

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing December 2023

---

#### Guinea Summary 14 December 2023

*Junta leader Colonel Mamady Doumbouya dismisses health minister Dr Mamadou Phété Diallo from his post on 21 November, replacing him with Oumar Diouhé Bah. On 22 November it is confirmed that Diallo has been arrested and on 29 November he appears in the Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (CRIEF) (court for repression of economic and financial offences) on charges of corruption, illicit enrichment and extortion to the detriment of the state. The ruling Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement (CNRD) has implemented a new wave of media restrictions, clamping down on private media and social media during November and December. Australia-headquartered Rio Tinto offers an update on 6 December on the Simandou iron ore project, reporting that it expects its initial share of capital expenditure to be \$6.2 billion.*

---

#### Health minister arrested and charged with corruption

Junta leader Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya** on 21 November dismissed health minister Dr **Mamadou Phété Diallo** from his post, replacing him with **Oumar Diouhé Bah**. It was confirmed on 22 November that police had arrested Diallo, a former representative of the **United Nations to Guinea Bissau**. On 29 November he was referred to the **Cour de Répression des Infractions Économiques et Financières (CRIEF)** (court for repression of economic and financial offences) on charges of corruption, illicit enrichment and extortion to the detriment of the state.<sup>1</sup> CRIEF placed Diallo under judicial supervision.

Diallo spent the week between his dismissal and court case in custody at the **Direction Centrale des Investigations de la Gendarmerie Nationale (DCIJ-GN)** (central directorate of investigations of the national gendarmerie) to face questioning.<sup>2</sup> Diallo's lawyer, **Lanciné Sylla**, addressed the media following the court hearing, calling it "purely political" and noted that Diallo has denied all accusations.<sup>3</sup>

Justice minister **Charles Wright** on 23 November ordered the attorney general to initiate legal proceedings against Diallo.<sup>4</sup> In his letter to the attorney general, Wright noted that the charges stem from an agreement between the government and **Chinese** company **Zhejiang Medicines and Health Products Import & Export Co., Ltd** signed in 2015, the acquisition of vaccines during the **Covid-19** pandemic, and a concession at the **Donka** hospital awarded to **French** company **Eifage**, all of which Diallo was involved in.<sup>5</sup> The details of the role Diallo played in allowing embezzlement to take place or benefiting from these contracts have not been made available.

The ruling **Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement (CNRD)** has sought to tackle corruption that is endemic in Guinea and was common practice under former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021). Several investigations have been opened and heard at CRIEF against former ministers, with Diallo the second minister from the current regime. Former infrastructure and public works minister **Yaya Sow** was accused of corruption in January and his case heard by CRIEF before being dismissed, indicating the junta's intolerance of corruption even within its own ranks.

---

<sup>1</sup> Guinee 360, 22 Nov 2023; APA News, 29 Nov 2023

<sup>2</sup> Africa Guinee, 29 Nov 2023

<sup>3</sup> VOA Afrique, 30 Nov 2023

<sup>4</sup> Guinee Live, 23 Nov 2023

<sup>5</sup> Guinee Live, 23 Nov 2023

## Media crackdown

The ruling CNRD has implemented a new wave of media restrictions, clamping down on private media and social media during November and December. It was initially reported on 24 November that access to social media networks including **Facebook**, **X** and **Instagram** had been restricted alongside the jamming of airwaves of private radio stations including **Djoma FM**, **Fim FM** and **Espace FM**.<sup>6</sup> Citizens resorted to using VPNs to access social media networks, with no official communication from the government on whether it was restricting access, and if so, why.<sup>7</sup> Several human rights organisations, including **Amnesty International Guinée**, hosted a press conference on 30 November to denounce the restrictions and demand they be lifted, calling on the junta to comply not only with the transition charter but also other human rights treaties to which it is party.<sup>8</sup> As of 11 December, reports indicate that access to social media networks is still restricted and requires a VPN.<sup>9</sup>

Between 6 and 9 December, **Djoma Média** was suspended from the **Canal+ Guinée** cable network, again with no official communication. However, on 7 December, Canal+ notified Djoma Média owner **Kalil Oularé** that the **Haute autorité de la communication (HAC)** (high authority for communication) had instructed it to remove the media group “without delay” and until further notice, citing security reasons.<sup>10</sup> As of 11 December, Fim FM and Espace FM were continuing to experience signal jamming and on 9 December, the HAC requested that **Espace TV**, **Évasion FM** and **Évasion TV** be removed from Canal+ also over security concerns.<sup>11</sup>

Local media report that these media outlets are often critical of the junta and this is likely the reason behind the blocking of their broadcasting. This is not the first time the junta has been accused of adopting such tactics; in May, local press accused the junta of media censorship, citing lack of access to websites and social media platforms. At the time, international internet media watchdog **NetBlocks** backed these allegations, reporting on 17 May that the government was restricting social media platforms Facebook, **WhatsApp**, Instagram and **TikTok** among others. NetBlocks noted that the disruptions coincided with the demonstrations planned for 17 May and the CNRD’s deployment of the army to help maintain “law and order”.<sup>12</sup>

France-based **Reporters Without Borders** condemned the ongoing restrictions on 14 December, calling the attacks on press freedom “considerable”:

*“Access to television channels and radios is suspended overnight, depriving citizens of their right to information. The lack of transparency of these decisions under the pretext of ‘national security’ is alarming, furthermore discrediting the supposed independence of the regulatory body.”<sup>13</sup>*

## Rio Tinto offers Simandou project update

Australia-headquartered mining company **Rio Tinto** offered an update on 6 December on the **Simandou** iron ore project it is working on with Chinese-led **Winning Consortium Simandou (WCS)** alongside shareholders **Aluminium Corporation of China (Chinalco)** and **China Baowu Steel (Baowu)**. In a press release, Rio Tinto confirmed the potential of the project, describing it as the world’s largest untapped high-grade iron ore deposit. As of 31 December, the deposit holds an estimated total mineral resource of 2.8 billion tonnes with a conversion of an estimated 1.5 billion tonnes that would support a mine life of 26 years.<sup>14</sup> Rio Tinto also confirmed that it expects its initial share of capital expenditure to be \$6.2 billion.

<sup>6</sup> DW, 30 Nov 2023

<sup>7</sup> Agence Ecofin, 4 Dec 2023

<sup>8</sup> Guinée Matin, 30 Nov 2023

<sup>9</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Dec 2023

<sup>10</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Dec 2023

<sup>11</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Dec 2023

<sup>12</sup> Netblocks.org, 17 May 2023

<sup>13</sup> Guinée News, 14 Dec 2023

<sup>14</sup> Rio Tinto, 6 Dec 2023

Plans on the project have been stalled several times. In July 2022, the junta ordered a halt to activities after it cited delays in formalising the agreement between the government, Rio Tinto and WCS over the project infrastructure (see *ARC Briefing Guinea Jul 2022*). Agreements were put in place allowing work to resume and Rio Tinto confirmed that the agreements are on track. Once operational, the 600 km of multi-use railway and port facilities will enable export of up to 120 million tonnes per year.

While Rio Tinto is on track, it was reported in September that its Chinese partners had not yet obtained approval from the Chinese government to release funds necessary for the project, potentially slowing down work.<sup>15</sup> The junta has set a hard deadline of 31 March 2025 for exploitation of the project to begin, and threatened to remove the rights to the project, which were first awarded in 1997, from the partners if this deadline is not met.

### Looking ahead

The upcoming year will be focused on the junta's efforts to ensure that it sticks to its transitional timeline, culminating in elections by January 2025. Pressure has been placed not only by the regional body, the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, but also by the international community. Failure to meet the election deadline could result in increased and fresh sanctions on Guinea. This would almost certainly impact the timeline for the exploitation of the Simandou project, which is expected to pick up speed in 2024 ahead of the 31 March 2025 exploitation deadline.

### Planner

3 – 4 Dec **Dakar (Senegal) Société Nationale des Pétroles (SONAP)** to participate in 4<sup>th</sup> **MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power 2023**

Dec 2024 - Jan 2025 **Guinea** Presidential elections

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

### Chronology

12 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Agence Ecofin. Canada**-headquartered **Sanu Gold** confirms it is preparing for a drilling campaign at its **Bantabaye** gold project in early 2024;

11 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Guinee360**. Junta leader Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** confirms that a law regarding the identification of natural persons and civil status in Guinea has been passed, a key step towards the creation of a national register of the allocation of identification numbers ahead of the planned 2025 elections;

11 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Guinee7.com. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** says the junta has made no significant progress in the implementation of its transition activities;

9 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Jeune Afrique**. Government suspends three media outlets from broadcasting between 6 and 9 December, reportedly over their criticism of the ruling junta;

6 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Anadolu Agency. North Korea** closes its diplomatic missions in Guinea and **Senegal** to reduce spending amid economic difficulties;

6 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Agence Ecofin. Australia**-headquartered **Rio Tinto** says it will need to invest an initial \$6.2 billion to ensure that the **Simandou** iron deposit enters production by the 2025 deadline;

6 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea) Crisis24**. Protests erupt near **Route le Prince** in the capital to denounce deaths that occurred during previous clashes between demonstrators and the security forces;

<sup>15</sup> Agence Ecofin, 6 Dec 2023

4 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Foreign affairs minister **Morissada Kouyaté** tells attendees at the first **Guinean-German** economic forum, held in **Dortmund** (Germany), that Guinea offers a favourable business climate for investors, and that the specialised **Cour de répression des infractions économiques et financières (CRIEF)** (court for the repression of economic and financial offenses) established under junta leader Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya** has helped to create a better business environment;

2 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. Transporters who travel across the **Senegalese** border have deplored harassment by soldiers who often demand bribes to allow the transporters to cross;

1 Dec 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. **World Bank** approves \$266.5m to help improve internet access in Guinea, **Gambia** and **Mauritania**;

29 Nov 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee News*. **European Union (EU)** eases sanctions on several countries, including Guinea;

28 Nov 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *RFI*. The 2009 stadium massacre trial resumes after defence lawyers boycotted the security measures put in place at **Kaloum** prison following the 4 November prison break which saw several defendants escape;

25 Nov 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. Citizens report restricted access to social media networks including **Facebook**, **WhatsApp** and **X**;

### About Africa Risk Consulting:

**Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

**ARC's** core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for a routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistleblower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

[www.africariskconsulting.com](http://www.africariskconsulting.com)

### About ARC Briefing:

**ARC Briefing** is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

**ARC Briefing** is an information service keeping you:

- Up to date with Country Chronologies of business-critical events
- In the know via Country Briefings on political, economic, business and operating trends. Written in-country, ARC experts analyse and comment
- Ahead with Country Planner which details future elections, budgets, regulatory changes etc.

[www.africariskconsulting.com](http://www.africariskconsulting.com)

### Getting in touch

Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com) or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

Follow us on Twitter: [@ARCBriefing](https://twitter.com/ARCBriefing)