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Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun

I. OVERVIEW

The military junta that took control of the country just hours after President Conté's death on 23 December 2008 has tightened its grip on power. The self-proclaimed president, Moussa Dadis Camara, and his group of mid-ranking officers calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement, CNDD), have shown few signs of moving towards elections by the end of 2009 as promised. As Guinea's dire economic prospects erode popular support, the junta, unpracticed in governing, is also in danger of resorting to authoritarian measures. With the risk of a counter-coup from dissatisfied army elements still present, a democratic transition at best faces a long and difficult road. Concerted national and international pressure is urgently needed to produce a return to civilian rule, even before elections if the junta begins to stall on preparations for a vote.

Conté left a legacy of abusive security forces, a collapsed economy and lack of trust among a divided civil society and quarrelsome political parties. Despite their troubled relationship with the military, many Guineans have welcomed the junta as the least worst option. Political parties and civil society groups have argued that the constitution was so manipulated under Conté that it could not provide a way out of the crisis he left behind.

The junta's leaders are unacquainted with the exercise of state power. While some are undoubtedly sincere in their declared intention of cleaning up the corruption of the Conté years, serious allegations of human rights abuses have been levelled against others. Although the junta has said it is willing to hand over to a civilian president, it has spent more than two months consolidating its grip on power by replacing dozens of administrators with its own supporters. Most of the key posts in the government named on 14 January are held by the military. The junta's governance style is unlikely to be sustainable, but the exercise and sinecures of power may prove too attractive for the soldiers to give it up voluntarily.

The principal risks to the transition are fractures within the junta and subsequently among the wider security forces as they fight over the spoils of power and perhaps fragment on ethnic lines as well. A violent counter-coup is a distinct possibility and likely to become more so the longer the junta stays in power. Other risks include a spillover into the streets of public dissatisfaction with the junta's record and the continuing decline in living standards; divisions emerging between newly formed youth groups and political parties competing for junta patronage; intractable disagreements over the transition; or a combination of any of these.

High expectations have led to a proliferation of uncoordinated demands and proposals for reform, but if civil society groups and political parties are to play a constructive role in the transition, they need to overcome their historical differences and concentrate on the priorities of the next ten months. A clear transition timetable needs to be agreed upon. If a National Transitional Council (Conseil national de transition, CNT), as proposed by both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and civil society groups and now endorsed by the junta, is to be put in place, its terms of reference and precise powers must be agreed upon with no further delay.

Preparations for elections still have a long way to go, and potentially controversial issues are yet to be resolved. The longer elections are delayed, the greater is the junta's ability to create further obstacles from which a dangerous impasse could result. This should not be allowed. The 16–17 February meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea helpfully pressed the CNDD to stick to a short transition timetable, but it did not go far enough. There is no reason why civil society, political parties and the international community should accept the CNDD remaining in power beyond the end of 2009 if elections are delayed. The military needs to be edged out, to prevent it becoming rooted in the country's public administration. Although the nomination of a civilian transitional head of state might pose problems, other scenarios could be much worse. The debate over alternative governance arrangements should start now.

The CNDD is in a similar position to the reformist governments Guinea has known over the last ten years. Initial popular support will be put to the test by a deteriorating economy. The international community will

then, once again, be asked to bail out the government. It is vital to use donor leverage effectively this time, so as to minimise the risks that military rule presents to Guinea and the region. The following steps are urgent:

- The CNDD should rein in security force abuse, stop centralising state functions in its hands and instead allow the newly formed government to work unhindered. CNDD leaders should clarify their position on the transition, accepting unanimously the principle of leaving power by the end of 2009, regardless of the electoral timetable, and making clear plans for a return to barracks.
- Political parties and civil society must put the euphoria of late December aside, urgently build a working consensus on the rules for democratic transition that includes alternative transitional governance arrangements as necessary and demand a clear timetable for the CNDD's departure by the end of 2009, independent of the electoral timetable.
- The international community must significantly support democratic transition by pressing the junta on elections, assisting their preparation and providing early observation, as well as emphasising that the apparent legitimacy of the bloodless coup will fade rapidly if the transition drags on. It should press the junta to allow the government to work free of military influence and desist from appointing military personnel to posts in public administration. With Guineans, it should decide on an end-of-year deadline for return of civilian rule even if elections have not yet been held. International organisation (AU, ECOWAS) and bilateral (U.S.) measures put in place after the coup, including suspension of Guinea's membership and limitations on aid, should be maintained until there is firm progress on transition, and it should be made clear that violence within the junta or against civilians will be met with targeted sanctions.

II. THE JUNTA COMES TO POWER

A. A DEATH AND A COUP

The death of President Lansana Conté was announced on national radio and television in the early hours of 23 December 2008 by President of the National Assembly Aboubacar Somparé, who, according to the constitution, was the head of state's rightful successor. He was flanked by Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces General Diarra Camara and Prime Minister Tidiane Souaré. Conté's death brought to an end 24 years of misrule that left the people of Guinea impoverished and desperate for change.[1]

But the constitutional succession was not to hold, as very few Guineans believed it would.[2] In those same early hours, a small group of mid-ranking officers, calling itself the National Council for Democracy and Development (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement, CNDD), took over one of the national radio and television stations and announced the suspension of the constitution. At that point, it was unclear who comprised the CNDD and whether they would prevail against the senior generals, who were considered supporters of the constitutional succession.

Tensions ran high in Conakry, the capital, throughout that day and night, as groups of soldiers loyal to the constitutional successor continued to hold parts of the city. Somparé, General Camara and Prime Minister Souaré all appeared on international radio and television claiming they retained control of the situation.[3] But by early on the 24th it was clear that the CNDD had rallied the vast majority of the army's middle ranks. In the early afternoon, the CNDD paraded into the centre of Conakry, welcomed by cheering crowds. The next day the government, and Somparé himself, finally acknowledged the weakness of their position and submitted to its authority. On the 28th, the CNDD leader, Captain Dadis Camara, retired 22 senior generals.

The failure of the constitutional successor and his allies to control events following the death of their patron was indicative of the decay of the Guinean state, including its military hierarchy, and of the profound unpopularity of the regime. An already disastrous economic and security situation had deteriorated even further in 2008. Following mutinies in May, the army took to the streets to prey on the population.[4] Government had become chaotic and major agreements with mining companies subject to the erratic dynamics within the presidential clan.[5] This was exacerbated

[1] See for prior analysis Crisis Group Africa Report N°121, *Guinea: Change or Chaos*, 14 February 2007; and Africa Briefings N°49, *Guinea: Change on Hold*, 8 November 2007, and N°52, *Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms*, 24 June 2008.

[2] Crisis Group interviews, journalists, politicians and members of civil society, Conakry, January 2009.

[3] Crisis Group interviews, residents of Conakry, January 2009. See also "Guinea: soldiers attempt coup after president dies", Reuters, 23 December 2008.

[4] Crisis Group interviews, residents of Conakry and security specialist, Conakry, January 2009.

[5] Secretary General of the Presidency Sam Mamady Soumah was dismissed within 24 hours of signing a letter in Conté's name rescinding the Simandou iron ore concession, alleg-

as Conté's health, the subject of much discussion and anxiety in Conakry since 2003, deteriorated markedly. By mid-December the severity of his illness was common knowledge.[6]

The catastrophe of Conté's rule undoubtedly goes some way to explaining the euphoria that initially welcomed the CNDD junta. The release of tension built up over the previous 36 hours and relief at the lack of bloodshed were also undoubtedly factors.[7] Many Guineans had feared for some time that Conté's regime would end in widespread violence.

Most of all the junta was welcomed as a sign of change. Somparé was perceived as a direct continuation of Conté's rule, having been a key figure in his regime, and even in that of Sékou Touré before him.[8] The constitutional path was also rejected by Guinean political parties and civil society groups on the basis that as the mandate of the National Assembly had expired in December 2007, its president had no right to take over as head of state.

All these factors were far more important in Guinean reactions to the coup than any appreciation of the junta, since the leader and many members of it were unknown to the population.[9] It is likely that opposition political parties offered support to the junta partly to create alliances, which they had been unable to do effectively under Conté. It was a measure of the deterioration of the country that Conakry was willing to greet as saviours members of an army that had less than two years before been involved in firing on civilian demonstrators.[10]

The international community was quick to condemn the coup, grounding its response on the unacceptability of a non-democratic change of power. The African Union (AU) suspended Guinea on 29 December 2008, and on 6 January the U.S. suspended all save humanitarian and democracy-building assistance.[11] Most of Guinea's neighbours, however, conscious of the risk of instability spreading across shared borders, were non-committal in their responses, while Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, along with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, openly endorsed the coup. Despite these divisions, ECOWAS on 10 January suspended Guinea until the junta returns the country to constitutional order.[12]

The first meeting of the international contact group, formed with a wide membership at the end of January in reaction to the events of December, was held in Guinea on 16–17 February.[13] It held discussions with the junta and with civil society and political parties. On the 16th, Dadis Camara organised a large meeting at the people's palace in Conakry with the Contact Group and civil society, during which he warned the international community that it would be badly judged by history if it did not support the junta.[14] Perhaps predictably given the large size of the contact group, its messages were mixed. While pressing the junta to stick to its plan to hold elections in 2009, it failed to make clear the consequences if this did not happen and did not underline the dangers of protracted military rule.

B. WHO ARE THE CNDD?

A significant number of CNDD members met in the army in 1990, when some, including Dadis Camara, were at the beginning of military careers, and others

edly worth $6 billion, from mining giant Rio Tinto. In the following two days he was promoted and dismissed again. See "Guinea confusion grows as Conté sacks ally again", Reuters, 5 August 2008 and "Iron ore, jaw-jaw", *Africa Confidential*, 22 August 2008.

[6] It was particularly remarked on that Conté did not drive through the capital to show himself to the population in late November, as usual following an illness. His recovery was unusually announced on national television by the communications minister on 16 December. "Le porte parole du gouvernement guinéen dément les rumeurs sur la santé du président Conté", Agence de Presse Africaine (APA), 17 December 2008.

[7] Crisis Group interviews, political parties and civil society organisations, Conakry, January 2009.

[8] Somparé was ambassador to France for seven years, until President Sékou Touré's death in 1984.

[9] Seasoned observers had not heard of Dadis Camara before May 2008. Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009.

[10] See Crisis Group Report, *Guinea: Change or Chaos*, op. cit., and "Dying for change: brutality and repression by Guinean security forces in response to a nationwide strike", Human Rights Watch, 24 April 2007.

[11] See "Communiqué of the 165th meeting of the peace and security council", African Union, 29 December 2008; and "U.S. calls for elections in Guinea, suspends aid", Reuters, 7 January 2009.

[12] "ECOWAS suspends Guinea until democracy restored", Reuters, 10 January 2009.

[13] The members of the contact group are the ECOWAS Commission and Chair, the AU Commission and Chair of its Peace and Security Council (currently Angola), the Sahelo-Saharan organisation CEN-SAD, the EU, the Mano River Union, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the Organisation of Francophonie, the UN Secretariat and the permanent members and African members of the Security Council. See "Statement of the consultative meeting on the situation in Guinea", African Union, Addis Ababa, 30 January 2009.

[14] BBC radio broadcast of the event, 22 February 2009.

were doing one-year military service.[15] The group coalesced during the disturbances and mutinies that have characterised the army since 2005. Mutinous soldiers have repeatedly demanded better pay and conditions, maintenance or increase of the subsidy that the army enjoys on rice imports and the retirement of senior officers seen as blocking the promotion of younger colleagues.[16] Conté repeatedly gave in on pay and the rice subsidy but refused to retire the generals, whom he considered close allies. These pay increases, along with waves of recruitment in 2007-2008, ate into the state's fragile finances. But far from satisfying the troops, they generated an expectation that violent protests would bear fruit.

The mutinies of May 2008, the last under Conté's rule,[17] were led by Lieutenant Claude Pivi and his close ally, Dadis Camara.[18] They allowed the junior officers in the Alpha Yaya camp, and Pivi in particular, to gain control of the bulk of the army's weaponry, which proved crucial in the events of 23 and 24 December.

The mutinies were eventually ended through direct negotiations between Dadis Camara and Conté. However, during the second half of 2008, discipline and respect for rank in the army deteriorated further. Even before the extent of the president's final illness became apparent, mid-ranking officers had started serious planning for a takeover in the event of his demise. The existence of this group, or more precisely of several overlapping groups, was known to many in Conakry's international community and media.[19] The exact composition and hierarchy of the CNDD was, however, uncertain until at least 24 hours after Conté's death. Concordant accounts indicated that Dadis Camara seized the opportunity to lead the junta during the course of 23 December through sheer force of personality, helped by his close relationship with the feared Pivi.[20]

Dadis Camara was quickly able to bring on board other parts of the military. In particular, he won over the presidential guard (Bataillon autonome de securité présidentielle, BASP), by offering a high position in the junta to the senior officer, Colonel Fodéba Touré. However, the absence of Colonel Sékouba Konaté, later named number three in the junta, from the initial CNDD roster broadcast on the radio on 23 December is indicative of the tense negotiations that preceded publication of the definitive list late that day.[21]

The CNDD rests on an uneasy balance of power between its four most powerful members. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, now self-proclaimed president of the republic, is from the Guerza, one of the indigenous ethnic groups in the south east that are frequently referred to as the Forestier ethnic family. After joining the army in 1990, he was trained in Germany, entered the parachute regiment (Bataillon autonome des troupes aéroportées, BATA) and had been in charge of the army's fuel supply since late 2008, a powerful and potentially lucrative position. As noted, he is widely thought to have been instrumental in the May 2008 mutinies, when his close relationship with Pivi was forged.[22] His aggressive populism and focus on cleaning up corruption are strongly reminiscent of other mid-rank military strongmen who have come to power in West Africa since the early 1990s.[23]

Lieutenant Claude Pivi, also a Forestier from the south east, but from the Toma ethnic group, is the CNDD's enforcer. He is usually accompanied by up to 100 fiercely loyal troops. According to several credible reports, he is responsible for the torture of Cameroonians he suspected of having damaged his car in Conakry on 20

[15] Crisis Group interviews, specialist in Guinean politics and a source close to the CNDD, Conakry, January 2009. One-year military service was an obligation for university graduates phased out in the early 1990s.

[16] A government subsidy allows the military to buy rice at under half the civilian price. Much is then re-sold. This subsidy was reduced considerably under the national consensus government (May 2007-May 2008) but restored soon after. On military unrest, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°94, *Stopping Guinea's Slide*, 14 June 2005; Africa Briefing N°37, *Guinea in Transition*, 11 April 2006; Africa Report, *Guinea: Change or Chaos*, op. cit.; Africa Briefing, *Guinea: Change on Hold*, op. cit.; and Africa Briefing, *Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms*, op. cit.

[17] See Crisis Group Briefing, *Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms*, op. cit., pp. 11-12; also Gilles Yabi, "Guinée: le pire cadeau empoisonné de Conté à son pays: une armée à la fois dangereuse et incontournable", AllAfrica.com, 7 January 2009.

[18] Crisis Group interview, security specialist, Conakry, January 2009.

[19] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January and February 2009.

[20] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and security specialist, Conakry, January 2009.

[21] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009, including a witness to events who transcribed the CNDD list as announced on 23 December.

[22] Crisis Group interviews, journalist and security specialist, Conakry, January, 2009.

[23] For example, in an interview, Dadis Camara said, "whoever tries to block this transition will be dealt with as an enemy, in the military sense of the term". "Moussa Dadis Camara 'Pourquoi j'ai pris le pouvoir'", *Jeune Afrique*, 10 January 2009. See also "Le CNDD dévoile ses couleurs: 'c'est du Conté sans Conté'", *Guinée Presse*, 17 January 2009. On previous young officer strongmen in the region, see Stephen Riley, "Sierra Leone: the militariat strikes again", *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 24, no. 72, 1997, pp. 287-292.

November 2008.[24] He inspires great fear among ordinary inhabitants of Conakry, many of whom believe he has powers that make him bulletproof. While the junta characterises his ministerial-rank responsibility for presidential security as a way of keeping him from extensive contact with the population,[25] his presence at the heart of power and close relations with Dadis Camara should be of serious concern to civil society and the international community.

General "Toto" Camara, like former President Conté a Soussou from the south west, is the most senior soldier in the junta, but it is unlikely that he was party to the putchists' plans until late in the day. He is known to have fallen out with Conté in April 2004 over an alleged coup plot involving former Prime Minister Sidya Touré.[26] Appointed defence attaché at the Washington embassy in late 2007, he was brought back to Conakry in November 2008 and made head of the army. On 23 December, he provided the link between the emerging junta and the presidential family, almost certainly helping to negotiate its safety, and between the junta and the officers based in the Almamy Samoury Touré camp in central Conakry. He thereby earned himself a place as number two in the junta.

The junta's number three, Colonel Sékouba Konaté, worked, like Dadis Camara, in the logistics wing of the army and is also from the BATA. A Malinké whose family origins are in the north east, he was based in Macenta in the south east. In late 2008, senior officers brought him back to Conakry to balance Pivi's growing power. Both Konaté and Pivi have combat experience from the Liberian border war of 2000-2001.[27]

The junta's relationship with Conté's family and allies (popularly known collectively as the "clan") was initially ambivalent. On the one hand, Dadis Camara spoke out against the previous regime's corruption and initiated measures to recover money from those previously close to Conté.[28] On the other hand, he frequently praised the deceased president in his early speeches. Several informed observers believe that the family struck a deal with the emerging junta in the final weeks of the president's life, possibly with Conté's blessing, in the realisation that the generals could not be relied on to ensure their physical or financial security.[29] However, on 24 February the junta arrested the former president's son, Ousmane. His public confession to involvement in the drug trade and apology to the nation was broadcast live on national television. It would seem that Dadis Camara's desire to keep the Conté family on his side has been decisively outweighed by the need to maintain the momentum of his populist campaign against drugs and corruption.[30]

Several other powerful members of the army have been brought in to the CNDD. Lieutenant Colonel Korka Diallo was Dadis Camara's direct superior in the supply service for many years. He is number fourteen in the CNDD and was made minister for trade in February.

The large size of the CNDD (33 members) is indicative of a desire to keep various army factions on board with the promise of patronage, more than any calculation of talents and skills. There are, nonetheless, several influential and savvy people in the junta, both military and civilian. Alpha Yaya Diallo, one of four civilian members and an experienced public official, was named deputy director of customs on 16 January. Lieutenant-Colonels Mathurin Bangoura and Aboubacar Sidiki Camara (known as "Idi Amin" due to his imposing physical presence) and Colonel Siba Nolamou were some of the thinkers responsible for producing the junta's early speeches and press releases.

III. THE JUNTA CONSOLIDATES, GUINEA REACTS

A. THE CNDD IN POWER

1. Populism

The CNDD took over with unexpected ease and has not faced any significant challenge from within the armed forces. The Alpha Yaya camp has become the de facto presidential office, where the junta's leadership receives political parties, civil society groups and the international community. The leadership combines an apparently sincere desire to clean up the corrupt government with

[24] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009. See also articles in *La Lance* newspaper, 21 November 2008 and the entry for Guinea in the 2008 U.S. State Department report on country human rights practices, released on 25 February 2009.
[25] Pivi's role in charge of presidential security was described by a CNDD supporter as "like being under house arrest". Crisis Group interview, Conakry, January 2009.
[26] See, for example, "Guinée: 'garde à vue judiciaire' de Sidya Touré", Guinéenews.org, 24 April 2004.
[27] Crisis Group interview, specialist on Guinean military, Conakry, February 2009.
[28] See "Le président du CNDD le capitaine Moussa Dadis Camara s'attaque aux pilleurs de l'économie et aux narcotrafiquants", Guinéenews.org, 13 January 2009. See section III.A below, "The CNDD in power".
[29] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009.
[30] See section III.A.1 below. These broadcast confessions will not have failed to remind older Guineans of the public confessions of anti-revolutionaries in the Sékou Touré era.

erratic and arbitrary decision-making. It also clearly wants to tighten its grip on key points in the administration.

From early on, the CNDD declared its intentions to carry out audits of public administration, winning thereby considerable popular support and some credibility in the eyes of diplomats and international investors.[31] Several audit bodies have been set up; the main one is the Committee for the Audit and Oversight of Strategic Economic Sectors (Comité d'audit et de surveillance des secteurs stratégiques de l'économie), headed by the number three in the junta, Colonel Sékouba Konaté.

On 21 January 2009, Dadis Camara announced a list of thirteen people suspected either of theft of public funds or of owing money to the state. They were ordered to present themselves at the Alpha Yaya camp, where they were instructed not to leave the country while investigations continue. The Conakry press has subsequently published the amounts for which each is allegedly liable.

There have been other signs of a genuine willingness to tackle corruption and criminality. Several suspected drug dealers have been arrested, their property confiscated or destroyed.[32] In an apparent acknowledgement of the importance of due process, some of these suspects have been transferred from the Alpha Yaya camp to the custody of the justice ministry. Some attempts have been made to pay public sector salaries correctly and deal with the problem of "ghost workers" on the public rolls.

In addition to the audits, the CNDD has moved to recover unpaid taxes from businesses. Mobile phone companies, with quick cash flow, have been particularly targeted. In some cases, the taxes are genuinely owed, but the muscular style of the demands, including lengthy interrogations at the Alpha Yaya camp, has given rise to concern that the process is more about getting hard cash for the new regime than re-introducing the rule of law.[33] Many accusations of embezzlement are based on hearsay rather than proper investigation. However, it is not yet clear whether the CNDD and its allies intend to move into any of the economic sectors.

The CNDD came to power with no experience of government and shares with the Guinean population a profound mistrust of the previous regime's failed bureaucracy and corrupt leadership. Authority at many levels, including regional governor and prefect, had collapsed several years before Conté's death. The CNDD has moved to fill this power vacuum by a deluge of appointments, including throughout the armed forces and at the gendarmerie, the presidency, the Central Bank and the National Communications Council.[34] The military took over the regional administrations during or shortly after the coup. Some governors have been retained, others have already been replaced by allies of the junta, some of whom are civilian, others military.[35]

The changes at the head of customs, one of Guinea's biggest sources of income, illustrate the attempt to ensure control of public administration and of the revenues that come with it. Under Conté, customs was headed by Olga Siradin and her deputy, Bruno Bangoura. Both were central members of the Conté clan, Bangoura being a younger brother of the first lady, Henriette. On 11 January 2009, Dadis Camara sacked Bangoura and interned him in the Alpha Yaya camp. He was freed at the beginning of February, but his position was given to Alpha Yaya Diallo of the CNDD, a friend of the new president since the early 1990s.

On 3 February, Dadis Camara arrived in person at the customs offices. He had Olga Siradin arrested, before holding a vote among the assembled staff that resulted in her replacement by Mamadi Touré, a mid-level administrator.[36] Whether a genuine vote or stage-managed theatre, such populism understandably gains the junta short-term support but is unlikely to provide a sustainable basis for government.

[31] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and mining sector investors, Conakry, January 2009.
[32] "Guinea suspected drug traffickers arrested", Afrique en ligne, 9 February 2009.
[33] See "Guinée: la junte sonne la fin de la récréation", *Jeune Afrique*, 25 January 2009, and "Guinea: A popular putsch, so far", *Africa Confidential*, 23 January 2009.
[34] On 5 January Dadis Camara announced new military appointments. For a full list see "Armée guinéenne: Dadis fait le ménage", Guineeactu.com, 12 January 2009. On 17 January he named 22 presidential advisers. "Le Président du CNDD nomme 22 nouveaux conseillers à la présidence", Guineenews.org, 17 January 2009. Two days later, he replaced the head of the Central Bank, its two vice governors and the head of the National Communications Council (Conseil national de la communication, CNC). He also named Alassane Onipogui minister in charge of state affairs (ministre chargé de contrôle de l'Etat, normally a post associated with financial control and auditing). See "Le shadow cabinet de 'Super El Dadis'", *La Lettre Du Continent*, 29 January 2009 and "Guinée suite des nominations à la tête de l'Etat", linternationalmagazine.com, 19 January 2009.
[35] Crisis Group interview, leading member of civil society, Conakry, February 2009.
[36] See "Direction nationale des douanes: vote populaire pour Mamadi Touré", Aminata.com, 3 February 2009.

2. Centralisation of power

Despite the good intentions of some members, the junta has not been able to move beyond its initial stand against the old regime's corruption to articulate a coherent governing program. Nor does it seem willing to delegate this task. Its reaction to the uncertainties of Guinean political life has been to centralise decision-making at the Alpha Yaya camp. Dadis Camara and the other core members hold court there, making quick decisions on issues as complex as mining contracts, while also receiving groups and associations that arrive daily to sing the junta's praises and ask for favours. Many disputes that built up under the old regime, for example involving land and property, are summarily dealt with, and money is dished out to community organisations.[37]

This approach to issues and a continuing assurance of impunity for the army have led to several abuses of power, including the visit of an armed group to the house of former Prime Minister Cellou Dallein Diallo on 1 January. In a clear attempt to intimidate, it forced entry three times that day, but Diallo refused each time to accompany the intruders to the Alpha Yaya camp. The CNDD later apologised, but the incident is highly unlikely to have been undertaken without the knowledge of senior members. Further incidents in February have involved harassment of Chinese and Lebanese traders by security force personnel.

The junta's mistrust of the "old guard" is manifest in the CNDD youth support groups emerging throughout the capital and beyond, including the newly formed Youth Movement for Democracy and Development (Mouvement des jeunes pour la démocratie et le développement, MJDD) and the Young Patriots of Guinea (Jeunes patriotes de la Guinée).[38] Many youths have welcomed the change of generation that the CNDD represents. However, while a generational renewal in politics may be a positive development, some Guineans are worried that it is the junta's aggressive and ostentatious style – members travel in four-wheel drive cars, go to night-clubs and wear sunglasses most of the time – that is mobilising young supporters.[39]

These youth groups may indicate a still embryonic CNDD strategy to create political entities to outflank the existing parties and their veteran leaders. Despite the many rumours of links between the opposition parties and the junta, there have been indications that the CNDD may try to portray them as part of the old guard associated with the Conté regime.[40] Given that most party leaders worked in Conté's government at some point, this strategy may bear some fruit. In any event, Conakry is likely to see the continued emergence of new groups, whether created by the CNDD or by opportunistic political entrepreneurs.

Brought together by a variety of motivations and unused to power, the CNDD is vulnerable to internal tensions. These became manifest as early as late January 2009, when Colonel Sidiki Camara, known as one of the most educated members of the junta and recipient of the army's order of merit in 2008, was arrested on the orders of Dadis Camara. He was accused of sedition for attempting to orchestrate his own promotion, but the circumstances of his arrest have never been made clear.

These tensions point to one of the potential fractures in the CNDD. The army has for some years been divided along lines of age, ethnicity and corps. The forced retirement of the senior generals at the end of 2008 and their silence since indicate that the threat of fissures on age lines is not great at present. Dadis Camara was able to skilfully deal with the other two constituencies by making the CNDD ethnically diverse and bringing in members of other army corps. He also included people based on personal loyalty, independent of ethnicity or army allegiances. Since then, however, there has been a small but perceptible shift in the balance of power towards the Forestier ethnic group. The Fula are little represented in either the CNDD or the appointments Dadis Camara has made since the coup.

Two other key junta advisers were arrested at the same time as Sidiki Camara, Colonels Biro Condé and Bambo

[37] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and civil society activists, Conakry and Dakar, January and February 2009.

[38] "Young Patriots" is likely a deliberate reference to the pro-regime youth groups that have emerged in Côte d'Ivoire since its crisis began in 2002. The nomination of Mohamed Diop as governor of Conakry is a further sign of this emerging generation around the CNDD. Diop, close to Sékouba Konaté, was a well-known youth mobiliser as vice mayor of central Conakry. See "Le MJDD exige la levée des sanctions contre la Guinée", GuineeConakry.info, 3 January 2009. Crisis Group witnessed a pro-CNDD youth movement meeting in Conakry on 24 January, where nearly the whole crowd, gathered around a stage with a rap DJ, wore CNDD T-shirts.

[39] Core members have the run of a nightclub in Conakry's Lambanyi suburb. Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009.

[40] See, for example, "Guinea coup leader refuses on vote date", Associated Press, 10 February 2009, quoting Dadis Camara at a press conference: "The one to whom we will hand over power will be a clean president and a new man, because all those that served under Conté, who stole public funds and who now want to create their own political parties – well that's just not going to work". Political party and union activity remained suspended throughout January and February by CNDD communiqué no. 1 of 23 December 2008.

Fofana. Condé was known to have been very close to Dadis Camara.[41] Again no explanation has been given. Further instability in the junta was evident in February, when Dadis Camara sacked the finance minister, Captain Mamadou Sandé, only three weeks after his controversial appointment. Tensions over the conduct of government appear to have been at the root of this, but no coherent explanation has been forthcoming.

The CNDD named a prime minister a week after seizing power. Its choice, Kabiné Komara, is a respected financial technocrat, whose name featured in a list suggested for the post in the wake of the January-February 2007 crisis. But his room for manoeuvre is evidently limited, and it took two further weeks before a government was named on 14 January 2009.

Ten ministers in Komara's cabinet are military, most members of the CNDD. That the government was named by presidential decree, and the ministers of security, defence, justice and anti-criminality (Secrétaire d'état chargé des services spéciaux), as well as the governor of the Central Bank, were all placed under the authority of the presidency further confirms the widely held view in Conakry that Komara had little say in its composition. Political parties and unions, some of which were angling for positions, were not included.[42]

The choice of ministers responded to several criteria. The CNDD, in private conversations, has explained the heavy presence of the military as a way of imposing some order in a corrupt administration or as a necessary means for keeping the soldiers occupied.[43] In reality a number of ministers were chosen to satisfy different sections of the armed forces or reward individuals who rallied to the CNDD on 23 December.[44] Others were chosen because Dadis Camara knew and trusted them.[45] While competence and probity are not incompatible with loyalty to Guinea's new strongman, this personalisation of nominations will reinforce the impression that he has wasted no time in tightening his grip on power.

On the same day that the new government was named, Dadis Camara made a characteristically long and rambling speech on national television, laying out the government program, including on agriculture, water, energy, health, education and infrastructure. While all these sectors need urgent attention, the scope of the program, the absence of a clear transition timetable in the speech and the composition of the government point to a CNDD belief that it alone can solve the country's myriad problems.

B. CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

In contrast to the international condemnation of the coup and suspension of Guinea from high-level AU and ECOWAS meetings, the CNDD was welcomed by the political opposition, trade unions and civil society groups. This willingness to support unconstitutional change has been justified on the grounds that the constitution was in no way respected under Conté's rule.

The CNDD made early contact with all these elements, offering informal positions and advocacy roles in an attempt to win them round. Many initially argued the CNDD's case to the international community and issued statements either supporting the coup or at least not condemning it. The union leader Rabiatou Serah Diallo said, "the CNDD occupied a vacant seat. The first to throw himself at it took it. And we, in the unions, are glad he did so".[46] A political leader interviewed by Crisis Group in January 2009 said his party had "strongly appreciated" the CNDD's early speeches. Motivated in large part by the continuing official ban on union and party political activity, civil society partly revised its initially positive position in the course of February and joined those expressing a more cautious view.[47]

Civil society and political parties have agreed upon a basic outline for a transition to democracy. This plan calls for elections to be held by the end of 2009 and a process guided by a National Transitional Council (Conseil national de transition, CNT), composed of around

[41] Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Conakry, January 2009.
[42] Crisis Group interviews, members of civil society, a union leader and journalists, Conakry, January 2009. See also "La junte guinéenne nomme un gouvernement dominé par les militaires", *Le Monde*, 16 January 2009.
[43] Crisis Group interview, source close to the CNDD and union leader, Conakry, January 2009.
[44] One such was Colonel Fodéba Touré of the presidential guard, now minister for sports and youth.
[45] The latter include Captain Mamadou Sandé, finance minister, Alexandre Céce Loua, foreign minister, and several ministers and presidential advisers from the Total oil company with whom Dadis Camara dealt when responsible for the army's fuel supply. The nomination of Captain Sandé was particularly controversial since, despite some economics training, he lacked the experience usually associated with a finance minister. His suspension in February, yet to be clearly explained, is said to be due to a disagreement with Dadis Camara.
[46] "Interview, Rabiatou Serah Diallo", *Le Monde*, 13 January 2009.
[47] Crisis Group interviews, civil society and youth groups, Conakry, January 2009. See also "Rabiatou Serah Diallo durcit le ton", Aminata.com, 15 February 2009.

60 people representing the broad range of society. The CNDD should either be absorbed into the CNT or be placed alongside it. The CNT would then act either as a legislative or consultative body complementing the government, its tasks including making recommendations for changing the constitution and revising the electoral law.[48]

However, this minimal common ground barely masks disagreements over the transition. There is no consensus on what sort of elections should be held and when. One political party argued in January for legislative elections in six months, to be followed by presidential elections six months later. Another, led by former Prime Minister Sidya Touré's Union of Republican Forces (Union des forces républicaines, UFR), called for holding presidential elections first, whether in six months or twelve.[49]

Both groupings say theirs is a reasonable approach to the transition and suspect the other is trying to manoeuvre for advantage. Some political leaders want to prioritise legislative elections so as to use their party strength to influence the debate over the constitution, in particular to block any move to reintroduce an age limit of 70 for presidential candidates that was scrapped in the constitutional change of 2001 and that would eliminate several leading candidates.[50] Those who argue for presidential elections first are suspected of wishing to take advantage of an exceptional situation to stand for the office without the backing of a strong party.

The joint statement of parties, unions and civil society published on 7 February restated the demand that the transition last no longer than twelve months and a transitional body be established (whether or not called the CNT). However, it was silent on election sequencing and whether a referendum should be required to enact constitutional change.[51]

Beyond these basic disagreements, the end of 50 years of dictatorships has given rise to an outpouring of diverse and uncoordinated demands for reform. If all were taken into account, the agenda would occupy a generation. A civil society umbrella body, the National Council of Guinean Civil Society Organisations (Conseil national des organisations de la société civile de Guinée, CNOSCG), for example, issued a declaration detailing 63 propositions, including some as complex and ambitious as a full national census and the introduction of a single town council for the capital to replace the current five urban communities.[52]

The former ruling party, the Party of Unity and Progress (Parti de l'unité et du progrès, PUP), is now one among many. Profoundly unpopular with many Guineans, it suffered a leadership split in late January. Despite its once strong position throughout public administration, it will struggle to find a role in the new landscape.

Conté's former allies are now feeling pressure from the junta and trying to save what they can. Mamadou Sylla, a rich businessman close to Conté, has formed a breakaway party, including some of the PUP. Interrogated by the junta in connection with corruption under the previous regime, he is awaiting the outcome of the promised audits. Despite Dadis Camara's evident concern to protect it, Conté's family is highly unlikely to find a future role in Guinea. As detailed above, Ousmane Conté, who led a much feared unit of the presidential guard under his father's rule, was arrested on 24 February and has confessed on national television to involvement in the drug trade.

There has been a proliferation of ideas and propositions, from both recognised bodies and less well-known associations in towns and villages, where the country's political future has been the subject of intense debate. This is, in the longer term, a welcome sign of the underlying strength of civil society. Much of the press also reflects this lively debate. However, it is also indicative of the serious fragmentation and mistrust that afflicted political parties and associational life under Conté.[53] Improved

[48] See "Plateforme des partis politiques sur l'organisation et la gestion de la transition", Conakry, 4 January 2009; and "Proposition pour une transition apaisée en République de Guinée", CNOSCG, Conakry, January 2009 (the precise date is not given on the document obtained by Crisis Group).

[49] This situation led to two rival documents being produced following the meeting of political parties at the start of January. See ibid, "Plateforme", and "Plateforme des partis politiques de l'alliance nationale pour l'alternance démocratique (ANAD) sur l'organisation et la gestion de la transition", 4 January 2009; also "Interview, Sidya Touré", *Jeune Afrique*, 1 February 2009.

[50] Alpha Condé, leader of the Rally of Guinean People (Rassemblement du peuple de Guineé, RPG), and possibly other candidates, would be ineligible.

[51] "Déclaration commune de la société civile Guinéenne, des partis politiques, de l'inter-centrale syndicale CNTG-USTG élargie a l'ONSLG et à l'UDTG et de la confédération patronale des entreprises de Guinée", 7 February 2009 (acronyms in Appendix B).

[52] See "Proposition", CNOSCG, op. cit. This disunity was much in evidence at a round table of civil society groups attended by Crisis Group on 23 January 2009.

[53] See, for example, Crisis Group Briefing, *Guinea: Change on Hold*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

coherence will require better internal democracy in civil society groups and political parties, to discourage dissatisfied members from breaking away and adding to the existing proliferation of entities. If not addressed urgently, these divisions might also delay the transition, and perpetuate a political vacuum that could play into the hands of those who may wish to derail the process.

IV. GETTING BACK TO CIVILIAN RULE

Despite the initial welcome for the junta and the remarkable lack of bloodshed during both the coup and the subsequent two months, most Guineans are well aware of the dangers of military rule.[54] The civil society and political party declaration of 7 February, complaining of the absence of a CNDD response to previous proposals, was indicative of an emerging reluctance to offer unconditional support. The CNDD has promised to hand over to a civilian president. It initially talked of a 60-day transition, quickly changed this to two years and was finally pushed by international pressure to accept the principle of a handover of power during 2009.

This commitment was reaffirmed in front of civil society and the international community in February. However, despite elaborating an ambitious four-phase plan for the transition at the meeting with the international contact group, Dadis Camara is still proving reluctant to commit to a precise timetable.[55] Tensions in the military, the absence of other centres of power and lack of coordination among political parties indicate that the months ahead will be complex and uncertain.

A. RISKS FOR THE TRANSITION

There are four broad risks for the peaceful transition of power to civilian rule, which may have to be addressed singly or in combination. The first is that the CNDD simply clings on. The longer it does, the more evident the limitations of its style of government will become and the more the population will contest its right to rule. While Dadis Camara talks frequently of his desire to leave office "like ATT", no other member of the junta speaks meaningfully of handing over power, and a cloud of ambiguity hangs over plans.[56] Crisis Group interviews indicate that some CNDD members still adhere privately to the two-year transition timetable announced soon after the coup.[57] The junta's growing control over public administration and its elaborate plans for reform clearly indicate that transition to civilian rule is not a shared priority.

The manner in which the CNDD has wielded power – a combination of authoritarianism and populist good deeds – may prove intoxicating and difficult to give up. While Dadis Camara has taken a hard line on corruption and criminality, the attitude of others in the junta is less clear.[58] Furthermore, the army sees itself as having filled a security vacuum. Poor relations with the police are likely to reinforce its belief that it alone can maintain law and order. As a human rights activist put it, "the problem in Guinea is that the military has become used to power. Getting it back in the barracks is going to be the most difficult thing".[59]

The second threat to the transition is that the CNDD, or the military more broadly, fractures. The military was able to find some unity in its corporate demands during the Conté years. This is unlikely to withstand the pressures of power and the competition for resources, as the CNDD's internal tensions already indicate. The risk of a counter-coup is very real, either from within the CNDD or from as yet unknown elements in the armed forces – in particular those whose hopes of leading the post-Conté era have so far been frustrated or those involved in criminality. To counter these risks, the CNDD leadership is buying support, both directly and by multiplying patronage opportunities for the military.[60] In the face of high expectations among the troops,

[54] Some Guineans refer nervously to 1984-1985 when Colonel (soon General) Conté took over on Sékou Touré's death. Splits within the military emerged, and the number two of the junta was arrested in July 1985, and executed for plotting a coup.

[55] See final communiqué of the first session of the International Contact Group on Guinea, African Union and ECOWAS, 17 February 2009. The communiqué detailed Dadis Camara's four-phase plan: 1. creation of the transitional institutions; 2. establishment of a truth, justice and reconciliation commission; 3. constitutional reforms; 4. publication of laws on electoral process.

[56] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Conakry, January 2009. Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré (commonly known as ATT), who took power in Mali on the death of the dictator Modibo Keita in 1991, is widely respected for relinquishing power one year later to a civilian president, Alpha Konaré. In 2000, after Konaré served the two terms permitted by the constitution, ATT was elected president.

[57] Crisis Group interviews, a source close to the CNDD, diplomats and journalists, Conakry, January 2009.

[58] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009.

[59] Crisis Group interviews, human rights activists, Conakry and Dakar, January 2009. Poor police relations can be traced in large part to June 2008, when soldiers led by Lt. Pivi were involved in a shoot-out, resulting in a number of police deaths.

[60] This is how one informed source explained the heavy military presence in the new government. Crisis Group interview, Conakry, January 2009.

expenditure on the military, already a large proportion of government spending, is unlikely to come down.[61]

If the junta fractures, there is a real possibility it will do so along ethnic lines. There is a perception among some members of the ethnic groups in the south east known as the Forestiers that the arrival of Dadis Camara is a historic chance for them to wield power, while other ethnic groups do not want them to become too powerful.[62] The Malinké, the ethnic group of the CNDD number three Sékouba Konaté, in particular, has a complex relationship with the Forestiers. The latter often feel that the Malinké are arrogant and overbearing and look down on them.

The resentments of the Forestiers at their supposed inferior status could yet prove crucial to relations within the military. That all three officers arrested in late January were Malinké may point to emerging tensions. Historic differences between the Malinké and the Fula, which go back to the persecution of the latter under Sékou Touré, may add to these tensions. If serious fissures do develop in the security forces, Guinea's strong sense of national unity and pride could be severely tested.

There is an associated danger, as yet remote, of ethnic tensions in the security forces causing ripples in the subregion. The tensions between Forestier and Malinké groups were a significant part of the troubles in the Guinea-Liberia border region in 2000-2001, in which some CNDD members were directly involved.[63] Liberia's leadership, strengthened by a strong UN presence, is watching the situation in Guinea with some disquiet. President Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire, who counted Conté as an ally, is clearly concerned. He sent his top defence adviser to meet the new junta shortly after the coup and, according to one report, to try to secure or recover weapons that Gbagbo had stored in Conakry at the height of the Ivorian crisis in 2003–2004.[64]

As outlined above, there are a number of proposals concerning the sequencing of the transition circulating among civil society and political parties but little agreement. A legalistic and perfectionist impulse, along with a desire to correct the numerous problems of the Conté years, is producing a maximalist view of what needs to be done during the transitional period. And few people seem to be in a hurry. The third risk, therefore, is that lack of agreement within a future National Transitional Council or other transitional forum hinders the transition.

It is vital to avoid such a situation, as it would play into the hands of those in the CNDD who do not wish to hand over power. A fractious civil society would potentially allow the military to present itself as the only alternative to chaos, in effect forcing the international community to consent to its continued rule. That Guinean civil society and political groups accept that the CNDD should stay in power until elections, even if these do not take place in 2009, is problematic.

The fourth risk to the transition is the deteriorating economic situation. State finances were already in a bad state in late 2008. The coup has led to the suspension of some aid and of the IMF-led Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, which was scheduled to provide additional finance for the government in 2009. Investors, whose enthusiasm was already waning in light of falling commodity prices, are in wait-and-see mode.

The CNDD is convinced it can ride out the financial crunch by recuperating unpaid tax and clamping down on corruption.[65] But its plans may not provide much more than a one-off windfall, and if its hopes prove unfounded, public anger is likely to follow. Dissatisfaction over the cost of living was a background factor in demonstrations during the Conté era. The reaction of the military was repeated violence against demonstrators.[66] There is every reason to believe that if challenged in this way, the military's position would again harden. It is equally possible that competition for CNDD patronage between newly formed youth associations and political groups who may see their strength in mobilising "the street" could turn violent.

B. OPTIONS FOR THE TRANSITION

In order to ensure the success of the transition, civil society, political groups and the international community must strike a delicate balance between competing priorities. At root, that balance is between urgency and

[61] It was not possible to know with any certainty the exact military proportion in the budget under Conté. But it was undoubtedly high, and it increased dramatically in 2007-2008 as he tried to buy off dissatisfaction. The army also expanded considerably during this time, through recruitment. Crisis Group interview, security specialist, Conakry, January 2009.

[62] Crisis Group interviews, members of civil society, Conakry, January 2009.

[63] See Crisis Group Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 December 2003, and Crisis Group Report, *Stopping Guinea's Slide*, op. cit., pp. 15-23.

[64] See "'Dadis' bloque l'aviation ivoirienne", *La Lettre du Continent*, 12 February 2009.

[65] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and a source close to the CNDD, Conakry, January 2009

[66] See Crisis Group Report, *Guinea: Change or Chaos*, op. cit., and "Dying for change", Human Rights Watch, op. cit.

perfectionism. Most Guineans want to be sure that this transition brings real improvements and democracy. In their view, the main risk is of precipitous elections. As a member of civil society put it at a meeting on human rights in which Crisis Group participated, "it's not a question of a sprint, but of a long distance race, and hurrying things will serve no purpose".[67]

For some Guineans the comparison with West African states where military rule has proven disastrous is not valid. During the 50 years of isolation under Sékou Touré and then Conté, suspicion of foreign influence and respect for Guinea's unique "revolution" were part and parcel of education and public life.[68] As a result, many believe that their history, though little understood by outsiders, makes Guinea in some way exceptional and immune to the problems that military rule has brought elsewhere.[69] Others, however, believe that the risks inherent in the military's grip on power will increase the longer it stays. Much of the debate turns on what has to be done between now and elections and who is to be invested with the power to oversee the process.[70]

Most Guineans agree on the need to revise the constitution as part of the transition to democratic rule. Some regard the changes made in 2001 as illegitimate, due to the poor conduct of the constitutional referendum. Some revisions, such as reinstating the two-term presidential limit introduced in 1990, might be adopted with little debate. Others under discussion, including limiting the number of parties, defining a constitutional role for the prime minister and reinstating the 70-year age limit for presidential candidates, will be more controversial.

Indeed, there is a significant danger that seemingly simple amendments could cause acrimonious disputes and long delays to the transition. Furthermore, there is no consensus on whether a referendum will be required to endorse proposed changes to the constitution, and if so, whether this would have to occur before elections. Adding a referendum to two national elections (legislative and presidential) would almost certainly jeopardise the chance of completing the transition in 2009.

When the CNDD took power, legislative elections were already eighteen months behind schedule.[71] Following Conté's death, presidential elections have now been added to the tasks facing the Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission électorale nationale indépendante, CENI). On 4 January 2009, the CNDD issued an ordinance changing the role of the CENI from oversight to responsibility for managing the electoral process, including the electoral census, and placing it under the direct authority of the presidency.

The CENI has a board of 25 members, drawn mainly from political parties, and a permanent central staff of only five. Its regional and local bodies have several thousand staff, but none are paid, so their employment by the CENI is rather theoretical. The drawing up of electoral lists, complete with biometric data, started in May 2008, and 30 per cent of the population has now been registered, according to the CENI.[72] However, many Guineans contest the reliability of these registrations.[73] Although the CENI is receiving considerable support from donors, led by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), its lack of capacity poses serious problems for the transition timetable. Absence of independence now that it has been placed under the authority of the military junta may also prove problematic.

Some seven weeks after the formation of a government on 14 January, the question of the overall architecture of the transition remains unanswered. As explained above, civil society, unions and political parties have all told the CNDD they want to see a National Transitional Council in place.[74] However, their proposal did not detail the powers of the proposed body, for example over revision of the constitution. Its composition is also likely to prove controversial. The CNDD envisages a merger between itself and such a CNT, with Dadis Camara remaining president and a significant military presence in the new entity, but the mechanism for this has not been clarified.

Establishment of a CNT will not ensure, in itself, that divisions and antagonisms between different groups are overcome. It will need to be kept as small as possible, while remaining socially, ethnically and politically inclusive. The military's relationship to it needs

[67] Roundtable on Human rights, Conakry, 23 January 2009.
[68] The "revolution" refers to Sékou Touré's refusal to accept French tutelage in 1958, which led to immediate independence, two years before other French African colonies.
[69] See, for example, commentary by the editor in chief of Guinéeactu.com on the discussion following Dadis Camara's speech of 9 February 2009: "The audience examined, with objectivity, the dangers of being too hasty, as well as the commands coming from the advocates of democracy, often foreigners and completely ignorant of the peculiar realities of the social and political landscape of Guinea".
[70] Crisis Group interviews, civil society and political parties, Conakry, January and February 2009.
[71] See Crisis Group Briefing, *Guinea: Ensuring Democratic Reforms*, op. cit.
[72] Crisis Group interview, head of the CENI, Conakry, January 2009.
[73] Crisis Group interviews, Conakry, January 2009.
[74] See Section III.B above.

to be restricted to the minimum commensurate with the armed services' legitimate corporate interests. The body's agenda should be as small as possible; the creation of a sounding board for all the country's grievances would serve no purpose at this stage. Debates should be limited to advancing the electoral timetable and the transitional arrangements to be put in place if presidential and legislative elections are not both held by the end of the year. This could usefully include discussion of the future career paths of members of the military junta.

There is likely to be a strong lobby in the CNT for proposing mechanisms and issues for constitutional amendment. Although the return to constitutional rule following the coup is of vital practical and symbolic importance, this is dangerous ground. The revision process is likely not only to further delay the transition, with the attendant risks, but also to cause considerable controversy over eligibility for the presidential office. An acceptance of the current constitutional arrangement until after the voting may be the least bad option.

The dangers of allowing the military junta to remain in power, while a transitional council loses valuable time in acrimonious debate, need to be recognised by civil society and the international community. The CNDD itself, which is ill-prepared for a long stay in power, needs to make clear plans to leave.

V. CONCLUSION

The coup was mercifully bloodless, but Guinea is far from out of danger. The junta is fostering its image as the harbinger of a youthful new era, unconnected with the corrupt old ways of the Conté generation. The desperate population has received it eagerly, and political parties are too fragmented to do much more than play according to the CNDD's rules. But in two months, Dadis Camara and his allies have shown some signs that they could be as difficult to shift from power as the former president and his clan. The administration is dominated by soldiers inexperienced in the workings of government, and the risks of both abuse of authority and a bloody counter-coup from within the CNDD or the wider army remain high.

A return to civilian rule is, therefore, paramount. Ideally this transition should be achieved through free and fair elections. But if the CNDD's departure is dependent on the holding of elections, it will be well positioned to stall. To prevent more electoral delays and further entrenchment of the military in the political sphere, discussions must start now on how to establish a civilian transitional leadership if the CNDD does not make good on its pledge to hold elections.

Guinean civil society and political parties, alongside the international community, must stimulate this process. At the same time as they support CENI in the technical work of preparing the vote, including by providing election observers, foreign partners should make clear to the junta that its apparent legitimacy and the acceptance of its bloodless coup will fade rapidly if the transition drags on. They can hasten the CNDD's release of power by making aid conditional on its leaving by year's end, even if elections have not yet been held. Meanwhile, it is vital to start the work of creating stable governing institutions soon – before rivalry over the country's rich resources turns violent.

Dakar/Brussels, 5 March 2009

APPENDIX A

MAP OF GUINEA

Map No. 4164 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS
June 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BASP	Autonomous Battalion of Presidential Security (Bataillon autonome de la sécurité présidentielle)
BATA	Parachute regiment (Batallion autonome des troupes aéroportées)
BCRG	Central Bank of the Republic of Guinea (Banque centrale de la République de Guinée)
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission électorale nationale indépendante)
CNC	National Council of Communication (Conseil national de la communication)
CNDD	National Council for Democracy and Development (Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement), the military junta led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, which took power on 23 December 2008
CNOSCG	National Council of Guinean Civil Society Organisations (Conseil national des organisations de la société civile de Guinée)
CNT	National Transitional Council (Conseil national de transition)
CNTG	National Confederation of Guinean Workers (Confédération nationale des travailleurs de Guinée), an umbrella union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIPC	Poverty Reduction Program for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, initiated by the IMF and the World Bank
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MJDD	Youth Movement for Democracy and Development (Mouvement des Jeunes pour la Démocratie et le Développement)
ONSLG	National Organisation of Free Unions of Guinea (Organisation nationale des syndicats libres de Guinée)
PUP	Unity and Progress Party (Parti de l'unité et du progrès), former ruling party
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDTG	Democratic Union of Guinean Workers (Union démocratique des travailleurs de Guinée)
UFR	Union of Republican Forces (Union des forces républicaines), political party led by former Prime Minister Sidya Touré
USTG	Trade Union of Guinean Workers (Union syndicale des travailleurs de Guinée)
YPG	Young Patriots of Guinea (Jeunes patriotes de la Guinée)

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