

URGENT ACTION

UNIONISTS AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS STILL DETAINED

Following the wave of arrests of opposition members and trade unionists ahead of the 11 October elections, 10 of the at least 35 opposition members arrested in Koundara, northern Guinea, have been released on bail. The other 25, including a minor, are still in detention. Five trade unionists, including Jean Dougo Guilavogui, remain in arbitrary detention in Conakry, the capital. Their trial has been postponed and Jean Dougo Guilavogui has been denied access to adequate medical care.

Jean Dougo Guilavogui, Secretary General of the trade union National Union of Military Pensioners and Widows of Guinea (Syndicat National des Militaires Retraités et Veuves de Guinée) and retired member of the armed forces, was arrested in Conakry on 19 September ahead of the 11 October presidential elections. On 29 September, a criminal investigation was opened against him for contempt of the Head of State and the army. Trade unionists **Jean Bangoura**, **Sekou Kourouma**, **Souleymane Diallo** and **Sekou Kouyate** were arrested at the beginning of October for their participation in the organization of a peaceful protest calling for the release of Jean Dougo Guilavogui. They were charged with contempt of the Head of State and defamation.

The five men are currently held in the Maison Centrale de Conakry prison, together with convicted criminals. Jean Dougo Guilavogui suffers from a chronic heart condition, but is not receiving the specific medical treatment he requires. Their trial, scheduled for 8 December, has been postponed and no new date has been given. They are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

On 20 September at least 35 opposition members were arrested following violent clashes with supporters of the ruling party in Koundara, northern Guinea. Some insisted that they did not take part in the violence and were being held arbitrarily. Ten of them have been since been released, including two minors and a man with sight impairment who cannot walk unaccompanied. The ten remain under judicial supervision. The remaining **25 opposition members** are still in detention. One is a 17-year-old boy who is being held together with adult convicted criminals.

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 and currently being held without trial;
- Urging them to release opposition activists arrested in Koundara who did not use or advocate violence and ensure that all children are separated from adults when they are held in detention awaiting transfer to organizations responsible for the protection of children;
- Calling on them to immediately ensure that all of those detained are allowed to challenge the lawfulness of their detention and provided with appropriate medical treatment and care, in accordance with their wishes.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 FEBRUARY 2016 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 second update of UA 221/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR29/2660/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Over the past decade, at least 360 people have died during protests in the country, including 20 in 2015, and more than 1,800 have been injured. 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. President Alpha Condé was re-elected, and was inaugurated on 14 December 2015. The next day clashes erupted between protesters and the police in the 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.

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 in September, 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 protesters 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, Jean Dougo Guilavogui and 25 detained opposition members
Gender m/f: all male.

Further information on UA: 221/15 Index: AFR 29/3114/2015 Issue Date: 21 December 2015