

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Guinea

CAPITAL: Conakry

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic

AREA: 245,857 Sq Km (94,926 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 8,827,500



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Guinea is located in southwestern West Africa. It is bound by Guinea-Bissau to the northwest, Senegal and Mali to the north, the Ivory Coast to the east, Sierra Leone and Liberia to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the southwest. The country is divided into four topographical regions. (1.) Lower or Maritime Guinea which is an alluvial plain with coastal swamps (2.) Middle Guinea which is formed by the Fouta Djallon Massif and consists of a stepped plateau cut by narrow valleys. (3.) Upper Guinea in the northeast which is a region of grassy plains and savannas. (4.) The forest region of southeastern Guinea which consists of the Guinea Highlands. Over one-third of the country is drained by the Niger River and lower Guinea has numerous rivers, of which the most important are the Rio Nunez, Fatala, Melikhoure, Konkoure and the Rio Kapatchez. Major Cities (pop. est.); Conakry 650,000, Kankan 55,000, N'zerekore 44,600, Kindia 39,100 (1983). Land Use; forested 59%, pastures 22%, agricultural-cultivated 3%, other 16% (1993).

CLIMATE: Guinea has a tropical climate with two seasons, the wet season from April/May to October/November with the heaviest rainfall occurring in July and August while the dry season is from November to April. The prevailing winds are the SW Monsoon and the northeastern Harmattan, which is a dry dust laden wind that blows from the Sahara Desert. Average annual precipitation at Conakry is 4,923 mm (193 inches) and average temperature ranges are from 22 degrees Celsius (72 degrees Fahrenheit) to 32 degrees Celsius (92 degrees Fahrenheit).

PEOPLE: The country's ethnic groups number nearly 24, of which the main groups are the Fulani who account for 39% of the population while the Malinke account for 23%, the Soussou or Susu for 11%, the Kissi for 6%, the Kpelle for 5% and others include the Dialonka and Loma.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 29 persons per sq km (74 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 25.6% urban, 74.4% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.2% male, 49.8% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 42.0 years male, 43.0 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 47% under 15, 26% 15 to 29, 15% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 4% 60 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 51.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 22.0 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 29.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 145.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Around 85% of the population are Muslims while 5% follow local native tribal beliefs and 1.5% are Christians, overwhelmingly Roman Catholic.

LANGUAGES: The official language is French, although eight national languages are also used. They are Poular, Malinke, Soussou, Kissi, Guerze, Toma, Coniagui and Bassari while French is understood by 20% of the literate population.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: N/A. Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 27.2% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1958 the people of Guinea voted for complete independence from France which was granted on Sept. 28, 1958 and Ahmed Sekou Toure officially became President. Guinea's first constitution took effect on November 12 which was amended in December and made Toure's Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG) the country's only political party. Toure embarked on a program of political and economic centralization. The government also hoped to encourage unity among the peoples of the new nation and strengthened Guineas ties with other African nations. In Nov. 1970 Guinean exiles from neighboring Portuguese Guinea (Guinea-Bissau) attempted a coup which resulted in the execution of 90 suspected conspirators. After Toure's death on Mar. 26, 1984 military leaders took control of the government under Col. Lansana Conte and suspended the constitution as well as abolishing the PDG. In July 1985 Col. Traore, the former Vice President, attempted a coup which resulted in his execution and the imprisonment of 200 suspected conspirators, of which 60 were sentenced to death. In Dec. 1987 amnesty was granted to 67 political prisoners. In Oct. 1989 Pres. Conte promised a return to a two party democracy after a five year transitional period, however, in 1990 hopes were lowered as further details became apparent that the Presidential powers would remain intact. In Sept. 1990 civil servants, students, teachers and workers frustrated with the pace of reforms demonstrated only to be dispersed by tear gas and rubber bullets. Further strains were placed on the economy when thousands of Guinean refugees were repatriated as a result of Liberia's civil war. Additionally, there were some border clashes during the year. In Jan. 1991 Pres. Conte dissolved the ruling Military Committee and established a Transitional Committee for National Recovery. In May 1991 there were further crippling strikes and demonstrations which continued through summer as a result of austerity measures and the slow pace of democratic reforms, eventually the strikes and demonstrations forced the government to announce that a multiparty democracy would begin in Jan. 1992. On Feb. 14, 1992 Pres. Conte narrowly escaped from his car after a student demonstrators had set fire to it. On April 3, 1992 Pres. Conte declared that constitutional democracy would begin as a result of the continuing popular protests, although an election timetable was not scheduled while the opposition called for a national conference. Also during 1992 and as a result of IMF

pressure, the urban economy suffered as all citizens had to pay for basic services, including water, electricity, schooling and medicine. Throughout 1993 pro-democracy demonstrations continued. In May 1993 three people died and many were injured in protest in Conakry and Dinguiraye. On July 4, 1993 thousands protested throughout the country insisting that Pres. Conte open democracy talks and establish a national electoral commission. On Dec. 5, 1993 amid some violence election were held that resulted in Pres. Conte's Unity and Progress Party getting 51% of the vote while Alpha Conde and the Rally of the People of the Left (RPG) achieved 21% and Mamadou Ba of the Union for a New Republic (UNR) got 13% of the vote.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the is the Franc (GF) divided into 100 Cauris.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$3,260,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$2,675,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$730,000,000 (1993). Exports; USD \$607,100,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$6,000,000. Balance of Trade; USD \$169,600,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 2,590,000 or 42.3% of total population (1992). Unemployed; N/A.

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, Germany, the former USSR, Spain, Canada and France.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Bananas, Bauxite, Cassava, Coffee, Diamonds, Iron Ore, Livestock, Maize, Millet, Palm Oil Products, Pineapples, Rice, Timber.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Bauxite Refining, Fishing, Mining.

MAIN EXPORTS: Alumina, Bananas, Bauxite, Coffee, Diamonds, Palm Products, Pineapples.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 662 km (411 mi) (1990), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 28,400 km (17,647 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 13,000 (1989), trucks and buses 13,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 26 (1990), deadweight tonnage 2,827 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 28,764,000 (17,873,000 passenger-mi) (1986), cargo ton-km 2,458,000 (1,683,000 short ton-mi) (1986).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 1 with a total circulation of 13,000 (1988). Radio; receivers 230,000 (1994). Television; receivers 65,000 (1994). Telephones; units 15,800 (1993).

MILITARY: 9,700 (1995) total active duty personnel with 87.6% army, 4.1% navy and 8.2% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.5% (1992) of the Gross National Product (GNP).