

Guinean military massacres opposition

Wed, 07/10/2009 - 10:36

Soldiers belonging to the military rulers of Guinea have slaughtered scores of protesters in Guinea, West Africa.

Fifty thousand demonstrators gathered in a sports stadium in Conakry, capital of Guinea, to hear opposition speeches in protest against Captain Dada Camara, who heads up the military junta, when soldiers burst in and started shooting randomly into the crowd. An estimated 150 people were killed.

The soldiers then went on a violent rampage, beating and shooting at protesters. They also captured women and raped them in the streets. Eye-witnesses say frenzied soldiers set upon the peaceful demonstrators.

?Protesters were caught in a trap. Soldiers fired at point-blank range. They raped women in front of everybody. They stabbed people with bayonets. They raped women with guns. This is a savagery that can?t be explained,? said Thierno Maadjou Sow of the Guinean Organisation for Human Rights.

Camara denied all responsibility and told Radio France Internationale: ?I wasn?t myself in the stadium. They told me there was stampeding, and they told me also there were gunshots, and that some people stole weapons from a police station. So, in this human flood, there were gunshots.?

This is a callous response ? an outright, bare-faced lie ? from a man who leads murderers and rapists. He cynically went on to offer a government of national unity. Who would want to be in government with this man?

Decades of oppression

Guinea?s problems go back decades, as a succession of corrupt governments have ripped off the people and sold the country to the multinationals. In the past 10 years, prices have risen while wages have stagnated. But the workers and the youth have not taken this lying down; they have fought back time and again.

In 2004 there were riots over the price of rice in Conakry. In early 2005 teachers went on an all out strike for a week. Later that year, in November, the unions organised a 48-hour general strike for better wages, including a minimum wage and decent pensions. There were two more general strikes in March and June of 2006. One day in June 2006 saw 11 students shot dead by riot police.

Workers organised further general strikes in 2007 that lasted for a total of 60 days. In this great revolt, 100 people were killed and 2,000 arrested.

All this occurred under President Lansana Conte, who, like his successor Camara, also ran a corrupt regime that violated people?s human rights and exploited workers and peasants. Through five years of mass mobilisation, the workers prevented Conte, however, from making moves to establishing a dictatorship.

But they were unable to oust him from power because the only political parties available to them were those of the bosses. And the bosses will always choose healthy profits under a corrupt regime than democracy brought to them by a militant mass movement.

The army chiefs, who were trained and emboldened in their murderous ways under Conte, realized the impotence of the bourgeois democrats. They stepped in when Conte finally died last December, and postponed elections for a year. Camara's brutality is aimed at terrorising the people into submission for more military rules.

The workers and peasants of Guinea have fought and struck heroically over the past decade. The problem is the unions have failed to take the opportunity to form a party of the workers and poor peasants. But only the workers and the youth, armed with their own revolutionary party, one that links the fight against the dictatorship to the struggle against poverty and exploitation, can oust the military murderers, establish the rule of democracy and open up the road to socialism.

Source URL: <https://fifthinternational.org/content/guinean-military-massacres-opposition>