



Migration Profile

GUINEA CONAKRY

A. Executive Summary

Guinea is a West African nation endowed with many natural resources (especially mining and hydropower), and yet a cross-section of the population still lives in dire poverty. The country gained its independence from France in 1958, and since then, respectively in 2008 and 2021, the military has made attempts to take over the government. Despite its effort to overcome poverty, this issue is still a major concern in the country, like unemployment whose rate was 4.35% in 2020ⁱ, while among young people in 2019 was at 5.04%ⁱⁱ. Agriculture remains the backbone of the local economy and employs 52% of the workforce, providing income for 57% of the householdsⁱⁱⁱ. Guinea has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.477, and it is ranked at 178 out of 189 countries, placing it in a low human development category^{iv}.

From 2013 to 2016, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia were the epicentre of the Ebola pandemic outbreak, and recently, in 2021, new cases were identified. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has deteriorated the country's condition even more, and the double virus threat is pushing families into poverty, especially girls who are more at risk of forced marriage (47% of them were married before the age of 18)^v.

As far as refugees, recently Guinea has been more of a sending country than a receiving one, and refugees living in Guinea mainly come from Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

B. Country profile

I. Background information

Guinea was a former French West African colony until 1958, when it gained its independence. It is surrounded by Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Its population is about 12.8 million people^{vi}. It is often referred to as Guinea-Conakry after the name of its capital, Conakry, to differentiate it from other territories in the eponymous region such as Guinea-Bissau, and Equatorial Guinea. Guinea-Conakry is a multilingual country with over 40 ethnic languages. The official language is French, and other widely spoken languages are Pular, Maninka, and Susu. Its ethnic population includes Fulani (Peuhl) 33.4%, Malinke 29.4%, Susu 21.2%, Guerze 7.8%, Kissi 6.2%, Toma 1.6%, other/foreigners 0.4%^{vii}. It

is predominantly a Muslim country (89.1%), followed by Christians (6.8%), Animists (1.6%), others (0.1%), and people with no affiliation (2.4%)^{viii}.

II. Internal and International Migration

Urbanization remains the key driver of internal migration in Guinea, where in the last decade there has been a rapid urbanization phenomenon (37% in 2015)^{ix}. Conakry is the hub for urbanization, with an annual growth rate of 4.58%, compared to 2.56% of other cities^x. The steady growth from 2000 to 2015 meant also a yearly increase of 150,000 people in Conakry, coming from other parts of the country^{xi}, and the concentration of socio-economic activities in the city has led to a spatial imbalance among cities in Guinea. Due to extreme poverty and lack of opportunities in rural areas, Conakry, where most industries and main educational institutions are located^{xii}, remains a pull force for rural-urban migration in Guinea.

In 2020, international migrants living in Guinea were approximately 121,437 (0.9% of the total population), and 41.4% of them were female^{xiii}. They mostly come from Mali, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Algeria^{xiv}.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

There is no data available regarding the number of skilled Guinean migrants living abroad. However, in addition to Burundi, Algeria, Mauritania, and Chad, Guinea is one of the five top countries in Africa with regards to brain drain, with a 6.5 index point in 2021 which is above the world average of 5.25, based on 173 countries^{xv}. Research conducted by GERM (*Laboratoire des Etudes et Recherches sur le Genre l'Environnement, les Religions et les Migrations, Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis*) indicated that between 2007 and 2014 most migrants left Guinea for either a professional reason (56.2%) or to study (15.6%)^{xvi}. The stock of Guinean emigrants stood at 398.5x1,000, constituting 3.3% of the total population. The main destination countries for Guinean emigrants are Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Liberia, The Gambia, France, Mali, The United States of America, Spain, and Mauritania^{xvii}. Migration from Guinea to Côte d'Ivoire is one of the top 10 migration corridors in Western Africa, with 167,516 Guineans who have already moved into Cote d'Ivoire^{xviii}.

IV. Forced Migration (internally displaced, asylum seekers, refugees, and climate-displaced people)

In 1999, Guinea was recognised as the largest refugee receiving country in Africa, hosting about 450,000 people^{xix}. Despite its decline in number since 1999, Guinea is still a host country for refugees, and, as of November 2021, there were 6,092 refugees and 3,551 asylum seekers. Refugees in Guinea come from Côte d'Ivoire (4,091), Sierra Leone (1,506), Liberia (321), not specified (51), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (47), the Central African Republic (33), the Syrian Arab Republic (12), Nigeria (10), Rwanda (9), Mali (7), and Congo (5)^{xx}. The most recent data (2009) indicates that refugees were placed in southwest Guinea, in Laine and Kouankan refugee camps^{xxi}. Currently, there is no information regarding specific refugee locations.

Lately, the main reason for internal displacement in Guinea is natural disasters - mostly flooding caused by heavy rainfall -, with about 2,600 internally displaced people in the country^{xxii}. In late August and early September 2021, heavy rain fell over most parts of the country resulting in major flooding. The hardest-hit areas were Siguiiri, where 43,815 people were affected, 9,305 in Gueckedou, and 16,551 in Conakry^{xxiii}. Floods and heavy rain also destroyed 867 houses, 763 water points, and 964 latrines, causing the displacement of more than 2,500 people^{xxiv}. Those affected the most were people already living in precarious conditions, and they received assistance from humanitarian organisations. For example, during the Kankan flood in 2020, which produced the displacement of 1,363 people, the Guinea Red Cross Society provided the victims with shelter, food, water, and other resources^{xxv}.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

In 2020 the unemployment rate in Guinea was 4.35%^{xxvi}, which remains one of the main causes of human trafficking in the country. Guinea has one of the world's youngest populations, and more than 75% of its people is 35 years old and under^{xxvii}. With such a young population and a high unemployment rate, many of them fall victims of human trafficking. Guinea is also considered both a source and a transit country for human trafficking, and especially the town of Koundara in the north-western region is known to the local government as a transit town for human trafficking^{xxviii}.

Guinea is a Tier 2 country and does not entirely meet the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, despite its efforts to pursue it. Some of the key areas where human trafficking is largely active are forced labour in farms, domestic labour, sexual exploitation, begging, and most of the identified victims are children and women. People from the villages of Middle and Upper Guinea are more vulnerable to human trafficking^{xxix}. For example, in the coastal region of Boke, children are forced to work in farms under the false pretext of being provided with their education. Some Quranic teachers also forced their students to beg on the streets, both in Guinea and other countries, such as Senegal, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau. In Conakry and the mining cities of Kamsar, Lero and Siguiiri, child sex trafficking is widely attested^{xxx}. Other areas, where Guineans are being forced into domestic labour and sexual exploitation, include West Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States of America^{xxxi}. In 2021, the government reported 212 victims, and 62 more of potential human trafficking victims. Of the 212 people, 200 were forced labour victims, which included 80 children who had been exploited in domestic servitude, and 12 more in sex trafficking^{xxxii}.

The government, through its health services and social workers, provides medical and psycho-social services to victims of human trafficking. In addition to that, it relies heavily on other countries and NGOs in order to provide special care to these victims.

VI. National Legal Framework

With regards to immigration, Act No. L/94/019/CTRN sets the guidelines for entry and residence in Guinea. Instead, in order to address emigration policies in Guinea, an inter-ministerial commission is in charge of drafting a comprehensive migration policy.

At the regional level, Guinea is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and one of its priorities is to allow and enhance the movement of people within the region. At the continental level, Guinea is a signatory to the 1969 AU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees Problems in Africa. Guinea is also a signatory to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). Beyond the continent, Guinea is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, The Convention of the Rights of the Child, The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on Migrant Workers, The United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families, The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

VII. Main Actors

The State

Three ministries are responsible for handling migration in Guinea. The Ministry of Security and Civil Protection is in charge of maintaining internal security, the Ministry of Employment, Vocational, and Technical Education is in charge of, among other things, granting work permits to foreigners, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad provides protection to Guineans abroad and engages with the diaspora.

In collaboration with UNHCR, the *Bureau national de coordination de refugies* (BNCR) is responsible for refugee affairs in the country and deals with the procedures for refugee status determination of new arrivals and asylum seekers.

The anti-trafficking committee (CNLTPPA) is, finally, responsible for the implementation of anti-trafficking policy and related activities.

International Organisations

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are the most important international agencies dealing with migration-related issues in Guinea. IOM, through a joint initiative with the European Union, gives assistance for the return and reintegration of migrants in Guinea, provides capacity building for government and local stakeholders, develops migration policies and research in Guinea, and provides health care services^{xxxiii}. UNHCR provides international support and material assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Other international organisations in Guinea include the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), Plan International, Save the Children, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Other Organisations

Another locally based migration related organisation is the *Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (ODGH), which monitors human rights violations against refugees. In addition, ODGH provides training to Guinean military and police on understanding and respecting human rights.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has one archdiocese in Conakry, and two dioceses are located in Kankan and N'Zerekore.

In a predominantly Muslim country, the Catholic Church is present thanks to its humanitarian activities designed to assist the vulnerable in the local communities. Intending to improve people's living conditions without any discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation, Caritas has initiated and developed programmes in the areas of food security, health, education, water and sanitation, community development, and peacebuilding^{xxxiv}. In the domain of health, for example, Caritas, in partnership with the government of Guinea during the outbreak of Covid-19, activated programmes benefitting at least 2,650 vulnerable households that do not have the basic necessities to meet their needs^{xxxv}. The initiative took place to raise awareness about the pandemic and for the distribution of health kits. In the realm of peacebuilding, Caritas through its "Share the Journey" campaign aimed at building relationships among refugees, migrants, and local communities in Guinea^{xxxvi}.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Guinea focuses primarily on providing health assistance to the vulnerable within the various communities. CRS is one of three non-governmental organisations (the other two are Population Services International and Plan International) handling the Global Fund grants in the country, which provides funds for the fight against HIV and Aids, tuberculosis and malaria in Guinea^{xxxvii}. For example, the government in partnership with CRS and other international organisations on World Malaria Day distributed 8.8 million insecticide-treated bed nets to over 16 million people living in Guinea, including refugees^{xxxviii}. Other areas which CRS is involved in are conflict mitigation, emergency response, and migration.

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