

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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President Alpha Condé (2010- present) is the clear favourite to win the first round presidential election scheduled for 11 October. His well-financed election campaign focuses on infrastructure improvements in his first term, including electricity provision in Conakry. The opposition lacks unity and focuses on electoral disputes rather than government shortcomings, while Guinea's ethnic politics also enters the equation. A new mandate will see Condé focus on further infrastructure developments including the Rio Tinto-led Simandou South iron ore mine and infrastructure project and Souapiti hydropower dam. Security risks will increase in the period before, during and after the 11 October election. However, political and street violence, involving clashes with security forces, will probably remain isolated.

Condé positions for second term in power

President **Alpha Condé** (2010- present) is the clear favourite¹ to win the first round presidential election scheduled for 11 October. Despite the mining downturn and Ebola outbreak that has stagnated the economy during his first term in power, the 77-year-old incumbent remains well positioned for a second term due to the lack of opposition cohesion. Condé was one of eight candidates that the constitutional court approved on 2 September for the election.² Campaigning is in full swing across the country having officially started on 10 September, and running to 9 October.³ If no candidate obtains over 50% of the vote, a second round run-off election will be required between the two leading candidates 14 days after the announcement of the final results for the first round.⁴

"The question is whether Condé will need a second round or not..."⁵

*"...Condé will be hoping not to need a second round. In 2010, in forming his broad winning **Arc-en-ciel** coalition, he accumulated a lot of baggage and spent a good part of his first years in power trying to remove this baggage."⁶*

Condé's **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG)** has implemented a well-financed campaign for his re-election under the slogan: *"Progress is on the march."*⁷ The campaign has sought to highlight infrastructure improvements in Condé's first term and future infrastructure projects slated for his second term (see below).⁸ Condé timed the official inauguration of the **Chinese**-built 240-megawatt **Kaléta** hydropower dam, on 28 September, to coincide with the re-election campaign. With Kaléta coming online, Condé has managed over the past four months to bring a reliable electricity supply to the capital **Conakry** for the first time since the mid-to-late 1990s. Up until 2015, violent protests over power cuts had marked Condé's first term.

Condé, as Guinea's first democratically elected leader, is also credited with bringing the army under control. Condé focused on this essential task at the start of his term due to Guinea's recent history of

¹ Source, several including an analyst and foreign correspondent, Conakry

² AFP, 2 Sept 2015.

³ AFP, 2 Sept 2015.

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sept 2015.

⁵ Source, Guinea-focused political researcher, Conakry

⁶ Source, Guinea-focused political researcher, Conakry

⁷ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

⁸ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

military instability, and particularly after soldiers launched an attempted assassination against him in July 2011, just seven months after he came to power. However, despite significant gains, military reform remains a work-in-progress – the army is bloated, with some 26,000 soldiers with an average age of 42-years, and absorbs 10% of the state budget, according to a recent audit.⁹

The opposition's focus on disputes around the organisation of the election has diverted attention away from its campaigning and criticism of the Condé administration's shortcomings, including management of the Ebola crisis. The principal opposition leader, **Cellou Dalein Diallo** of the **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**, has accused the government of not upholding a political agreement signed on 20 August.¹⁰ In the agreement the government made concessions with the opposition on three points: more opposition representation in local government to oversee the elections; changes to the composition of the **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)**; and an audit of the electoral register.¹¹ Subsequently, Diallo and an opposition bloc have threatened to boycott the 11 October election unless the government upholds the provisions in the agreement.¹² On 15 September, Diallo accused Condé of acting “*unilaterally*” with CENI head **Bakary Fofana**, in “*flagrant violation*” of the law.¹³ The opposition remains focused on “*anomalies*” in the electoral register that it claims favour Condé.¹⁴ Despite these claims, the government has pointed to a joint **United Nations, Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS)** and **African Union** mission to Guinea that claimed that the government had made “*significant progress*” with regards to the 20 August political agreement.¹⁵ According to the mission this included reforms involving the electoral register and more opposition representation among local officials.¹⁶ Diallo said experts from his UFDG party will assess the register in regard to fraudulent listings and other “*anomalies*” before deciding whether to boycott the election.¹⁷

Ethnicity continues to play a significant role in Guinean politics. Diallo, who draws support from the majority (around 40%) ethnic **Peul** community, faces resistance from the non-Peul electorate, which remains unprepared to elect a president from a community that dominates the economy.¹⁸ For this reason, **Sidya Touré**, the other prominent opposition figure from **Basse Guinée** from a mixed **Soussou** and **Malinké** ethnic group, has withdrawn his support for Diallo in the event of a second round election between Condé and Diallo.¹⁹ After Touré finished third in the first round election in 2010, his supporters failed to follow his instructions to vote for Diallo in the run-off election against Condé.

Condé has the support of his ethnic Malinké community, the second largest ethnic group accounting for around 30% of the population. However, Condé has also reached out to Diallo's stronghold, **Moyenne-Guinée**. He has secured the support of former Diallo ally, **Abe Sylla**, who placed sixth in the 2010 first round election.²⁰ Condé also spent eight days touring the region in early September before the official start of the campaign period.²¹

“Several people have said that Diallo has shrugged his shoulders and given up on this election. He is thinking ahead to 2020 in mind that Condé will leave power under the two-term constitution limit.”²²

⁹ Jeune Afrique, 22 Sept 2015.

¹⁰ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

¹¹ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Aug 2015

¹² Bloomberg, 9 Sept 2015.

¹³ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

¹⁴ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

¹⁵ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

¹⁶ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

¹⁷ Bloomberg, 9 Sept 2015.

¹⁸ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

¹⁹ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

²⁰ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

²¹ RFI, 9 Sept 2015.

²² Source, foreign correspondent, Guinea

A notable omission from the presidential candidate list is former junta leader **Moussa Dadis Camara** (2008-2010), who remains in exile in **Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)**. In July, Guinean authorities indicted Camara over his alleged role in the killing of at least 157 civilians during the suppression of an anti-junta protest on 28 September 2009 in Conakry.²³ Regional authorities prevented Camara from returning to Guinea in August.²⁴ Camara's team claims that Condé sought to prevent Camara from returning to enlist as a candidate for the election.²⁵ Camara announced his intention in May to join the opposition, run in the election and form an electoral alliance with Diallo.²⁶ However, Camara's support for Diallo may not deliver Diallo sufficient votes in the Camara's stronghold **Forestière Region**. Several reports confirm that there is resistance in the Forestière Region electorate to backing Diallo, while Condé maintains support in the region.

"Support for Dadis (Camara) appears to have weakened Diallo, particularly in the international and regional community. I also cannot see Dadis profiting from this. Dadis is now considering his support for Diallo... he is now saying vote for anybody but Condé."

*"Condé retains a lot of support in the Forestière Region. He established the precursor to his RPG party there during the time of first president **Sékou Touré** (1958-1984), starting clandestine political activities for convenience... because there is little state control and army control there and he profited from the resentment to Touré."*²⁷

.... and aims for second term infrastructure drive

Another mandate will see Condé focus on efforts to improve infrastructure and overall economic development. The post-election period should coincide with the end of the Ebola outbreak. For the first time since March 2014 Guinea recorded a week in early September without a new case recorded.²⁸ The government expects the country to be free of Ebola cases by the end of November.²⁹ The mining downturn and Ebola crisis have left the economy in urgent need of investment to create more economic opportunities. In August a government official expected economic growth of 0% in 2015.³⁰ Around 43% of the 12m population are living on less than \$1.25 a day, making Guinea the ninth least developed country in the world.³¹

Condé will focus on completing his priority project, the **Rio Tinto-led Simandou South** (blocks 1 and 2) iron ore mine and infrastructure project. In May 2014, the government and the project partners signed an **Investment Framework** for the \$20 billion project.³² The infrastructure component includes the construction of the **Trans-Guinean** railway, a 650km, \$7 billion line from the mine in the Forestière Region to a \$4 billion deep-water port.³³ Once complete, the project has the potential to double Guinea's gross domestic product (GDP), contribute \$1.2 billion government revenue annually and create 45,000 jobs.³⁴ At the time of the landmark agreement in May 2014, the government cited a "tentative" production start date at the end of 2018.³⁵ Since then, the continuing mining downturn, the Ebola outbreak and multi-jurisdiction litigation involving the adjacent **Simandou North** concession have delayed the completion of the bankable feasibility study.³⁶

Despite the global mining downturn, a new wave of investment is expected in the bauxite sector. **Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee (CBG)** has a \$1 billion development plan to almost double

²³ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Aug 2015

²⁴ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Jul 2015

²⁵ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Aug 2015

²⁶ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Aug 2015

²⁷ Source, Guinea-focused political researcher, Conakry

²⁸ Sky news, 27 Sept 2015.

²⁹ Bloomberg, 21 Sept 2015.

³⁰ See ARC Briefing for Guinea, Aug 2015

³¹ United Nations

³² AFP, 27 May 2014.

³³ Reuters, 27 May 2014.

³⁴ Reuters, 27 May 2014.

³⁵ Financial Times, 26 May 2014.

³⁶ Metal Bulletin, 11 Sep 2015.

annual production to 28.5m metric tonnes within five years.³⁷ Four other bauxite projects involving **Alufer Mining Ltd, China Hongqiao Group Ltd, Alliance Mining Commodities** and **Guinea Alumina Corporation** could contribute a further 20m metric tonnes annually in this period.³⁸

Condé will also focus on developing the power sector. All three turbines of the Kaléta hydropower dam 150km north of Conakry are now in operation. The project was completed in three years, one year ahead of schedule.³⁹ Condé has pledged to complete another dam at **Souapiti** if elected to a second term.⁴⁰ The **China International Water & Electric Corp**, which constructed the Kaléta dam, is in negotiations with the government to construct the \$2 billion 550-megawatt Souapiti hydropower dam on the **Konkouré River** around 2km from Kaléta.⁴¹ The project will provide additional power supply for the expansion of the bauxite sector. **Export-Import Bank of China**, which provided 75% of the financing for the Kaléta dam, is interested in financing the project.⁴² The government conducted a study of Souapiti in 1999 and the **West African Power Pool** also sought consultants earlier in 2015 for a feasibility study.⁴³ Energy ministry official **Lansana Fofana** said the Souapiti dam could power mining growth:

*"We want to build refineries for our bauxite. We will even be able to position ourselves as an energy exporter."*⁴⁴

... as election security risks come to the fore

Security risks will increase in the period before, during and after the 11 October election. Significant political and street violence involving heavy-handed security force interventions have marked recent elections, including the 2010 presidential elections and 2013 parliamentary elections. Several minor incidents have already been reported since the start of the campaign period. On 21 September, supporters of Condé and Diallo were involved in clashes in **Koundara** (Moyenne-Guinée).⁴⁵ Condé's supporters also threw stones to prevent a Sidya Touré campaign event in Condé's stronghold of **Kankan (Haute-Guinée)**.⁴⁶ The UFDG has warned that it will launch a street protest campaign if Condé is declared the winner of the first round election.⁴⁷ If the opposition maintains its threat to boycott the election, it will also trigger unrest.

In the event of a Condé victory, militant opposition supporters will probably launch violent street protests, which will involve clashes with security forces. In Conakry, protests and subsequently clashes will centre around neighbourhoods with large Peul populations, including **Hamdalaye, Bambeto, Cosa, Enco-5** and **Matoto** as well as the airport area and **Medina**. Across the country, clashes between rival supporters are also expected in areas with significant Peul and Malinké communities in Moyenne-Guinée and Haute-Guinée.

The fragile Forestière Region remains a potential security flashpoint. The exclusion of Camara in the elections will probably result in his supporters organising protests and clashes with security forces. Camara retains widespread support in the region and he may move to foster unrest.

Several sources do not expect violence to become widespread. *"No one has the stomach for a long period of stagnation."*⁴⁸ However, allegations of electoral fraud, security forces firing live rounds at protesters or soldiers joining clashes with protesters will trigger more intensive and violent protests and clashes. There have been no recent legitimate reports involving a possible planned coup or other military or stability risks.

³⁷ Bloomberg, 21 Sep 2015.

³⁸ Bloomberg, 21 Sep 2015.

³⁹ AFP, 29 Sept 2015.

⁴⁰ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

⁴¹ Bloomberg, 15 Sept 2015.

⁴² ESI Africa, 23 Sept 2015.

⁴³ Hydroworld.com, 23 Sept 2015.

⁴⁴ Bloomberg, 15 Sept 2015.

⁴⁵ News 24, 21 Sept 2015.

⁴⁶ News 24, 21 Sept 2015.

⁴⁷ Reuters, 14 Sept 2015.

⁴⁸ Source, Guinea-focused political researcher, Conakry

The government established an 18,000 special security force for the election period, including approximately 9,000 gendarmes and 9,000 police officers.⁴⁹ Human rights monitors such as **Amnesty International** have urged authorities to “ensure that excessive force is not used against protesters and other citizens”.⁵⁰

A considerable presence of international and regional election monitors reduces the risk of unrest around the election. A 70-member **European Union** election observation mission started its deployment in Guinea on 15 September.⁵¹ Condé initially rejected international monitors, but changed his position during talks with international partners in January.⁵² ECOWAS will closely monitor the election. The Guinean election was on the agenda of a special ECOWAS meeting in **Dakar (Senegal)** on 12 September.⁵³

Implications

Condé is well placed to win re-election and the question remains whether he will need a second round election for victory. If a second round election is needed, it will fracture the next Condé government due to competition for positions as it did following his 2010 victory. Condé has again proved himself to be a shrewd political operator. Despite the mining downturn and Ebola crisis he has successfully managed the timing of the Kaléta dam – and reliable electricity supply in Conakry – to position himself for re-election. In addition, Diallo has failed to expand his support base beyond the Peul community. Diallo will face increasing challengers to his position as head of the opposition, particularly due to his courting of Camara, which appears a political miscalculation.

A Condé re-election will reduce business uncertainty and therefore increase investor confidence. With credible elections without major incident and the Ebola outbreak reaching an end, the incoming government has an opportunity to bring in significant foreign investment. The bauxite sector will drive some of this growth, and a medium-term improvement in the price of other commodities will also lead to considerable investment in other mining sectors. If granted a second term Condé will look to the Simandou South mine and infrastructure development as his legacy piece. However, the post-Ebola recovery and infrastructure drive will offer an opportunity for the government to diversify the economy.

Considerable security incidents are expected over the election period given Guinea’s recent election history and current tensions between the government and opposition – and their supporters. The situation in the Forestière Region centres on the divisive Camara. With much of the region resistant to voting for Diallo, Camara may turn to Condé to reach a deal to secure protection from judicial processes around the 28 September stadium massacre. Several factors reduce the possibility of violence becoming widespread. Firstly, under Condé military discipline has improved markedly and soldiers have kept in the barracks during several periods of unrest. Electoral authorities will also stagger results during counting to reduce tensions around an announcement of the final result. The presence of international election monitors and their endorsement will also reduce tensions around the election. Finally, West African leaders are increasingly responding in unity to an election crisis in the region and ECOWAS have developed effective mechanisms to resolve election disputes.

⁴⁹ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sept 2015.

⁵⁰ Jeune Afrique, 11 Sept 2015.

⁵¹ AFP, 15 Sept 2015.

⁵² Jeune Afrique, 15 Sept 2015.

⁵³ RFI, 13 Sept 2015.

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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