

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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The Cour Constitutionnelle (constitutional court) confirms President Alpha Condé (2010-present) as the winner of the 18 October presidential election. Condé obtained 59.9% of votes in the first round of the contest while opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG) leader Cellou Dalein Diallo received 33.49%. The UFDG's refusal to acknowledge the results has led to violence, in which the government estimates that 21 people have died, while the opposition claims 46 have died. The government has issued arrest warrants against opposition civil society leaders on charges of instigating the electoral violence. The cabinet has ratified two rail and port infrastructure agreements related to the exploitation of blocks 1 and 2 of the Simandou iron ore project.

President Alpha Condé elected for third presidential term ...

President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) has emerged victorious in the 18 October presidential elections, obtaining 59.9% of votes cast in the first round.¹ The election and its aftermath have been marred by violence and electoral challenges, particularly from the opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**, which has refused to accept the election results.² This will perpetuate the socio-political crisis that has bedeviled **Guinea** since 2018 and hamper the start of Condé's already controversial third presidential term.³

Condé's win came as no surprise, as he was widely regarded as the favourite amongst the 12 presidential candidates.⁴ The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission) declared his victory on 24 October,⁵ which the **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) confirmed on 7 November.⁶ UFDG candidate and party president **Cellou Dalein Diallo** was runner-up with 33.49% of votes.⁷ Diallo faced Condé for a third time, having lost to him in the 2010 and 2015 elections.⁸ Diallo had initially decided to boycott the polls, only to confirm his candidature shortly before the deadline set by CENI (see *ARC Briefing Guinea September 2020*).

The lead-up to the election saw anti-government protests opposing Condé's decision to submit a new constitution to a referendum, which would allow him to pursue a third presidential mandate, as well as his eventual decision to run for a third term. The protests, coordinated by the opposition parties and civil society consortium **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, failed to prevent the 86-year-old Condé from declaring himself a candidate for the ruling **Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel)** (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Oct 2019-Oct 2020*).

Election campaigns across the country were characterised by violence, acts of intimidation and allegations of use of hate speech by supporters of the two leading political parties (see *ARC Briefing Guinea October 2020*). The UFDG suspended its party meetings after an army colonel was killed in the

¹ Jeune Afrique, 7 Nov 2020

² GuinéeNews.org, 27 Oct 2020

³ ARC Guinea analyst

⁴ GuinéeNews.org, 18 Oct 2020

⁵ GuinéeNews.org, 24 Oct 2020

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 7 Nov 2020

⁷ GuinéeNews.org, 7 Nov 2020

⁸ RFI, 18 Oct 2020

Kindia area, 130 km north of the capital **Conakry**, on 16 October, during the final day of campaigning.⁹ **United Nations (UN)** secretary general **Antonio Guterres**, through his spokesperson **Stéphane Dujamric**, called for peaceful and inclusive elections and for security forces to act responsibly during the elections.¹⁰

Fuelling the tense situation, Diallo claimed electoral victory on 20 October before the final results were announced, stating he had obtained 52.57% of votes compared to Condé's 39.24%.¹¹ Diallo's claims were supported by the **Alliance Nationale pour l'Alternance Démocratique (ANAD)**, a consortium of opposition parties that support the UFDG.¹² Following Diallo's declaration, security forces were deployed outside his residence in Conakry, effectively placing him under house arrest.¹³ Territorial administration minister **General Bourema Condé** announced the army had been deployed to help the other state security agencies maintain security and order.¹⁴ **United Kingdom-**based non-governmental organisation **Amnesty International** has accused Guinean security forces of using live ammunition against opposition protesters.¹⁵ The government estimates that 21 people have died as a result of electoral violence, while the opposition claims the death toll is 46.¹⁶

A tripartite **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, **African Union (AU)** and **United Nations (UN)** diplomacy mission arrived in Conakry on 27 October to meet political stakeholders in an effort to defuse the conflict.¹⁷ The delegation met with Condé and Diallo as well as members of the Constitutional Court, CENI and the ambassadors of the **European Union (EU)**, **France** and the **United States (US)** to Guinea.¹⁸ The delegation condemned the violence and called for all parties to engage in inclusive dialogue.¹⁹ Diallo's house arrest ended on 28 October and police also released UFDG vice presidents **Fodé Ousso Fofana** and **Kalemndou Yansané** from custody.²⁰

In confirming Condé's victory on 7 November, the constitutional court reported the election participation as 79.51%.²¹ The court acknowledged there had been irregularities in the locality of **Fria**, but not significant enough to alter results.²² Diallo denounced the court's ruling, stating that acceptance of the decision would be tantamount to renouncing his belief in fair, equitable and transparent procedure as the best way to attain power.²³ FNDC head of planning and strategy **Sékou Koundouno** called the election "*illegal and illegitimate*" and described Condé's re-election as a "*constitutional coup*".²⁴

The government has begun to crack down on opposition and civil society members it claims were responsible for violence during the elections.²⁵ **Tribunal de Première Instance (TPI) de Dixinn** (Conakry) (court of first instance) prosecutor **Sidy Souleymane Nidiaye** said on 12 November that 137 individuals had been arrested while several opposition and civil society members were being "*actively sought*" for their alleged role in electoral violence, specifically the possession of weapons.²⁶ Those arrested include UFDG vice president and former **Banque Centrale de Guinée (BCG)** (central

⁹ RFI, 16 Oct 2020

¹⁰ UN News, 17 Oct 2020

¹¹ Aminata.com, 21 Oct 2020

¹² Jeune Afrique, 21 Oct 2020

¹³ Aminata.com, 21 Oct 2020

¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 21 Oct 2020

¹⁵ RFI, 26 Oct 2020

¹⁶ RFI, 7 Nov 2020

¹⁷ RFI, 25 Oct 2020

¹⁸ GuinéeNews.org, 28 Oct 2020

¹⁹ GuinéeNews.org, 28 Oct 2020

²⁰ Aminata.com, 28 Oct 2020

²¹ GuinéeNews.org, 7 Nov 2020

²² GuinéeNews.org, 7 Nov 2020

²³ RFI, 7 Nov 2020

²⁴ RFI, 7 Nov 2020

²⁵ RFI, 12 Nov 2020

²⁶ Jeune Afrique, 13 Nov 2020

bank) governor **Cherif Bah**, UFDG political adviser **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** and ANAD president **Bah Abdoulaye**.²⁷

... as the international community responds

The results of the presidential election have met a mixed response from the international community. **European Commission** vice president **Josep Borell** said the EU “*doubted the credibility of the final election results*”,²⁸ while the French foreign affairs ministry (**Quai d’Orsay**) released a statement expressing concern about the non-consensual nature of the electoral register and questioning the credibility and transparency of the polls.²⁹ The US, through its embassy in Conakry, also expressed doubt about the validity of results.³⁰ All three, including the EU sub-commission for human rights, condemned the electoral violence and expressed support for the ECOWAS-led tripartite mission and organisation of inclusive dialogue.³¹

Condé responded to the electoral criticism stating that Guinea “*will not accept orders from other countries*”.³² During Condé’s presidency Guinea has consolidated its economic and political connections with **China, Russia, Turkey** and the **Gulf** states, making the influence of Western powers less relevant.³³ ECOWAS commission chairperson **Jean-Claude Brou** congratulated Condé for his “*brilliant re-election*” in a further sign that Guinea’s regional allies are ready to lend their political and diplomatic support despite the criticism from Western countries.³⁴

Next steps for Condé and the opposition

Condé is likely aware, that as the first president of Guinea’s fourth republic, he faces a multitude of tasks to deal with immediately.³⁵ Establishing rapprochement with the opposition will be necessary for him to peacefully carry out his presidential mandate. Condé has also promised to work hard to tackle corruption.³⁶ Condé stated in a nationally broadcast speech following the constitutional court’s confirmation of his victory on 7 November that corruption would not be tolerated and added that “*Guinean people need to profit from the country’s riches*”.³⁷ Fostering economic development and improving the livelihoods of women and youth were key themes of Condé’s election campaign.

The opposition will struggle to mobilise effectively against the ruling coalition. The decision to boycott the March legislative elections caused the UFDG to lose 37 parliamentary seats and the **Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR)** 10 seats (see *ARC Briefing Guinea April 2020*). In a sign of appeasement, **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Amadou Damaro Camara** has suggested the possibility of dissolving the legislature in order to give the UFDG an opportunity for parliamentary representation.³⁸ The UFDG has also lost support from fellow opposition parties and organisations. Elements within the FNDC criticised the UFDG’s decision to participate in presidential elections. The opposition will need to adopt a new mobilisation strategy, as protests and electoral participation clearly were not effective in dislodging the ruling coalition.³⁹

²⁷ Jeune Afrique, 13 Nov 2020

²⁸ GuinéeNews.org, 27 Oct 2020

²⁹ GuinéeNews.org, 28 Oct 2020

³⁰ GuinéeNews.org, 28 Oct 2020

³¹ GuinéeNews.org, 28 Oct 2020

³² GuinéeNews.org, 29 Oct 2020

³³ ARC Guinea analyst

³⁴ MediaGuinée24, 10 Nov 2020

³⁵ ARC Guinea analyst

³⁶ GuinéeNews.org, 7 Nov 2020

³⁷ GuinéeNews.org, 7 Nov 2020

³⁸ Jeune Afrique, 3 Nov 2020

³⁹ ARC Guinea analyst

Agreements for Simandou iron ore project infrastructure get green light

The council of ministers (cabinet) on 5 November ratified two rail and port infrastructure agreements related to the exploitation of blocks 1 and 2 of the **Simandou** iron ore mega project.⁴⁰ The **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) ratified the agreements in June (see *ARC Briefing Guinea June 2020*).⁴¹ In terms of the agreements, a consortium led by Chinese-Singaporean **SMB Winning** along with China-based aluminium producer **Shandong Weiqao**, French-Guinean **United Mining Supply (UMS)** and China-based **Yantai Port Group**, will build and develop the 650-674 km **Transguinean** railway from Simandou (southeast) to **Matakong**, which will provide passenger services, and transport minerals and agricultural products.⁴² A deep-water seaport will be constructed at Matakong in **Forécariah** prefecture, 50 km south of Conakry, with a handling capacity of 80 million tonnes per year. The private developers will transfer ownership of the port to the state after managing it for 35 years.⁴³

SMB Winning notes it will finance half of the first phase of railway construction with equity and the remainder with credit.⁴⁴ The overall cost of the projects is estimated at \$16 billion, of which \$5.5 billion will be allocated to railway infrastructure, \$1.5 billion for construction of mine equipment and installations, and \$1 billion for port infrastructure.⁴⁵ The second phase of the project budgets \$7 billion for expanding mine capacity, doubling the railway and port size, and building a steel plant.⁴⁶ The project is expected to create 30,000 direct jobs and 65,000 indirect jobs in the construction phase.⁴⁷

Mines and geology minister **Abdoulaye Magassouba** expressed satisfaction about the imminent start of the project stating “*We finally have hopes of realising this old dream*”.⁴⁸ The Simandou deposit has an estimated 2 billion tonnes of high-grade iron ore. Simandou could see the production of 100m tonnes of iron ore per year, which would make Guinea the third largest iron ore producer in the world after **Australia** and **Brazil**.⁴⁹ Magassouba expects the project will generate \$15.5 billion in revenue during its 25-year lifespan, when exploitation commences in 2026.⁵⁰

After years without positive development, the Simandou iron ore project has been a source of good news for the government over the past 18 months. A seven-year legal dispute between the government, former block 1 and 2 owner **Franco-Israeli** billionaire **Beny Steinmetz**, and Brazil-based miner **Vale**, was resolved in February 2019 (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March 2019*). In March, US-based media organ **Bloomberg** reported China’s **State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC)** was actively pushing for the Simandou project to go ahead.⁵¹ SASAC oversees the activities of China’s largest state owned enterprises (SOEs).⁵² SMB Winning is not waiting for support to kick-off developments related to the Simandou project, as the foundation stone for the construction of the **Morebaya** river port at **Maferiyah** in Forécariah prefecture was laid on 6 October (see *ARC Briefing Guinea October 2020*).⁵³

⁴⁰ Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴¹ S&P Global, 9 Jun 2020

⁴² Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴³ Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴⁴ Mining Weekly, 12 Nov 2020

⁴⁵ Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴⁶ Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴⁷ Agence Ecofin, 6 Nov 2020

⁴⁸ Mining Weekly, 12 Nov 2020

⁴⁹ Bloomberg, 5 March 2020

⁵⁰ Bloomberg, 5 March 2020

⁵¹ Bloomberg, 5 March 2020

⁵² Bloomberg, 5 March 2020

⁵³ Africa Guinée, 7 Oct 2020

Planner

2026 **Conakry (Guinea)** Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project;

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

Chronology

13 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. **Tribunal de Première Instance (TPI) de Dixinn** (Conakry) (court of first instance) prosecutor **Sidy Souleymane Nidiaye** says 137 individuals have been arrested and several opposition and civil society members are being “actively sought” for their alleged role in electoral violence, specifically the possession of weapons.

9 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. The opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** organises national boycott action to protest President **Alpha Condé’s** election to a third presidential term;

8 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. President **Alpha Condé** promises to fight corruption, impunity and nepotism during his upcoming term of office;

7 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** announces the arrest of 22 **Sierra Leonean** “mercenaries” on Guinean territory;

7 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) confirms President **Alpha Condé’s** victory in the 18 October presidential election with 59.90% of votes and a 79.51% voter participation rate;

6 Nov 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. Government adopts two rail and port agreements for exploitation of iron ore from **Simandou** blocks 1 and 2 by the **Chinese-Singaporean** consortium **SMB-Winning**, which will see the construction of a 650 km-679 km long railway and deep water port with a capacity of 80 million tons per year (MTPA) in **Matakang**;

31 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. President **Alpha Condé** criticises **France**, the **United States** and the **European Union (EU)** for questioning the credibility of election results, which saw him emerge victorious in the 18 October presidential elections;

27 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. An **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, **African Union (AU)** and **United Nations (UN)** tripartite delegation meets with presidential runner-up **Cellou Dalein Diallo** in a bid to reduce post-electoral tensions and calls on Guinean authorities to end Dalein Diallo’s house arrest;

26 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. **United Kingdom**-based NGO **Amnesty International** reports live ammunition was used in post-electoral violence which the government says has led to 18 deaths;

24 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission) declares President **Alpha Condé** winner of the presidential elections, after securing 59.49% of votes during the first round of the elections;

23 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Mining Weekly*. **Australia**-based **Predictive Discovery** aims to raise AUD 10.6m (\$7.5m) through an institutional placement to finance exploration activities at the **Bankan** gold project;

19 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. Violence breaks out in the capital Conakry as Guineans await the proclamation of presidential election results;

19 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** presidential candidate **Cellou Dalein Diallo** declares himself winner of elections, before the official proclamation of results;

18 Oct 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. Voting takes place in Guinea's presidential elections;

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