

Guinea

Country Overview

Politics

Guinea is a constitutional democratic republic in West Africa.¹ Guinea declared its independence from France in 1958, but the country fell under authoritarian rule immediately thereafter. In 2008, after the death of then-president Lansana Conte, a military group took over in a coup. The country held its first democratic elections in 2010, electing current president Alpha Conde.² Conde was re-elected during 2015 elections that were judged by the U.S. Department of State to be free and fair.³ The next presidential elections were set to take place in 2018, but are now scheduled for 2020.⁴

According to Human Rights Watch, security forces have a history of violence against civilians, and continue to use excessive force, theft, and extortion. During 2019 protests over a proposed constitutional revision that could allow President Conde to be elected for a third presidential term, security forces killed at least 17 protesters.⁵

Economy

Guinea is classified by the World Bank as a low-income economy.⁶ The country's economy is currently recovering from the Ebola crisis of 2014 and 2015. Low commodity prices have also slowed the nation's economic growth.⁷ Guinea experienced a 5.8 percent growth in GDP in 2018, down from a growth of almost 10 percent in 2017. 76 percent of Guinea's 5.5 million laborers work in agriculture, and agriculture accounts for 19.8 percent of the country's GDP.⁸

Guinea's economy has been fueled by recent growth in its mining sector, including significant increases in the production of the nation's top two exports: bauxite (aluminum ore) and gold. Guinea also has the potential for significant hydroelectric energy production, and the country has seen recent foreign investment in its energy sector.⁹ A new hydroelectric dam, constructed in partnership with the Chinese government, will provide 450 megawatts of electricity for Guineans, although the project will ultimately displace roughly 16,000 local residents.¹⁰

Social/Human Development

Guinea is home to approximately 12,527,440 people and is comprised of six main ethnic groups: the Fulani (33.4 percent), the Malinke (29.4 percent), the Susu (21.2 percent), the Guerze (7.8 percent), the Kissi (6.2 percent), and the Toma (1.6 percent). The remaining 0.4



percent are identified as ‘other’ or ‘foreign.’ Each of these ethnic groups uses a separate language.¹¹

Guinea scores 0.466 on the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking it 174 out of 189 countries. Guinea’s HDI drops to 0.310 when adjusted for inequality.¹²

TIP Report Summary

The U.S. State Department TIP ranking: Tier 2

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report, trafficking and trafficking risk was noted in potentially exported supply chains including fishing, agriculture, and gold and diamond mining.

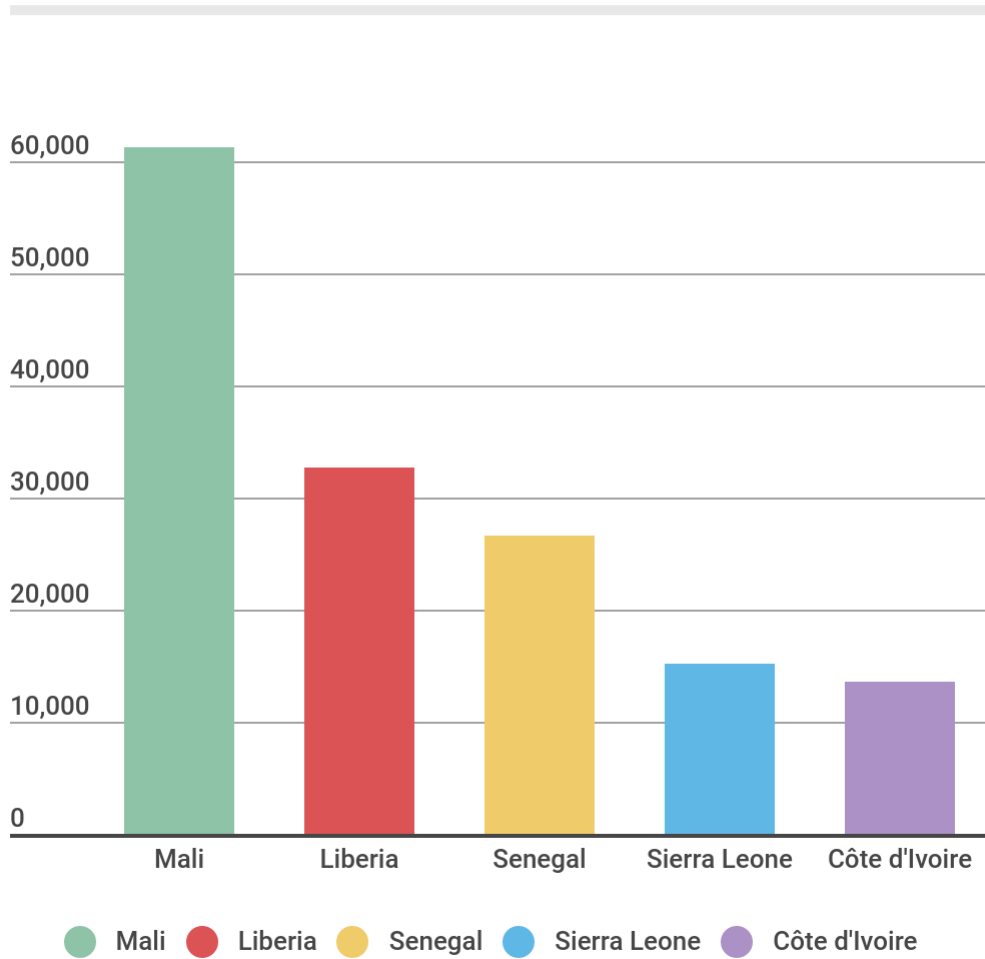
Read the full TIP report at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/guinea/>

Migration

According to the World Bank, Guinea currently has negative net migration. As of 2015, 1.8 percent of the country’s population were migrants.¹³ The top sending countries are Mali, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire.¹⁴ There were an estimated 5,878 persons of concern in Guinea at the end of 2018. Of this population, 4,294 individuals were refugees.¹⁵ Although there is no definitive data, the U.S. Department of State estimates that there are several hundred stateless persons in Guinea. Most of them are likely from nearby Sierra Leone.¹⁶



Migrants to Guinea

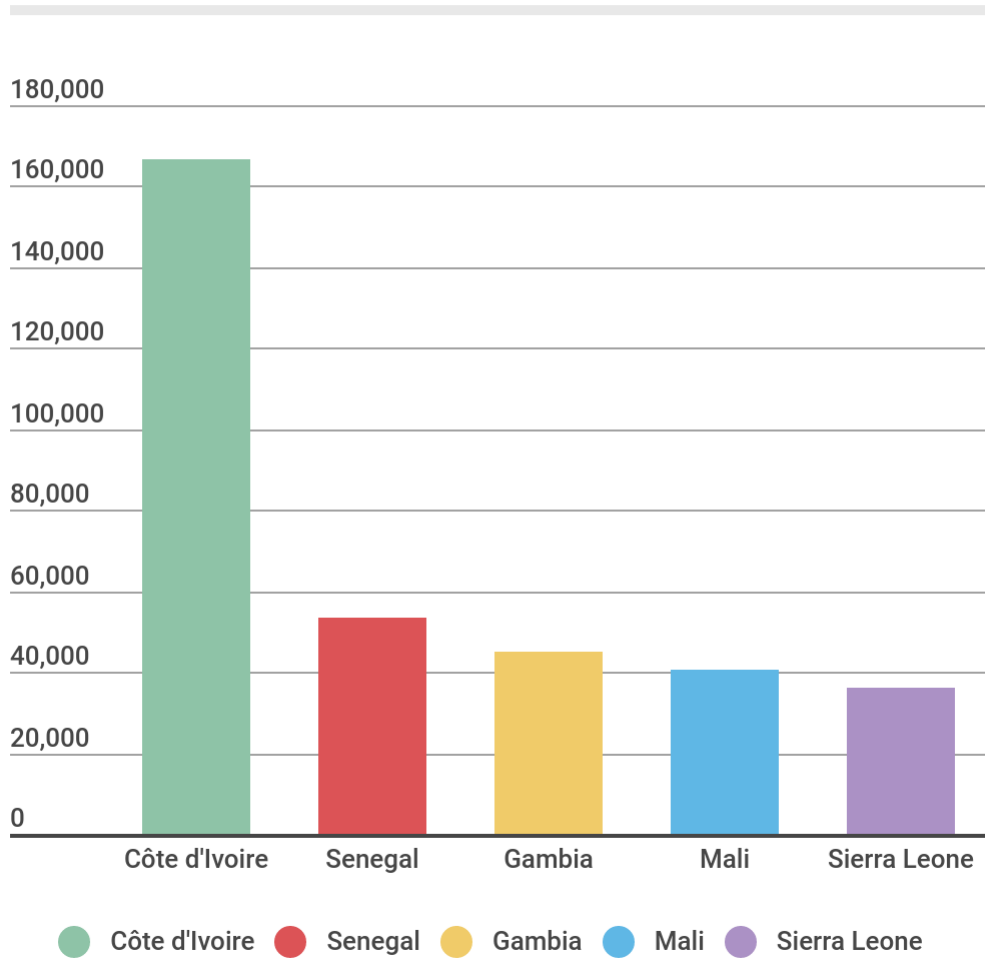


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The top destination countries for migrants from Guinea are Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, the Gambia, Mali, and Sierra Leone.¹⁸



Migrants from Guinea



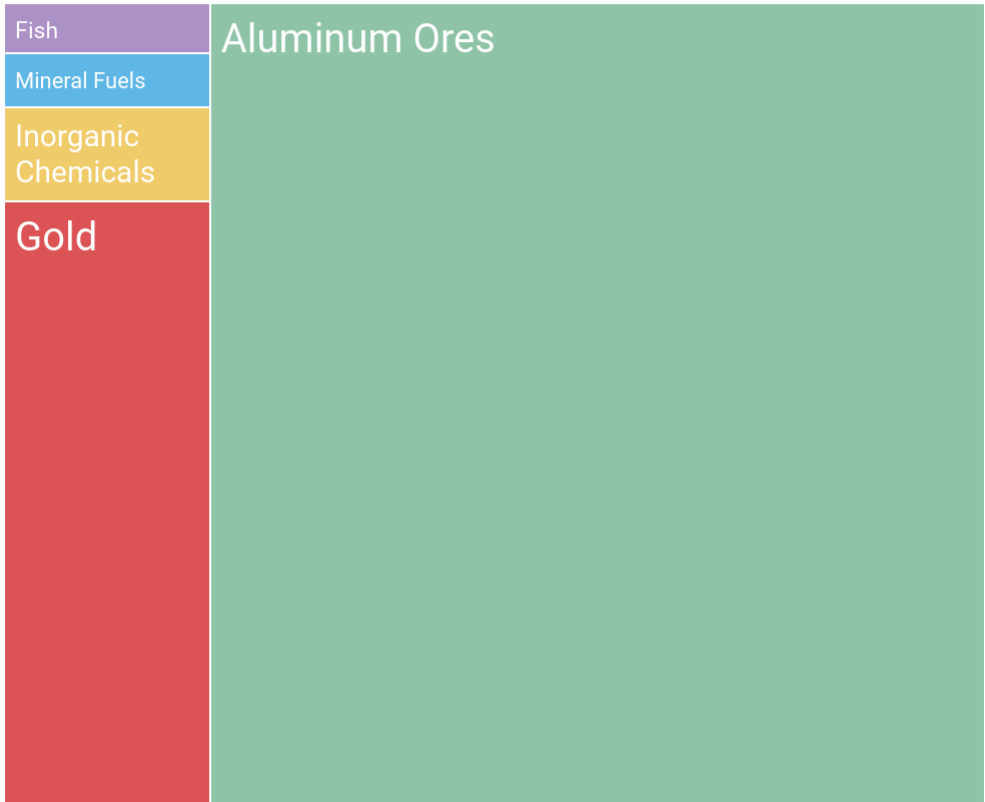
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Exports and Trade

Guinea's top exports in 2019 were aluminum ores, gold, inorganic chemicals, minerals, and fish.²⁰



Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands)

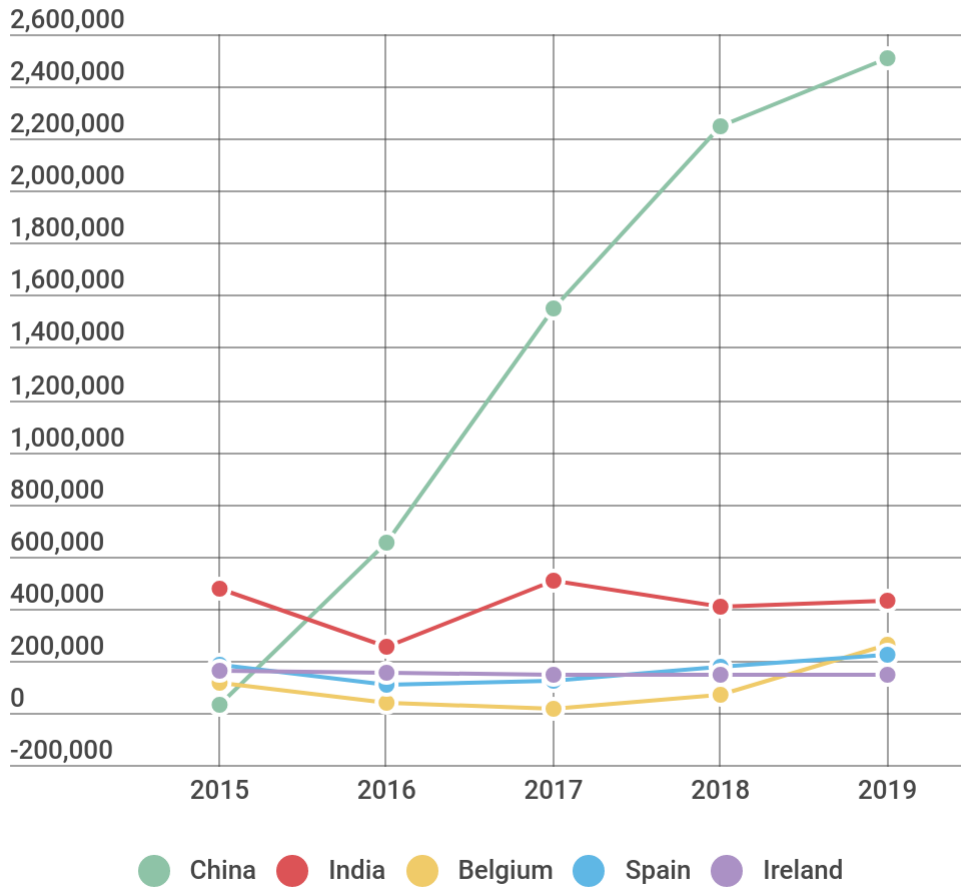


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The top importers of goods from Guinea in 2019 were China, India, Belgium, Spain, and Ireland.²²



Guinea Export Partners (USD/Thousands)



TIP Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association

The Guinean legal code allows for workers to organize and join unions, use collective bargaining, and carry out strikes, but it also places restrictions on workers' rights to engage in all of the aforementioned activities. For a union to be recognized, it must represent at least 20 percent of workers in a workplace, and a 10-day notice must be provided to the Ministry of Labor in order for a union to legally carry out a strike. The law prohibits government employees and members of the military from engaging in a strike. According to the U.S. Department of State, the Guinean government does not effectively enforce existing legal codes pertaining to workers' rights, mostly due to lack of resources to ensure compliance.²⁴

In 2018, the government placed a ban on street protests. Security forces used this policy during 2019 protests, arresting dozens of protesters and civil society leaders.²⁵

Working Conditions

There is no minimum wage for most sectors, although a 2013 law stipulated a minimum wage for domestic workers. This wage is set below the World Bank's international poverty level.

Guinean law stipulates that the workweek should not exceed 10-hour days or 48-hour weeks and that each salaried worker has the right to paid vacation each year. However, the Ministry of Labor fails to rigorously enforce these laws due to a shortage of labor inspectors. The law permits all workers, regardless of nationality or immigration status, to refuse to work in unsafe conditions without penalty, but many workers choose not to exercise this right for fear of potential punishment.²⁶

Discrimination

Guinean labor law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, political opinion, disability, or ethnicity, but it does not address discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin or citizenship, social origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, language, or HIV-positive status. Although the law does require equal pay for equal work, women often receive lower salaries than their male counterparts.²⁷



Forced Labor

Guinean law prohibits forced labor, and the government has recently increased their efforts to combat trafficking. However, the government continues to underfund key anti-trafficking agencies and committees.²⁸

Child Labor

Guinean law prohibits child labor in formal sectors of the economy, but there are no laws governing the use of child labor in informal sectors of the economy. The minimum working age is 16 and children younger than 18 are not allowed to work under hazardous conditions.²⁹ The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the Guinean Ministry of Labor fails to adequately enforce these laws. They estimate that 32.3 percent of children under the age of 14 are currently working, with many employed in hazardous sectors such as mining.³⁰

Civil Society Organizations

Domestic and international human rights associations are legally permitted to operate freely within Guinea with little interference from governmental bodies. However, the Guinean government rarely (if ever) acts on the concerns of such groups, regardless of evidence presented.³¹ Additionally, Freedom House reports that many activists and nongovernmental organization workers face severe harassment and even imprisonment for their work.³²



Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	In force
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified

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Political Risk Factors

Level of Corruption

In 2019, the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scored Guinea 29 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.” Guinea ranks 130 out of 198 countries on the index.³⁴ The Guinean government has operated an Anti-Corruption agency since 2004, but the agency has yet to make a successful conviction. Additionally, the government proposed a 92 percent cut to the agency’s budget in 2019. According to the U.S. Department of State, corruption remains rampant across government agencies and commercial sectors.³⁵

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. Department of State reports that crime threat in Guinea is “considerable,” with poverty and desperation being the primary drivers of criminal behavior. No terrorist organizations are known to operate in Guinea, but some terrorist activity has occurred near Guinea’s borders, which remain poorly enforced.³⁶



The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report ranks Guinea at 105 out of 141 countries for organized crime.³⁷

State Persecution

State security forces in Guinea often act with impunity, and there are widespread reports of violence against civilians and political demonstrators, which included arbitrary detentions, killings, and rape.³⁸ In 2019, the National Assembly implemented a law that protects law enforcement officers from being prosecuted for unlawful violence.³⁹

National law prohibits consensual same-sex relationships.⁴⁰

Political Instability or Conflict

Guinea scored a 97.2 in the 2020 Fragile States Index (FSI), ranking the country 15 out of 178. Guinea's score on the FSI has improved over the last five years, dropping by 7.7 points. The FSI scale spans from 0 to 120, where a higher score indicates a less stable political system. A lower country ranking also indicates political instability.⁴¹

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Guinea scores a 0.466 on the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking it 174 out of 189 countries. Guinea's HDI drops to 0.306 when adjusted for inequality.⁴²

Level and Extent of Poverty

Guinea has a systemic level of poverty, with 61.9 percent of the population deemed to be living in multidimensional poverty, according to the United Nations.⁴³

The country's reliance on its mineral extraction industry and the prevalence of artisanal extractive operations continue to keep much of the population in poverty. There is also a heavy reliance on subsistence farming, and crumbling nationwide infrastructure has led to regular electrical outages and lack of access to clean water. The lasting impact of the Ebola crisis has also weakened Guinea's economic viability.⁴⁴

Degree of Gender Inequality

The U.S. Department of State reports that women's rights to inheritance, property, credit, and divorce are restricted under Guinean law. While the law protects women from employment discrimination, they continue to face significant discrimination, particularly in hiring.⁴⁵



Environmental Factors

Many of Guinea's environmental risk factors stem from the agricultural industry, where deforestation, desertification, and soil contamination are primary issues. Overfishing is also an issue in coastal regions of the country.⁴⁶ Guinea's mining sector has polluted water sources and caused health issues for residents living near mines.⁴⁷

Documented Trafficking Risk in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Bauxite

Bauxite Overview

Guinea is Africa's largest producer and the world's third largest producer of bauxite, a mineral that is used in aluminum ores.⁴⁸ 35 percent of the global reserves of bauxite are located in Guinea.⁴⁹ Bauxite mining is primarily carried out by multinational mining companies, with the Guinean government holding sizable shares in the country's top bauxite exporting company.⁵⁰ Bauxite production is concentrated in the northeast.⁵¹ Most bauxite is mined via a strip mining method.⁵²

Documented TIP Risk in Bauxite

Although there have been previous reports of child labor in Bauxite mining, recent reports are lacking.⁵³ In 2017, local communities rioted against Bauxite mining activity, in part due to the attendant pollution from mining operations.⁵⁴ Dust pollution from Bauxite mining has impacted Guinean farmers' ability to grow crops, and this mining has also led to water pollution and water shortages.⁵⁵ Guinean environmental officials have the right to revoke the licenses of mining companies that violate environmental policies. However, Human Rights Watch reports that the government is highly unlikely to shut down active mining operations, due to the jobs, government revenue, and foreign investment that the mining sector provides to Guinea's economy.⁵⁶

Human Rights Watch reports that many farmers have lost their land to mining companies in recent years. Very few Guinean farmers have officially registered their land ownership, due to the current inaccessibility of this process, so mining companies have claimed large amounts of farmland that technically belongs to the state. The government has allowed mining companies purchase this land from farmers without their consent. Additionally, the government has failed to provide legislation to ensure adequate compensation for farmland; currently, many farmers receive far less than the true value of their land, and this can make it nearly impossible for them to develop new sources of income.⁵⁷



Gold

Gold Overview

Gold mining is concentrated in north-eastern regions in Guinea.⁵⁸ Mining activities include large-scale commercial mines⁵⁹ as well as significant artisanal gold mining.⁶⁰ The Central Bank of Guinea controls gold exports, but a significant amount of gold is reportedly smuggled through neighboring countries such as Mali.⁶¹

Documented TIP Risk in Gold

According to the U.S. Department of State, Guinean boys are reportedly trafficked into forced labor in gold mines. Guinea also serves as a transit country for children from other West African countries who are forced into gold mining throughout that region.⁶²

Studies suggest there are approximately 200,000 – 300,000 artisanal miners in Guinea, a significant percentage of whom are women and children.⁶³ Children are reportedly heavily involved in processing activities and may participate in shaft mining.⁶⁴ Miners reportedly earned the equivalent of USD 1.30 – 2.00 per day. Shaft owners control access to mining and therefore garner a large share of profits.⁶⁵ As in other regions, artisanal gold mining is highly hazardous, and can lead to serious injuries and even death in the case of shaft collapse.

A significant number of artisanal gold miners in Guinea are reportedly migrants from Mali who live in informal mining camps around mining sites.⁶⁶

Fishing

Fishing Overview

The Guinean fishing sector includes both an artisanal and industrial fleet. The artisanal fleet is primarily composed of canoes, about half of which are motorized.⁶⁷ Shrimp, whitefish and other small pelagic fishes are caught in Guinea's waters.⁶⁸ Offshore species include sea bass, flounder, catfish, shrimp, sardines, and mackerel. Approximately 70 percent of documented catch is sold in local markets⁶⁹ although there has been a significant issue of illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing and most stocks are reportedly overexploited. An estimated USD 100 million worth of fisheries products are caught illegally in Guinean water every year, primarily by international vessels.⁷⁰

The high rates of illegal fishing led the EU to ban imports from Guinea in 2013, although the ban was lifted in 2016 due to increased government efforts at monitoring and a revised legal framework.⁷¹ However, up to 500 Chinese trawlers were reportedly still operating illegally in these waters in 2016.⁷² Some analysis suggests that illegal fishing in Guinea increased while the



country battled the recent Ebola outbreak, since the outbreak left the government with depleted resources for monitoring fishing activity.⁷³ Further, the satellite tracking systems required by the EU are reportedly too expensive for widespread implementation.⁷⁴

Documented TIP Risk in Fishing

In 2010, the Environmental Justice Foundation and Greenpeace found that workers on foreign vessels off the coast of Guinea experienced indicators of forced labor including recruitment deception, document retention, and abusive working conditions. Crews were kept on the boat for up to two years as transshipment was used to ferry catch back to port. Crew members included both African and Asian workers.⁷⁵

The U.S. Department of State reports that traffickers exploit some Guinean boys in fishing.⁷⁶

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