

17 December 2009 Human Rights Watch Summary (...) To date, the Guinean government has failed to investigate, much less hold accountable, any member of the Guinean security forces for their role in the killings, rapes, and other abuses.

In the course of an in-depth, on-the-ground investigation into the events of September 28 and their aftermath, Human Rights Watch interviewed some 240 individuals, including victims wounded during the attack, witnesses present in the stadium, relatives of missing people, soldiers who participated in the violent crackdown and the government cover-up, medical staff, humanitarian officials, diplomats, journalists, and opposition leaders. The investigation found that the majority of killings, sexual assaults, and other abuses described in this report were committed by members of the elite Presidential Guard, in particular the unit at the time directly responsible for the personal security of CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara. Others who committed serious abuses included gendarmes, police, and men in civilian clothes armed with machetes and knives. (...)

The dearth of any apparent threat or provocation on the part of the demonstrators, in combination with the organized manner in which the security forces carried out the stadium attack—the simultaneous arrival at the stadium of different security units, the coordinated manner of deployment to strategic positions around the stadium in anticipation of the fleeing demonstrators, the failure to use non-lethal means of crowd dispersal, and the presence of officers, including a minister tasked with security responsibilities—suggests that the crimes were premeditated and organized.

The evidence gathered by Human Rights Watch suggests that the killings, rapes, and other abuses committed by the security forces on and after September 28 rise to the level of crimes against humanity. The scale and organization of these crimes strongly suggest that they were both widespread and systematic. As such, the principle of “command responsibility” applies to military commanders and others in position of authority who may be criminally liable for crimes committed by forces under their effective command and control. All those responsible, including those who gave the orders, should be held criminally accountable for their actions, as should anyone who participated in efforts to cover up the crimes and dispose of any evidence.

In a significant display of international revulsion uniting African and other governments as well as regional and international bodies, important international actors—including France, the United States, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, and the United Nations—harshly denounced the September 28 violence in Guinea. This was followed by the imposition of arms embargos by ECOWAS and the European Union; travel bans and asset freezes of CNDD members by the EU, the US, and the African Union; and the withdrawal or cancellation of economic and military assistance from the EU and France.

The international community has been equally definitive about the need for those responsible for the September violence to be held accountable. As a result, an African Union and ECOWAS-proposed international commission of inquiry was on October 30 established by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on October 14 confirmed that it had initiated a preliminary examination of the situation. Unfortunately, continued economic and diplomatic support for Guinea from China and Libya mars the otherwise unified international response.

Based on the evidence presented in this report, Human Rights Watch recommends that the Guinean government immediately suspend from their duties and promptly investigate, prosecute, and punish in accordance with international standards the security officials believed to be most responsible for the killings, sexual violence, and other abuses committed during the September violence. (...)

Guinea's international partners should maintain the demand for accountability and support international efforts to prosecute these crimes if the Guinean authorities fail to meet their obligations to hold accountable those responsible. Lastly, Human Rights Watch calls on the UN secretary-general to promptly make public the report of the international commission of inquiry into human rights violations associated with the September 28 violence, and ensure that its findings are discussed and implemented.

***Read the [report](#) by the Human Rights Watch.***