

GUINEA 2016 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guinea is a constitutional democratic republic in the early stages of a transition from decades of authoritarian rule. On October 11, 2015, the country held its second democratic presidential election, and incumbent President Alpha Conde won with 58 percent of the vote. The political campaign was more peaceful than the 2010 presidential and 2013 legislative elections, but a few deaths occurred during skirmishes between demonstrators and security forces.

Despite tighter rules of engagement and a prohibition on the use of lethal force during street protests, elements of the security forces on occasion acted independently of civilian control.

The most serious human rights problems remained life-threatening prison and detention center conditions; denial of fair trial; and violence and discrimination against women and girls, including sexual abuse, forced and early marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

Other human rights problems included: security force killings and use of excessive force against civilians, including torture to extract confessions; arbitrary arrest; lengthy pretrial detention and indefinite detention, including of political prisoners; arbitrary interference with family and home; restrictions on freedoms of press and assembly; corruption at all levels of government; discrimination against persons with disabilities; and human trafficking, including forced child labor.

Impunity remained a problem. The government took minimal steps to prosecute or punish officials who committed abuses during the year or in years past.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings

There were reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. Police use of excessive force resulted in the death of one demonstrator (see section 2.b.).

For example, on August 16, law enforcement personnel used lethal force during an opposition march, killing one person and injuring 12. One officer was arrested and was awaiting trial.

On June 18, a military unit commander ordered his security detail to beat a truck driver who was blocking his convoy. The crowd reacted and turned against the soldiers. The incident provoked two days of clashes and looting between civilians and soldiers, resulting in 17 injuries. The government took immediate action and removed the unit commander, Colonel Issa Camara, but the Ministry of Defense did not respond to the request by the Ministry of Justice to interrogate the colonel.

The promise by former prime minister Fofana to investigate the violence from 2012 and 2013 in the Forest Region involving law enforcement units remained unfulfilled.

Impunity persisted for grave abuses perpetrated by state actors in years past, including security force killings of at least 150 opposition demonstrators and the rape of more than 100 women and girls in the 2009 stadium massacre. Only one person--a low-ranking gendarme--was tried and convicted of rape during the stadium massacre; four low-ranking military personnel arrested in 2010 remained in indefinite detention. Two of the indicted alleged ringleaders of the massacre--Colonel Claude Pivi and Colonel Moussa Tiegboro Camara--remained in high-level government posts. In addition General Mathurin Bangoura, another indictee, was named governor of Conakry. The stadium massacre inquiry commission made some progress in 2015 when the judges indicted former junta leader Dadis Camara, who resided in Burkina Faso and acknowledged moral--but not criminal--responsibility for the event. The timing of the indictment raised questions as it coincided with Camara's meeting with the leader of the opposition. Aboubacar "Toumba" Diakite, another indicted alleged ringleader and Dadis Camara's aide de camp, was not arrested by year's end. The International Criminal Court, which continued its investigation into the 2009 stadium massacre, encouraged national authorities to investigate and try those responsible for crimes. Authorities took no action to exhume the bodies reportedly buried by security forces in mass graves.

The government took no action against perpetrators of the 2007 killings nationwide of between 137 and 186 demonstrators.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of new politically motivated disappearances.

The government continued to take no action to investigate the disappearance of dozens of prodemocracy demonstrators following the 2009 stadium massacre. The Association for the Victims of September 28 estimated 84 persons were still missing and presumed dead.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Although the constitution and law prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishments, human rights observers stated government officials continued to employ such practices with impunity. The old criminal code did not criminalize torture; however, on October 26, the new penal code was promulgated. The new code reconciles Guinean law with international conventions on torture. Security force personnel used violence to quell demonstrations, which resulted in deaths and injuries (see section 2.b.).

Abuse of inmates in prisons and in judicial police and gendarme detention centers continued at previous levels. Gendarmes and police designated as “judicial police officers” (OPJs) routinely abused detainees to coerce confessions. Human rights activists noted that the most egregious abuses occurred during arrest or in gendarme detention centers. A video of law enforcement officers forcefully interrogating a suspect went viral on April 23 after its posting on Facebook. The ensuing social media uproar prompted a quick reaction from the government, including from the minister of national reconciliation and from the national police director who launched an investigation that led to the identification and suspension of the officers involved. According to NGOs guards tortured, beat, raped, and otherwise abused detainees, including children, and coerced some women into exchanging sex for better treatment.

The government took no action against officials responsible for the September 2013 arbitrary detention and abuse of 33 persons, whom authorities held at the PM3 gendarme detention center in Matam and subsequently transferred to the Soronkony Military Camp near Kankan. The victims, all of whom were released in 2013, alleged their captors beat them and threatened them with death and torture at Soronkony. One prisoner subsequently died from injuries inflicted during his detention, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Guinea (OHCHR).

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Conditions in civilian prisons, which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice, remained harsh and life threatening. Abuse, poor sanitation, malnutrition, disease, and lack of medical attention were pervasive throughout the prison system, and worse in gendarmerie and police detention facilities. Violence, bribery of guards for miscellaneous services, and intermingling of minors, women, and men continued to be problems.

Physical Conditions: The government did not keep complete nationwide statistics on the number of prisoners held in prisons or in gendarmerie detention centers, but as of October, NGOs and the government estimated 2,900 prisoners and detainees in all categories were incarcerated nationwide.

As of June 1, Conakry Central Prison (CCP)--with a designed capacity of 300 persons--held approximately 1,400 inmates. Authorities held minors in a separate section of the prison, where they slept on iron bunk beds with no mattresses or on the floor because it was too hot on the upper bunks below the building's metal roof. Authorities did not separate pretrial detainees (59 percent) from convicted prisoners (41 percent), and the prison system often was unable to track pretrial detainees after arrest.

Most prisons and detention centers were overcrowded. In one section of the CCP, approximately 700 prisoners were held, with an estimated 50 prisoners packed into each of the cells that measured approximately 20 by 25 feet, with an open toilet and shower in the middle of each cell. Prisoners, who slept shoulder to shoulder on the floor due to overcrowding and lack of beds, were permitted to leave their cells for only one hour each day. Prison officials converted rehabilitation facilities, such as schools and workshops, into dormitories due to overcrowding.

In the two main prisons outside of Conakry and in gendarmerie detention centers, men and women were intermingled. The country did not have a juvenile detention system, and officials generally held juveniles with adults in prisons outside the capital. Men, women, and children were intermingled at gendarmerie detention centers, sometimes with women sleeping in hallways outside the prison cells.

Lack of healthcare personnel and medicine in prisons, combined with malnutrition and dehydration, made infection or illness life threatening; cases of beri-beri were recorded, and deaths of prisoners were seldom investigated. The two main prisons had a full-time doctor and medical staff, but lacked adequate medicine and funds. The CCP had a sick ward where approximately 30 patients were crowded into a

room 15 by 30 feet. Prisoners relied on family members, charities, or NGOs to bring medication, but visitors often had to pay bribes to provide the medicine to prisoners. Prisoners were sometimes close to death before they received treatment. Neglect, mismanagement, and lack of resources were prevalent. Toilets did not function, and prisoners slept and ate in the same space used for sanitation purposes. Access to drinking and bathing water was inadequate. Many prisons were former warehouses with little ventilation. Temperatures were stifling, and electricity was insufficient.

NGOs reported endemic malnutrition throughout the prison system. Authorities provided food at the CCP, but most prison directors relied on charities, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and NGOs to provide food for inmates. The CCP claimed it began providing two meals a day to all inmates in 2011; however, NGOs claimed prisoners in Conakry and elsewhere still received only one meal per day, and that many relied on food from their families or other outside sources. Relatives often abandoned prisoners due to the difficulty and cost of travel to prisons and because guards often demanded bribes for delivering food that they frequently confiscated.

The OHCHR and NGOs noted that conditions at gendarmerie detention centers, intended to hold detainees for not more than two days while they awaited court processing, were much worse than in prisons. Such “temporary” detention could last from a few days to several months, and facilities had no established system to provide meals or medical treatment. As in the case of prisons, gendarmerie facilities were dank and fetid. The government routinely suspended habeas corpus.

Although the Ministry of Justice administered civilian prisons, some prisoners exercised more power than did the guards, controlling conditions and cell assignments, and providing better conditions to prisoners who were able to pay. Prison administrators and the supervisors of gendarme detention centers said they sometimes had to follow directives from their military or gendarme superiors, even when they conflicted with orders from the Ministry of Justice. Sometimes the court would order prisoners released, but guards would not release them until they paid bribes.

Administration: Authorities did not use alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders. Prison recordkeeping was inadequate. If prisoners paid bribes for their release, records of their arrest often would be “lost.” There were no ombudsmen to respond to complaints. An inspector-general of prisons in the Ministry of Justice had responsibility for handling complaints, but this rarely occurred. The local

NGO Equal Rights for All (MDT) stated religious practice was restricted at prisons other than the CCP. Prisoners and detainees have the right to submit complaints but seldom did so due to fear of reprisal by prison guards or gendarmes. Prisoners must use a lawyer to file a complaint, but lawyers were scarce and expensive. Prison authorities did not investigate credible allegations of abuse or inhuman prison conditions.

Independent Monitoring: The government permitted prison visits by local humanitarian and religious organizations that offered medical care and food to those in severe need. Local NGOs--such as MDT and the Association for the Support of Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Detainees--as well as volunteers and religious groups received regular and unimpeded access to the CCP. The ICRC had regular access to all civilian prisons and detention facilities and continued partnership programs with prison and other security authorities to improve civilian prison conditions. The government also allowed international organizations and NGOs access to detention centers operated by the gendarmerie.

Conditions in military prisons, which were under the Ministry of Defense, could not be verified since the government denied access to prison advocacy groups and international organizations. Although military authorities claimed they did not hold civilians at military prisons, previous cases contradicted this assertion. Reports indicated a prison continued to exist at a military camp on Kassa Island, but authorities refused to permit independent monitoring.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, but the government did not always observe these prohibitions.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

The gendarmerie, a part of the Ministry of Defense, and the National Police, under the Ministry of Security, share responsibility for internal security, although their mandates are not clearly defined. The army is responsible for external security but also plays a role in domestic security. The law permits the military, the gendarmerie, and police to make arrests, but only the gendarmerie can arrest members of the military and police. There are also special police or gendarme units, such as the Anti-Criminal Bureau and the Secretariat General of the Presidency in Charge of Special Services in the Fight against Drugs and Organized Crime. Judicial Police Officers (OPJs)--mixed units of police and gendarmes with

special training in investigative techniques--were responsible to the courts and investigated specific crimes.

There were instances in which security forces failed to prevent or respond to societal violence, including several incidents that took place nationwide as groups reacted violently. During the year nationwide mob violence killed 17 persons, five of whom mobs forcibly removed from security force custody.

Police remained ineffective, poorly paid, and inadequately equipped. There were multiple reports of security service units disregarding their orders and resorting to excessive force.

Corruption remained widespread (see section 4). Administrative controls over police were ineffective, and security forces rarely followed the penal code. Few victims reported crimes due to the common perception that police were corrupt, ineffective, and dangerous.

The government continued reform efforts by standardizing uniforms, providing identity cards, and removing imposters. The gendarmerie continued to receive improved training and equipment. The government established strict rules of engagement for protest marches, with standing orders to allow destruction of property--including police stations--rather than resorting to lethal force.

There were limited internal and external mechanisms to investigate security force abuse, but these mechanisms were ineffective due to a lack of professionalism and skills and a dysfunctional judicial system.

Impunity remained a widespread problem, and the government took only minimal steps to prosecute or punish officials who committed abuses. Despite a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) request for more information, the case of a human rights lawyer who was beaten by security personnel in 2014 had not been heard in court by year's end.

In another example, authorities had tried no perpetrators in the 2012 killing of Aissatou Boiro, an anticorruption activist. Authorities arrested two persons in 2012 and charged them with the killing but later released one of the suspects after a criminal court employee forged the prosecutor's signature on court documents. Authorities rearrested the suspect, but the case had not gone to trial by year's end. In March authorities' explanation of the murder of Boiro was that it was a crime but not politically motivated.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

Although the law requires arrest warrants, police arrested many persons without warrants. The law also provides that detainees be charged before a magistrate within 48 hours, renewable once if authorized by a judge, but many detainees were held for longer periods. Authorities held most prisoners in the three main prisons indefinitely without trial. In cases involving national security, the law allows the length of time to be doubled to 96 hours, renewable once.

The law precludes the arrest of persons in their homes between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., but night arrests occurred. After being charged, the accused may be held until the conclusion of the case, including a period of appeal. Authorities must inform detainees of charges against them within 48 hours. Authorities routinely ignored the legal provision entitling defendants to an attorney and did not provide indigent defendants with an attorney at state expense. Although the law prohibits incommunicado detention, it occurred. Release on bail was at the discretion of the magistrate who had jurisdiction. The law allows detainees prompt access to family members, but such access was sometimes denied or allowed only if an official was present, or if the family member paid a bribe for access.

Arbitrary Arrest: Many arrests took place without warrants and in violation of other due process protections provided in the law. Police arbitrarily arrested and detained opposition members. Authorities also arrested family members for offenses allegedly committed by their relatives (see sections 1.e. and 1.f.).

Pretrial Detention: Authorities held approximately 75 percent of prisoners in indefinite pretrial detention. They often held pretrial detainees three years or more before trial completion and sentencing or release. Judicial inefficiency and corruption contributed to the long delays.

In August a UN-funded mission by an NGO in the prisons of Labe and Conakry provided legal support to 168 women and minors, resulting in 10 women and 21 minors being released.

Detainee's Ability to Challenge Lawfulness of Detention before a Court: Articles 147 and 148 of the criminal procedural code provide that the detainee or his/her lawyer may request provisional release at any point in the proceedings. The investigating magistrate has the obligation to transmit the request to the prosecutor

within 48 hours. Few detainees, however, choose this option because of the difficulties they would face.

Amnesty: Following his reelection, in December 2015 President Conde pardoned one of his strongest political opponents, Bah Oury, after he received a life sentence in absentia in 2013. The National Assembly, however, had not passed an amnesty law on Oury's behalf to expunge his criminal record, which he would need done if he intended to pursue his political career.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Although the constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, the judicial system lacked independence and was underfunded, inefficient, and overtly corrupt. Budget shortfalls, a shortage of qualified lawyers and magistrates, an outdated and restrictive penal code, nepotism, and ethnic bias limited the judiciary's effectiveness. As of 2012 the country had only 200 magistrates (judges, court reporters, and prosecutors). As a result, in the lowest courts in prefectural regions (Courts of the Peace), one person often acted as judge, prosecutor, and court reporter. Regularly scheduled criminal trials with the Cour d'Assises (High Crimes Court) resumed in 2012 after a seven-year suspension. The court, which is supposed to meet three times a year to try "high crimes," had only met once since 2012. Domestic court orders often were not enforced. For example, some prisoners freed by the courts remained in prison because they could not pay "exit fees" to guards. On the other hand, politically connected criminals often escaped prosecution.

Many citizens, wary of judicial corruption or with no other choice, relied on traditional systems of justice at the village or urban neighborhood level. Litigants presented their civil cases before a village chief, a neighborhood leader, or a council of "wise men." The dividing line between the formal and informal justice systems was vague, and authorities sometimes referred a case from the formal to the traditional system to assure compliance by all parties. Similarly, a case not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties in the traditional system could be referred to the formal system for adjudication. In the traditional system, evidence given by women carried less weight.

Trial Procedures

Trials are public, and juries are used for criminal cases in the High Crimes Court. Defendants have the right to be present and to consult with an attorney in a timely

manner. The prosecution prepares a case file, including testimony and other evidence, and provides a copy for the defense. Defendants have the right to confront and question prosecution witnesses and to present witnesses and evidence on their own behalf. The law provides for the presumption of innocence of accused persons, the independence of judges, the equality of citizens before the law, the right of the accused to counsel (but only for major crimes), and the right to appeal a judicial decision, but these rights were not consistently observed. Authorities must inform defendants in detail of the charges, and with free interpretation as necessary from the moment charged through all appeals, and must charge or release them within 48 hours, but authorities did not always respect these rights. Defendants generally had adequate time but not the facilities, such as access to a lawyer, to prepare a defense. Most cases never came to trial. Officials may not hold defendants for more than six months to a year (depending on the charge) before trial. Authorities frequently denied defendants these rights.

Although the government was responsible for funding legal defense costs in serious criminal cases, it rarely disbursed funds for this purpose. The attorney for the defense, if there was one, frequently received no payment. Authorities allowed detainees' attorneys access to their clients, but often on condition that prison guards or gendarmes be present. Under law defendants have the right not to be compelled to testify or confess guilt, but torture in detention centers undermined this protection.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

According to NGOs the government arrested a few individuals as "political intimidation" but released them shortly thereafter. The government permitted access to such persons on a regular basis by the ICRC.

After four years General Nouhou Thiam and four other military personnel--who were in prison for their alleged connection with the 2011 assassination attempt on President Conde--were tried and released in March, following a sentence of "time served." According to human rights activists, that sentence does not exist in the country's criminal justice system but was the only way for the government to avoid being prosecuted for abusive or arbitrary detention. The length of their detention exceeded the maximum sentence for their alleged crimes: General Thiam was facing charges carrying a two-month sentence, and charges against the four others carried six-month sentences.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

The law provides for a judicial procedure in civil matters, including lawsuits seeking damages for human rights violations. Nevertheless, the judicial process was neither independent nor impartial, and bribes and political and social status often influenced decisions. There were few lawsuits seeking damages for human rights violations, in part due to public fear of suing security force members and lack of confidence in the competence and impartiality of the judiciary. Domestic court orders often were not enforced. NGOs that filed cases for civilians in 2012, 2013, and 2014--ranging from complaints of torture to indefinite detention--claimed their cases had yet to be heard.

f. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, but police reportedly ignored legal procedures in the pursuit of criminal suspects, including when it served their personal interests (see section 1.e.). Authorities sometimes removed persons from their homes at all hours, stole their personal belongings, and demanded payment for their release.

The government continued to punish family members for alleged offenses committed by relatives.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and of the press, but the government restricted press freedoms.

Press and Media Freedoms: Independent and opposition-owned media were active and generally expressed a wide variety of views. Print media had limited reach due to the low literacy rate (41 percent) and the high cost of newspapers. Radio remained the most important source of information for the public, and numerous private stations broadcast throughout the country. FM radio call-in shows were popular and allowed citizens to express broad discontent with the government. An increase in online news websites reflected the growing demand for divergent views. Nevertheless, libels and allegations could result in government reprisals, including suspensions and fines. For example, after being accused of being an accessory to insult of the president of the republic, a journalist of private radio

station Milo FM was sentenced on June 22 by the Court of First Instance of the prefecture of Kankan (Upper Guinea) to pay a fine of one million Guinean francs (GNF) (\$112).

Violence and Harassment: There were reports of direct physical attacks, harassment, and intimidation of journalists by members of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) political party affiliated with the government and law enforcement agents.

In June presidential guards severely beat a journalist who had taken a picture of the president attending a political meeting of his party and confiscated his equipment.

Law enforcement officials also confiscated reporters' equipment.

A journalist was killed while covering a February political meeting, allegedly by a stray bullet.

Censorship or Content Restrictions: The government penalized stations and journalists who broadcast items criticizing government officials and their actions.

Some journalists accused government officials of attempting to influence the tone of their reporting with inappropriate pressure and bribes. Others hired bodyguards, and many practiced self-censorship.

The president publicly admonished the Radio France International correspondent for asking a question about his son's involvement in a mining corruption scandal during a May press conference.

Libel/Slander Laws: Libel against the head of state, slander, and false reporting are subject to heavy fines. Officials used these laws to harass opposition leaders.

For example, a journalist hosting a talk show in June, on which a caller insulted the president, was fined one million GNF (\$112) for complicity and insult of the head of state.

Internet Freedom

The government did not restrict or disrupt access to the internet or censor online content, and there were no credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. According to the

International Telecommunication Union, 4.7 percent of individuals had access to the internet in 2015.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Freedom of Assembly

The constitution provides for freedom of assembly, but the government restricted this right. The law bans any meeting that has an ethnic or racial character or any gathering, “whose nature threatens national unity.” The government requires 72-working-hour advance notification for public gatherings. The law permits local authorities to prohibit a demonstration or meeting if they believe it poses a threat to public order. Authorities may also hold event organizers criminally liable if violence or destruction of property occurs. After protests by citizens in October against the lack of electricity, a mixed unit of police and gendarmes arrested 30 persons on charges of illegal gathering and disturbance; 12 were convicted and 18 acquitted.

Police use of excessive force to disperse demonstrators--often protesting poor public services--resulted in deaths and injuries. During the August opposition demonstration in Conakry, a 21-year-old man was killed by a police bullet. The suspected agent was arrested. According to the minister of security and civil protection, 12 other persons were injured.

In April Conakry governor Bangoura prohibited at the last minute a previously authorized march in Conakry by women protesting the imprisonment of opposition party members.

Part of the 2013 and 2015 political accords promised an investigation into the political violence that resulted in the deaths of more than 50 persons in 2012 and 2013, punishment of perpetrators, and indemnification of victims. The government had taken no action on these promises by year’s end.

Freedom of Association

The constitution provides for freedom of association, and authorities generally respected this provision. Requirements to obtain official recognition for public, social, cultural, religious, or political associations were not cumbersome, although bureaucratic delays sometimes impeded registration.

c. Freedom of Religion

See the Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights. Police and security forces, however, continued to detain persons at roadblocks to extort money, impeding the free movement of travelers and threatening their safety. The Ebola epidemic further complicated matters as authorities closed borders with Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, impeding the movement of persons and goods. In August, after countries in the region were declared Ebola-free, the border with Cote d'Ivoire was reopened. The government cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, stateless persons, and asylum seekers.

In-country Movement: The government required all citizens over age 18 to carry national identification cards, which they had to present on demand at security checkpoints.

In 2012 the government announced the elimination of all roadblocks on the highways but declared it would maintain checkpoints along the borders and on certain strategic routes in Conakry. Police and gendarmes, however, set up random checkpoints throughout the capital and the country and routinely asked drivers to pay "tolls" or other illegal fees. Police and gendarmes occasionally robbed and beat travelers at these checkpoints and sometimes threatened them with death. High-level government officials acknowledged that the practice continued but claimed to be powerless to stop it.

Internally Displaced Persons

Interethnic violence in parts of the country occasionally resulted in internal displacement. Humanitarian organizations were able to access these populations and provided assistance.

Protection of Refugees

The country hosted refugees from neighboring countries, including Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. As of April UNHCR recorded 8,696 refugees, including 6,580 Ivoirians. The Ebola epidemic at times resulted in restricted access to areas across the country, including regions hosting refugees; however, aid organizations were able to assist Ivoirian refugees living in Kouankan II Camp. Following the official end of Ebola in August, Cote d'Ivoire reopened its border with Guinea, thus opening the way to resume voluntary repatriation, and in September UNHCR organized an initial land convoy of 128 refugees.

Access to Asylum: The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees.

Access to Basic Services: Refugees had access to basic services such as education and health services.

Stateless Persons

There were a few hundred effectively stateless persons, who originally came from Sierra Leone. These persons did not meet any of the criteria for Guinean citizenship--birth within the country, marriage, naturalization, or parental heritage. According to UNHCR these refugees requested neither repatriation nor local integration after the invocation of the cessation clause for refugees from Sierra Leone. Some of this population lived in abandoned refugee camps, while others moved from former refugee sites in Kissidougou to artisanal gold-mining areas in the northeast of the country.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage, but citizens were restricted in the exercise of that ability.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: On October 11, 2015, President Alpha Conde won reelection with 58 percent of the vote.

The constitution calls for local elections within six months of the installation of the National Assembly; the latter occurred on January 13, 2013. Local elections were again delayed three times during the year and most recently rescheduled for 2017.

Political Parties and Political Participation: There were no official restrictions on political party formation beyond registration requirements, but parties may not represent a single region or ethnicity.

Participation of Women and Minorities: Observers noted there were cultural constraints on women's political participation. Five of 34 cabinet ministers were women, as were 25 of the 114 National Assembly deputies. The electoral code requires at least 30 percent of candidates for any party competing for seats in the National Assembly to be women. Not every party adhered to this rule, which was not enforced.

During the October presidential election, one of the eight candidates was a woman from the Green Party.

Minority ethnic groups had representation in the National Assembly, the courts, and the cabinet.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

Although the law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The World Bank's most recent Worldwide Governance Indicators reflected that corruption continued to be a severe problem. Officials diverted public funds for private use or for illegitimate public uses, such as buying expensive vehicles for government workers. Land sales and business contracts generally lacked transparency.

Corruption: Security force corruption was endemic. Police and gendarmes ignored legal procedures and extorted money from citizens at roadblocks, in prisons, and in detention centers. The government reduced the number of road checkpoints, but traders, small business operators, drivers, and passengers were still obliged to pay bribes to pass. Observers noted prisoners paying money to guards in exchange for favors. In April the minister of national reconciliation

stopped as a regular citizen at a police roadblock and was extorted; upon returning a few moments later in his official vehicle, the officers ran away but were not prosecuted.

The reform of the justice sector entailed in part an increase in salary for the magistrates and the establishment of the High Council for the Magistrature to handle cases of corrupt magistrates. Gendarmes, police, and prison guards--also poorly paid--offered to release prisoners in exchange for bribes, including prisoners to whom the courts had already granted release. Police and court officials often asked defendants in criminal and civil cases for money to reduce or eliminate charges.

Business leaders asserted regulatory procedures were opaque and facilitated corruption.

The National Anti-Corruption Agency (ANLC), created in 2004, is the only state agency focused solely on fighting corruption. It is an autonomous agency but reports directly to the presidency. The ANLC receives anonymous tips concerning possible corruption received by the Bureau of Complaint Reception. During the past two years, however, there were no prosecutions based on any such tips.

Financial Disclosure: Public officials are not subject to public disclosure laws. The electoral code bars persons from certain types of financial activity if they are members of or candidates for the National Assembly. They may not be paid by a foreign state; be the chief executive officer (CEO), a deputy of a CEO, or the president of a company under state control; or be a shareholder in an enterprise under state control or reliant on state subsidies or other state benefits. Despite these rules, some National Assembly members took state revenues to support their businesses, such as operating schools funded by public tuition. Authorities threatened to cut the state subsidies of some National Assembly members if they did not support the ruling party.

Public Access to Information: Although in 2010 the National Transition Council adopted a law providing free access to government information, free access was not regularly provided. Lower-level bureaucrats often did not respond to requests in a timely fashion, if at all. Government websites and other files functioned poorly, provided little information, and were not easy to navigate.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Some domestic and international human rights groups monitored and attempted to disseminate information on human rights abuses. They generally operated without government restriction. NGOs are required to renew their permits with the government every three years.

Despite the government's willingness to meet with and listen to NGOs on human rights problems, it did not often act on their requests or suggestions. The government continued to ignore a request from human rights groups and the international community to dismiss or place on administrative leave government officials indicted in connection with the 2009 stadium massacre.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The Ministry of Human Rights and Public Freedoms disappeared with the reorganization following the 2015 presidential election. In 2012 the government had established the ministry and named Diaby Gassama Kalifa as its first minister. The ministry's purpose was to promote human rights awareness and fight impunity, but it did not fulfill the constitutional requirement for an independent human rights commission. NGOs, nevertheless, considered the ministry's establishment an important step. Although part of the government, the ministry continued to assert its independence, and observers praised Minister Diaby for raising the profile of human rights, which he continued to do during the year as minister of national unity and citizenship.

The Provisional Commission for National Reconciliation, established in 2011 to promote reconciliation concerning human rights abuses committed since independence, presented its final report in late June with a recommendation to establish a permanent truth and reconciliation commission.

In 2014 the government implemented Title XVI of the 2010 constitution and established the Independent National Institution for Human Rights. The institution was controversial from its inception because as established, it was different from the institution described in the law, but it continued efforts to establish its credibility.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: The law criminalizes rape and domestic violence, but both occurred frequently, and authorities rarely prosecuted perpetrators. The

law does not address spousal rape. Rape is punishable by five to 10 years in prison. The penalty increases to 20 years' imprisonment if the rape is committed against a pregnant woman, a gun is used, an accomplice is involved, or the rape involves incest. According to a 2011 government study, 91 percent of women had experienced gender-based violence and 49 percent had experienced sexual assault. Victims reported less than 1 percent of these crimes to police due to custom, fear of stigmatization and reprisal, and lack of cooperation from investigating police or gendarmes. Studies indicated citizens also were reluctant to report crimes because they feared police would ask the victim to pay for the investigation. The police Office for Protection of Women, Children, and Morals (OPROGEM) referred 20 rape cases for investigation through June, including 17 of minors.

Violence against a woman that causes an injury is punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine of up to 30,000 GNF (\$3.30). If the injury causes mutilation, amputation, or other loss of body parts, it is punishable by 20 years' imprisonment; if the victim dies, the crime is punishable by life imprisonment. The law does not directly address domestic violence, although authorities may file charges under general assault, which carries sentences of two to five years in prison and fines of 50,000 to 300,000 GNF (\$5.50 to \$33). Assault constitutes grounds for divorce under civil law, but police rarely intervened in domestic disputes, and courts rarely punished perpetrators.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): Although the law prohibits FGM/C, the country had an extremely high prevalence rate. UNICEF reported 96 percent of women and girls in the country had undergone the procedure, which was practiced throughout the country and among all religious and ethnic groups. In two trial cases, the judges handed down only light suspended sentences to the perpetrators. There were two cases of death from FGM/C at excision camps in the Forest Region; in one case the perpetrator was still awaiting trial, and in the second local authorities reportedly misplaced or destroyed evidence and denied the crime ever happened, despite reports to the contrary.

Cutting was done primarily on girls between ages four and 17. Different ethnic groups practiced FGM/C at different ages. For example, 6 percent of Toma girls were cut before age five, compared to 39 percent of Malinke girls. According to a UNICEF study using 2011 data from the Demographic and Health Survey, 100 percent of women ages 45 to 49 had undergone FGM/C. According to UNICEF's 2013 report on FGM/C, 96.6 percent of women had undergone FGM/C before age 15. The law provides for a penalty of up to life in prison or death if the victim dies within 40 days of the procedure. The child code provides for minimum

imprisonment of three months to two years and fines from 300,000 to one million GNF (\$33 to \$110) for perpetrators who do not inflict severe injury or death. If a victim is severely injured or dies, the child code specifies imprisonment of five to 20 years and a fine of up to three million GNF (\$330). The government was still in the process of harmonizing the child code with the penal code.

The most common form of FGM/C was excision, which involves the partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora (Type II, according to the World Health Organization's classification). The Coordinating Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting Women's and Children's Health reported high rates of infant and maternal mortality due to FGM/C. Social pressure to adhere to FGM/C customs was intense, and many families believed the stigma and social consequences of not conforming were more harmful than the procedure.

The government increased its efforts to combat FGM/C with the support of religious leaders. A foreign embassy continued to assist the government in a National Campaign to Accelerate the Abandonment of FGM/C. In collaboration with UNICEF and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the campaign included NGOs, media, civil society networks, and several ministries. Police worked with campaign partners to implement the law, and the government made several declarations against the practice of FGM/C.

The government also cooperated with NGOs in their efforts to eradicate FGM/C and educate health workers, state employees, and citizens on the dangers of the practice. More than 60 health facilities had integrated FGM/C prevention into prenatal, neonatal, and immunization services. A trend for medically trained staff to perform FGM/C under more hygienic conditions continued. While the "medicalization" of the practice may have decreased some of the negative health consequences of the procedure, it did not eliminate all health risks; it also delayed the development of effective and long-term solutions for the abandonment of the practice. Urban, educated families increasingly opted to perform only a slight, symbolic incision on a girl's genitals rather than the complete procedure.

Sexual Harassment: In 2014 the government adopted a new labor code that prohibits all forms of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment; the constitution prohibits harassment based on sex, race, ethnicity, political opinions, or other grounds. Although urban women working in the formal sector complained of frequent sexual harassment, employers did not penalize perpetrators. As of September the Ministry of Labor had not documented any case of sexual harassment, despite its frequency.

Reproductive Rights: Couples and individuals have the right to decide the number, spacing, and timing of children, free from discrimination, coercion, or violence, but they often lacked the information and means to do so. Cultural norms and taboos reportedly dissuaded individuals from taking advantage of opportunities to learn about reproductive health or seek health services for sexually transmitted infections. The UN Population Division estimated 7.5 percent of girls and women ages 15-49 used a modern method of contraception in 2015. According to WHO, the maternal mortality ratio was 679 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015. The UNFPA reported that 44 percent of women ages 20-24 had given birth before the age of 18. Health care for pregnant women, including caesarian surgery, was free and included limited access to skilled attendance during childbirth, prenatal care, essential obstetric care, and postpartum care. Patients, however, often had to offer medical staff between 500,000 GNF (\$55) and 1,500,000 GNF (\$165) to ensure services were effective. A government survey estimated 85 percent of girls and women of reproductive age received prenatal care, and 45 percent had a skilled birth attendant present during childbirth; only 40 percent of births occurred at a health facility or hospital.

Discrimination: The law does not provide for the same legal status and rights for women as men, including in inheritance, property, employment, credit, and divorce. The labor code adopted in 2014 prohibits gender discrimination in hiring. Women nevertheless routinely experienced discrimination in employment, pay, and education. Traditional law discriminates against women and sometimes took precedence over formal law, particularly in rural areas.

The Ministry of Social Action and the Promotion of Women and Children worked to advance legal equality for women, who faced discrimination throughout society, but particularly in rural areas where opportunities were limited. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), women under traditional law are entitled to hold land only under an agreement basis, which authorizes them to work family-owned land and draw a wage but not to own it. Women had difficulty obtaining loans, according to the OECD.

Government officials acknowledged that polygyny was common. Divorce laws generally favor men in awarding custody and dividing communal assets. Legal testimony given by women carries less weight than testimony by men, in accordance with Islamic precepts and customary law.

Children

Birth Registration: Children derive citizenship by birth within the country, marriage, naturalization, or parental heritage. According to UNICEF, authorities registered only 41 percent of rural births compared with 77 percent of urban births. Observers attributed the low registration rate to distances between registration offices, illiteracy, and the cost of birth certificates. Authorities did not permit children without birth certificates to attend school or access health care.

Education: Government policy provides for tuition-free, compulsory primary education for all children up to 16 years of age. While girls and boys had equal access to all levels of primary and secondary education, approximately 56 percent of girls attended primary school, compared with 66 percent of boys. Government figures indicated 11 percent of girls obtained a secondary education, compared with 21 percent of boys; a 2011 study from the International Labor Organization (ILO) confirmed this disparity. Sexual harassment, demand for girls' labor at home, child marriage, and other factors lowered attendance of female students. Since the minimum age for work is 16, children ages 14 and 15 were particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor as they may have completed primary school but are not yet legally permitted to work.

Child Abuse: Child abuse was a problem. OPROGEM investigated 29 cases of child abuse and seven cases of neglect during the year, but observers believed this number vastly understated the prevalence of the problem. Child abuse, which occurred openly on the street, rarely was reported. Families ignored most cases or addressed them at the community level. For example, in 2015 in Kindia, the local committee investigated a case of abuse, but for unknown reasons was not allowed to refer the case to the courts.

Early and Forced Marriage: The legal age for marriage is 21 for men and 17 for girls, but tradition permits marriage at age 14. Early marriage was a problem. According to the UNFPA, 63 percent of women ages 20 to 24 were married before age 18. Parents contracted marriages for girls as young as age 10 in Middle Guinea and the Forest Region. According to the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices, forced marriage of women and girls was common. There were no reported prosecutions related to child marriage during the year, although OPROGEM investigated one case of forced marriage.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): See information for girls in women's section above.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law prescribes penalties of five to 10 years' imprisonment for all forms of child trafficking, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, but it was a problem. The minimum age of consensual sex is 15. Punishment if convicted of sex with a child under age 15 is three to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to two million GNF (\$220). The law also prohibits child pornography. These laws were not regularly enforced, and sexual assault of children, including rape, was a serious problem. Girls between ages 11 and 15 were most vulnerable and represented more than half of all rape victims. There were no reports of sex tourism.

Displaced Children: Although official statistics were unavailable, there was a large population of children living on the streets, particularly in urban areas. Children frequently begged in mosques, on the street, and in markets. OPROGEM reported 144 children went missing from January through August, although authorities recovered most of the children and returned them to their parents.

Institutionalized Children: The country had numerous registered and unregistered orphanages. According to the Ministry of Social Action and the Promotion of Women and Children, 49 registered orphanages cared for 4,822 children. While reports of abuse at orphanages sometimes appeared in the press, reliable statistics were not available. Authorities institutionalized some children after family members died from the Ebola virus.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. See the Department of State's *Annual Report on International Parental Child Abduction* at travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/en/legal/compliance.html.

Anti-Semitism

The Jewish community was very small, and there were no reports of anti-Semitic acts.

Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

Persons with Disabilities

The law does not prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. In February 2015, however, the country adopted a new labor code that prohibits discrimination in employment against persons with disabilities. Although there were no official reports, most observers believed societal and governmental discrimination against such individuals was pervasive. The law does not mandate accessibility for persons with disabilities, and buildings and vehicles remained inaccessible. The Ministry of Social Action and the Promotion of Women and Children is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, but it was ineffective. The country had one school for blind students in N'Zerekore and a school for children with disabilities in Conakry. The government provided no support to mainstream such children in regular schools.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The population was diverse, with three main linguistic groups and several smaller ones identifying with specific regions. While the groups resided throughout the country's four major regions, Middle Guinea was largely populated by Peuhl (Fulani), Upper Guinea by Malinke, and Coastal Guinea by Soussou. Conakry and other large urban areas such as Kankan were ethnically heterogeneous. The Forest Region had an estimated 24 distinct languages, some spoken by as few as 20,000 persons.

While the law prohibits racial or ethnic discrimination, discrimination by members of all major ethnic groups occurred in private sector hiring patterns, ethnic segregation of urban neighborhoods, and ethnically divisive rhetoric during political campaigns. Ethnically targeted violence occurred during the year.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, which is punishable by three years in prison; however, there were no known prosecutions. In 2012 the government restructured OPROGEM to include a unit for investigating morals violations, including same-sex sexual conduct. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that authorities arrested cross-dressing men in nightclubs on public nuisance charges. Antidiscrimination laws do not apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals.

Deep religious and cultural taboos against consensual same-sex sexual conduct existed. There were no official or NGO reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, although societal stigma likely prevented victims from reporting abuse or harassment. There were no active LGBTI organizations.

HIV and AIDS Social Stigma

Laws to protect HIV-infected persons from stigmatization exist, but the government relied on donor efforts to combat discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS. Government efforts were limited to paying salaries for health-service providers. Most victims of stigmatization were women whose families abandoned them after their husbands died of AIDS. Doctors and other health workers routinely disregarded medical confidentiality standards, resulting in widespread distrust of testing.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

Discrimination against persons with albinism occurred, particularly in the Forest Region. Speculation continued about albino sacrifice, although authorities did not receive any confirmed reports during the year. Albino rights NGOs continued to raise awareness of discrimination and violence against persons with albinism.

Survivors of Ebola continue to encounter nationwide discrimination at work and elsewhere within society.

Section 7. Worker Rights

a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining

Although the law provides for the right of workers to organize and join independent unions, engage in strikes, and bargain collectively, the law also places restrictions on the free exercise of these rights. In February the government adopted a new labor code that requires unions to obtain support of 20 percent of the workers in a company, region, or trade the union claims to represent. The new code mandates that unions provide 10-day notice to the Ministry of Labor before striking, although it allows work slowdowns without notice. Strikes are permitted only for work-related issues; such permission does not extend to government workers, members of the armed forces, or temporary government workers since these categories do not have the legal right to strike.

The labor code protects union officials from antiunion discrimination. The code prohibits employers from taking into consideration union membership and activities with regard to decisions about employee hiring, firing, and conduct. It also allows workers 30 days to appeal any labor decisions.

The Office of the Inspector-General of Work within the Ministry of Labor manages consensus arbitration, as required by law. Employers often imposed binding arbitration, particularly in “essential services.”

The government did not effectively enforce applicable laws. Resources and inspections were not adequate to ensure compliance, and penalties were not enforced. Information on delays of administrative and judicial procedures was not available. Penalties for various labor violations ranged from fines of 50,000 to 1.5 million GNF (\$5.50 to \$165), imprisonment for six months to five years, or both. Included among the various labor violations in the penal code are forced labor, smuggling illegal workers, and preventing union meetings. The penal code also defines labor crimes to include punishment of workers and employers who subvert national interests or steal trade secrets. Penalties were insufficient to deter violations.

Worker organizations generally operated independently of government or political party interference. Authorities did not always respect freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits some types of forced or compulsory labor, but it does not prohibit debt bondage. The law provides penalties of five to 10 years’ imprisonment and confiscation of any proceeds from the crime of depriving third parties of their liberty through forced labor. The government did not effectively enforce this law or obtain any convictions for adult forced labor. Penalties were not sufficient to deter violations. While criminal sentences requiring forced labor are illegal, prisoners could be obliged to participate in prison chores such as cleaning.

Reports indicated adult forced labor was most common in the agricultural sector. Forced child labor occurred as well, and the majority of reported trafficking victims were children (see section 7.c.).

Migrant laborers represented a small proportion of forced labor victims.

See also the Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* at www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/.

c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits child labor in the formal sector and sets forth penalties of three to 10 years' imprisonment and confiscation of resulting profits. The law does not protect children in the informal sector. The minimum age for employment is 16. Exceptions allow children to work at age 12 as apprentices for light work in such sectors as domestic service and agriculture and at age 14 for other work. The law does not permit workers and apprentices under age 18 to work more than 10 consecutive hours, at night, or on Sundays. The Ministry of Labor maintained a list of hazardous occupations or activities that may not employ women and youth under age 18, but enforcement was limited to large firms in the formal sector. The law does not prohibit hazardous occupations and activities in all relevant child labor sectors, including agriculture. The penal code increases penalties for forced labor if minors are involved, but penalties did not meet international standards, and enforcement was not sufficient to deter child labor violations. The most recent statistics indicated more than one-third of all children under age 18 worked in industries considered dangerous by the ILO. Although the child code provides that the laws respect treaty obligations and be regarded as law by the justice system, ambiguity about the code's validity continued due to the government's failure to pass implementing legislation.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing child labor laws, and it conducted occasional inspections. Authorities did not bring any cases to justice, and inspections were not adequate. OPROGEM, under the Ministry of Security, is responsible for investigating child trafficking and child labor violations. After making an arrest, police transfer all information to the Ministry of Justice. In 2012 the Ministry of Security set up a new unit specifically focused on child trafficking and child labor. The unit had 30 members and brought five cases to trial in 2012, one in 2013, and four during the first half of 2014. In 2014 the court sentenced three traffickers to four months in prison for trafficking 22 minors to Senegal.

Boys frequently worked in the informal sectors of subsistence farming, small-scale commerce, forced begging, street vending, shining shoes, and mining. Smaller numbers of girls, mostly migrants from neighboring countries, were subjected to domestic servitude. Forced child labor occurred primarily in the cashew, cocoa, coffee, gold, and diamond sectors of the economy. Many children between ages

five and 16 worked 10 to 15 hours a day in the diamond and gold mines for minimal compensation and little food. Child laborers extracted, transported, and cleaned the minerals. They operated in extreme conditions, lacked protective gear, did not have access to water or electricity, and faced a constant threat of disease. In the region of Kindia, the local child protection committee identified 430 exploited children working as carriers, miners, or as house workers, and more than 150 homeless children. Many children did not attend school and could not contact their parents, which may indicate forced labor.

According to a 2011 government study conducted with the ILO, 43 percent of all children between ages five and 17 worked, including 33 percent of children ages five to 11, 56 percent between ages 12 and 15, and 61 percent between ages 16 and 17. Of working children, 93 percent were employed in what the ILO defines as hazardous conditions--indicating 40.1 percent of all children in the country worked in hazardous conditions. This included more than one million children in agriculture and fishing, 30,600 in manufacturing, 46,100 in mining, 15,200 in construction, 204,800 in commerce and restaurants, 6,800 in transport, and 92,900 in other hazardous or dangerous work.

Many parents sent their children to live with relatives or Quranic teachers while the children attended school. Host families often required such children to perform domestic or agricultural labor, or to sell water or shine shoes on the streets. Some children were subjected to forced begging.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children also occurred (see section 6).

Also see the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at www.dol.gov/ilab/reports/child-labor/findings/.

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The labor code adopted in February prohibits discrimination with respect to employment and occupation based on sex, religion, political opinion, disability, or ethnicity. The law does not address discrimination based on race, color, national origin or citizenship, social origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, language, or HIV-positive status or having other communicable diseases. The government did not effectively enforce the law. Penalties were not sufficient to deter violations.

Although the law requires equal pay for equal work, women received lower pay for similar work (see section 7.d.). Few persons with disabilities worked in the formal sector, although some worked in small family businesses; many survived by begging in the streets.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The labor code allows the government to set a minimum monthly wage, enforced by the Ministry of Labor. In 2013 the government exercised this provision for the first time, setting the minimum wage for domestic workers at 440,000 GNF (\$48) per month. No minimum wage for other sectors was established. There was no known official poverty income level established by the government.

The law mandates that regular work should not exceed 10-hour days or 48-hour weeks, and it mandates a period of at least 24 consecutive hours of rest each week, usually on Sunday. Every salaried worker has the legal right to an annual paid vacation, accumulated at the rate of at least two workdays per month of work. There also are provisions in the law for overtime and night wages, which are a fixed percentage of the regular wage. The law stipulates a maximum of 100 hours of compulsory overtime a year.

The law contains general provisions regarding occupational safety and health, but the government did not establish a set of practical workplace health and safety standards. Moreover, it did not issue any orders laying out the specific safety requirements for certain occupations or for certain methods of work called for in the labor code. All workers, foreign and migrant included, have the right to refuse to work in unsafe conditions without penalty.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing labor standards, and its 160 inspectors were empowered to suspend work immediately in situations deemed hazardous to workers' health. Enforcement efforts, nevertheless, were sporadic. According to the ILO, inspectors received inadequate training and had limited resources. Retired labor inspector positions went unfilled. Inspectors lacked computers and transportation to carry out their duties. Penalties for violation of the labor law were not sufficient to deter violations. The penal code calls for prison terms of up to 10 years for persons found guilty of trafficking in persons. Additionally, the law requires traffickers to forfeit objects of value or money received through forced labor. Offering someone into forced labor is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.

Authorities rarely monitored work practices or enforced workweek standards or overtime rules. Teachers' wages were extremely low, and teachers sometimes went six months or more without pay. Salary arrears were not paid, and some teachers lived in abject poverty.

Violations of wage, overtime, and occupational health and safety standards were common across sectors. There were, for example, reports of unsafe working conditions in the artisanal (small-scale) gold mining communities in the northern section of the country, where inspectors found occupational health and environmental hazards.

Despite legal protection against working in unsafe conditions, many workers feared retaliation and did not exercise their right to refuse to work under unsafe conditions. Data were not available on workplace fatalities and accidents, but accidents in unsafe working conditions were common. The government banned wildcat gold and other mining during the rainy season to prevent deaths from mudslides. The practice, however, continued near the border with Mali, resulting in recurring accidents.