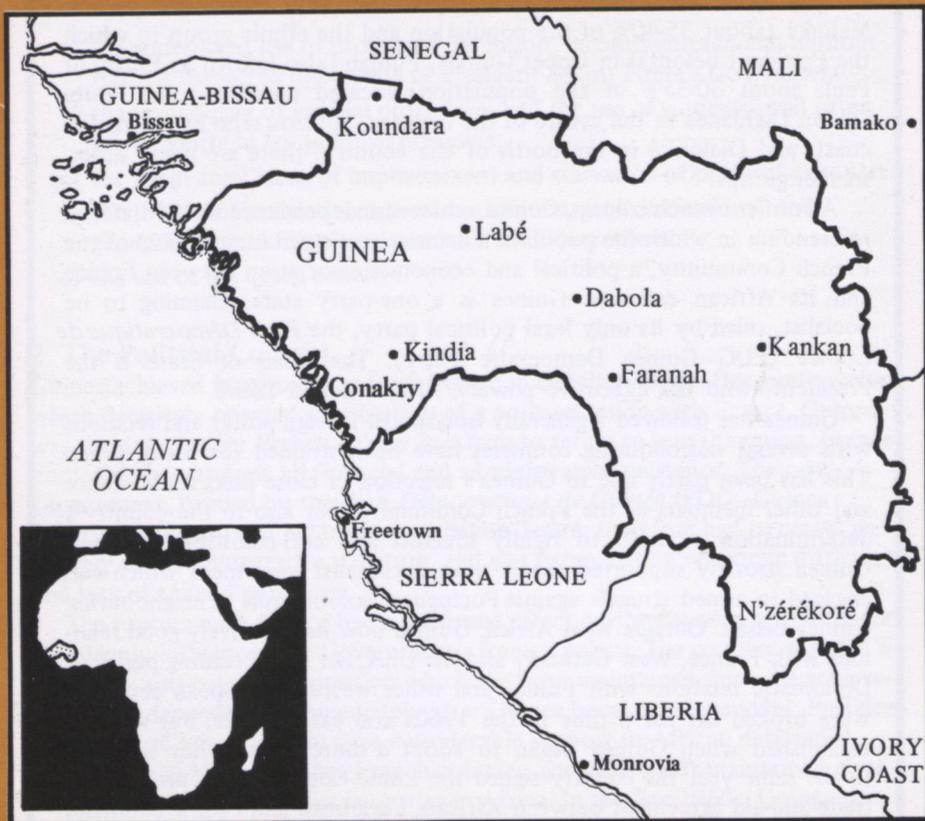

Amnesty International Briefing

GUINEA



June 1978

GUINEA IN OUTLINE

The Republic of Guinea is situated on the Atlantic coast of West Africa. Its neighbours are Guinea-Bissau to the north-west, Senegal and Mali to the north, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone to the east and south. Guinea is almost 246,000 square kilometres in area, and the population in 1975 was estimated to be 5,243,000. The capital, Conakry, has a population of about half a million, but more than 90% of the population of the country as a whole lives in rural areas. The main ethnic groups are: Malinké (about 35-40% of the population and the ethnic group to which the President belongs) in Upper Guinea, Foulah (also known as Fulani or Peul, about 30-35% of the population) located mainly in the Fouta Djallon Highlands in the centre of the country, Soussou who live along the coast, and Dialonké in the north of the country; there are many other, smaller groups.

A former French colony, Guinea achieved independence in 1958 after a referendum in which the population decisively rejected membership of the French Community, a political and economic association between France and its African colonies. Guinea is a one-party state, claiming to be socialist, ruled by its only legal political party, the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG—Guinea Democratic Party). The Head of State is the President (who has executive power), Ahmed Sékou Touré.

Guinea has followed a generally isolationist foreign policy and relations with several neighbouring countries have been strained for many years. This has been partly due to Guinea's rejection of close links with France and other members of the French Community, but also to the country's determination to hold to rigidly socialist and anti-colonialist policies. Guinea strongly supported the African nationalist movement which was engaged in armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. Outside West Africa, Guinea now has relatively good relations with France, West Germany and the USA, her major trading partners. Diplomatic relations with France and other western European countries were broken off for a time in the 1960s and early 1970s, but were re-established when Guinea began to adopt a more open policy in 1975. In the same year the country signed the Lomé Convention, a preferential trade-and-aid agreement between African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Economic Community. Guinea is a member of both the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, as well as of the Economic Community of West African States which was founded in 1975.

Most of the population are subsistence farmers, but certain cash crops are produced for export, particularly pineapples and coffee. The principal source of foreign exchange is the mining sector—Guinea has important reserves of bauxite and iron-ore—but this is dominated by foreign-owned companies.

Guinea

1. Introduction

Amnesty International considers the following human rights issues in Guinea to be of major concern:

- a) the widespread use of prolonged detention, incommunicado and without trial, of suspected opponents of President Sékou Touré's Government;
- b) the inadequacy of judicial procedures and the use of summary and often secret courts to try political prisoners;
- c) the harsh conditions of imprisonment and starvation of political prisoners;
- d) the torture of political detainees both to extract "confessions" and generally to intimidate opponents of the Government;
- e) the use of the death penalty.

2. The Political Context

Guinea achieved independence from France in October 1958, after a referendum which decisively rejected membership of a political union with France. Guinea was the only former French colony in Africa to refuse to join the union. France immediately withdrew all financial and administrative assistance. The new Government, formed by the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* (PDG—Guinea Democratic Party) and led by Ahmed Sékou Touré, therefore had to create an entirely new administrative structure, and was hampered by economic difficulties and lack of trained personnel.

The rupture with France had a profound effect on the Guinean economy and also deeply influenced the Government's foreign policy. The country adopted a staunchly anti-colonialist position which has been maintained since the achievement of independence. Immediately after Guinea became independent, President Sékou Touré's Government gave considerable support to African nationalist movements in Mali and other French colonies, and afterwards maintained close relations with other socialist countries in Africa. In the late 1960s, Guinea also provided significant assistance to the PAIGC (*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*), the African liberation movement fighting Portuguese rule in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. This led to extremely strained relations between Guinea and Portugal and culminated in an attack on Conakry on 22 November 1970, which was a combined operation by Portuguese forces and Guinean opposition elements. The attackers withdrew after one day's fighting. Portugal's action was subsequently condemned by both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Within Guinea, the PDG had already achieved absolute control by 1958. In the years immediately following independence, it further consolidated its position by suppressing the last vestiges of legal opposition. In doing so, it demonstrated its intolerance towards any form of criticism and made it clear that persistent critics of the Government would be regarded as enemies of the state.

During the 1960s Guinea's international isolation caused increasing disenchantment and political instability. This led to a series of confrontations between the Government and different interest groups, such as the Islamic establishment (1959-60), the trading community (1965) and the Roman Catholic Church (1967). Stringent measures designed to improve the country's economic situation were introduced, but these caused further widespread resentment. President Sékou Touré's response was to accuse a series of real or imagined political opponents of plotting his overthrow and to publicly blame them for the country's problems. Those accused and imprisoned included several Government ministers and high officials, who were denounced as "imperialist agents" determined to sabotage Guinea's revolution.

Between 1958 and 1970 there were 12 occasions when the Government claimed to have uncovered conspiracies against the administration. Each time those suspected of involvement were arrested and imprisoned. Some were sentenced to death. In February 1969 for example, 40 people were arrested and tried for being involved in a plot against the Government. Thirteen were executed and 27 sentenced to life imprisonment, including three former cabinet ministers.

However, the most significant attempt to overthrow President Sékou Touré was made, not by opponents at home, but by Portuguese colonial forces and some Guinean exiles operating from neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. Although the Portuguese attack on Conakry in November 1970 was a failure in military terms, it had a profound effect in increasing the sensitivity of President Sékou Touré and his advisors to internal criticism. Because of the participation of Guinean opposition elements in the incident, large numbers of arrests were made in Conakry and throughout the country. In January 1971, the National Assembly was changed into a Revolutionary Tribunal to try those accused of complicity in the Portuguese attack. Details of the ensuing trial are given in Section 3, page 5.

Further waves of arrests occurred throughout early 1971, culminating in July and August when several hundred people were reported to have been detained. However, none of them is known to have been brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal used earlier in the year. Instead—according to information from released prisoners—some 130 detainees were taken before secret investigation committees and made to confess their alleged guilt. As these committees met in secret, no verdicts were made public.

The political situation remained unstable during the 1970s and on a number of occasions President Sékou Touré accused foreign governments of plotting to overthrow him. In 1976, another alleged conspiracy resulted in a series of arrests. Official sources claimed that a group of conspirators had tried to arrange for a 14-year-old boy to assassinate the President while he was visiting Conakry Polytechnique in May 1976. The President laid responsibility for this plot on the Foulah ethnic group, who make up approximately one third of the country's population. The leader of the conspiracy was alleged to be Diallo Telli, then

Minister of Justice, formerly first Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity and Guinea's Ambassador to the United Nations. Many other people of Foulah origin were detained but there were no public trials. However, a public confession of guilt by Diallo Telli was broadcast over Conakry Radio.

Although no new conspiracies were exposed by Sékou Touré during 1977, the year saw growing popular discontent within Guinea, particularly over economic policy. The economic position had looked promising at the time of independence, when Guinea was considered to be one of the most developed of France's colonies in Africa. However, for various reasons—mis-management of agriculture and nationalized industries, and Guinea's international economic isolation—the country's economic performance has not matched initial expectations. Almost the only significant economic growth has been in the mining industry, where bauxite mines have been developed by foreign private companies. In most other sectors, private enterprise has been discouraged in favour of state control, but this has been markedly unsuccessful. Food shortages are reported to be common, particularly in Conakry, and average incomes are among the lowest in Africa. In addition, the 1977 harvests were extremely bad and the country now has a crippling foreign debt.

As a result of these economic difficulties—particularly food shortages—there were demonstrations in most major towns between June and October 1977. The demonstrators were mostly women, as women to a large extent control the retail food trade in Guinea, as well as being the main buyers of food. These demonstrations were so serious that, according to some sources, some 50 protesters were killed when troops were brought in to restore order.

3. Constitutional and Legal Situation

Since independence was achieved in 1958, Guinea has been a one-party state ruled by the country's only political party, the Guinea Democratic Party (PDG—*Parti Démocratique de Guinée*). Most senior Government ministers are members of the Party's Central Committee, the National Revolutionary Council, which consists of 25 members elected by the Party Congress for five-year terms. However, most decisions appear to be made by the seven-member inner cabinet, known as the National Political Bureau, which is headed by Sékou Touré, who is both the country's President and Secretary General of the PDG.

Guinea also has a National Assembly, consisting of 150 deputies elected for seven-year terms. The National Assembly has no active role in determining national policy, but appears to exist merely to endorse decisions made by the President and the Political Bureau.

Guinea's Constitution, which was introduced in 1958 and revised in 1963, guarantees to all citizens such fundamental rights as freedom of speech, conscience and assembly, and provides protection from arbitrary arrest and detention without trial (Articles 40-45). In practice, however, the Guinean authorities have shown little regard for the constitutional rights of the individual.

(i) Legislation under which prisoners are held

It is not clear whether, officially, legislation exists to provide for prolonged detention without trial, but, in practice, it is evident that detainees have no legal

safeguards. Often, it seems, they are not even informed of the specific reasons for their detention, nor for how long they may expect to be held. Detainees cannot contest the grounds for their detention and there is no independent body to review detention orders. In other words, despite the constitutional guarantees against arbitrary arrest and detention supposedly available to individuals, the Government exercises unlimited power to detain without trial anyone suspected of dissidence. Such detainees may be held for extremely long periods—in some cases for eight years or more.

Although most political prisoners are detained without charge or trial, a large number have received some form of trial before being sentenced to terms of imprisonment. During the 1960s and early 1970s, following the discovery of a series of alleged conspiracies against the Government, a series of major treason trials was held in Conakry, involving members of the armed forces, former Government ministers, civil servants and others. In most cases, the defendants were charged with a variety of offences under the Penal Code, including economic sabotage and speculation, illegal possession of arms, insulting the Head of State, and treason.

(ii) Political Trials

Until 1973 Guinea's judiciary was largely modelled on the French system and consisted of a hierarchy of courts throughout the country with jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases, and central courts handling major criminal cases and appeals in Conakry. However, the legal profession was abolished soon after independence. In 1973 the court system was modified and brought more into line with existing PDG organizational structures at national, regional and local level. In practice, both before and after the judicial system was revised, officers of the courts have tended to be not only PDG party members, but also senior party officials at local and regional level. Such a system means that, almost inevitably, the judiciary is subservient to the Government.

Cases concerning alleged political offences were taken out of the hands of the ordinary courts in 1961 when a High Court of Justice was established. This Court consists of the President of the National Assembly, three cabinet ministers and three other members of the National Assembly, selected by President Sékou Touré. However, in practice, it has been repeatedly by-passed in political cases. In 1969, for example, the President decided that the National Revolutionary Council (the Central Committee of the PDG) should be transformed into a unique Revolutionary Tribunal, which was established to try more than 40 soldiers and former Government officials charged with plotting to overthrow the President. The Revolutionary Tribunal was empowered to impose death sentences, and the March 1969 trial resulted in 13 executions.

At the end of 1970, following the abortive raid on Conakry by Portuguese forces, yet another new type of court was created to deal with political cases. Just as President Sékou Touré had changed the central committee of the PDG into a form of court in 1969, so he now announced that the entire National Assembly would be transformed into a Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal. This was given the task of trying a number of Portuguese soldiers and others captured during the course of the Conakry raid, and many of the several hundred Guineans and foreign nationals resident in Guinea who were arrested in the months immediately after the attack.

In January 1971 more than 160 cases were brought before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, but in no way could the proceedings be considered fair and in accordance with internationally accepted legal standards. The defendants were not given an adequate opportunity to present their cases, nor were they allowed defence lawyers. In fact, most of them were not even allowed to appear before the Tribunal at all nor to play an active part in the proceedings. Tape-recorded "confessions" were played to the members of the Tribunal, and accepted as evidence, even though they were widely believed to have been obtained under torture.

According to consistent reports received from former prisoners and political refugees, the accused were made to appear before a special "Commission", consisting of senior party members, almost all of them close relatives of President Sékou Touré. The Commission was chaired by Ismael Touré, the President's brother. Former prisoners have described the Commission as no better than an inquisition. It carried out its work inside Conakry's main prison, Camp Boiro, supervising the task of collecting incriminating evidence and "confessions" from the prisoners, frequently by coercion and torture.

No foreign journalists or observers were permitted to attend the proceedings of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, even though this was, to some extent, a "show trial". Within Guinea, the trial was used to demonstrate to the people the lengths to which so-called "imperialists" were prepared to go in order to sabotage the country's political and economic progress since independence. This was also the message which Guinea put out abroad. The verdicts were a foregone conclusion—the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal existed merely to give some credibility and legitimacy to decisions already taken by the Government. Fifty-eight prisoners were sentenced to death and 33 other death penalties were imposed *in absentia* on Guineans abroad. The remaining more than 60 prisoners, whose cases were heard by the Tribunal were each sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. They included Mgr Tchidimbo, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Conakry, several former Government ministers and officials, and many foreigners who had been working in Guinea.

After widespread international protest at the way in which the proceedings had been conducted and the severity of the sentences, the Government again revised its policy in dealing with alleged political offences. In mid 1971 the Government broadcast frequent radio reports, stating that the country was in imminent danger of invasion. As a consequence of this alleged threat, hundreds of suspected opponents of the regime were arrested. Among those detained were many prominent members of the Government, the PDG and the army, including many long-standing supporters and intimate friends of Sékou Touré himself.

In July, the President announced that many of those arrested would be put on trial for subversion and treason, that their confessions would be broadcast over Conakry Radio, and that the people as a whole would then be called upon to pronounce judgment and sentence. In fact, apart from the broadcasting of the alleged confessions, very little information was forthcoming about the nature of the evidence against those accused or the conduct of the trial proceedings. It is not even clear whether the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal was once again used to provide some form of legitimacy for what occurred. Although a few prisoners

are reported to have been discharged and released, many other people were arrested after being denounced in "confessions". At the end of September, President Sékou Touré stated publicly that he had renounced his right, as Head of State, to grant clemency or commute death sentences, and he called upon the people, by means of the local and regional party structures, to deliver their verdict. However, in order to avoid a recurrence of the previous international protest, most of the sentences passed on those whose cases were heard between July and September 1971 were never publicized. At least eight senior army officers are known to have been sentenced to death, but it is not certain how many people received prison sentences. In October 1971, President Sékou Touré announced that a total of 128 people had been accused, but these figures must be treated with caution, as the real number may indeed be higher.

Although so few details are available about the July-September trial, more people are known to have been arrested in mid 1971 than the 128 prisoners mentioned by Sékou Touré. Many hundreds of others are believed to have been detained at the time. It is not known how many of these were interrogated by the Commission in Camp Boiro. It seems likely that the Commission was concerned only with the most prominent prisoners—those whose public confessions were required—and that most detainees received no form of hearing at all. The Commission suspended its activities at the end of 1971 and was not revived until the major conspiracy (already mentioned on page 2) was allegedly uncovered in mid 1976, involving Diallo Telli, the Minister of Justice, and several others, accused of attempting to arrange the assassination of President Sékou Touré. In August 1976 Conakry Radio broadcast several so-called confessions made by the alleged conspirators, probably obtained under duress at the direction of the Commission headed by Ismael Touré. There is no information to suggest that Diallo Telli and those accused with him were given any form of trial other than an examination by the Commission. Their "confessions" were, however, broadcast on national radio, together with denunciations by the President.

(iii) *International Legal Instruments*

Since it joined the United Nations on achieving independence in 1958, Guinea has signed and ratified the two major international instruments intended to ensure implementation of the rights enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. These are the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* which are treaties binding upon the parties to them under international law. They were signed in 1967 and ratified by Guinea in February 1978. By ratifying the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Guinea has committed itself to guaranteeing the rights recognized by the Covenant, including:

- the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty;
- the right to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of one's defence;
- the right to communicate with counsel of one's own choosing;
- the right to be tried without undue delay;

- the right to examine, or have examined, the witnesses against one and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on one's behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against one.

The right of the individual to be protected from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is, of course, stipulated by the Covenant and by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Guinea signed (in 1975) but has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, which would permit individuals to have complaints regarding violations of their human rights examined by the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

4. Number and Description of Political Prisoners

It is impossible to estimate accurately the number of political prisoners in Guinea as so little information about arrests, detentions and trials is made available by the authorities. Moreover, prisoners are not allowed to communicate with the outside world, nor can their families visit them, so there is no regular flow of information from within the prison camps, either about the number of prisoners or the conditions in which they are held. However, unofficial estimates suggest that there are probably between 2000 and 4000 political prisoners. The real figure may be higher.

Guinea's political prisoners do not share a common background. Drawn from different ethnic and occupational groups, they include individuals from all over the country. At different times, repression has been directed against most sections of the population. A significant proportion of the country's educated élite—civil servants, army officers, teachers and students, Muslim and Christian religious leaders—have been imprisoned, killed or forced into exile since Sékou Touré came to power. However, waves of arrests have not been limited to the élite. Farmers and petty traders, too, have been arbitrarily imprisoned or driven into exile. Most recently, in 1976, action was taken against the Foulah ethnic group, which comprises one-third of the population; people of Foulah origin at all levels of society were subjected by Government officials to harassment and intimidation, arrest and imprisonment.

Most political prisoners now held have been in prison continuously since at least 1971. By far the majority have never had any form of trial. Many who were detained between 1958 and 1970, after the alleged discovery of a series of conspiracies against Sékou Touré, are believed to have died in prison. Further waves of arrests occurred more recently, following the discovery of yet another conspiracy in May 1976. Many people are reported to have been detained in the intervening period between 1972 and 1976, and in 1977, for "economic crimes", for participating in demonstrations against the Government and for attempting to leave Guinea without official permission.

5. Location of Prison Camps

The main political prison in Guinea is Camp Boiro, situated in Conakry. It is the largest and most notorious prison camp in the country, and contains some 1500 prisoners in cramped and overcrowded conditions. Most prominent prisoners are

held there. Another major prison camp, the Kémé Boureffma camp, is in Kindia, 100 kilometres inland from Conakry. More than 1000 prisoners are held there.

Smaller numbers of political prisoners are held in town prisons and military camps throughout Guinea. Apart from Camp Boiro, there are at least four other prisons in or close to Conakry: the Gendarmerie prison, the Alpha Yaya and Samory Camps, and another camp 36 kilometres from Conakry, on the road to Coyah. In eastern Guinea, Kankan military camp is reported to contain 120 prisoners, and a similar number is probably held at the El-Hadj Omar Camp at Labé in the Foutah Djalon Highlands. Other prison camps include those at Dabola, Kissidougou, Koundara and N'zérékoré.

6. Prison Conditions

Conditions are reported to be extremely harsh in all Guinea's prison camps, and particularly in Camp Boiro and Kindia, where most political prisoners are held. The poor treatment which inmates receive is, to some extent, directly due to the general level of poverty in Guinea, and to the belief that prisoners, political and criminal, should not receive better food and medical treatment than the rest of the population. However, it is evident, both from Sékou Touré's public statements and from consistent accounts received from former prisoners, that the Government has adopted a particularly vindictive attitude towards political prisoners. They are treated as virtual outcasts from society, and their relatives are officially encouraged to sever all ties with them. No attempt is made to rehabilitate political prisoners so that they can eventually be reintegrated into society. Instead, they are held in prolonged detention and subjected to particularly severe conditions as a means of punishment.

Prison camps are gravely overcrowded. In Camp Boiro, for example, prisoners are so tightly packed into cells that they have little room to move. Cells are kept locked almost continuously and prisoners are permitted no formal exercise. The only means of ventilation is a small hole set high in the cell wall and conditions inside the cells are aggravated by corrugated iron roofs which cause unbearable heat.

Many prisoners, because of their overcrowded, cramped conditions and sparse, vitamin-deficient diet, suffer from recurrent illnesses. Diseases such as beri-beri, scurvy, malaria and chronic dysentery are common, and so, also, are rheumatism, skin infections and hypertension. Yet medical facilities are almost non-existent and no attempt is apparently made to isolate prisoners with infectious illnesses. One eye-witness has reported that in 1974 at Camp Boiro, 25 prisoners were packed into a cell in which a prisoner had just died from tuberculosis. Seven prisoners were subsequently moved to other cells, but 16 of the remaining 18 prisoners died within six months.

Prisoners receive a diet consisting largely of bread or rice with a little sauce; they rarely get any fruit, fresh vegetables, fish or meat. European prisoners have claimed that they were better treated than African prisoners, and sometimes given some fish or meat and a few vegetables. They reported, too, that some African prisoners were purposely starved until they were either too weak to walk or died. All prisoners are kept short of water despite the heat in Guinea.

Provisions for hygiene and sanitation are also grossly inadequate. Prisoners are allowed to wash only infrequently, and methods of sewage disposal are primitive.

Prisoners are completely cut off from the outside world: they receive neither visits nor any mail.

Prison conditions for political prisoners clearly do not conform in any way with the basic requirements laid down in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The Government's vindictive attitude towards political prisoners means that they are subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment as a matter of deliberate policy.

7. Torture and Deaths in Detention

The use of torture has become an essential part of the machinery of repression in the years since independence. Consistent reports received from a number of former prisoners indicate that torture is used both as a means of general intimidation, and in order to extract "confessions" from real or suspected opponents of the Government and those who have been made scapegoats for the country's political isolation and economic failures. All this has occurred with tacit Government approval, and also, according to eye-witnesses, with the active participation of senior Government officials, including Ismael Touré, the President's brother and the present Minister of Economy and Finance. Seydou Keita, until recently Guinea's Ambassador to France and therefore one of the country's most important diplomatic representatives, has also been named as a torturer by several witnesses.

Most allegations of torture mention the existence of special torture centres, commonly known as *Cabines Techniques*, within each of the detention camps. It is in these centres that prisoners are coerced into making "confessions" which may not only be self-incriminating but may also lead to other individuals being accused of political offences. In some cases, those who have been denounced in such "confessions" extracted from torture victims have themselves then been detained and subjected to torture until they too provided "confessions" and agreed to acknowledge publicly their apparent guilt.

Various methods of torture are said to be used. They include the application of electric shocks to the head, limbs or genitals; severe beating on the body with fists and sticks; burning with cigarettes. Torture victims have also been hung by the ankles for long periods, immersed head first in barrels of water until unconscious and subjected to intense physical pain by being bound securely with metal wire or by having their fingernails ripped out. Other methods used to cause mental disorientation and destroy the prisoner's will to resist are deprivation of food and water, prolonged solitary confinement and humiliation through stripping, insult and abuse.

No precise figures can be given for the number of prisoners who have died as a direct consequence of torture, although unofficial estimates put it as high as hundred. Persistent reports state that individual prisoners have been kicked or beaten to death. Others are said to have been tied up in front of the prison cells and starved to death. Hundreds of prisoners are reported to have died from disease or starvation after being deprived of medicines or food by the prison

authorities. For example, from March to September 1974, 253 deaths occurred in one particular section of Camp Boiro.

It is impossible to gauge the accuracy of these reports as the Guinean authorities have not sanctioned visits to prison camps by representatives of international humanitarian organizations or other independent bodies. When accused of torture, the Guinean Government has reacted aggressively, angrily repudiating accusations and attacking the credibility of those who have tried to express their genuine concern for people liable to torture. Typical of this attitude was the response made by Guinea's Foreign Minister, Fily Cissoko, when pressed by a journalist in June 1977 to say what had happened to Diallo Telli, who had been arrested a year earlier: the Minister's only comment was that he did not care whether it was thought that Diallo Telli was alive or dead.

8. Capital Punishment

Guinea still uses the death penalty, and large numbers of political prisoners as well as criminals have been executed in recent years, many of them after being condemned by non-statutory courts and without being allowed to appeal. In January 1971, for example, 58 people were executed within several days of being sentenced to death. The death penalty may be imposed for criminal offences such as murder, drug-taking and theft, as well as for a wide range of so-called political offences. In 1968 the death penalty was introduced for economic crimes, such as smuggling and black marketeering. Condemned prisoners have a right of appeal when sentenced by regional criminal courts, but in recent years political prisoners have been permitted no right of appeal and the President has renounced his right to commute their sentences. Executions are generally carried out by hanging.

9. Refugees

Some indication of the scale of human rights violations under Sékou Touré's regime is given by the fact that more than one million Guineans—about a sixth of the total population—at present live outside Guinea, mainly in neighbouring countries. While many of these have left Guinea for purely economic reasons, including trade, the majority are political refugees who have fled to escape persecution or imprisonment in Guinea. Periodically, the Guinean Government has tried to obtain the repatriation of many individual refugees, and some, indeed, have been returned. Generally, however, neighbouring countries have refused to send refugees back to Guinea.

10. Amnesty International Action

Although Amnesty International took up the cases of trade unionists and other political prisoners in the 1960s, work for individual prisoners was scaled down in the early 1970s because of the fear that the Guinean authorities would retaliate against prisoners whose cases were publicized. Amnesty International has therefore campaigned generally for the release of all political prisoners in Guinea, rather than for individual prisoners. The two main political prisons, Camp Boiro and Kindia, have been "adopted" by Amnesty International groups, who

have tried to publicize the harsh conditions under which political prisoners are held.

During 1977, Amnesty International made several approaches to the Guinean Government to gain approval for a high-level Amnesty International mission to visit Conakry in order to discuss human rights issues. However, these approaches met with no response from the Government, and the impression was given that no decisions about the visit could be taken without the personal approval of President Sékou Touré.

These papers are intended to summarize available information on political imprisonment, torture and capital punishment in a single country or territory governed by a specific political authority. They are designed to be concise and factual and are written primarily for reference purposes.

Since Amnesty International is limited by its statute to act only in specific human rights situations, reference is made to the political, economic and social situation in each country *only where this has direct relevance to particular human rights problems*. The information contained in each paper is accurate at the time of publication.

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Briefing Paper No. 14

© Amnesty International Publications 1978

ISBN: 0 900058 75 7

First published June 1978

Original language: English

AI Index: PUB 88/00/78

Published by Amnesty International Publications

Printed in Great Britain by the Russell Press Ltd., Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET