

Devout Rastafarian

TRAILER

At only 24 years old, Takana Zion has become one of Guinea's most recognisable musicians. The devout Rastafarian has earned a big following for his songs about his country's troubled politics, which are especially relevant now ahead of Guinea's election.

RUNTIME: 06:04

COUNTRY: GUINEA, SWITZERLAND

FILMING LOCATION: CONAKRY, NYON

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH, FRENCH, SOUSSOU

SOURCE: A24 MEDIA/ REUTERS; MUSIC: MAKAFRESH/MAKASOUND

RECORDS – FRANCE AND GUINEA

SCRIPT

COMMENTARY

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French/Subtitled)

“Hit, hit, hit the bad spirits; avoid, avoid, avoid them. Rastaman only trusts in God, he’s asking for his help...”

COMMENTARY

Mouctar Soumah or Takana Zion as he’s known to his fans is Guinea’s undisputed King of reggae.

When he performs live at home, like at this concert in Conakry’s Palais du Peuple, thousands of fans come out to see him.

COMMENTARY

The devout Rastafarian sings in his native Soussou and Malinke as well as French and English.

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French/Subtitled)

“Everybody calm down, the Rastaman president is coming. civilians blame the military, the military blames civilian leaders, civilian leaders blame the different tribes...”

COMMENTARY

His hard-hitting lyrics on political and social issues come at a time when Guineans are about to in an election that’s meant to end a long political crisis.

Takana had planned to hold a reconciliation concert here in the September 28th Stadium – where about 150 people were killed when the military opened fire on demonstrators last year.

But the government cancelled the concert at the last minute, greatly disappointing his fans.

ITV, ALASSANE CONDE (Soussou)

“They sabotaged our concert. Takana came to play for the youth and they took the concert and turned it into something political. This is not ok. That is what the youth wanted, what had to be done. If this government continues to contradict us, things will not go very well because we’re not interested in politics.”

ITV, IBRAHIMA SYLLA (Soussou)

“He composed songs more interesting than those we heard here before. His fellow musicians came all the way from Europe and he even took care of their costs. Why did they decide to cancel his concert the day before? Why did they do that? We are very angry.”

COMMENTARY

Takana was in Guinea as part of a Europe and West Africa tour to promote his fourth Album, Black Mafia Two. At a press conference, he stressed that in spite of his political lyrics, he doesn't have an agenda.

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French)

"We are not associated to any political party. Our thing is just music."

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French/Subtitled)

"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give Africans what belongs to them."

COMMENTARY

Takana Zion has released 4 albums under the French Makafresh label that also manages his concerts in Europe. He doesn't only sing about the situation in Guinea but also about the West's relationship with Africa in general – and his Rastafarian beliefs.

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French/Subtitled)

"The first Greek scholars learnt from Africa's wisdom, look at the pyramids and all the mysteries they contain."

ITV, RAAS DJ JAH, Guinean Musician (French)

"What I like about Takana's music is that a young person who grew up in the 1990s is making reggae roots music. It's original. What bothers me is that he's also doing a lot of hip-hop and dance hall, while trying at the same time to produce high quality reggae roots albums. But then Takana Zion always surprises us."

COMMENTARY

Despite his popularity here, it's difficult to estimate the sale of Takana's CDs as there are no official records of music sales. But local music vendor Ibrahim Barry has charted his success from the beginning.

ITV, IBRAHIM BARRY, CD Vendor (French)

“Takana’s arrival in Guinea is great for the reggae fans because before his generation, reggae did not really sell in Guinea or did not even exist. I can tell you that because I started selling music before his albums arrived here.”

COMMENTARY

With the concert cancelled, Takana had time to catch up with friends and family in Hafia estate in the outskirts of Conakry. His father and mother, a former MP and a doctor, used to live here too but have since moved to France.

ITV, TAKANA ZION, Reggae Artist (French/Subtitled)

“It’s always beautiful for brothers and sisters to be together man, you know. It takes me back to my childhood. It was always the same atmosphere, you see. We would drink tea together, discuss different subjects which strengthens the link, and links are what makes Africa, you know?”

COMMENTARY

The artist grew up here until he was 17 when he went to Mali to work on his music. He came back 4 years later a star, but to his neighbours, he’s still Mouctar.

ITV, BANGOURA MBO, Neighbour (Soussou)

“Mouctar would come to see me from school, he was always singing. When I warned him that his mother would hear him he would not take it seriously. One time, his mother confided in me saying, “I’m really worried. When this child wakes up, takes his bath, sleeps, he’s always singing.” She did not realize that that was where his luck lay.”

ITV, SALIFOU BANGOURA, Neighbour (Soussou)

“His mother would always tell me, ‘Hey! Do not leave Mouctar’s hair like that. He has to shave. Look at the state of his hair’ He liked dreadlocks since he was a child.”

COMMENTARY

But Takana Zion couldn't stay long and is already back in Europe where he'll be touring as his country goes to the polls.

SHOTLIST

(AJ) CONAKRY, GUINEA (RECENT) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

1. MOHAMED MOUCTAR SOUMAH A.K.A. TAKANA ZION PERFORMING AT A CONCERT AT CONAKRY'S PALAIS DU PEUPLE

2. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) RAGGAE MUSICIAN TAKANA ZION SAYING:

“Hit, hit, hit the evil spirits, avoid, avoid, avoid them. Rastaman only trusts in God, he is asking for his help...”

3. CROWDS OF TAKANA FANS SINGING ALONG

4. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) TAKANA ZION SAYING:

“Everybody calm down, the Rastaman president has arrived. The civilians blame the military, the military blames the civilian leaders, the civilian leaders blame the different tribes...”

5. VARIOUS OF 28TH SEPTEMBER STADIUM

(AJ) CONAKRY, GUINEA (FILE) (ORIGINALLY 4:3) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

6. CROWDS OF PROTESTERS IN CONAKRY'S STADIUM

7. OPPOSITION POLITICIAN BEING ESCORTED OUT BY SUPPORTERS AS SHOTS RING OUT

8. PEOPLE TRY TO CLIMB FENCES AND RUN AWAY AS GUNSHOTS ARE HEARD

(AJ) CONAKRY, GUINEA (RECENT) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

9. VARIOUS STREET SCENES OF CONAKRY/TAKANA ZION ALBUM BANNER

10. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) TAKANA ZION'S FAN ALASSANE CONDE SAYING:

“They sabotaged our concert. Takana came to play for the youth and they took the concert and turned it into something political. This is not ok. That is what the youth wanted, what had to be done. If this government continues to contradict us, things will not go very well because we’re not interested in politics.”

11. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) TAKANA FAN IBRAHIMA SYLLA SAYING:

“He composed songs more interesting than those we heard here before. His fellow musicians came all the way from Europe and he even took care of their costs. Why did they decide to cancel his concert the day before? Why did they do that? We are very angry.”

12. VARIOUS OF PRESS CONFERENCE IN PREPARATION FOR TAKANA ZION’S CONCERT

13. (SOUNDBITE) (French) REGGAE ARTIST TAKANA ZION SAYING:

“We are not associated to any political party. Our thing is just music.”

(AJ)NYON, SWITZERLAND (RECENT) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

14. TAKANA ZION PERFORMING AT A CONCERT IN NYON, SWITZERLAND

15. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) RAGGAE MUSICIAN TAKANA ZION SAYING:

“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give Africans what belongs to them. The first Greek scholars learnt from Africa’s wisdom, look at the pyramids and all the mysteries that they contain...”

(AJ) CONAKRY, GUINEA (RECENT) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

16. (SOUNDBITE) (French) REGGAE MUSICIAN AND DJ RAAS DJ JAH

“What I like about Takana’s music is that a young person who grew up in the 1990s is making reggae roots music. It’s original. What bothers me is that he’s also doing a lot of hip-hop and dance hall, while trying at the same time to produce high quality reggae roots albums. But then Takana Zion always surprises us.”

17. VARIOUS STREET SCENES OF CONAKRY

18. VARIOUS OF DVD AND MUSIC CD VENDOR IBRAHIM BARRY AT HIS STALL

19. (SOUNDBITE) (French) MUSIC VENDOR IBRAHIM VARRY SAYING:

“Takana’s arrival in Guinea is great for the reggae fans because before his generation, reggae did not really sell in Guinea or did not even exist. I can tell you that because I started selling music before his albums arrived here.”

20. VARIOUS OF TAKANA ZION ARRIVING HOME IN HAFIA ESTATE

21. (SOUNDBITE) (French) TAKANA ZION SAYING:

“It’s always beautiful for brothers and sisters to be together man, you know. It takes me back to my childhood. It was always the same atmosphere, you see. We would drink tea together, discuss different subjects which strengthens the link, and links are what makes Africa, you know?”

22. VARIOUS OF TAKANA ZION SITTING WITH FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS AND RELATIVES

23. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) TAKANA ZION’S NEIGHBOUR MADAME BANGOURA MBO SAYING:

“Mouctar would come to see me from school, he was always singing. When I warned him that his mother would hear him he would not take it seriously. One time, his mother confided in me saying, “I’m really worried. When this child wakes up, takes his bath, sleeps, he’s always singing.” She did not realize that that was where his luck lay.”

24. (SOUNDBITE) (Soussou) TAKANA ZION’S NEIGHBOUR SALIFOU BANGOURA SAYING:

“His mother would always tell me, Hey! Do not leave Mouctar’s hair like that. He has to shave. Look at the state of his hair.” He liked dreadlocks since he was a child.”

25. TAKANA SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS FOR KIDS

END