

Guinea: World's Biggest Mining Project, Civilian Govt Dissolved

February 23, 2024

23 February 2024: Conakry, Guinea: The: Rio Tinto announced from London, UK, that it would invest \$6.2 Bn in a mine, rail-road and port in the Republic of Guinea. This would be in partnership with seven other companies, five of them from China.

February 20, 2024: Conakry: Dissolution of the Interim Government (2024): Guinea's Transitional President General **Mamady Doumbouya** dissolved the government led by Prime Minister **Bernard Goumou**. According to a decree, by the Transitional President, read on television by **Amara Camara**, the Secretary General of the Presidency, the country's interim government was dissolved without providing a clear explanation. The junta directed the **bank accounts of ministers to be blocked** and ordered **the seizure of their passports**.



Republic of Guinea: Capital and largest city: Conakry

Population (2023 Estimate): 14.2 Mn (75th); Area: 245,857 Km² (77th); Density: 40.9/Km² (164th)

GDP (2023 Estimate): \$23.2 Bn (140th); GDP/ capita \$1,542 (161st)

Population of **Conakry** (2014 Census): 1.66 Mn

Conakry was established on the small **Tombo Island** and later spread to the neighboring **Kaloum Peninsula**, a 36-Km-long stretch of land, 0.2 to 6 Km wide. The city was founded after Britain ceded the island to France in 1887. Conakry became the **capital of French Guinea in 1904** and prospered as an export port, particularly after a railway (now closed) to Kankan opened up the interior of the country for the large-scale export of groundnut.



----A BACKGROUNDER on a BRIEF HISTORY of today's **Guinea** ----

Before the 17th century, the territories of Guinea were a part of **the Ghana, the Mali and the Songhai empires**. But, by the beginning of 17th century, when European traders arrived, the territories had only small kingdoms.

In 1891, France declared Guinea to be its colony, administratively separate from Senegal.

At that time, the **Mandinka Muslim cleric, Samori Ture was trying to** establish an independent Islamic State in parts of West Africa and fought against the French colonial rule. **In 1898**, French forces defeated the armies of **Samori Touré, Mansa** (meaning *the Emperor*) of the **Ouassoulou State**, giving France control of what today is **Guinea and adjacent areas**.

Through the **referendum of 28 September 1958**, the French colonies were asked to choose between a common Parliament for all these colonies or to opt for separation and full sovereignty.

Ahmed Sékou Touré, a Guinean and an African political leader became the first President of Guinea. His tenure spanned **from 1958 until his demise in 1984**.

ABOUT **AHMED SÉKOU TOURÉ**: **Born on January 9, 1922**, in Faranah, French Guinea, **Touré** was the great-grandson of the **Mandinka Muslim cleric, Samori Ture**, who established an independent Islamic rule in parts of West Africa and fought against the French colonial rule. **Sékou Touré's father, Alpha Touré**, originally from French Sudan (now Mali), **migrated** and eventually settled in **Faranah**.

In 1946, **Ahmed Sékou Touré** helped found the **Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA)**, together with **Houphouët-Boigny** and other African leaders. RDA was a trade union for French colonies of Africa.

As **Secretary-General** of the Guinean branch of the **RDA**, **Touré** became **Vice-President of the Government Council of Guinea**.

Houphouët-Boigny and other Leaders of RDA wanted a common administration for the French colonies. But, **Sékou Touré** campaigned for **separation and complete sovereignty for Guinea**. The people of Guinea followed **Touré**. Accordingly, on

October 2, 1958, Guinea declared itself an **independent state**, with **Ahmed Sékou Touré** as the first President of Guinea.

In 1960, Touré established the **Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG)** as the **sole legal party** of Guinea. From then on, he ruled as a virtual dictator, re-elected unopposed to **four consecutive seven-year terms**.



Ahmed Sékou Touré

1st President (from October 2, 1958 to March 26, 1984) of Guinea

With help from USSR, **Sékou Touré** tried to establish a **socialist** regime. In the center of **Conakry**, he built **Camp Boiro** (1960–1984), a Guinean **Concentration Camp** (*Gulag*). The **political prison block** in the Camp was constructed with assistance from the **Czechoslovak government**. In **1961** the Commandant had the **windows reduced in size**, since they were **too large for condemned men**. The camp was renamed **Camp Mamadou Boiro** in **1969** in honor of a Police Commissioner who had been thrown from a helicopter in which he was transporting prisoners **from Labé to Conakry**.

Camp Mamadou Boiro was originally called **Camp Camyenne**. It housed the Republican Guard under French colonial rule.

It has been estimated that during the regime of President **Ahmed Sékou Touré**, 5,000 to 50,000 people were **executed or died from torture or starvation** at the Camp. His regime persecuted, at the Camp, opposition leaders and dissidents, including some ministers in **Touré's** own Government, from within the ruling PDG.

After the death of Sékou Touré in 1984, the military took power in a coup d'état and released many of the political prisoners at **Camp Boiro**. Many of the leaders of the **Touré's** regime were imprisoned, and later executed by the military junta.

Touré's legacy was a blend of progress and authoritarianism. His commitment to **education, healthcare, and infrastructure development** left a lasting impact.

POST-TOURÉ ERA (1984-2008): Following **Ahmed Sékou Touré's** death, a military junta led by **Colonel Lansana Conté** took control of the country. The junta abolished the ruling party, PDG, and replaced it with the **Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN)**.

Lansana Conté (born 30 November 1934 – died 22 December 2008) was a Guinean politician and military official who served as the 2nd President of Guinea, from 3 April 1984 until his death on 22 December 2008. **Conté** came to power in the 1984 Guinean coup d'état.



Lansana Conté

2nd President (from 5 April 1984 to 22 December 2008) of Guinea

Conté's regime was characterized by authoritarian rule. **Conté** faced coup attempts and army mutinies during his tenure. He was **elected President in 1993 and reelected twice**, although opposition parties disputed the legitimacy of these elections.

CONTÉ's LONG RULE (1984-2008): President **Lansana Conté** and President **Sékou Touré** were both dictators. But President **Lansana Conté** was less oppressive.

POST-TOURÉ ERA and MILITARY TAKEOVER (2008-2010): On December 23, 2008, **Aboubacar Somparé**, the President of the National Assembly, announced Conté's demise on television. Conté had been suffering from chronic diabetes and leukemia.

According to the Constitution, the President of the National Assembly was to assume the presidency in the event of a vacancy, and a new presidential election was to be held within 60 days.

The Military Coup: Hours after **Conté's** death, the military seized power in a coup led by Captain **Moussa Dadis Camara**, in the name of the **National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD)**.

The CNDD dissolved the government and institutions of the Republic, suspending the constitution and political activity.



*Captain **Moussa Dadis Camara**, Leader of the Military Junta*

Camara justified the coup by citing Guinea's "deep despair" due to rampant **poverty and corruption**. **Camara** promised a smooth transition to democracy and a presidential election where he would not stand.

However, when, in 2009, Camara's intention to run for the presidency became known, about 50,000 participants protested against it in an opposition rally in Conakry. Security forces opened fire on the demonstrators in the Stadium, resulting in the deaths of at least 157 people and injuries to 1,253 others. The security forces

engaged in a cover-up, sealing off entrances to the Stadium and removing bodies to bury them in mass graves.

The Long-Awaited Trial: Thirteen years after the massacre, in 2022, the trial of 11 men accused of responsibility for the massacre finally began.

These men, including high-ranking military and government figures, faced charges related to the atrocities committed during the 2009 events. The trial marks a major step toward justice for the victims and their families, who have campaigned tirelessly for accountability.

Due to international pressure, **Camara** stepped down, and **General Sékouba Konaté** took over as interim leader. **Konaté** initiated a transition to multi-party democracy. The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** pressured the junta to hold elections within an acceptable timeframe.

MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY (2011-2021): In **2010**, Guinea held its **first democratic presidential election**. **Alpha Condé**, a veteran opposition leader, won the election.



Alpha Condé (born 4 March 1938)

the 4th President (from 21 December 2010 to 5 September 2021) of Guinea

Condé led the **Rally of the Guinean People (RPG)**, an opposition party. He had unsuccessfully run against President **Lansana Conté** in the 1993 and 1998 presidential elections. Standing again in the 2010 presidential election, **Condé** was

elected president **in a second round of voting**. Upon his election, he said he would strengthen Guinea as a democracy and fight corruption.

On 30 January 2017, **Condé** succeeded **Chad's Idriss Déby** as head of the **African Union**. He was succeeded by **Rwandan President Paul Kagame** on 28 January 2018.

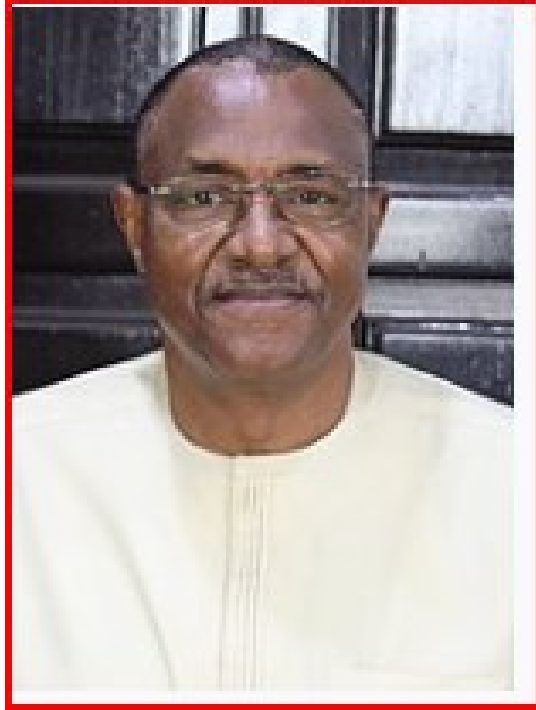
He was reelected in 2015 with about 58% of the vote, and again in 2020 with 59.5% vote. **Condé's** critics claimed there was fraud in both the 2015 and 2020 elections. In 2020, a constitutional referendum, which allowed **Condé** to **"reset" his term limit and seek two more terms**, sparked massive protests before and after the referendum. The protests were brutally repressed.

ANOTHER MILITARY TAKE-OVER: On **5 September 2021**, the Guinea Armed Forces arrested **Condé** and **Condé's government** was ousted in a military coup led by **Colonel Mamady Doumbouya** and the **National Committee of Reconciliation and Development (CNRD)** assumed control for an 18-month transition period.



Mamady Doumbouya (born 4 March 1980)
Interim President (from 1 October 2021) **of Guinea**
Chairman of NCRD (from 5 October 2021)

5 September 2021: Efforts Toward Restoration of Civilian Rule: The junta pledged to restore civilian rule in Guinea by the end of 2021. On October 6, 2021, a civilian Prime Minister was appointed by General **Mamady Doumbouya**.



Mohamed Béavogui (born 1953)

Prime Minister (from 6 October 2021 to 17 July 2022)

The Interim President chose to replace PM **Mohamed Béavogui** with **Bernard Goumou** on 17 July 2022, without offering any explanation.



Bernard Goumou (born 1980)

Prime Minister (from 17 July 2022 to 19 February 2024) of Guinea



CHALLENGES and RICHES: Guinea possesses abundant agricultural, water, and mineral resources, including bauxite, gold, and diamonds.

Despite mineral wealth, poverty remains widespread, and bauxite mining has raised environmental concerns.

UN-ADDRESSED CHALLENGES: Population growth and poor Healthcare facilities.

In the past health crises (such as the Ebola epidemic) have impacted development.

----A BACKGOUNDER on **LANSANA CONTÉ** ----

Early life: Born in Moussayah Loumbaya (*Dubrêka*), a member of the Susu ethnic group, **Lansana Conté** estimated his birthdate to be 1934. **Conté** was educated at a local Quranic school and attended **Dubrêka** primary school. He then went on to study at Military Preparatory Schools in **Bingerville**, **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Saint Louis, Senegal**.

Military and government service:

- In 1955, **Lansana Conté** enlisted in the French Army and was posted to Algeria during the war of independence in 1957.
- After his service in the French Army, **Conté** returned to Guinea, which became **independent from France on 2 October 1958**, and was integrated into the new army with the **rank of sergeant**.
- **In 1962**, he attended the **Camp Alpha Officer's School** in **Conakry**. Soon after, he was transferred to the 2nd Battalion **Artillery-Training Center** in **Kindia**. On **1 July 1963**, he was promoted to **Second Lieutenant**. In 1965, **Lansana Conté** was given the rank of Lieutenant.
- On 22 November 1970, Portuguese military together with Guinean dissidents invaded the country from **Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau)** in an apparent attempt to overthrow the government of President Ahmed Sékou Touré and destroy **African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC)** guerillas. For his service during the attack, he was **promoted to the rank of Captain on 27 February 1971**.
- **In 1973**, he was named Commander of the **Boké Operational Zone (in Northwestern Guinea)** to assist PAIGC in neighboring Portuguese Guinea.
- On **10 May 1975**, he was named **Assistant Chief of Staff** of the army.
