

Press release

# **CADTM supports the general strike of the Guinean people and denounces the repression orchestrated by the illegitimate power of Lansana Conte**

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## **CADTM Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt - Press release, 12 February 2007**

On Monday 12 February 2007, the general strike calling for the departure of Guinean president Lansana Conte was resumed and met with ferocious repression. Eleven people were killed, bringing the total to over one hundred since the beginning of the year.

It would seem that the army is no longer totally loyal to the failing regime and some of the crack regiments are bringing their support to the popular insurrection. The capital is paralyzed by barricades and the principal roads are blocked.

For CADTM, the Guinean people has long been deprived of its rightful wealth (in particularly the very large reserves of bauxite), by multinational foreign companies and a clan close to the ruling power which enriches itself by illegal and illegitimate means. Guinean citizens are entirely within their rights to demand explanations from those who have been getting rich at the expense of the people.

Guinea was the first French West African colony to achieve independence in 1958 when Sékou Touré issued his famous 'non' to General De Gaulle. Subsequently, popular sovereignty was quickly confiscated to the advantage of an elite. For CADTM, the general strike is the means by which the Guinean people can legitimately press for a return to popular and non-negotiable sovereignty.

The first period of strikes forced Conte to accept the nomination of a Prime Minister. However the choice of Prime Minister was a profound disappointment for the people. Eugene Camara is a close accomplice of Conte and his appointment is a betrayal of popular demand.

For the moment, the regime has decided on the use of force to conserve the little power it has left. According to 'Human Rights Watch', Conte, who is seriously ill, may have recruited ex-Liberian rebels as mercenaries. He has just decreed a 'state of siege' that gives him full

powers in total disregard of democratic principles.

CADTM says that Lansana Conte should immediately step down as president.