

# Çava?



## The Newsletter of Friends of Guinea

Advocacy, Information, and Networking for Guinea and Peace Corps Guinea

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### Condé sworn in as Guinea's first democratic president

*By Brian Farenell, FOG Communications Director*

*Note: For the most up-to-date news, follow FOG's Twitter feed ([www.twitter.com/friendsofguinea](http://www.twitter.com/friendsofguinea)) and blog ([friendsofguinea.blogspot.com](http://friendsofguinea.blogspot.com))*

On December 21, longtime opposition leader Prof. Alpha Condé was sworn in as Guinea's first ever democratically elected president. He quickly named Dr. Mohamed Saïd Fofana, a technocrat, as his prime minister. This followed his narrow electoral runoff victory over former Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo, who'd received more than double Condé's vote total in the first round. There was quite a bit of wrangling and several violent clashes between both sets of supporters but Diallo eventually decided not to challenge Condé's victory.

This is in stark contrast to neighboring Côte d'Ivoire where a bitter and prolonged electoral stalemate has sent several thousand refugees flee into southwestern Guinea, straining water and sanitation facilities.

In early February, President Condé was warmly received at the African Union summit in Ethiopia.

The new president has an immense task on his hands. In addition to well-known social and economic challenges, the much-publicized Wikileaks' diplomatic cables revealed the broad influence of the narco-traffickers during the latter days of Lansana Conté's regime. Given the stronghold the drugs traffickers have in Guinea-Bissau and parts of Mali, it's unlikely that influence has completely disappeared.

### The University of Wisconsin-Madison's African Studies Program will host "Peace Corps and Africa: 50 Years," an event honoring a half century of volunteer service.

On March 24-26, 2011, returned Peace Corps volunteers, Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams, musicians, artists, storytellers and some of the Peace Corps' early founders and present-day leaders will come together in Madison to celebrate, reflect, and debate the legacy of the Peace Corps in Africa and beyond.

"We look forward to welcoming former volunteers, their friends and family, as well as anyone touched by international volunteerism or interested in the assessing the impact of the Peace Corps," says James Delehanty, African Studies associate director and a former Peace Corps volunteer (Niger 1979-81).

The weekend events also include an address by current Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams and a panel led by some of the early founders of the Peace Corps. They will discuss the ideals and commitment that drove the formation of a U.S. government agency promoting international peace and friendship through service and cultural exchange.

For information and to register for the event, please visit: [www.africa.wisc.edu/peacecorps](http://www.africa.wisc.edu/peacecorps). For more information, follow the link to the press release about the event at <http://www.news.wisc.edu/18778>

***In early December, the Peace Corps training group scheduled to arrive in Guinea was first postponed and then cancelled. In mid-January, about 15 Peace Corps Response Volunteers in Guinea were finally allowed to go to their sites after months of waiting. Some had been sequestered in Conakry since September.***

## A FULANI WAY OF LIFE

*Irene Abdou, Cultural, Humanitarian/NGO, and Africa Photographer, Germantown, Maryland*

Many years ago, I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger (1995-1999), where I lived first in a small Fulani (Pulaar) village of 40 people and later in a small Fulani town. While I worked in international development for many years after Peace Corps, today, I work as cultural, humanitarian/NGO and Africa photographer.

I spent this past month of November 2010 traveling in Burkina Faso. While there, I received an invitation from the American Society of Media Photographers, Washington, DC chapter to give a presentation of my work, so I put together a 10-minute multimedia piece of still photography and field-recorded audio from Burkina. 99% of the images are from the north – in the heart of Fulani territory. You can view the piece here: <http://bit.ly/gxLg4V>.

I created all of the images in Part I, called “When Darkness Falls,” in the evening and night. As we all know, in Burkina, more than 12 million people live without electricity, and countless more families – while enjoying limited electricity – will still never know the conveniences of a refrigerator, modern oven, or even an electric iron. I wanted to show that while this is the only life they know, through it all, they dance, they sing, and they celebrate.

The music that you’ll hear in the background of this first collection of images is called “doohaali” in Fulfulde. Doohaali is a specific form of song and dance that is only practiced by Fulani from the “Djelgooji” area of Burkina Faso. I’ve known about it for a while, but I’d never seen photos of it before, and

I’d only ever been able to find one audio recording. So I was extremely excited to be able to find it on this trip, and to even be able to record it.

The doohaali was difficult to photograph, first because it was very dark, and second because there is a line of men and a line of women standing very closely together and facing each other. They shuffle towards each other, and then shuffle away. The women are singing and clapping, and the men – holding their cattle-herding sticks – are doing these deep vocalizations that sound like huh...huh...huh...huh... At times, all of a sudden, the men will start chanting faster and will shuffle very quickly towards the women, and the women have to shuffle backwards very quickly. Going backwards is harder than going forward. When I was there – and I was dancing in the women’s line – I just thought that it was the coolest thing I’d ever seen in my life. I love the music. It was like waves of sound washing over me; I don’t know how else to explain it.

The men who performed the doohaali were the winners of a regional cultural competition, and a few days later, traveled to Bobo-Dioulasso in southwestern Burkina Faso to perform at the bi-annual “Semaine Nationale de la Culture.” There are a few photos of the female winners as well, though most of the women in the images are members of the community who have joined in the nighttime fun.

Part 2, called “Spirit of Humanity,” is a collection of portraits, many of them taken in remote Fulani villages. I was looking for scenes that demonstrated resilience, pride, passion, love, and strength in the face of adversity. The first audio clip that you’ll hear in this second collection of images is a traditional griot. The second clip of music is singing at a wedding, and the third clip is from a pair of women at night.

Please share the link to the multimedia piece (<http://bit.ly/gxLg4V>) with friends, family, and other people who may be interested. You can also view my full Africa image archive here: <http://archive.ireneabdouphotography.com>. Many of the images are available for purchase as fine art photography, and all are available for personal and commercial licensing.





## **Peace Corps Guinea and the Peace Corps** **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*Katie Conlon, current PC-Guinea Response Volunteer*

### **Peace Corps Guinea Theme**

Celebrating 50 years of partnership between the Peace Corps and the People of Guinea.

Honoring the Past

Highlighting effective projects

Inspiring future generations

*Célébrons les 50 ans de partenariat entre le Corps de la Paix et le peuple de Guinée*

*Honorons le passé*

*Mettons en évidence les projets efficaces*

*Inspirons les générations futures*

### **Description of PC Guinea 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps Activities**

Peace Corps in Guinea will mark the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps thru a number of events.

Kicking Off the activities will be an event at the Peace Corps office in Conakry in March that will feature written messages, posters (with comments and photos), audio and video recordings from volunteers and Guineans who have come into contact with volunteers as a result of their assignments.

Additionally there will be art contests and shows, music, and dancing. Radio and television coverage is being planned and there will be developed a “travelling” display/show that will make visits all over Guinea during 2011.

This is an invitation to any Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in Guinea from the 1960’s to today. We are asking previous PCVs from Guinea to send us your comments on the five following questions. Your comments may be written, spoken, and/or on video. We would also like to receive two photographs, one from your service in Guinea and another photo from the present.

For Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in Guinea: Respond in English or any language used in Guinea. Send responses to: Katie Conlon at [guinea50@gmail.com](mailto:guinea50@gmail.com)

1. When and where were you a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guinea and what was your assignment?
2. What did you love most about the people of Guinea?
3. Describe an accomplishment achieved during your service in Guinea.
4. What would you say to encourage future Peace Corps Volunteers?
5. And, What would you say to encourage Guinean partners?

For your information, we are also collecting comments from Guineans who have worked with volunteers over the years. They are being asked to respond to the following questions.

For Guinean partners who were in contact with Peace Corps Volunteers. Respond in French or any language

used in Guinea. Send responses to: Katie Conlon at [guinea50@gmail.com](mailto:guinea50@gmail.com)

1. Quand et ou avez vous ete en contact avec un volontaire du Corps de la Paix?
2. Qu est ce que vous avez apprecie le plus chez les volontaires Americains ?
3. Decrivez une experience acquise lors de votre collaboration avec la/le volontaire.
4. Que diriez vous pour encourager les future volontaires du Corps de la Paix ?
5. Et, Que diriez vous pour encourager les futurs partenaires de volontaire ?

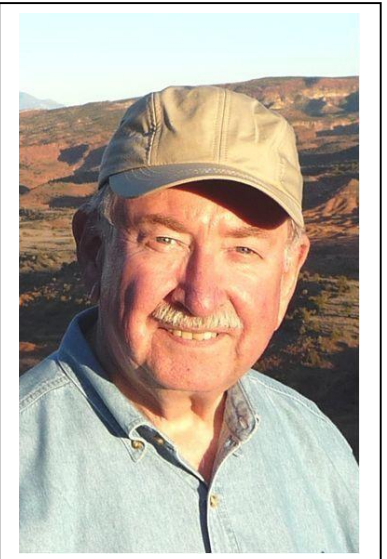
Here is a sample “poster”, edited for size:

**My name is Kerry Johnson. I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guinea in 1965 and 1966. I was a teacher at the Ecole des Beaux Arts (School of Fine**



**1966**

**I was constantly amazed by the Guinean student's thirst for knowledge, their intense curiosity to learn all they could, and their good-naturedness. My students were constantly polite and in good humor, always ready with a “hello” and a**



**2010**



*Adrienne and Joshua Cohen are siblings who share a deep love of and respect for Guinea and its culture. They are currently working together to raise money for a project titled Unite Guinean Arts. Here's more about the project in their own words:*

We are writing to update you on the status of Unite Guinean Arts our current fund-raising effort for "*The Play*": *Guinean Arts in Exhibition/Performance*, a fiscally sponsored project of Fractured Atlas. First of all, thanks so much to all of you who have contributed to the campaign!!! We are thrilled and honored at the strong support you've shown us... We would also like to thank you for checking out the site, expressing interest, asking questions, and posting comments—putting our campaign in the "popular" category at IndieGoGo! Right now, since our goal is to raise \$6,000 by February 15, we are again asking for your help in spreading the word and adding donations. To this end, a few updates...

—1— Introducing our **ADVISORY BOARD...** We are grateful to these outstanding professionals—innovators in their respective fields and in the field of African arts and culture—for their ongoing advising and encouragement. The Board is: **Mahen Bonetti**, African Film Festival New York, **Michael Markus**, Magbana Drum & Dance NYC, and **Susan Vogel**, Prince Street Pictures —2— A **PHOTO ESSAY** on street dance in Conakry is now posted to the gallery section of the site, with images by photographer Chris LaMarca. —3—A **SHORT FILM** explaining the project's concept will be up very soon... will keep you posted. As always, contributions can be made by clicking "fund this campaign" at <http://www.indiegogo.com/Unite-Guinean-Arts>. It also helps to share this project via email, IM, word of mouth, Facebook, etc, etc! Please consider donating \$10 or \$20 right now! We need your help to make it happen! Many thanks again for your support and consideration. Sincerely,

Adrienne Cohen & Joshua Cohen

ÇaVa? Is the quarterly newsletter of Friends of Guinea and seeks to maintain contact and community among members as well as inform them of official activities of the organization. We welcome submissions!

FOG is run by a small group of volunteers. Consider joining our ranks! Email us ...@friendsofguinea.org

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| membership@ ... Brian Clappier                     | web@ ... Karen Star  |
| mentor@ ... Meghan Greeley (parents)               | <a href="mailto:info@friendsofguinea.org">info@friendsofguinea.org</a> (General information) |
| secretary@ ... Position open (volunteers welcome!) |  |

Website: <http://friendsofguinea.org>

Friends of Guinea is a non-profit organization made up of former Guinea Peace Corps Volunteers, Guineans inside and outside of Guinea, and others interested in promoting the cause of Guinean development in the world at large. We are a country-of-service affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association. Dues are \$15 annually for individuals and \$23 for families.



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