

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinea Summary 21 August 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 August until 16 September. The Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (ANIES) (national agency for economic and social inclusion) launches a national cash transfer scheme that will benefit 1.5 million individuals. The ruling Rassemblement des Peuples Guineéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel) endorses President Alpha Condé (2010-present) to be its candidate for the 18 October presidential election. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union and United Nations hold talks with the Guinean presidential majority and opposition in a bid to end the ongoing political impasse. France-based NGO Sherpa and rights group Collectif pour la Transition en Guinée (CTG) (Guinean transition Collective) lodge complaints at the Parquet National Financier pour la Corruption (national financial and corruption crime's court) against protégés and relatives of President Condé accused of corruption and influence peddling in the Guinean mining sector.

Fifth extension of Guinea's state of emergency ...

President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) announced a 30-day extension of **Guinea's** national state of emergency on 14 August.¹ This is the fifth extension of the state emergency since it was implemented on 27 March. In announcing the extension of the state of emergency, President Condé praised Guineans for their resilience during the five months since the country announced its first **Covid-19** case. Guinea had registered 8,260 positive cases, 7,177 recoveries and 50 deaths in its population of roughly 13.1 million on 14 August, indicating an 87% recovery rate.²

While extending the state of emergency, President Condé has further eased Covid-19-related restrictions. Curfew in the **Greater Conakry** (Grand Conakry) region, comprising the capital, **Conakry**, and the **Dubreka** and **Coyah** prefectures will run from midnight to 4am, while curfew is lifted for the rest of the country.³ International commercial flights are authorised to land in Guinea, as long as health protocols are respected.⁴ Condé said failure to respect basic health guidelines led to new cases in the interior of the country and reminded Guineans that mask wearing is compulsory in public and in their homes.⁵ Condé thanked societal stakeholders and development partners for assisting in the fight against Covid-19, noting that from 15 July to 15 August the positive case rate following testing had reduced from 7.9% to 6.7%.⁶

Guinea launches national cash transfer programme

The **Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (ANIES)** (national agency for economic and social inclusion) launched a national cash transfer scheme on 13 August.⁷ During the first phase of the scheme, 240,000 households (1.5 million individuals) will receive monthly payments of 250,000

¹ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

² Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

³ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁴ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁵ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁶ Guineenews.org, 15 Jul 2020

⁷ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

GNF (\$25).⁸ The programme will begin in Conakry, where 17,000 households have been identified as beneficiaries.⁹ Households in nine prefectures that were selected as part of the pilot phase of the programme will also receive support.¹⁰ These include **Beyla, Dabola, Forecariah, Gaoual, Kindia, Kouroussa, Kerouane, Mamou and Tougue**.¹¹ Households were identified for the programme following a data collection process coordinated by the **Institut Nationale des Statistiques (INS)** (national institute of statistics), with assistance from ANIES and the **World Bank**.¹² **France**-based biometrics firm **IDEMIA** helped to register the beneficiaries.¹³ **South Africa**-based telecommunications firm **MTN** has provided a SIM card for each household in order to receive transfers through mobile money.¹⁴ Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** said the programme, announced in January, will help to lift 6 million people out of poverty by 2025.¹⁵

The Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the Guinean economy. Inflation is set to reach 9.1%, while economic growth will fall from the pre-Covid-19 estimate of 5.8% to 1.8% (see *ARC Briefing Guinea July 2020*).¹⁶ Guinea already had very high poverty and extreme poverty levels, affecting 60% (7.5 million) and 25-30% of Guineans respectively, according to the prime minister's office.¹⁷ The cash transfer programme complements Guinea's 3,000 billion GNF (\$314.9m) Covid-19 economic and social response plan.

Ruling party chooses Condé as its presidential candidate ...

The presidential majority **Rassemblement des Peuples Guinéens Arc-en-Ciel (RPG arc-en-ciel)** has endorsed President Alpha Condé as its candidate for the 18 October presidential election.¹⁸ The RPG arc-en-ciel national convention commenced on 5 August at the **Palais de Peuple** in Conakry, where political bureau members and regional delegates chose the party's presidential candidate.¹⁹ RPG arc-en-ciel national coordinator **Hadja Nantou Cherif** declared on 6 August that the party had selected President Condé as its electoral candidate.²⁰ President Condé outlined to party members the conditions to be fulfilled in order for him to definitively accept the nomination, calling on politicians, public administration officials and members of government to make greater efforts towards engaging with grassroots supporters:

*"If you want me to be your candidate, you have to make a commitment that the RPG is what it was in the beginning, that is, a party that leaves no one behind, especially young people and women. If we agree that the next six years should allow Guinean youth to master knowledge and be an example for African countries."*²¹

Leaders of Guinea's most prominent opposition parties were critical of the decision by the ruling party. **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** president **Cellou Dalein Diallo** described the endorsement as the culmination of a process that Condé began almost a year ago, involving amendment of the constitution in order to be able to run for a third term:

⁸ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

⁹ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹⁰ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹¹ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹² Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹³ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹⁴ Financial Afrik, 14 Aug 2020

¹⁵ Vision Guinee, 15 Aug 2020

¹⁶ IMF, 16 Jul 2020

¹⁷ Guineenews.org, 16 Jan 2020

¹⁸ RFI, 6 Aug 2020

¹⁹ RFI, 6 Aug 2020

²⁰ DW, 7 Aug 2020

²¹ DW, 7 Aug 2020

“He violated the old Constitution, he had this new Constitution painfully adopted, without the participation of the people, but the Guineans showed him their opposition to this presidency for life.”²²

Opposition **Union des Forces Republicains (UFR)** president **Sidiya Touré** accused Condé of taking Guinea ten years backwards in its political trajectory.²³

President Condé signed a decree on 11 August confirming 18 October as the date for presidential elections.²⁴ RPG arc-en-ciel communication officer **Sidiki Touré** said he was confident that the **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (national independent electoral commission) would ensure the smooth organisation of elections and that participating political parties would be ready by election day.²⁵ CENI president **Kabinet Cissé** issued a communiqué on 18 August setting the deposit for would-be presidential candidates at 800m GNF (\$82,902).²⁶ The timeframe for aspiring candidates to present their candidacy files runs from 18 August to 8 September.²⁷

... as international bodies seek to head off electoral violence

The hard-line faction of the Guinean opposition continues to delegitimise the organisation of the October elections and has ruled out its participation. Four members of the **Front Nationale pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, a collective of opposition parties and civil society organisations opposed to President Condé’s efforts to undertake another presidential mandate, filed a complaint on 12 August to **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** chairman **Jean-Claude Brou**.²⁸ The complainants accuse the Guinean government of falsifying the constitution, which was adopted during the 22 March referendum, saying the document voted during the referendum differed from the framework that President Condé enacted on 6 April.²⁹ If ECOWAS rules that the current constitution is not valid, Condé would not be allowed to run for a third term in October.³⁰

The FNDC has organised anti-government protests since October, which have resulted in the deaths of scores of FNDC supporters and raise the spectre of electoral violence ahead of the October presidential race. A meeting involving ECOWAS, the **African Union** and the **United Nations** was set to take place during the week of 10 August to facilitate political dialogue between the FNDC and the presidential majority and build on similar efforts undertaken in July.³¹ However, the two sides gave no commitment to discussions.

ECOWAS, AU and UN officials met with the FNDC and presidential majority via videoconference on 15 August. Jean-Claude Brou represented ECOWAS, while former **Burundi** president **Pierre Buyoya** (1987-1993 and 1996-2003) and special representative of the secretary general for the **UN in West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas** represented the AU.³² They were joined by the foreign affairs ministers of **Burkina Faso, Niger** and **Nigeria**.³³ Brou said the meeting aimed to recommence dialogue to ensure the 18 October elections would take place and added that “*stability*” is the priority of ECOWAS.³⁴ The delegation first held discussions with members of the presidential majority, who echoed the need to preserve stability.³⁵ A meeting with officials from CENI and the **Cour**

²² RFI, 7 Aug 2020

²³ Guineenews.org, 7 Aug 2020

²⁴ DW, 12 Aug 2020

²⁵ DW, 12 Aug 2020

²⁶ Aminata.com, 19 Aug 2020

²⁷ Aminata.com, 19 Aug 2020

²⁸ RFI, 12 Aug 2020

²⁹ RFI, 12 Aug 2020

³⁰ ARC Guinea Analyst

³¹ Africa Guinee, 12 Aug 2020

³² Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

³³ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

³⁴ RFI, 17 Aug 2020

³⁵ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

Constitutionnelle (constitutional court) followed, with ECOWAS promising to provide technical support to CENI in the lead-up to elections.³⁶ The final deliberations were held with the FNDC, which laid out the conditions to be fulfilled before it will commit to participating in the presidential elections. These include the cancellation of the 22 March double vote, the liberation of political prisoners, the revision of voter lists and the non-participation of President Condé in the October elections.³⁷ The FNDC has said it is willing to engage in dialogue with the presidential majority, a view shared by its counterparts. However, the RPG Arc-en-Ciel refuses to adhere to the opposition's demands to cancel the results of the 22 March constitutional referendum and legislative elections and withdraw the new constitution.³⁸

Despite the efforts made by the ECOWAS-led delegation, the opposition has expressed scepticism about ECOWAS' ability to act as a neutral body during the political impasse. An anonymous FNDC member stated after the meeting that "*ECOWAS appears to prioritise stability to the detriment of democratic transition*".³⁹

The **United States (US) Embassy** in Conakry issued a statement on 17 August acknowledging its support for democratic institutions and processes, and encouraging the organisation of free, fair and transparent elections.⁴⁰ The communiqué called on all Guinean parties to refrain from violence and engage in dialogue to find peaceful solutions to their grievances.⁴¹ The statement concluded with an appeal to Guinean authorities to finalise investigations into the deaths of individuals killed during protests.⁴² The **Catholic** Archbishop of Conakry, **Monsignor Vincent Coulibaly**, echoed these calls, asking the government to bring the perpetrators of political violence to justice, while promoting dialogue and condemning the loss of life during protests.⁴³ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including US-based **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** and **United Kingdom (UK)-based Amnesty International** have made similar pleas over the past months with respect to trying perpetrators of violence.⁴⁴

Although President Condé continues to be characteristically ambiguous as to whether he will run for a third presidential term, it is likely he will accept the nomination, as no other leader within the presidential majority has been earmarked to stand as its candidate for the elections. While it is still unclear if the opposition will participate, the possibility of violence in the lead-up to, during and after elections is high, particularly with both sides refusing to engage in dialogue. Anti-constitutional change protests from October 2019 to February 2020 led to a reported 32 deaths, while 12 individuals died in Conakry during the 22 March double vote.⁴⁵ The international community will play an important role in bringing both sides to the table and preventing increased polarisation of positions.

French rights groups lay corruption complaints against Condé's entourage

Two non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations in **France** have lodged complaints with French judicial institutions over claims of corruption and influence peddling in the mining sector, allegedly by family members and close associates of President Condé.⁴⁶ France-based anti-corruption NGO **Sherpa** filed a complaint at the **Parquet National Financier pour la Corruption** (national financial and corruption crimes court) in **Paris** on 31 July, in regard to payments that **Anglo-Australian** miner **Rio Tinto** allegedly made to consultants after the

³⁶ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

³⁷ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

³⁸ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jul 2020

³⁹ RFI, 17 Aug 2020

⁴⁰ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

⁴¹ Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

⁴² Guineenews.org, 17 Aug 2020

⁴³ Africa Guinee, 17 Aug 2020

⁴⁴ ARC Guinea Analyst

⁴⁵ African Center for Strategic Studies, 28 Apr 2020

⁴⁶ Guinee Matin, 31 Jul 2020

government awarded them the mining rights to the **Simandou** iron ore deposit.⁴⁷ The accusation stipulates that following the conclusion of an agreement to grant the mining concession to Rio Tinto, the firm paid \$10.3m to French investment banker and former adviser at the **French Cour des Comptes** (court of accounts) **Francois de Combret** for his role as a consultant for the transaction.⁴⁸ Sherpa claims they have evidence from 2011 of emails in which Rio Tinto executives mentioned financial disbursements made to Combret in his capacity as a consultant for the Simandou deal.⁴⁹ At the time of the transaction, Combret served as an adviser to President Condé.⁵⁰ French investigative media outlet **Mediapart** first revealed the details of the commission payment in 2016 and the matter is currently under investigation by the UK's **Serious Fraud Office (SFO)**.⁵¹

Sherpa lawyer **Vincent Brengarth** justified the lodging of the complaint in France on the grounds that Combret is a French national:

*"This initiative aims to shed light on behaviour that undermines the general interest and harms the development of Guinea, by promoting the logic of personal enrichment."*⁵²

The **Collectif pour la Transition en Guinée (CTG)** (Guinean transition collective) lodged a complaint at the same French court on 4 August.⁵³ CTG alleges that President Condé's son, **Mohamed Condé**, defence minister **Mohamed Diané**, and Diané's niece, **Fatoumata Kalo**, are responsible for the disappearance of €171m (\$201.6m) emanating from a mining deal.⁵⁴ CTG claims that several financial transactions took place from 2012 to 2013 between Guinea and France involving the **Société Minière de Boké (SMB)**, a branch of **China-Singaporean** consortium **SMB Winning**, and France-based **Alliance Minière Responsable (AMR)**.⁵⁵ CTG lawyer **Jean-Baptiste Soufron** alleges the individuals mentioned in the complaint sold assets to SMB on behalf of AMR at an overvalued price, which was beneficial to AMR shareholders, who are protégés of the Conakry regime.⁵⁶ AMR has denied the allegations.⁵⁷

This is not the first time Mohamed Condé has been embroiled in financial controversy. In 2015 an investigation was launched to identify the origin of his property portfolio, including his ownership of a luxury apartment in Paris.⁵⁸ The investigation, which is ongoing, has implicated several French personalities including former minister **Arnaud Montebourg**, businessman **Xavier Nel**, and **Anne Lauvergeon**, former CEO of France-based nuclear giant **Areva**.⁵⁹

The allegations against high-placed individuals in the strategic Guinean mining sector send a bad signal to investors. The Simandou iron ore project and the involvement of controversial French-**Israeli** businessman **Benny Steinmetz** have cast a reputational cloud over Guinea's mining sector for close to a decade. While the dispute between Guinea and Steinmetz was definitively resolved in February 2019 (see *ARC Briefing Guinea March 2019*), the latest case indicates that further issues could arise from the Simandou mining concession. Mohamed Condé continues to be influential in Guinea's political circles as a protégé of current SMB chairman **Fadi Wazni**, whose company owns the concessions for blocks 1 and 2 of the Simandou iron ore deposit.⁶⁰

⁴⁷ Guinee Matin, 31 Jul 2020

⁴⁸ RFI, 2 Aug 2020

⁴⁹ RFI, 2 Aug 2020

⁵⁰ Guinee Matin, 31 Jul 2020

⁵¹ RFI, 2 Aug 2020

⁵² Guinee Matin, 31 Jul 2020

⁵³ Guineenews.org, 4 Aug 2020

⁵⁴ Guineenews.org, 4 Aug 2020

⁵⁵ Guineenews.org, 4 Aug 2020

⁵⁶ Guineenews.org, 4 Aug 2020

⁵⁷ RFI, 11 Aug 2020

⁵⁸ RFI, 5 Aug 2020

⁵⁹ RFI, 5 Aug 2020

⁶⁰ ARC Guinea analyst

Planner

18 Oct 2020 **(Guinea)** Presidential elections

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

Chronology

14 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. President **Alpha Condé** extends Guinea's state of emergency for an additional 30 days as part of its **Covid-19** response efforts;

13 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. The opposition and civil society pressure coalition, the **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, has lodged a complaint with the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission**, contesting President **Alpha Condé's** ability to run for a third presidential term of office;

13 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. The **Agence Nationale d'Inclusion Economique et Sociale (ANIES)** (national agency of social inclusion) is set to commence a nationwide cash transfer programme which will benefit 240,000 households or 1.5 million individuals;

12 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. President **Alpha Condé** confirms 18 October as the date on which Guinea's presidential elections will take place;

11 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. **Tribunal de Première Instance de Kaloum** (Kaloum court of first instance) public prosecutor **Alpha Seny Camara** announces two high-ranking officials at the post and telecommunications ministry have been arrested for the alleged embezzlement of \$51m through the **Autorité de Régulation des Postes et Télécommunications (ARPT)** (post and telecommunications regulatory authority);

6 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. The ruling **Rassemblement pour la Guinée Arc-en-ciel** nominates President **Alpha Condé** to stand as its presidential candidate in the 18 October presidential elections;

6 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinée*. Prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana** announces that the construction of 10,000 low cost social housing units will commence before the end of 2020;

4 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. The **Collectif pour la Transition en Guinée (CTG)** (Guinean transition collective) lodged a complaint **Parquet National Financier pour la Corruption** (national financial and corruption crimes court) in **Paris (France)** alleging that President Condé's son, **Mohamed Condé**, defence minister **Mohamed Diané** and Diané's niece, **Fatoumata Kalo**, are responsible for the disappearance of €171m (\$201.6m) emanating from a mining deal

4 Aug 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. President **Alpha Condé** instructs the transport ministry to accelerate negotiations for the commencement of work on the 65 km **Conakry-Kouria** railway which **China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC)** will build on the **Build Operate Transfer (BOT)** model;

2 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin* The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** has approved \$71.3m in budget support aid to **Benin, Togo and Guinea** to finance the **Multi-Country Support Program for the response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (PARCovid-19)**

31 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. France-based anti-corruption NGO **Sherpa** has lodged a complaint at the **Parquet National Financier pour la Corruption** (national financial and corruption crimes court) in **Paris** against former Guinean presidential adviser **François de Combret** for allegedly receiving a commission of \$10.5m as a consultant for **Anglo-Australian** miner **Rio Tinto** during negotiations for the **Simandou** iron ore deposit concession;

27 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guineenews.org*. Australia-based **Golden Rim Resources** concludes a binding memorandum of understanding to acquire up to a 75% interest in the Guinean **Kada** gold project from **Vetro Gold** and **Turkey-based Elta**;

24 Jul 2020 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. Public works minister **Moustapha Naité** declares 2,500 km (5%) of Guinea's 43,000 km road network is tarred;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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