



Conakry, le 14 Octobre 2015

Pour diffusion immédiate

Statement by US Ambassador Alexander Laskaris

In my three years in Guinea, I have visited the morgues of Conakry to speak with the relatives of those killed in politically-motivated violence. I have visited the wounded in the emergency rooms and I have walked through burning neighborhoods listening to Guineans tell me of the destruction of their homes, their businesses and their property.

I have never asked the families of the dead or the wounded which political party they support. I have never asked a shopkeeper whose business was destroyed what national language the assailants were speaking. I have never asked a head of family standing in the still-smoldering ruins of his family's home who he thinks should be President of Guinea.

After the recent violence in Koundara, N'Zérékore, Banankoro and Conakry, I did not ask, "who threw the first stone?" In my time as Ambassador to Guinea, I have met many young men who told me that they threw the **second** stone, and that they acted in self-defense. They come from all communities, speak all national languages, and support all of Guinea's political parties ... just like the people who threw the first stones.

When it comes to violence, the only question to my Guinean friends that matters today is, "what are you doing to stop it?"

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