

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Guinea Monthly Briefing February 2023

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#### Guinea Summary 22 February 2023

*The foreign affairs ministers of Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali meet in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on 9 February to discuss presenting as a common front ahead of an African Union (AU) summit and extraordinary summit of the regional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECOWAS meets on the side lines of the 36<sup>th</sup> AU Summit in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 18 February and decides to maintain the suspension of the three countries. The AU announces on 19 February that it will also maintain the suspension of the three countries. Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC) announces on 6 February that it will hold a peaceful march in greater Conakry on 16 February to demand the immediate release of its leaders who have been imprisoned for several months and all other political leaders, as well as a faster return to civilian rule. The FNDC reports on the eve of 16 February that two people died during clashes with the police, approximately 58 people were injured and 50 people were arrested. Ruling **Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD)** leader Colonel Mamady Doumbouya (2021-present) reaffirms on 21 February that he will leave power at the end of the transition in 2024 and pledges that Guinea will return to civilian rule by 1 January 2025.*

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#### Guinea joins Burkina Faso and Mali form common front against ECOWAS and AU sanctions

The foreign affairs ministers of **Guinea, Burkina Faso** and **Mali** met in **Ouagadougou** (Burkina Faso) on 9 February to discuss presenting as a common front ahead of an **African Union (AU)** summit and extraordinary summit of the regional bloc, the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**.<sup>1</sup> The meeting reportedly initially aimed to discuss the three countries creating a federation, after Burkina Faso's prime minister, **Apollinaire Kyélem de Tambela**, touted the idea early in February. However, the outcome was instead a collective political front against ECOWAS and the AU and additional reliance on each other for development initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

Burkina Faso's **Olivia Rouamba**, Guinea's **Morissanda Kouayté** and Mali's **Abdoulaye Diop** discussed using each other's strengths to help address issues such as combining efforts to tackle security issues, working on various hydrocarbons and electricity projects, development of trade and transport from the port of **Conakry**, mining projects and the construction of a railway line connecting the capitals of each country.<sup>3</sup> Rouamba noted that the three ministers "*reaffirmed their commitment to examine any partnership that respects sovereignty and meets the needs of their populations*".<sup>4</sup> The meeting ended with the representatives noting a need to establish a permanent consultation framework between them, holding additional political and diplomatic consultations and strengthening solidarity among their governments.<sup>5</sup>

The meeting between the three countries and their representatives took place amid a common desire to request ECOWAS and the AU to lift sanctions and suspensions from these bodies that were placed on the countries after each of their respective coup d'états. The ministers claim the suspensions prevent the countries from participating in statutory bodies focused on issues such as insecurity, humanitarian aid and sustainable economic development, which negatively impacts their populations.

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<sup>1</sup> RFI, 10 Feb 2023

<sup>2</sup> RFI, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>3</sup> RFI, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>4</sup> RFI, 10 Feb 2023

<sup>5</sup> Anadolu Agency, 10 Feb 2023

The countries also expressed their wish for the AU and ECOWAS to provide technical, financial and other support for their efforts to return to constitutional order. Elections have been planned for 2024 in Mali and Burkina Faso, and for 2025 in Guinea.

The meeting came shortly after a visit by **Russia's** foreign affairs minister, **Sergei Lavrov**, to Mali on 7 February, where he promised aid to countries in the **Sahel** and countries bordering the **Gulf of Guinea** in their fight against jihadists.<sup>6</sup> Both Burkina Faso and Mali have chosen Russian assistance over their traditional partner, **France**. While Guinea maintains ties with France, this could change, especially amid the push for solidarity amongst these three countries.<sup>7</sup>

ECOWAS met on the side lines of the 36<sup>th</sup> AU Summit in **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)** on 18 February, where it was decided that the bloc would maintain the suspension of the three countries, and added travel bans on government officials and representatives.<sup>8</sup> The AU announced on 19 February that it would also maintain the suspension of the three countries. AU political affairs commissioner **Bankole Adeoye** cited the AU's 'zero tolerance' policy against unconstitutional regimes when announcing the decision.<sup>9</sup>

### **FNDC hosts protests**

Civil society collective **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** announced on 6 February that it would hold a peaceful march in greater Conakry on 16 February to demand the immediate release of its leaders, who have been imprisoned for several months, and all other political leaders, as well as a faster return to civilian rule.<sup>10</sup> The ruling military junta, **Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD)**, banned all demonstrations in May 2022 and dissolved the FNDC in August, alleging that it had organised armed demonstrations on public roads and acted as a private militia. However, the FNDC has defied these orders on several occasions.<sup>11</sup> On this occasion, political parties **Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)**, **Union des forces républicaines (UFR)** and former ruling **Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée-Arc-en-ciel (RPG-AEC)** supported the mobilisation, amplifying the call to supporters.<sup>12</sup>

As anticipated, the demonstrations met with violence and pushback from police. The FNDC reported on the eve of 16 February that two people (aged 16 and 19) had died during clashes with the police, approximately 58 people were injured and 50 people were arrested.<sup>13</sup> The families of the victims confirmed their deaths to media outlets following the demonstrations. Journalists also reported that they were assaulted by soldiers who were called to assist the police force in quashing the demonstrations. **Organisation guinéenne de défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen (OGDH)** (Guinean organisation for defence of human rights) spokesperson **Alseny Sall** subsequently raised concerns about the involvement of the military during the demonstrations.<sup>14</sup>

Territorial administration minister **Mory Condé** addressed the media on 17 February, acknowledging the injuries, but did not confirm or speak of the deaths reported by the FNDC. Condé described the demonstrations as "*urban guerrilla warfare*" and noted that at least eight citizens were injured, as well as 20 law enforcement officers and gendarmes.<sup>15</sup> He issued a warning to the FNDC and announced that law enforcement measures would be strengthened in the face of the FNDC's defiance.

The FNDC has shown its discontent with the CNRD in other ways. On 13 February, it filed a complaint with the Conakry court of appeal entitled 'denunciation of crimes and abuses committed under the

<sup>6</sup> France24, 10 Feb 2023

<sup>7</sup> ARC Guinea analyst

<sup>8</sup> Africanews, 20 Feb 2023

<sup>9</sup> Jeune Afrique, 20 Feb 2023

<sup>10</sup> Afriksoir.net, 10 Feb 2023; Jeune Afrique, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>11</sup> Afriksoir.net, 9 Aug 2022

<sup>12</sup> Jeune Afrique, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>13</sup> RFI, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>14</sup> Africanews, 18 Feb 2023

<sup>15</sup> RFI, 17 Feb 2023

regime of Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** [2021-present]', attaching a list of 23 additional people related to the colonel who are likely to be directly or indirectly involved in the *"bloody repression of peaceful and citizen demonstrations in Guinea"*.<sup>16</sup> The FNDC lodged a similar complaint with a French court in September. Despite the government's dissolution and warnings against the FNDC, it is unlikely that it will stop mobilising until the CNRD meets its demands to release its imprisoned leaders.

### **Doumbouya affirms he will leave at the end of the transition**

Ruling CNRD leader Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya reaffirmed on 21 February that he will leave power at the end of the transition in 2024.<sup>17</sup> Doumbouya, who seized power on 5 September 2021, addressed the media on 21 February noting that he and the junta would organise the transition, but would not be part of the post-transition process. He further pledged that Guinea would return to civilian rule by 1 January 2025.<sup>18</sup>

The affirmations came during the opening of a symposium to launch the drafting of Guinea's new constitution, which Guinean magistrates state must be completed before the end of 2023.<sup>19</sup> The CNRD legislative body, the **Conseil National de Transition (CNT)** (national transitional council), will draft the new constitution, which will be put to a referendum before being adopted, involving civilian opinion in the process. Colonel Doumbouya said the constitution should not be geared towards an individual or political party:

*"We are not going to redo a Constitution every ten years. We are going to write a Constitution that will stand the test of time and that can be useful to our children."*<sup>20</sup>

International and regional organisations that have been pushing for a return to civilian rule will welcome the colonel's affirmations and his pledge regarding the transition. The ruling junta has also offered a timeline for companies invested and involved in Guinea, allowing them to prepare for a change in rule and other changes that may accompany the transition.

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<sup>16</sup> Jeune Afrique, 17 Feb 2023

<sup>17</sup> VOA Afrique, 22 Feb 2023

<sup>18</sup> VOA Afrique, 22 Feb 2023

<sup>19</sup> RFI, 22 Feb 2023

<sup>20</sup> APA News, 21 Feb 2023

## Planner

2025 **Guinea** General elections

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

## Chronology

17 Feb 2023 **Gaoual (Guinea)** *Financial Afrik*. **Australia's Alliance Mining Commodities (AMC)** begins construction on the **Wendoubour** bauxite mine, which has estimated deposits of 500 million tonnes and has cost investment of \$1 billion;

8 Feb 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Guinean political figure and economist **Mamadou Ba Baadiko** claims that the level of corruption in Guinea has decreased since the establishment of the **Cour de répression des infractions économiques et financières (CRIEF)** (economic and financial offences court);

6 Feb 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *APA News*. **Le Front national pour la défense de la Constitution (FNDC)** announces that it will organise a peaceful demonstration on 16 February to demand the release of several of its leaders who remain in detention;

2 Feb 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. The **French** government is funding two major projects in Guinea, including deployment of digital terrestrial television (DTT) and the construction of regional hospitals, at an estimated cost to the French treasury of €66m (\$72m) and €100m (\$109m) respectively;

1 Feb 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. Planning and international cooperation minister **Rose Pola Pricemou** says her ministry intends to draw up the census cartography of the general population and housing;

30 Jan 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinee*. Authorities announce that construction on the **Simandou** iron-ore project will begin as soon as March;

29 Jan 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. Colonel **Mamadi Doumbouya** creates a public regulatory authority for the gaming sector and related practices;

26 Jan 2023 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinee*. **United Kingdom**-headquartered **Amnesty International** calls for the release of **Mamadou Billo Bah, Oumar Sylla** (also known as **Foniké Menguè**) and **Ibrahima Diallo**, all members of the **Front National pour la Défense de la Constitution (FNDC)**, calling their detention arbitrary and a violation of rights to freedom of expression;

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