

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing March 2022

#### Guinea Summary 27 March 2022

*Although Guinea has taken a neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, United Kingdom sanctions on pro-Kremlin oligarch Oleg Deripaska could hamper operations of his Guinea-based bauxite mining firm, UC Rusal. Head of state and president of the Comité National de Redressement et du Développement (CNRD) military council Col. Mamadi Doumbouya (2021-present) launches national meetings that will run until 29 April and focus on national reconciliation and transitional justice. The Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (CRIEF) (economic and financial crimes court) is investigating 114 corruption-related cases that occurred during the reign of former president Alpha Condé (2010-2021). The CNRD reaches agreement with Australia-based Rio Tinto and a Chinese-backed consortium to resume activities at the Simandou iron ore deposit, after resolving disputes over infrastructure.*

#### Guinea takes neutral stance in Russia-Ukraine conflict

Guinea has taken a neutral stance in the ongoing conflict between **Russia** and **Ukraine** opting not to participate in the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** vote on 2 March condemning Russia's military operations in Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> Guinea has not had an ambassador at the UN since head of state and president of the **Comité National de Redressement et du Développement (CNRD)** military council Col. **Mamadi Doumbouya** (2021-present) recalled 30 ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions on 3 February.<sup>2</sup> Foreign affairs and international cooperation minister **Morissanda Kouyaté** declared on 24 February that Guinea would not take sides and would not be forced to clarify its position, reportedly after the **Ukrainian Embassy in Dakar (Senegal)**, which has jurisdiction in Guinea, called on Guinea's foreign affairs ministry to condemn the Russian operations.<sup>3</sup> The Guinean foreign affairs ministry suspended Ukraine's honorary consul to Guinea, **Charles Sossoadouno** the same day, alleging that the Ukrainian embassy had not sent its letter through the proper channels, delivering it to Sossoadouno, rather than the Guinean Embassy in Dakar.<sup>4</sup>

Kouyaté said the Guinean government's primary concern was to ensure the safety of an estimated 800 Guinean nationals resident in Ukraine and that he was in contact with representatives of Guinean citizens in Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> To this end, Doumbouya authorised on 3 March the allocation of \$100,000 to ensure that Guineans in Ukraine have access to their basic and immediate necessities.<sup>6</sup>

Guinea's refusal to lend support to Ukraine is not surprising. Guinea was a key **Soviet** ally in **Africa** during the presidency of **Sékou Touré** (1958-1984) and is a member of the non-aligned movement.<sup>7</sup> Former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021) had close relations with Russia's President **Vladimir Putin** (2000-2008; 2012-present).<sup>8</sup> Russia supported Condé's controversial third-term presidential ambitions.<sup>9</sup> However, Russia has taken steps to build strong relations with Doumbouya and the CNRD, and a delegation of Russian officials had an audience with Doumbouya in February.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 4 Mar 2022

<sup>2</sup> Jeune Afrique, 3 Mar 2022

<sup>3</sup> Africa Guinée, 24 Feb 2022

<sup>4</sup> Africa Guinée, 24 Feb 2022

<sup>5</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 24 Feb 2022

<sup>6</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 4 Mar 2022

<sup>7</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>8</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Mar 2022

<sup>9</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Mar 2022

<sup>10</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Mar 2022

The conflict in Ukraine could have a negative effect on the mining operations of one of Guinea's largest industry players, Russia-based **UC Rusal**, which is involved in bauxite mining and is owned by pro-Kremlin oligarch **Oleg Deripaska**.<sup>11</sup> The **United Kingdom (UK)** government placed sanctions on Deripaska, described as one of Putin's "*favourite*" industrialists, on 10 March.<sup>12</sup> The sanctions, which entail an asset freeze, could hamper UC Rusal's ability to raise money for its mining operations.<sup>13</sup>

### National meetings kick off despite opposition boycott

CNRD military council president Mamadi Doumbouya launched national meetings (*assises nationales*) on 22 March.<sup>14</sup> The proceedings take place from 22 March to 29 April across all Guinea's prefectures.<sup>15</sup> Although Doumbouya no doubt hopes these meetings will serve as a legitimising exercise for the CNRD, a massive opposition boycott may thwart his ambitions for legitimacy.<sup>16</sup> Presiding over the opening ceremony, Doumbouya stated that over the next six weeks, Guinea would focus on fostering truth, reconciliation and building a new institutional framework.<sup>17</sup>

Doumbouya announced the decision to hold the national meetings during a 31 December address to the nation.<sup>18</sup> On 10 March, he tasked the prime minister's office as well as the ministries of territorial administration and decentralisation and foreign affairs to coordinate preparations for the event, focusing on transitional justice and reconciliation.<sup>19</sup> Territorial administration and decentralisation minister **Moury Condé** promised to hold discussions with political actors ahead of the meetings, using their input to establish the talking points.<sup>20</sup>

However, on 21 March, 61 political parties declared they would not participate in the national meetings.<sup>21</sup> Leading opposition parties choosing to boycott the meetings include the **Union des Forces Démocratiques de la Guinée (UFDG)** and **Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR)**, respectively led by former prime ministers **Cellou Dalein Diallo** and **Sidiya Touré**. UFR executive secretary **Saikou Yaka** said the reason for the boycott was the lack of clarity surrounding the organisation of the meetings and the absence of any concrete framework or agendas.<sup>22</sup>

The opposition's decision to boycott was not unexpected. The CNRD and leading opposition parties have been at loggerheads over the past months over the nature of the transition.<sup>23</sup> On 9 March, 58 political parties issued a statement condemning the unilateral manner in which the CNRD was managing the political transition and criticised its failure to consult on matters of national interest.<sup>24</sup> However, the former ruling party, the **Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée-Arc-en-ciel (RPG-AEC)**, confirmed its participation in the national meetings during an audience with Condé on 15 March.<sup>25</sup>

This is not the first time that Guinean authorities have launched major reconciliation initiatives. Former president Alpha Condé created a **Commission Provisoire de Réflexion sur la Réconciliation Nationale** (provisional commission for reflection on national reconciliation) in June, co-chaired by two religious leaders, **El Hadj Mamadou Saliou Camara**, first imam of the **Fayçal Grand Mosque**, and Monsignor **Vincent Koulibaly**, Archbishop of **Conakry**.<sup>26</sup> The consultations were

<sup>11</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>12</sup> The Guardian, 10 Mar 2022

<sup>13</sup> The Guardian, 10 Mar 2022

<sup>14</sup> RFI, 22 Mar 2022

<sup>15</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 21 Mar 2022

<sup>16</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>17</sup> Africa Guinée, 22 Mar 2022

<sup>18</sup> RFI, 22 Mar 2022

<sup>19</sup> RFI, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>20</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 15 Mar 2022

<sup>21</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 21 Mar 2022

<sup>22</sup> Africa Guinée, 22 Mar 2022

<sup>23</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>24</sup> RFI, 10 Mar 2022

<sup>25</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 15 Mar 2022

<sup>26</sup> Jeune Afrique, 21 Mar 2022

recorded in a 243-page report submitted in the same month to Condé, but were never acted upon.<sup>27</sup> UFDG communications coordinator **Joachim Baba Milimouno** cited this failure as justification for the widespread boycott of the national meetings.<sup>28</sup>

### High-ranking state officials investigated on corruption charges

The transition government has continued to interrogate, charge and arrest former government members and high-ranking public officials who served during former Alpha Condé's presidency.<sup>29</sup> On 25 February, former economy and finance minister **Ismaël Dioubaté** was placed under a warrant of committal and asked to pay a deposit of GNF 5 billion (\$557,000) before he could be provisionally released from detention on corruption charges.<sup>30</sup> Dioubaté was arrested on 22 February, alongside former government spokesperson and state minister for small and medium-sized enterprises and industry **Tibou Kamara**.<sup>31</sup>

Dioubaté and Kamara were apprehended for their alleged role in the presumed misappropriation of 131 billion GNF (\$14.7m) by former technical education, vocational training and employment minister **Zenab Nabaya Dramé**.<sup>32</sup> In November 2020, local media outlet **GuinéeNews** revealed the financial deficits, which the anti-corruption unit at the presidency subsequently confirmed (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Dec 2020*).<sup>33</sup> Dramé initially denied the charges and took three GuinéeNews journalists to court for defamation. The case against Dramé was reopened after Condé's overthrow.<sup>34</sup> While Dioubaté has been placed in detention and Kamara is under judicial supervision, Dramé is living in exile in **France**.<sup>35</sup>

Several other former cabinet ministers were also summoned to the directorate of judicial investigations at the national gendarmerie as part of preliminary investigations regarding potential acts of corruption.<sup>36</sup> These include:

- Former prime minister and head of government **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**;
- Former defence minister **Mohamed Diané**;
- Former economy and finance minister **Mamadi Camara**;
- Former public works minister **Kadiatou Diaby**;
- Former water and sanitation minister **Papa Koly Kourouma**;
- Former education minister **Alpha Baro Barry**.<sup>37</sup>

**Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (CRIEF)** (economic and financial crimes court) special prosecutor **Aly Touré** stated on 15 March that the CRIEF had charged 114 individuals with embezzlement of public funds, money laundering, complicity and corruption, amongst other crimes, and placed eight people in preventive detention.<sup>38</sup> Touré said legal proceedings would commence from April, once the CRIEF had found a venue to host them.<sup>39</sup>

Since its creation in December, the CRIEF has pursued a broad anti-corruption campaign with Doumbouya's support (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Dec 2021 and Jan-Feb 2022*).<sup>40</sup> Touré claims to have received death threats as a result of his actions but promises to continue carrying out his

<sup>27</sup> Jeune Afrique, 21 Mar 2022

<sup>28</sup> Africa Guinée, 22 Mar 2022

<sup>29</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>30</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 25 Feb 2022

<sup>31</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 23 Feb 2022

<sup>32</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 23 Feb 2022

<sup>33</sup> RFI, 22 Feb 2022

<sup>34</sup> RFI, 22 Feb 2022

<sup>35</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 25 Feb 2022

<sup>36</sup> Africa Guinée, 8 Mar 2022

<sup>37</sup> Africa Guinée, 7 Mar 2022

<sup>38</sup> Africa Guinée, 15 Mar 2022

<sup>39</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 15 Mar 2022

<sup>40</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

responsibilities.<sup>41</sup> The Guinean transition authorities seem unlikely to cease their anti-corruption efforts; former director general of state-owned electricity firm **Électricité de Guinée (EDG)** director general **Bangaly Maty** was indicted on 14 March on allegations of corruption.<sup>42</sup> Maty was subsequently removed from his post by presidential decree along with **Institut National de Santé Publique (INSP)** (national institute for public health) director general Prof. **Abdoulaye Touré** on 17 March.<sup>43</sup>

### Doumbouya orders halt to Simandou iron ore project activities

The ruling CNRD junta has reached an agreement with **Australia**-based **Rio Tinto** and a **Chinese**-backed consortium to resume activities at the **Simandou** iron ore deposit.<sup>44</sup> Government spokesperson **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** had announced after a 10 March ordinary council of ministers session that President Doumbouya had ordered the cessation of activities at Simandou, reportedly to obtain clarification from stakeholders how the operating model for the project will ensure the preservation of Guinea's interests.<sup>45</sup>

The Simandou iron ore deposit is divided into four blocks. The government awarded **Winning Consortium Simandou (WCS)** the mining rights to develop Blocks 1 and 2 in November 2019. The WCS consortium consists of **Société Minière de Boké (SMB)**, a consortium formed by **Singapore**-based shipowner **Winning Shipping**, **China**-based aluminum producer **Shandong Weiqiao**, **China**-based **Yantai Port group**, and **Guinea**-based transport company and logistics **United Mining Supply (UMS)**.<sup>46</sup> Southern Blocks 3 and 4 have mixed ownership, with **Australia**-based **Rio Tinto** owning 45.05% of the deposit, and **Chinalco** and the **Guinean state** respectively hold the remaining 39.95% and 15% shares.<sup>47</sup> Rio Tinto was initially granted the concession in 1997.<sup>48</sup>

The work stoppage dates back to a meeting in December between Guinean state authorities and representatives of WCS and Rio Tinto, including Rio Tinto CEO **Jakob Stausholm**, in which both firms committed to developing the project.<sup>49</sup> In January, Doumbouya instructed prime minister **Mohamed Béavogui** to bring together sectoral ministers and ensure agreements are concluded to ensure the protection of Guinea's interests.<sup>50</sup> During a 3 March meeting, Doumbouya reportedly expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of progress.<sup>51</sup> A mines ministry source said Doumbouya wants WCS and Rio Tinto to collaborate in the construction of the 670-km **Transguinean** railway, which will transport the iron ore from Simandou to the deep sea port of **Matakong**.<sup>52</sup> At present, WCS is the only Simandou concessionaire involved in the railway construction and it is unclear how the two parties would work together.<sup>53</sup> The previous administration had made construction of the railway a non-negotiable requirement for the award of the Simandou block 1 and 2 mining rights, despite the fact that transporting the iron ore through **Liberia** would be shorter and less costly.<sup>54</sup>

While Doumbouya described his decision as a "little break", the moratorium on mining activity has caused concern in the Guinean mining sector. President Condé revoked the Simandou mining licence held by **Franco-Israeli** billionaire **Beny Steinmetz** and **Brazil**-based **Vale S.A** in 2014, claiming they had obtained the concession through corrupt means. The ensuing court battle only ended in February 2019 (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Mar 2019*). Doumbouya has promised that no contracts will be

<sup>41</sup> Africa Guinée, 3 Mar 2022

<sup>42</sup> Africa Guinée, 14 Mar 2022

<sup>43</sup> Africa Guinée, 17 Mar 2022

<sup>44</sup> Reuters, 27 Mar 2022

<sup>45</sup> GuinéeNews.org, 10 Mar 2022

<sup>46</sup> VOA Afrique, 13 Mar 2022

<sup>47</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>48</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>49</sup> Mining.com, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>50</sup> Vision Guinée, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>51</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Mar 2022

<sup>52</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>53</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Mar 2022

<sup>54</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

renegotiated, echoing a similar promise to mining industry stakeholders in the immediate aftermath of the 5 September coup.<sup>55</sup> The military junta took steps to ensure mining activities were not disrupted during that time frame (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Oct 2021*). Rio Tinto CEO Stausholm said in October that he saw the development of Simandou as “a core project”,<sup>56</sup> while SMB board chairman **Fadi Wazni** has previously declared that an agreement can be reached with Rio Tinto regarding collaboration.<sup>57</sup> NGO **Actions Mines Guinée** president **Amadou Bah** suggested that the state draw up a framework for collaboration between the two companies and define the terms of the agreement, “including the sharing of the financial envelope between them”.<sup>58</sup>

The Simandou iron ore project is Guinea’s most important economic development project.<sup>59</sup> The mining deposit is estimated to hold 1.8 billion tonnes of high-grade iron ore reserves, making it the third largest reservoir in the world after Australia’s **Pilbara** region and Brazil.<sup>60</sup> UK-based **CRU Group** estimates that Guinea will export 150m tonnes annually, when production begins, making it the third largest iron ore exporter in the world.<sup>61</sup> The **World Bank** reports that Guinea derives 35% of its gross domestic product from mining activities and is therefore counting on the proceeds of Simandou’s exploitation to improve its economic well-being.<sup>62</sup> Wazni has forecast that Simandou production will begin in 2025, while shipping of iron ore exports is expected to begin by the end of 2026.<sup>63</sup>

Guinean economist **Mamady Fanta Keita** notes that although the transition government wants Guinea to get the best deals possible, this could have been achieved without disrupting work at Simandou.<sup>64</sup> Keita suggests that upwards of 45,000 people risk losing their jobs if the Simandou project does not resume operations soon:

*"Simandou is already one of the biggest iron ore mining projects in Africa. Not only is it mining iron, but it supports lots of infrastructure programmes in Guinea."*

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<sup>55</sup> VOA Afrique, 13 Mar 2022

<sup>56</sup> VOA Afrique, 13 Mar 2022

<sup>57</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Mar 2022

<sup>58</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Mar 2022

<sup>59</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>60</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>61</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>62</sup> DW, 23 Mar 2022

<sup>63</sup> Reuters, 11 Mar 2022

<sup>64</sup> DW, 23 Mar 2022

## Planner

(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

27 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Reuters*. Ruling junta reaches agreement with **Australia**-based **Rio Tinto** and a **Chinese**-backed consortium to resume activities at the **Simandou** iron ore deposit, after resolving infrastructure disputes;

24 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. Former **Banque Centrale de la République de Guinée (BCRG)** (central bank) governor **Louncény Nabé** is arrested and imprisoned for alleged corruption;

23 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *DW*. Mining sector expresses concern after military junta stopped operations at **Simandou** iron ore project of **Rio Tinto** and its partners following Col. **Mamady Doumbouya's** request for clarification on how the mine will preserve Guinea's national interests;

22 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Former foreign affairs minister **Ibrahima Kalil Kaba** arrested for his alleged implication in a leaked audio, whereby former president **Alpha Condé** implicitly calls for the overthrow of the current government;

21 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews*. A total of 61 political parties have opted to boycott the national dialogue (assises nationales) due to commence on 22 March;

21 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. **Mamadou Baldé** voted as president of the **Chambre de Commerce, d'industrie et d'Artisanat de Guinée (CCIAG)** (Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of Guinea);

18 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. **France**-based **Thomson Broadcast**, has signed an agreement with the Guinean state, to assist with digital migration, for the cost of €66 million (\$72.2m);

17 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Australia**-based **Golden Rim Resources** seeks to issue around 68 million ordinary shares in a placement aimed at raising \$4.6m to finance activities for the **Kada** gold project;

15 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. **Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (CRIEF)** (economic and financial crimes court) prosecutor **Aly Touré** says hearings at the court could commence in April;

14 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The **Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (Crief)** (economic and financial crimes court) has indicted state-owned electricity firm **Électricité de Guinée (EDG)** director general **Bangaly Maty** on allegations of corruption;

12 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Travelers to Guinea who are fully vaccinated against **Covid-19** will no longer have to present a negative PCR test upon arrival at the **Aéroport International Ahmed Sékou Touré**;

10 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *GuinéeNews.org*. Guinean president and head of the **Comité National de Redressement et du Développement (CNRD)** military transition council Col. **Mamadi Doumbouya** suspends activity at all four blocks of the **Simandou** iron ore deposit, indicating the CNRD's intention to gain clarification on the operating model of the megaproject;

10 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. Guinean president and head of the **Comité National de Redressement et du Développement (CNRD)** military transition council **Col. Mamadi Doumbouya** announces that national meetings regarding the ongoing political transition will take place on 22 March;

9 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Former prime minister **Dr. Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** has accepted a proposal to take over the presidency of the former ruling party, the **RPG Arc-en-ciel**;

7 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Former ruling party **RPG arc-en-ciel** designates former prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** as its sole candidate for upcoming party leadership elections;

6 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Anadolu Agency*. The **United States** department of treasury **Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)** has named two Guinean businessmen, **Ali Saadi** and **Ibrahim Taher**, as financiers of **Lebanese** political military movement **Hezbollah**;

5 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The transitional government will continue to audition members of former president **Alpha Condé's** government, accused of corruption, after ex-prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** and former defence minister **Mohamed Diané** appeared before the judicial directorate of the national gendarmerie;

4 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Australia**-based **Golden Rim Resources** estimates that the **Kaba** gold project, in which it holds an exploitation concession, contains 930,000 ounces of gold;

3 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the **United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)** have called on the Guinean transitional government to provide an acceptable electoral calendar, after it failed to organise an election six months after the September 2021 military coup, in-line with ECOWAS regulations

3 Mar 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. Government spokesman **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** reports that a landslide at the **Kassengua** mine in **Gaoual** prefecture killed 18 people;

28 Feb 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Violent clashes take place in Conakry between security forces and supporters of former prime ministers and current opposition leaders **Cellou Dalein Diallo** and **Sidya Touré**, after security forces attempted to enforce their eviction from their private residences, which the government alleges have been built on state land

25 Feb 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée news.org*. **Cour de Répression des Infractions Economiques et Financières (CRIEF)** (economic and financial crimes court) has recommended that detained former budget minister **Ismaël Dioubaté** pay a deposit of GNF 5 billion (\$557,000) before he can be provisionally released from detention on corruption charges;

24 Feb 2022 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **South Africa**-based miner **AngloGold Ashanti** reports that the **Siguiri** gold mine produced 258,000 ounces in 2021, a 21% y/y increase;

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