou [the leading Peuhl opposition candidate, Cellou Dalein Diallo]... we’re going to kill all of you. We will stay in power.”⁷

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigative report was published in December 2009 and made several references to harm being perpetrated against the Peuhl in the neighbourhoods which were considered pro-opposition, in the stadium during the pro-opposition rally and in the post-rally violence when some demonstrators were abducted and detained in the camp - Camp Alpha Yaya Diallo - in the vicinity of the stadium. HRW also interviewed some opposition leaders such as Cellou Dalein Diallo, who had fled to France following this incident. Here is a selection of references which indicate the particular focus on the Foulah (Peuhl):

During the sexual assaults against girls and women of Peuhl ethnicity, assailants frequently made ethnically biased comments, insulting and appearing to threaten the Peuhl in particular. (Massacre, Sexual Violence, and cover-up. P8)

...

The neighborhoods in which there were attacks, notably Dar-es-Salaam, Hamdalaye, Koloma, Bomboli, and Cosa, are widely considered to be opposition strongholds, and are dominated by residents who are of the Peuhl and Malinké ethnic groups. Numerous victims and witnesses to violence in these neighborhoods told Human Rights Watch how, in the course of the attacks, the soldiers and irregular militia killed, raped, vandalized, and stole from residents. They also repeatedly insulted and made threats against people of Peuhl ethnicity in particular. (Abuses after the stadium violence. P9)

⁷ Human Rights Watch 2009, *Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated*, 27 October <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/10/27/guinea-september-28-massacre-was-premeditated> - Accessed 25 November 2009 - Attachment 7

...

Guinea, a country of just over 10 million people, has three major ethnic groups—the Peuhl, representing 40 percent of the population; the Malinké, 30 percent; and the Sousou, 20 percent. (I. Background. P17)

...

They beat me with wooden sticks for five minutes. One of them said, “If you think Guinea belongs to the Peuhl and the Malinké, today you will learn who the real bastards and the mad dogs are.” I couldn’t get up anymore, so I just stayed on the ground. There was a girl next to me, she was nearly naked, only in her underwear, she was crying and bleeding, so I gave her my T-shirt. Then I lost consciousness and woke up at Donka Hospital. (Attack on rally participants by security forces inside the stadium. P30)

...

Of the victims interviewed, 20 were from the Peuhl ethnic group; five from the Malinké ethnic group, two from the Sousou ethnic group, and one Wolof. The majority of victims interviewed by Human Rights Watch believed that they were targeted at random, and that the greater number of Peuhl victims of sexual abuse resulted from the disproportionate presence of individuals from this ethnic group at the opposition rally. However, many Peuhl victims said that their perpetrators made ethnically biased threatening comments during the attacks. (IV. Rape and other sexual assault by security forces. P47)

...

...they jabbed their guns into my stomach, telling me if I resisted they would kill me, kill all the Peuhl. (Abduction and rape. P8)

...

they jabbed their guns into my stomach, telling me if I resisted they would kill me, kill all the Peuhl. (Psychological impact of rape. P59)

During the sexual assaults against Peuhl girls and women, assailants frequently made ethnically biased comments, insulting and appearing to threaten the Peuhl in particular. One woman who was gang raped by members of the Presidential Guard described how her attackers referred repeatedly to her ethnicity: “Today, we’re going to teach you a lesson. Yes, we’re tired of your tricks ... we’re going to finish all the Peuhl.” Another woman, who described being held at a villa for four nights where she and others were raped and sexually assaulted, recalled that her assailants “...insulted me and said they were going to kill me, kill all of us Peuhl. They said to forget about our political leaders, that they were going to stay in power.” Women who were raped and assaulted at the stadium reported similar ethnic-based comments. One woman who was raped by three Presidential Guard soldiers recalled that her attackers told her, “We’re going to kill all of you, especially you Fullah [Peuhl] people ... we’re going to finish all of you off.” Another woman, who was raped on the stadium’s field, and who saw another young woman being raped and then killed, recounted that some of the red berets were yelling, “We’re going to kill you Peuhl ... you are all bastards!” One woman who was sexually assaulted by two members of the Presidential Guard was told, “You Peuhl women are racist ... it is you who are trying to ruin Dadis ... we’re going to finish with you, you’ll see.”(Psychological impact of rape. P61)

...

The neighborhoods in which there were attacks, notably Dar-es-Salaam, Hamdalaye, Koloma, Bomboli, and Cosa, are widely considered to be opposition strongholds, and are dominated by residents of the Peuhl and Malinké ethnic groups. Numerous victims and witnesses to violence in these neighborhoods told Human Rights Watch how, in the course of the attacks, the soldiers and irregular militia killed, raped, vandalized, and stole from residents. The attackers also repeatedly insulted and made threats against Peuhls in particular. (VIII. Attacks on opposition neighbourhoods by military and civilian militia. P81)

...

The red berets cut off his clothes and told him that the “Peuhls were causing war,” before beating him with the butts of their rifles and robbing him. (VIII. Attacks on opposition neighbourhoods by military and civilian militia. P83)

...

“The military kept threatening us, saying, ‘We are going to kill you. You are Peuhl, we are going to eliminate you all.’” Another man detained in Camp Alpha Yaya described a soldier asking all detained men from the Malinké ethnic group to identify themselves, and then admonished them: “How dare you mingle with these Peuhl vermins, trying to burn the country down?” (IX. Arbitrary detentions and abuses in detention. P84)

...

The three former detainees who said that they were held by the gendarme unit commanded by Captain Tiégboro Camara described being subjected to frequent beatings for four, eight, and 11 days respectively. They said that all but three of the 70 detainees held with them were ethnic Peuhls. (Abuses at Camp Alpha Yaya Diallo. P87)⁸

The Montreal Press reported a fund-raising event in support of the Muslim Peuhl ethnic group in the wake of the September 2009 massacre:

Most of the victims of September's violence were from the mainly Muslim Peuhl ethnic group, while the military commanders are mostly Christian or belong to African traditional religions.⁹

The massacre of December 2009 was also the subject of a UN inquiry:

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Mr. Ban [UN Secretary-General Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon] said he has transmitted the report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the deadly crackdown to the Government as well as to the Security Council, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).¹⁰

On 3 December 2009, Lieutenant Abubakar “Toumba” Diakité, who was at the time Moussa Dadis Camara’s personal aide de camp and chief bodyguard, made an attempt to assassinate him; there were further acts of antagonism against the Foulah (Peul) as is reported in this article of 8 December 2009:

A la tête d'une bande de Bérêts rouges, le très brutal capitaine Claude Pivi, dit “Coplan”, ministre de la Sécurité présidentielle, a semé la terreur lundi dans la banlieue frondeuse de Cosa, peuplée pour l'essentiel de peuls. (On Monday [7 December 2009] Claude Pivi, the rogue captain called “Coplan”, who is the Minister of Presidential Security, was causing terror in the rebellious suburb of Cosa, which has a mainly Peul population)¹¹

⁸ Human Rights Watch 2009, *Bloody Monday. The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea*, December 2009
http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/guinea1209webwcover_0.pdf - Accessed 7 January 2010 – Attachment 7

⁹ Scott, M. 2009, ‘Show honours slaying victims in Guinea; at least 150 killed in rampage. Dozens of women gang-raped after armed forces attacked opposition rally’ *The Gazette*, 28 November - Attachment 9

¹⁰ Ban sends report on deadly Guinean crackdown to Security Council’ 2009, United Nations News centre, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33306&Cr=Conakry&Cr1>
Accessed 13 January 2010 - Attachment 10.

¹¹ Hugeux, V. 2009, ‘En Guinée, l'heure de l'après-Dadis a sonné’, *L'Express*, 8 December - http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/en-guinee-l-heure-de-l-apres-dadis-a-sonne_834410.html - Accessed 12 January 2010 - Attachment 11.

List of Sources Consulted

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Human Rights Watch (HRW) website <http://www.hrw.org/>

International News & Politics

BBC News website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Le Monde <http://www.lemonde.fr/>

Le Monde diplomatique www.monde-diplomatique.fr

Region Specific Links

L'Enqueteur <http://enqueteur.boubah.com/>

L'Observateur <http://www.observateur-guinee.com/>

Le Populaire <http://lepopulaire.press-guinee.com/>

L'Express <http://www.lexpress.fr/>

Le Monde <http://www.lemonde.fr/>

Libération <http://www.liberation.fr/>

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Yahoo search engine <http://search.yahoo.com>

Copernic search engine

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Cerný, V; Hájek, M; Bromová, M; Cmejla, R; Et al, 2006, '*mtDNA of Fulani Nomads and their Genetic Relationships to Neighboring Sedentary Populations*', Human Biology, Vol. 78, 1February.
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4. Blackwell, R. and Baldauf, S. 2009, 'Can Guinea avoid a violent power struggle?', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 December.
5. 'Guinée/Municipales - L'opposition accuse le pouvoir de fraude' 2000, *Reuters*, 27 June.
6. 'Guinea: Sacked prime minister speaks out' 2006, IRIN, 10 March. (CISNET GUINEA CX151330)

7. Human Rights Watch 2009, *Guinea: September 28 Massacre Was Premeditated*, 27 October
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