

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Country briefing – Guinea

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Summary

The opposition takes its seats in the new Assemblée Nationale, even though it does not agree with the final results of the 28 September legislative elections. They hope the move will provide a good starting position for the next presidential election scheduled for late 2015. President Condé's government rushes through the 2014 budget in the interim parliament to meet donor obligations, despite an opposition legal challenge. The budget targets improved electricity production, roads and agriculture. As political tension recedes, corruption has reduced but remains a major problem, while violent crime is on the increase again.

1.1 Opposition to take its place in parliament

The inauguration of Guinea's first elected parliament since June 2002 will mark the formal end of its full transition to democracy. Although the dates for the first sitting of the 114-seat **Assemblée Nationale** are not yet known, the opposition has announced that it will participate in parliamentary proceedings.¹ This follows the Supreme Court's final decision on 15 November to ratify the results of the 28 September legislative elections.² Opposition parties announced their almost unanimous decision on 12 December to take their seats in parliament, although they disagreed with the final results.³ The opposition statement said that they had taken that decision in the interest of national cohesion and peace. The only exception is former prime minister **Lansana Kouyaté** (2007-2008)'s **Parti de l'espoir pour le développement national (PEDN)**, which has only two seats in the new

¹ Reuters, 12 December 2013

² See ARC Guinea Briefing, November 2013

³ Opposition declaration, made in Conakry and reproduced by Afrikom, 14 December 2013



legislature.

"They cannot continue to obstruct everything if they want to be taken seriously. They must actively take part in proceedings." ⁴

The head of the main opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** and de facto opposition leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** explained to local media that the choice to be part of parliamentary proceedings has a specific aim.

"Our main objective is the end of the presidential mandate in 2015... In order to gain power in 2015 it is more prudent to be in the National Assembly where the opposition has at the very least 54 seats. In these conditions, we can prevent the excesses of Alpha Condé's dictatorship." ⁵

Diallo also said that it was important for the opposition to make electoral inroads in the forthcoming local elections which **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** has announced for March 2014.⁶ These are the first local elections since 2005 and Diallo believes they will offer insight into the strength of the opposition.⁷

The first intra-parliamentary battle is already under way and centres around **Claude Cory Kondiano**, a member of parliament for Conde's **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG)**, whom the president has proposed as president of the Assemblée Nationale. The parties seated in the new parliament will propose candidates and MPs will elect the president during its first session.⁸

Kondiano's non-confrontational personality and his career as a banking administrator have not invited this controversy.

⁴ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

⁵ Cellou Dalein Diallo, statement, reproduced by GuinéeNews, 14 December 2013

⁶ Kababachir.com, 13 July 2013

⁷ GuinéeNews, 14 December 2013

⁸ French pages of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), www.ipu.org/parline-f/reports/1131_C.htm, the date of the first session has not been announced

“At issue is the regional question. Kondiano is from Guinée Forestière. The opposition accuses Condé of playing regional politics with this proposal. There is already a president from Haute Guinée and a prime minister from Guinée Maritime. With a Forestier presiding parliament they feel encircled. Their strength is in the only other region left, Moyenne Guinée.”⁹

Condé used the soon to be replaced temporary parliament, the **Conseil National de la Transition (CNT)**, to pass the 2014 budget. The opposition pledged to launch a Supreme Court challenge against a 17 December decree to call an extraordinary session of the CNT to approve the budget.¹⁰ The opposition UFDG said the decree was illegal and prejudicial against the yet to be formally inaugurated Assemblée Nationale. Secretary General in the presidency **Kiridi Bangoura** says the government was pressed to pass the budget due to "international requirements".¹¹

*"If we could autofinance our budgets, we could work according to a national timetable. But...our ministers must go to **Washington** and reach an agreement with our partners about the macroeconomic framework and the provisional budget for 2014."*¹²

The UFDG continues to argue that the president's move is disempowering the new national assembly. The local opposition-aligned press says the CNT resembles a "rubber stamp".¹³

1.2 Budget focuses on improving electricity, roads and agriculture

The proposed budget represents optimism over expected economic growth rates in 2014 after the slowdown in 2013. The proposed CFA936 billion (\$1.9 billion) budget increased 18% from 2013. However, the continued downturn in mining sector activity is likely to reduce government revenue. Nevertheless, the spending component includes several infrastructure rehabilitation programs that

⁹ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

¹⁰ GuinéeNews, 17 and 18 December 2013; GuinéeDirect, 18 December 2013

¹¹ Quoted in coaguines.blogspot.com, 20 December 2013

¹² Secretary-General to the presidency Kiridi Bangoura, quoted in coaguines.blogspot.com, 20 December 2013

¹³ GuinéeDirect, 18 December 2013



are long overdue.

Budget minister **Mohamed Diaré** told the CNT that delays surrounding the **Simandou** iron ore mining projects and the faltering **RusAl**-owned alumina plant at **Fria** have contributed to economic growth of 2.5% in 2013, and growth is expected to increase to 4.5% in 2014.¹⁴ In addition, **Loucény Nabé**, the governor of the **Banque Centrale de la République de Guinée** announced that the inflation rate for 2013 was likely to be just above 10% and that the government was aiming for 8.5% in 2014.¹⁵ The budget sets aside \$73m for the development of agriculture, \$170m for various projects related to electricity (the **Kaleta Dam** near **Dubreka**, currently under construction; street lighting) and \$175m to construct and rehabilitate roads throughout the country.

Guinea's road network is extremely poor, rendering parts of the country such as the **Fouta Djallon** (Moyenne Guinée) and large parts of the Forestière region inaccessible for months at a time, especially during the rainy season. The absence of street lightning contributes to the recurring crime waves (see below). Large areas of the capital are no-go areas.

Guinea under democratic rule has made steady and continuous progress against corruption but the country remains firmly in the lowest regions of the **Corruption Perception Index (CPI)** and is still considered "*highly corrupt*".¹⁶ The CPI, an annual publication from the anti-corruption group

Transparency International ranks Guinea as follows:

Date	Ranking	Political events
2013	150 th / out of 177 countries	First democratic legislative elections.
2012	154 th / out of 176 countries	Conde delays legislative elections.
2011	164 th / out of 183 countries	New mining code and normalisation of business sector. Conde survives attempted coup.

¹⁴ GuinéeNews, 18 December 2013, Kaloumpresse, 18 December 2013

¹⁵ Kaloumpresse, 19 December 2013

¹⁶ Transparency International website, Guinea country profile (<http://www.transparency.org/country#GIN>)



2010	164 th / out of 178 countries	Transition government paves the way for the first democratic elections, Alpha Conde elected president.
2009	168 th / out of 180 countries	Military junta rule. 28 September stadium massacre.
2008	173 rd / out of 180 countries	Military junta coup follows death of longstanding military leader Lansana Conte dies.

Guinea's longstanding reputation as one of the most corrupt countries in the West African region has been a substantial deterrent for investors. Commenting on the findings, **Mamadou Taran Diallo**, chairman of the **Association Guinéenne pour la Transparence (AGT)**, says Condé should take the lead and declare his assets. He also called for more robust control systems and better tendering laws.¹⁷

The long confrontation between **Beny Steinmetz**, founder of **Beny Steinmetz Group Resources (BSGR)**, and the Condé government and its associates over ownership of **Simandou** iron ore blocks 1 and 2 continues. On 16 December BSGR announced that it was taking legal action against the campaign group **Global Witness** which it accuses of holding personal data on Steinmetz and his business associates that it claims the group refuses to hand over.¹⁸ Global Witness has responded saying that it considers the move an act of bullying and an attempt to stifle journalism in the interest of the public.¹⁹ There is as yet no date for the first hearing of the case. The government's **Comité Technique de Revue des Titres et Conventions Miniers (CTRTCM)** has set January as the deadline by which BSGR and its **Brazilian** partner **Vale** must provide information about their Simandou deal.²⁰ Controversy surrounds BSGR's acquisition of the Simandou block in 2008. Vale suspended its activities at Simandou in 2012.²¹

¹⁷ Mosaiqueguinée, 3 December 2013

¹⁸ BSGR website, statement dated 16 December 2013

¹⁹ Global Witness website, statement dated 17 December 2013

²⁰ Reuters, 20 December 2013

²¹ Vale website

1.3 Crime is on the increase

Armed robbers murdered **Pascal Bangoura**, the general director of the police commissariat in **Sonfonia**, Conakry, on 1 December, highlighting a recurring crime wave. One report from the central town of **Pita**, Moyenne Guinée, claims that after 8pm the town is quiet for fear of armed banditry.²² Security minister **Madifing Diané** expressed his frustration when he addressed law enforcement officers following a spate of car-jackings, armed robberies and highway attacks against intercity taxis.²³ He said that *"crime is increasing in Conakry and elsewhere in the country"*.²⁴

Since the 1990s, when arms became widely available as various neighbouring countries descended into war, armed crime has been a problem in Conakry and elsewhere. Guns are readily available and cheap. Security forces are often complicit and the risk-reward ratio is excellent – from the criminal's point of view. There are no easy solutions but given that there is political will to tackle the problem, the government is likely to concentrate more efforts on fighting crime, if only because making the streets and the roads safer is a vote winner.

2 Implications

The anticipated inauguration of the Assemblée Nationale will end the country's long transition from military to civilian rule. However, delays in establishing the legislature mean that the next two years of parliamentary politics will be devoted to electioneering rather than policy making. The 2015 presidential elections will dominate political debate inside and outside the new Assemblée Nationale. This is a logical but unfortunate consequence of the lengthy delays in holding parliamentary elections. The soon to be defunct CNT has passed important legislation, including a new mining code, giving investors in the extractive sector the long-term view they need. However, improved political stability may prove elusive, as the passing of individual mining contracts and major policy initiatives, for instance in the areas of army reform and improved administrative transparency will stagnate in a

²² Afrik.com, 8 December 2013

²³ Aminata.com, 2 December 2013; Afrik.com, 2 December 2013

²⁴ Security minister Madifing Diané, quoted by RFI, 9 December 2013



hung parliament where scoring political points may become more important than country's development.