

URGENT ACTION

FOUR MORE TRADE UNIONISTS DETAINED

Four other trade unionists and retired military officers close to opposition groups were arrested in Conakry between 4-6 October, days before the contested 11 October presidential elections. They have been charged with contempt of the head of state and defamation. The four, together with Jean Dougo Guilavogui, are being held with convicted criminals and without adequate access to medical treatment.

Jean Bangoura was arrested at his home in Conakry on 4 October by Gendarmerie officers without an arrest warrant. **Sekou Kourouma, Souleymane Diallo and Sekou Kouyate** were arrested during a peaceful protest in Conakry on 6 October. The four men are members of the National Union of Military Pensioners and Widows of Guinea (Syndicat National des Militaires Retraités et Veuves de Guinée). According to one of their lawyers, they were arrested for their participation in the organization of a peaceful protest held on 6 October calling for the release of the Secretary General of their union, **Jean Dougo Guilavogui**. The four men were held at PM3 detention centre after their arrests before being charged with contempt of the head of state and defamation on 8 October. They were transferred to the Maison Centrale de Conakry and are being held in different cells with convicted criminals. Jean Dougo Guilavogui is also being held at the same prison, facing similar charges.

Prison guards have ordered other detainees not to speak to them. They can only speak to their lawyers during prison visits. Jean Dougo Guilavogui suffers from a chronic heart condition. He has notified the prison authorities of the condition, but has not been granted the medical treatment and medication requested. The other detainees also have no access to medical treatment. Amnesty International considers Jean Dougo Guilavogui and his fellow trade unionists prisoners of conscience.

At least 35 opposition members arrested following violent clashes with supporters of the ruling party remain in detention in Boké. Some insist that they did not take part in the violence and are being held arbitrarily.

Please write immediately in French, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Jean Dougo Guilavogui and the other trade unionists as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to release opposition activists arrested in Koundara who did not use or advocate violence;
- Calling on them to immediately ensure that all of those detained are allowed to challenge the lawfulness of detention and provided with appropriate medical treatment and care, in accordance with their wishes;
- Reminding them that they must guarantee the human rights of all, regardless of their political opinions, and protect against arbitrary arrests in the pre-electoral period and thereafter, including by repealing the provisions of the penal code which criminalize defamation and contempt to the President of the Republic and to public officials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

President of the Republic of Guinea

Alpha Condé
Présidence de la République
Conakry, Guinée
Email: gouvgn@gmail.com
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

M. Cheick Sako
Ministère de la Justice
BP 06, Conakry, Guinée
Email: gouvgn@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Human Rights and Public Freedoms
Kalifa Gassama Diaby
Ministères des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés Publiques
BP 564, Conakry, Guinée
Email: gouvgn@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 221/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr29/2604/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jean Dougo Guilavogui, a union leader and retired member of the armed forces, was arrested in Conakry on 19 September and detained without being brought before judicial authorities until his indictment on 25 September. His extended detention is contrary to international and Guinean law. While in their custody, police officers openly questioned his union involvement and the public support he gave to an opposition party.

At least 35 opposition members were also arrested on 20 September, following clashes between opposition militants, Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée, UFDG) and supporters of the ruling party, Rally of the Guinean People (Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée, RPG), in the town of Koundara in northern Guinea. According to testimonies collected by Amnesty International, several of those arrested did not take part in the violence and called for peace. The opposition members were charged with arson, destruction of public buildings and intentional injury, and are being held at the central prison in Boké, located some 250 km from their place of arrest, far from their families, and without access to lawyers. Some of them, suffering from illnesses, do not have access to the medical treatment they need.

Between 8 and 10 October, clashes between political groups armed with stones and machetes, as well as with the security forces, left at least six people dead in Conakry, more than 50 injured and considerable damage to property. At least one person died in similar clashes in Nzérékoré in the Guinea Forest Region between 2 and 3 October. The presidential elections took place on 11 October in a tense environment. On 12 October, all the presidential candidates except current President Alpha Condé declared there were major irregularities during the vote and announced they would not accept the results of the election. The next day clashes erupted between protesters and the police in Bambeto and Hamdallaye areas. Several police men were taken to clinics with injuries they sustained from rocks. Several young men also sustained injured, two of them from gunshots.

At least six people have died and hundreds wounded since March in clashes between protestors and security forces during the election period. Over 350 people have died and thousands wounded during protests over the last decade in Guinea.

On 2 June, a bill on maintaining public order was passed by the National Assembly, defining how and when force can and cannot be used to police protests. While welcoming measures to define the roles and responsibilities of Guinea's security forces, the new law – still to be approved by the President – contains significant gaps that could restrict the right to peaceful assembly. The law does not allow spontaneous public assembly, while security forces will have the power to disperse groups of otherwise peaceful protestors if at least one person is believed to have a weapon. Moreover, such clauses could be used as grounds for banning or repressing peaceful protests. The National Assembly also passed a separate bill in the same session on 2 June, approving measures that would introduce penalties of up to five years' imprisonment and hefty fines for insulting, slandering, offending or publishing 'false news' about the President and other officials. These measures are an unjustified restriction of freedom of expression that could be used to criminalize dissent; the President must refuse to assent to this law.

In a report published last month, Amnesty International called upon political stakeholders and security forces to fully respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to ensure that excessive force is not used against protestors and other citizens during the election period and thereafter (See: *Guinea: Preventing the excessive use of force and respecting freedom of peaceful assembly in the run-up to the 2015 elections and beyond – A call to action*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr29/2160/2015/en/>).

Name: Jean Bangoura, Sekou Kourouma, Souleymane Diallo, Sekou Kouyate and Jean Dougo Guilavogui
Gender m/f: m

Further Information on UA: 221/15 Index: AFR 29/2660/2015 Issue Date: 14 October 2015