

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing April 2023

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#### Guinea Summary 25 April 2023

*Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya (2021-present) hosts Rwanda's President Paul Kagame (2000-present) from 17-19 April. The two leaders sign a series of agreements intended to foster cooperation in various areas while working to deepen existing relations in the areas of security, agriculture, mining and culture. The visit underlines the possibility that Guinea will turn to Rwanda for assistance if it experiences an increased jihadi threat. French foreign ministry state secretary for development Chrysoula Zacharopoulou arrives in Conakry on 18 April, shortly after Kagame's departure, to accompany the French ambassador and other officials to discuss how France will support Guinea in its transition back to civilian rule. Conseil national de la transition (CNT) (national transitional council) president Dansa Kourouma leads a delegation to attend the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) spring meetings in Washington DC (United States) between 10 and 16 April. Several international institutions and the US affirm financial and technical support for the return to civilian rule.*

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#### Rwanda and Guinea deepen ties ...

Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** (2021-present) hosted **Rwanda's** President **Paul Kagame** (2000-present) from 17-19 April. The two signed a series of agreements intended to foster cooperation in various areas while working to deepen existing relations in security, agriculture, mining and culture.<sup>1</sup> During the visit, Doumbouya expressed his respect for Rwanda and what it has achieved since the 1994 genocide, noting in a presidential statement that he wants to be inspired by the Rwandan model.<sup>2</sup>

The two leaders also attended the inauguration of the **Kagbelen Bridge**, named after Kagame. Kagame said he hopes Rwanda will be able to share its expertise with Guinea.<sup>3</sup> Government spokesperson **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** noted that since the military junta **Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD)** seized power in September 2021, it has sent several ministers and government directors to learn how Rwanda's governance structures work.<sup>4</sup>

Kagame, who also visited **Benin** and **Guinea-Bissau**, notably extended an offer of military aid to Benin to help push back against jihadist threats that have spilt over from neighbouring countries, including **Burkina Faso**.<sup>5</sup> Rwanda already has a military presence in **Mozambique** and **Central African Republic** and is pushing to be seen as a reliable military power on the continent. While Guinea has remained relatively untouched by the threat of insurgency, its ongoing rule by a military junta, general instability in the region and other issues such as maritime insecurity, transnational organised crime and trafficking increase the likelihood of rising insecurity, and Guinea is expected to turn to Rwanda to help increase its security capabilities.<sup>6</sup>

These deals are not without benefits for Rwanda. One of the signed cooperation agreements focuses on Rwanda-based entities extracting gold in Guinea, for processing in Rwandan gold refineries, with

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<sup>1</sup> APA News, 17 Apr 2023

<sup>2</sup> Africa News, 18 Apr 2023

<sup>3</sup> Vision Guinee, 20 Apr 2023

<sup>4</sup> Vision Guinee, 19 Apr 2023

<sup>5</sup> The New Times, 19 Apr 2023

<sup>6</sup> The East African, 23 Apr 2023

Rwanda deriving much of the economic benefit.<sup>7</sup> Rwanda's military diplomacy approach in **Africa** has also been supported by **France**, which followed up Kagame's visit with one of its own (see below).

### ... as France extends offers of support to Guinea

French foreign ministry state secretary for development **Chrysoula Zacharopoulou** arrived in Guinean capital **Conakry** on 18 April, shortly after President Kagame's departure. Zacharopoulou accompanied the French ambassador and other officials to discuss how France can and will support Guinea in its transition back to civilian rule. In a press conference on 20 April, Zacharopoulou noted that her visit comes at an important time in the country's transition, given the region's fragile political and security state.<sup>8</sup>

Zacharopoulou met with the ruling military junta CNRD and representatives of political parties and civil society, spreading the message of inclusive dialogue and respect for the agreements signed with the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the wider international community.<sup>9</sup> She also addressed questions regarding the **United States (US)** State Department's report on human rights abuses in Guinea, saying she had clearly expressed France's position on these subjects and that France remains committed to the promotion of human rights.<sup>10</sup> Government spokesperson Ousmane Gaoual Diallo confirmed that the junta was receptive to Zacharopoulou's visit and wished to expand cooperation into other agreements while re-visiting current agreements in the areas of infrastructure, education, health and the fight against terrorism.<sup>11</sup>

The US, **Russia**, **China** and France have been sparring for increased influence on the continent amid a recent pushback in the **West African** region against French influence. While Guinea has thus far refrained from cutting ties with international partners, Burkina Faso and Mali have both expelled French military forces and diplomats.

The timing of the visit underscores France's new approach to diplomacy in Africa – "*leading from behind*".<sup>12</sup> France has adopted the strategy of supporting Rwanda, allowing African countries to turn to fellow African countries for assistance. France has been one of the largest financial contributors to the **Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)** and reportedly promoted the idea of funding, alongside the **European Union**, the RDF's deployment in **Mozambique**.

African countries facing crises have become the target of influence jockeying by international powers, and Guinea appears to be no exception. While China has economic interests in Guinea through the **Simandou** iron-ore deposit, Russia has not been a partner of choice for Doumbouya despite its proximity under former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021). However, in the wake of France's charm, Russia could step up its diplomatic efforts with Guinea amid continuing jockeying.<sup>13</sup>

### Guinea attends IMF and World Bank meetings

**Conseil national de la transition (CNT)** (national transitional council) president Dr **Dansa Kourouma** led a delegation to attend the **World Bank** and **International Monetary Fund's (IMF)** spring meetings in **Washington DC** (US) between 10 and 16 April. The World Bank announced that it would lend \$81m to Guinea for the implementation of local governance projects and committed to holding a round table on the water and sanitation sector in Guinea between 10 and 12 May, with Guinea seeking additional financing of \$200m for projects in this sector.<sup>14</sup>

Kourouma met with several officials from the IMF, World Bank, the US and the **National Democratic Institute (NDI)**, which is supported by the **United States Agency for International Development**

<sup>7</sup> DW, 19 Apr 2023

<sup>8</sup> Africa News, 20 Apr 2023

<sup>9</sup> Africa Guinee, 20 Apr 2023

<sup>10</sup> Africa Guinee, 20 Apr 2023

<sup>11</sup> Vision Guinee, 19 Apr 2023

<sup>12</sup> The East African, 23 Apr 2023

<sup>13</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>14</sup> Vision Guinee, 17 Apr 2023

**(USAID).** These institutions all expressed their support for the return to civilian rule in Guinea, committing either expertise or financial assistance to help the transition. Overall, the trip seems to have been a success for Kourouma, who obtained support for the transition and opened Guinea up to support from international partners. Compared to Burkina Faso and Mali, which have both seen coups in recent years, Guinea is faring far better. By remaining more neutral in its relations with France and other countries, Guinea is likely to be more successful in its return to civilian rule.

## Planner

2025 **Guinea** General elections

31 March 2025 **Conakry (Guinea)** Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project;

## Chronology

24 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** dismisses **Ismael Keita**, director of military intelligence, citing gross negligence;

17 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *APA News*. **Rwanda's** President **Paul Kagame** pays a working visit to Guinea at the invitation of Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya**, aimed at deepening relations and strengthening economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in the security, agriculture, mining and cultural sectors;

17 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. **World Bank** agrees to lend \$81m to Guinea for governance projects during the World Bank and **International Monetary Fund's** spring meetings;

12 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa News*. Guinean navy seizes 1.5 tonnes of cocaine from a ship flying the **Sierra Leonean** flag;

10 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. **Electricité de Guinée (EDG)** management confirms it has ended its contract with **Turkish** energy company **Karpowership** for its **Karadeniz Powership İbrahim Bey** floating power plant, which was costing the state \$4m per month despite not being in operation since November;

10 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Prime minister **Bernard Gomou** launches extension and renovation works on **Ahmed Sékou Touré** airport in Conakry at a cost of \$217.9m, with a goal of accommodating three million passengers a year;

7 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. Agriculture minister **Mamoudou Nagnalen** announces the purchase of 350 tractors and 70,000 tonnes of fertiliser to help farmers across the country impacted by the **Covid-19** pandemic and conflict in **Ukraine**;

4 Apr 2023 **Geneva (Switzerland)** *Jeune Afrique*. Geneva appeal and review court confirms the conviction of **Israeli-billionaire Beni Steinmetz** for influencing the granting of mining rights to **Simandou** via corrupt practices;

3 Apr 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *APA News*. **United States** embassy in Guinea launches a countdown to the return to civilian rule on its website, which foreign affairs minister **Morissanda Kouyaté** calls "unacceptable";

30 Mar 2023 **Kankan (Guinea)** *RFI*. Residents of **Kankan** launch protests against a lack of electricity during the Ramadan period;

29 Mar 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. **United Kingdom**-headquartered non-governmental organisation **Amnesty International** claims in its 2022/2023 annual report that Guinea has violated several human rights;

28 Mar 2023 **Ankara (Turkey)** *Vision Guinee*. Foreign affairs minister **Morissanda Kouyaté** meets his Turkish counterpart, **Mevlut Cavusoglu**, affirming ties despite former president **Alpha Condé** remaining in exile in Turkey;

27 Mar 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. **United States** identifies Guinea as a priority partner in the **US Strategy for Preventing Conflict and Promoting Stability (SPCPS)** and will implement programmes in Guinea that will complement the SPCPS;

27 Mar 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. The September 2009 massacre trial is suspended after lawyers announce the government has not paid them at all since the trial started in September;

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