

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinea Summary 13 December 2024

Guinea's anti-corruption court sentences former Assemblée nationale (national assembly) president Amadou Damaro Camara to four years imprisonment for fraud, corruption and personal enrichment. The government's draft budget for 2025 forecasts a 7% growth rate, almost entirely based on the Simandou iron ore project going ahead. The African Development Bank loans \$81m to Guinea and Senegal for improvements to a road linking the two countries. A football match at the N'zérékoré stadium held in the name of General Mamadi Doumbouya (2021-present) turns into a stampede, leaving an estimated 150 dead.

CRIEF condemns former parliament president to 20 years for fraud

Guinea's anti-corruption court, **cour de repression des infractions économiques et financières (CRIEF)**, on 2 December sentenced the former **Assemblée nationale** (national assembly) president **Amadou Damaro Camara** to four years in prison for embezzling public funds, personal enrichment, money laundering and corruption. He was also fined GNF 10m (\$1,158) and his personal possessions have been requisitioned.¹

Camara, 71, was the last president of Guinea's parliament until the 5 September 2021 coup that removed former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021) from power. He was arrested on 27 April 2022. He is among several former high-ranking government officials from the Condé presidency, either wanted or in detention for similar offenses. One other high profile case concern former prime minister **Ibrahima Kassory Fofana**, who on 11 December was granted the right to be evacuated to a foreign country for medical reasons. Following his arrest in April 2022, he had been held in Conakry's central prison, **Maison d'arrêt de Conakry**, where his health deteriorated.² He had already been interrogated while in hospital.

The charges against Fofana are similar: illicit personal enrichment, embezzlement of public funds and corruption.³ Similar to the one conducted against the previous junta of **Moussa Dadis Camara** (2008-2010), these trials are primarily designed to project an image of a government being serious about fighting bad governance and corruption.

Government announces a draft 2025 finance bill

Economy and finance minister **Facinet Sylla** and planning and international cooperation minister **Ismael Nabé** presented the draft 2025 budget to the **Conseil national de la transition (CNT)** (national transitional council), Guinea's provisional parliament, on 9 December. Nabé explained that the budget is built on three premises - first that growth will be at 7% next year, mostly supported by continued investment in the **Simandou** iron ore extraction projects; second, that inflation would be pegged at 6% and third, that the exchange rate of the Guinea franc against the **United States (US)** dollar would be at GNF 8,478 to the US dollar.⁴ It currently stands at GNF 8,658 to the US dollar.⁵

¹ Guineenews, 2 Dec 2024; Le Lynx, 2 Dec 2024

² Guinee360, 11 Dec 2024

³ Guinee360, 11 Dec 2024

⁴ Guineenews, 9 Dec 2024

⁵ Banque centrale de la République de Guinée, 11 Dec 2024

The government has tied Guinea's growth figures almost entirely to the expected Simandou performance and targeted expenditure to the rolling out of the **Project Simandou 2040**, which seeks to stimulate agriculture, diversify the economy away from minerals extraction, promote capacity building among Guineans, build infrastructure and enhance digital technology.⁶

Concerning revenues and expenditures for 2025, these are projected to go up by 12.1% and 8.4% respectively.⁷ The expenditures consist of 62.3% of recurring costs and 37.7% of what Sylla calls investments, mostly tied to the preparation of rolling out Project Simandou 2040.⁸ Expenditure is expected to be GNF 41.89 trillion (\$4.78 billion) while revenue is projected to be GNF 33 trillion (\$3.82 billion). Recurring costs include GNF 10 trillion (\$1.11 billion), earmarked as recurrent costs which constitute the state's wage bill, another GNF 2.21 trillion (\$243.36m) for pensions for civilians and the military, GNF 3 trillion (\$347.66m) for electricity subsidies and GNF 2.15 trillion (\$249.15m) for interest payments. The budget deficit is forecast to be 2.8% of GDP, within the convergence criteria of 3% set as a benchmark by the **West African Monetary Union**.

While the economy is still recovering from the oil depot explosion at central Conakry last December, Nabé sees a more positive environment internationally, where, from his perspective, **China** is the most important trading partner by far and a reliable market for most of Guinea's bauxite and, in the near future, almost all its iron ore.⁹

As far as government finances themselves are concerned, Sylla told the CNT that the focus would be on mobilising more local resources through digitising tax and customs procedures, stricter surveillance of timely payments and robust recovery of taxed, levies and duties still owed.¹⁰ In an interesting side remark, the minister said that he would pay specific attention to pricing practices by bauxite exporters, suggesting that there was a difference between what he termed reference prices and transfer prices and that these would be more closely monitored.¹¹

AfDB approves a \$81m loan to build a new road between Guinea and Senegal

African Development Bank (AfDB) announced on 27 November its concessionary window, the **African Development Fund**, approved an \$81m loan for the resurfacing of 241km of two-lane road between **Labé** in Guinea and **Kédougou** in **Senegal**. The road also passes through the Guinean village of **Mali** and the border post of **Fongolembi**.¹² This is a different route from the existing one through the Guineas border town of **Koundara** and on to the eastern Senegalese hub of **Tambacounda**, strengthening integration between the two countries.

The road will be resurfaced by what the statement described as climate-resilient asphalt, with 178km of the work in Guinea and the remaining 63km in Senegal.¹³ The project includes feeder roads from the surrounding rural areas, thus facilitating easier marketing of produce, including to the relatively wealthy mining town of Kédougou.¹⁴ Another possible advantage could be felt by Malian drivers, who currently have the choice between two routes into and out of Senegal, neither of which is particularly viable. Once this stretch is completed, Malian drivers can then also opt for the alternative route into the port of Conakry.¹⁵ About 1.5 million people living in this border region between the two countries are expected to be impacted by the project.¹⁶ Further financing for this particular project comes from

⁶ Government of Guinea: Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération Internationale, 10 Dec 2024

⁷ Guinee Mosaïque, 9 Dec 2024

⁸ Guinee Mosaïque, 9 Dec 2024

⁹ Guineenews, 9 Dec 2024

¹⁰ Guineenews, 9 Dec 2024

¹¹ Guineenews, 9 Dec 2024

¹² African Development Bank press release, 27 Nov 2024

¹³ African Development Bank press release, 27 Nov 2024

¹⁴ Agence Ecofin, 28 Nov 2024

¹⁵ Agence Ecofin, 28 Nov 2024

¹⁶ Agence Ecofin, 28 Nov 2024; Guinee28.info, 29 Nov 2024

the **Islamic Development Bank** and the **West African Development Bank** and the governments of Guinea and Senegal.¹⁷

Government declares three-days of national mourning after stadium stampede

A stampede at **N'zérékoré** stadium on 1 December killed an estimated 150 people with another 50 still unaccounted for.¹⁸ Official figures report the death toll as 56 but civil society organisations, who have been in contact with local communities and relatives of the victims, have disputed this figure.¹⁹

The match was the final of a tournament organised in the name of junta leader, General **Mamadi Doumbouya** (2021-present), and accompanied the junta's efforts to promote Guinea's new draft constitution, which is likely to give Doumbouya the opportunity to present himself as a candidate for presidential election.²⁰ During the match, several decisions made by the referee led to angry pitch invasions, which the security forces attempted to contain by using tear gas. In the ensuing panic a stampede occurred to the sole exit door, causing the deaths. Most of the victims were reported to be minors trampled underfoot.

In statements, various civil society groups, including the **Front national pour la défense de la constitution (FNDC)**, have held the junta fully responsible for what happened.²¹ The junta, directly understanding the importance of the disaster, dispatched its own team to N'zérékoré to offer its condolences and announce an inquiry.²² However, a local civil society collective in N'zérékoré has started its own investigation into the actual death toll and has demanded a judicial inquiry.²³

Even though observers and civil society organisations alike have made the link between the stadium disaster and Doumbouya's presidential ambitions, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which events will ultimately affect Doumbouya's chances at an election, whenever this may be held. The junta will continue its efforts to appear concerned while putting as much distance as possible between itself and the events at the stadium but in any presidential contest, the opposition will ensure that Doumbouya's responsibility for this event is a campaign issue.

2025 outlook

Guinea was set to hold its elections by January 2025, but it was confirmed several times through 2024 that this date was no longer achievable. Key steps remain in the election process, including the constitutional referendum. It is more likely that elections will now take place towards the end of 2025, but the possibility of further delays cannot be ruled out. Further delays could also risk further civil unrest, but as seen in all protests until now, the junta will use heavy handed tactics and repress any dissent. At this point, the junta has not been held accountable for such actions and given the region's other concerns with instability in countries like **Burkina Faso**, **Mali** and **Niger**, Guinea will likely be given more grace.

As seen in the draft finance budget, Guinea is also betting on the start of exploitation of the Simandou iron ore project. The project thus far appears to be keeping to its timeline. Once achieved, this will be a key development for Guinea's economic future, but the management of these new revenues will be a key issue in the upcoming election.

Planner

TBC **Guinea** Constitutional referendum expected

TBC **Guinea** Presidential elections

¹⁷ Agence Ecofin, 28 Nov 2024; Guinee28.info, 29 Nov 2024

¹⁸ RFI, 4 Dec 2024;

¹⁹ Guineenews, 3 Dec; RFI, 11 Dec 2024

²⁰ Africaguinee.com, 1 Dec 2024; ledjely.com, 2 Dec 2024; Deutsche Welle, 3 Dec 2024

²¹ Ledjely.com, 2 Dec 2024; Le Monde, 5 Dec 2024; L'Indépendant, 3 Dec 2024

²² Guinée: Présidence, 3 Dec 2024; ledeclic.info, 2 Dec 2024

²³ Kalenews.org, 3 Dec 2024; Le Point, 9 Dec

2025 Conakry (Guinea) Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project

Chronology

11 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Mining Weekly*. Planning minister **Ismael Nabe** says Guinea plans to use some of its income from **Simandou** to create a sovereign wealth fund;

9 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. Government presents the draft 2025 finance bill, which forecasts GDP growth of 7% and average inflation of 6%;

7 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. Police arrest director of customs **Moussa Camara** and ten others for their alleged involvement in a 700 billion GNF (\$80.92m) financial scandal;

6 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. Mines minister **Bouna Sylla** reports that the **Simandou** iron ore project is over 50% complete;

5 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *APA News*. **United States (US)** embassy expresses concern over the kidnapping of journalist, **Habib Marouane Camara**, by unknown individuals, calling for a thorough investigation;

5 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AFP*. Junta leader **Mamady Doumbouya** says refereeing and poor governance are to blame for the stampede at a football stadium in **N'Zérékoré** in which government reports at least 56 people died;

3 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. **Cour de répression des infractions économiques et financières** (court for the repression of economic and financial offences) sentences former **Assemblée nationale** (national assembly) president **Amadou Damara Camara** to four years in prison for embezzlement of public funds and illicit enrichment;

1 Dec 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. Clashes between supporters during a football match leave dozens dead in **N'Zérékoré** as supporters also set fire to the N'Zérékoré police station;

28 Nov 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *APA News*. Prime minister **Bah Oury** travels to **Morocco** and meets his counterpart, **Aziz Akhannouch**, to discuss bilateral relations;

27 Nov 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AfDB*. **African Development Bank (AfDB)** approves an \$80.93m loan to Guinea and **Senegal** for the construction of a new interstate road;

25 Nov 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. **Libya's** youth minister **Fathallah Al-Zini** leads a delegation on behalf of prime minister **Abdelhamid Debbouba** to Guinea to discuss strengthening cooperation;

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