

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Campaigns for the 18 October presidential election move to the interior of Guinea, where the two frontrunners, President Alpha Condé (2010-present) and opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG) leader Cellou Dalein Diallo, make final efforts to gain supporters. Election campaigns have seen documented use of violence, intimidation and hate speech, which regional and international organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Criminal Court (ICC) and United Nations have criticised. The government launches several transport infrastructure projects including the extension and modernisation of Conakry's Aéroport Internationale de Gbessia, construction of the Morebaya river port at Maferiyah and the tarring of the 354-km Coyah-Dabola-Kindia road.

Guinea votes ...

Guineans head to the polls on 18 October to select the country's next president from a pool of 12 candidates. The victor will preside over a country that is set to experience a mining investment boom over the next decade, particularly in bauxite and iron ore production. The two frontrunners in the electoral contest are 82-year-old President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present), candidate for the ruling **Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel)**, and 68-year-old opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo**. The two presidential candidates are facing off for a third time following the 2010 and 2015 presidential contests.

The lead-up to the elections has been fraught with opposition, at times violent, to Condé's decision to run for a third presidential term. Guinea's opposition parties and civil society consortium **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** have held protests since October 2019 against Condé's participation in the election, which the enactment of a new constitution in March enabled. During a 6 October interview with France-based media organs **France24** and **Radio France Internationale (RFI)**, Condé justified the constitutional change that effectively revoked his previous two presidential terms.¹ Condé noted that a new constitution had been in the pipeline since his election in 2010, but other priorities "needed to be dealt with".²

During a nationally televised address on 10 October, Condé promised Guineans that if re-elected, his administration would make a complete break from the previous ten years of his rule.³ Condé said he would govern for all Guineans, promote unity and ensure Guineans would not feel excluded by promoting dialogue and fighting injustice.⁴ Condé said his candidacy was not to fulfill a personal ambition, but rather a "patriotic duty", pledging to foster a more democratic society that promotes the rule of law, social peace and a better life for all Guineans.⁵

Guinea's **Covid-19** preventive strategy amidst the on-going state of emergency initially seemed likely to impact the campaign trail. The RPG at first announced plans to organise door-to-door awareness campaigns and use videoconferences rather than the usual large-scale rallies in order to comply with Covid-19 regulations that prohibit gatherings of more than 30 people in the **Greater Conakry** (Grand

¹ RFI, 6 Oct 2020

² RFI, 6 Oct 2020

³ Guineenews.org, 10 Oct 2020

⁴ Guineenews.org, 10 Oct 2020

⁵ Guineenews.org, 10 Oct 2020

Conakry) region comprising the capital, **Conakry**, and the **Dubreka** and **Coyah** prefectures, and 50 individuals for the rest of the country.⁶ However, following his videoconferences from Conakry, Condé embarked on a more traditional campaign in Guinea's interior regions from 11 October.⁷ Ignoring Covid-19 health protocols, Condé hosted large rallies in **Lola** and Guinea's second largest city, **Nzérékoré**, in **Guinée Forestière** in the south-east of the country, where he pledged to undertake road construction and mining development projects.⁸ Condé warned residents of Nzérékoré not to vote for "grave diggers", a reference to the opposition UFDG, which since 2019 has been involved in anti-government protests that have led to almost 50 deaths.⁹ During the last stop of his tour in Guinée Forestière at **Kissidougou**, Condé claimed his presidency would see Guinea become the second largest economy in the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** after **Nigeria**.¹⁰

Opposition leader Dalein Diallo campaigned in Conakry throughout September, but on 5 October moved the UFDG's campaign into the interior town of **Marela**, at **Mamou Prefecture** in **Moyenne Guinée**.¹¹ Dalein Diallo attacked Condé for not fulfilling his earlier campaign promises, such as the construction and rehabilitation of the Conakry-**Kankan-Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)** railway. Dalein Diallo accused Condé of promoting tribalism and called him the "*Champion of division in Africa*".¹² During a rally at **Macenta**, Dalein Diallo promised to establish an impartial public administration and pursue actions to promote youth employment in agriculture.¹³ At a 14 October rally at **Kindia** attended by thousands, Dalein Diallo pledged that security sector reform, reconciliation and protection of human rights would form the cornerstones of his presidency.¹⁴

Although Condé draws most of his support from **Haute Guinée**, **Guinée Forestière** and **Basse Guinée**, he has made inroads in Conakry and Moyenne Guinée, areas that have hitherto supported Dalein Diallo.¹⁵ Condé stands a stronger chance than Dalein Diallo of obtaining an absolute majority in the first round of voting, with Haute Guinée and Guinée Forestière representing 36% of the 5,140,000 eligible voters.¹⁶ The UFDG's only stronghold, where it has little competition, is Moyenne Guinée, home to 14% of the electorate.¹⁷ The UFDG will need favourable results in Conakry, as well as support from **Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR)** supporters, which boycotted the election, and **Ousmane Kaba** potentially taking Condé's votes in Guinée Forestière.¹⁸

Electoral fraud by the ruling RPG cannot be ruled out.¹⁹ The central government has control over the institutions that oversee the elections at both national and local levels. A jointly conducted research paper published in September by Africa-focused survey data organisation **Afrobarometer** and Guinea-based think-tank **Stat View International**, using statistics from 2019, reported 56% of Guineans stating they have "very little" to "no confidence" in the **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (national independent electoral commission).²⁰

⁶ Guineenews, 14 Sep 2020

⁷ RFI, 11 Oct 2020

⁸ Guineenews.org, 12 Oct 2020

⁹ Aminata.com, 12 Oct 2020

¹⁰ RFI, 11 Oct 2020

¹¹ Africa Guinée, 5 Oct 2020

¹² Guineenews.org, 6 Oct 2020

¹³ Guineenews.org, 7 Oct 2020

¹⁴ Guineenews.org, 14 Oct 2020

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique, 8 Oct 2020

¹⁶ Jeune Afrique, 8 Oct 2020

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 8 Oct 2020

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 14 Oct 2020

¹⁹ ARC Guinea analyst

²⁰ Stat View International, 8 Sep 2020

... amid concerns over violence

The electoral showdown between Condé and Dalein Diallo has generated headlines over the use of violence, intimidation and hate speech throughout the campaign, largely eclipsing the political manifestoes of the leading candidates. Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**, Condé's campaign director, saw his convoy attacked on 1 October while travelling in a UFDG stronghold along the **Labé-Dalaba** road.²¹ What could be viewed as a series of retaliatory attacks by RPG supporters against UFDG members followed. On 5 October, 11 UFDG supporters were injured and UFDG local headquarters vandalised at **Kankan**, an RPG bastion and Guinea's third largest city, following clashes with RPG supporters.²² UFDG vice president **Fodé Oussou Fofana** cancelled a UFDG meeting at **Forécariah** on 7 October after RPG supporters attacked his convoy.²³ RPG supporters stopped Dalein Diallo's convoy at **Toukounou** on 10 October, preventing him from attending a rally at Kankan.²⁴ Condé condemned the use of violence against his opponents, but alleged UFDG members instigated the incidents.²⁵

UFDG and RPG members have accused each other of using hate speech and ethnic slogans during the election campaign. Although the leading parties have pluralist membership, the UFDG is aligned with the **Peul (Fulani)** ethnic group, which represents 41% of the population, while the RPG obtains support predominantly from the **Soussou** and **Malinké** ethnic groups, which make up an estimated 40% of the country.²⁶ **United States**-based rights group **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** published a report on 25 September indicating that 32 individuals were killed in Nzérékoré during inter-communal fighting from 22-24 March around the time of the constitutional referendum and legislative elections.²⁷ Pro-government ethnic militias consisting of Malinké and **Koniake** individuals clashed with **Guerzé** armed groups, which are purportedly aligned to the opposition. **United Kingdom**-based rights group **Amnesty International** estimates that violence during anti-government protests from October 2019 to July 2020 has led to the deaths of 50 individuals.²⁸

Several international organisations have expressed concern about the possibility of violence during and after the elections. **United Nations (UN)** officials have called on candidates to "*refrain from using provocative language that might lead to violence, discrimination and other human rights violations*".²⁹ An **ECOWAS-African Union (AU)** and UN tripartite mission announced on 2 October its concern about the lack of trust among Guinea's political leaders and called for the organisation of peaceful elections.³⁰ UN Human Rights commissioner **Michelle Bachelet** and **Dramila Patter**, the UN's acting special adviser on the prevention of genocide, on 7 October condemned the "*increasingly pervasive and divisive appeals to ethnic affiliations*" by presidential candidates.³¹ **International Criminal Court (ICC)** chief prosecutor **Fatou Bensouda** has also expressed concern about the volatile situation.³²

Condé has refuted allegations of his party members using hate speech and inciting violence. Security minister **Albert Damatang Camara** has also denied accusations regarding the alleged role of state security forces in the violence over the past months.

²¹ Aminata.com, 1 October 2020

²² DW, 5 Oct 2020

²³ Guineenews.org, 7 Oct 2020

²⁴ RFI, 11 Oct 2020

²⁵ RFI, 13 Oct 2020

²⁶ Al Jazeera, 7 Oct 2020

²⁷ HRW, 25 Sep 2020

²⁸ Amnesty International, 1 Oct 2020

²⁹ UN News, 7 Oct 2020

³⁰ Aminata.com, 3 Oct 2020

³¹ UN News, 7 Oct 2020

³² Agence Ecofin, 12 Oct 2020

Transport infrastructure projects launched

Despite Guinea's political upheaval in the past months, the government has recently launched a number of transport-related infrastructure projects across the country. **Chinese-Singaporean** consortium **SMB Winning** laid the foundation stone on 6 October for the construction of the **Morebaya** river port at **Maferiyah**, in Forécariah prefecture.³³ The project is linked to the \$15 billion **Simandou** iron ore megaproject that SMB Winning will undertake.³⁴ The port will be used for the importation of equipment to be used in the Simandou project. In the longer term, the infrastructure will be used for other commercial activities.³⁵

President Condé launched construction work on 12 October for the extension and modernisation of the **Aéroport Internationale de Gbessia** (Conakry).³⁶ The project, which is being pursued through a private-public partnership (PPP), will cost \$175.7m and construction will last for 27 months.³⁷ The project's owners include the Guinean government through the **Société de Gestion et d'Exploitation de l'Aéroport de G'Bessia (SOGEAG)**, France-based **Aéroport des Paris (ADP)** and the **Africa50** investment fund, owned by the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**.³⁸ SOGEAG director general **Sekou Mai Diarra** said the airport upgrade will see passenger capacity increase to 1.5 million passengers by 2030.³⁹ The airport surface area will expand to 20,000 hectares, and will include a new import-export freight terminal, a presidential pavilion and the headquarters of SOGEAG.⁴⁰ President Condé claimed that the airport will be one of the most modern in Africa.⁴¹ Guinea's airport modernisation plan mirrors similar improvements in the last few years in **Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal** and **Togo** of their largest international airports.⁴²

President Condé and public works minister **Moustapha Naité** launched the tarring of the 354-km **Coyah-Dabola-Kindia** road network on 14 October. **China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)** will execute the project at an estimated cost of \$419.7m. Completion of the project is set for 2022.⁴³

³³ Africa Guinee, 7 Oct 2020

³⁴ Africa Guinee, 7 Oct 2020

³⁵ Africa Guinee, 7 Oct 2020

³⁶ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

³⁷ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

³⁸ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

³⁹ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

⁴⁰ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

⁴¹ Financial Afrik, 12 Oct 2020

⁴² ARC Guinea analyst

⁴³ Guinee 360, 14 Oct 2020

Planner

18 Oct 2020 **(Guinea)** Presidential elections

(Date TBA due to Covid-19) **Conakry (Guinea)** Transform Africa Conference;

Chronology

16 Oct 2020 Conakry (Guinea) *Guineenews.org*. The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** will send 100 election observers for the 18 October presidential election;

14 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee 360*. President Condé and public works minister **Moustapha Naïté** launched the tarring of the 354-km **Coyah-Dabola-Kindia** road network on 14 October. **China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)** will execute the project at an estimated cost of \$419.7m

12 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. Construction work begins for the 175.7m extension and modernisation of the **Aéroport Internationale de Gbessia** (Conakry);

12 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **International Criminal Court (ICC)** chief prosecutor **Fatou Bensouda** expresses concern at the rise in tensions leading up to Guinea's 18 October presidential election;

11 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Supporters of the ruling **RPG Arc-en-ciel** prevent opposition presidential candidate **Cellou Dalein Diallo** from undertaking a campaign visit to the town of **Kankan** in **Haute Guinée**, a stronghold of President **Alpha Condé**;

10 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** launches a project to extend and modernise **Gbessia International Airport Conakry**, estimated to cost \$176.9m and be completed in three years;

9 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. **European Union (EU)** ambassador to Guinea **Josep Coll** announces that the EU will not send an electoral observer mission to supervise the 18 October presidential elections;

9 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. **Orange Guinée**, a branch of France-based telecommunications firm **Orange**, announces it will commission the **4G** internet service in 2020;

7 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *UN News*. **United Nations** Human Rights commissioner **Michelle Bachelet**, and **Dramila Patter**, the UN's acting special adviser on the prevention of genocide call on presidential candidates to desist from the use of hate speech during the election period;

6 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** presidential candidate **Cellou Dalein Diallo** launches his campaign in **Marella** and accuses President **Alpha Condé** of causing division within Guinea;

2 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. Public works minister **Moustapha Naïté** says the 370-km **Coyah-Mamou-Dabola** road, which **China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)** will construct at a cost of €357m (\$419.7m), will be completed by the end of 2022;

1 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. **United Kingdom**-based human rights organisation **Amnesty International** publishes a report blaming Guinean security forces for the death of 12 individuals during the 22 March legislative elections and constitutional referendum;

30 Sep 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AFP*. Government sources say **Guinea** has closed its border with **Senegal** and **Guinea-Bissau** for security reasons ahead of controversial general elections set for 18 October;

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