

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinea Summary 22 April 2020

*Guineans vote overwhelmingly in favour of adopting a new constitution in the 22 March referendum. The ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen Arc-e-Ciel (RPG Arc-en-Ciel)** secures an absolute majority in the **Assemblée Nationale** in the simultaneously held legislative elections. The enactment of the new constitution enables President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) to pursue a third term of office when his current mandate ends in October. At time of writing, Guinea has registered 761 Covid-19 cases, 164 recoveries and six deaths since the outbreak of the pandemic on its national territory. While Guinea still has a low Covid-19 mortality rate and has put in place a host of measures to prevent its spread, it is too early to ascertain whether they have been effective or not. Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** presents the government's comprehensive economic and support package worth 3,000 billion GNF (\$314.9m) as Guinea's economic growth is set to fall to 2.8%.*

Opposition boycott hands ruling party a strong majority ...

Guineans voted strongly in favour of adopting a new constitution in the 22 March constitutional referendum, held concurrently with legislative elections in which the ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen Arc-e-Ciel (RPG Arc-en-Ciel)** secured an absolute majority in the **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly).¹ The enactment of a new constitution officially enables President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) to pursue a third term of office when his current mandate ends in October, a scenario that is likely to lead to political violence in Guinea (see below). The now late (see below) president of the **Commission Electorale Nationale et Indépendante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission), **Amadou Salif Kebe**, declared the provisional results of the constitutional referendum on 27 March, reporting that 91.59% of individuals (2,856,675) voted in favour of adopting a new constitution, while 8.51% (262,185) voted against the motion.²

Voters turned out in relatively high numbers despite Guinea's main opposition parties, the **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** and the **Union des Forces Républicains (UFR)** calling on voters to boycott the double vote.³ The voter participation rate was 61.18%, equivalent to 3,168,961 voters out of the 5,179,600 who were eligible to participate.⁴ CENI had removed 2.4 million "problematic" voters from the voters' roll after a joint **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and **Francophonie** electoral register audit had brought these to CENI's attention.⁵ The **Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, a collective of opposition parties and civil society organisations to oppose the proposed constitutional change, supported the boycott.⁶ The UFDG, UFR and FNDC had held protests against the holding of elections since October, which led to an estimated 30 deaths (see *ARC Briefing Guinea November 2019-March 2020*). According to CENI communications head **Aly Bocar Samoura**, the boycott was only observed in the **Conakry** commune of **Ratoma**, a UFDG stronghold.⁷ Samoura said voter participation rates were "quite high" in the other

¹ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

² Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

³ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

⁵ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

⁷ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

four communes of Conakry as well as the regions of **Basse Cote, Haute Guinée** and **Guinée Forestière**.⁸

Despite Samoura's positive report, 12 individuals reportedly died as a result of election-related violence in Conakry.⁹ In the south-eastern border town of **Nzérékoré**, approximately 22 people were killed during inter-communal violence that took place on election day.¹⁰ Territorial administration minister **Gen. Bourema Conde** informed the public that hundreds of voting stations were vandalised and burned during elections, although he did not indicate who the perpetrators of these acts were.¹¹

After the declaration of results, former RPG Arc-en-Ciel parliamentary group president, **Amadou Damaro Camara** claimed that the will of the people had prevailed despite the violence and intimidation from opposition supporters.¹² RPG Arc-en-Ciel central committee member **Domani Doré** denounced the actions of the "*radical opposition*".¹³ However, UFDG president **Cellou Dalein Diallo** accused CENI of fabricating figures and called it "*out of question*" to accept the results.¹⁴ He said the opposition would continue to fight for the invalidation of election results.¹⁵ UFR president **Sidiya Toure** said the victory was similar to **Soviet**-era electoral scores.¹⁶

CENI proclaimed the legislative election results on 1 April, reporting that the RPG Arc-en-Ciel won 79 out of 114 available National Assembly seats.¹⁷ A total of 76 seats were required to obtain an absolute majority. In the absence of the UFDG and UFR, which had 37 and 10 parliamentary seats respectively during the previous legislative cycle, the **Union Democratique de Guinée (UDG)** becomes the largest opposition party in parliament after winning four seats (see *ARC Guinea Briefing January 2020*). UDG president **Mamadou Sylla** is now the official leader of the Guinean opposition.¹⁸

The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) validated the results of the double vote on 3 April.¹⁹ There were slight modifications to the results, with the vote in favour of the new constitution reduced to 89.76% and the participation rate lowered to 58.25%.²⁰ President Alpha Condé enacted the new constitution on 6 April, while Amadou Damaro Camara was voted president of the National Assembly on 21 April.²¹

The election results elicited a wide range of reactions from the international community. The **French** foreign affairs ministry (**Quai d'Orsay**) issued a statement on 24 March, calling into question the credibility of the election on the basis that participation was non-consensual and non-inclusive, and said security forces went beyond protecting voters and polling stations.²² This prompted Guinean foreign affairs minister **Mamadi Touré** to summon the French ambassador, **Jean-Marc Grosгурin**, to Conakry on 25 March.²³ The **United States (US) Embassy** at Conakry also issued a statement on 30 March condemning the election-day violence and calling for an independent investigation into these events.²⁴ **United Kingdom (UK)**-based NGO **Amnesty International** accused Guinean security forces and pro-government youth groups of carrying out violence and accused the police of excessive force and burying victims without performing autopsies.²⁵ US-based NGO **Human Rights Watch (HRW)**

⁸ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

⁹ Guineenews.org, 2 Apr 2020

¹⁰ RFI, 29 Mar 2020

¹¹ RFI, 27 Mar 2020

¹² Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

¹³ RFI, 29 Mar 2020

¹⁴ Le Point, 28 Mar 2020

¹⁵ France 24, 27 Mar 2020

¹⁶ Le Point, 28 Mar 2020

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 2 Apr 2020

¹⁸ Aminata.com, 14 Apr 2020

¹⁹ Aminata.com, 3 Apr 2020

²⁰ Aminata.com, 3 Apr 2020

²¹ Vision Guinée, 22 Apr 2020

²² RFI, 27 Mar 2020

²³ RFI, 27 Mar 2020

²⁴ Guineenews.org, 30 Mar 2020

²⁵ Guineenews.org, 2 Apr 2020

also accused the government and security forces of enforcing arrests and disappearances of opposition supporters on the day of the vote.²⁶

Russian foreign ministry spokesperson **Maria Zakharova** was a lone voice of support amongst election critics. Zakharova praised the organisation of the elections and denounced the acts of provocation that led to violence.²⁷ Zakharova also criticised external interference in Guinea's domestic affairs.

... as Guinea's new constitution come into effect

Guinea's new constitution changes the presidential term, which has been a source of discontent among the opposition and major civil society group since President Condé first announced the possibility of constitutional change. Article 40 of the new constitution provides that the presidential term will increase from five to six years and will be renewable once (see *ARC Briefing Guinea February 2020*).²⁸ The adoption of the new constitution will enable Condé to not only run for a third presidential term during the October 2020 elections, but possibly rule for another 12 years.

President Condé has not said definitively whether he will pursue a third presidential mandate. While his party largely supported his desire to propose a new constitution, three of his ministers resigned from cabinet posts in the months leading up to the referendum in protest against Condé's ambition to change the constitution. Guinea has a recent history of electoral violence, dating back to the February 2018 communal elections. If President Condé becomes his party's candidate for the October elections, the scale of violence is likely to be larger than in the two previous elections.

Guinea's new constitution does, however, introduce several progressive elements to improve the protection of human rights and the livelihoods of its citizens:

- Article 6 abolishes the death penalty;
- Article 23 bans female genital mutilation and forced marriage;
- Article 24 makes education free and compulsory for children up to 16 years of age.²⁹

Guinea applies state of emergency to combat Covid-19 ...

While Guinea still has a low **Covid-19** mortality rate and has put in place a host of measures to prevent its spread, it is too early to ascertain whether these measures have been effective or not. At time of writing, Guinea had registered 761 Covid-19 cases, 164 recoveries and six deaths since the outbreak of the pandemic on its national territory.³⁰ Since Guinea recorded its first case on 14 March (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March 2020*), authorities have taken several preventive health measures to curb the spread of the virus and monitor its evolution.

During a national address on 26 March, President Condé declared a national state of emergency that commenced on 27 March and entailed the closure of all land borders and places of religious worship.³¹ At the time, Guinea had registered five cases.³² The state of emergency complemented previously implemented measures which included a ban of gatherings with more than 100 people,³³ the closure of schools and the **Aéroport de Conakry** (Conakry airport), and the government's pledge to allocate 300 billion Guinean Francs (GNF) (\$31.4m) to the fight against Covid-19.³⁴ The state of emergency regulations also limited the number of passengers in a car to three, and minibus passengers to 7-10.³⁵

²⁶ Guineenews.org, 10 Apr 2020

²⁷ Jeune Afrique, 27 Mar 2020

²⁸ Jeune Afrique, 16 Feb 2020

²⁹ Jeune Afrique, 16 Feb 2020

³⁰ Vision Guinee, 22 Apr 2020

³¹ Guineenews.org, 26 Mar 2020

³² Guineenews.org, 26 Mar 2020

³³ RFI, 14 Mar 2020

³⁴ Guineenews.org, 18 Mar 2020

³⁵ Guineenews.org, 26 Mar 2020

Following a rise in the number of confirmed cases, President Condé on 30 March instituted a national curfew from 9 pm to 5 am and prohibited movement of people from Conakry, to the rest of the country without authorisation from the health ministry.³⁶ Public service ministry chief of cabinet **Mohamed Traoré** instructed all government departments to keep non-essential staff at home.³⁷ With the number of Covid-19 cases having reached 319, President Condé on 13 April extended the state of emergency to 15 May, renewable again.³⁸ Cases had been confirmed beyond the epicentre of Conakry, **Boké, Faranah, Labé and Telimélé** prefectures.³⁹ Condé announced that the wearing of masks would be compulsory from 18 April and failure to comply would lead to a 30,000 GNF (\$3) fine.⁴⁰ President Condé instructed the government to ensure the price of masks does not exceed 2,500 GNF (\$0.26).⁴¹ The closure of schools, places of worship and bars was maintained, while gatherings with more than 20 people were also prohibited.⁴²

Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** announced on 6 April the government's economic and social support plan to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak.⁴³ Kassory Fofana said screening and surveillance would be significantly increased in Conakry as well as at 34 high-risk border posts.⁴⁴ The government organised a Covid-19 sensitisation campaign in the Conakry district of **Kaloum**, in which President Condé took part.⁴⁵ The presidency stated that President Condé would carry out a similar exercise in the localities of **Coyah, Dubreka and Forecariah**.⁴⁶ President Condé subsequently created the **Conseil Scientifique de Riposte contre la maladie à Coronavirus (CSRC)** (coronavirus response scientific council).⁴⁷ The institution comprises 17 individuals who will work with the health ministry to oversee the fight against the spread of the virus.⁴⁸

High-ranking Guinean officials have been victims of the ongoing pandemic. CENI president Amadou Salif Kebe passed away from Covid-19 on 17 April, after being admitted for treatment on 14 April.⁴⁹ Kebe was last seen in public on 2 April, during the confirmation of the referendum and legislative election results (see above).⁵⁰ Government secretary general **Sekou Kourouma** was also pronounced dead from Covid-19 on 18 April in Conakry.⁵¹ Public works minister **Moustapha Niate** and security and civil protection minister **Albert Damantang Camara** both confirmed they had contracted the illness.⁵² Dr **Sakoba Keita**, the director of the **Agence Nationale de la Sécurité Sanitaire (ANSS)** (national agency for health security), which is coordinating the Covid-19 health response, has also tested positive for the virus.⁵³

Despite the relatively late confirmation of Covid-19 cases in Guinea compared to many of its regional counterparts, Guinea continues to see a gradual rise in patients. Despite its past experience with handling the 2014 **Ebola** pandemic, it is too early to tell whether the steps taken will be sufficient to manage the outbreak.

³⁶ Guineenews.org, 30 Mar 2020

³⁷ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

³⁸ Guineenews.org, 13 Apr 2020

³⁹ Guineenews.org, 13 Apr 2020

⁴⁰ Guineenews.org, 13 Apr 2020

⁴¹ Guineenews.org, 13 Apr 2020

⁴² Guineenews.org, 13 Apr 2020

⁴³ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁴⁴ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁴⁵ Guineenews.org, 9 Apr 2020

⁴⁶ Guineenews.org, 9 Apr 2020

⁴⁷ Guineenews.org, 10 Apr 2020

⁴⁸ Guineenews.org, 10 Apr 2020

⁴⁹ Guineenews.org, 17 Apr 2020

⁵⁰ Guineenews.org, 17 Apr 2020

⁵¹ Guineenews.org, 18 Apr 2020

⁵² Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵³ Vision Guinee, 22 Apr 2020

... and launches 3,000 billion GNF (\$314.9m) economic response plan

Prime minister Ibrahima Kassory Fofana presented the government's comprehensive economic and support package, worth 3,000 billion GNF (\$314.9m), on 6 April.⁵⁴ Kassory Fofana noted the plan was formulated in consultation with the **Banque Centrale de Guinée (BCG)** (Guinea's central bank) and local private sector stakeholders.⁵⁵ Kassory Fofana said 1,125 billion GNF (\$118.1m) would be allocated towards health and social related actions. The **Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (ANIES)** (national agency for economic and social inclusion) will provide 439 billion GNF (\$46m) in financial assistance to the most vulnerable citizens. This will include cash transfers to 240,000 households (an estimated 1.6 million individuals).⁵⁶ The government will take care of electricity and water bills for three months from April to June at a cost of 456 billion GNF (\$47.8m) and 24 billion GNF (\$2.5m) for electricity and water bills respectively.⁵⁷ Rents on private and public buildings are suspended from April to December, while the prices of health products and basic necessities are frozen during the pandemic.⁵⁸

With respect to measures affecting the private sector, Kossary Fofana noted that Guinea's tourism, hotel and catering domains were particularly exposed to the crisis because of international travel restrictions. The following measures aim to alleviate the economic effects of the pandemic in these domains:

- Postponement of all taxes for the tourism and hotel sector for three months;
- State to pay arrears owed to tourism and hotel industry;
- Electricity and water bill payments suspended for tourism and hotel activities;
- Bank repayments to be suspended and suspension of Value Added Tax (VAT) payments, without incurring penalties.⁵⁹

General support provisions for businesses include:

- The exemption of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from taxes and duties for three months;
- Reduction of the VAT reimbursement timeframe to two weeks;
- Acceleration of internal debt payment to businesses by government;
- Cancellation of late penalty payments for public contracts;
- Public contract arrears which were financed by bank loans to be settled;
- Creation of 50 billion GNF (\$5.2m) guarantee fund to assist SMEs with bank loans;
- An amount of 20 billion GNF (\$2.1m) to support specific economic interest groups.⁶⁰

Kossary Fofana noted that Guinea's gross domestic product (GDP) will decline by 1% as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶¹ Guinea's inflation, which according to the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** stood at 9.7% in 2019,⁶² will increase, while the budget deficit will increase from 3.4% to 6% of GDP due to the increase in health and human security expenditure.⁶³ Kassory Fofana said that, as a result of the slowdown in economic activity, particularly from the mining sector, Guinea will lose tax revenue, which could have notable consequences on the population's standard of living.⁶⁴ Guinea's economic growth is also set to dip, due to the impending economic downturn. Guinea generated 6.2% growth in 2019, higher than the 5.9% projected by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.⁶⁵ The

⁵⁴ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵⁵ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵⁶ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵⁷ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵⁸ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁵⁹ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁶⁰ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁶¹ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁶² African Economic Outlook, 30 Jan 2020

⁶³ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁶⁴ Guineenews.org, 6 Apr 2020

⁶⁵ Guineenews.org, 2 Jan 2020

AfDB in its 2020 **African Economic Outlook** predicted Guinea would attain 6% growth in 2020 and 2021.⁶⁶ However, budget minister **Ismael Dioubate** has since said that growth will drop to 2.8% in 2020.⁶⁷ Despite the government's initiatives to support the most vulnerable in society, they may not be sufficient to support the estimated 60% of Guineans living in poverty.⁶⁸

The IMF reported on 1 April that Guinea faces significant downside risks as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, despite broadly satisfactory performance under the **Extended Credit Facility** (ECF) three-year economic reform programme that it adopted in December 2017.⁶⁹ The IMF provided Guinea with a \$23.5m disbursement under the ECF on 1 April. The aim of the \$170.1m programme is to support strengthening Guinea's resilience, scale-up growth-generating investment and social safety nets as well as promote private sector development.⁷⁰

Planner

(Date TBA due to Covid-19) **Conakry (Guinea)** Transform Africa Conference;
Oct 2020 **(Guinea)** Presidential elections (date to be determined)

Chronology

21 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. The **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) elects **Amadou Damaro Camara** as its new president;

20 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Creamer Media's Mining Weekly* Diversified gold producer **Nordgold Group** signs an engineering, procurement and construction agreement with **China**-based manufacturing service group **SUMEC** to design and build a 33 MW power plant at its **Lefa** mine, one of the largest gold mines in **Guinea**;

18 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Budget minister **Ismael Dioubate** announces Guinea's growth will drop to 2.8% in 2020 as result of the **Covid-19** outbreak;

17 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. **Commission Electorale Nationale et Independante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission) president **Salif Kebe** passes away after contracting **Covid-19**;

13 Apr 2020 **Washington D.C (United States)** *IMF Communique*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** managing director **Kristalina Georgieva** approves immediate debt service relief for 25 IMF member countries including **Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea, Mali and Niger**;

13 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** extends Guinea's health emergency until 15 May;

9 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Budget minister **Ismaël Dioubaté** says local petroleum prices will not fall despite the fall in global oil prices;

8 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Australia**-based miner **Predictive Discovery** has signed an agreement to acquire up to 100% interest in four gold exploration permits in **Koundian** in the **Sirigui Basin**;

6 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** enacts Guinea's new constitution which will allow him to pursue a third presidential term when his current term ends in October;

6 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**

⁶⁶ African Economic Outlook, 30 Jan 2020

⁶⁷ *Guineenews.org*, 18 Apr 2020

⁶⁸ *Guineenews.org*, 17 Jan 2020

⁶⁹ IMF, 1 Apr 2020

⁷⁰ IMF, 1 Apr 2020

announces a 3,000 billion GNF (\$315.1m) economic support plan to offset the socio-economic effects of the **Covid-19** pandemic;

2 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea) Jeune Afrique**. The **Commission Electorale Nationale et Independante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission) announces the ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple Guineen Arc-en-Ciel (RPG Arc-en-Ciel)** won 79 of 114 seats in the 22 March legislative elections, which Guinea's major opposition parties boycotted;

1 Apr 2020 **Conakry (Guinea) IMF Communique**. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** grants Guinea a \$23.5m **Extended Credit Facility (ECF)** loan in line with Guinea's economic reform agenda;

27 Mar 2020 **Conakry (Guinea) RFI**. The **Commission Electorale Nationale et Independante (CENI)** (independent electoral commission) declares 91.59% of voters voted in favour of adopting the new constitution during the 22 March constitutional referendum;

26 Mar 2020 **Conakry (Guinea) RFI**. President **Alpha Condé** announces the application of a national state of emergency to mitigate the spread of the **Covid-19** pandemic;

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