

AI Index: PRE 01/487/2011
28 September 2011

Guinea urged to investigate opposition protest deaths

The Guinean authorities must immediately carry out an investigation into the deaths of three protesters killed during clashes between police and demonstrators at a banned opposition rally in the capital Conakry on Tuesday, Amnesty International said today.

On the eve of the second anniversary of a massacre where more than 150 people were killed by security forces in Conakry, protestors were stopped on their way to a stadium by police using live rounds, tear gas and batons. Some demonstrators responded by throwing stones at police.

The demonstration was called for by Guinea's two main opposition parties, who have criticized the way a December parliamentary election is being organized.

"Beating and killing protesters has been the standard response of Guinean security forces whenever popular demonstrations have called for political or economic reforms," said Paule Rigaud, Amnesty International Deputy Director for Africa.

"It's deeply alarming that President Alpha Condé is resorting to exactly the same brutal methods as his predecessors. Although the Chief of Staff had asked the army to remain in their barracks yesterday, it seems that no orders of restraint were given to the police," she said.

President Condé came to power in November 2010, after a disputed election that ended military rule under Captain Moussa Dadis Camara.

One protestor told Amnesty International he had witnessed police killing another demonstrator: "The security forces chased us and began beating some of us with their truncheons. We ran away and one of us fell down. A member of the security forces leant over him and stabbed him to death."

Security forces also reportedly entered private compounds and looted houses, according to another eyewitness Amnesty International spoke to.

On 28 September 2009, Guinean security forces shot dead more than 150 unarmed protesters during an opposition rally in the same stadium. Over 40 women were raped in public, at least 1,500 people were wounded and many others went missing.

Despite the fact that a judicial enquiry was opened more than one year ago, the main perpetrators of the massacre have not been suspended from duty and none of them have been brought to justice.

"If this recurrent excessive use of force by police is to be stopped, it is essential to put an end to the climate of impunity that appears to be prevailing in Guinea," said Paule Rigaud.