

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Guinea Summary 24 May 2024

International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive board on 6 May approves a disbursement of \$71m to Guinea under the Exogenous Shocks Window of the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) to help address the fallout of the December Kaloum fuel depot explosion. Prime minister Bah Oury confirms on two occasions that the transitional timeline will be delayed. United Kingdom-headquartered Amnesty International publishes a report on 15 May deploring the junta's crackdown on demonstrations. Russia's and France's ambassadors to Guinea meet with the government to push strong bilateral cooperation.

IMF disburses emergency funds

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** executive board on 6 May approved a disbursement of \$71m to Guinea under the **Exogenous Shocks Window** of the **Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)** to help address the fallout of the December 2023 **Kaloum** fuel depot explosion.¹ The explosion at the fuel depot in **Conakry's** Kaloum district on 18 December killed 24 people, injured 241 others and damaged at least 800 buildings (*see ARC Briefing Guinea Jan 2024*). In January, the government amended its 2024 budget to reflect a drop in revenues of 446.11 billion GNF (\$51.83m) as a direct impact of the explosion, announcing it was seeking financial assistance to deal with its consequences, including from the IMF. The total economic impact is now estimated to be at least \$413.2m.²

The IMF noted in its press release that Guinea's economic growth is expected to slow to 4.1% in 2024 due to the explosion, which has led to ongoing fuel shortages and power outages.³ The funding is set to be used to help affected households, decontaminate the explosion site, help construct and rehabilitate affected infrastructure and rebuild a new modern and safe depot.

The executive board also concluded its **Article IV Consultation** with Guinea, forecasting that growth will reach 5.6% in 2025, driven by the mining sector.⁴ The executive board recommended that the government work on increasing domestic revenues, modernising tax systems, improving public finance management and increasing social spending. The IMF emphasised that the government needs to ensure that the **Simandou** iron ore project has the expected economic benefits.

Following confirmation of the funds, prime minister **Bah Oury** met with the committee in charge of compensating the explosion victims to confirm that the process would begin soon.⁵

Transition delays confirmed

Over the course of May, Bah gave a series of updates on the planned return to civilian rule, confirming that the transitional timeline will be delayed. Bah clarified on 10 May that the constitutional referendum is expected at the latest at the end of this year, which will push elections past the expected early-2025 timeline.⁶ Guinea agreed in October 2022 with the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** to hold elections in early 2025, after negotiations led the junta to trim its transitional timeline from three years to two years (*see ARC Briefing Guinea Oct 2022*).

¹ IMF, 6 May 2024

² Africa Guinee, 8 May 2024

³ IMF, 6 May 2024

⁴ IMF, 6 May 2024

⁵ Vision Guinee, 7 May 2024

⁶ Vision Guinee, 10 May 2024

Bah justified the delays by saying the government is accounting for previous transitions in Guinea that have not worked out, and does not want to repeat these mistakes. Bah addressed the issue at the **Africa CEO Forum in Kigali (Rwanda)** on 16 and 17 May, stating:

*‘We will do everything possible for the return to constitutional order in the sense that Guinea will be able to make a spectacular leap forward thanks to the works which will allow us to have a strong, resilient economy and which will be a centre of development in this part. of **West Africa.**’⁷*

During the interview, Bah confirmed that the transitional timetable as it stands – planning for elections in December 2024/January 2025 – will not be met and that by this stage, only the constitutional referendum would have taken place.⁸ He did not give a date for the elections.

Historically, transition timetables have never been met, so it is unsurprising that Guinea’s transition is delayed. However, the country has maintained a far more concrete timeline than its regional neighbours and has shown the political will to hand back power. On 25 October, the **Conseil National de la Transition (CNT)** (national transitional council) adopted draft laws related to the **Identification des Personnes physiques** (identification of natural persons) and **Régime de l’Etat civil** (civil status regime), key to allowing the **Recensement administratif à vocation d’Etat-civil (RAVEC)** (administrative census for civil status purposes), to take place. When the census is complete, the third step in the timeline of return to civilian rule – the establishment of the electoral register – can take place.⁹ The remaining steps include:

- Developing a new constitution;
- Organising a referendum vote on the constitution;
- Developing new laws;
- Organisation of local and municipal elections;
- Organisation of legislative elections;
- Establishment of necessary institutions;
- Organisation of the presidential election.¹⁰

Bah added that the electoral register is the main challenge, as conducting a census in Guinea will be difficult, and that the constitutional referendum will be the “*first test*”, but following this, “*everything will become very easy.*”¹¹

Amnesty International denounces junta’s human rights record

United Kingdom-headquartered **Amnesty International** published a report titled “*Wounded Youth: Care and justice urgently needed for the victims of unlawful use of force in Guinea*” on 15 May, stating that authorities have repeatedly violated human rights and left the wounded unable to access healthcare for fear of reprisal. The report states that since the **Comité national du rassemblement et du développement (CNRD)** seized power in September 2021, at least 47 people have died because of heavy-handed tactics employed by defence and security forces during demonstrations.¹² The report added that more than 75% of those killed have been under the age of 25 and 40% under the age of 18. Public and private healthcare centres have often refused to treat the injured as they do not want people who have technically broken the law under their care.

The junta banned demonstrations in 2022 and has since not only cracked down on them but arrested several opposition leaders, civil society members and members of the media.¹³ Between 2019 and

⁷ Vision Guinee, 19 May 2024

⁸ Vision Guinee, 19 May 2024

⁹ Africa Guinee, 25 Oct 2023

¹⁰ Africa Guinee, 25 Oct 2023

¹¹ Vision Guinee, 19 May 2024

¹² Amnesty International, 15 May 2024

¹³ AFP, 15 May 2024

2021, at least 66 people were killed in demonstrations against former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021), with the CNRD seizing power under the guise of ending the repression of the Condé era. However, as the report highlights, the repression has continued and has been accompanied by other violations, such as restricting internet access for several months.¹⁴

Human rights organisations have published several reports on repression under the junta, but no action has been taken by the junta or even other international parties to address the allegations or push for greater respect for human rights. While a post-transition government may look at compensating the victims, the likelihood of investigations into human rights abuses and action against defence and security personnel is low.

France and Russia vie for cooperation rights

Russia's ambassador to Guinea, **Alexey Popov**, met with Bah in the last week of April to discuss bilateral relations and prospects for technical, mining, commercial and military cooperation. Popov disclosed that they had also discussed restarting an intergovernmental commission.¹⁵ Popov met with foreign affairs minister **Morissada Kouyaté** on 12 May to discuss "*revitalising*" cooperation between the two countries.¹⁶ Kouyaté said that the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)** was Guinea's first partner after independence in 1958.

Following this, during the Africa CEO Forum in Kigali on 16 and 17 May, Bah met with a delegation from **Electricité de France (EDF)** to discuss energy solutions for Guinea's electricity crisis. This was also part of discussions between Kouyaté and France's ambassador to Guinea, **Marc Fonbaustier**, on 18 May.

France's standing in the region has declined rapidly in recent months, with junta-run **Burkina Faso**, **Mali** and **Niger** cutting military ties with France and limiting diplomatic ties. Russia has largely replaced France in these countries and is keen to expand cooperation with Guinea. However, France is pushing to maintain strong ties with **Senegal** and **Côte d'Ivoire** and prove through its relationship with Guinea that it is willing to work with juntas. To this point, Fonbaustier noted that France is "*in line with the priorities defined by the government*".¹⁷ Guinea has maintained a relatively neutral stance in its international relations, with transitional government members often meeting with their counterparts in the **United States**, France, Russia and **China** and maintaining positive ties with them. Kouyaté affirmed that Guinea's relations with France are long-standing and very strong.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, 15 May 2024

¹⁵ Vision Guinée, 24 Apr 2024

¹⁶ Vision Guinée, 20 May 2024

¹⁷ Vision Guinée, 18 May 2024

Planner

2024 **Guinea** Constitutional referendum expected
 2024/2025 **Guinea** Presidential elections expected
 2025 **Conakry (Guinea)** Start of exploitation at the **Simandou** iron ore project;

Chronology

18 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinea*. Foreign affairs minister **Morissada Kouyaté** meets with **Russia's** ambassador to Guinea, **Alexis Popov**, to discuss prospects for cooperation between the two countries;

17 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Miningmx*. **United Kingdom**-headquartered **Hummingbird Resources** says it will restart production at the **Kouroussa** gold mine from the third quarter;

16 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinea*. Transport minister **Ousmane Gaoual Diallo** and finance minister **Mourana Soumah** sign an agreement to mobilise financial resources and rebuild a 1,400km railway that will connect Guinea to **Mali** and **Burkina Faso**;

14 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinea*. **Chinese** embassy in Conakry hosts a Sino-Guinean forum;

13 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Guinee Matin*. **Rwanda's** President **Paul Kagame** arrives in Conakry for a brief visit with junta leader Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya**;

9 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinea*. **European Union (EU)** ambassador to Guinea, **Jolita Pons**, calls on the junta to respect the transition deadlines;

7 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Switzerland**-headquartered **Global Fund** grants Guinea \$167m as part of the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, adding that Guinea has made "significant" progress against these diseases;

1 May 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinea*. **Italy's** foreign affairs ministry's director general of development cooperation, **Stephano Gatti**, meets with prime minister **Bah Oury** to discuss strengthening cooperation, with Gatti calling Guinea a new priority country for Italy;

29 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinea*. **Conseil National de la Transition** (national council of the transition) president **Dansa Kourouma** asks the **Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)** (parliamentary assembly of the Francophonie) for increased support for the transition in Guinea;

30 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinea*. Junta leader Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya** reshuffles the national gendarmerie;

29 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinea*. Junta leader Colonel **Mamady Doumbouya** makes several changes to the army, shuffling the officers who lead military regions and battalions across the country;

27 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Tech Point*. Guinea and **Gambia** sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a second subsea optical fibre cable;

27 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Africa Guinea*. Prime minister **Bah Oury** calls on the intelligence services to increase their efforts to prevent any attempts to destabilise the transition;

25 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Vision Guinea*. **Conseil National de la Transition** (national council of the transition) approves an agreement signed in 2023 between the government and **West African LNG Group**, paving the way for a potential \$3-billion investment in liquefied natural gas import infrastructure;

24 Apr 2024 **Conakry (Guinea)** *Mining.com*. Mines ministry confirms that production and export of bauxite increased in 2023 for a third year in a row with production rising by 123 million metric tonnes, a 19% year-on-year increase, and exports reaching 127 million tonnes, a 24.5% increase;

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