



Genocide Watch: Guinea March 2021

Since gaining independence from France in 1958, Guinea has experienced decades of political instability, authoritarian rule, and episodic state-led mass violence that continues to this day. In 2008, a military junta seized control of the country in a [bloodless coup](#). The junta cracked down on civil society and all forms of political dissent, culminating in the [September 2009 massacre](#) of more than 150 civilians and the mass rape of protesters by security forces.

Elections in 2010 promised to break the cycle of violence and repression and usher in a [new era of Guinean democracy](#). Despite this optimism, the winner, Alpha Condé, has remained in power since and during his decade-long rule has presided over an increasingly violent and authoritarian regime.

In October 2019 amid rumors that Condé would seek an unconstitutional third term in office, opposition figures and activists formed the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC). In December, Condé confirmed these suspicions, [announcing](#) his intention to pursue a constitutional referendum. Meanwhile, the government responded to FNDC-led street protests with violence. Between October 2019 and January 2020, Guinean security forces killed [at least 30 protesters](#). In the lead up to the referendum vote on March 22, 2020, pro-government forces [arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared](#) dozens of suspected opposition supporters.

The opposition boycotted the referendum, which quickly devolved into bloodshed. In Guinea, political tensions have the potential to escalate into communal violence as political affiliation and [ethnic identity are often closely interlinked](#). In Nzérékoré, referendum-induced violence between the pro-government Malinke and Soussou and the largely pro-opposition Peul [left at least 32 dead](#). Separately, security forces [killed eight protesters](#) in the capital, Conakry. The referendum passed, receiving 90% of a vote that saw no opposition participation.

In October 2020, Condé claimed victory in the election, securing his third presidential term at the age of 82. The presidential vote was shrouded in further violence and repression, leaving [at least 21 people dead](#). Following the election, the government reinvigorated its crackdown on dissent with a wave of politically motivated arrests. Four opposition figures have now [died in prison](#). Since October 2019, security forces have killed at least [92 opposition protesters](#), amid other serious and widespread allegations of [ongoing state-sponsored atrocities](#).

Due to increased state repression and rising political and ethnic tensions, Genocide Watch recognizes the situation in Guinea to be at **Stage 6: Polarization**.

To prevent the situation in Guinea from further escalating, Genocide Watch recommends:

- The government of Guinea uphold the legal right of its citizens to peaceful assembly, end the use of live fire against civilian protesters, and release arbitrarily detained political opposition figures.
- Regional and international organizations such as the AU, ECOWAS, and the UN pressure Guinea's government to work with outside observers to conduct credible investigations into violence against civilians, past and present, to end the country's ongoing cycle of impunity.
- Political, civil society, and local community leaders refrain from framing the ongoing political crisis in ethnic terms, which could incite further ethnic and inter-communal violence across the country.

GENOCIDE WATCH is the founder and coordinator of the Alliance Against Genocide
George Mason University, S-CAR, 3351 N Fairfax Dr, MS4D3, Arlington, VA, USA 22201.
Phone: 1-703-448-0222 Fax: 1-703-993-1302

E-mail: president@genocidewatch.org Website: www.genocidewatch.com Tax exempt EIN: 26-1672589