Guinea

Presidential Election Report
19 December 1993

Issued March 1994

Executive Summary

For the first time in its decade-long existence, the International Republican Institute (IRI) decided to cancel an election observation mission because of an electoral environment so flawed and government manipulation of the process so gross that even a nominally representative election was beyond reach. When the presidential election in Guinea took place on 19 December 1993, IRI had two persons in-country gathering information in the five communes of the capital city of Conakry and in the south-central town of Mamou.

Since October 1992, IRI had monitored preparations for the first multi-party elections in Guinea. Through all the ups and downs of the process, including at least four postponements and an abrupt switch in the order of elections that placed the presidential contest before the election of the legislature, IRI, in addition to its own field visits, had been in continuous contact with the Guinea Ministry of Interior and Security (MIS), the political parties, non-governmental organizations, the U.S. Embassy and journalists in an effort to track the process.

It became clear that a process, which, at one time, seemed troubled largely due to a lack of infrastructure and logistical difficulties, was being manipulated deliberately by the government in contravention of Guinea electoral law and internationally accepted norms of election practices. The cooperative spirit that the Government of Guinea (GOG) had demonstrated intermittently disappeared in the months leading up to the presidential election.

There were a number of problems that rendered the electoral environment in Guinea too flawed to produce an acceptable election. However, two factors played the major role in IRI's decision not to field an observation mission. First, the assembly of the electoral list and the distribution of voter cards was entirely in the hands of the government. Not only does this place in question the openness of the process, but it is in violation of Guinea electoral law.

Second, the National Electoral Commission (CNE), which was charged by the government with the "moral" responsibility of guaranteeing the transparency of the election, was not sworn in until nine days before the election and, therefore, was unable to play any meaningful role in the electoral process. Consequently, all substantive preparation for -- and the intentional maladministration of -- the elections was the responsibility of the MIS.

There were several other problems that were of great concern to IRI, but the lack of openness surrounding the creation and handling of the electoral list and the failure to seat the CNE in a timely fashion provided an overwhelmingly daunting atmosphere in which to attempt to conduct an acceptable election. Therefore, IRI decided that sending an election observation team to Guinea would be a waste of time and money and, worse yet, could lend credibility to a process that deserved none.

This view was shared by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), which declined to send any of its planned 80 observers; and the CNE itself, once it was able to meet and to investigate the matter, called on the government to postpone the presidential election for lack

of readiness.

The violence with which many Guineans at home and abroad reacted to the government's determination to continue with the presidential election bespoke their utter frustration with the state of the electoral process. Such frustration surely was heightened by the handling of the release of electoral results, which saw the government release three different percentage figures for President Lansana Conté as it annulled the results from two prefectures where the President fared poorly.

The current situation does not bode well for the advancement of Guinean pluralist democracy in general or the conduct of an acceptable legislative election in particular.

Background

In October 1992, IRI conducted an assessment of the political situation in Guinea. A three-person team talked with MIS officials, officials of CYK (the government consultant charged with managing some election matters), the chief justice of the Supreme Court, local government officials, representatives of at least half the country's then-42 political parties, religious leaders and members of the journalists' association. IRI found that the situation mitigated against holding legislative elections on 29 December 1992.

The government and political parties were not cooperating on election preparations. The electorate (and even party leaders and NGOs) were largely uninformed about the election process. Tension was high among political party activists, threatening to spark violence. Procedural delays had rendered the electoral timetable moot, making it unlikely that either the electoral list or any other election-related materials would be completed and delivered on time.

IRI recommended a postponement of the legislative election and urged the government to: initiate an ongoing dialogue with political parties; remove all restraints on party public events; drop the requirement of a bond for parties to compete in the elections; open the broadcast media to effective participation by parties; work with parties, civic groups and religious groups to verify the census; and adopt a uniform procedure for the identification of potential voters.

The Institute urged political parties to: calm their fiery rhetoric; work among themselves cooperatively to address common electoral problems; engage in constructive dialogue with the government; develop coherent, positive messages to appeal to voters; and utilize the independent print media as an adjunct to the government-controlled broadcast media.

By the time IRI began its programming in Guinea in January 1993, it appeared that these recommendations largely had been accepted by both sides and that there was a developing atmosphere of cooperation. IRI training missions provided a unique opportunity to gauge the developing political scene in Guinea throughout 1993.

IRI Programming

The first phase of a four-part IRI democratization program in Guinea began in late January 1993 with civic education seminars for political parties and civic groups in one-day sessions in Conakry, Kindia, Labé, Kankan and Nzerekoré. The training concentrated on such issues as the fundamental rights of citizens, the rule of law, the process of elections, democratic culture and democratic government. The response was so great in some cases that there were more than twice the target number of 50 persons per session.

These civic education sessions in some cases provided the first opportunity for members of the government party and parties opposing the current government to sit down together and discuss the country's ongoing electoral process. Initial hostility began slowly to give way to a greater willingness to cooperate on the local level. This willingness was not reciprocated on the national level, however.

The postponement of the legislative election from spring to an undetermined date in the fall led IRI to switch its training schedule and move political party building up to April and push pollwatcher training back to the fall. This was done to engage the still-restive opposition parties in necessary work on during the May-September rainy season.

An April all-parties seminar held in Conakry over a three-day period drew the participation of 18 political parties. Following this seminar, IRI trainers held one-on-one sessions with parties as requested to discuss their individual problems and concerns regarding organization. The IRI team found that many of the smaller parties had very workable plans for competing in selected areas for seats in the National Assembly. Consequently, the legislative election began to loom as a contest that would determine the survival of the best organized of the country's political parties, regardless of size.

IRI also visited Boké and Faranah and conducted one-day sessions that consisted of an abbreviated combination of civic education and party building. This was in response to urgent requests from party activists in those areas who had not received any of the information that IRI had given their national offices. In addition to finding proof of the lack of coordination within parties, IRI further saw evidence that there was no uniformity among the prefects as to how the laws on political parties and elections were being put into practice. In Boké, for example, the prefect was an obvious partisan of the ruling party and restricted opposition party activities, whereas the prefect in Kankan was more neutral in his dealings with the opposition.

It also became clear through these individual sessions that the various alliances of opposition parties were not effective. The État Généreaux, a coalition of as many as 31 political parties and NGOs, began in May 1993 with the lofty goal of demanding that the government adhere to Guinea electoral law and international electoral practice in the upcoming elections. However, the group dissolved in all but name for the same reason as its smaller predecessors: the refusal of the major opposition parties to work cooperatively. Despite the generally negative response to President Conté's unexpected April announcement of the switch in the order of

presidential and legislative elections, the opposition was unable to devise an effective, coordinated strategy for contesting this development. As it turned out, this presaged the opposition's failure to contest effectively later government manipulations of the electoral process.

By August, the government still had not announced a date for the now-rescheduled presidential elections. In anticipation of October elections, IRI conducted one-day training sessions that month for political party agents and prospective domestic observers in Conakry, Boké, Kindia, Faranah, Labé, Kankan and Nzerekoré.

By the time these sessions were conducted, certain problems with the election preparations were made quite apparent. The issue of the government's completion of the census and the resulting electoral list in cooperation with political parties had not been resolved. The formation of an impartial electoral commission, long requested by opposition parties, had been promised but not announced by the government. The question of the placement of polling places on military bases was not settled. The uneven and often unfair treatment of political parties by various local government officials also remained an outstanding issue.

Pre-Election Environment

On 29 September, a few weeks after IRI pollwatcher training was completed, a demonstration in Conakry to protest the government's continued intransigence on electoral matters suddenly turned violent. An estimated 68 persons were officially reported killed and hundreds reportedly were wounded, as the mostly Sou-Sou police force opened fire on the largely Fulani and Malinke demonstrators. The deaths and resulting ethnic unrest stunned the capital.

In the aftermath of this incident, the government and its political opposition seemed to have been shocked into cooperating. Opposition rhetoric was toned down somewhat, and the government initiated movement on the matter of the Electoral Commission. Muslim and Christian religious leaders attempted to defuse the rising ethnic tensions. Unfortunately, the atmosphere of cooperation did not last long. Fulanis were encouraged to leave not only Conakry, but all of coastal Guinea. The Sou-Sou, who dominate government positions, especially in coastal Guinea, apparently began to fear a violent reaction to the September police shootings in Conakry by the more numerous Fulanis. Their open hostility to Fulanis throughout the region led to a massive exodus. The result was thousands of Fulanis returning to their traditional homes in middle Guinea, which also translates into thousands of voters moving to locations at which they were not legally registered to vote.

There were conflicting assessments of the political environment in Guinea in the weeks leading up to the scheduled presidential election. Just days before the scheduled 5 December date for the elections, there was increasing uncertainty that they would be held on time. When the government postponed elections for two weeks, the U.S. Embassy in Conakry requested that IRI delay sending its observer team and requested a smaller fact-finding mission to assess the electoral environment.

In order to sort out the true situation on the ground, IRI sent two experienced election experts in late November and early December. In discussions with all eight political parties fielding presidential candidates (including six of the candidates themselves), IRI was told that the parties had not had an opportunity to examine the electoral lists that were then being utilized to print voters cards.

This was confirmed by a representative of the International Federation of Electoral Systems (IFES), who said parties did not even have uniform access to the census data on which electoral lists were based. In only some prefectures, IFES reported, were party representatives given access, and even then it was for a week or less.

When IRI began its discussions in-country, Guinea's political parties had identified their representatives to the prospective election commission. They knew who the government representatives would be as well as the identity of the NGO representatives. What they did not know, however, was the exact date on which the commission would be empaneled. The continued delay in swearing in election commissioners, in IRI's opinion, placed in question the government's commitment to the openness of the elections since the decree creating the commission charged it with the "moral" responsibility for transparency in the election process.

In light of the lack of action on the part of those directly or indirectly involved in the Guinea elections, IRI announced on 3 December that "it would be extremely difficult to conduct a technically satisfactory presidential election on 19 December." This statement was intended to provoke public discussion of matters then talked of only in private and then only within certain groups and not all those involved in the election process.

The statement was met with silence by the government, but the opposition political parties all agreed that elections were unwise on 19 December under the prevailing conditions. There was discussion of a joint opposition effort to demand yet another postponement, but they could not agree on a strategy of implementation. Still, the opposition parties generally felt that a two-month delay was warranted. Parties such as the Rassemblement du Peuple de Guineé (RPG) and the Union pour la Nouvelle République (UNR) indicated that they would not encourage elections to proceed under the current conditions, while other parties, such as the Parti du Renouveau et du Progrés (PRP) and the Parti Démocratique de Guineé - Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PDG-RDA) were not satisfied, but intended to contest the elections.

What became clear in talks with not only the parties, but also others such as Christian Sow, director of the Guinean Association for Human Rights (AGDH) and a member of the Electoral Commission, was that there was tremendous frustration over the government's failure to live up to its promises regarding preparations for the election.

In addition its failure to swear in the Electoral Commission as soon as possible before the election, the government also reneged on: 1) the electoral commission's role in accrediting domestic observers, 2) the sole use of the Canadian-donated plastic ballot box seals, 3) the requirement that voters have 30 days to obtain their voter registration cards and 4) the ability

of party agents to sign the polling place logs.

Perhaps most curious was the lack of coordination among Guinea's donor nations. Unlike in Kenya, for example, the major international donors to Guinea did not make any significant attempt to coordinate their actions to support an acceptable electoral process. France and Germany, the major providers of development funds and trade monies, were relatively silent on their position regarding the election. The European Commission, which was funding the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) observation team, gave conflicting reports of its intentions to provide observers. (The ICJ team, which assessed the situation and released a report several weeks before the election, was the only other international team besides IRI which performed any on-the-ground analysis on Guinea's electoral atmosphere.)

Unclear Lines of Electoral Authority

Guinea electoral law places all power for the administration of elections in the Ministry of Information and Security (MIS). It was explained to the government that this was contrary to normally-accepted international practice and would negatively impact upon their stated aim of conducting an open and transparent election. After opposing the establishment of an independent electoral commission for months, the government decided in fall 1993 to establish such a commission, albeit one with effective control still in the hands of the MIS.

On 6 October 1993, President Conté issued Decree No. 93/196, which created the National Electoral Commission. Article 2 stated that the commission would serve as the "moral guarantor for credibility of polling and the accuracy of votes." The commission was mandated to help control the activities surrounding the conduct of the presidential and legislative elections. According to Article 8, the commission was prohibited from any activities until "each and all members...take the oath of office."

Unfortunately, while the President followed the first decree with a second on 19 November (Decree No. 93/225) naming the members of the commission, Interior and Security Minister René Alseny Gomes failed to swear in the members. Neither the MIS nor the President ever refused to have them sworn in - it just never happened when promised. This caused consternation among prospective opposition party and NGO members of the commission and caused talk of civil disobedience to force the government's hand, but no such actions materialized.

Finally, on 8 December, President Conté signed the third decree (Decree No. 93/228). This decree, which reportedly had been before the President for several weeks before he signed it, had been expected to set forth the exact duties and powers of the commission. However, the decree actually set the operating parameters for the commission. Nevertheless, the commission members proceeded to work on examining the preparations for the upcoming presidential election within hours of being sworn in on 10 December.

On 10 December, IRI called on the commission to take up five issues that it believed

threatened the openness and transparency of the election process. IRI called upon the CNE to ensure that:

1) undue omissions of voters were minimized by working with the government and political parties to examine electoral lists for accuracy at the district and quartier levels as required by Article L18;

2) the government and political parties worked cooperatively to distribute elector's cards equitably as required by Articles L37, L38 and R22;

3) the issue of voters displaced by ethnic tension was addressed in a manner that preserved the principle of openness in the spirit of Article L32;

4) the government produced a writ providing clarification of procedures at the polling places that were not specifically covered in the existing electoral law and made this document available to government electoral officials and political party representatives at all polling places to avoid confusion on election day, and

5) the list of polling stations was examined for anomalies and that the revised list was communicated to as many voters as possible prior to election day, although the time frame required by Article L71 already had been unduly shortened.

The CNE met several times and sent teams to Guinea's five geographic regions to examine preparations at polling places. They found a lack of readiness, and on 16 December, the commission called on the GOG to postpone elections. The government ignored this entreaty from the CNE, and President Conté and Minister Gomes both said almost immediately in various forums that the elections would proceed as scheduled.

The case of Minister Gomes is particularly relevant at this point. It was the MIS and Minister Gomes in particular that was extended the authority by Guinean electoral law to manage elections. Since election preparations began in earnest in the fall of 1992, Minister Gomes had been criticized for not fully including political parties in these preparations and for failing to meet legally-mandated deadlines for completing various preparations.

When it became clear that the GOG would not be prepared to conduct an election on 27 December 1992, the government postponed balloting and promised to be ready in the spring of 1993. However, there was little progress by the time IRI completed civic education training in February, and when political party capacity-building began in April, a second postponement was a foregone conclusion.

Within the GOG, rumblings against Minister Gomes were not unheard of, but dissatisfaction with his management abilities became open as the months wore on. This discontent with Gomes reportedly became open at a Council of Ministers meeting on 30 November when sources say President Conté angrily cut Gomes off during a discussion, calling

November when sources say President Conté angrily cut Gomes off during a discussion, calling him a liar and stating that he wanted to hear no more from him. This also is said to have been followed up by Conté establishing an inter-ministerial task force to handle the preparations for the election. From this point on, it was common knowledge that Gomes no longer had sole authority to control the election process, but it never became clear who was in control.

In the days leading up to the 19 December election, a number of decisions regarding which forms would be used and which procedures would be followed at the polling places were introduced and then abandoned. There was speculation that MIS officials were being given conflicting orders and that Gomes had no control over decisions being made about the election.

Political Party Disunity

Although the GOG apparatus managing the elections was disjointed, the working relationship among Guinea's opposition parties was practically non-existent. Both large and small parties agreed on many issues regarding the elections, but even though they often agreed on actions to be taken, these actions seldom came to fruition.

Opposition parties did unite in a joint statement on 15 December reiterating their previously-expressed concerns regarding the establishment of the electoral list, the distribution of voter cards and the placement of polling places. The joint statement also pointed out that the CNE had not had proper time to assess the readiness for an election. This statement was the only joint action opposition parties took prior to the election.

The parties even failed to take joint action on the suspension of campaigning, despite almost universal agreement that campaign momentum had been broken and that parties were spending far more than had been budgeted for this election. The problem was that the government's actions were technically legal, although in violation of the spirit of fairness. In talks with party officials, they lamented the government's conduct, but seemed resigned to live with it.

In the weeks before the election, there was a great deal of talk about concerted action by opposition parties to stop the elections, but again the provocatively fiery rhetoric of some party leaders made joint action unlikely. PRP leaders spoke of filing suit to stop the election, at least partly on the grounds that Article L65 of the electoral law provided that there must be 60 days notice of a new election if a scheduled election were "annulled." There admittedly was some confusion over whether this provision referred to a cancelled election rather than merely a postponement of an election. However, there is no other provision in Guinea electoral law authorizing the movement of an election date. At any rate, no other parties joined in any PRP legal action.

A number of backstage maneuvers to force an election postponement were tried. The most promising was an initiative championed by African ambassadors in Conakry. Led by the dean of the diplomatic corps, Ghana's Ambassador Larry Bimi, they conducted a two-pronged

ambassadors met with Guinea's opposition parties to hear their views on the reasons for postponing the presidential election. The African ambassadors then met with the president to try to convince him to postpone.

When phase one failed, the African group reportedly planned to commence phase two, which involved their respective Presidents calling Guinea's President to suggest that a postponement might be in order to maintain peace and President Conté's place in history. It has not been confirmed that phase two ever went into effect, but if it did, it also failed.

At least some of the opposition presidential candidates reportedly had placed their hopes for a postponement in the African ambassadors' initiative. Again there was no joint decision on how to respond from the failure of the African initiative and the continuing intransigence of the GOG. On the Friday before the election, PRP's Siradiou Diallo, with the expectation of similar positions by other major opposition parties, decided to urge his supporters not to take part in what was increasingly seen as an illegitimate process.

However, RPG's Alpha Conde and UNR's Mamadou Bah decided at the last moment that there was no international unanimity that the Guinea presidential election was illegitimate. Therefore, both men announced on the eve of the election that their supporters should take part in the election the next day. The relatively high turnout of their voters indicates that this announcement may have been preceded by quiet preparations to counteract their prior statements against participating in the elections. Needless to say, this situation has only further served to divide the main opposition parties and lessen the chances of future joint action regarding reform of Guinea's electoral process.

Guinea's Troubled Election

Days before the election, Guineans living abroad exploded in anger over what many believed to be a tainted electoral process. Not only was there a dearth of information about the process for voting, but electoral lists often were unavailable, prompting many Guineans to fear they would be prevented from voting. In many African capitals, frustrated Guineans attacked their country's embassies. For example, a crowd of 200 Guineans were reported to have ransacked their embassy in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, to protest the upcoming election. A crowd of nearly 100 Guineans similarly attacked their country's embassy in Dakar, Senegal.

As a result of the attacks and heightened tension, several African governments cancelled absentee voting by Guineans. On election day, the Guinea embassies in Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone were not open for voters. Only 22% of those living overseas who were eligible to vote participated.

Sporadic violence also was in evidence in parts of Guinea itself before the election. Six Guineans were killed in the days before voting took place. Seven neighborhoods in Conakry were the scene of unrest on the eve of elections. Polling stations were ransacked the night before the election and on election day. Shooting was reported in the capital throughout election

before the election and on election day. Shooting was reported in the capital throughout election day and even the following day. The GOG had banned the unauthorized use of private vehicles from midnight Sunday (election day) until 6:00 PM Monday to cut down on traffic and confusion that might hinder the election. Still, only 109 of 165 polling stations in the Conakry commune of Dixin were able to report results.

Despite this tense atmosphere, turnout of poll workers and voters was impressive. Both groups had to be determined to play their roles in this election since it was uncertain that voting would be possible or even that the designated polling place was still in existence. Party agents, however, were not in evidence in large numbers. Those monitoring the balloting said no more than two agents were present at any polling place visited.

Even with the confusion caused by random violence and, in some cases, the late delivery of voting materials, there were widespread reports that the voting process went smoothly. An IFES consultant who helped IRI gather information on election day reported that voting in the town of Mamou was calm and efficient under the circumstances. Nevertheless, anomalies in election results have called into question any credit the process might have gained from smooth polling place operations.

Adjusted Election Results

During the evening of 19 December, IFES' representative was present at the MIS headquarters when election results were reported. Tallying difficulties led to delays in the compilation of results, whereupon the IFES representative computed the results on his own. According to preliminary results, President Conté received 47.89% of the vote, and his nearest challenger, Alpha Conde, received 22.4%. UNR's Bah received 13.13%, and PRP's Diallo won 12.19%. The other challengers received 1% or less.

These preliminary results were slightly skewed, however, because when the total for overseas voting was reported, there was no breakdown of votes by candidate. The preliminary vote credited all overseas ballots to Conté. When the vote breakdown became available, Conté's percentage was slightly reduced to a little more than 46%. According to the results, then, a second round was in order.

But the government, citing intimidation of voters, had almost immediately acted to annul the vote results in the Upper Guinea mining town of Siguiri. For similar reasons, results from Kankan, the capital of Upper Guinea, also were annulled. The combined annulments put Conté over the 50% mark. Official results announced on 23 December by the MIS gave Conté 50.93%, Conde 20.85%, Bah 13.11% and Diallo 11.64%. The other candidates still received 1% or less.

Since IRI did not observe balloting in either Kankan or Siguiri, it cannot be stated definitively that there was no intimidation of PUP voters in either city. However, it seems rather convenient for the government's purposes that it disputes figures in towns in which it did

capital city, in which PUP did well.

Of course, there was furor over the annulments in Siguiri and Kankan, where Conté had done poorly. All eight presidential candidates filed suit challenging the election results. Although he had now won the election, President Conté challenged the results in the two towns where voting results had been disallowed. According to widespread speculation, the President's challenge was intended to cover him should the MIS annulments in Siguiri and Kankan be overturned by the Supreme Court.

By early January 1994, however, the Guinea Supreme Court ratified the results of the election. This included the annulments in Siguiri and Kankan, as well as a new development - adjusted results showing that President Conté actually received 51.7% of the vote. Under the new calculations, Conde lost more than a percentage point to finish at 19.55%. The results of the other candidates were either unchanged or minimally changed.

The government has not released full electoral figures that would explain the discrepancy in the various results. According to the figures that were released, 2,021,838 valid ballots were cast according to the preliminary totals (minus the votes from Siguiri). Even though the 113,732 previously-valid votes from Kankan subsequently were thrown out, the total number of votes announced by the government on 23 December reflected a total vote of 2,132,167. Final results reported to foreign embassies showed that 2,082,840 valid votes were cast. No effort thus far has been made to reconcile convincingly how the final vote total could rise when more than 200,000 votes were thrown out. Even more in need of explanation is why every adjustment benefitted President Conté to the detriment of his challengers, particularly Alpha Conde.

Election Implications

Elections are expected to settle questions rather than raise new ones, as Guinea's 19 December balloting has done. The GOG had been preparing for an election since the fall of 1992, and there still are questions regarding its ability to manage a process efficiently, honestly and without serious questions regarding the handling of results. Moreover, one must question whether sufficient lessons have been learned by the MIS that would produce a more credible and efficient process for the legislative elections.

Since the CNE was appointed late and then its recommendations ignored regarding postponement, how credible will this body be in preparations for legislative elections? One must further ask whether effective authority and a specific role will be granted to the CNE so that it can play a meaningful role in Guinea's electoral process.

Political parties continue to have a major role in preparing for and managing the legislative elections. However, in light of their past failure to act in concert and the last-minute strategic contortions, how can the opposition parties be expected to work together in good faith to guarantee an acceptable election?

The mistrust of each other among Guinea's donor nations was palpable. It is likely that

The mistrust of each other among Guinea's donor nations was palpable. It is likely that the lack of a united front by donor nations allowed the GOG to believe that it was unnecessary to adhere to its own electoral law, fulfill its promises regarding election procedures or cooperate with international election standards and practices. The donors should do a better job of coordinating their positions on what constitutes an acceptable election.

As things stand now, the GOG conducted a seriously flawed election and appears to have suffered few, if any, negative effects. After more than three decades of single-party rule, this election was supposed to be a learning experience for all concerned in Guinea. However, one must question what was learned from this exercise. The government was to conduct an election on its own terms. The CNE played no significant role in the election in Guinea and may not be able to play a meaningful role in any future election unless its members are more determined and substantively prepared to be taken seriously. Political parties conducted themselves ineffectively and, in some cases, dishonorably. These problems probably will not be solved if the international community fails to play its role of passing impartial judgement on the Guinea electoral process.

IRI believes that observation of an election should begin as far in advance as possible. It is as vital to assess the electoral environment as it is the events of election day. Elections generally are won or lost long before the first voter casts a ballot. Timely constructive criticism early in the electoral process can help prevent injustice on election day. After all, how can one reasonably criticize a government for the conduct of an election if critical comments that could have produced timely corrections were withheld?

The legislative election scheduled for late March 1994, in Guinea promises to have a vital impact on the future of multi-party politics in Guinea. Most of the country's 43 registered political parties have an opportunity to win at least one seat in the national assembly. For those who fail to win that one seat, this election could mean the end of that party as a viable organization. Therefore, it is even more imperative that effective observation of the legislative election is conducted by as many observers as possible - both domestic and international.

Among the criteria that will be used by IRI to determine whether to observe future elections in Guinea are the following:

* Responsible, impartial individuals must be identified and empowered to conduct preparations for elections, and the CNE must be given a more specific and meaningful role in the conduct of elections;

* The GOG must fulfill both Guinea law and its own promises to work with political parties to examine and correct, if necessary, the current list of voters;

* The GOG and Guinean political parties must work cooperatively to ensure that all legally registered voters receive their voter cards;

* The GOG and the CNE should reexamine electoral procedures to eliminate inconsistent and unfair practices and make the next election more equitable;

* The GOG and CNE must reexamine the list of polling places to eliminate anomalies such as polling places on military bases or in private homes, and

* The GOG, CNE and political parties must work cooperatively to find an acceptable solution to the problem of thousands of displaced voters who were effectively disenfranchised in the Presidential election.

IRI is continuing to monitor the political situation in Guinea and hopes to be able to conduct an observation of the upcoming legislative election.

Appendix 1
IRI Statements

IRI Statement On
Guinea Presidential Election

After examining the electoral environment in Guinea, the International Republican Institute (IRI) believes it will be extremely difficult to conduct a technically satisfactory Presidential election on 19 December.

There are two reasons why the IRI has reached this preliminary conclusion. First, with approximately two weeks until the election, it remains uncertain whether voter registration cards can be printed and delivered beforehand to eligible voters. This would effectively diminish the openness of this election.

Second, the members of the National Electoral Commission, which is charged with the "moral" responsibility to guarantee the transparency of the election, still have not been sworn in. To date, the commission has been unable to play any meaningful role in the electoral process.

The IRI will continue to monitor this situation, and at a later date will determine the disposition of its observer mission.

Conakry, 3 December 1993

IRI Assessment of Electoral Environment
For 19 December Presidential Elections

The International Republican Institute (IRI), a U.S.-based non-governmental organization that promotes democracy worldwide, has determined after an extended assessment of the electoral environment in Guinea that it is not possible at this time to hold an open, transparent and meaningful Presidential election.

Now that the members of the National Electoral Commission (CNE) have been sworn in, they must be allowed to immediately take up their mandated role as the "moral" guarantors of transparency for the electoral process. In the short amount of time remaining until the election, the IRI strongly recommends that the CNE should ensure that:

1) undue omissions of voters are minimized by the government and political parties working together to examine electoral lists for accuracy at the district and quartier levels as required by Article L18;

2) the government and political parties work cooperatively to distribute elector's cards equitably as required by Articles L37, L38 and R22;

3) the issue of voters displaced by ethnic tension is addressed in a manner that preserves the principle of openness in the spirit of Article L32;

4) the government produce a writ providing clarification of procedures at the polling place that are not specifically covered in the existing electoral law and make this document available to government electoral officials and political party representatives at all polling places to avoid confusion on election day, and

5) the list of polling stations is examined for anomalies and that the revised list is communicated to as many voters as possible prior to election day, although the time frame required by Article L71 already has been unduly shortened.

To make it possible to properly address these issues, the IRI calls upon the CNE to recommend a postponement of the 19 December election. It is vital that the issues mentioned previously are resolved prior to this election. Otherwise, it will not conform to either internationally-accepted electoral standards of Guinea electoral law.

Conakry, 10 December 1993

INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE

N E W S R E L E A S E

For Immediate Release
December 15, 1993

Contact: Matthew DeCamara
(202) 408-9450

IRI CANCELS ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO GUINEA

Preliminary Statement of Findings

After an extended assessment of the electoral environment in Guinea, International Republican Institute (IRI) has determined that it is not possible to hold an open, transparent, and meaningful presidential election on the scheduled date of December 19, 1993.

By preventing a neutral and broad-based election commission from taking office and by assuming administrative and logistical control over the process, the government's intentions must be called into question. The government's Ministry of Interior and Security (MIS) has managed the election process without adequate consultation from various political representatives in Guinea.

Disorganization on the part of the government's administration of the balloting is a cause for further concern. Although the government did attempt to distribute some election material into the field on time, it failed to allow the opposition political parties to review and approve the official voter rolls. Consequently, the composition of these vital lists has been in the sole

- more -

control of the government, a gross abrogation of the principle of openness.

Polling places were not identified by the government 30 days in advance of the elections as required by law. Therefore, adequate time has not been given for voters to locate their voting stations. Furthermore, current procedures for voting have not been established by the MIS. It would be difficult to expect Guineans, many of whom have never voted, to be informed adequately of their voting rights at this late date.

Based on credible reports, hundreds of thousands of voters may have fled from potential ethnic conflict in coastal Guinea, where they were registered to vote, to other areas of the country. There currently is no discussion of how to ensure that these voters can cast ballots.

With no politically neutral administrative structure, lack of transparency at various levels of the process, no set locations or procedures for casting ballots, and no provision for issuance of proper credentials to international observers or domestic monitors of the voting, IRI determined that an observer mission would serve no useful or constructive purpose.

Consequently, IRI will not send observers to the December 19 presidential elections. We have joined with both domestic groups and the international community present in Guinea in strongly urging the government to postpone these elections until openness and transparency can be achieved. To proceed with these elections now will result in meaningless, undemocratic results.

# #

Appendix 2
ICJ Statement

DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

December 16, 1993

Our Reference: GP/mcf/2465/93

To: The Ambassador of the United States

RE: Presidential Elections
CIJ Observers

Mr. Ambassador,

I am pleased to inform you that the CIJ headquarters in Geneva has confirmed to me that Mr. Adama Dieng, Secretary-General of the CIJ, before his departure for Palestine on December 13, 1993, sent a letter to the Republic of Guinea by expedited mail and by fax.

In this letter, Mr. Dieng informed the president of the Republic that the analysis of Professor Maurice Glele, Director of the Institute of Human Rights and Democracy and member of the Benin Constitutional Court, who undertook a mission to Conakry last December 7-10, concluded that it was necessary to postpone the electoral deadline, thus confirming the conclusions of the previous CIJ mission. Consequently, the CIJ believes that it cannot send to Guinea the team of 80 observers as scheduled for the presidential ballot called for December 19, 1993.

On this occasion, I would like, Mr. Ambassador, to express to you my sincere personal thanks for the close, confidence-inspiring cooperation you created between your Embassy and the Delegation during the entire course of this Guinean electoral process.

Sincerely,
The Head of the Delegation,
G. Petitpierre
[signature and seal]

Appendix 3
Listing of Presidential Candidates

1. His Excellency Lansana Conté
   Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès (PUP)
   Party of Unity and Progress

2. Alpha Conde
   Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG)
   People's Assembly of Guinea

3. Mamadou Bah
   Union pour la Nouvelle République (UNR)
   Union for the New Republic

4. Siradiou Diallo
   Parti du Renouveau et du Progrès (PRP)
   Party of Renewal and Progress

5. El Hadj Ismail Ghussein
   Parti Démocratique de Guinée-Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PDG-RDA)
   Democratic Party of Guinea-Democratic African Assembly

6. Jean Marie Doré
   Union pour le Progrès de la Guinée (UPG)
   Union for the Progress of Guinea

7. El Hadj Mohamed Mansour Kaba
   DYAMA
   The People

8. Facinet Touré
   Union Nationale pour la Prosperité de la Guinée (UNPG)
   National Union for the Prosperity of Guinea

Appendix 4
Electoral Commission Membership

1. Amadou Dieng: Adviser - representative of the Ministry of Interior and Security

2. Karamoko Kandet: National Director - representative of the MIS

3. Dembo Touré: National Director - representative of the MIS

4. N'fa Ousmane Touré: Head of Section - representative of the Ministry of Justice

5. Lt. Colonel Mohamed Lamine Traoré: representative of the Ministry of Defense

6. Mamadou Soare: Chief of Cabinet - representative of the Ministry of Planning and Finance

7. Abraham Doukouré: National Director - representative of the Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation

8. Alpha Kabine Keita: National Director (computer science systems analyst) - representative of the Ministry of Communications

9. Digui Berete: Representative of the UPG

10. M'Baye Gueye: Representative of the UNPG

11. Ibrahima Laho Diallo: Representative of the PGUG

12. Sory Serinde Diallo: Representative of the PRP

13. Momo Conté: Representative of the PEG

14. Abdoul Kabelee Camara: Representative of the PUP

15. Ibrahima Sory Diallo: Representative of the UGD

16. Thierno Hassan Diallo: Representative of the PLD

17. M'Bemba Kabine Dioubaté: Representative of the RGD

18. Mamdi Nabe Touré: Representative of the UDG

19. Moriba Doumbouya: Representative of the PUP

20. Agubou Kamban Bah: Representative of the UNDG

21. Famoro Sidrame Camara: Representative of the RPG

22. Ansoumane Bangoura: Representative of the RGT

23. Aly Conté: Representative of the UNP

24. Mamadi Sidibe: Representative of the ANP

25. Moussa Sano Soumah: Representative of the PUD

26. Tamba Lamine Millimono: Representative of the PPG

27. Lansana Magasouba: Representative of the ARENA

28. Mohamed Lamine Samoura: Representative of the PDEG

29. Amadou Bailo Bah: Representative of the DYAMA

30. Fode Mamadou Keita: Representative of the PDG-RDA

31. Ghandi Tountara: Representative of the UDS

32. Mamadi Bailo Baldé: Representative of the PGP

33. Gadiri Diallo: Representative of the PGT

34. Thierno Boubacar Diallo: Representative of the RNP

35. Sidy Diara: Representative of the UNR

36. Mohamed Cheick Bah: Representative of the ADN

37. Boye Guilavogui: Representative of the RDD

38. Soulemane Savane: Representative of the UPN

39. Joseph Tamba Mansaré: Representative of the PLG

40. Alama Bayo: Representative of the PS

41. Kabalo Conde: Representative of the PSDG

42. El Hadj Sekou Oumar Keita: Representative of the UDR

43. Mohamed Dyeli Sidibe: Representative of the RPD

44. Aboubacar Mangue Camara: Representative of the LCC

45. Abass Barry: Representative of the UFR

46. Amadou Thierno Diallo: Representative of the UND

47. Ibrahima Sosry Soumah: Representative of PRGP

48. Jonas Lamah: Representative of the Christian community

49. El. Hadj Oumar Bangoura: Representative of the National Islamic League

50. El Hadj Abdoulaye Kaba: Representative of the National Islamic League

51. Mohamed Lamine Youla: Representative of the Order of Advocates

52. El Hadj Mamadou Dia: Representative of the Association of Journalists of Guinea

53. Aboubacar Sankarela Diallo: Representative of the Guinean Association of Editors of the Independent Press

54. Dr. Kekoura Camara: Representative of the Guinean Association of Former Diplomats

55. Khalil Fofana: Representative of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

56. Sidafa Camara: Representative of universities and institutions of higher studies

57. Aly Badara Sylla: Representative of universities and institutions of higher studies

58. Daraba Saran Camara: Representative for coordination of female NGOs

59. Lealah Koundouno: Representative of coordination of female NGOs

60. Christian Sow: Representative of the Organization for the Defense of Human Rights

61. Moussa Mara: Representative of the National Union of Former Servicemen

62. Soriba Sylla: Representative of unemployed graduates

63. Abdoulaye Doumbouya: Representative of unemployed of former servicemen

64. Mara Mamou Mario: Representative of the National Council of Entrepreneurs

65. Dr. Ousmane Barry: Representative of the Order of Doctors, Surgeons and Pharmacists

66. Dr. Cherif Diallo: Representative of the Order of Engineers and Certified Public Accountants