

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing August 2022

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#### Guinea Summary 26 August 2022

*The opposition Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC) continue demonstrations against the ruling Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD). The CNRD deploys security forces, arrests demonstrators, and dissolves the FNDC. Monitoring groups report the deaths of six people during the protests. Transitional president, Mamadi Doumbouya appoints a new prime minister and reshuffles his cabinet. Australia-based Rio Tinto, Chinese-backed Winning Consortium Simandou (WCS) and the government sign a new joint venture. TransGuinee will be responsible for the infrastructure for the Simandou iron ore mine. Former prime minister, Ibrahima Kassory Fofana, faces charges of embezzlement of \$4m as the CNRD continues to tackle corruption.*

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#### Deadly protests continue through August

Opposition coalition, **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, has continued organising demonstrations against the ruling military junta, the **Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD)**, protesting the length of the transitional return to civilian rule.

The first round of protests began on 28 July in the capital, **Conakry**. The former ruling party **Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée-Arc-en-ciel (RPG-AEC)** and **Alliance nationale pour l'Alternance et la Démocratie (ANAD)** also called on their supporters to join protests.<sup>1</sup> FNDC reported one death after the first day, with a leader of the FNDC, **Ibrahima Diallo** also reporting that 102 people had been arrested, of which 23 were sent to a military camp.<sup>2</sup> On 29 July FNDC reported that four people had been shot dead by security forces during the second day of protests. Monitoring groups confirmed the deaths and the injury of several others.<sup>3</sup> Following the initial protests and a call for the second round of protests by the FNDC, the CNRD decided to dissolve the coalition. Government in the order stated:

*"Their modus operandi is structured by violent actions during banned demonstrations, attacks against individuals who do not share their ideology, and targeted actions against the forces of order."<sup>4</sup>*

Diallo and fellow FNDC leader, **Oumar Sylla** (aka **Foniké Mangué**) were arrested after the two-day protest on charges of participating in a prohibited gathering, looting, destruction of public and private property, assault and battery.<sup>5</sup> The two remain in prison.<sup>6</sup> **Umaro Sissoco Embaló**, president of **Guinea Bissau** and current president of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** asked the FNDC to suspend its next round of planned protests, scheduled for 4 August, to allow for mediation with the junta.<sup>7</sup> Embaló also noted that he had asked the junta to shorten its planned 36-month transition to 24 months, which they agreed to. However, junta spokesman **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** told the media that the junta does not confirm this information.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022

<sup>2</sup> Reuters, 29 Jul 2022

<sup>3</sup> Reuters, 29 Jul 2022

<sup>4</sup> Africanews, 10 Aug 2022

<sup>5</sup> Africanews, 2 Aug 2022

<sup>6</sup> Africanews, 10 Aug 2022

<sup>7</sup> Africanews, 10 Aug 2022

<sup>8</sup> Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022

Another coalition of political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, **Forces vices de la nation**, also threatened new demonstrations should dialogue not occur between the junta and the coalitions.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the junta's ruling to dissolve the FNDC, the coalition called for another round of demonstrations on 17 August, demanding dialogue with the junta and the release of those previously arrested.<sup>10</sup> Police and security forces were deployed and fired tear gas at the protestors. The FNDC reported the deaths of two people by the end of the day, accusing Doumbouya's motorcade of killing the two.<sup>11</sup> A junta spokesman, **Amara Camara**, denied this on 18 August, leading the FNDC to call for renewed demonstrations on 20 August. The coalition has asked supporters to take to the streets once again on 29 August and 4 and 5 September.<sup>12</sup>

Guinea's human rights organisation has voiced concerns over the ongoing situation, stating the dissolution of FNDC is confiscation of citizens' freedoms.<sup>13</sup> The regional body, ECOWAS, has continued to plea with Guinea to engage in dialogue with the political class and civil society to defuse tension. **Thomas Boni Yaya**, the ECOWAS mediator, was sent to Guinea on 20 August to begin efforts to diffuse the situation between political organisations and the junta. FNDC, ANAD and RPG-AEC boycotted talks on 24 August, stating the framework of the mediation was not conducive to allowing the parties to be heard.<sup>14</sup>

The leader of the CNDR Col. **Mamadi Doumbouya** (2021-present) also appeared unphased by Yaya's presence. Addressing the nation on 24 August, Doumbouya stated that Guinean problems need Guinean solutions, but did not outwardly call out ECOWAS' assistance as unwanted.<sup>15</sup>

The protests have also caught international attention. **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet**, also sent a letter to the junta voicing her concerns about the human rights situation in Guinea following the 28 and 29 July protests.<sup>16</sup> Bachelet not only referred to the loss of life but also the number of arrests of protests including the two leaders of the FNDC as well as the dissolution of the FNDC, as human rights violations. Bachelet called for the immediate reinstatement of the FNDC. Doumbouya has not previously responded to criticism from the United Nations (UN), namely when the junta ban protests in March, however, the junta will need to ensure it does not push too far and risk regional or international sanctions.

### Partial reshuffle of government includes new prime minister

Col. **Mamadi Doumbouya** (2021-present) has appointed a new prime minister and has reshuffled his cabinet. **Bernard Goumou**, the former commerce and industry minister is the new prime minister. The reshuffle also comes against the background of opposition protests and is ahead of the one-year mark of the junta taking power on 5 September.<sup>17</sup>

Goumou replaces **Mohamed Béavogui**, who has been on extended health leave since July.<sup>18</sup> Goumou previously served as the commerce and industry minister and was appointed acting prime minister on 17 July.<sup>19</sup> Goumou used his official signing in on 22 August to announce his commitment to

<sup>9</sup> Africanews, 2 Aug 2022

<sup>10</sup> Africa Guinee, 17 Aug 2022

<sup>11</sup> Africanews, 18 Aug 2022

<sup>12</sup> France 24, 20 Aug 2022

<sup>13</sup> Africanews, 10 Aug 2022

<sup>14</sup> Africa Guinee, 24 Aug 2022

<sup>15</sup> Africa Guinee, 24 Aug 2022

<sup>16</sup> Africa Guinee, 22 Aug 2022

<sup>17</sup> Bloomberg, 20 Aug 2022

<sup>18</sup> Bloomberg, 20 Aug 2022

<sup>19</sup> Reuters, 20 Aug 2022

accelerating the implementation of the transitional timeline, however, did not indicate how he will achieve this.<sup>20</sup>

Civil society has had mixed reactions to the partial reshuffle – it was not an unexpected appointment but for some, it does not address the root issues at hand such as inclusive political dialogue. Local media house, **Africa Guinee**, interviewed, **Faya Milimouno**, leader of the opposition party **Le Bloc Libéral**, who noted that while the appointment of Goumou is no surprise, Goumou faces the challenge of bringing Guineans together to focus on what the country will look like post-transition.<sup>21</sup> **Fodé Oussou Fofana**, a senior executive of the opposition party **Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** expressed in the same interview that the reshuffle fails to address the issues at hand, namely the “*organisation of inclusive dialogue to lay the foundations for a return to constitutional order...*”.<sup>22</sup>

The reshuffle has no significant impact on the order of things in Guinea, policy and transition will continue as is. The CNDR agreed upon a 36-month transition in May (*see ARC Briefing May 2022*), during which several referendums would take place before democratic elections take place in 2025. ECOWAS chair, Embalo, reported to the media on 29 July that he convinced Guinea’s military government to shorten its transition timeline to 24 months, but the CNDR has not confirmed this.<sup>23</sup>

Goumou could use the opportunity to rally the transitional government to return to constitutional order as quickly as possible, by promoting political dialogue and keeping with the 24-month timeline ECOWAS has asked for while rallying support from Guineans. Goumou, if he makes the right moves, could see himself retaining a high-level government position post-transition or even the presidency. There are currently no calls for Goumou to assume this role, but he could use this process to present himself as a presidential candidate.

### Simandou joint venture finally signed

**Australia-based Rio Tinto, China-backed Winning Consortium Simandou (WCS)** and the Guinean government signed an infrastructure joint venture on 27 July allowing work on the Simandou iron ore deposit, one of the largest in the world, to go forward.<sup>24</sup> Work on Simandou was suspended by the junta on 3 July after expressing frustration with its partner’s delays in agreeing on a joint venture (*see ARC Briefing Guinea July 2022*).

The joint venture, **La Compagnie du TransGuinéen** includes a 15% free carry for the government. A free carry means the government will not have to contribute capital to the joint venture railway and port projects, a concession made by its WCS and Rio Tinto.<sup>25</sup> WCS and Rio Tinto’s local subsidiary **Simfer Jersey Limited** each hold 42.5% in La Compagnie du TransGuinéen.

The agreement signed on 26 March has a value (*see ARC Briefing Guinea April 2022*) of approximately \$15 billion and provides for a new company, the exploitation of the iron deposits and the construction of port and railways infrastructure to export the iron ore from Simandou, which lies in the remote southeast of Guinea.<sup>26</sup> The railway, known as the **Transguinéen**, will be approximately 670 km long and lead to the deep-water port to be built in **Moribaya**.<sup>27</sup> The infrastructure will not be for the exclusive use of iron mining operations, but will also be used to transport other goods and people, and by other companies who start operations in the same area.<sup>28</sup> Once completed, the infrastructure will become state property, to be managed by a public agency.<sup>29</sup> The government will maintain a 15%

<sup>20</sup> Guinee Matin, 22 Aug 2022

<sup>21</sup> Africa Guinee, 22 Aug 2022

<sup>22</sup> Africa Guinee, 22 Aug 2022

<sup>23</sup> Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022

<sup>24</sup> Reuters, 28 Jul 2022

<sup>25</sup> Reuters, 28 Jul 2022

<sup>26</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Mar 2022

<sup>27</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Mar 2022

<sup>28</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Mar 2022

<sup>29</sup> Africa Business Magazine, 31 Mar 2022

stake in the railway, deep water port and the mine. The additional infrastructure is expected to be completed by December 2024 and commercial production of the mine has been moved up from 2026 to 31 March 2025.<sup>30</sup>

The mine has been a focus of Doumbouya, who has pressurised Rio Tinto and WCS to create an agreement that he believes is actually beneficial to the Guinean population. Despite the delays since the agreement was signed in March, progress on the mine is moving faster than ever before, pushed by Doumbouya. The government of former president Condé awarded WCS the mining rights to develop Blocks 1 and 2 on Simandou in November 2019.<sup>31</sup> Simandou Blocks 3 and 4 have mixed ownership, with Rio Tinto owning 45.05% of the deposit, and **Aluminium Corporation of China (Chinalco)** and the Guinean state respectively holding the remaining 39.95% and 15% shares.<sup>32</sup> Rio Tinto was initially granted the concession in 1997.<sup>33</sup>

### Former prime minister facing prosecution over embezzlement

The justice ministry announced on 11 August that it will prosecute former prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** on charges of alleged embezzlement of approximately \$4m in public funds as the ruling military junta continues to crack down on corruption.<sup>34</sup> Fofana serves as prime minister under the former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021) until he was overthrown by the CNDR on 5 September 2021 (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Sep 2021*). Former economic and financial advisor to the prime minister, **Ansoumane Camara**, and several officials of the **L'Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (Anies)** (economic and social inclusion agency) are also under investigation for corruption and embezzlement.<sup>35</sup>

Fofana has been detained in jail since April after being arrested on charges of corruption, embezzlement, illicit enrichment, and money laundering.<sup>36</sup> Other officials arrested on the same charges include former defence minister **Mohamed Diané**, environment minister **Oyé Guilavogui** and hydrocarbons minister **Zakaria Coulibaly**.<sup>37</sup> The justice ministry is also investigating Fofana for allegedly misappropriating \$46m, funds intended for the fight against the **Covid-19** pandemic.

The junta has focused on tackling the endemic corruption in Guinea since taking power. In February **Cour de répression des infractions économiques et financières (Crief)**, the new economic and financial offences court established by the CNDR announced it would open a judicial investigation into all the ministers that served under Condé.<sup>38</sup>

**Cour d'Appel de Conakry** (court of appeal) attorney general **Charles Wright** also launched legal proceedings against Condé for human rights abuses, among other crimes. The legal proceedings, filed on 4 May, are also against 26 senior executives who served under Condé.<sup>39</sup> The period under investigation is the March 2020 referendum election (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Apr 2020*) and the October 2020 presidential election (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Nov 2020*).

**German**-headquartered non-governmental organisation (NGO) **Transparency International** ranked Guinea 150<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in its 2021 **Corruption Perceptions Index**. The country scored a mere 25/100.<sup>40</sup> The tackling of corruption by the junta has drawn positive feedback from the international community, however, the **French**-headquartered NGO **Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH)** (international federation for human rights) and its members

<sup>30</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Mar 2022

<sup>31</sup> VOA Afrique, 13 Mar 2022

<sup>32</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>33</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>34</sup> Africanews, 12 Aug 2022

<sup>35</sup> Africanews, 12 Aug 2022

<sup>36</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jun 2022

<sup>37</sup> Africanews, 6 Apr 2022

<sup>38</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Aug 2022

<sup>39</sup> Media Guinee, 11 May 2022

<sup>40</sup> Transparency International, accessed 24 Aug 2022

have also called on Guinea to ensure fair trials for those accused. Drissa Traoré, secretary general for FIDH stated in a press release in February:

*"The fight against corruption and illicit acquisition of wealth is legitimate and essential, not only to combat poor governance but also to ensure transparency in public affairs and thus contribute to restoring a bond of trust between the people and the Guinean authorities. Such results require a fair trial that respects the rights of the defence."<sup>41</sup>*

The junta has recently agreed to a shorter 24-month transition to constitutional rule; however, this is still a significant period in power where it should not attract any further unwanted attention or risk sanctions.

### Planner

(Date TBA due to Covid-19) **Conakry (Guinea)** Transform Africa Conference;  
 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** Guinea Investment Forum;  
 31 March 2025 **Conakry (Guinea)** Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project;

### Chronology

24 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Bloomberg*. **Guinean** court releases on bail former **Banque Centrale de la République de Guinée** (central bank) governor **Louncy Nabe**, who was charged in March with embezzlement and violating public procurement rules;

24 Aug 2022 **Beijing (China)** *Africa Guinee*. **China** cancels 23 interest-free loans to **African** countries including **Guinea**;

22 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Ewn.co.za*. A former minister, **Louncy Camara**, who was imprisoned by the ruling military junta on charges of embezzlement, has died in jail;

22 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **West Africa LNG-Group (WA-LNG)** announces it has obtained a local from **American** investors for a facility for the import, processing and distribution of LNG to be used by bauxite miners and other industrial facilities in **Guinea**;

15 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee News*. Sources close to the transitional government state that the transitional president, Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** will appoint a new government in the coming weeks;

15 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Opposition coalition, **Front national pour la défense de la constitution (FNDC)** has called for renewed demonstrations on 17 August against the transitional government. A coalition of political parties, **L'Alliance nationale pour l'alternance et la démocratie (ANAD)**, has reiterated the call;

11 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *EWN*. Justice ministry says it will prosecute former prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** over the alleged embezzlement of more than \$4m in public funds intended for economic, political and social programmes;

10 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AFP*. The transitional government orders the dissolution of the **National Front for the Defence of the Constitution**, a major collective that has been opposing the ruling junta for several months and which spearheaded protests against former President **Alpha Condé**;

8 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Modern Ghana*. Political coalition **National Front for the Defence of the Constitution** calls for renewed demonstrations against the ruling junta, ending a truce for lack of response to its demands for "credible dialogue" on the transition to civilian rule;

<sup>41</sup> FIDH, 25 Feb 2022

5 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. **Conseil ordinaire des ministres** (council of ministers) meets in the presence of a visiting **Malian** contingency of five ministers in a diplomatic gesture;

7 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Media Guinee*. The transitional governments of **Mali** and **Guinea** agree on a railway project linking the two countries;

4 Aug 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Reuters*. **Guinea's** navy seizes 3 tonnes of cocaine from a ship docked in Guinean waters, a route often used as a transit point for cocaine en route from **South America** to **Europe**;

31 Jul 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Media Guinee*. **G5 Guinea**, composed of the **United Nations, European Union, United States, France** and the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, releases a statement deploring the excessive use of force during protests on 29 July;

29 Jul 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Reuters*. Opposition coalition **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** confirms the killing of four people during anti-government protests held in **Conakry**;

29 Jul 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Al Jazeera*. **Guinea-Bissau's** President **Umaro Sissoco Embalo**, who is chair of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** says he convinced Guinea's military government to shorten its transition timeline to 24 months;

27 Jul 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee News*. Guinean government, **Australia-based Rio Tinto** and **Chinese-backed Winning Consortium Simandou** sign an agreement creating a joint venture called **Compagnie du Transguinee** for the co-development of the **Simandou** iron-ore mine;

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