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Guinean elite army defence unit Groupement des Forces Spéciales (GPS) commander Colonel Mamady Doumbouya overthrows President Alpha Condé (2010-2021) in a military coup. Doumbouya suspends the constitution, dissolves cabinet and the Assemblée Nationale (national assembly), and creates the Comité National du Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD), a transitional governing council, pledging to form a government of national unity. The international community has widely condemned the military takeover but will focus efforts on ensuring a smooth transition to civilian rule to avoid a recurrence of the on-going socio-political crisis in Mali. The military junta assures mining sector stakeholders that sectoral activity will not be disrupted amid uncertainty over changes it may make.

President Alpha Condé overthrown in military coup ...

Guinea's first democratically elected president, **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021), was removed from office in a military coup on 5 September.¹ Guinean elite army defence unit **Groupement des Forces Spéciales (GPS)** commander **Colonel Mamady Doumbouya** led the military takeover.² Guinea has a history of military takeovers, having experienced coups in 1984 and 2008.³ However, Condé's overthrow is the first of a sitting Guinean president and has thrown Guinea's already unstable socio-political landscape into greater uncertainty.

While Condé's overthrow came as a shock, domestic and international observers acknowledge that he had lost legitimacy since the start of his second term of office in 2015.⁴ Although it is alleged that Condé's attempts to remove Doumbouya as commander of the GPS were the catalyst for the coup,⁵ his ambitions to extend his stay in power beyond the constitutional two-term limit ultimately sealed his downfall. Restrictions on political and civil liberties, especially since 2018, characterised by rigged elections, the arrest, detention and killing of opposition leaders and supporters, as well as bans on public demonstrations and abuse of civilians by security forces, added to his unpopularity.⁶

Residents of Guinea's capital, **Conakry**, woke up to the sound of gunfire, emanating from the commune of **Kaloum**, at around 8 am on Sunday 5 September.⁷ The defence ministry issued a communiqué acknowledging that an attack had taken place at the **Sékoutourey** presidential palace, but assured the situation was under control.⁸ However, widely circulated images showed a group of armed soldiers holding the visibly tired 83-year-old Condé at gunpoint in a residential unit.⁹

The coup leader was subsequently identified as Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, who announced on state broadcaster **Radio Télévision Guinéenne (RTG)** the suspension of the constitution, and dissolution of cabinet and the **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly).¹⁰ Doumbouya informed the public of the creation of the **Comité National du Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD)**, a

¹ Vision Guinée, 5 Sep 2021

² Vision Guinée, 5 Sep 2021

³ ARC Guinea analyst

⁴ ARC Guinea analyst

⁵ TV5 Afrique, 5 Sep 2021

⁶ ARC Guinea analyst

⁷ GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

⁸ DW, 5 Sep 2021

⁹ GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

¹⁰ GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

transitional governing council, and the eventual formation of a government of national unity. Doumbouya accused the former government of financial mismanagement, excessive politicisation of public administration, poverty and endemic corruption, amongst other ills.¹¹ Doumbouya promised to end the “*personalisation of politics*”, expressing hope that all Guineans would work with the CNRD to solve the problems Guinea has faced since attaining independence from **France** in 1958.¹² Doumbouya concluded his speech by quoting former **Ghanaian** president **Jerry Rawlings** (1981-2001), who also ascended to power through a military coup, stating:

*“If the people are crushed by their elites, it is up to the army to give the people their freedom.”*¹³

Col. Mamady Doumbouya was a relatively unknown figure in Guinea’s socio-political scene until he led the 5 September military takeover.¹⁴ He is from **Kankan** in Eastern Guinea and, like Condé, is a career soldier. He served in the French foreign legion before his appointment as head of the GPS in 2018.¹⁵ Doumbouya received military training in France, **Gabon**, **Israel** and **Senegal**, but had also been stationed at military missions in **Afghanistan**, **Central African Republic** and **Côte d’Ivoire**.¹⁶ In 2018, he undertook training by the **United States (US) Army** in **Burkina Faso** of **African Special Forces**, where he befriended the leader of Mali’s August 2020 coup, **Col. Assimi Goïta**.¹⁷

Doumbouya announced that secretaries-general of ministerial departments would henceforth handle their day-to-day coordination while governors, prefects and sub-prefects were removed from their positions of responsibility.¹⁸ Regional commanders have replaced governors while local unit commanders replace prefects and sub-prefects.¹⁹ All former cabinet ministers and heads of institutions were called upon to convene at the **Palais de Peuples** (people’s palace) at 11 am on 6 September.²⁰ Doumbouya declared a travel ban had been placed on all persons summoned and asked those present to submit their passports to the military authorities.²¹ Doumbouya pledged that there would be no “*witch hunt*” against members of the former government, but that the judiciary would be expected to act “*where necessary*”.²² The high-ranking officials were permitted to leave but told to return their service vehicles the following day.²³ In addition, a nationwide curfew was imposed from 8pm to 4am.²⁴

... amid cautiously positive local reaction ...

Scenes of celebration across different parts of Conakry greeted news of the successful coup, most notably in the well-established opposition stronghold of **Bambeto**.²⁵ The opposition **Alliance Nationale pour l’Alternance Démocratique (ANAD)** described the coup as a “*day of victory for the people and failure of Condé’s regime*”.²⁶ ANAD called on the military junta to prioritise the establishment of legitimate institutions and implement reforms that could set Guinea on the path to national reconciliation, and to ensure it respects the rule of law.²⁷ Opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** said the UFDG and ANAD would work with Guinea’s new leaders.²⁸ Dalein Diallo, who finished as runner-up to Condé in the 2010,

¹¹ GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

¹² GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

¹³ GuinéeNews.org, 5 Sep 2021

¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 6 Sep 2021

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique, 6 Sep 2021

¹⁶ TV5 Afrique, 8 Sep 2021

¹⁷ TV5 Afrique, 8 Sep 2021

¹⁸ Aminata.com, 5 Sep 2021

¹⁹ Aminata.com, 5 Sep 2021

²⁰ Aminata.com, 5 Sep 2021

²¹ Jeune Afrique, 6 Sep 2021

²² Jeune Afrique, 6 Sep 2021

²³ Jeune Afrique, 6 Sep 2021

²⁴ Aminata.com, 5 Sep 2021

²⁵ TV5 Afrique, 5 Sep 2021

²⁶ DW, 6 Sep 2021

²⁷ DW, 6 Sep 2021

²⁸ DW, 7 Sep 2021

2015 and 2020 presidential contests, described the coup as “*an historic act*”.²⁹ He attributed Condé’s downfall to his violation of the constitution, which saw him undertake a controversial third term in office, as well as his abuse of the basic principles of the rule of law.³⁰ Dalein Diallo said he was confident that Doumbouya would take the necessary steps to organise free and fair elections in due course.³¹ Civil society organisation **Collectif pour la Transition en Guinée (CTG)** member **Ibrahim Keita** similarly noted that Condé undertook “*un mandat de trop*” (one mandate too many) and says he will give the CNRD “*the benefit of the doubt*”.

Two opposition heavyweights, **Union des Forces Républicains (UFR)** president **Sidiya Touré** and **Parti de l’Espoir pour le Développement National (PEDN)** leader **Lansana Kouyaté**, have also pledged support for the CNRD.³² Both individuals are former prime ministers currently living in exile in France, but said they would return to Guinea following Condé’s overthrow.³³ Touré expressed disappointment in Condé, whom he initially supported upon winning the presidency, as well as confidence in the military rulers’ ability to successfully undertake Guinea’s political transition.³⁴ Opposition **Union pour la Démocratie (UDD)** leader **Bah Oury** suggested Condé had brought the coup upon himself, by violating the constitution and committing violence against those not supporting him.³⁵

However, not all civil society and opposition organisations supported the coup. **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** coordinator **Abdourahmane Sano** expressed regret at the turn of events and said the coup could have been avoided.³⁶ The FNDC had organised anti-government protests since October 2019. **Centre d’Analyse d’Etudes Stratégique de Guinée** (Guinea centre for strategic analysis) head **Mamadou Barry** has warned the opposition and organisations such as the CTG and FNDC to remain vigilant, as the CNRD leaders are making the same declarations that former president Capt. **Moussa Dadis Camara** (2008-2009) made when he came to power in a military coup.³⁷ Sano, a former cabinet minister, nevertheless said he was satisfied that “*the dictatorship is over*”.³⁸

Doumbouya on 7 September ordered the secretary general at the justice ministry to ensure the release of all political prisoners.³⁹ Many of the 79 detainees released had been imprisoned on charges related to the violence that occurred during and after the October 2020 presidential elections,⁴⁰ including prominent UFDG leader **Bah Abdoulaye**, who was rearrested in August for criticising Condé after being granted conditional release on medical grounds in July (see *ARC Briefing Guinea July-August 2021*).⁴¹ **Mohamed Traoré**, a lawyer for several of the released individuals, welcomed the decision and said the next step would be to secure the release of soldiers who had also been unjustly detained.⁴² The new authorities have also ordered the reopening of UFDG headquarters in the Conakry district of **Dixinn**, which the previous government had closed in October 2020 and subsequently guarded by security forces.⁴³

Although Doumbouya and the CNRD have promised not to pursue a witch-hunt against members of the former regime, they are taking concerted steps to assert their control over state affairs. Military authorities announced on 9 September the temporary freeze of withdrawal operations on the bank

²⁹ Africa Guinée, 6 Sep 2021

³⁰ DW, 7 Sep 2021

³¹ DW, 7 Sep 2021

³² Africa Guinée, 10 Sep 2021

³³ Africa Guinée, 10 Sep 2021

³⁴ DW, 7 Sep 2021

³⁵ Aminata.com, 5 Sep 2021

³⁶ DW, 7 Sep 2021

³⁷ TV5 Afrique, 5 Sep 2021

³⁸ DW, 7 Sep 2021

³⁹ Africa Guinée, 7 Sep 2021

⁴⁰ ARC Guinea analyst

⁴¹ Africa Guinée, 8 Sep 2021

⁴² GuinéeNews.org, 7 Sep 2021

⁴³ Aminata.com, 6 Sep 2021

accounts of public and commercial institutions attached to the presidency, as well as presidential programmes and projects.⁴⁴ A leaked document, circulated to Guinea's overseas diplomatic missions and consulates, has instructed Guinean diplomats on how to communicate the reasons for the coup to representatives of their host country.⁴⁵ The document, signed by foreign affairs ministry secretary general **Fanta Cissé**, highlights the political crisis emerging from the March 2020 legislative elections and referendum, administrative inertia, poor economic inclusion, loss of confidence in the state and the deterioration of societal relations to justify the coup action.⁴⁶ However, the CNRD pledged to hold consultations with societal stakeholders from 14 to 17 September, putting into practice its initial declaration to pursue inclusive dialogue with all components of Guinean society.⁴⁷ Surprisingly, Condé's party, the **Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée Arc-en-ciel (RPG Arc-en-ciel)**, has confirmed its participation in the talks organised by the CNRD.⁴⁸ RPG Arc-en-ciel secretary general **Lansana Komara** said the party will use the occasion to plead for the release of the former president.⁴⁹

... and international concern ...

The international community has weighed in on the recent developments in Guinea. **United Nations (UN)** secretary general **Antonio Guterres** issued a statement at the onset of the coup, expressing his concern about the situation.⁵⁰ The **African Union (AU)** and **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** both condemned the coup action, calling for Condé's release as well as the protection of his physical integrity.⁵¹ France echoed the ECOWAS call, while the US representative to the **Sahel**, **Peter Pham** claimed the developments in Guinea could have a negative impact on regional stability.⁵²

ECOWAS took a lead in addressing the Guinea coup, organising an extraordinary heads of state meeting via videoconference on 8 September.⁵³ A communiqué issued after the meeting reiterated the concern of heads of states regarding the socio-political situation in Guinea, calling for a return to constitutional order and Condé's safety.⁵⁴ ECOWAS suspended Guinea from all its activities and recommended that the AU and UN take similar decisions. The AU suspended Guinea from its activities on 10 September.⁵⁵

ECOWAS followed the conference with the dispatch of a high-level delegation to Conakry on 10 September, consisting of **Geoffrey Onyeama**, **Robert Dussey**, **Shirley Botchway** and **Alpha Barry**, respectively the foreign ministers of **Nigeria**, **Togo**, Ghana and Burkina Faso.⁵⁶ ECOWAS commission chairperson **Jean Claude Brou** was also part of the delegation.⁵⁷ ECOWAS envoys met with Conakry gendarmerie regional director **Col. Balla Samoura** and held closed-door discussions with Doumbouya.⁵⁸ The delegation also met Condé, whom they said was in good health. At the time of writing, Condé was still in detention and had reportedly refused to sign his resignation letter.⁵⁹ In a statement issued by Fanta Cissé, the CNRD agreed "*in principle*" to release Condé.⁶⁰

⁴⁴ Africa Guinée, 9 Sep 2021

⁴⁵ Africa Guinée, 8 Sep 2021

⁴⁶ Africa Guinée, 8 Sep 2021

⁴⁷ Jeune Afrique, 13 Sep 2021

⁴⁸ RFI, 13 Sep 2021

⁴⁹ RFI, 13 Sep 2021

⁵⁰ Reuters, 5 Sep 2021

⁵¹ Jeune Afrique, 5 Sep 2021

⁵² Anadolu Agency, 8 Sep 2021

⁵³ Anadolu Agency, 8 Sep 2021

⁵⁴ Anadolu Agency, 8 Sep 2021

⁵⁵ Africa Guinée, 10 Sep 2021

⁵⁶ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sep 2021

⁵⁷ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sep 2021

⁵⁸ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sep 2021

⁵⁹ Jeune Afrique, 13 Sep 2021

⁶⁰ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sep 2021

Institute for Security Studies (ISS) coordinator for **Central Africa**, **Oluwole Ojewole**, believes ECOWAS will take the lead role in facilitating the Guinean transition and try to ensure that it handles this scenario better than the political crisis in **Mali**, which has resulted in two successive military coups.⁶¹ ECOWAS' decision not to impose economic sanctions and not request the deposed leader be returned to power, as it did during the August 2020 Mali coup, demonstrates a more pragmatic response.⁶²

The US, France and the **European Union (EU)** are likely to support whatever initiatives ECOWAS undertakes. According to **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** director for West and Central Africa **Christopher Fomunyoh**, condemnation of the coup by Western nations was a mere formality, as they did not have the best relations with Condé and were aware that his increasing loss of legitimacy was at the centre of Guinea's socio-political crisis.⁶³ Fomunyoh believes that Condé's most trusted allies, **China, Russia and Turkey**, will have little choice but to work with the new military authorities and the government they appoint.⁶⁴

France-based independent journalist **Francis Laloupo** believes Condé had become increasingly disconnected with reality.⁶⁵ **Nordic Africa Institute** researcher **Jesper Bjarnesen** similarly believes that Condé's decision to change the constitution to remain in power was a by-product of his increasingly "erratic" behaviour. France-based publication **Jeune Afrique** reports that Condé believes he was overthrown because of his anti-corruption stance and cuts to the defence budget.⁶⁶

The coup is a fall from grace for Condé, whose political career started in the 1960's as a student leader in the **Fédération des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire** in France.⁶⁷ He began a Guinean opposition movement in France, which led founding Guinean president **Sekou Touré** (1958-1984) to sentence him to death, and was imprisoned by former president **Lansana Conté** (1984-2008) from 1998-2001.⁶⁸ After losing the 1993 and 1998 presidential contests, Condé emerged victorious in 2010.⁶⁹

... and jitters in Guinea's mining sector

Col. Mamady Doumbouya has assured mining industry stakeholders that the military takeover will not disrupt mining activity. Doumbouya declared on 6 September the lifting of the nationwide curfew in mining areas.⁷⁰ **South Africa**-based **AngloAshanti Gold**, **China's Chalco** and **Singapore's TOP International Holding** all reported on 7 September that they were operating normally despite the coup.⁷¹

The mining sector is unlikely to experience major disruptions in the short term, as the CNRD will need to ensure the inflow of mining revenue to carry out the transition process.⁷² Non-governmental organisation **Actions Mines Guinée** president **Amadou Bah** notes that Guinea has few noteworthy economic sectors beyond mining that provide foreign exchange, underlining the need for mining activity to continue undisturbed.⁷³

However, there is greater uncertainty for mining in the medium term. During Condé's presidency, mining revenue increased significantly, from \$115m in 2011 to \$397m in 2019. According to the **World Bank Commodity Market's Outlook** published in 2020, Guinea surpassed China as the second largest producer of bauxite, registering an output of 70m tonnes in 2019, compared to 17.6

⁶¹ Telephone conversation with Dr. Oluwole Ojewole

⁶² Telephone conversation with Dr. Oluwole Ojewole

⁶³ Telephone conversation with Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh

⁶⁴ Telephone conversation with Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh

⁶⁵ Al Jazeera, 6 Sep 2021

⁶⁶ Jeune Afrique, 13 Sep 2021

⁶⁷ RFI, 6 Sep 2021

⁶⁸ RFI, 6 Sep 2021

⁶⁹ RFI, 6 Sep 2021

⁷⁰ Agence Ecofin, 6 Sep 2021

⁷¹ Agence Ecofin, 6 Sep 2021

⁷² Agence Ecofin, 6 Sep 2021

⁷³ DW, 8 Sep 2021

tonnes in 2020.⁷⁴ Despite the marked increase, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** noted in December that Guinea is not deriving sufficient mining revenue, despite the current boom in production (see *ARC Briefing Guinea December 2020*).⁷⁵ Condé's government set up the **Mission d'Appui à la Mobilisation des Ressources Internes (Mamri)** (mission to support the mobilisation of internal resources), a task force aiming to raise domestic revenue collection to the equivalent of 20% of gross domestic product (GDP) (see *ARC Briefing Guinea February 2021*). South Africa-based mining investment analyst **Simon Hudson-Peacock** says the new leadership is likely to revise mining tax rather than expropriate mining companies, in order to support the previous government's objectives.⁷⁶

While tax revisions could take place, there is also the possibility that mining contracts will be reviewed, with strong precedent for such action in Guinea.⁷⁷ Former president Condé investigated mining deals that the previous military junta leader, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara, ratified immediately after he assumed power in December 2008.⁷⁸ The most notable outcome of these investigations was Condé's decision to strip **Brazil-based Vale S.A** and **Guernsey-registered BSG Resources** of their rights to the **Simandou** iron ore deposit in 2014.⁷⁹ Doumbouya is known to have links to Mali's new military junta and may follow its lead – in November 2020, Mali's military announced a review of all mining contracts awarded during the previous presidency.⁸⁰

Doumbouya would derive support from leading groups such as the FNDC, which could be part of the government of national unity. FNDC head of communications **Abdoulaye Sow** highlighted that all mining contracts signed during Condé's term of office need to be reviewed, in light of past corruption allegations against his regime.⁸¹ A case in point would be the complaint lodged in France by CTG against Condé junior and former defence minister **Mohamed Diané** over the "disappearance" of €171m (\$201.6m) in several transactions between Condé junior, Diané, **Société Minière de Boké (SMB)**, a branch of China-**Singaporean** consortium **SMB Winning** and France's **Alliance Minière Responsable (AMR)** (see *ARC Briefing Guinea August 2020*).

Condé's overthrow may also make mining investors reluctant to make large-scale commitments or sign contracts, which a new government may call into question.⁸² The new authorities will need to strike a balance between correcting the perceived ills of the previous administration and ensuring protection of the interests of mining stakeholders.

⁷⁴ Agence Ecofin, 24 Nov 2021

⁷⁵ IMF, 9 Dec 2020

⁷⁶ Jeune Afrique, 9 Sep 2021

⁷⁷ Source, ARC Guinea analyst Leonard Mbulle-Nziege

⁷⁸ Agence Ecofin, 6 Sep 2021

⁷⁹ ARC website, 9 Sep 2021

⁸⁰ ARC website, 9 Sep 2021

⁸¹ DW, 8 Sep 2021

⁸² Jeune Afrique, 9 Sep 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

13 Sep 2021 **London (United Kingdom)** *Mining.com*. The price of aluminium price reaches \$3,000 a tonne for the first time since 2008 on the **London Metals Exchange** due partially to supply disruptions caused by the military takeover in **Guinea**;

10 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The **African Union (AU)** suspends Guinea from all activities following military coup;

10 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *New York Times*. A **New York Times** article reveals 12 **United States Army Green Berets** were training the **Groupement des Forces Spéciales (GPS)** defence unit that carried out the 5 September coup d'état;

8 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *DW*. Heads of state of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** suspend Guinea from the organisation and call for a return to constitutional order as well as for the military government to ensure the safety of deposed former president **Alpha Condé**;

6 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Comité National du Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD)** (national development committee) transitional council president **Col. Mamady Doumbouya** assures mining industry stakeholders that sectoral activities will not be disrupted despite the coup;

6 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. **Comité National du Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD)** (national development committee) transitional council president **Col. Mamady Doumbouya** places a ban on former government ministers and heads of institutions from leaving Guinea;

5 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** is deposed and arrested in a military coup led by **Groupement des Forces Spéciales (GPS)** commander **Col. Mamady Doumbouya**, who announces the dissolution of cabinet and parliament and the creation of the **Comité National du Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD)** (National Development Committee) transitional council;

30 Aug 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Opposition leaders and former prime ministers **Sidya Touré**, **Cellou Dalein Diallo** and **Lansana Kouyaté** announce the imminent creation of a new opposition alliance;

26 Aug 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Guinea has issued an international arrest warrant against **Sékou Koundouno**, head of planning and strategy for the opposition and civil society consortium the **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, on charges of association of criminals, arson, disturbing the State by massacre, devastation and looting, and participation in an insurrectionary movement;

26 Aug 2021 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. Budget minister **Ismaël Dioubaté** presents the amended finance bill for 2021, which will see the budget for the 2021 financial year stand at 25,783.96 billion GNF (\$2.65 billion), an increase from the initial figure of 23,511.64 billion GNF (\$2.40 billion); Economic growth projections for 2021 have also been revised downwards from 5.5% to 5.2%;

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