

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing June 2021

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#### Guinea Summary 24 June 2021

*The opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG) is at a crossroads as members diverge over participation in the political dialogue that President Alpha Condé (2010-present) promised to organise following his re-election in October. The Guinea-Senegal land border is set to reopen for the first time since September, following the signing of a security and defence cooperation agreement between the two states on 19 June. President Condé inaugurates the 125-km Dapilan-Santou railway, which is part of the Boffa-Boké iron ore project. The \$700m railway was financed and developed by Chinese-Singaporean consortium SMB Winning. The national health state of emergency is extended by 30 days. The health ministry has vaccinated over 350,000 Guineans since the start of its national Covid-19 vaccination campaign. The World Health Organisation, in tandem with the Guinean government, officially declares the end of Guinea's Ebola virus outbreak, which emerged in February.*

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#### Opposition UFDG divided on participation in political dialogue

The opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** is at a crossroads as members express divergent views on whether or not to participate in the political dialogue that President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) promised to organise following his re-election in October. The UFDG, Guinea's most popular opposition party, indicated in May that it would not participate in any talks organised by the government, claiming that the government's continued imprisonment of UFDG supporters and closure of UFDG headquarters showed bad faith on the part of the government.

In a letter published on 2 June, prominent UFDG figures **Ousmane Gaould**, **Mamadou Baldé** and **Ibrahima Chérif Bah** cited the importance of "*initiating the process of appeasement through dialogue and consultation in the interests of strengthening national unity and social peace*".<sup>1</sup> The trio was arrested on charges of manufacturing and possessing weapons of war and attacks on fundamental interests of the nation in November (see *ARC Guinea Briefing December 2020*) and since their arrest have been held in detention at the **Prison Civile de Conakry**.<sup>2</sup> Chérif Bah is vice president of the UFDG and member of its political council; Gaould is also a political council member and director of communications while Baldé is a member of the political bureau and former member of parliament (MP).<sup>3</sup> In their letter, Chérif Bah, Gaould and Baldé reiterated their innocence, and their commitment to democracy and the rule of law, rather than the acts of looting and insurrectional activity of which they are accused.<sup>4</sup>

The UFDG was the political party most vocal against Condé's attempts to modify the constitution in order to stand for a third presidential term.<sup>5</sup> However, following the declaration made by Chérif Bah, Gaould and Baldé, the party issued a statement expressing its disapproval of the trio's support for dialogue.<sup>6</sup> The government has also indicated that only the UFDG national directorate and other competent bodies can articulate the party's position on dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>2</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>3</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>4</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>5</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>6</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>7</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 3 Jun 2021

Senior party members on 5 June communicated divergent rules concerning the stance the party should adopt at a conference.<sup>8</sup> UFDG secretary general **Aliou Condé** reiterated that the party should not participate in any talks with the government, as it would validate the abuses, deprivation of freedom and killings perpetrated by the government over the past years.<sup>9</sup> However, UFDG assistant secretary general **Mamadou Barry** suggested the UFDG reorient its strategy, stating that “*the battle of 18 October is over*”.<sup>10</sup> At a virtual UFDG assembly on 9 June it was unanimously agreed that the party would make no further comment with respect to participating in dialogue in light of the continued imprisonment of UFDG supporters and members of allied groups, including the civil society and opposition consortium **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** and the **Alliance Nationale pour l’Alternance Démocratique (ANAD)**.<sup>11</sup> The party also cited the closure and occupation of UFDG headquarters by security and defence officials as well as the travel ban on UFDG president **Cellou Dalein Diallo** and other members.<sup>12</sup> Despite the declaration, 52 UFDG federations across **Africa, Europe** and **North America** publicly declared their support on 11 June for the party’s position and for Dalein Diallo, who called on UFDG members to pursue internal debate while prioritising solidarity in party activities.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the UFDG’s reluctance to engage in talks, the government has taken concrete steps to carry out dialogue when the opportunity arises. Condé revealed on 3 June that the permanent framework for political and social dialogue he created on 21 January (see *ARC Guinea Briefing February 2021*) will deal with issues of national interest.<sup>14</sup> These will include societal matters, transport challenges, national unity, consolidation of social peace, rule of law and democracy.<sup>15</sup> The permanent secretary for the framework, **Fodé Bangoura**, issued a communiqué on 15 June announcing that the first dialogue session would begin on 16 June with transport sector stakeholders.<sup>16</sup>

The hosting of talks using Condé’s framework may be seen as a move by the government to gain legitimacy by creating the perception that it is willing to carry out talks with various societal stakeholders.<sup>17</sup> However, as the UFDG has stated, several issues must be resolved before the possibility of talks can be raised.<sup>18</sup> There is a significant trust deficit between the hardline opposition and government, which may require the involvement of external actors if dialogue takes place.<sup>19</sup> ANAD executive member **Keamou Haba** noted that while the opposition alliance is open to holding talks, it favoured their facilitation by the troika of the **African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the **United Nations (UN)**.<sup>20</sup>

### Guinea-Senegal border set to reopen nine months after closure

The Guinea-**Senegal** land border is set to reopen for the first time since September 2020, following the signing of a cooperation agreement between the two states on 19 June.<sup>21</sup> The reopening of the border will be welcome news for retailers and transporters who carry out activities between the two countries.<sup>22</sup> According to **Tanou Nadhel Diallo**, administrative secretary for the **Syndicat des Transports de Labé** (Labé transporters’ union) in **Moyenne Guinée**, 80% of the region’s food comes

<sup>8</sup> Africa Guinée, 6 Jun 2021

<sup>9</sup> Africa Guinée, 5 Jun 2021

<sup>10</sup> Africa Guinée, 6 Jun 2021

<sup>11</sup> Africa Guinée, 10 Jun 2021

<sup>12</sup> Africa Guinée, 10 Jun 2021

<sup>13</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 11 Jun 2021

<sup>14</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>15</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Jun 2021

<sup>16</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>17</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>18</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>19</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>20</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 2 Jun 2021

<sup>21</sup> Aminata.com, 19 Jun 2021

<sup>22</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

from **Guinea-Bissau**, Senegal and **The Gambia**, with the halt in border activity leading to increased food prices.<sup>23</sup>

Guinea's defence minister, **Mohamed Diané**, and his Senegalese counterpart, **Sidiki Kaba**, signed a military and technical cooperation agreement on behalf of their respective states during the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** 59th Ordinary Session of the heads of state conference, which took place in **Accra (Ghana)** from 19-21 June.<sup>24</sup> The agreement recommends the strengthening of collaboration in the domains of fighting terrorism and cross border crime, intelligence sharing, staff training and the hosting of joint exercise between both national armies.<sup>25</sup> Although details of the agreement were not revealed, sources familiar with the development said it entails the establishment of mixed patrols along the border and intelligence sharing between the two countries.<sup>26</sup>

A central point of the agreement is the clause stipulating "*the non-use of territory of one of the parties against the interests of the other*". Each signatory will act to prevent its territory being used for subversive activities, destabilisation, or against other parties. The exchange and protection of information regarding subversive organisations as well as the formation of joint/simultaneous patrols to secure the border and the strengthening of checkpoints also form part of the agreement.<sup>27</sup> The terms and conditions of the agreement, as well as its implementation, will be managed by a joint committee, whose members will be chosen by the defence ministers of Guinea and Senegal.<sup>28</sup>

The conclusion of the accord will lead to the re-opening of the 330-km long Guinea-Senegal border, which Guinea closed on 27 September together with its borders with Guinea-Bissau and **Sierra Leone**, ahead of the 18 October presidential elections.<sup>29</sup> Conakry justified the closing down of the border on the basis of what it described as "*security concerns*".<sup>30</sup> However, Condé reportedly ordered the closure because intelligent reports suggested that Guinea Bissau's President **Umaro Sissoco Embaló** (2020-present) supported Condé's main challenger, Cellou Dalein Diallo, ahead of the elections.<sup>31</sup> There were also claims that Embaló, in tandem with Sierra Leone's vice president, **Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh**, was recruiting individuals to stir up violence in Guinea during the elections.<sup>32</sup> While Guinea reopened its border with Sierra Leone in February, it took the mediation of Ghana's President **Nana Akufo-Addo** (2016-present) to make headway in ending the closure.<sup>33</sup>

Senegal, which hosts the largest contingent of Guineans residing outside their country, was also accused of being sympathetic to the Guinean opposition; President **Macky Sall** (2012-present) has close relations with Dalein Diallo. During an October 1 meeting with an ECOWAS delegation, Condé accused Senegal of hosting FNDC members who had arrest warrants against them.<sup>34</sup> In a March interview with **France**-based publication **Jeune Afrique**, Condé stated that Senegal has previously been a base for destabilising activities in Guinea, but admitted that was not presently the case.<sup>35</sup> However, although Condé acknowledged that the border could not be closed indefinitely, he said the establishment of mixed patrols was a prerequisite for him to lift the restriction.<sup>36</sup> President Sall has not responded to the requirement for mixed patrols. Senegal claims that Guinea did not inform it of the decision to shut down the border.

<sup>23</sup> RFI, 8 Apr 2021

<sup>24</sup> RFI, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>25</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>26</sup> RFI, 21 Jun 2021, APS, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>27</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>28</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>29</sup> Africa Guinée, 12 Jun 2021

<sup>30</sup> Africa Guinée, 12 Jun 2021

<sup>31</sup> Jeune Afrique, 26 Feb 2021

<sup>32</sup> Jeune Afrique, 26 Feb 2021

<sup>33</sup> Africa Guinée, 12 Jun 2021

<sup>34</sup> Jeune Afrique, 26 Feb 2021

<sup>35</sup> Jeune Afrique, 30 Mar 2021

<sup>36</sup> Jeune Afrique, 30 Mar 2021

While Guinea reopened its border with Sierra Leone in February, Guinea's security and civil protection minister **Albert Damantang** and defence minister Diané had been holding talks with Senegal's defence minister since March, with the aim of finding a solution to reopening the border.<sup>37</sup>

ECOWAS issued a statement expressing its satisfaction with the decision taken by the two parties, noting it was characterised by the spirit of "*solidarity and openness*".<sup>38</sup> ECOWAS also stated that it hoped Guinea would similarly reopen its 324-km border with Guinea-Bissau.<sup>39</sup> This appears unlikely, as Embaló has accused Condé of unilaterally deciding to close the border.<sup>40</sup> During the conference, Embaló said he would not allow any of his ministers to sign an agreement similar to the one between Guinea and Senegal.<sup>41</sup>

### Condé inaugurates 125 km Dapilan-Santou railway

President Condé inaugurated the 125 km **Dapilan-Santou** railway in the **Kolaboui** area in **Boké** region on 16 June.<sup>42</sup> The railway will initially be used solely for the transport of iron ore as part of the **Boké-Boffa** project. **Chinese-Singaporean** consortium **SMB Winning** fully financed and carried out the \$700m project, while **China Railways Construction Group** undertook the construction.<sup>43</sup> The railway traverses Boké and **Kindia** regions and will connect the deposits of **Santou II** and **Houda** in **Télémele** to the river terminal of Dapilon in Koalbouï sub-prefecture.<sup>44</sup> Condé praised the rapid completion of the project, whose construction began on 29 March 2019, as well as Guinea's ability to work with international partners, which he said was a testimony to the country's peaceful environment. Condé noted that these kinds of projects will enable Guinea to progress and develop.<sup>45</sup>

Mines and geology minister **Abdoulaye Magassouba**, SMB Winning CEO **Sun Xiushu**, company chairperson **Fadi Wazni** and SMB director general **Frédéric Bouzigues** were also present at the commissioning ceremony. Wazni noted that local partners were involved in the undertaking and completion of the railway.<sup>46</sup> Xiushu described the railway as part of the "*win-win approach*" that his firm has adopted for its Guinea operations and

*"... a desire to contribute to the growth of the Guinean mining industry and economic development".<sup>47</sup>*

The Dapilan-Santou railway forms part of the \$3 billion Boké-Boffa bauxite project, which will see the construction of an alumina refinery, subject to the conclusion of feasibility studies as well as the establishment of an agricultural growth corridor along the railway.<sup>48</sup> The railway was developed using the **Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT)** model, with the Guinean government acquiring ownership of the infrastructure in 33 years.<sup>49</sup> While it will initially be used exclusively to transport ore, in the longer term it will also transport other goods.<sup>50</sup> The creation of a platform to promote agricultural activities alongside mining-related projects is a unique project that SMB is set to undertake during the construction of the 650-km **Transguinean** railway.<sup>51</sup>

Guinea is in the midst of a mining boom. In November, the **World Bank** reported that Guinea's bauxite production had increased from 59.5m tonnes in 2018 to 70m tonnes in 2019, making Guinea

<sup>37</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>38</sup> APS, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>39</sup> APS, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>40</sup> RFI, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>41</sup> RFI, 21 Jun 2021

<sup>42</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>43</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 16 Jun 2021, Jeune Afrique, 4 Feb 2019

<sup>44</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>45</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>46</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>47</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>48</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>49</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>50</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

<sup>51</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021

the world's third largest producer of bauxite (see *ARC Guinea Briefing December 2020*).<sup>52</sup> This has been due in large part to the activities of **Société Minière de Boke (SMB)**, SMB Winning's Guinean subsidiary.<sup>53</sup> SMB is set to undertake the exploitation of the **Simandou** iron ore megaproject, regarded as one of the largest iron ore deposits in the world. However, lack of transport infrastructure due to decades of non-investment by successive governments is a major challenge that Guinea needs to overcome in order to capitalise on its current mining boom. The construction of the Dapilan-Santou railway is thus a welcome development. The construction of the 650-km Transguinean railway as part of the Simandou iron ore project is further proof that Guinea is attempting to remedy its infrastructural deficiency to maximise its mining sector.<sup>54</sup>

### Guinea extends health state of emergency by 30 days ...

President Condé in a nationally televised address on 26 May announced the extension of the national health state of emergency for an additional 30 days, noting that the wearing of protective face masks and hand washing remain compulsory in Guinea's fight to curb the spread of **Covid-19**.<sup>55</sup> However, Condé reduced the curfew timeframe, which now runs from 12am-4am, encouraging Guineans to adhere to the restrictive measures and get vaccinated against Covid-19 in order to experience a quicker return to normal life.<sup>56</sup>

The **Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire** (national health security agency) reports that as of 21 June, 356,928 individuals had received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, while 135,127 had obtained a second dose, since the national vaccination campaign kicked off.<sup>57</sup> As of 23 June, Guinea had recorded 23,579 positive cases of Covid-19 in its population of roughly 13.5 million, with 22,579 recoveries and 168 deaths since confirming its first case on 12 March 2020.<sup>58</sup>

### ... and declares an end to the Ebola virus outbreak

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, in tandem with the Guinean government, officially declared the end of Guinea's **Ebola** virus outbreak on 19 June, during a ceremony in the city of **Nzérékoré** in the south-west **Guinée Forestière** region, the epicentre of Ebola cases.<sup>59</sup> This was Guinea's first Ebola outbreak since 2016.<sup>60</sup> Since the Ebola outbreak was officially acknowledged on 16 February (see *ARC Guinea Briefing February 2021*), 16 cases were recorded with 12 deaths, a significantly lower figure than the estimated 2,500 Guineans who died during the 2013-2016 outbreak, although WHO officials suggest the latter figure might be under recorded.<sup>61</sup>

Health minister **Rémy Lamah** said Guinean authorities had handled the latest Ebola outbreak better than the 2013-2016 outbreak. WHO **Africa** regional officer Dr **Tierno Baldé** noted that the availability of new drugs and better facilities, as well as a quicker response, had enabled Guinea to deal with the Ebola outbreak in a matter of months.<sup>62</sup> The health ministry had ordered 24,000 Ebola vaccines and administered 10,000 doses.<sup>63</sup> The organisation of awareness campaigns assisted in informing the population about the presence and dangers of Ebola.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Agence Ecofin, 26 Nov 2020

<sup>53</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>54</sup> Agence Ecofin, 16 Jun 2021 and 6 Nov 2020

<sup>55</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 27 May 2021

<sup>56</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 27 May 2021

<sup>57</sup> ANSS Twitter account

<sup>58</sup> ANSS website

<sup>59</sup> RFI, 19 Jun 2021

<sup>60</sup> Jeune Afrique, 19 Jun 2021

<sup>61</sup> Jeune Afrique, 19 Jun 2021

<sup>62</sup> RFI, 19 Jun 2021

<sup>63</sup> RFI, 19 Jun 2021 and 20 June 2021

<sup>64</sup> RFI, 19 Jun 2021

## Planner

Oct 2021 **Montpellier (France)** France-Afrique Summit  
 (Date TBA due to Covid-19) **Conakry (Guinea)** Transform Africa Conference;  
 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** Guinea Investment Forum  
 2026 **Conakry (Guinea)** Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project;

## Chronology

20 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Aminata.com*. Defence minister **Mohamed Diané** and his Senegalese counterpart sign a military cooperation agreement that will permit the reopening of their borders, following Guinea's decision to close it in November;

19 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. Guinea and the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** officially declare an end to the **Ebola** virus outbreak that commenced in February;

16 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. President **Alpha Condé** inaugurates the 125-km **Dapilon-Santou** railway, which cost an estimated \$700m and was built by **Chinese-Singaporean-Guinean consortium SMB-Winning**;

14 Jun 2021 **(West Africa)** *Reuters*. **France's** President **Emmanuel Macron** invites the **United States** and **South Africa** to provide military forces for a **West African** counter-terrorism effort;

10 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** will allocate \$23m to Guinea to support local governance and capacity building in the health system;

9 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. President **Alpha Condé** reiterates his intention to facilitate the creation of 100,000 female and youth entrepreneurs during his six-year mandate;

2 Jun 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. During a meeting with prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**, **France-based TotalEnergies'** marketing director for **Africa, Stanislas Mittelman**, says the firm will invest \$40m-\$50m in developing and upgrading service stations across Guinea;

31 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Mining Review Africa*. The **World Bank** has approved a \$65m loan from the **International Development Association (IDA)** to the Guinean government for its **Natural Resources, Mining and Environmental Management Project**;

27 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. A 25-year contract has been signed between **United Kingdom-based InfraCo Africa** and state-owned electricity provider **Electricité de Guinée (EDG)** for the former to build the 40 MW **Khoumaguéli** solar plant;

27 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** president **Cellou Dalein Diallo** says he intends to lodge a complaint against the Guinean government at **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice** to contest the travel ban placed on him;

27 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** extends Guinea's health state of emergency for an additional 30 days;

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