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The United African Organization calls upon authorities in Guinea to end widespread carnage and killing of defenseless civilians, and open immediate dialogue with trade unions and the opposition

Instability in Guinea poses grave danger for security and development in the West African sub-region, especially Liberia and Sierra Leone.

CHICAGO -As Guineans continue their heroic strikes and mass demonstrations to end more than two decades of autocratic rule, the crisis in the West African nation is deepening by the hour and spiraling out of control.

The two main trade unions - National Union of Workers of Guinea and Syndicated Union of Workers of Guinea - launched a work stoppage on January 10 to protest corruption and a decision by President Lansana Conte in December to free two of his associates who had been facing trial for embezzlement. Joined by 14 opposition parties, their demands now include the removal of Conte by the Supreme Court on the grounds he is too sick to serve as president. Conte has run Guinea since a bloodless military coup in 1984.

"In order to avoid another tragic civil war in Africa," said Gaye D. Sleh, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Directors of the United African Organization and President of the Organization of the Liberian Community in Illinois, "the African Union and the international community must facilitate the exit of Lansana Conte now!"

The bloody civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone left both countries in a complete state of institutional disrepair. The destruction of all vital infrastructure for development and the resultant disruption of lives continue to cripple reconstruction efforts.

If Guinea slides into civil war, the viability of the Mano River Union and its mission to accelerate joint development ventures among Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea would be gravely undermined.

"The challenge facing Guinea today is the need for regime change," said Alie Kabba, President of the United African Organization and the Sierra Leone Community Association of Chicago "in the context of a volatile mixture of political tension, ethnic and regional competition, morbid militarization of power, and gross unequal distribution of wealth."

The US State Department can play a constructive role in partnership with France and Britain to pave the way for a transitional government in Guinea.

There is no reason why the United States should shy away from expanding democratic and economic reforms in Africa.

"Africa must never be a safe haven for the world's dictators!" said Anthony Cole, Vice President

of the United African Organization.

The widespread discontent in all regions of the country is a clear indication that Lansana Conte must resign.

The United African Organization joins the Guinean masses to call for a constitutional transfer of power in Guinea.

"The future of Guinea is in the hands of the people of Guinea," added Alie Kabba, UAO President. "We extend our unflinching solidarity to them as we mobilize public opinion on the side of ordinary Guineans yearning for democratic change and national development."

The United African Organization is an advocacy coalition of African national community associations dedicated to social justice, civil rights and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

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