

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinea Summary 22 July 2020

President Alpha Condé (2010-present) announces the extension of Guinea's national state of emergency to limit the spread of Covid-19 for a further 30 days from 16 July until 16 August, but authorises the resumption of international commercial flights. Economic cluster ministers defend the government's Covid-19 response plan, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts Guinea will experience economic growth of 6.6% in 2021. The opposition and civil society coalition, the Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC), and the presidential majority Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel) fail to engage in internationally brokered dialogue over President Condé's ability to run for a third presidential term.

State of emergency extended for fourth time ...

President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) announced a 30-day extension of **Guinea's** national state of emergency on 15 July as the country continues to manage the ongoing **Covid-19** pandemic. The extension runs from 16 July until 16 August.¹ This is the fourth extension of the state emergency since it was initially implemented on 27 March.

Along with extending the state of emergency, President Condé has eased several Covid-19-related restrictions. Condé lifted national curfew across Guinea, with the exception of **Greater Conakry** (Grand Conakry) region, comprising the capital, **Conakry**, and the **Dubreka** and **Coyah** prefectures.² Curfew for Greater Conakry was readjusted to run from midnight to 4 am, while markets in Greater Conakry will close daily at 6pm. Condé indicated that air borders would reopen and international commercial flights would be permitted to fly to Guinea from 17 July.

President Condé reiterated that wearing of protective masks in public and private spaces remains compulsory while expressing his frustration about the failure of Guineans to respect physical distancing measures, wear protective masks and adhere to the ban on travel outside of Conakry. Condé cited these as reasons for the increase in infections in the interior of the country.³ Condé noted that the **Agence Nationale de la Sécurité Sanitaire (ANSS)** was in the process of establishing a testing protocol in collaboration with the Guinean civil aviation authority for prospective travellers.⁴

The decision to lift certain Covid-19 related restrictions followed directives in June to end the nationwide curfew while primary and secondary schools for examination classes and universities were authorised to reopen on 29 June (see *ARC Briefing Guinea June 2020*).⁵ The national education ministry indicated it would pursue a phased reopening of schools to run from 29 June to 6 August.⁶ **Syndicat Libre des Enseignants et Chercheurs de Guinée (SLECG)** (Guinea union of teachers and researchers) president **Aboubacar Soumah** commended the school reopening, however SLECG spokesperson **Adrien Ghamy** acknowledged that some learning institutions had not opened due to the absence of testing kits.⁷

¹ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

² Guineenews.org, 15 Jun 2020

³ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁴ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁵ Guineenews.org, 15 Jun 2020

⁶ Guineenews.org, 2 Jul 2020

⁷ Guinée Matin, 30 Jun 2020

Health and public hygiene minister Colonel **Remy Lemah** provided an update on 13 July of recent measures the government had undertaken to control the spread of Covid-19. Lemah said by 11 July, Guinea had carried out 32,683 Covid-19 tests, with testing capacity having increased from 250 to 1,000 tests per day. The number of treatment centres had increased from two to nine, with six of them located in the pandemic epicentre of Conakry, while the other three were set up in **Boké, Fria** and **Kindia** prefectures. Hospital bed capacity has increased from 600 to 1,200 beds. Lemah added the government was working with health sector professionals, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the media to carry out an awareness campaign and assist in the distribution of medical equipment, which cost 125 billion GNF (\$12.9m). Lemah said epidemiological treatment centres would be created at **Boké, Fria, Kankan, Macenta, Mamou, Nzérékoré** prefectures.

While Guinea has registered a high recovery rate, the country's health system is highly under-resourced, despite efforts to fill longstanding gaps in the health sector. At the time of writing, Guinea had recorded 6,652 confirmed cases, 5,771 recoveries and 41 deaths from Covid-19.⁸

... as economic cluster ministers defend Covid-19 response plan measures

Cabinet ministers from the government's economic cluster have defended measures undertaken with respect to Guinea's 3,000 billion GNF (\$314.9m) Covid-19 economic and social response plan. Economy and finance minister **Mamadi Camara** on 25 June underscored that 40 billion GNF (\$4.1m) had been earmarked to support special economic interest groups and small and medium-sized industries (SMIs).⁹ Camara said hotel industry and travel agents had respectively received 27,324 billion GNF (\$2.83m) and 13,576 billion GNF (\$1.4m) from the government to offset the suspension of their activities.¹⁰ Camara said the government had committed to fully repaying the debts of firms whose debts amounted to less than 500m GNF (\$51,900) and to date has paid 4,849 billion GNF (\$508,200) to companies. The government also intends to pay 200 billion GNF (\$20.7m) in value added tax (VAT) credits as an additional measure to support businesses during this period.¹¹

Trade minister **Boubacar Barry** reported on 3 July that the government had acquired stocks of basic food necessities including cooking oil, onions, rice, sugar, tomatoes and wheat, to prevent shortages of these items.¹² Barry assured that the prices of these goods would not increase, as the government has lifted customs duties on the import of these products.¹³ In preparation for the implementation of the second phase of the economic and social response plan, the **Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (ANIES)** (national agency for economic and social inclusion) announced it would commence surveys of 45,000 households, to identify the poorest households.¹⁴ The exercise aims to identify the beneficiaries of the cash transfer and food distribution programme it intends to extend to 130,000 households or 850,000 people.¹⁵

Guinea's multi-faceted response plan has recognised the need to provide support to the private sector as well as the country's most vulnerable. Against a poverty rate of 60%, the government has committed to paying utility bills for the poorest households during the ongoing crisis. The government's ability to obtain support from institutions such as the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank** (see *ARC Briefing Guinea June 2020*) is testament to the confidence these stakeholders have in its response plan.

⁸ Guinée Matin, 21 Jul 2020

⁹ Guineenews.org, 26 Jun 2020

¹⁰ Guineenews.org, 26 Jun 2020

¹¹ Guineenews.org, 26 Jun 2020

¹² Guineenews.org, 5 Jul 2020

¹³ Guineenews.org, 5 Jul 2020

¹⁴ Guineenews.org, 18 Jul 2020

¹⁵ Guineenews.org, 18 Jul 2020

IMF projects 6.6% growth in 2021...

The IMF published a country note on 16 July following the release of a \$148m **Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)** financing mechanism. The report underscores the economic challenges that Guinea has experienced since the outbreak of Covid-19. Mining activity fell by 5% during the first quarter (Q1) of activity, while gold and bauxite exports fell during the same period by 6.6% and 20% respectively. The current economic slowdown has also severely affected retail trade, tourism and transport.¹⁶

As a result of increased imports, gold reserves have fallen to \$1.2 billion and the government will need \$349m (equivalent to 2.4% of gross domestic product) to meet its balance of payment (BOP) operations. Inflation is set to reach 9.1%, while economic growth will fall from the pre-Covid-19 estimate of 5.8% to 1.8%.¹⁷ Despite the immediate negative economic impact of Covid-19, the IMF estimates Guinea will experience economic growth of 6.6% in 2021, an improvement from initial projections of 6.2%. Nonetheless, the IMF has raised concern that possible political instability in the lead-up to and after the October 2020 presidential election may disrupt these predictions.¹⁸

... as government prepares its 2021 budget

Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** outlined Guinea's budget orientation for 2021 in a letter presented to budget minister **Ismael Dioubate**, economy and finance minister **Mamadi Camara** and planning minister **Kanny Diallo** on 10 July. The highlights of the budget include:

- Preservation of macroeconomic stability and respect of international financial commitments
- Pursuing inclusive economic growth and prosperity sharing
- Revival of economic activity to ensure employment preservation
- Budget transparency and efficient management of public finances
- Control of energy sector subsidies
- Intensification of internal resource mobilisation efforts.¹⁹

The budget directives provide that the deficit should not exceed 3.2% of GDP, while budget allocations to the agriculture department will be at least 10% of the budget. National, technical and higher education should together receive 20% of the budget. To foster poverty reduction and alleviation, ANIES will have a budget of 250 billion GNF (\$25.9m), with the aim of reaching 390,000 households and 2.5 million people.²⁰

Ruling party and opposition at loggerheads over Condé's third term push

The stalemate between the presidential majority and the opposition continues as President Condé's supporters increasingly call for him to run for a third term in the 18 October presidential elections, while the opposition holds demonstrations to protest such an occurrence. The hard-line stance that both sides have adopted could lead to a violent pre-electoral, electoral and post-election period if Condé decides to heed to the call of his supporters.²¹

In a bid to reduce tensions with respect to the ongoing socio-political crisis, the **African Union (AU)**, **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and the **United Nations (UN)** held consultations with the presidential majority and the opposition, with the aim of establishing direct talks between both parties.²² On 3 July, a delegation from the ruling **Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel)** attended a meeting in Conakry with the international partners. State minister **Naby Youssouf Bangoura** represented the RPG Arc-en-Ciel. The ruling coalition delegation expressed President Condé's desire to pursue talks with the opposition. However,

¹⁶ IMF, 16 Jul 2020

¹⁷ IMF, 16 Jul 2020

¹⁸ IMF, 16 Jul 2020

¹⁹ Guineenews.org, 17 Jul 2020

²⁰ Guineenews.org, 17 Jul 2020

²¹ ARC Guinea Analyst

²² Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

the RPG Arc-en-Ciel will not agree to the opposition's demands for the cancellation of the results of the 22 March constitutional referendum and legislative elections as well as the withdrawal of the new constitution, which was enacted on 6 April.²³

The AU, ECOWAS and UN held a similar meeting by videoconference on 4 July with members of the **Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**.²⁴ The FNDC is a collective of opposition parties and civil society organisations opposed to the constitutional change and President Condé's efforts to undertake another presidential mandate. Key attendees included **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** president **Ceillou Dalein Diallo**, **Union des Forces Republicaines (UFR)** president **Sidiya Touré**, FNDC coordinator **Abdourahmane Sano**, **Parti des Democratés pour l'Espoir (PADES)** president **Ousmane Kaba**, and former prime minister **Lansana Kouyaté**.²⁵ No tangible results emerged from the meeting. Following the session, Touré reiterated the FNDC's call for President Condé not to declare his candidacy for the October elections. Touré added that the constitution must be revoked and the **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) dissolved.²⁶ The FNDC has recently shown mistrust towards ECOWAS, claiming the regional body did not exert sufficient pressure on the government not to organise the 22 November double vote.²⁷

Following the failure of the meetings to convince both sides to undertake dialogue, the FNDC continued to make plans for nationwide anti-government demonstrations to take place on 20 July.²⁸ The protest was initially set to occur on 8 July, but was rescheduled on 3 July, the same day the FNDC buried eight of its members in Conakry who had been killed in earlier demonstrations.²⁹ In the lead-up to the protests, the FNDC issued a communiqué on 17 July accusing the government of intimidating its lawyers.³⁰ The FNDC alleged that government security forces had tried to kidnap its operation coordinator, **Ibrahima Diallo**, at his residence.³¹

In response to these accusations and previously documented transgressions by the government and security forces, **United Kingdom**-based NGO **Amnesty International** released a report on 18 July denouncing the "*arbitrary detention*" of local activists.³² Amnesty International cited the intimidation of activists and the regular ban on demonstrations and called on the government to respect Guineans' right to exercise their freedom of expression. **United States**-based NGO **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** made similar allegations in April and May, which the Guinean government denied (see *ARC Briefing Guinea April-May 2020*).

Despite the publication of the Amnesty International report, territorial administration minister General **Bourema Condé** on 19 July banned the holding of the FNDC protest.³³ In a strongly worded statement, Condé said the government would deploy the forces of law and order if the FNDC did not follow its directive.³⁴ On the day of the demonstration, a heavy police presence prevented Dalein Diallo from leaving his Conakry residence.³⁵ According to the security ministry, few people answered the FNDC's call to protest, with only a few groups attempting to demonstrate in certain areas of the capital.³⁶ However, the FNDC noted in a counter-statement that protest action took place across Conakry and that security forces' actions led to the injury of 20 FNDC members.³⁷

²³ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

²⁴ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

²⁵ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

²⁶ Guineenews.org, 5 Jul 2020

²⁷ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

²⁸ Guineenews.org, 3 Jul 2020

²⁹ Aminata.com, 3 Jul 2020

³⁰ Guineenews.org, 17 Jul 2020

³¹ Guineenews.org, 17 Jul 2020

³² RFI, 18 Jul 2020

³³ Guineenews.org, 19 Jul 2020

³⁴ Guineenews.org, 19 Jul 2020

³⁵ Vision Guinée, 20 Jul 2020

³⁶ Vision Guinée, 20 Jul 2020

³⁷ Vision Guinée, 20 Jul 2020

RPG arc-en-ciel regional delegates will choose the party's presidential candidate on 5 August. The selection of these delegates will take place throughout the second half of July.³⁸ While the opposition and the presidential majority continue to wrangle over President Condé's potential third presidential term, Condé himself has been extremely coy. Throughout the past weeks he has not made any declaration to confirm or deny whether he will be a candidate. He has, however, argued that the introduction of a new constitution enables him to run for office again, as this cancels his previously served two terms.³⁹ The continued polarisation of the two sides and the failure of the international community to establish rapprochement make it increasingly likely that continued protests and the use of violence will characterise Guinea's presidential electoral period.⁴⁰

Planner

5 Aug 2020 (Guinea) **Rassemblement des Peuples Guineés Arc-en-Ciel** (RPG arc-en-ciel) elective conference

18 Oct 2020 (**Guinea**) Presidential elections (date to be confirmed)

(Date TBA due to Covid-19) **Conakry (Guinea)** Transform Africa Conference;

Chronology

20 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. The **Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** claims 20 of its members were injured during anti-government protests, while the security ministry claims there were no injuries;

18 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. **United Kingdom**-based NGO **Amnesty International**, publishes a report criticising the arbitrary arrest of members of the civil society and opposition pressure group, the **Front National pour de la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**;

17 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. International air travel for non-repatriation flights resumes in Guinea on 17 July;

17 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice** has ordered the Guinean government to pay \$ 47.5m to energy company **K-Energie**, finding the Guinean State guilty of violating the property rights of K-Energie by depriving the company of the use of its assets;

17 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Territorial administration minister **General Bouréma Condé** bans planned anti-government demonstrations that are set to take place on 20 July;

16 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *IMF*. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** predicts Guinea will generate economic growth of 6.6% in 2021;

15 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. President **Alpha Condé** extends the national state of emergency for an additional 30 days;

10 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. The ruling **Rassemblement des Peuples Guineen arc-en-ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel)** declares it will decide its candidate for the October presidential election on 5 August;

8 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. The **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** (French development agency) signs a financing agreement with the Guinean government for a €33.5m (\$38m) grant from 2020-24, which will support the education sector;

³⁸ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

³⁹ ARC Guinea Analyst

⁴⁰ ARC Guinea Analyst

7 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. Demonstrations take place in the **Kankan** area to protest on-going electricity cuts;

3 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. Transport minister **Aboubacar Sylla** reports Guinea's maritime sub-sector has lost \$7m since the start of the national state of emergency on 26 March;

29 Jun 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. The government says it has forfeited 381.1 billion GNF (\$39.3m) in taxes from businesses as a mechanism to support the private sector during the **Covid-19** pandemic;

27 Jun 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) ratifies the basic agreement authorising the development of the \$14 billion **Simandou** iron ore deposit by **Chinese-Guinean-Singaporean** consortium **SMB Winning**;

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