August 2006 Volume 18, No. 7(A)

"The Perverse Side of Things"
Torture, Inadequate Detention Conditions, and Excessive Use of Force by Guinean Security Forces

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I. Summary

With its president, Lansana Conté, rumored to be gravely ill, its economy in a tailspin, and its military thought to be deeply divided, Guinea is a country teetering on the edge of a political transition.[1] But while Guinea's political future may be uncertain, the fact that ordinary Guineans are regularly brutalized by the very security forces responsible for protecting them is not. Immediate measures to combat this culture of violent law enforcement are critical, and could boost Guinea's stability at an uncertain time of impending political transition.

Security forces and other government officials in Guinea routinely violate some of the most basic civil and political rights, including the inherent right to life, freedom from torture, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to a trial within a reasonable period. These violations are committed against individuals accused of common crimes as well as those persons security forces perceive to be government opponents.

While brutality on the part of Guinean security forces is at times well publicized in local and international press, serious human rights violations often escape the public eye, especially those violations that take place in detention facilities such as police stations and prisons. Human Rights Watch interviewed 35 individuals, including children, who provided detailed and consistent accounts of mistreatment and torture by police officers while in police custody. Victims told Human Rights Watch that during police interrogation they were bound with cords, beaten, burned with cigarettes and corrosive chemicals, and cut with razor blades until they agreed to confess to the crime of which they were accused. Most of those interviewed by Human Rights Watch bore nearly identical scars on their body, which they report were the result of police torture during interrogation.

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[1] "Guinea: Ailing president in Switzerland for medical treatment," *IRINnews*, March 20, 2006, http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52325&SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=GUINEA. (accessed August 10, 2006). "Guinea: Grinding poverty drives unprecedented general strike," *IRINnews*, March 3, 2006, http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52006&SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=GUINEA. (accessed August 10, 2006). International Crisis Group, "Guinea in Transition," April 11, 2006, http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4067&CFID=30852257&CFTOKEN=55231897 (accessed August 10, 2006). Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, United Nations (UN) representatives, journalists, international nongovernmental organizations, local human rights defenders, civil society leaders, and opposition party members, Conakry, April and June 2006.

Once individuals are transferred from police custody to prison to await trial, many are left to languish for years in cramped cells where they face hunger, disease, and sometimes death. Human Rights Watch interviewed many detainees who have spent over four years in pre-trial detention. Nearly all the individuals interviewed in prison by Human Rights Watch told us they were there based in part on a confession they made under torture.

Other forms of brutality by Guinean security forces take place not in the confines of a police station, but in public for all to see. In June 2006 the government responded to demonstrations and a nationwide strike against rising prices of basic commodities with a brutal crackdown. Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 50 victims of and witnesses to the violence that took place, and collected detailed accounts alleging involvement by the police in murder, rape, assault, and theft. Eyewitnesses to thirteen killings told Human Rights Watch that security forces fired directly into crowds of unarmed demonstrators. Scores of Guineans, many of them mere bystanders to the demonstrations, were severely beaten and robbed at gunpoint by security forces.

The June 2006 crackdown, the largest in recent years, was the latest in a series of incidents in which Guinean security forces have used excessive and at times lethal force on demonstrators protesting worsening economic conditions.

Putting a stop to such brutality must include addressing the impunity that too often allows abuses to continue undeterred. Many of those interviewed by Human Rights Watch expressed a view that it was the failure to address the human rights abuses that took place under Guinea's first president, Sékou Touré, that paved the way for a repetition of those same abuses during the presidency of Lansana Conté.[2] To combat the entrenchment of impunity, the Guinean government must immediately investigate and punish, in accordance with international standards, crimes committed by state security forces during the June 2006 nationwide strike, and investigate promptly and independently alleged torture and ill-treatment of individuals in police custody.

At the same time, as the international community begins to reflect on the prospect for a peaceful political transition in Guinea, it is critical that accountability for human rights violations play a central role. International donors such as France, the United States, and the European Union should begin to call publicly and privately on the Guinean

[2] Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society leaders, April and June 2006.

government to investigate, and where applicable, to punish those responsible for the violations described in this report.

This report is based on Human Rights Watch interviews in Guinea in April and June 2006 with officials from the Guinean Ministry of Justice; diplomats; journalists; representatives from the United Nations; international nongovernmental organizations; trade unions; local civil society organizations; and opposition parties; as well as victims of and eyewitnesses to human rights violations in Guinea. Human Rights Watch was given permission by the Ministry of Justice to interview prisoners and detainees in Conakry's main prison, the *Maison Centrale*. All such interviews were conducted outside the presence of prison guards or other government authorities. The names of prisoners, detainees, and other witnesses have been omitted to protect their identity and ensure their privacy. Human Rights Watch thanks the Ministry of Justice for the open access that it was granted, and hopes that such openness speaks well for the possibility of reform.

II. Background

Guinea's father of independence, Sékou Touré, ruled Guinea from independence from France in 1958 until his death in 1984.[3] Embracing a mixture of pan-Africanism and Marxist ideology, Touré transformed Guinea into a one-party dictatorship (with a closed, socialized economy) in which free expression and political opposition were ruthlessly suppressed. Touré created what was, in essence, a police state, and the names of his gulag-style prison camps for political dissidents, such as *Camp Boiro*, where thousands were imprisoned, have become synonymous with torture, starvation, and death.

Due to the atmosphere of paranoia and repression that prevailed in the Sékou Touré era, thousands of Guinean intellectuals fled the country, only to return (if at all) after Sékou Touré's death in 1984. Some have estimated that as many as one million Guineans fled to neighboring countries such as Côte d'Ivoire.[4]

When Touré died in 1984, the army swiftly seized power and Col. Lansana Conté, Guinea's current president, emerged to assume control. The new government declared the protection of human rights to be one of its primary objectives, released political prisoners, and encouraged the Guinean diaspora that had fled to return. In 1991, multipartyism was permitted and the first opposition parties were born.

Lansana Conté would go on to win elections in 1993 and 1998 that were regarded by international observers as flawed due to allegations of vote rigging, disruption of opposition party meetings, and arrest and detention of opposition figures.[5] Conté was re-elected for a third term in 2003 after an amendment to the constitution was passed allowing the president to run for an unlimited number of terms.[6] Most opposition parties boycotted the 2003 election, and Conté won against a single, relatively unknown candidate.

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[3] Guinea gained its independence from France in 1958, after being the first and only Francophone country in West Africa to say "no" to the referendum initiated by Gen. Charles de Gaulle, opting for complete independence with no integration into the French Community.

[4] U.S. State Department, Bureau of African Affairs, "Background Note: Guinea," May 2006, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2824.htm.

[5] U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 1999: Guinea," February 23, 2000, http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/1999/250.htm; "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 1994: Guinea," February 1995, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1994_hrp_report/94hrp_report_africa/Guinea.html.

[6] This amendment, and an extension of the presidential term from five to seven years, were approved in a national referendum in 2001.

While many Guineans claim that human rights conditions have improved since the Sékou Touré era, the human rights record of the Conté regime has been marked by abuses and repression, including the arrest and detention of opposition leaders and supporters, torture of those accused of common crimes in police custody, and harassment of journalists.[7]

[7] Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, UN representatives, international nongovernmental organizations, journalists, local human rights defenders, and civil society leaders, Conakry, April and June 2006.

III. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of Suspects in Police Custody

In June 2006, Human Rights Watch interviewed 35 individuals in Conakry, Guinea's capital, many of them children, who provided detailed and consistent accounts of mistreatment and torture by police officers while in police custody. Many of these individuals told Human Rights Watch that during police interrogation they were bound in painful positions, hung from a tree or from a hook in the ceiling, and then severely beaten, burned, and abused by police until they agreed to confess to the crime of which they were accused. The experiences of current prisoners and detainees in Conakry, and information from local human rights groups, suggest that the use of torture by the police is routine.

The Guinean constitution guarantees freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.[8] International conventions ratified by Guinea, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, also prohibit the use of torture.[9]

Torture, as defined in the UN Convention, is an act by which severe mental or physical pain or suffering is intentionally inflicted against an individual, at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official, the purpose of which is to obtain information, or a confession, or punishment for an act the individual has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidation, coercion, or discrimination of any kind.[10] Human Rights Watch's research revealed a clear pattern of torture of suspects in police custody. Nearly all of the cases of abuse documented met the elements described above and thus rose to the level of torture.[11]

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[8] Constitution of the Republic of Guinea, 1990, Title II, Article 6.

[9] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted December 16, 1966, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), 999 U.N.T.S. 171 (entered into force March 23, 1976; ratified by Guinea in 1978); African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), (entered into force October 21, 1986; ratified by Guinea in 1982); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture), adopted December 10, 1984, G.A. Res. 39/46, annex, 39, U.N. Doc. A/39/51 (entered into force June 26, 1987; ratified by Guinea in 1989); Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted November 20, 1989, G.A. Res. 44/25, U.N. Doc. A/RES/44/25 (entered into force September 2, 1990; acceded to by Guinea in 1990).

[10] Convention against Torture, Article 1.

[11] Convention against Torture, Article 16.

Arrest and Interrogation of Suspects

After arrest, most suspects detained by the police in Guinea are taken into police custody where they are interrogated at one of numerous police stations. Under Guinean law, an individual may spend a maximum of 48 hours in police custody before being presented to judicial authorities to be charged.[12] However, seven individuals interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported spending weeks if not months in police custody before being presented to a judge for the first time. Those interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported that it was during this period of police custody that they were subjected to police abuses that amounted to torture.

Types of Torture or Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment Experienced During Police Custody

The most common types of abuse committed by the police in Guinea and described to Human Rights Watch by victims include binding the detainee with nylon cords in painful positions and then beating him.

As described, the detainee's arms were often bound tightly behind his back just above the elbow and below the shoulder with cord, and the detainee hung from a tree in a courtyard or from a hook in the ceiling. The weight of the body caused the cord to cut deeply into the skin. Some victims who were suspended reported that their legs were also bound at the ankles and brought up behind the back. Once suspended, the detainee was then beaten with police batons, pieces of wood, or other implements, and burned with cigarettes, while being interrogated.[13]

Individuals who have been subjected to this technique are easily recognizable as they present with large, circular scars around their arms just above the elbow and right below the shoulder, from where they were bound and hung. During its visit to Guinea's biggest prison, known as the "*Maison Centrale,"* Human Rights Watch identified at least seventy individuals bearing such scars, and interviewed twenty of them, including three children. One member of a local prisoners' advocacy organization reported seeing a prisoner whose wounds from being suspended were so deep that they revealed bone.[14] Several victims interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported that full sensation had not

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[12] Guinean Code of Penal Procedure, 1998, Article 60. An extension of an additional 48 hours may be authorized by a public prosecutor or an investigating magistrate, for a total of 96 hours.

[13] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 20 and 23, 2006.

[14] Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

returned to their hands even years after being suspended. According to a local human rights defender, such techniques date back to the Sékou Touré period.[15]

Prisoners in the *Maison Centrale* in Conakry bear scars that they say are a result of being bound with cords and hung in the air as part of a torture technique used during police interrogation. © 2006 Human Rights Watch

The following is an account from a 16-year-old detainee in pre-trial detention for some four years, who told Human Rights Watch that the police subjected him to the treatment described at the age of 12, before bringing him to prison:

> I am accused of stealing boxes of food in the market. I was arrested at my house by the police and taken to a police station in downtown Conakry. They tied my arms behind my back and then hoisted me up in a tree in the courtyard. I was hanging there for about three hours. Two policemen were telling me to tell the truth, to admit that I stole the goods. Then they pushed their cigarettes into my arms. At first I

[15] Human Rights Watch interview with a local human rights defender, Conakry, June 30, 2006.

> maintained my innocence, but I was in so much pain that I had to say I stole it. Otherwise, they would have continued.[16]

In one variation to the technique described above, the detainee is leaned forward in a crouching position, and his hands are bound underneath his ankles. The detainee is then tipped forward onto his face or onto his side and then beaten with a police club, with a piece of wood, or with a cord, as described in the following account (with accompanying photograph) from a detainee who arrived in the *Maison Centrale* in June 2006:

> I am accused of armed robbery. I was arrested on June 13, 2006, and taken to the police station in Bellvue.[17] The police abused me there for one week. Every day, they would take me out of my cell at four in the morning and beat me until six in the morning. They handcuffed my hands under my legs and put an iron bar under my knees. Then they tipped me forward so that my butt stuck up in the air. I was beaten with clubs and whipped on my buttocks with some kind of cord. They told me to confess. They did this until I denounced three innocents.[18] I finally recognized what they wanted me to say to save my life.[19]

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[16] Human Rights Watch interview with a detainee, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

[17] A neighborhood in central Conakry.

[18] Human Rights Watch had the opportunity to meet two of the "innocents" denounced by this individual, who were also being held in the *Maison Centrale*. Human Rights Watch interviews with detainees, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

[19] Human Rights Watch interview with a detainee, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

A prisoner in the *Maison Centrale* shows the wounds he allegedly received from being repeatedly beaten and whipped on the buttocks during police interrogation in June 2006. © 2006 Human Rights Watch

Several individuals interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported more uncommon torture techniques applied to them during police interrogation, including the removal of teeth, being burnt with caustic chemicals, and being cut with razor blades.[20]

Who is Targeted

Of the 35 victims of torture interviewed by Human Rights Watch, all were male, and most were between the ages of 16 and 40. Seven were children[21] at the time they were tortured; two were as young as 12 and 14 at that time. All of those interviewed were accused of or convicted for common crimes such as petty theft, armed robbery, and some for murder. Many of the individuals subject to the most severe torture sessions appear to be those accused of crimes involving guns, such as armed robbery.

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[20] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 20 and 23, 2006.

[21] Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1, "a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."

Nearly all individuals interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported that police officers tortured them until they were willing to "recognize the facts" of the crime of which they were accused, and that as soon as they did so torture stopped.[22] Individuals interviewed reported that a typical torture session lasted anywhere from one to twelve hours. Many interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported that they endured several such sessions before confessing.[23] Once a confession is obtained, police draw up a report that is presented to a judge, which includes mention of the confession.[24]

Government Response

Following unsuccessful attempts during Human Rights Watch's time in Conakry to meet with the minister of security, under whose authority the police are placed, Human Rights Watch sent a letter to the minister requesting a response to the allegations relating to police torture now contained in this report. Though Human Rights Watch was told by an official within the Ministry of Security that the letter had been received by the minister and was being studied,[25] there was no response at the time this report went to publication.

Human rights defenders interviewed by Human Rights Watch in April and June 2006 report that they have never heard of a government investigation into police torture or prosecution of individuals involved. Although most victims interviewed by Human Rights Watch said that they did not attempt to raise the issue of police torture with judicial authorities, based on the scars witnessed by Human Rights Watch many of the victims must have had wounds visible to any observer at the time they were brought before judicial authorities. Those few victims who told Human Rights Watch that they raised the issue of their mistreatment by the police with a judge claimed that their complaint was ignored.

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[22] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 20 and 23, 2006.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Human Rights Watch interviews with a criminal defense lawyer, prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 16, 20 and 23, 2006.

[25] Human Rights Watch email correspondence with an official in the Ministry of Security, July 29, 2006.

IV. Prolonged Pre-trial Detention in Guinean Prisons

Once charged with a crime, detainees are transferred from police custody to prison where many of them are left to languish for years before being brought to trial. As a result, hundreds of individuals in Guinea accused of crimes such as petty theft, robbery, assault, and murder are held in prolonged detention before a determination of their guilt or innocence can be made by a court of law. As described above, many of these individuals are in prison based on a confession extracted under police torture. Most are held in the *Maison Centrale* prison in Conakry.[26]

Of the approximately one thousand men, women, and children currently held in the *Maison Centrale*, between 70 and 80 percent are still awaiting trial.[27] Human Rights Watch interviewed twenty detainees who have spent more than four years in the *Maison Centrale* without trial, including two children; six had been there for over six years.[28] One individual told Human Rights Watch that he has been in prison since 1991 without trial.[29] While one of the three wings of the *Maison Centrale* is known as the "hallway of the convicted," pre-trial detainees are mixed in with convicted prisoners throughout the three wings.[30]

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights provide for the right to be tried within a "reasonable time."[31] The Guinean Code of Criminal Procedure provides that suspects should be brought to trial within four months of being brought to prison as a pre-trial detainee,

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[26] The *Maison Centrale*, like all civilian prisons in Guinea, falls under the authority of the Ministry of Justice.

[27] Human Rights Watch interviews with National Director of Penal Administration (Directeur National de l'Administration Pénitentiaire) Naby Youssouf Sylla, June 22, and with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006. While the Maison Centrale in Conakry undoubtedly houses the highest number of pre-trial detainees, other prisons in Guinea, such as Faranah and N'zérékoré, also contain high ratios of unsentenced to convicted prisoners. Human Rights Watch interview with local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

[28] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 20 and 23, 2006.

[29] Human Rights Watch interview with a detainee, Conakry, June 20, 2006.

[30] Under the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Article 8(b), "Untried prisoners shall be kept separate from convicted prisoners." The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1957, is one of the most long-standing norms on the human rights of all those deprived of their liberty, and is widely considered an authoritative guide as to how governments may comply with their obligations under international law.

[31] ICCPR, Article 9; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 7.

unless an investigating magistrate authorizes an extension.[32] However, according to one criminal defense lawyer interviewed by Human Rights Watch, such procedures are never observed and after four months have passed, many detainees are simply forgotten. UN officials and local human rights defenders told Human Rights Watch that they view prolonged pre-trial detention as a serious problem.[33]

A major contributing factor to the problem of prolonged pre-trial detention is that, under Guinean law, individuals accused of a serious crime such as armed robbery, murder or rape may only be tried before a particular court, known as the *Cour d'Assise*.[34] Under Guinean law, the *Cour d'Assise* is required to hold a session once every four months.[35] However, because the *Cour d'Assise* has only met twice since 2000 and it only hears a small number of cases per session, individuals accused of a serious crime are often forced to wait years for a trial.[36]

An official with the Ministry of Justice responsible for oversight of the *Cour d'Assise* told Human Rights Watch that holding more regular sessions is a challenge due to the money required, but that he expects to hold a session later this year that should "absolutely" resolve all outstanding problems with pre-trial detainees.[37]

Prolonged pre-trial detention is also attributable in part to poor record keeping. For example, the detainee who reported that he has been in prison without trial since 1991 told Human Rights Watch that his file was lost by the authorities during his transfer to the *Maison Centrale* in the early 1990s. Another group of at least five detainees were held in limbo at the *Maison Centrale* for over five years because a fire at one of the courthouses in Conakry in the late 1990s destroyed their files.[38] Although a local criminal defense

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[32] Guinean Code of Penal Procedure, 1998, Article 142; Human Rights Watch interview with criminal defense lawyer, Conakry, June 16, 2006.

[33] Human Rights Watch interviews with UN officials and local human rights defenders, Conakry, April 2 and 6, 2006.

[34] Guinean Code of Penal Procedure, 1998, Article 232. Human Rights Watch interviews with a local prisoners' advocacy organization and with officials of the Ministry of Justice, Conakry, June 2006.

[35] Guinean Code of Penal Procedure, 1998, Article 235.

[36] Human Rights Watch interviews with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, a criminal defense lawyer, and officials of the Ministry of Justice including General Prosecutor for the Court of Appeals (*Procureur Général de la Cour d'Appel*) Yves William Aboly and National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 2006.

[37] Human Rights Watch interview with General Prosecutor for the Court of Appeals Yves William Aboly, Conakry, June 28, 2006.

[38] Human Rights Watch interviews with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, June 14; with a criminal defense lawyer, June 16; and with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 22, 2006.

lawyer interviewed by Human Rights Watch has succeeded in freeing four of them, one of them remained in prison at the time of Human Rights Watch's visit (he claimed he has been in prison since 1997 without trial), and explained his situation as follows:

> I am accused of theft. After my arrest, I spent two days at the police station, where I was hung from the ceiling and beaten with a club until I agreed to confess. After coming to prison, an investigating magistrate came to interview me, but I have never had a trial. Later I was told that my file was destroyed in a fire, so I am still here. Those with relatives who can pay can get out of here, but my family is dead, so there is no money to pay them.[39]

Poor record keeping may also be the reason that some detainees have been kept for several years after they had served their sentence.[40]

A chalkboard in one of the three wings of the *Maison Centrale* in Conakry is used to keep track of the number of prisoners in different cells. © 2005 Kim Osborn

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[39] Human Rights Watch interview with a detainee in the *Maison Centrale*, Conakry, June 20, 2006.

[40] A local criminal defense lawyer told Human Rights Watch that he has recently managed to free two such prisoners. A local prisoners' advocacy organization told Human Rights Watch that they have recently worked with the prison authorities to computerize the list of prisoners so that such incidents should no longer occur. Human Rights Watch interviews, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

V. Prison Conditions

Research conducted by Human Rights Watch into conditions within Guinean prisons where pre-trial detainees and others are held revealed gross inadequacies with respect to overcrowding, food and nutrition, and the level of training received by most prison guards. While Human Rights Watch's visit was limited to Guinea's biggest prison, the *Maison Centrale* in Conakry, conditions and problems are similar countrywide.[41]

Overcrowding

Severe overcrowding is acknowledged as the most basic, and most chronic, problem plaguing the *Maison Centrale*.[42] The *Maison Centrale* was originally designed to hold 240-300 prisoners.[43] The Current population hovers around 1,000, but has been as high as 1,500 in recent years.[44] In other words, for every space that exists in the *Maison Centrale*, there are 3.3-5 individuals to lay claim to it. As a result, most prisoners and detainees spend 24 hours a day in cramped, dimly lit cells, where there is space to sleep, but little more.[45] As noted above, an important contributor to overcrowding in Guinea's prisons is the confinement of detainees awaiting trial.[46]

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[41] Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

[42] Ibid. Also Human Rights Watch interviews with Director of the *Maison Centrale* (Régisseur) Soriba Bangoura, June 15, and with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, June 14, 2006.

[43] Built in 1930 by French colonists, the *Maison Centrale* is a crumbling collection of buildings in central Conakry surrounded by low concrete walls topped with barbed wire. Since their original construction, few changes have been made to the three buildings that house the bulk of the prison's population, adult males. Human Rights Watch interview with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 22, 2006.

[44] Ibid. Also Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14 2006.

[45] Adult male prisoners are almost never let out their cramped cells, due to concern that they will escape. Human Rights Watch interviews with Director of the Maison Centrale Soriba Bangoura, June 15, and with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, June 14, 2006. The director of the Maison Centrale cited an example from May 2005 when "hundreds" of prisoners had escaped.

[46] Human Rights Watch interviews with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, General Prosecutor for the Court of Appeals Yves William Aboly, Director of the Maison Centrale Soriba Bangoura, and a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 2006.

Prisoners in the *Maison Centrale* look out of an overcrowded, dimly-lit cell. © 2005 Kim Osborn

Lack of Food and Nutrition

The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners provide specifically that all prisoners "shall be provided with food of nutritional value adequate for health and strength, of wholesome quality and well prepared and served." Nearly all prisoners and detainees interviewed by Human Rights Watch indicated that they do not have adequate food. Adult males at the *Maison Centrale* are generally fed a couple of handfuls of plain rice once per day with a tablespoon of palm oil or watery sauce on top.[47]

In 2004, roughly seven individuals died per month due to malnutrition and disease at the *Maison Centrale*.[48] Although Human Rights Watch was told by the director of the *Maison Centrale* that this figure has since decreased, it is difficult to identify the current number of deaths due to malnutrition and disease at the *Maison Centrale* in part because the prison director has a policy of releasing individuals who are about to die for one reason or another, so that they do not die in custody.[49] Deaths due to malnutrition undoubtedly continue, however: a local prisoners' advocacy organization told Human Rights Watch

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[47] During its visit, Human Rights Watch was able to observe several feeding times.

[48] Human Rights Watch interviews with Director of the *Maison Centrale* Soriba Bangoura, June 15, 2006.

[49] Ibid., and Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

that in Coyah, a small town about an hour's drive outside of Conakry, two individuals died from complications due to malnutrition soon after their release in May 2006.[50]

The national director of penal administration told Human Rights Watch that he estimates 10 - 15 percent of prisoners and detainees in the *Maison Centrale* suffer from malnutrition.[51] However, a prisoners' advocacy organization interviewed by Human Rights Watch suggested that this figure could be much higher.[52] The national director of penal administration told Human Rights Watch that to alleviate the problem, he would like to create revenue-generating work for the prisoners and detainees so that the prison can obtain enough money to provide adequate food.[53]

Due to the inadequacy of prison food, prisoners and detainees often rely on families to supplement their rations, though guards require families to pay 3,000 GNF (about U.S. $0.60) to deliver a meal, and some individuals report that the guards pick through the meals to eat any meat before delivering them.[54] During its visit, Human Rights Watch witnessed one family pleading with a guard to deliver food because they claimed they did not have the amount requested by the guard.

Volunteer Prison Guards

Prisons in Guinea, including the *Maison Centrale,* are staffed largely by "volunteer" guards, who have no training and are not paid by the state for their services but who are fed by the government using the same budget that is designated to provide food for prisoners and detainees.[55] Guards are generally "paid" by selling goods to prisoners and detainees, such as marijuana and cigarettes, in exchange for money, clothing, and other items of value.[56] Guards also make money through extortion. For example, although boys are generally separated from adult males in the *Maison Centrale*, some guards use placement with adults as a means of extortion—they may put a child who has been given money by a parent in with adults until the boy agrees to give the guard some of the money.[57] Such practices

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[50] Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

[51] Human Rights Watch interview with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 22, 2006.

[52] Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

[53] Human Rights Watch interview with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 22, 2006.

[54] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 20 and 23, 2006.

[55] Human Rights Watch interviews with the National Director of Penal Administration, Naby Youssouf Sylla, June 22, and with the Director of the *Maison Centrale* Soriba Bangoura, June 15, 2006.

[56] Human Rights Watch interview with a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 14, 2006.

[57] Ibid., and Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners and detainees, Conakry, June 2006. Guards also punish minors for various infractions, such as fighting among themselves, by placing them in cells with adults.

violate Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides that "[j]uvenile offenders shall be segregated from adults."[58]

One official from the Ministry of Justice interviewed by Human Rights Watch lamented the lack of salary and training, citing them as one reason that some prison guards engage in what he called the "perverse side of things."[59] Human Rights Watch was told by officials from the Ministry of Justice that the government hopes that guards will be given a salary and training in the near future.[60] Human Rights Watch did not gather any evidence of physical brutality on the part of prison guards.[61]

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[58] See also Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37(c). The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Article 8(d), similarly provides that "young prisoners shall be kept separate from adults." Human Rights Watch helped extract five minors from the adults' section during an initial tour of the facilities.

[59] Human Rights Watch interview with National Director of Penal Administration Naby Youssouf Sylla, Conakry, June 22, 2006.

[60] Ibid., and Human Rights Watch interview with the Director of the *Maison Centrale* Soriba Bangoura, Conakry, June 15, 2006.

[61] Human Rights Watch interviews with prisoners, detainees, and a local prisoners' advocacy organization, Conakry, June 2006.

VI. Excessive Use of Force and the Killing of Unarmed Demonstrators

Brutality on the part of Guinean security forces includes both the everyday, such as that which takes place during police interrogation, and the political. One example of the latter is recurrent excessive use of force against unarmed demonstrators. As Guinea has slid deeper and deeper into economic and political chaos, there has been an increasing number of demonstrations by trade unions and other civil society organizations. Guinean civil society, once thought to be a weak voice for political change, has increasingly attempted to pressure the government for political and economic reform.[62] Civil society leaders interviewed by Human Rights Watch attribute this increased activity to rapidly deteriorating economic conditions, which many Guineans find increasingly intolerable.[63]

Since late 2005 there have been several incidents in which Guinean security forces have used disproportionate and lethal force against unarmed demonstrators. In September 2005, two individuals in the northern town of Kouroussa were reportedly seriously injured after a prefect's guards opened fire on a crowd protesting government corruption.[64] In November 2005, three protestors in the central town of Télimélé were reportedly killed after soldiers opened fire on students demanding more teachers.[65] Human Rights Watch interviewed victims of and witnesses to an incident in Conakry in February 2006 when soldiers fired on demonstrators, resulting in two wounded and one killed, during a nationwide strike to protest increases in basic commodity prices.[66]

The most serious incident occurred in June 2006 when Guinean security forces responded to a second strike to protest increases in basic commodity prices with excessive and inappropriate use of force.

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[62] Many civil society organizations interviewed by Human Rights Watch attribute this previous reluctance and timidity to the severe repression experienced by many Guineans during the presidency of Sékou Touré. Human Rights Watch interviews with members of Guinean civil society, Conakry, April and June 2006.

[63] Human Rights Watch interviews with civil society leaders, Conakry, April and June 2006.

[64] "Guinea: Two hurt in anti-corruption protest, *IRINnews*, September 9, 2005, http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=48990&SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=GUINEA (accessed August 10, 2006).

[65] Human Rights Watch interview with local human rights defender, Conakry, April 3, 2006. See also "Three killed in Guinea protest over education," Reuters, November 25, 2006.

[66] Human Rights Watch interviews with victims and eyewitness, Conakry, April 3, 4, and 7, 2006.

June 2006 Nationwide Strike

On June 8, 2006, Guinea's two most prominent trade unions called a nationwide strike to protest, among other things, increases in prices for rice and gas.[67] The first four days of the June strike were relatively peaceful, with most citizens choosing to stay home rather than protest in the street.

On Sunday, June 11, an announcement was made on national radio calling all secondary students to present themselves at test centers to sit for national baccalaureate exams.[68] When students arrived the following morning, they found that there was no one to supervise the exams because the teachers' union had joined the strike.[69] Faced with what many students believed to be the prospect of a "white year" (a year without exams, requiring students to repeat the school year), thousands of students and other civilians took to the streets of Conakry, Labé, N'zérékoré and other towns across the country in protest, chanting anti-government slogans and calling for the government to step down.

In some locations, protests were peaceful. In other locations, students and other civilians set up barricades, burned tires, threw rocks at security forces, and burned cars. In Labé (one of Guinea's regional capitals) students vandalized several government installations, breaking windows and damaging walls at the offices of the governor, mayor, and prefect.[70]

Victims and witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch described how police and gendarmes would generally kick and severely beat anyone they could catch on the street. Eyewitnesses in different locations told Human Rights Watch how security forces fired directly into crowds of unarmed demonstrators. Many protestors interviewed claimed that the throwing of rocks and other acts of vandalism by protestors were in response to police brutality—that is, that they did not start until police beatings and shootings began, or greatly increased thereafter.[71] Human Rights Watch sent a letter to the minister of

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[67] The two trade unions are the National Confederation of Guinean Workers (*Confederation Nationale des Travailleurs de Guinée,* CNTG) and the Guinean Workers' Union (*Union Syndicale des Travailleurs de Guinée,* USTG). The June 2006 strike followed the February strike called to protest increases in prices of basic commodities, which was "suspended" after five days based on government concessions. On June 8, however, the trade unions re-activated the strike because they said that the government had not implemented any of the concessions it had previously made. Both strikes were observed by many Guineans who were not union members. Human Rights Watch interviews with diplomats, journalists, union leaders, and members of Guinean civil society, Conakry, April and June 2006.

[68] Human Rights Watch interviews with students and civil society leaders, Conakry and Labé, June 20 and 26, 2006.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Human Rights Watch interviews with students and other protestors, Labé, June 26, 2006.

[71] Human Rights Watch interviews with numerous students and other protestors, Conakry and Labé, June 2006.

security requesting an official account from the police, but no response had been received at the time this report went to publication.

Accounts of Lethal Use of Force

While police forces did use teargas and warning shots at various locations, in several different incidents across the country police and soldiers opened fire on unarmed demonstrators with live ammunition in what amounted to inappropriate and excessive use of force. Human Rights Watch gathered accounts from eyewitnesses to a total of thirteen killings by police and soldiers in Conakry and Labé.[72] The following account by a taxi driver in Conakry describes one such incident:

> On Monday the 12th, around 9:30 or so, I was sitting in a café that taxi drivers in the area frequent. The café overlooks a crossroads, and many people were coming and going in the street. Many of them were in student uniforms. Around 12:30, I saw four or five police vehicles come. I don't know exactly how many policemen got out, but there were a lot, maybe even one hundred of them. They had black uniforms and had riot gear. There were also some gendarmes there. Students were not throwing rocks at them at this point. The policemen got out of their vehicles and immediately began shooting teargas directly at the crowd that had gathered in the crossroads. Then they started shooting their rifles. I saw four people killed with my own eyes. Two were hit in the chest. One was hit behind the ear. People started to flee. The owner of the café where I was sitting said he wanted everyone out. People were being beaten left and right. A policeman grabbed me and hit me on the shin with a club. You can still see all the bruises. If the police catch you and you don't have any money, you get taken to the police station. But because I had 100,000 francs [GNF, about U.S.$20], they freed me. One of the policemen told me, "He who speaks of this will be eliminated," in Sousou.[73] I fled after my release, so I didn't see who picked up the bodies. Since then, opposition parties have come to the neighborhood to see what happened, but the police have been telling people, "If you speak about what happened, you'll be eliminated."[74]

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[72] While the official death toll stands at eleven, a group of local civil society organizations maintains that twenty-one people were killed by gunfire from the Guinean security forces during the demonstrations nationwide.

[73] The Sousou are one of Guinea's major ethnic groups, and are most numerous in the lower coastal regions of Guinea. It is the ethnic group of President Conté and many key members of government.

[74] Human Rights Watch interview with a witness to violence during the strike, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

Another witness interviewed by Human Rights Watch, a mechanic in Conakry, provided the following account of a different incident involving lethal use of force:

> On Monday the 12th, I was sitting in front of my house in the early morning. I saw lots of people running through the streets and chanting and screaming. They were saying, "Down with the PUP!"[75] The energy excited me, so I followed the crowd. I followed them to the stadium, but when I got there, my older brother saw me and told me to go home, so I started walking back towards my house. I made it to a crossroads near my house. I saw a group of police sitting in the back of a pickup truck firing in the air. I ran with a group of people behind a building. One of the young men behind the building said he wanted to see what was happening, so he stuck his head around the corner to look. I heard a shot and saw his body fall to the ground. He was shot in the head. I started running away, and then I heard people yelling, "They killed him! They killed him!"[76]

In a radio broadcast on June 12, the Guinean government expressed its condolences to victims' families, but accused opposition parties of trying to destabilize the government by providing finance and equipment to individuals who took part in the demonstrations.[77] The Presidency of the European Union and the UN Secretary-General both issued statements expressing concern at the deaths.[78]

Accounts of Police Beatings, Rape, and Robbery of Bystanders

As protestors dispersed into surrounding neighborhoods, police and gendarmes pursued them, rampaging through the homes and businesses of local residents, beating not only the protesters, but many others including women, children, and elderly men who had not participated in the protests. Many of those interviewed by Human Rights Watch had been arrested and taken to police detention facilities where they reported being beaten with clubs, held for several days, and freed only after family members bribed police officers to secure their release. The following account from a 40-year-old father is typical:

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[75] The Party for Unity and Progress (*Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès,* PUP) is the ruling party to which President Conté belongs.

[76] Human Rights Watch interview with a witness to violence during the strike, Conakry, June 28, 2006.

[77] Transcript printed in, "Après les folles journées de 12 Juin 2006 en Guinée c'est dans une déclaration radiodiffusée que le gouvernement indexe les partis politiques," *L'Observateur* (Guinea), June 13, 2006.

[78] Statement by the Presidency on Behalf of the European Union on Guinea Conakry, P/06/85, Brussels, June 16, 2006; Statement Attributable to the Spokesman of the Secretary-General, New York, June 13, 2006.

> On Tuesday morning, around 9:30, I was home sitting on my porch. I had told all my kids not to go out due to the strike. Suddenly, a teargas canister was launched into the clearing in front of our house. The next thing I knew, I saw police come running into the area. There were at least thirty of them. My kids ran over to me on the porch to be protected. But the police started catching my children and hitting them with police batons. I said to leave them alone because they haven't even gone outside. When I said that, four policemen came and grabbed me. They took me and four children to a truck parked on the road not far from the house. They emptied everything from our pockets, taking my watch, 150,000 francs [GNF, about U.S.$30], and my shoes. We drove off, and they continued to beat us with their baton in the truck. Then they stopped to transfer us to another truck. To do this they formed a line of policemen on two sides that we had to pass through from truck to truck, and they struck us as we went through. Later, we changed trucks again, but they didn't hit us this time. By this time, there were so many of us in the truck, we were stacked up like luggage on top of each other. They took us to the police station near Cameyenne.[79] They lined us up in a big courtyard in front of a table were we had to give our name and neighborhood. They asked no other questions. Then they undressed us. I asked what we had done to be taken from our own house, but they just said to shut up and sit down. After this, they put us naked with our faces to the sun on the hot pavement and left us like that for an hour. Then they put us in prison. There were others there, maybe fifty or so. They were naked too. We stayed there until 6 p.m. or so. If prisoners had managed to keep any money, you could pay a policeman to call your relative to come pay to get you out. But we didn't have any. Luckily, a relative had figured out where we were and came to negotiate our release. We paid 500,000 francs [GNF, about U.S.$100] for the five of us.

We want to file a complaint, but it will create more problems for us. It's the leaders who sent them here, so if we complain, it'll just make it worse.[80]

Two women told Human Rights Watch that they were raped by security forces in their homes. One of them, a 19-year-old student in the tenth grade, described being raped by the police:

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[79] One of the neighborhoods in central Conakry.

[80] Human Rights Watch interview with a 40-year-old Conakry resident, June 17, 2006.

> I was preparing lunch for the family when a large group of police officers came into the courtyard. We thought that because we were staying home, we wouldn't have any problems. I saw them hitting some of my brothers, and I ran into my house. One of the policemen came into my room. Like the others, he was dressed in black and wearing a bulletproof vest. He pushed me up against the armoire. With his hand he ripped my shirt in front and hurt my breasts. Another officer came in and said, "Leave her alone, she's just a child." The two of them left, but the first policeman came back a second time. Then he raped me. His gun was pressing on my shoulder. He left, but then he came back a third time and pressed a knife to my head. I thought he was going to kill me, but I guess it was only to frighten me. His hands smelled like gas. They were disgusting. The next day, I had pain down in my stomach and I was bleeding. Because it's a policeman who did it, there's nowhere to go to talk about it. They do it because they are armed, and because they know they won't be punished. They are no different than the bandits.[81]

Numerous witnesses described to Human Rights Watch how during the protests and in the days following the protests, police and gendarmes stole valuables at gunpoint, including cell phones, household electrical goods, and money from both protestors and bystanders. The following account from a goat and sheep merchant in Conakry was typical:

> I had gone to feed my flock, and was returning to my house on my motorcycle. When I got to a crossroads, three soldiers wearing red berets stopped me and removed the key.[82] They physically pulled me off of the motorcycle and put it in the back of their truck. They undressed me in the middle of the road, so I was wearing only my underwear. I had 840,000 [about U.S.$168] in my pocket for buying sheep, which they took. They also took my cell phone. They beat me with some kind of club until I lost consciousness. Look, you can still see all of the bruises. I don't even know when they left or who took me back to my house because I had been beaten so much, on the head and everywhere.[83]

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[81] Human Rights Watch interview with a 19-year-old student, Conakry, June 20, 2006.

[82] There are two primary divisions within the army that wear red berets—the Autonomous Presidential Security Battalion (*Bataillon Autonome de la Sécurité Presidentielle*, BASP), or presidential guard, stationed primarily in and around Conakry, and the Autonomous Battalion of Airborne Troupes (*Bataillon Autonome des troupes Aéroportées*, BATA), an elite group of commandos stationed throughout the interior of the country. Human Rights Watch interviews a former member of the Guinean military, Conakry, July 1, 2006.

[83] Human Rights Watch interview with a merchant, Conakry, June 24, 2006.

Another witness interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Conakry, a young merchant, provided the following account:

> I was in my bedroom when I heard some shots outside the house—about five of them in rapid succession. I heard yelling outside. Someone was telling my mother to bring all her children out in the courtyard. I head them say, "We know you have lots of kids and they are the ones causing the problems." My mom said we weren't home. The next thing I knew a group of policemen, ten or so of them, broke down the door and came in to the house. You can still see the shattered doors. They were dressed in riot gear. They didn't ask or say anything. They just started searching the house and beating the five of us that were in there with a police baton. You can still see the bruises all over my back. They took two cell phones and 500,000 francs [GNF, about U.S.$100] in cash. They spent about 20 minutes searching the house. When they were done searching the house and beating us with clubs, they took five of us, including my father, down to the street and put us in the back of a truck. My mother came running to the truck and gave one of the policemen 159,000 francs [GNF, about U.S.$31.80] to let us go, and they let us get out of the truck. I haven't seen those policemen since then.[84]

Intimidation of Journalists, Union Leaders, and Opposition Parties in Connection with the June 2006 Strike

One of Guinea's most prominent union leaders told Human Rights Watch that in the weeks leading up to the June 2006 strike he was verbally threatened by two government ministers, and was followed by a suspicious individual. When army guards stationed at the bank where the union leader works went to arrest the suspicious individual, they reportedly found an identity card showing his affiliation with Guinean intelligence services, and a pistol with a silencer on it.[85]

During the strike, eight members of a prominent opposition party, the Union of Republican Forces (*Union des Forces Républicaines,* UFR), were arrested in their homes at two or three in the morning and detained for one week at a police station in downtown Conakry.[86] UFR leaders told Human Rights Watch that the detainees were denied

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[84] Human Rights Watch interview with a merchant, Conakry, June 17, 2006.

[85] Human Rights Watch interview with a union leader, Conakry, June 20, 2006.

[86] Human Rights Watch interviews with UFR party leaders and neighbors who witnessed the arrest of one of the eight UFR party members, Conakry, June 19 and 21, 2006.

visitation rights by their lawyers and ultimately released nine days later, with no explanation.[87]

A local correspondent for Radio France International told Human Rights Watch that the government may have tried to kidnap him from his home in the early hours of the morning on June 16.[88] According to the correspondent, police arrived in the vicinity of his house to effect the arrest, but mistakenly knocked on his neighbor's door instead. Another of the correspondent's neighbors reportedly overheard one policeman saying, "He's not a journalist" and another who replied, "Let's take him anyway."[89] The detained neighbor was freed a day later by the police after reportedly paying 200,000 GNF (about U.S.$40).

Government Response to Killings and Other Strike-Related Abuses

The Guinean government has legal obligations under several international and African human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which require it to respect the right to life and freedoms of expression and assembly.[90] The actions of the security forces during the first weeks of June violated those obligations.

The violations detailed in this report require immediate and thorough investigation on the part of Guinean authorities. However, when Human Rights Watch interviewed the public prosecutor for the regions of lower and middle Guinea, he suggested that if there is to be an investigation into the June 2006 demonstrations, it is up to each individual district prosecutor to decide whether to investigate problems in his or her district.[91]

In its letter to the minister of security Human Rights Watch requested a response to the allegations relating to police participation in violations during the strike and the status of any investigations that might be underway, but no response had been received at the time this report went to publication.

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[87] Human Rights Watch interviews with UFR party leaders, Conakry, June 21, 2006.

[88] Human Rights Watch interview with a correspondent for Radio France International and other journalists, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

[89] Human Rights Watch interview with a correspondent for Radio France International, Conakry, June 23, 2006.

[90] ICCPR, Articles 6, 19, and 21; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Articles 4, 9, and 11.

[91] Human Rights Watch interview General Prosecutor for the Court of Appeals Yves William Aboly, Conakry, June 28, 2006.

Local human rights defenders and other members of civil society told Human Rights Watch that there are no recent examples where killing or wounding of demonstrators has resulted in a member of the Guinean security forces being brought to trial.[92] According to one local human rights defender, "the soldier has no fear to use his weapon on a group of civilians because he is sure that there will be no follow up."[93]

[92] Human Rights Watch interviews with local human rights defenders and other civil society leaders, Conakry, April and June 2006.

[93] Human Rights Watch interview with a local human rights defender, April 3, 2006.

VII. Conclusion

The rights discussed in this report, including the inherent right to life, freedom from torture, freedom of expression and of assembly, and the right to a trial within a reasonable period, are important foundations for any democratic society. And yet, over 20 years after the end of Guinea's brutal dictatorship under Sékou Touré, and over a decade after Guinea's transition to multiparty democracy, brutality on the part of Guinean security forces, and consequent violations of these rights, have not been stopped.

Putting an end to the violations described in this report requires that the Guinean government take immediate measures to end the impunity that emboldens perpetrators and sustains abuses. To this end, the Guinean government must show that it is concerned with protecting the rights of its citizens by immediately investigating the violations outlined in this report and holding those responsible to account.

At the same time, to encourage the development of a climate of accountability, key actors with a stake in Guinea's future such as Guinea's biggest bilateral and multilateral donors—including the United States, France, and the European Union—should support local nongovernmental organizations to help develop their ability to monitor and document violations by security forces and conduct advocacy with respect to these violations, including advocacy on behalf of prisoners, at a national level.

VIII. Recommendations

To the Government of Guinea

- Acknowledge and condemn excessive use of force on the part of state security forces during recent demonstrations, including the June 2006 nationwide strike.
- Immediately investigate and punish, in accordance with international standards, crimes committed by state security forces during the June 2006 nationwide strike, including murder, rape, assault, and theft.
- Thoroughly review—and as necessary revise—the training curriculum for police and other security forces to ensure comprehensive training on human rights issues including legal and appropriate interrogation techniques, crowd control, and appropriate use of force. Provide comprehensive training for police officers on the conduct of investigations. All training must be consistent with international human rights standards, such as the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.
- Publicly condemn the use of torture and ill-treatment by police officers and other law enforcement agencies, including through a public information campaign to increase awareness that torture is forbidden under Guinean and international law.
- Investigate promptly and independently all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by police officers or other law enforcement agencies. Identify the individuals responsible for ordering and carrying out the torture, and immediately suspend them from active duty, pending criminal prosecution.
- Ensure that persons taken into custody are charged and brought before a court of competent jurisdiction within 48 hours.
- Ensure that children in detention are kept separate from adults.
- Ensure that all suspects in police custody and in prisons are given adequate food and water, and are granted access to medical treatment when required.
- Compensate victims of torture and ill-treatment adequately and speedily.
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Torture, allowing visits to Guinea by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Committee against Torture, and the UN special rapporteur on torture.

To the Judiciary

- Immediately conduct a review of all prisoners in Guinea who have waited for more than four months without trial.
- Ensure that all defendants are brought to trial within a reasonable time. The authorities should show special diligence in bringing the case to trial if the accused is in pre-trial detention.
- Ensure that the *Cour d'Assise* has sufficient funding to hold sessions at least every four months, as required by Guinean law.
- Ensure that all prison guards receive a regular salary and training from the state, including human rights training.

To the United States, France, the European Union and other International Donors

- Call publicly and privately on the Guinean government to investigate, and where applicable punish in accordance with international standards, those responsible for crimes during the June 2006 nationwide strike, including, murder, rape, assault, and theft, and those responsible for torture of individuals in police custody.
- Support local nongovernmental organizations to improve the monitoring and documenting of police violations and to undertake advocacy at a national level.
- Support local nongovernmental organizations conducting advocacy on behalf of prisoners.

To the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

- The UN special rapporteur on torture and the African Commission "focal point" on prevention of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in Africa should request permission to visit Guinea and prepare reports on torture and ill-treatment with recommendations to the government of Guinea.