

Guinea

NOT FREE

30
/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	7 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	23 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

34/100 **Not Free**

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology.



Overview

Guinea experienced a transition to civilian rule in 2010, following a 2008 military coup and decades of authoritarian governance. Ethnic division, corruption, a crackdown on dissent, and the abuse of civilians by security forces marked the subsequent decade. A section of the armed forces, the Special Forces (GFS), staged another coup in September 2021, and coup leaders have since delayed a return to civilian rule, incarcerated critics, and brutally repressed protesters.

Key Developments in 2022

- In January, transition president Mamady Doumbouya named the 81-member National Transitional Council (CNT). The interim legislative body's responsibilities include drafting a new constitution and facilitating a transition to constitutional rule. However, no new electoral framework has been established, and elections have not been scheduled.
- In May, the junta-led government effectively banned public demonstrations. Nevertheless, the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC) continued organizing mass demonstrations calling for the immediate return of civilian rule, even after violent crackdowns by security forces against demonstrators.
- In August, the government formally dissolved the FNDC. Several FNDC leaders and functionaries were arrested and at year's end were awaiting trial.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0 / 4

In September 2021, military commanders led by Lieutenant Colonel Mamady Doumbouya overthrew the government. Doumbouya was sworn in as interim president in October 2021, serving a term with no specified end date. The junta introduced a transitional charter that established the National Committee of Reconciliation and Development (CNRD), headed by Doumbouya, as a transitional governing body. CNRD members are prohibited from contesting future elections, but the junta has not specified which individuals are in the CNRD.

In August 2022, Doumbouya appointed Bernard Goumou as prime minister because his predecessor, Mohamed Béavogui, was absent due to ill health.

Under the 2020 constitution, the president is elected by popular vote for up to two six-year terms. That constitution included language that was interpreted as a reset of the term count for then president Alpha Condé, who had already served two five-year terms under the previous constitution. Condé won a highly controversial third term in October 2020.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

0/4

The junta's transitional charter specifies the establishment of the 81-member National Transitional Council (CNT), which is responsible for drafting a new constitution. Members of the Condé administration were barred from participating in the CNT. President Doumbouya appointed CNT members from political parties, the security forces, the trade union movement, the business sector, and civil society. The CNT is led by Dansa Kourouma, a relative of Doumbouya, a long-term civil society functionary, and former supporter of President Condé.

The major opposition parties have no representation in the CNT, as they boycotted the 2020 legislative elections. Numerous civil society organizations and political parties have refused to participate in the CNT.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

0/4

Guinea's previous electoral framework and administrative bodies facilitated credible elections, though there were sometimes disputes over the composition of the electoral bodies and electoral outcomes.

The 2020 constitution, which was approved in a referendum held concurrently with that year's parliamentary elections, instituted six-year terms for the president, up from five years under the previous charter. The junta that seized power in September 2021 suspended the constitution and the Independent National Electoral Commission. The transitional charter does not specify when new elections will be held.

In the wake of the coup, Guinea's ambassador to the United Nations stated that the junta would revise the voter roll ahead of elections. A decree from the interim president transferred responsibility for managing elections and referendums to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization. In October 2022, the government agreed to limit the transition period to two years beginning in January 2023. The CNT has yet to start deliberating on a new electoral framework or to decide whether to maintain the previous framework.

Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because no new electoral framework has been created since the junta took power last year, and elections have not been scheduled.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free

1/4

of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	
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More than 150 political parties were officially recognized as of December 2021, with most having clear ethnic or regional bases of support. Article 6 of the transitional charter establishes the right for political parties to freely form. In practice, the operations of political parties are increasingly restricted under the junta, which in 2022 dismantled the country's largest opposition group.

In May 2022, the junta banned all political demonstrations “as long as public order cannot be guaranteed.” This announcement effectively targeted the activities of the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC), a coalition of civil society groups, political parties, and labor unions, which accuse the junta of authoritarian practices. In July, the government initiated legal proceedings against three FNDC leaders, who subsequently were arrested. In August the government formally dissolved the FNDC. The FNDC and other organizations such as the National Alliance for Alteration and Democracy (ANAD) and the formerly ruling Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) no longer participate in the dialogue with the junta.

In October, security forces used live ammunition against protesters calling for the return of civilian rule, and detained numerous FNDC sympathizers.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the junta formally dissolved the country's main opposition movement and cracked down on political demonstrations.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	1/4
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The interim government rules through violence and intimidation. Because the political reconstruction process is controlled by President Doumbouya and his junta, the opposition appears to stand only a very limited chance to increase support or gain through elections. The date of the next elections has yet to be determined.

In 2022, security forces frequently attacked rallies and protests organized by the opposition, making it more difficult for opposition parties to mobilize their supporters. The government formally dissolved the main opposition movement in August.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the junta dissolved the country's main opposition movement and has overseen significant impediments to other groups' ability to contest future elections.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?	1 / 4
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Previously, Condé's administration had reduced the influence of the military in politics, but the Special Forces (GFS), claimed power in 2021 and Doumbouya, the officer who led the GFS and the coup, became the interim president.

Ethnic loyalty played an outsized role in the political choices of voters and party leaders under Condé. Rather than organizing around policy platforms or political ideologies and trying to attract new supporters, each party tacitly pledged allegiance to its respective ethnic group, contributing to the threat of mutual hostility and violence.

There is widespread speculation that foreign-owned mining interests in Guinea, including Russian and Turkish operations, backed Condé and now back Doumbouya because they view him as best positioned to protect their interests.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	2 / 4
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Women and members of ethnic and religious minority groups have full political rights under the law, but ethnic divisions and gender bias limit their participation in practice. Under a law passed in 2019, women must constitute 50 percent of electoral lists. Female representation in the National Assembly stood at only 16.7 percent prior to the 2021 coup.

The transitional charter included a 30 percent gender quota for the CNT, which is implemented in practice. Members of the LGBT+ community are poorly represented in political life.

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	0/4
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An unelected junta-led government has ruled the country since the military coup of September 2021.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	1/4
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The country's underfunded and understaffed National Anti-Corruption Agency was further undermined by instability that accompanied the coup.

Junta leader and transition president Doumbouya announced the creation of a special anticorruption court (CRIEF) in December 2021. At the close of 2022, it was still difficult to judge the court's effectiveness or ascertain the true motives behind its formation. It has summoned the former prime minister and several former ministers of the Condé era, and placed them under arrest for embezzlement, but has refused to examine corrupt activities within the armed forces and the mining sector. In

October, the court ordered the arrest of Cellou Baldé, a supporter of the junta and leader of the Union of Democratic Forces.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?	1/4
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Government operations are generally opaque although the Condé administration had made some progress regarding budget transparency. A 2010 access to information law was never implemented, and the National Assembly voted in favor of a new version in 2020.

In July 2022, the CNT debated a three-year budget proposal (2023–25) from the junta-led government. There has otherwise been very little effort by the interim government to facilitate or permit transparent debate about the budget.

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	1/4
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The transitional charter commits to freedom and independence of the media, but in practice media freedom remains restricted. In 2022, several critical journalists reportedly faced arbitrary arrests, intimidation, questioning, and censorship by the security forces. Conakry's new rulers have frequently called on the national communication authority (HAC) to issue suspensions against outlets that provided critical coverage. In addition, individual units of the military have visited the offices of

newspapers and radio stations that produced critical reports, and intimidated journalists. The junta has further managed to skew media coverage in favor of the transitional authorities by selectively offering financial support. Separately, there were reports in 2022 that journalists covering demonstrations against the junta were attacked by protesters armed with rocks and knives.

Previous laws permitting criminal defamation and prosecutions under broad cybersecurity measures remain on the books.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 due to increased harassment of journalists by junta authorities.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	3/4
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Religious rights are generally respected in practice. Some non-Muslim government workers have reported occasional discrimination. People who convert from Islam to Christianity sometimes encounter pressure from their community.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	3/4
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Academic freedom has historically been subject to political restrictions under authoritarian regimes. The problem was less severe under the 2010–21 civilian government, though self-censorship still reduced the vibrancy of academic discourse. The coup of September 2021 has neither worsened nor improved the relationship between academic freedom and executive power.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	2/4
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Ethnic tensions and laws restricting freedom of expression may deter open debate in some circumstances. The junta does not officially restrict private discussions. However, state-led repression against dissenting voices and attempts to sideline critical media outlets have triggered widespread hesitation to express personal views for fears of surveillance or retribution.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	1/4
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Article 34 establishes the freedom of assembly in the transitional charter, but in May 2022 a decree by the military junta banned demonstrations that have the potential to disturb public order. The junta used the decree to outlaw any demonstration that is critical of the government. In October the security forces used live ammunition against protesters and detained numerous FNDC sympathizers. Nevertheless, despite the risk of injury and persecution, protest marches against the government continued to take place throughout 2022.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?	1/4
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Civil society is weak and subject to periodic interference and intimidation. Nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers and activists have faced threats, harassment, and imprisonment. Guinean NGOs also suffer from poor access to funding, leadership struggles, the restriction of civic space, and security concerns.

Civil society representatives are represented in the CNT under the September 2021 transitional charter. Many such organizations in the CNT are said to be supportive of President Doumbouya.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?	2/4
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Although workers are allowed to form trade unions, strike, and bargain collectively, they must provide 10 days' notice before striking, and strikes are banned in broadly defined essential services. In practice, unions are relatively active and constitute the core of civil society. The Condé (2010–21) and the Doumbouya (since 2021) administrations have attempted to divide unions seen as posing a potential threat to the authority of the government.

Several unions are represented in the CNT.

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?	1/4
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The judicial system remains subject to political influence and corruption and is generally understaffed and lacks transparency. The judiciary suffers from a lack of resources and personnel.

Shortly after overthrowing Condé, junta leader Doumbouya ordered the return of cars and properties from judges who approved Conde's third term. Apart from the creation of a new anticorruption court there has been no substantial reform of the judiciary since the 2021 coup.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	1/4
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The junta released political detainees imprisoned by Condé. However, in 2022 security forces under the junta carried out their own arbitrary arrests and detentions. Due process is upheld unevenly in the state justice system, and many disputes are settled informally through traditional justice systems.

Security personnel implicated in abuses during the 2020 electoral periods did not face significant judicial scrutiny, due in part to limited institutional capacity and the unwillingness of witnesses to participate in subsequent proceedings.

Most of the incarcerated population consists of people in prolonged pretrial detention.

In September 2022, the trial against former junta leader Moussa Dadis Camara and other alleged perpetrators of the 2009 Conakry stadium massacre started; interim President Doumbouya had ordered the trial. The victims were not guaranteed protection for testimony against the accused perpetrators. The proceedings are being monitored by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which signed a memorandum of understanding with the Doumbouya administration. Media coverage of the trial was shown on television without restriction.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?	1/4
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Security forces have engaged in torture and other forms of physical violence with apparent impunity.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	1/4
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Women face pervasive societal discrimination and disadvantages in both the formal and traditional justice systems. Various ethnic groups engage in mutual discrimination with respect to hiring and other matters. Antidiscrimination laws do not protect LGBT+ people. Same-sex sexual activity is a criminal offense that can be punished with up to three years in prison. Although this law is rarely enforced, LGBT+ people have been arrested on lesser charges in connection with their identity.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

2/4

Rampant crime and the lack of employment opportunities remain important informal impediments to freedom of movement and ability to seek new employment. Temporary restrictions on movement implemented in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were no longer in place at the end of 2022.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

2/4

In principle there are avenues to document property rights and ownership, and following recent reforms, property registration processes have become faster and less expensive. However, the legal and administrative system responsible for enforcing ownership rights is ineffective and corrupt. In 2022, the junta expropriated a number of properties in the capital.

Women face gender-based disadvantages in laws and practices governing inheritance and property rights.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	1/4
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Rape and domestic violence are common but underreported due to fears of stigmatization, and there no specific legislation addresses domestic abuse. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is common despite a legal ban; in 2016, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that 69 percent of 20- to 24-year-old women were subjected to FGM before their 10th birthday. The 2016 criminal code set the legal age for marriage at 18, but early and forced marriages have remained common. A civil marriage is required by the civil code prior to a traditional or religious marriage ceremony, but enforcement of this requirement is rare.

In 2019, the parliament amended the civil code to make monogamy the general regime of marriage, except when there is “explicit agreement” on polygamy from the first wife.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	1/4
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Workers in the informal sectors do not enjoy work-related protections. Income generated from the exploitation of the mining sector benefit those in power. In some mining areas, child labor is a major problem.

The 2016 criminal code specifically criminalized trafficking in persons and debt bondage, but reduced the minimum penalties for such crimes, and enforcement has been weak. Women and children are sometimes trafficked for sexual exploitation to other parts of West Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. The

military coup of September 2021 diverted attention and administrative capacity away from existing programs to combat child labor and human trafficking.



On Guinea

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Country Facts

Global Freedom Score

30/100 Not Free

Other Years

2024

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