



# An Examination on the Prospects for the Restoration of the Defense and Security Forces in Guinea

CONAKRY, JANUARY 2010

A partnership project of the Alliance for Peacebuilding and swisspeace

1320 19th Street NW, Suite 410 • Washington, DC 20036, USA  
Tel : +1.202.822.2047 • Fax: +1.202.822.2049 •

Sonnenbergstrasse 17 • P.O. Box, CH-3000 Bern 7, Switzerland  
Tel. +41 (0)31 3301087 • Fax: +41 (0) 31 3301213 •

[www.beforeproject.org](http://www.beforeproject.org)

## Table of Contents

Preamble .....	3
Historical Background .....	4
Recommendations .....	5
Conclusion .....	7

## Preamble

This examination deals with the restoration of the Defense and Security Forces (DSF) of Guinea; it is part of the BEFORE National Action Plan for Peace in Guinea formulated during the BEFORE workshop "Reflection on a Peace Consolidation Strategy in Guinea" in May 2009.

This examination draws attention to the various factors which would help the DSF of Guinea operate in a more conventional manner in accordance with the prevailing laws and rules of a standard professional military. As a result the DSF avoid misconduct and breaches of public trust, particularly like those seen in Conakry recently.

The examination also covers the reintegration of demobilized soldiers back into society and the appropriate transfer of active service soldiers, as well as the military members of the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), after the governmental transition as outlined in the Ouagadougou Agreement signed on January 15, 2010, has been completed.

This examination does not deal with Security Sector Reform (SSR) which is a substantive work, not only requiring a substantial reorganization of the justice and prison systems but also takes into consideration gender, human security, and private security companies dynamics, to name just a few. A larger SSR agenda for Guinea is already being engaged in by the international community and international institutions, such as the United Nations and its partners, including continental, regional and sub-regional organizations.<sup>1</sup>

Guinea is currently eligible to receive assistance from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, which outlined an emergency plan for the country in April 2009. On October 17, 2009, the heads of state and government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) asked its commission to instigate, with the support of the African Union (AU), the United Nations, and other partners, a SSR program in Guinea. The CNDD and the Guinean government also asked the International Contact Group on Guinea (GIC/G) to develop a SSR program.

Instead, the factors discussed in this examination are those essential for the start of SSR, and the results and recommendations produced here may contribute to the further study on a SSR proposal by international institutions.

This examination was undertaken by a team of consultants led by General Lamine Cissé of the Republic of Senegal.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is recommended that a preliminary study of SSR must be undertaken by a large, multidisciplinary team on the ground lasting at least three months, and the reform itself should take place over many years, with the Peacebuilding Support Office in New York as its major funding source.

## Historic Background Information

Since the independence of Guinea in 1958, the Defense and Security Forces (DSF) have been at the center of the national political scene. No decision, standard or arbitrary, has been made without taking the DSF into account. They have become indispensable in the governance and management of the country. Over the decades the DSF have reinforced their stronghold within the system through their structural organization. Today, the DSF are at the top of the political power structure in Guinea.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the army and gendarmerie of Guinea, which were first formed by French colonial troops, proved themselves to be professional, brave and valuable on the world's battlefields. Guinea's army and gendarmerie were regularly mentioned on national monuments in remembrance of historic and costly battles. They have even been glorified by the founders of the first Vosgean resistance in France during World War II. The army and gendarmerie of Guinea also intervened several times to help liberate neighboring African countries, who were fighting for their independence, such as Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. They also participated in several operations under the United Nations and other sub-regional organizations.

With the death of long-time President and former independence fighter Ahmed Sékou Touré in 1984, there was a subsequent bloodless military coup, the army took power of Guinea and began to adopt a position that deviated from its original mission to serve the security needs of its country and allies. Conditions continued to deteriorate, due to the lack of discipline, until in February 1996 a few thousand malcontent troops mutinied in the capitol of Conakry, killing several dozen civilians. This attack resulted in the most violent public riot of Guinea's history.

The shift in the military's roles within the government was the consequence of a rupture in civil-military relations. Additionally, over time a failure occurred in the roles and responsibilities of soldiers with regards to authority and command structure, where higher ranking officers give orders and subordinates carrying out these orders. February 1996 thus became a key date in the history of the DSF of Guinea. It was because of this violent event that soldiers' wages were increased and agreed upon benefits were integrated in regular salaries.

### After 1996

Nonetheless after 1996, Guinean DSF faced several security challenges well, including:

- Interventions in external wars (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau).
- An invasion of rebels from Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2000. The DSF successfully pushed back these external invasions with appropriate professionalism.

However, during these interventions, there was a particular challenge regarding the deployment of various DSF groups. The correct order of deployment is: the police first; then the gendarmerie if necessary, and finally the army. In recent decades this deployment structure has not been followed well.

Moreover, neither rules of procedure nor rules of summons were used. Instead DSF were found at the same blockades without coordination. Both the absence and the non-observance of rules of procedures in interventions lead to confusion on the ground and mistakes with lethal and weighty consequences.

Additionally, there were other incidents from 2006 to 2009 that in all resulted in a strained relationship between the civil population and the DSF, who in view of the extent of damage done by the DSF, apologized to the people of Guinea during a national conversation.

## Recommendations

There are various external and internal phenomena that have caused the DSF of Guinea to become a significant part of the country's conflict sources and a key player in any consensus-oriented political arrangement or arbitrary decision-making.<sup>2</sup> The DSF are fully involved in politics; it is this situation that leads a significant deterioration in the relations with the civilian population and civilian loss of confidence in the DSF, the very forces responsible for their protection and safety.

In light of this situation, for a large country like Guinea with its glorious past and significant contribution to African history, proud people, and immense natural resources potential, a strategy needs to be adopted to assist the DSF in becoming successful again. The objective of this strategy is the restoration in their public image, of relationship with civilians and of internal professionalism. This is a brief outline of the recommendations for such an endeavor:

1. Downsize the DSF. The current level of DSF personnel is approximately 30,000 (non-official figure), too large for Guinea's current 11 million citizens and security needs.
2. Carry out a multi-ethnic recruitment proportional to Guinean demographics, so that the DSF are representative of the national population.
3. Respect, apply and enforce existing statutes governing DSF recruitment, including the General Statutes of Army Law L/97/034/AN of June 3, 1997, articles 3 to 8.
4. Integrate civic education in the new recruit training program, so that recruits understand and respect common national customs and values.
5. Respect relevant laws, particularly General Statutes of the Army, with regards to the management of DSF personal regarding the length of service for each rank in all military categories, the system of promotion per rank, and retirement. This measure will help reduce frustrations and tensions among ethnic groups and the different generations serving in the DSF.
6. Sign and implement the newly revised General Statutes of the Army.
7. Appropriately assign qualified senior officials of the DSF to honorary or appointed state functions, such as diplomatic posts, representatives at international institutions, etc.
8. Renovate military living quarters and structural infrastructure with the help of military engineers to enable the DSF to live in barracks in accordance with military rules.
9. Plan the reintegration of released DSF personnel to help them avoid unemployment and using their combat and weapons training inappropriately.
10. Create a social service entity for the army, gendarmerie, and police to foster improved relational dynamics within military families. Services could include home economics classes, education for women, and a joint management project to support promising micro-development projects.

---

<sup>2</sup> To understand these dynamics more clearly please refer to the full Examination of the Prospects for the Restoration of the Defense and Security Forces in Guinea in French.

11. Create mutual insurance plans for the army, gendarmerie, and police force to reduce medical expenditures and the likelihood of using wages to purchase illegal drugs.
12. Foster the concept of an army that serves the nation to improve civil-military relations. This makes it possible to improve the public image of the DSF in line with their internal improvements. It is strongly recommended a public relations department be created, using the media to communicate the positive aspects of the DSF to the civilian public, and military engineering and health services be used within the larger human protection services.
13. Continue the fight against drug-trafficking. Restructure the Ministry responsible for anti-drug trafficking and organized crime by building human resources and budgetary capacities, and redefining and strengthening its cooperation with the other state institutions addressing the same issue.
14. Continue and bolster the fight against arms proliferation and human trafficking.
15. Reassign and reintegrate some junior officers and non-commissioned officers, whose return to military barracks would likely cause internal conflicts and divisions, in to other government structures, such as territorial administration, state enterprises, private sector development, embassies and consulates.
16. Send young junior officers and non-commissioned officers, who received exceptional and non-standard promotions, outside of the country to allow them to pursue their training at schools, classes for the Captains, Joint Chief of Staff schools or corresponding technical schools. This will enable officers to return to Guinean barracks with adequate skills and expertise.
17. Make a firm political commitment to a national SSF plan.
18. Continue to conduct seminars on civil-military relations throughout the ranks of the DSF.
19. Restructure and revitalize the national body of firefighters while strengthening its manpower and material resources to enable it to serve throughout the entire country. It should be commanded by a General Officer or a higher-ranked officer and allow for the reintegration of retired or active service soldiers of all ranks.

## Conclusion

Guinea is a country very rich in natural resources, including diamond, gold, bauxite, iron, etc. Additionally, oil and uranium are the subjects of current exploratory excavation projects. Guinean forests and rivers also have abundant resources. The majority of the rivers in neighboring West African countries originate in Guinea. The question that arises is why, in light of these resources and a defense force formerly professional and efficient, is Guinea not experiencing lasting stability? A key reason is bad governance on the one hand, and the premature and enduring involvement of the DSF in politics on the other hand.

The DSF deserve to be restored to its former glory.

The examination has addressed the various challenges and threats the DSF face, such as drug-trafficking, ethnic divisions, human resources management, and inconsistent recruitment and training processes. In addition to these challenges, the country's geographical position is challenging: 4 of the 6 border countries surrounding Guinea are in post-conflict situations whose rebel forces roam along the borders as mercenaries available for hire. Lastly, like many African countries, disagreements about certain border zones remain among neighbors, although sub-regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) undertakes the process of mediation and consensus building through the joint management of certain borders.

Increased social measures, civil-military relations, the concept of a national army, and the fight against new types of crime constitute a holistic strategic solution that will foster loyalty and nationalism within the DSF of Guinea. Seminars and workshops on issues like civil-military relations should also be frequently organized. Moreover, the latest political and military upheavals in Guinea require a reintegration of some DSF personnel, in particular the members of the CNDD and other high-ranking officers. It is a strong recommendation that no soldier currently serving should be idle or abandoned at this point.

Certain points of this examination should be the object of detailed investigation at a later point. However, the first reform of the DSF must be a change of organizational attitude, culture and norms. Guinean soldiers should be able to delineate their mission as security personnel and limit their actions within a professional military framework. The ultimate goal should be to remain at the service of their country and the civil government elected by the people because the basis of their vocation is to be and remain loyal citizens.

If all these considerations and recommendations are taken into account, and if its implementation starts, this examination could effectively be used as prelude to a serious SSR effort in Guinea. Quickly taking into account the recommendations of this examination could also be a means to support the transition outlined in the Ouagadougou Agreement and to maintain the current democratic process.

It is hoped that efforts to actualize the recommendations in this document will be encouraged and implemented by the Guinean government, the international community, and the DSF themselves.