

**AFRICA RISK CONSULTING**

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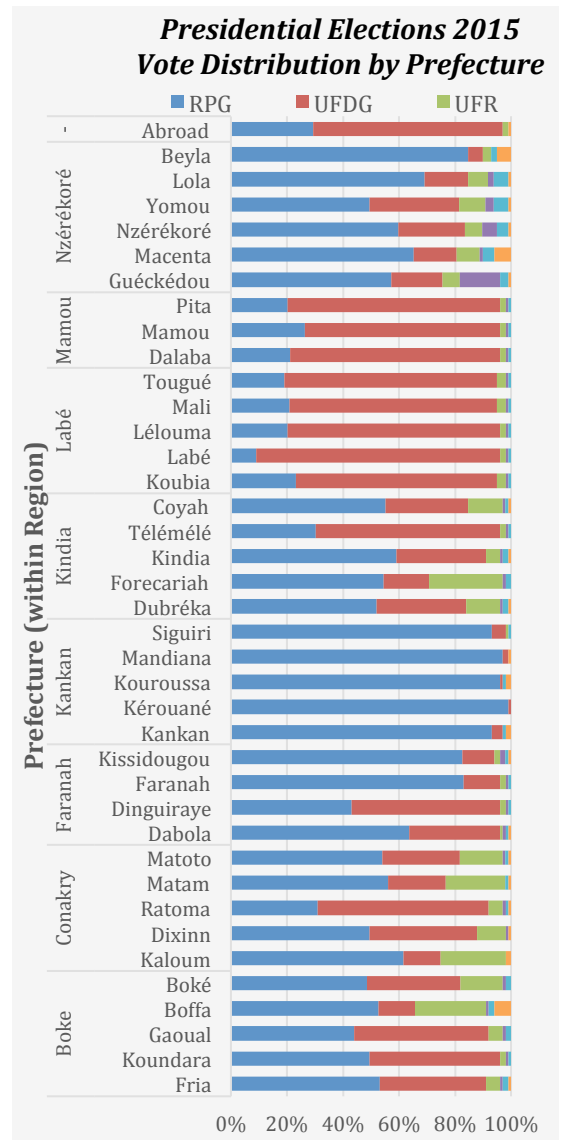
**Guinea Summary 25 January 2018**

*It appears increasingly likely that the schedule for the 4 February local elections will be respected. Guineans are likely to vote along regional and ethnic lines, but electoral success of the two main political parties, the ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG)** and the opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**, is difficult to predict. President Alpha Condé (2010-present) signs a decree announcing the appointment of Mariama Camara as new agriculture minister. Unidentified assailants shoot and kill a Saudi Arabian preacher near Kantebalandougou (Kankan Region).*

**February local elections date likely respected**

It appears increasingly likely that the schedule for the 4 February local elections will be respected.<sup>1</sup> The **Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (electoral commission) has, at the time of writing, not mentioned any administrative backlogs or logistical bottlenecks, apart from a slight extension in the deadline for delivery of candidacies.<sup>2</sup> The CENI had fixed the deadline for delivery of candidacies on 26 December.<sup>3</sup> The local elections will renew the mandates in **Guinea's** 342 municipalities and sub-prefectures.<sup>4</sup> Local elections last took place in 2005, meaning that five-year mandates expired approximately eight years ago.<sup>5</sup>

The electoral success of the two main political parties, the ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG)** and the opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**, is difficult to predict. If former presidential elections serve as a reliable guideline, there is a high likelihood that Guineans will vote along regional and ethnic lines (see adjacent *Presidential elections 2015, vote distribution by prefecture*). Political affiliations remain strongly linked to ethnicity: the RPG draws support from the **Malinké** ethnic group, and partly from the **Soussou** (together making up approximately 40% of the population), while the UFDG is more closely linked with the **Peul** (41% of total population).<sup>6</sup> The RPG is thus likely to retain the majority of seats in **Kankan Region** (wider **Haute-Guinée**), while the UFDG is likely to dominate in **Mamou** and **Labé Regions (Moyenne-**



<sup>1</sup> BBC, 25 Dec 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Source, journalist, Conakry

<sup>3</sup> BBC, 25 Dec 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Aminata, 20 Jan 2018.

<sup>5</sup> RFI, 12 Oct 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Multiple sources: www.irinnews.org; www.stat-guinee.org

Guinée). President **Alpha Condé** (2010-present) visited **Pita** prefecture (in Mamou Region) on 20 January, to inaugurate a new rural electrification network, in an apparent bid to sway UFDG voters to the RPG.<sup>7</sup> Condé was reportedly also expected to visit Mamou before the 4 February elections.<sup>8</sup> Local election results are hardest to predict in **Basse-Guinée**, the most contested electoral landscape, which comprises the capital **Conakry**, **Boké Region** and **Kindia Region**, and the majority of the country's mining riches.<sup>9</sup> Guinea's third largest party, the **Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR)**, led by **Sidya Touré**, is expected to challenge the UFDG and the RPG in some jurisdictions, but not to reverse its position significantly.<sup>10</sup> Although he has a credible reputation abroad, Touré is viewed within many circles in Guinea as Condé's accomplice, which could hinder the UFR's chances in the local elections.<sup>11</sup>

Condé enacted a revised electoral code in July 2017 as a conciliatory measure to obtain the opposition's commitment to holding the local elections in February (see *ARC Briefing Guinea July 2017*). However, the new electoral code allows local officials to govern without the presence of an opposition member on the communal council, where members of parliament (MPs) meet with local officials to discuss local policy action.<sup>12</sup> This means that if the RPG secures a local office, it can make policy decisions at a local level without the need for opposition input.<sup>13</sup> The UFDG claimed that the government had violated the October 2016 political agreement and its blueprint for local elections in 2017, alleging that the proposed revision of the electoral code in parliament would unfairly favour the RPG in local elections (see *ARC Briefing Guinea January 2017*). The delays in the organisation of the local elections were also compounded by internal tensions within the CENI, after a vote of no confidence against former CENI president **Bakary Fofana** in July 2017.<sup>14</sup> The UFDG held a mass protest in August, calling for government to respect the commitments laid out in the October 2016 political agreement.<sup>15</sup> The UFDG is particularly concerned about Condé's rumoured intention to stand for a third term in 2020 – which the current **2010 Constitution** does not allow for.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the relationship between the UFDG and ruling RPG government remains antagonistic.

The UFDG plans to challenge the RPG in swing regions such as **Ratoma**, **Gaoual** and **Fria**.<sup>17</sup> UFDG leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** publicly announced that the local elections must be “*revenge for the party's martyrs*”,

*“For our martyrs, Condé had nothing but contempt, because the youth and their families were not afforded justice. We did everything – we signed a multitude of political agreement, after which the government committed to open enquiries and deferred to the judiciary the perpetrators of these crimes, which they never did! Our protests had been repressed in blood. Today, on the eve of elections, it will be a UFDG victory because we fought to have these elections... We don't have the right to lose, we must win.”<sup>18</sup>*

Diallo has also said he believes the UFDG can contest the RPG in Conakry's municipalities and sub-prefectures, but made inflammatory allegations that the RPG government could attempt electoral fraud,

*“The UFDG is on the electoral list in 325 out of 342 municipalities and sub-prefectures... The RPG is conscious of its weaknesses in the field. [The RPG] has one weapon which it has always used to announce itself as the winner. This [weapon] is fraud... I am certain that they are preparing*

<sup>7</sup> Africa Guinée, 20 Jan 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Africa Guinée, 20 Jan 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Source, Guinea analyst, London

<sup>10</sup> Source, Guinea analyst, London

<sup>11</sup> Source, Guinea analyst, London

<sup>12</sup> Jeune Afrique, 10 Jan 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Jeune Afrique, 28 Jul 2017.

<sup>14</sup> RFI, 6 Jul 2017.

<sup>15</sup> AFP, 3 Aug 2017.

<sup>16</sup> AFP, 3 Aug 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Source, Guinea analyst, London

<sup>18</sup> Aminata, 21 Jan 2018.

*fraud... If the elections take place in a transparent fashion, the UFDG is capable of winning in [Conakry].”<sup>19</sup>*

At present, it remains a strong possibility that the UFDG will contest the result of the local elections, especially if it deems the results as unfavourable. The UFDG’s pre-emptive allegations of electoral fraud will increase the risk of related violence, if Diallo decides to publicly contest the election results. This risk is heightened in swing regions, especially in Basse-Guinée and Conakry. Nevertheless, the 4 February election date looks likely to be respected. It is unclear how soon after the election the CENI will announce results. Investors should remain attentive to the strategic significance of their prefecture in the national political landscape, as more competitive areas are more likely to be the target of protests and possible violence.

### Condé names Mariam Camara agriculture minister

Condé signed a decree on 27 December announcing the appointment of **Mariama Camara** as new agriculture minister.<sup>20</sup> Camara replaced interim agriculture minister **Naby Youssouf Kiridi Bangoura**, the secretary general at the presidency.<sup>21</sup> Until her appointment Camara was managing director of the state-owned **Société Guinéenne de Palmiers à Huile et de l’Hévéa (Soguipah)** (Guinean palm and rubber company), a position she held for over two decades.<sup>22</sup> Camara oversaw a boom in both the palm and rubber sectors – rubber production in Guinea in particular saw the most growth, with a nine-fold increase in the past two decades.<sup>23</sup> Camara had a positive reputation at the head of Soguipah, so much so that several of its workers claimed in the Guinean press that her departure would threaten the progress made at Soguipah,

*“She manages this company with much professionalism, rigour and tact. This is what created a climate of serenity, between management and the local authorities, between the workers and their managers. To let her go and manage the agriculture ministry, a position she had previously declined, would dangerously hamper the achievements of the only state enterprise to survive bad practice in management in the last 20 years.”<sup>24</sup>*

Bangoura, upon handing over to Camara, said the government’s priority for the agriculture sector will be strengthening rural agricultural operations,

*“I must underline the relevance of coming back to a more effective coordination of the rural sector. In effect, directly or indirectly, the agricultural services like fishing and aquaculture, water and forests, and livestock concern the same players, often in the same areas and around the same resources. Rural development is everything.”<sup>25</sup>*

In addition to her Soguipah and other agro-industrial experience, Camara has a political background. She was a member of the **Parti de l’Unité et du Progrès (PUP)**, the ruling party during the **Lansana Conté** (1984-2008) government, and reportedly also supported the **Moussa Dadis Camara** (2008-2009) (no relation) military junta.<sup>26</sup> Ahead of the 2010 presidential election, Camara decided to support Condé’s presidential bid, although she has never held any elected office.<sup>27</sup>

The majority of palm and rubber production occurs in **Guinée Forestière**, an RPG stronghold region (see above).<sup>28</sup> The small-scale subsistence nature of much of African agriculture creates political

<sup>19</sup> Aminata, 21 Jan 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Guinée News, 2 Jan 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Médiaguinée, 20 Sept 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Guinée News, 2 Jan 2018.

<sup>23</sup> www.fao.org

<sup>24</sup> Guinée News, 2 Jan 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Naby Youssouf Kiridi Bangoura quoted in Scoop Guinée, 4 Jan 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Source, journalist, Conakry

<sup>27</sup> Source, journalist, Conakry

<sup>28</sup> www.invest.gov.gn

opportunities for a ruling government through the growth of the agriculture sector in these regions.<sup>29</sup> Guinea has approximately 14.5 million hectares of agricultural area, of which 6.2 million hectares is arable land.<sup>30</sup> Agriculture provides income for 80% of the Guinean population and is the main source of revenue for 57% of the rural population.<sup>31</sup> Most recent estimates value the agriculture sector's contribution to national gross domestic product (GDP) at around 14%, of which over 65% is rice production.<sup>32</sup> Despite the government's overt promotion of the sector as a growth area to reduce dependency on the mining sector, the government cut expenditure in the agriculture sector by 33% in the 2017 budget.<sup>33</sup>

The appointment of Camara to the agriculture ministry brings a technocratic and well-reputed name to oversee a major growth sector in Guinea. However, a concern for the government may be that Camara lacks loyalty to Condé, given previous instances of political expediency.

### Tensions build in Kankan Region after killing of Saudi Arabian preacher

Unidentified assailants on 19 January shot and killed a **Saudi Arabian** preacher near **Kantebalandougou** (Kankan Region).<sup>34</sup> The killing is reportedly evidence of rising tensions between rural Guineans and proponents of Salafist Islam (also known as Wahhabism) in the region.<sup>35</sup> The full extent of underlying tensions between the two communities is not clear. However, events escalated after unidentified assailants killed the head of a group of hunters, which local authorities had claimed may have been related to the killing of the Saudi preacher.<sup>36</sup> The preacher, by the name of **Abdulaziz bin Abdulmohsen al-Twajiri**, had reportedly been seeking to proselytise local traditional hunters to the Salafist doctrine.<sup>37</sup> The Salafist doctrine's proselytist agenda, led by Saudi Arabian clerics and government, has been described as "*the largest worldwide propaganda campaign ever mounted*"<sup>38</sup>, and **West Africa** is one of the target areas of its proliferation.<sup>39</sup> The West African region has historically been closer to the more moderate Sufi Islam doctrine, while security experts believe that the spread of Salafism has coincided with that of Islamist militancy.<sup>40</sup> Although Guinea is 85% Muslim, it is traditional African religion areas that are reportedly most hostile to the Salafist movement.<sup>41</sup> Reportedly the individual who killed the traditional African hunter had shouted "*Allah Akbar*"<sup>42</sup> before the act, perhaps evidence of the strength of militant Islamic movements in the region.<sup>43</sup>

There are few reports of Islamist militancy in Guinea, and this incident highlights the potential risks that could develop in the coming years. For the moment, there is no indication that the event would escalate further.

### Planner

2020 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Presidential elections;

Sept 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Legislative elections;

9 May 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Press Release*. The **Symposium Mines Guinea** (international

<sup>29</sup> Source, West Africa political analyst, Abidjan

<sup>30</sup> Multiple sources: [www.apip.gov.gn](http://www.apip.gov.gn); [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).

<sup>31</sup> [www.apip.gov.gn](http://www.apip.gov.gn)

<sup>32</sup> [www.apip.gov.gn](http://www.apip.gov.gn)

<sup>33</sup> Agence Ecofin, 9 Dec 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>35</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Center for Security Policy, 8 Jul 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Center for Security Policy, 8 Jul 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Center for Security Policy, 8 Jul 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Reuters, 19 Jan 2018.

mining conference and exhibition) **2018** begins;

4 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *AFP*. Local elections;

### Chronology

20 Jan 2018 **Pita (Guinea)** *Guinée News*. President **Alpha Condé** inaugurates the extension of the national grid to 20 municipalities in **Mamou Region**;

19 Jan 2018 **Kantebalandougou (Guinea)** *Reuters*. Unidentified assailants shoot and kill a **Saudi Arabian** preacher;

2 Jan 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Prime minister **Mamady Youla** names **Mariama Souguipah** as new agriculture minister;

1 Jan 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée News*. President **Alpha Condé** makes his end-of-year speech, outlining the government's vision for 2018;

28 Dec 2017 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinée*. Leader of the opposition **Union des Forces Démocratique de Guinée** alleges that the ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen** will rig the local elections in February 2018;

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