

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guineans vote in local elections for the first time since 2005. The Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) (electoral commission) has been slow to release full results. The ruling Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG) party wins over half of urban areas, while the main opposition Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG) party wins less than a third. Street protests erupt across several cities on the day after the lead to the death of five children. The opposition organises a 'dead city' protest in Conakry and major urban centres. The Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guinée (UGTG) (general workers' union) begins a nationwide strike calling for a 40% retroactive increase in teachers' salaries.

Guineans vote in local elections

Guineans voted in local elections on 4 February.¹ Under the newest version of the electoral code passed in July 2017, local elections are to be held every five years,² but the last local elections took place in 2005.³ Local government mandates thus expired for over eight years ago.⁴

Main opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)** party leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** alleged "*the ruling Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG) are preparing fraud*" before voting for the local elections began.⁵ In the lead-up to the local elections, the UFDG alleged that the government had repeatedly delayed them to maintain its grip on local administrations (see *ARC Briefing Guinea July 2017*). The local elections required the revision of the electoral code, which was introduced in July 2017 after repeated delays. However, the UFDG had maintained an uncompromising stance, by refusing to vote in favour of its introduction in parliament, leading to a further scheduling delay of the elections from December 2017 to February 2018 (see *ARC Briefing Guinea July 2017*). Delays also resulted from leadership issues at the **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)** (electoral commission). CENI members backed a vote of no confidence against former CENI president **Bakary Fofana**, amid accusations that he engaged in opaque financial management practices.⁶

Full results of the 2018 local election vote, as of 27 February, or three weeks after the vote, are not available.⁷ The CENI has only made data available on a municipality-by-municipality basis (342 in total), making nation-wide analysis unwieldy.⁸ The CENI published results gradually, and at 20 February, only three municipalities in **Macenta Prefecture (Nzérékoré Region)** remained to be published.⁹ There has been no progress on the remaining three constituencies since then. CENI president **Salif Kébé** said that CENI has not been able to publish the final results due to "technical" difficulties, which have been put before local courts,

¹ RFI, 4 Feb 2018.

² RFI, 12 Oct 2016.

³ RFI, 4 Feb 2018.

⁴ RFI, 12 Oct 2016.

⁵ Aminata, 21 Jan 2018.

⁶ RFI, 6 Jul 2017.

⁷ Multiple sources: RFI, 20 Feb 2018; www.ceni.org.gn.

⁸ www.ceni.org.gn

⁹ RFI, 20 Feb 2018.

“The judge issued a decision and observed that several polling stations’ results have not been found at our headquarters. We have a team on the ground that did not recover the results from these polling stations. There are some polling stations to integrate [into the results], there are polling stations that we must eliminate. And we cannot do this randomly – we must know exactly which polling station, how many voters and the type of vote. So, this is what is preventing us from publishing the results for these constituencies.”¹⁰

The CENI began to publish results on 10 February, initially with just 16 municipalities, with none confirmed in **Conakry**, the capital and most highly contested electoral area.¹¹ The RPG has won over half of urban areas (20 out of 38, while the UFDG has won less than a third (12 out of 38)).¹² In the municipalities of **Boké**, **Kindia** and **Matoto**, the RPG and UPDG tied, which will require them to forge alliances with **Sidya Touré**’s opposition **Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR)** to obtain a majority.¹³ Independent candidates won **Boffa** and **Kaloum** municipalities.¹⁴ 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).¹⁵ Local sources said that the composition of new regional councils after the local elections will significantly impact the modalities of investment in each area:

“The establishment of the regional councils could be a source of future tensions, as the political party that heads the regional council will be the master of the implementation of local public policy. This could certainly impact the conditions of foreign direct investment within each region.”¹⁶

The 4 February local elections were the first instance of a strong performance from independent candidates who are prohibited from standing in legislative and presidential elections.¹⁷ Independent candidates won in strategic areas of Conakry. Independent candidate **Hadja Aminata Touré** (not to be confused with the former **Senegalese** prime minister), daughter of former President **Sékou Touré** (1958-1984), won the councillor’s seat in the **Kaloum** business district.¹⁸

... as opposition calls for protests

Although voting itself took place peacefully, the days following the local elections saw violence and unrest.¹⁹ Street protests broke out across several cities on the day after the vote.²⁰ Protesters started a fire in the northern town of **Dinguiraye (Faranah Region)** that led to the death of five children.²¹ The CENI had said it would announce full results by 19 February.²² Its failure to release full results provoked the UFDG to announce on 23 February that it would organise a ‘dead city’ protest from the 26 February in Conakry, which would be followed by several other protests across Guinea’s secondary urban centres.²³ The UFDG also demanded that the CENI’s board be sacked and new “competent”²⁴ management appointed.²⁵ Diallo applauded the success of the “dead city” protest that ‘took place on 26 February:²⁶

¹⁰ Guinée News, 21 Feb 2018.

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 10 Feb 2018.

¹² RFI, 20 Feb 2018.

¹³ RFI, 20 Feb 2018.

¹⁴ RFI, 20 Feb 2018.

¹⁵ Multiple sources: www.irinnews.org; www.stat-guinee.org

¹⁶ Source, banking sector investor, Conakry.

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 17 Feb 2018.

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 17 Feb 2018.

¹⁹ Multiple sources: RFI, 4 Feb 2018;

²⁰ Reuters, 7 Feb 2018.

²¹ Reuters, 7 Feb 2018.

²² Guinée News, 17 Feb 2018.

²³ Guinée News, 23 Feb 2018.

²⁴ Guinée News, 23 Feb 2018.

“The city was truly dead. No economic activity. No market was open. No shop. No taxi was driving the streets. Everyone followed the instructions.”²⁷

However, Diallo alleged that police forces entered popular neighbourhoods in the aim of suppressing any possible spontaneous attempts to protest, by “*knocking over stoves, assaulting citizens, and, unfortunately, killing another young student.*”²⁸ These allegations are unverified, although a source from the relevant hospital quoted in French press confirmed the death of the student.²⁹ Diallo reaffirmed that the opposition would continue its protests,

“There were promises, but at this stage, I have obtained nothing. We will keep our positions and we will continue to organise protests.”³⁰

The extensive delays in the CENI’s release of complete election results reveal serious inefficiencies in the system. The delays have also exacerbated tensions among the opposition, leading to extended protests across the country. At the time of writing, there is no proof of electoral fraud, but rather logistical capacity weaknesses as seen in the failure of CENI agents to recover the polling station results from several constituencies. An evaluation of the full regional impact of the election results and comparison with results of the 2005 local elections are not possible before CENI publishes complete results. It is likely that tensions between the opposition and the ruling government will continue for the foreseeable future.

... as general workers’ union begins a nationwide strike

The **Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guinée (UGTG)** (general workers’ union) began a nationwide strike on 26 February, in conjunction with the opposition dead city protest (see above).³¹ The UGTG says it will call for labour minister **Albert Damantang Camara** to stand down if the government does not meet its demands for a 40% retroactive increase in teachers’ salaries.³² Despite the government committing to increase teachers’ wages by 10%, the UGTG has maintained its strike.³³ The UGTG is also calling for rectification of a string of layoffs which it deems arbitrary at several companies, as well as removal of limits on the free operation of the unions, which the government reportedly does not legally recognise.³⁴ UGTG secretary general **Sidika Mara** called for the government to respect legal procedure:

“We do not understand how ministers such as Damantang remain in office, who go as far as threatening workers who wish to express their discontent. But we are trying to correct this... If the demands are not taken into account and the government begins negotiations, we will mobilise all the workers and go down to the streets because we have understood that this is how we will make these people understand reason.”³⁵

Damantang has not made any public statement since the UGTG’s announcement that it would not accept the government’s proposed 10% increase in teachers’ wages. The strike has increased the tensions surrounding the local elections and added to the government’s woes.

²⁵ Guinée News, 23 Feb 2018.

²⁶ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

²⁷ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

²⁸ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

²⁹ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

³⁰ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

³¹ Guinée News, 26 Feb 2018.

³² AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

³³ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

³⁴ AFP, 27 Feb 2018.

³⁵ Guinée News, 26 Feb 2018.

Planner

9 May 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Press Release*. The **Symposium Mines Guinea** (international mining conference and exhibition) **2018** begins;

Chronology

26 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Jeune Afrique*. The wider opposition holds a ‘dead city’ protest in the capital against alleged electoral fraud during the 4 February local elections, calling for a repeat election;

18 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée Matin*. The ruling **Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG)** remains ahead in most cities, following the partial result of local elections;

16 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante** (electoral commission) will announce the result of local elections on 19 February;

15 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée 360*. The **Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante** (electoral commission) publishes partial local election results in several of Conakry’s municipalities, showing mixed results for the ruling **RPG** and opposition **Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**;

15 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Opposition **UFDG** leader **Cellou Dalein Diallo** maintains allegations of electoral fraud during local elections;

13 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AFP*. Post-electoral protests and security force repression leads to the death of two youths;

10 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinée News*. The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante** (electoral commission) announces partial results for the 4 February local elections, publishing results for 17 of 342 constituencies;

7 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Post-electoral riots break out across major cities Conakry, **Kindia** and **Kalinko**, leading to the death of seven people, after opposition parties allege electoral fraud during local elections;

7 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. The **Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante** (electoral commission) will announce the result of local elections on 9 February;

5 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Opposition parties allege wide-scale electoral fraud during local elections;

5 Feb 2018 **Conakry (Guinea)** *AFP*. Opposition **Union des Forces Républicaines** leader **Sidya Touré** alleges “massive electoral fraud” during local elections;

4 Feb 2018 **(Guinea)** *Guinée News*. Guineans vote in local elections, with results expected on 9 February;

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;

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