

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Country briefing – Guinea

29 July 2013

Summary

President Alpha Condé is struggling to maintain security in the south-eastern Forestière region. Clashes during 14 -17 July between the Guerzé and Konianké communities resulted in 95 deaths and over 100 injured. The violence weakens Condé's position significantly. It risks crucial mining investment and electoral support for his 2015 re-election campaign. The insecurity in the region also halted Condé's attempts to reduce the influence of controversial military figures from the region and prosecute them for the 28 September 2009 stadium massacre. This includes Colonel Claude 'Coplan' Pivi, the military powerbroker in the region, who is close to former interim (2010) president General Sekouba Konaté. Konaté maintains influence in the military and is hostile to Condé. Thus, the clashes have increased the risk of a coup. After successful international mediation, the government and opposition are preparing for the 24 September 2013 legislative elections. Links between foreign companies and politicians will come under increased scrutiny in the lead up to the election.

President Condé struggles to control the Forestière region

President **Alpha Condé** is focused on security and maintaining support in the important south-eastern **Forestière** region. During 14 -17 July, clashes between the **Guerzé** and **Konianké** communities resulted in 95 deaths and over 100 injured.¹ The fighting occurred in the regional capital **N'Zérékoré**; in nearby **Koulé**, near to **Vale-BSG Resources** Zogota iron ore project; and in **Beyla**, a key base for **Rio Tinto**'s Simandou iron ore project 100 kilometres north of N'Zérékoré. An incident in Koulé triggered the clashes. On the night of 14 July Guerzé security guards at a service station accused three Konianké youths of theft and tortured them.² Other reports claimed the youths were "lynched."³ Two died a few hours later, which triggered retaliatory attacks between the local two communities.

¹ According to the government statement, 25 July 2013

² Jeune Afrique, 18 July 2013

³ Jeune Afrique, 23 July 2013

The clashes⁴ quickly spread to N'Zérékoré and Beyla on 15 July. Using mobile text messages, youths rallied together, burning mosques and churches and targeting traditional leaders.⁵ Condé deployed the military on 16 July to restore order.⁶

The Forestière region, an emerging iron ore province, borders **Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone**, and is enmeshed in conflicts in these neighbouring countries. The Guerzé is the main ethnic group in the region. They follow traditional beliefs or Christianity. The Konianké are an ethnic **Madingo** group who are related to Condé's **Malinké** and are Muslim. *"Ethnic violence between the two has been going on forever, and was exacerbated by the Liberia war [1989 – 1996, 1999 – 2003]."*⁷ The region is the most undeveloped, lawless and isolated in Guinea. *"It was neglected by the state for a long time, even during colonialism."*⁸ New mining projects have attracted additional residents, increasing competition for jobs in projects. In August 2012 youths rioted close to the Zogota iron ore mine demanding jobs, resulting in clashes with the military and five civilian deaths. Exploration work at the mine has not re-started since.

Instability in the Forestière region significantly weakens Condé's position. His reform programme relies on providing a secure environment to gain investment from iron ore projects in the region, which may spur the country's development. He also *"needs the region for his re-election"* in 2015, having had a *"strong following in the region for decades."*⁹ However, Condé has poor relations with controversial political and military figures from the region that helped him to power. His relationship with **Papa Koly Kourouma**, minister of state for energy, is fragile due to the ongoing power crisis.¹⁰ Kourouma secured 5.74% of votes in the first round presidential election and joined Condé's coalition for the run-off election in November 2010. Kourouma is the cousin of **Moussa Dadis Camara**, the former leader of the military junta that seized power in a coup following the death of former president **Lansana Conté** in December 2008. During the junta Kourouma acted as both henchman and financial controller for Dadis.¹¹ Several sources¹² confirm his poor record in office and point to the ongoing problems in the power sector. However, despite his shortcomings, Condé *"needs Kourouma politically."*¹³

The clashes have also reduced Condé's support from Camara's Guerzé in the region.¹⁴ The Guerzé believe Condé favors the Konianké *"for ethnic reasons"* and resent Camara's continued exile in **Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**. However, Condé did allow Camara to return to N'Zérékoré and his

⁴ Using machetes, axes, stones, sticks and firearms

⁵ Jeune Afrique, 23 July 2013

⁶ Reuters, 17 July 2013

⁷ Source, diplomat, US

⁸ Source, government official, Conakry

⁹ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

¹⁰ Several sources; also Jeune Afrique, 23 July 2013

¹¹ Source, political analyst, Conakry

¹² Including a banking source, journalist and diplomatic sources, Conakry

¹³ Source, foreign consultant working in mines ministry, Conakry

¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 23 July 2013

hometown of Koulé in April 2013 to attend his mother's funeral. Condé has also sheltered Camara from charges over the 28 September 2009 stadium massacre in which at least 157 anti-junta protesters were killed.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the two have a history of poor relations. Camara described Condé as “*enemy number one*” whilst he was president in 2009.

The clashes appear to be both ethnically and politically motivated.¹⁶ Ethnic lines become significant in a weak democracy¹⁷, while a **United Nations (UN)** source claims, “*This should also be seen as political ...it's being stirred up by actors against Condé.*”¹⁸

... and reduce the influence of Forestière military figures

The Forestière violence has halted Condé's attempts to reduce the influence of controversial military figures from the region. As the clashes in the Forestière region escalated on 16 July Condé was forced to deploy two powerful former military junta figures from the region, Colonel **Claude 'Coplan' Pivi**, the minister for presidential security, and Lieutenant-Colonel **Moussa Camara Tiégboro**, the minister in charge of fighting drug trafficking and organised crime.¹⁹ Pivi is Guerzé; Tiégboro, Konianké. The clashes halted soon after their deployment.

Both Pivi and Tiégboro have been charged over the 28 September 2009 stadium massacre. On 27 June Pivi was charged with murder, rape and destruction of property and appeared in court the next day to hear the charges.²⁰ **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** said it was a “*significant step towards justice.*”²¹ However, HRW and other human rights monitors have urged Condé to suspend Pivi and Tiégboro from their government functions during the investigation. Along with a UN investigation, they concluded that the government should investigate Pivi's role in the massacre. The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** has also demanded that the government charge Pivi.

Pivi was the number three in the junta behind Camara and **Sekouba Konaté**, former interim President during the 2010 transition period and current **High Representative for the Operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF)**. Pivi was appointed in his current role when the junta took power and was attached to Konaté's office. “*Pivi is classified as part of the old guard and close to Konaté....not sure about his loyalty [to Condé].*”²² “*Konaté and Pivi were together in the [2008] coup.*”²³

¹⁵ According to the United Nations (UN) and several other independent reports

¹⁶ Source, government official

¹⁷ Source, US diplomat, Guinea

¹⁸ UN source, Guinea

¹⁹ RFI, 17 July 2013

²⁰ BBC, 28 June 2013

²¹ HRW, 28 June 2013

²² Source, mining security executive, South Africa

²³ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

Konaté is also closely associated with the Forestière region. *“He was involved in the 2000 – 2001 border war where he earned his nickname El Tigre.”*²⁴

*“He was leading an army unit there under Conté. He has close links. He is especially close to the former fighters who went to Liberia to fight with ULIMO [United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy].”*²⁵

*“ULIMO was a creation of the Guinea army by Conté to get rid of Charles Taylor. It trained in Kankan [Upper Guinea] and the Forestière regions. The ULIMO factions have connections with the military junta. They made up much of the private militias under the junta...Dadis, Pivi and Konaté each had a private militia and none of this mess has been cleared up, the militias are still out there.”*²⁶

Konaté remains powerful within the military and hostile towards Condé.²⁷ Condé cancelled a number of lucrative contracts in which Konaté had a business interest. These include those of businessman **Kerfalla Person Camara ‘KPC’** to upgrade military facilities.²⁸

*“Konaté is tight with Pivi. He wants to maintain relations with the power in the military. He doesn’t want to be president but wants to maintain influence. He has many investments. He made a lot of money in Guinea, probably \$20-30m.”*²⁹

Konaté is also concerned over being charged for the 28 September 2009 massacre.

*“He should be indicted. He was part of the leadership, the investigation covers all leaders of the junta involved in decisions that led to the killings. He would be excluded only for political reasons.”*³⁰

The legislative election increases the risk of political exposure

The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** has scheduled the delayed legislative election for 24 September 2013. A government official claims that Condé will soon confirm the date by decree. For the first time since the elections were originally scheduled in 2011, the government and opposition are committed to the elections. The opposition – which had previously boycotted the electoral process – filed its candidates by 22 July. A total of 2,495 candidates will challenge for 114

²⁴ ibid

²⁵ Source, government official

²⁶ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

²⁷ See ARC Guinea briefing March 2013

²⁸ Source, francophone journalist, Conakry

²⁹ Source, diplomat, US

³⁰ Source, foreign consultant working in mines ministry, Conakry

seats. *“They will go ahead this time ...both sides are preparing and everybody is waiting including the opposition ...unless something major happens.”*³¹ Condé has also dismissed fears of not gaining a majority in the legislature, *“He says he doesn’t care if he doesn’t have a majority in the parliament because the constitution gives wide-ranging power to the executive.”*³²

The development followed a successful international mediation. On 3 July the government and opposition representatives signed an accord detailing the terms for the election, including³³:

- **Waymark** will remain as technical operator but a monitoring committee will oversee its activities and its activities are confined to development of the electoral list only. It will not compile results. A public tender will be launched for the 2015 election.
- Guineans abroad will be allowed to vote, but only those on the 2010 electoral list (120,000);
- The CENI will be subject to regular reviews and also monitored by a committee headed by a judge and including representative of political parties;

Links between foreign companies and politicians will come under increased scrutiny in the lead up to the election. There are unverified reports of companies funding political parties. Most of these unverified reports involve accusations that BSGR – currently the subject of an anti-corruption investigation into the acquisition of its Simandou iron ore licence – is funding **Cellou Dalein Diallo**, the main opposition leader.

*“The government claims that it has proof from western intelligence that BSGR is funding Diallo. It claims that \$150,000 was transferred into a Diallo account in **Hong Kong**.”*³⁴

*“It would not surprise me. We know that **Benny [Steinmetz, founder of BSGR]** pays off everyone. Diallo is also out there operating like a shadow government.”*³⁵

Implications

Guinea’s persistent ethnic rivalries are a symptom of its weak democracy. Condé needs to secure the Forestière region to prevent a situation where clashes escalate and spread, and potentially allow military figures to take their chance and launch a coup. However, the increasing international attention on Guinea mitigates the risk of violence escalating and a coup. The **United States (US)** has confirmed its commitment to see through the BSGR anti-corruption investigation and is watching the country closely. The EU and France are also continuing support for the security sector reform programme. The deployment of Pivi to contain the unrest underlines the difficulty of Condé’s position.

³¹ Source government official, Conakry

³² Source, West Africa correspondent, Dakar

³³ Accord sur la preparation et l’organisation des elections legislatives de 2013, 3 July

³⁴ Source, West Africa correspondent, Dakar

³⁵ Source, diplomat, US



At present security in the region relies on the same controversial military figures whose influence and impunity must be reined in.

The successful international mediation to pave the way for the legislative elections is another positive sign of increasing international interest in Guinea's stability. The risk of unrest will increase in the lead up to, during and following the election. Rumours of campaign funding – true or not – highlight the risk to investors. Scrutiny of their activities and political links will increase in the coming months and government suspicions may result in hostile government actions.