

Guinea: Step Up Efforts to Ensure Justice for Stadium Massacre Human Rights Watch 5
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The Guinean government should increase support to the domestic investigation of the September 28, 2009 massacre, rapes, and other abuses to enable fair, credible prosecutions of the crimes without further delay, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. The conclusion is based on extensive research and analysis of the factors holding up the investigation. International partners – including the European Union (EU), United States, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – also should increase pressure and support for justice to be done.

The 58-page report, “Waiting for Justice: Accountability before Guinea’s Courts for the September 28, 2009 Stadium Massacre, Rapes, and Other Abuses,” analyzes Guinea’s efforts to hold those responsible for the crimes to account. On that day, several hundred members of Guinea’s security forces burst into a stadium in Guinea’s capital, Conakry, and opened fire on tens of thousands of opposition supporters peacefully gathered there. By late afternoon, at least 150 Guineans lay dead or dying, and dozens of women had suffered brutal sexual violence, including individual and gang rape. More than three years later, those implicated have yet to be held accountable. (...)

Cases involving serious crimes are often sensitive and need resources that are scarce, Human Rights Watch said. But lack of justice can carry high costs by potentially fueling renewed abuses that are devastating for the population and national development. Impunity for human rights violations has been a persistent problem in Guinea over decades.

In February 2010, a Guinean prosecutor appointed a panel of judges to investigate the crimes.

More than 200 victims have been interviewed, and charges have been filed against at least seven people, including Guinea’s minister in charge of fighting drug trafficking and organized crime and the health minister at the time of the crimes. The Guinean government also recently accepted the appointment of an international expert offered by the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to support the accountability effort.

However, the investigation has yet to be completed more than three years after the crimes were committed, and numerous victims have yet to be given an opportunity to provide statements to the judges. The judges also have yet to interview at least two key suspects – the president at the time the crimes were committed, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, and Captain Claude “Coplan” Pivi – and witnesses who are not suspects who are members of Guinea’s security services. (...) In addition, Guinean judicial police have yet to provide the judges access to an identified possible mass grave, and a request by the judges to interview the former president in Burkina Faso about the crimes remains outstanding. Meanwhile, some suspects have already been in pretrial detention longer than the two years permitted by Guinean law. (...)

The report found that the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict have made vital contributions in pressing for justice for the September 28, 2009 crimes. (...)

Whether the ICC may open an investigation in Guinea is an open question under the ICC's complementarity principle. But even if the ICC were to open an investigation, its scope would be limited since it is based thousands of miles away in the Netherlands, and only focuses on suspects with greatest alleged levels of responsibility, and on genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

"Guinea's domestic investigation is a potentially important test case for the international community to help ensure accountability at the domestic level," Keppler said. "Guinea's international partners should use encouragement, pressure, and support to maximize its prospects to provide justice for the stadium massacre."

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[Waiting for Justice: Accountability before Guinea's Courts for the September 28, 2009 Stadium Massacre, Rapes, and Other Abuses](#)

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