



# Integrated Country Strategy

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## Guinea

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The Republic of Guinea is at once one of Africa's oldest independent states, having been the first Francophone colony to declare independence from France in 1958, and one of Africa's youngest democracies, having held its first true democratic elections in 2010. The newly democratic "third republic" emerged from the ashes of one of Guinea's darkest moments, the September 28, 2009 stadium massacre that saw security forces of the then-military regime murder and rape hundreds. Despite the crippling effect of the 2013-2016 Ebola crisis, Guinea has made significant gains on nearly all social and economic indices. While absolute scores remain low, the tendency is positive.

The overall objectives of the United States Mission in Guinea is to bolster the development of a stable and democratic Guinea as a security, economic, and political partner in West Africa. Consistent with the State-USAID Joint Regional Strategy (JRS), the Mission seeks to:

- Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests
- Encourage Mutually Beneficial Trade and Investment Between the U.S. and Guinea
- Transform Guinean Health Systems to Accelerate Reductions in Mortality
- Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance
- Recruit, retain, and support the most talented workforce available through a strong workforce development program
- To attract staff and increase morale, support the American International School of Conakry's efforts to improve K-12 education and explore the restoration or improvement of the housing pool

The November 2015 terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali, had a significant impact on Guinea's perceived risks due to terrorism and violent extremism. With that attack, Guinean leaders from the President on down saw the emergence of home-grown terrorism among the same residual ethnic groups found in Guinea. Cognizant of the risks, Guinea has used its own limited resources to detect terrorist threats (through a significant reform of its security agencies), deter outside threats (through stepped up border and maritime security), and, ultimately, respond (through the creation of an anti-terrorist unit). At the same time, Guinea has sought to reduce violent extremist messaging through closer control of financing for mosques and has shown itself open to U.S. assistance in countering extremist messaging. The U.S. Mission has been active, albeit modestly, in all aspects of Guinea's anti-terrorist and anti-extremist efforts. Guinea has never suffered a terrorist attack and is taking the preventive actions it can to keep it that way.

Guineans often refer to their "scandal" of natural resources. Guinea processes one-third of the world's bauxite reserves, has the largest known single deposit of iron ore, is a major gold producer, and has the hydroelectric capacity to become the literal powerhouse of West Africa. That said, Guinea's significant GDP growth of recent years has been almost exclusively driven by

mineral exports that provide little direct economic benefit for Guinean citizens. The rapid pace of investment in mining and power has not always been accompanied by due attention to environmental and social impacts. This has led to social unrest among young Guineans anxious to reap the benefits of a rapidly growing economy. U.S. public and private investment is proving an avenue to help Guinea secure sustainable, diversified, and equitable development. U.S. investors (including the U.S. Government through OPIC) have invested nearly \$1 billion since 2015 in diverse sectors including mining, power generation, telecommunications, housing, banking, and agriculture. American business standards are seen as improving Guinean business practices. Finally, Guinean entrepreneurs are increasingly looking to American partners, products, and suppliers.

The Ebola crisis of 2012-2015 remains the primary image of Guinea for most Americans. But even before Ebola, the health sector has been the main focus of U.S. assistance to Guinea. Some 70% of our assistance is in that sector with tangible results to be seen. USAID anti-malaria efforts have seen a 2/3 reduction in malaria prevalence since 2012 with improved medical services across the Government's health infrastructure. State efforts with civil society and religious leaders as seen a reported 1/3 reduction in the practice of Female Genital Mutilation. DOD efforts with the Guinean military has built a strong HIV/AIDS screening and treatment program. CDC post-Ebola efforts have substantially improved Guinea's ability to deter, detect, and respond to contagious diseases and has allowed Guinea to deploy its own experts to help the DRC in that country's own recent Ebola outbreak. Finally, NIH has constructed a world-class Guinean research facility for continued research in Ebola and other infectious diseases. While our impact has been significant, Guinea's health needs remain great and, without health sector improvements, development in other sectors will be hard to attain.

All our work with Guinea is predicated upon continued progress in creating a government that is just, transparent, and democratic. Guinea's democratic history has seen two presidential, one legislative, and one communal election cycles – all were successful but marred by sufficient contested practices to meet the definition of "fully free and fair." Elections in Guinea still provoke crisis rather than stability. At the same time, the quality of governance falls short of international norms with high levels of corruption and inefficiency depriving the country the benefits of its economic potential. For all the challenges, Guinea has made progress. Government institutions including the courts and National Assembly are increasingly independent and professional. Press and civil society play an active and generally free watchdog role. Reforms in managing state revenues and expenses are making Guinea's government increasingly transparent and accountable. The U.S. Mission remains deeply engaged in Guinea's democratic process with the Ambassador serving on the Oversight Committee for the Political Process in addition to Mission-wide engagement with parties, ministries, and civil society. U.S. efforts with the key ministries of Finance, Budget, Health, Defense, and Security have resulted in better utilization of public (and donor) funds and more responsive governance.

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Maintaining America's presence in Guinea is a challenge. Conakry is a well-deserved maximum hardship post making it a constant challenge to recruit American staff. Poor education standards limit the pool of well qualified local staff. Sub-par construction and poor to non-existent public services make maintaining our offices and residences a day-to-day struggle. That said, we have been able to improve both facilities and residences and have seen our American school go from near-certain bankruptcy to a going concern. Despite recruitment challenges, morale remains surprisingly high with a significant percentage of Americans seeking extensions.

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## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests

**Mission Objective 1.1:** U.S. and Guinean partnership and capacity towards combating regional terrorist threats are expanded.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Guinean security services' ability to counter transnational criminal threats and internal violence is improved.

**Mission Goal 2:** Encourage Mutually Beneficial Trade and Investment Between the U.S. and Guinea

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Increase Guinean participation to U.S. trade shows and exhibitions

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Support and assist U.S. businesses in Guinea enter and effectively compete in the Guinean market

**Mission Goal 3:** Transform Guinean Health Systems to Accelerate Reductions in Mortality

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Utilization of Quality Health Services Increased (CDCS DO 1)

**Mission Objective 3.2:** Prevent Avoidable Epidemics, Detect Threats Early, and Respond Rapidly and Effectively through Coordination and Partnership Across all Organizations

**Mission Goal 4:** Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance

**Mission Objective 4.1:** Democratic Governance and Economic Processes Strengthened (CDCS DO 2)

**Mission Objective 4.2:** Human Rights and Access to Justice Strengthened

**Management Objective 1:** Recruit, retain, and support the most talented work force available through a strong workforce development program.

**Management Objective 2:** To attract staff and increase morale, support the American International School of Conakry's efforts to improve K-12 education and explore the restoration or improvement of the housing pool.

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

#### **Mission Goal 1:** Advance Mutual Peace and Security Interests

**Description and Linkages:** Peace and security are fundamental goals the United States and Guinea strive to meet in order to advance our mutual prosperity. Threats from regional terrorism, transnational crime including human trafficking, and illegal trade in natural resources prevent the development of a safe environment for society and business to thrive. The United States Department of State and Department of Defense partners with the Guinean security sector to achieve shared objectives in Peacekeeping, Maritime Safety and Security, Counter Terrorism, Border Security and Security Sector Reform. Advancement of peace and security directly supports the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 1 and Mission Objectives 1.1 and 1.2. Additionally, it supports United States National Security Strategy Goals in Africa.

**Mission Objective 1.1:** U.S. and Guinean partnership and capacity towards combating regional terrorist threats are expanded

**Justification:** Increasing threats from regional terrorist organizations is concerning to the Guinean people and government and threatens the safety of American citizens, official facilities, and private businesses. The Guinean Armed Forces continue to send a peacekeeping battalion to support MINUSMA against the terrorist threat faced by neighboring Mali. This contribution also endangers Guinea from a terrorist attack, as seen multiple times to other regional peacekeeping contributors. The Guinean Armed Forces are in the process of establishing a Counter-Terrorism Unit to meet internal terrorists and to contribute to regional efforts in the future.

**Mission Objective 1.2:** Guinean security services' ability to counter transnational criminal threats and internal violence is improved.

**Justification:** Since the country's first democratic elections in 2010, Guinean security services have made steady progress in security sector reform. Threats faced from illegal exploitation of Guinea's maritime resources and the ongoing traffic of drugs, people, and small arms along porous borders remain significant security challenges that endanger the safety and security of the Guinean population as well as the safety of American citizens, official facilities, and private businesses. By partnering together to meet these threats, both the U.S. and Guinea protect public and private interests as well as provide venues for the continued reform of the security sector.

**Mission Objective 1.3:** The security and interests of U.S. citizens at home and in Guinea is protected through engagement with the Guinean government and vigilant, timely, and accurate consular services.

**Justification:** Strengthening U.S. border security and protection of U.S. citizens abroad ranks among the Department's and the nation's absolute highest priorities, as reflected in Pillar 1 of the National Security Strategy and Objective 1.5 of the JSP. Although the Justification for Objective 1.1 references threats to the safety of American citizens, it does not include content focused on their protection. Given the potential for unrest or epidemics, it is imperative that the mission strengthen crisis preparedness and evacuation procedures for U.S. citizens, to include establishing closer contacts with local authorities and strengthening communication with private U.S. citizens.

Executive Order 13780 required the Department to "review all nonimmigrant visa reciprocity agreements and arrangements to ensure that they are, with respect to each visa classification, truly reciprocal insofar as practicable with respect to validity period and fee." INA sections 221(c) and 281 require that the Secretary of State establish visa validity and fees, respectively, according to what foreign governments provide to U.S. citizens. As such, the Department of State must match visa validity and fees to match the visa issuance practices of the government of the Republic of Guinea.

In 2017, Guinea was designated a country that delayed or denied the return of their citizens or nationals, resulting in the discontinuation of at some visa services.

**Mission Goal 2:** Encourage Mutually Beneficial Trade and Investment Between the U.S. and Guinea

**Description and Linkages:** Guinea is a country of unrealized potential. Although the country's economy has expanded in recent years thanks to bauxite exports, Guinea still needs to diversify its economic activity, especially in the energy and agriculture sectors. By tapping U.S. technical expertise and investment, American companies can assist Guinea in efforts to sustain economic growth, while also expanding bilateral trade, to the benefit of both nations. This complements Goal 2 of the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategy.

**Mission Objective 2.1:** Increase Guinean participation to U.S. trade shows and exhibitions

**Justification:** As an emerging market with little prior exposure to U.S. business and franchising opportunities, Guinea represents untapped potential for American companies to expand their



markets. Trade shows and exhibitions are a natural first step for Guinean companies to begin to consider U.S. goods and services for purchase.

**Mission Objective 2.2:** Support and assist U.S. businesses in Guinea enter and effectively compete in the Guinean market

**Justification:** Creating mutually beneficial trade ties between the U.S. and Guinea requires the presence of U.S. companies on the ground. By raising awareness of the width and depth of commercial opportunities for American companies in Guinea, we can support and expand bilateral trade ties to the benefit of both nations.

**Mission Goal 3:** Transform Guinean Health Systems to Accelerate Reductions in Morbidity and Mortality

**Description and Linkages:** Programming will provide technical and financial assistance to strengthen the fragile Guinean health care system, while improving access to integrated quality care. To sustain and achieve a greater broad-based health impact, U.S. assistance addresses public health threats posed by infectious diseases. Through efforts in reproductive maternal neonatal and child health (RMNCH), obstetric fistula care, malaria, and family planning, the Mission's health programs will work to strengthen RMNCH, a cornerstone of public health, to reduce maternal, neonatal and child morbidity and mortality, preempt pandemics and the spread of diseases, and foster prosperity and stability.

In addition, the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) serves as a multilateral and multi-sectoral approach to strengthen capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious threats and public health emergencies of international concern, and to enable national governments to fulfill their obligations under the International Health Regulations (IHR).

Working with the ministry of health, partners, and communities, our programs will scale up effective, equitable, locally adapted, and evidence-based interventions to reach poor, marginalized, and vulnerable people to prevent and treat infectious diseases.

Primary Link to Joint State/USAID Strategic and Joint Regional Strategy Goals: This goal is linked to Goal 4 of the Joint Regional Strategy: Promote Inclusive Country-led Development and Goal 3 of the Joint Strategic Plan - Promote American Leadership Through Balanced Engagement

**Mission Objective 3.1:** Utilization of quality health services increased

**Justification:** There are multiple constraints on the public health sector that negatively impact health and well-being. Historically, high rates of malaria, annual cholera epidemics, and poor maternal and child health are notable indicators of its weakness. The frailty of Guinea's health system became more apparent and was exacerbated during the 2013-2016 Ebola outbreak. The

development hypothesis underlying this MO is: Citizen and leadership engagement in the supply and demand for quality health services will lead to a more responsive health system, improved delivery of quality services, and ultimately increased utilization of services. This MO is based on the evidence that improved leadership and governance will improve delivery of quality health services and create a more responsive health system, both of which are critical to the reduction of maternal, neonatal and child mortality among Guinean citizens.

**Mission Objective 3.2:** Prevent Avoidable Epidemics, Detect Threats Early, and Respond Rapidly and Effectively through Coordination and Partnership Across all Organizations

**Justification:** The 2014–2016 West Africa Ebola epidemic was one of the largest and most complex health emergency responses for the USG and its partners. The Ebola virus claimed 2,544 lives from Guinea out of 3,814 reported cases in the region affected by the disease. The Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak revealed major limitations in Guinea’s public health management and response system.

Building and maintaining global preparedness for pandemic threats and International Health Regulation (IHR) compliance requires coordination and technical expertise across multiple stakeholders. In December 2014, the U.S. Congress authorized emergency funding to USG agencies to end the Ebola epidemic and accelerate Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) implementation in partnering countries to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies. Outbreak and disease mitigation happens through strengthened workforce capacities, efficient surveillance and laboratory systems, and strong national coordination. The zoonotic disease burden persists because of weak veterinary and human public health systems that fail to detect diseases and allow them to spread.

**Mission Goal 4:** Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good Governance

**Description and Linkages:** Programming will provide financial and technical assistance to strengthen Guinea’s young democracy through support to targeted institutions to respond to challenges caused by inequity and lack of public accountability, transparency and responsiveness; to counter the drivers of violence and instability; and strengthen citizen-responsive governance, democracy, and human rights. Institutions include but not limited to the National Assembly, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Ministry of Justice, media, civil society, and political parties, etc.

The United States government seeks to accomplish this goal through effective collaboration with the Government of Guinea, other donors, local NGOs and the private sector.

Primary Link to Joint State/USAID Strategic and Joint Regional Strategy Goals: This goal is linked to Goal 3 of the Joint Regional Strategy - Strengthen Democracy, Human Rights, and Good

Governance - and Goal 1 the Joint Strategic Plan: Protect America's Security at Home and Abroad.

**Mission Objective 4.1:** Democratic Governance and Economic Processes Strengthened

**Justification:** Inadequate public service delivery, social conflict, and endemic corruption characterize Guinea's governance. The political system in Guinea has suffered from a lack of genuine competition and the notable absence of women and youth in positions of authority in decision-making processes. The absence of checks and balances on government controls over the executive branch, the electoral process, and political manipulation of the process threaten Guinea's stability and economic development. Limited capacity of civil society, media, and government institutions contribute to an electoral process plagued by profound mistrust, extreme polarization, and identity-based politics. In addition, youth unemployment and underemployment are evident, hindering economic growth and production. Many young people are unemployed, work in unpaid positions, or work in informal industries. Meanwhile, rising food costs, coupled with low or declining family incomes, put more people on the brink of food insecurity. Government subsidies have aimed to address these issues, but in general they are poorly implemented, unsustainable, and difficult to manage. If producers have access to quality information and inputs, in an environment where clear rules are enforced fairly, then Guinea can begin to reap the benefits of its rich natural resource base and increased global private investment.

**Mission Objective 4.2:** Human Rights and Access to Justice Strengthened

**Justification:** Decades of undemocratic rule prior to Guinea's first free elections in 2010 left the citizenry lacking faith in its government to provide fair and equal treatment under the law. Since 2010, faith has not substantially improved, despite successful elections in 2015. As reported year after year in Human Rights and Trafficking in Persons reports, there remain significant areas of concern despite increased Guinean government attention and legal reforms. The government continues to make small but tangible progress on national reconciliation initiatives aimed at breaking the cycle of recurrent mass ethnic-based human rights abuses. Further, government and civic leaders have demonstrated greater resolve in addressing the very high incidence of FGM/C, trafficking in persons, and child labor. Without continued progress on human rights and justice issues, Guinea will face challenges preventing violence and improving faith in the government, undermining democratic institutions.

## 4. Management Objectives

**Management Objective 1:** Recruit, retain, and support the most talented work force available through a strong workforce development program.

**Justification:** U.S. Mission Guinea has experienced much change and turmoil over recent years. The evacuation of 2010 and civil unrest in 2012-2013 were followed by the Ebola epidemic that started in March 2014. Management is seeking to regain a normal operational footing, while servicing five agencies and corresponding local staff. As Mission operations normalize post Ebola, the management platform must adapt to meet demand across the range of services, particularly in Human Resources and General Services Operations. Of note, M/PRI, in its May 2015 "Rightsizing Review of U.S. Mission Guinea," recommended that the Africa Bureau make one USDH position available to Mission Guinea for either an HRO or an A/GSO position and that upon attaining a certain personnel threshold --forecast for 2019-- the second position be made available. Budgetary constraints, and lack of FTE, are limiting factors, but Post will pursue the additional positions. Improving the management platform through augmenting workforce talent is critical to Mission Guinea's success and lack of progress threatens the Mission's ability to accomplish its objectives.

**Management Objective 2:** To attract staff and increase morale, support the American School of Conakry's efforts to improve K-12 education and explore the restoration or improvement of the housing pool.

**Justification:** Conakry is a Service Needs Differential post with a 30% hardship differential and a special R&R, based on factors such as the security situation; lack of infrastructure; an aging housing pool with substandard safety infrastructure; weak economy; lack of development; minimal cultural and recreational opportunities; and family hardships. Together, these factors often translate into low interest from potential bidders, contributing to long staffing gaps at Post. Ultimately, this undermines Post's ability to make progress toward its objectives. As such, the Mission must take a multi-pronged approach, including creatively leveraging CLO operations (a position which until recently was vacant for almost one and half years and is currently filled by one part time EFM), in order to maximize morale; regularly surveying community needs; and supporting the American International School of Conakry (AISC). A quality school is key to attracting bidders, and both Washington and Post have recently taken extraordinary measures to ensure the school's viability and long-term success. For Locally Employed Staff, there will be an increased emphasis on professional development, through continuing education and training. Post will do its part to fund relevant training, while also

encouraging TDY support from subject matter experts, as well as distance learning, which is the most cost-effective option.