

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinean judicial authorities order the release of 31 individuals who were arrested and detained in the aftermath of October's post-electoral violence but leading members of civil society and opposition consortium Front National Pour La Défense De La Constitution (FNDC) remain in detention without trial. The European Union (EU) has placed sanctions on former president Captain Moussa Dadis Camara (2008-2009) and four associates for their role in the 2009 Conakry Stadium massacre that resulted in 157 deaths. EU MPs have submitted a list of 25 high-ranking Guinean officials, including prime minister Ibrahima Kassory Fofana and nine cabinet ministers, to the EU for the possible imposition of sanctions. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) completes its review mission to Guinea and projects 5.2% economic growth for Guinea in 2021. The Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire (ANSS) (national health security agency) says it has administered at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to 157,903 Guineans amid decreasing Covid-19 infection rates.

Government drops election-related charges against 31...

In an apparent sign of government appeasement, **Guinean** judicial authorities have ordered the release of 31 individuals who were arrested on charges of alleged involvement in the post-electoral violence following the October 2020 presidential elections.¹ However, opposition and civil society groups and leaders claim their release is a move by the government to gain credibility in the international community, accusing the government of meddling in the judicial process and calling for the release of scores of opposition supporters who remain imprisoned. **Mohamed Traoré**, a lawyer representing the arrested opposition supporters, suggested their only crime was residing in neighbourhoods with predominantly opposition support.²

Newly appointed government spokesperson **Tibou Kamara** revealed on 6 May that President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) had provided "*firm instructions*" to fast-track the treatment of files related to individuals imprisoned in relation to post-electoral violence.³ Kamara noted that although the executive wished to see a quick resolution to these cases, the judiciary is independent and presiding magistrates have the autonomy and authority to conduct the judicial process in the manner they deem necessary.⁴ Kamara nonetheless pledged that the government would uphold the personal rights and dignity of prisoners:

*"As far as we are concerned, we will ensure their rights, assure respect for their dignity and also reassure ourselves that their condition of detention is respected, alongside their human rights and dignity."*⁵

Following Kamara's announcement, 31 individuals imprisoned at the **Prison Civile de Conakry** on charges stemming from the post-electoral violence, saw their cases dropped on 7 May and were released from detention.⁶ Kamara said the dropping of charges against the prisoners and their release demonstrated the independence of Guinea's judiciary system, separation of powers and rule of law.

¹ GuinéeNews.org, 7 May 2021

² Africa Guinée, 6 May 2021

³ Africa Guinée, 6 May 2021

⁴ Africa Guinée, 6 May 2021

⁵ Africa Guinée, 6 May 2021

⁶ GuinéeNews.org, 7 May 2021

Kamara called on the public to show confidence in judicial institutions, despite what he called “attempts to intimidate magistrates”.⁷

Despite Kamara’s claims of judicial independence, civil society and opposition consortium **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** says there is clear evidence that President Condé controls the judiciary.⁸ The FNDC claims that Kamara violated Article 8 of the **Code de Procédure Pénale** (penal code) in announcing the release of the prisoners, rather than the **Procureur Général** (state prosecutor). Justice ministry spokesperson **Sékou Keita**, in a statement released on 12 May, defended Kamara’s actions, saying the state prosecutor had transmitted the information to Kamara and thus no interference had taken place.⁹ Keita described the allegations as “unfounded criticism”, since no law prevents the government spokesperson from disseminating information and Kamara was simply exercising his duty to inform citizens.

A consortium of lawyers representing the detained individuals echoed the FNDC’s sentiments, accusing the government of orchestrating the release as a way to gain domestic and international credibility.¹⁰ Condé’s directive came in the wake of growing domestic and international pressure on the government over its imprisonment since October of FNDC leaders and supporters. In March, the **United States (US)** State Department’s **Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor** in its annual report accused the Guinean government and security forces of orchestrating the arbitrary arrest and detention of opposition supporters, various human rights violations and interference with the judiciary.¹¹ The allegations were in regard to protests against the 2020 March constitutional referendum and October presidential elections (see *ARC Briefing Guinea April 2021*). More recently, 32 **European Union (EU)** MPs addressed a letter on 15 April to EU High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy **Josep Borrell**, asking the EU to review its aid to Guinea in light of the deteriorating human rights situation, making particular reference to the plight of political detainees (see *ARC Briefing Guinea April 2021*).¹² International rights groups such as **France**-based **International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR)**, **United Kingdom**-based non-governmental organisation **Amnesty International** and **US**-based **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** have made similar appeals to the Guinean government.¹³

Despite the government’s apparent show of good faith, FNDC leaders **Abdoulaye Bah, Ousmane Gaoulo Diallo, Cellou Baldé, Etienne Soropogui** and **Ibrahima Chérif Bah** remain imprisoned.¹⁴ They were arrested in November on charges of manufacturing and possessing weapons of war and attacks on fundamental interests of the nation (see *ARC Guinea Briefing December 2020*). In March, their **France**-based lawyers **Ivan Terel** and **Patrick Krugman** lodged a complaint against the state of Guinea at the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice in Abuja (Nigeria)** for the alleged violation of their clients’ rights.¹⁵ Terel claimed their clients’ arrest was politically motivated and accused Guinean judicial authorities of not granting their clients the presumption of innocence, access to lawyers and a fair trial (see *ARC Guinea Briefing March 2021*).¹⁶ Although a trial date has yet to be set for the FNDC leaders, local press reports suggest they will be charged with looting, participation in an insurrectional movement, threats of violence and death as well as disturbing public order but the state will drop charges of murder, storage, transfer, manufacture, possession of and carrying illicit arms.¹⁷

⁷ GuinéeNews.org, 8 May 2021

⁸ GuinéeNews.org, 8 May 2021

⁹ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

¹⁰ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

¹¹ US Department of State, 30 Mar 2021

¹² Vision Guinée, 15 Apr 2021

¹³ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

¹⁴ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

¹⁵ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

¹⁶ France24, 13 Mar 2021

¹⁷ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

The continued detention of Guinean civil society and opposition leaders and supporters has been a major feature of the ongoing socio-political impasse in Guinea and could compromise attempts to foster dialogue between the government and the opposition.¹⁸ In a letter addressed to the EU parliament on 12 May, Borrel confirmed that the government would imminently pursue dialogue initiatives with opposition parties through the permanent framework for social and political dialogue that Condé established in January (see *ARC Guinea Briefing February 2021*).¹⁹ Condé has appointed **Fodé Bangoura**, a former minister during the presidency of Gen. **Lansana Conté** (1984-2008), as permanent secretary of the dialogue framework.²⁰

The UFDG, Guinea's most popular opposition party, has indicated it will not participate in any talks organised by the government.²¹ UFDG communication official **Joachim Baba Milimono** said the government's continued imprisonment of UFDG supporters and closure of UFDG headquarters show bad faith on the part of the government. The government's refusal to permit UFDG leaders, including Diallo and his wife **Halimatou Diallo** as well as UFDG vice president **Dr. Fodé Oussou Fofana**, from leaving the country further complicates any attempt at rapprochement.²² On 15 May, Fofana was prevented from travelling to France for medical treatment, while Diallo was refused permission to travel to **Togo** for a conference on the new **West African** currency, the **ECO**, from 26-28 May.²³ Milimono said the UFDG is not interested in engaging with the government because it has not implemented past agreements, noting the party did not want to engage in talks with regime hardliners such as territorial administration minister **Gen. Bourema Condé** and national assembly **Amadou Damaro Camara**.²⁴

... as EU sanctions government officials for human rights violations

The European Union (EU) has placed sanctions on former President **Captain Moussa Dadis Camara** (2008-2009) and four other high-ranking officials for their role in the September 2009 **Conakry Stadium** massacre, which led to an estimated 157 deaths.²⁵ Camara was head of the military transition government, the **Conseil National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (CNDD)** (national council for democracy and development) until an assassination attempt in December 2009 forced him out of power. He has since lived in exile in **Burkina Faso**.²⁶ Announcing the sanctions on 12 May, EU High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy **Josep Borrel** said the EU will review the sanctions in September.²⁷

However, Guinean officials could face further sanctions. A group of 32 EU MPs has submitted a list of 25 individuals, including prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**, nine cabinet ministers and a host of high ranking officials in Guinea's security services, to the EU for sanctions review.²⁸ The individuals are accused of having committed human rights violations and playing a significant role in events that have caused the death of 250 individuals in opposition protests since 2010.²⁹ Government spokesperson **Tibou Kamara** described the EU allegations as "*factional discourse*" and said Guinea is committed to respecting freedom and democratic rights as well as defending its institutions and national security.³⁰

In March, the EU suspended its support for the **Réforme du Secteur de Sécurité (PARSS)** (security sector reform programme) after discovering that one of the beneficiaries of the programme, state

¹⁸ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

¹⁹ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

²⁰ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

²¹ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

²² ARC Guinea analyst

²³ Africa Guinée, 15 May 2021

²⁴ Africa Guinée, 21 May 2021

²⁵ RFI, 16 May 2021

²⁶ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

²⁷ Africa Guinée, 12 May 2021

²⁸ GuinéeNews.org, 18 May 2021

²⁹ GuinéeNews.org, 18 May 2021

³⁰ Africa Guinée, 18 May 2021

security unit **Brigade de Recherche et d'Intervention (BRI)**, had committed human rights violations against Guineans (see *ARC Guinea Briefing February 2021*).³¹ Although the threat of sanctions on sitting members of cabinet could sway their approach to the country's socio-political impasse, Guinea maintains strong economic and political relations with countries such as **China, Russia, Turkey** and the **Gulf** states, all of which can provide Condé's regime with diplomatic support if sanctions are imposed.³²

IMF projects 5.2% economic growth for Guinea in 2021

Following its recent review mission from 14-28 April, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** projects that Guinea will attain 5.2% gross domestic product (GDP) economic growth in 2021, despite the continued threat of **Covid-19** and resurgence of the **Ebola** virus.³³ The IMF attributes its optimistic outlook to mining, which contributed significantly to the 7% economic growth Guinea experienced in 2020. The IMF predicts that non-mining activity, which contributes to 75% of Guinea's GDP, will only pick up fully in 2022, and encourages Guinean authorities to speed up the country's Covid-19 vaccination campaign to facilitate this economic recovery.³⁴

The IMF noted that Guinea's inflation rate is on the rise, increasing from 10.6% at the end of 2020 to the current figure of 12%, due in large part to supply disruptions caused by Covid-19. The IMF warned that rising inflation could lead to a drop in the current accounts balance, but praised Guinea for increasing its central bank reserves to \$1.3 billion. The IMF called on the government to take greater steps towards generating more domestic revenue, lauding Guinea's intention to implement digital taxation payment methods, review mining contracts and fully implement the **Code Miniéré** (mining code) in order to ensure optimum tax collection from mining firms. The IMF instructed the government to improve public investment management and take steps to phase out the electricity subsidy, which the IMF claims would allow Guinea to allocate resources towards other social welfare mechanisms.³⁵

The IMF praised the government for adhering to commitments related to the **Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)** disbursement, including the completion of an audit on Covid-19-related procurement and other reforms that aim to improve the business and regulatory environment. These reforms include the establishment of a commercial court, a one-stop-shop for investment, a land registry and strengthening the anti-corruption framework. Nevertheless, the IMF encouraged the government to pursue additional reforms, such as the adoption of a national anti-corruption strategy and an asset declaration framework.³⁶

The IMF's positive overview of Guinea's economy echoes the **African Development Bank's (AfDB) African Economic Outlook**, which estimates Guinea's growth will reach 5.6% and 5.1% in 2021 and 2022 respectively.³⁷ The development of the **Simandou** iron ore megaproject will boost mining activity, while increased energy supply due to the commissioning of the 450 MW **Souapiti** dam will also help to foster Guinea's economic growth (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March 2021*).³⁸ The government has committed to promoting commercial agriculture activity, which Kassory Fofana outlined in Guinea's general policy speech in April.³⁹ Strong investor interest in the agriculture sector was shown at the **Guinea Investment Forum (GUIF)** in February (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March*

³¹ Africa Guinée, 25 Mar 2021

³² ARC Guinea Analyst

³³ IMF, 30 Apr 2021

³⁴ IMF, 30 Apr 2021

³⁵ IMF, 30 Apr 2021

³⁶ IMF, 30 Apr 2021

³⁷ African Economic Outlook 2021, 12 Mar 2021

³⁸ African Economic Outlook 2021, 12 Mar 2021

³⁹ Jeune Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

2021),⁴⁰ while a \$100m loan agreement with the **World Bank** on 29 March also aims to support agricultural development (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March 2021*).⁴¹

Government spokesperson **Tibou Kamara** noted on 21 May the government's satisfaction with Guinea's status as the "*current African economic growth champion*".⁴² Kamara said this demonstrated the effectiveness of the government's political and economic vision, as well as Condé's Covid-19 response plan.⁴³

Covid-19 vaccine rollout continues

Guinea is rolling out the first phase of its Covid-19 vaccination programme, which began in March. The **Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire (ANSS)** (national health security agency) says the government aims to vaccinate 298,161 individuals during the first phase. As of 16 May, the ANSS had administered at least one dose of Covid vaccine to 157,903 people, while 66,776 individuals had received two doses.⁴⁴ The capital region of Conakry has seen the largest vaccine take-up, with 74,711 people having received their injections.

According to the ANSS, Guinea experienced the peak of its second wave in March, around the same time as the vaccine campaign commenced, but case totals have significantly reduced in April and May.⁴⁵ President Condé ordered the extension of the national health state of emergency by three months in February and another extension appears likely when the current state of emergency expires at the end of May.⁴⁶ Since recording Guinea's first Covid-19 case on 12 March 2020, the ANSS had confirmed 22,853 positive cases in Guinea's population of roughly 13.5 million, with 20,421 recoveries, and 161 Covid-19-related deaths as of 16 May.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Agence Ecofin, 26 Feb 2021

⁴¹ Financial Afrik, 30 Mar 2021

⁴² Vision Guinée, 22 May 2021

⁴³ Vision Guinée, 22 May 2021

⁴⁴ Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire website

⁴⁵ Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire website

⁴⁶ Africa Guinée, 26 Feb 2021

⁴⁷ Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire website

Planner

Jul 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

24 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Local judicial officials say a travel ban prevents opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** from travelling to **Togo** for a conference on the new **ECO** currency;

22 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Leading opposition party **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** has refused to participate in possible talks with President **Alpha Condé** on the grounds that several of its members and supporters have been imprisoned since the October 2020 presidential elections;

21 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. The Guinean government has granted **United Kingdom**-based **Hummingbird Resources** a mining permit to commence operations at the **Kouroussa** gold project;

21 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée 360*. President **Alpha Condé** has appointed **Fodé Bangoura**, a former minister during the presidency of Gen. **Lansana Conté** as permanent secretary of the permanent framework for political and social dialogue;

18 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Australia**-based miner **Predictive Discovery** raises \$20.7m to finance drilling activity at the **Bankan** gold project;

18 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée news.org*. **European Union (EU)** members of parliament have submitted a list of 32 high-ranking Guinean government officials, including prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** and eight cabinet ministers, to the EU for potential imposition of sanctions for their involvement in the deaths of anti-government protesters over the last decade;

15 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The **United States (US)** government has lifted travel restrictions on persons travelling to the US from Guinea, which it adopted in March following the outbreak of the **Ebola** virus in Guinea;

12 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. **European Commission** High Representative and Vice-President **Josep Borrell Fontelles** announces the **European Union (EU)** will place sanctions on five people involved in the **Conakry Stadium** massacre of 28 September 2009;

9 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africanews*. A landslide at a gold mine near **Siguiri** has killed at least 15 people;

7 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The government has released from detention 31 individuals arrested in connection with violence related to the October 2020 presidential elections, after they were found not guilty of charges related to electoral violence;

6 May 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Government spokesperson **Tibou Kamara** says President **Alpha Condé** has instructed that legal proceedings for individuals arrested for violence related to the October 2020 presidential elections should be held as soon as possible;

30 Apr 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *International Monetary Fund*. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** projects Guinea will generate 5.2% economic growth rate in 2021, following the completion of its review mission in Guinea;

29 Apr 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Media Guinée*. President **Alpha Condé** minister of state and

special adviser to the president **Tibou Kamara** as government spokesperson;

23 Apr 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** has granted €300m (\$362.1m) in financing for the energy interconnection project between the hydroelectric power stations of Guinea and **Mali** as part of the **West African** electrical energy exchange system;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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