

West Africa This Week – A weekly highlight on political, security, socio-political and health happenings across the West African region

July 29th to August 4th 2022

MALI, BURKINA FASO, SENEGAL, GUINEA

In the week under review, key highlights focus on developments on the case of the 49 Ivorian soldiers, the 2022 legislative elections in Senegal, responses or reactions to the French President's African tour, the FNDC issues in Guinea, and on the health scenes, the persistent rise in the number of confirmed new cases of COVID across the region.

Macron's African Tour

In line with French President, Emmanuel Macron's African tour to Cameroon, Benin and Guinea Bissau to strengthen bilateral ties between these countries, Macron was received in Benin Republic by President Patrice Talon on July 27. In Benin, the two presidents used the occasion to renew their friendship, as well as discuss the restitution of cultural property and the threats of armed terrorist groups affecting northern Benin. During a press conference in Guinea Bissau, Macron expressed France's support to the development of the country's agricultural sector, respect of ECOWAS in regional matters, and solidarity with the region in fighting against terrorism. On Mali, he highlighted that the military junta in government is no longer fighting terrorism which prompted the withdrawal of French forces from Mali and also reiterated ECOWAS responsibility to help the Malian people "build a stable environment" to fight jihadist groups¹.

MALI

Political Dynamics

Mali sends a message to Macron

The remarks made by the President of France, Emmanuel Macron during his African tour, precisely in Guinea Bissau on July 28, 2022, have yielded responses from the Malian Transitional Government. During his press conference, the French Head of State reiterated erroneous accusations by asserting that the Malian authorities maintain relations with a paramilitary group. Another was on the exercise of violence by the Malian authorities targeting a specific ethnic group.

In response, the Transitional Government has condemned with the utmost rigor these "hateful and defamatory" remarks by the French President and called national and international opinion to witness these serious accusations which are likely to arouse ethnic hatred and undermine their living together, cohesion, as well as harmony among Malians. The Malian press release

¹ More details on the tour in Guinea Bissau can be found here <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220729-macron-promises-to-revive-relations-with-guinea-bissau-and-help-region-battle-terrorism>

underlines that “these subversive remarks by the French President vindicate the Transitional Government which, rightly, put an end to defense cooperation with France for its unsatisfactory results in the fight against terrorism in Mali”².

French President Emmanuel Macron was thus demanded "to definitively abandon his neocolonial, paternalistic and condescending posture" with the understanding that no one can love Mali better than the Malians themselves.

ECOWAS Mediator praises the transition process

The ECOWAS Mediator, former Nigerian President Goodluck JONATHAN, was in Bamako from July 20 to 21 to monitor and evaluate the Transition process. During his 48-hour stay, he met with the Malian authorities and members of the local Transition monitoring committee³.

It would be recalled that the noteworthy progress made by the transition government enhanced the recent lifting of economic and financial sanctions by ECOWAS and WAEMU. However, ECOWAS had upheld other sanctions such as Mali’s suspension from decision-making institutions, until a peaceful return to constitutional order was attained.

Mandated to continue exchanges with Malian authorities, the Mediator noted the resumption of economic activities in post-sanction Mali upon his arrival at the airport. He acknowledged the progress made by the authorities and hoped that it will be maintained for the organization of the elections to allow the democratically elected government to take the reins of the country.

An international arrest warrant against former Prime Minister

An international arrest warrant against former leaders of IBK’s regime was issued on July 25, 2022 by the Supreme Court of Mali. The former leaders involved include Boubou Cissé, former Prime Minister and former Minister of Economy and Finance of IBK; Tièman Hubert Coulibaly, former Minister of National Defence; Mamadou Igor Diarra, ex-Minister of Economy and Finance, and Babaly Bah, ex-boss of BMS-SA. The case is related to the purchase of equipment under a public contract known as PARAMOUNT, a part of the implementation of the Orientation and Programming Law for Homeland Security⁴. Official investigation reports established overcharges of 40 billion CFA francs (\$72 million), in the case related to the purchase of presidential aircraft and military equipment.

The reason for the international nature of the arrest warrant must be linked to the current residences of the concerned former leaders being outside Mali. Former Malian Prime Minister Boubou Cissé took residence in Côte d'Ivoire since December 2021, after having been accused of wanting to destabilize the transition. Tièman Hubert Coulibaly, former Minister of Defense, took refuge in France after being suspected in the framework of the Military Orientation and Programming Law.

² Full details on <https://maliactu.net/le-mali-exige-de-macron-dabandonner-definitivement-sa-posture-neocoloniale-paternaliste-et-condescendante/>

³ <https://maliactu.net/goodluck-jonathan-a-bamako-se-rejouit-des-efforts-consentis/>

⁴ <https://maliactu.net/mali-la-cour-supreme-lance-un-mandat-darret-international-contre-des-ex-dirigeants-de-lancien-regime-dibk/>

However, responding to the international arrest warrant issued against him, the former prime minister, Boubou Cissé who has been in Cote d'Ivoire since December 2021, has released a press statement announcing that he is "absolutely serene and determined to clear his honor"⁵.

The case of the 49 Ivorian soldiers in Mali: recap and update

Following the arrest of 49 Ivorian soldiers on arrival in Mali, explanations from the Ivorian end linked the arrested soldiers to a UN procedure allowing peacekeeping contingents to call on external contractors for logistical support, the National Support Elements (NSE). However, the Malian authorities regarded the soldiers as mercenaries, and have consequently suspended all rotations of the military and police contingents of the United Nations Mission in Mali (UNMIS), including those already scheduled, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The suspension is effective until the organisation of a meeting to facilitate the coordination and regulation of the rotation of these contingents. As a result, 8 soldiers of the German army who had reserved their flights for July 14 were prevented from leaving Malian territory⁶.

However, before the expected meeting could even ensue, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Mali was invited by the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 20, to be notified that after the discussions between both teams, a series of biased and unacceptable publications on Twitter by the Spokesperson of MINUSMA, Olivier Salgado, (as stated by the Malian authorities) has led to new developments regarding the case. In a Communique⁷ by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated July 20, Mr. Olivier Salgado was given 72 hours to leave Mali having not been able to present proof of the assertions contained in his tweet, or make the necessary correction demanded by the Malian authorities. Olivier Salgado, a UN diplomat and spokesperson for MINUSMA is the third individual (excluding the Barkhane and Takuba forces) to be declared persona non grata in Mali. Others before him are Hamidou Bolly the ECOWAS representative in Mali, and Jöel Meyer, the French Ambassador to Mali.

Monitoring the reactions of Malians on Twitter to this decision by the government, it appears the decision is welcomed with pride and relief for majority. MINUSMA also acknowledged and regretted the decision, while reiterating to continue to work towards the implementation of its mandate in support of peace and security in Mali⁸.

Clarifications on all current military operations demanded

Given the inconsistencies surrounding the "49 Ivorian mercenaries" case, the Malian authorities decided to clarify all the military operations in progress in the country, starting with MINUSMA operations. Thus, after the suspension which took effect from July 14, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation requested a coordination meeting between the Malian structures concerned and the MINUSMA to facilitate the coordination and regulation of the

⁵ <http://bamada.net/affaire-du-marche-dit-paramount-lancien-premier-ministre-boubou-cisse-sort-de-sa-reserve>

⁶ <https://maliactu.net/8-soldats-allemands-ne-peuvent-pas-quitter-le-mali-en-raison-de-la-suspension-des-rotations-au-sein-de-la-minusma/>

⁷ The communique can be found here <https://t.co/SasAXMWbmg>

⁸ <https://minusma.unmissions.org/la-minusma-regrette-l%E2%80%99exoulsion-de-son-porte-parole-par-le-gouvernement-malien>

rotation of contingents operating within the MINUSMA. And so, on July 12, the Malian government addressed a correspondence to MINUSMA asking for all the necessary documents on its contingents and contractors or co-contractors in Mali; the clarification of the legal or contractual links between the Ivorian soldiers concerned, Sahel Aviation Service and the German contingent of MINUSMA; as well as an update on the numbers of the National Support Elements, together with the precision of their places of deployment and the missions entrusted to them⁹.

MINUSMA provides clarifications

On July 22, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) transmitted the information requested by the Malian authorities as follows:

1) Clarification on the legal or contractual links between the Ivorian military personnel who arrived in Bamako on 10 July 2022, Sahel Aviation Service and the German contingent of MINUSMA

MINUSMA notes that the Ivorian elements were deployed to Sénou (Bamako) to provide security at the German NSE base in Sénou, instead of Timbuktu where the Ivorian contingent of MINUSMA is based. It appears that certain procedures were not followed and the Mission is trying to better understand how these malfunctions could have occurred in order to avoid their recurrence in the future.

2) Contractual, sub-contractual relationship between the German contingent and third parties

MINUSMA is not aware of any contract between Germany and third parties for the protection of the German base in NSE. Measures have already been taken to strengthen the management of NSE

3) Number and location of NSE in MINUSMA

UN policies allow TCCs and PCCs to deploy NSEs to provide services to their contingents in a national capacity

Each contingent is responsible for informing MINUSMA on a monthly basis of the number of its national support elements deployed. According to the contingents' declarations, as of June 2022, the total number of NSEs in Mali is 609, including 471 supporting the German contingent, 33 Bangladeshis, 7 Cambodians, 5 Chadians, 60 British, 4 Sri Lankans, and 29 Swedes.

MINUSMA has not been informed of the presence and number of NSE from Côte d'Ivoire. However, by cross-checking internal documents, MINUSMA estimates the Ivorian detachment to be 50 men and women.

⁹ <https://maliactu.net/minusma-bamako-veut-clarifier-toutes-les-operations-militaires-en-cours/>

MINUSMA has initiated a census of NSE in all its contingents, in order to obtain accurate figures. The Mission will share the findings of its verification once it is complete.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali thanks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali for its kind cooperation and takes this opportunity to renew the assurances of its highest consideration¹⁰.

This new statement is clearly an indication that MINUSMA/United Nations has retraced its steps in the case of the 49 soldiers arrested on Sunday July 10, 2022, in Mali. From the statement, there were indeed malfunctions in the procedure, as contrary to the Ivorian statement on the case, this Note Verbale from MINUSMA clarifies that "the 49 Ivorian soldiers arrested in Bamako are not national elements supporting the Minusma contingents" but, by cross-checking internal documents, MINUSMA estimates that the Ivorian detachment amounts to 50 men and women. Although MINUSMA has informed the Malian authorities "to have initiated a census of the NSE in all its contingents, in order to obtain its verifications once they are established", could the Malian reasons behind the arrest of the 49 Ivorian soldiers be viable?

Demands for the departure of MINUSMA from Mali

The Yèrèwolo Movement is demanding the departure of MINUSMA from Mali before September 22. This was announced during a press conference and followed up with a letter of dismissal delivered to the UN Mission at its headquarters in Sènou on July 20¹¹.

Members of the Movement are taking this action on the basis that MINUSMA has become "an occupying force which revives and maintains fear, ethnic divisions and mistrust between communities in Mali"; that the MINUSMA mandate has been completely devoid of its content which was to "support the authorities of the Malian transition to stabilize the situation in the main agglomerations, in particular in the north of Mali, and, in this context, ward off threats and actively take steps to prevent the return of armed elements to the area"; and the Malians consider reports of the MINUSMA biased.

What implications would this action yield, given that the legitimate Malian authorities had renewed the mandate of the Minusma, albeit the recent suspension of activities?

The Case of 49 Ivorian soldiers: Mali sets conditions for their release

Under mediation by the Togolese President, Faure Gnassingbé, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire are still negotiating the release of the 49 soldiers detained in Mali. While the first mediation meeting yielded no result, a second meeting has led to the establishment of conditions for the release of the soldiers as follows¹²:

¹⁰ As found on the Note Verbale

¹¹ <https://maliactu.net/contre-toute-evidence-et-toute-logique/>

¹² <https://maliactu.net/le-mali-pose-des-conditions-pour-liberer-les-49-soldats-ivoiriens-arretes-a-bamako/>

1. that the Ivorian government expresses regret following the deployment of its soldiers on Malian territory without a legal framework, without notification and prior consultation with the Malian authorities.
2. the Ivorian authorities should undertake to work to restore peace and harmony between the two neighbors.
3. the Ivorian government should commit to respecting its sovereignty and its established rules and procedures for sending military forces to Malian territory.

The conditions have been rejected by Cote d'Ivoire, backtracking the mediation process.

Risks of Security Dynamics

11 civilians killed in the Ménaka region

A press release by Anadolu Agency has revealed the killing of at least eleven (11) civilians on July 29 in Tevolat area, Ménaka region, in northern Mali, by armed men belonging to Daesh¹³.

The attack was launched by armed men riding ISIS motorcycles. They also took the victims' cars and burned others with their animals

Transition president's residence camp suffered armed attacks

The military camp of Soundiata Keita located in Kati where Transitional President Colonel Assimi Goïta and the Minister of Defense also reside was attacked on July 22¹⁴. Heavy weapon fire accompanied by detonations was reportedly heard as early as 5 am but the situation had since been controlled by the Malian armed forces. Kati houses the largest military base in Mali and this is the first time it is being the target of a terrorist attack. In a statement by the Armed Forces published on Twitter¹⁵, two vehicles packed with explosives were found while the military took control of the situation. Consequently, 7 terrorists were neutralised, 8 arrested while on FAMa's end, 1 soldier died and 6 wounded, including 1 civilian. Prior to this attack, a police base on Kolokani had been attacked and two Malian soldiers killed, an army checkpoint had also been attacked and at least six people killed.

The resurgence of incessant attacks in the Malian territory necessitated the departure of U.S. officials and their non-emergency family members residing in the country. This was announced on July 29 by the US Embassy following the Embassy's limited capacity to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens in Mali¹⁶.

Socio-political Dynamics

World Bank to resume operations in Mali

¹³ <https://maliactu.net/mali-11-civils-tues-dans-la-region-de-menaka/>

¹⁴ <https://burkina24.com/2022/07/22/mali-une-attaque-armee-au-camp-militaire-de-kati/>

¹⁵ https://twitter.com/FAMa_DIRPA/status/1550458437263400960/photo/1

¹⁶ <http://bamada.net/recrudescence-des-attaques-terroristes-au-mali-les-etats-unis-ordonnent-le-depart-de-ses-fonctionnaires-non-essentiels-du-pays>

With the lifting of the ECOWAS and WAEMU sanctions against Mali, Mali's Ministry of Economy and Finance has announced on its Twitter platform¹⁷ the lifting of the suspension of disbursements relating to projects and programmes financed by the World Bank in Mali. World Bank, like other international organizations, had taken measures through economic and financial sanctions against Mali in 2021 after two coups in less than a year. Nevertheless, with the lifting of the sanctions, World Bank will resume financial operations in Mali.

BURKINA FASO

Political Dynamics

Former ruling party reawakens

The National Political Bureau of the People's Movement for Progress (Mouvement du peuple pour le progress – MPP), held its first ordinary session¹⁸ this year on July 16 at the Palais de la Jeunesse et de la Culture in Ouagadougou. During the session, the deteriorating security situation of the country and the increased number of IDPs were some of the focal areas of discussion. While renewing its unwavering support for the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) and the Volunteers for the Defense of the Fatherland (VDP) in the fight against insecurity, MPP invited its supporters to unite and work together for the strengthening and revival of the Party. The party is expected to take all appropriate measures to strengthen unity and cohesion and revitalize the life of the Party's statutory structures at all organizational levels of the MPP, through field trips.

Socio-political Dynamics

CODEL set to continue electoral education

The Convention of Civil Society Organizations for the Observation of Elections (CODEL) launched its project of "citizen watch and monitoring for good electoral governance in Burkina Faso", on July 21 in Ouagadougou. The project, which stems from the disruption to democratic processes by the coup d'état of January 24, will be implemented over a period of three (03) months for awareness creation among the population on the various recommendations of observation missions in future elections. It will also serve as an opportunity to call on the authorities to clean up the electoral process for better governance in Burkina Faso¹⁹.

¹⁷ <https://t.co/dPuVpA8wln>

¹⁸ For the full report of the session and the party's activities before and during the coup, please see <https://burkina24.com/2022/07/21/chute-de-roch-kabore-les-militants-du-mpp-attendaient-des-actions-vigoureuses-et-dissuasives-de-la-direction-politique-nationale-du-parti/>

¹⁹ More details can be found at <https://burkina24.com/2022/07/21/la-rupture-du-processus-electoral-est-un-frein-brutal-au-cheminement-du-burkina-faso-souleymane-ouedraogo-membre-de-la-codel/>

Project activities will be carried out mainly in the central region, particularly in Ouagadougou. The flagship activities include a capitalization meeting on the recommendations resulting from the 2015 and 2020 electoral observations, a forum on electoral corruption and the illicit financing of political parties, advocacy and communications on electoral reforms.

Barkhane in Ouagadougou

At a press briefing²⁰ organized by the Commander of the Barkhane Force, General Laurent Michon on July 21 in Ouagadougou, to mark the end of his mission in the Sahel, the Commander presented the results and prospects of the French military system in the Sahel region. Commenting on the withdrawal of Takuba and the Barkhane troop in Mali, he distanced the decision from the presence of Wagner but rather linked it to goodwill and hope for the political stability of the region.

Risks of Security Dynamics

Army counters at least 15 terrorists in Kelbo

In a communique published by the National Armed Forces of Burkina Faso on July 25, the general public was notified of the army's effort in countering and tracking down the terrorists who attacked the Kelbo military detachment on July 25, 2022²¹.

Following a vigorous response from the soldiers of the detachment, air support was deployed to intercept the group of attackers who were trying to escape. This action, coordinated with the ground units, made it possible to inflict a heavy defeat on the enemy. Three (03) armed pickup vehicles were destroyed and another recovered; 27 motorcycles, a large quantity of heavy and light weapons, various ammunition and means of communication were also recovered. At least 15 terrorists perished in this operation. The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces sends his hearty congratulations to the land and air forces engaged for these appreciable results. It encourages all the forces to continue with this dynamic, which is putting armed terrorist groups in increasing difficulty.

SENEGAL

Political Dynamics

Legislative elections in Senegal: victory battle between the presidential coalition and the opposition

²⁰ <https://burkina24.com/2022/07/21/la-decision-de-partir-du-mali-nest-pas-liee-a-larrivee-de-wagner-general-laurent-michon/>

²¹ <https://burkina24.com/2022/07/25/kelbo-au-moins-15-terroristes-neutralises-armee/>

After the successful legislative elections held on July 31 in Senegal, the presidential coalition and the opposition are predicting victory while the final results are yet to be announced. The legislative elections are intended to renew for five years the 165 seats of the unicameral Parliament, largely controlled by the presidential camp. Although the Senegalese president, Macky Sall had abolished the post of the prime minister and restored it in December 2021, the victory of the elections by the presidential coalition will also ensure the appointment of a prime minister by the Senegalese President.

Hence about seven million Senegalese were called for this ballot which took place without major incidents and with a 22% participation at the national level. The Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA), which oversees the vote, deployed about 22,000 observers. Experts from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and La Francophonie were also present.

With the release of several results, the presidential coalition, Benno bokk yaakaar, claimed to have won 30 departments out of the 46 in Senegal and constituencies abroad, thus securing a majority in the National Assembly. This was made known by the head of the presidential coalition, Aminata Touré, during a press brief on the evening of the election day²².

This proclamation of victory was however not received positively by the opposition as they responded immediately, referring to the claim as "vulgar lies" and "prefabricated majority" during an interview on a private radio RFM. The confidence of the opposition may also stem from their previous victory in the local elections of January 2022, during which they won in major cities, including Dakar, Ziguinchor and Thiès. While the victory of the presidential coalition would work in favour of President Sall, who was elected in 2012 for a 7-year rule and re-elected in 2019 for a 5-year rule, the victory of the opposition would certainly deter the president's candidacy in 2024.

The majority claimed by the opposition coalition

Contrary to the claims by the presidential coalition that they secured the majority votes, the opposing inter-coalition Yewwi askan wi and Wallu has also declared its own victory of having secured the majority with 83 seats out of the 165. With this claim, they are confident that the next President of the National Assembly will come from their camp, as declared during their press briefing on August 2. It was affirmed that out of 112 deputies from the departmental list, 55 were won by the Yewwi-Wallu inter-coalition²³. And the addition of the number of voters in these different departments would equal 55% of the electoral file.

Confident of their victory, the opposing coalition thus concludes that Benno bokk yaakaar, therefore, won only 45%. They went on to advise the presidential coalition not to confiscate their clear victory, but rather they should welcome cohabitation and not sow seeds of unrest. In the

²² <https://lequotidien.sn/mimi-toure-il-est-clair-que-nous-avons-la-majorite/>

²³ The full list of the departments can be found here <https://lequotidien.sn/legislatives-contentieux-electoral-le-second-tour-yewwi-affirme-avoir-83-sieges/>

hope of consolidating their victory, the opposition coalition is determined to stay united and organized, to mobilize for the vote of laws necessary to rebuild a Senegal reconciled with itself²⁴.

Provisional results²⁵

Amidst the battle for victory between the presidential coalition and the coalition of opposition parties in the legislative elections of July 31st, provisional results are directing victory marks towards the presidential coalition. In the commune of Vélingara, the Presidential Coalition Benno bokk yaakaar (BBY) has won the 2 seats in competition in this locality of the Kolda region, after the counting of votes. BBY obtained 36,419 votes in favor or 64.18% against 14,362 votes, 25.31% for the Coalition Yewwi askan wi which came in 2nd position. The other competing parties and coalitions shared the rest of the votes²⁶.

In the department of Kaolack, Benno bokk yaakaar secured 53,450 votes followed by Yewwi askan wi with 44,978 votes and Wallu Senegaal coalition with a total of 3,036 votes. Similarly, The presidential coalition topped the votes in the department of Nioro du Rip with 42,437 votes, followed by Wallu Senegaal in second place with 21,841 votes, before Yewwi askan wi in 3rd place with collected 2,957 votes. In Guinguinéo, the Presidential Coalition obtained 15,192 votes, Wallu Senegaal 12,985 and Yewwi askan wi 1,196²⁷.

In the Kaffrine region also, the presidential coalition also secured victory in several departments as follows: Benno Bokk led in Kaffrine with 33,027, Yewwi 17,461, Wallu Senegaal 1,246; in the department of Kounghoul, BBY secured 21,638 votes followed by Yewwi with 11,541 and Bokk gis gis 5497; in the department of Malem Hodar, the BBY garnered a massive 12,300 votes ahead of Wallu Senegaal who has 4338 votes and the Naataangué 1314 votes²⁸.

Health Concerns

Updates on COVID across the region

While most West African countries have laid back on harsh restrictions and preventive measures such as border closure, the spread of the virus seems to be not completely halted. New confirmed cases are being reported across the region with a steady daily increase in the number of confirmed new cases.

In Senegal. thirty-seven (37) new Covid-19 contaminations were on August 1. According to the Ministry of Health and Social Action, 957 tests were carried out, with 37 coming back positive.

²⁴ <https://lequotidien.sn/karim-wade-nous-devrons-rester-rassemble-organises-et-decides-pour-conforter-notre-victoire/>

²⁵ The complete provisional results by departments can be found here https://www.dakaractu.com/notes/Infographies-Senegal-Legislatives-2022-Voici-les-resultats-provisoires-issues-des-departements-du-pays_b66462261.html

²⁶ <https://lequotidien.sn/legislatives-a-velingara-bby-passe-avec-6418-des-votes/>

²⁷ As compiled by lequotidien <https://lequotidien.sn/kaolack-resultats-provisoires-benno-rafle-tout/>

²⁸ *Ibid*

While one of the confirmed cases is imported, the 36 cases were from community transmission in Dakar (33), Sokone (1), Mbour (1) and Tivaouane (1)²⁹.

GUINEA

Socio-political Dynamics

War against Doumbouya and the CNRD

In a press conference organized by the former opposition party UFDG, the president of UFDG, Cellou Dalein Diallo, who is in Dakar indirectly declared war on the military junta in power in Guinea³⁰. Speaking before an audience of supporters, Cellou Dalein Diallo laid bare the UFDG's intentions of changing its political combat strategies, ruling out the option of peace that they had always favored. Assuring the people of Guinea that happy days would be restored in the country, he encouraged his supporters not to give up but rather support one another in implementing the much-needed change.

July 28 Protest against the CNRD

The National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC) has called for a series of demonstrations from July 28 in Conakry and on August 4 throughout Guinea. This is to demand a rapid return to constitutional order, and also express its dissatisfaction over the unilateral and authoritative evolution of the socio-political and economic situation of Guinea since the beginning of the transition by the CNRD, whose main objective was to ensure the return to constitutional order. The hostile attitude of the CNRD adopted against active forces and a series of actions that altered the socio-political climate were not left unnoticed. Such actions specifically cited by the FNDC include: the unilateral elaboration of the Transition Charter; the deliberate and repeated violation of the Charter of the transition; the instrumentalization of justice through the violation of the presumption of innocence and the rights of defence; the non-publication of CNRD members; the initiation of forceful legal proceedings against political and civil society leaders, some of whom were kidnapped, dragged on the ground and chained, in broad daylight, during a press conference at their headquarters, the refusal, in contempt and arrogance, to respond to the call for dialogue on the transition, etc.

Consequently, the political wing of the FNDC, as well as local representatives of FNCD across Guinea, responded to the FNDC's call to organize a citizen and peaceful march on July 28, 2022 in Conakry and on August 04, 2022 throughout the country. The FNDC-POLITIQUE pledged its support to mobilize and respond effectively to the various calls for demonstrations of the FNDC³¹. The FNDC organized protest held on July 28 in Conakry had in participation youths of the former ruling party, Arc-en-Ciel RPG, who recently came out of silence with an Ordinary

²⁹ <https://lequotidien.sn/point-sur-le-covid-19-le-virus-ne-quitte-pas-laxe-dakar-thies/>

³⁰ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/23/cellou-dalein-diallo-en-colere-menace-nous-avons-toujours-opte-pour-la-paix-tout-le-monde-est-temoin-mais-il-nest-plus-question-daccepter-linacceptable/>

³¹ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/24/guinee-la-branche-politique-du-fndc-invites-ses-militants-a-se-tenir-prets-et-repondre-a-lappel-du-28-juillet-et-04-aout-2022-declaration/>

General Assembly at the party's headquarters on July 23. They are protesting against the imprisonment of their leaders and demanded their release³².

Prosecution Warning

Having been notified of the organization of peaceful marches, on July 28, 2022 in the Grand Conakry and August 04, 2022 throughout the national territory by FNDC, the Office of the General Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Conakry in its capacity as a facilitator, coordinator of the action of the Public Prosecutors with regard to both the prevention and the repression of offenses against criminal law, reiterated its constant concern to exercise the functions of Public Prosecutor in the interest of society and that of the law, signaling FNDC of its readiness and availability to prosecute the organizers in the event of reprehensible acts of illicit demonstrations, criminal participation in a demonstration or an unauthorized public meeting.

This is because, on the basis that within the meaning of Article 623 of the Penal Code, the administrative authority responsible for public order may temporarily prohibit a meeting or a public demonstration, if there is a real threat of disturbance to public order. Therefore, any action tending to defy the legal prohibition of demonstrations by the authorities in charge of maintaining public order constitutes the offense of criminal participation in a demonstration or a public meeting, liable to legal proceedings both against the organizers and participants, in accordance with the provisions of articles 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 634, 637 and 638 of the Penal Code³³.

In a similar turn of events, the mayor of one of the communes chosen by the FNDC for the march, the municipality of Matoto, has prohibited the demonstration in his commune, emphasizing that the administrative measures prohibiting marches in the CNRD press releases of May 13, 2022 and that of May 31, 2022 are still in force³⁴. Additionally, the organizing committee of the peaceful march cried over suspicious arrangements reportedly made by the CNRD to dress soldiers with the FNDC t-shirts that it has made for the purpose of looting public and private property. This accusation was made evident with the reported departure of two (2) Pick-Ups filled with red t-shirts from the presidency around 5:45 p.m of July 27 to head to Makambo camp in the Kaloum peninsula. Thus, FNDC pointed accusing fingers at Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya for any manoeuvres that would disrupt the peaceful march³⁵.

³² <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/23/rpg-arc-en-ciel-surprise-la-jeunesse-decide-de-tenir-tete-au-cnrd-aux-cote-du-fndc-le-28-juillet-prochain/>

³³ The statement by the Office of the General Prosecutor can be found here <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/26/manifstation-du-28-juillet-le-parquet-general-poursuivra-les-organisateur-en-cas-de-trouble-declaration/>

³⁴ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/26/manifstation-du-fndc-le-28-juillet-la-mairie-de-matoto-soppose/>

³⁵ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/27/marche-du-28-juillet-le-fndc-accuse-le-cnrd-de-faire-habiller-des-militaires-avec-ses-t-shirts/>

The FNDC Demonstration – July 28 – scores of violent clashes, injuries, deaths and arrests

The proposed peaceful march of July 28 for a rapid return to a constitutional order took a violent turn. Despite the ban on the demonstration, the FNDC commenced the demonstration in several areas in Conakry. In Bambeto³⁶, clashes broke out between young demonstrators and the security forces deployed in large numbers on the scene. The demonstrators threw stones at the police who, in turn, responded with tear gas. Barricades were erected on roads, traffic slowed down and shops were closed.

The Deputy Director of Communication of the Ministry of Security reported the cases of 12 injured officers, a burned CMIS police vehicle, at least 85 people arrested, and several acts of intentional assault, destruction of property, etc³⁷. Colonel Balla Samoura, High Commander of the National Gendarmerie and Director of Military Justice who was on the ground, underlined the non-compliance of the organizers to the injunctions of the general prosecutor's office, affirmed the reports of clashes in certain areas but also assured of having the situation under control. The non-respect of the ban also explained the reason for the police presence during the manifestation³⁸. Additionally, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization requisitioned the army to intervene alongside the security forces to restore public order.

However, the report of the FNDC's monitoring service reveals cases of loss of human lives, specifically four (4) cases of death³⁹. The FNDC notified the public of several gunshot wounds, five (5) of whom are said to be between life and death, and also highlighted the Defense and Security Forces' use of civilian counter-demonstrators in the repression and looting of property, particularly along the Hamdallaye-Kagbelen axis.

Reacting to the records of violence, the G5 (United Nations, ECOWAS, European Union, France and the United States) has called on all actors, civil and military leaders, political leaders and representatives of civil society to work for appeasement and the creation of conditions for dialogue to the incidents that occurred recently in Conakry⁴⁰.

Arrest of demonstration organizers

After the peaceful-turned march of July 29, the arrest of organizers and participants has begun. One of the main leaders of the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC), Oumar Sylla alias Foniké Menguè was arrested at his home in Commandaya in the commune of Ratoma (Conakry) on July 30⁴¹. Reacting to this arrest, considered an act of kidnapping by

³⁶ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/28/journee-de-manifestations-du-fndc-des-heurts-sur-la-transversale-2-bambeto-aeroport/>

³⁷ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/29/manifestations-du-fndc-des-agents-blesses-un-vehicule-de-la-police-incendie-85-interpelles-bilan-police/>

³⁸ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/28/manif-du-fndc-ils-nont-pas-ecoute-ils-nont-pas-respecte-ca-se-passera-entre-eux-et-la-justice-colonel-balla-samoura/>

³⁹ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/30/manifestations-a-lappel-du-fndc-a-conakry-le-fndc-dresse-un-bilan-de-4-morts-et-plusieurs-blesses-declaration/>

⁴⁰ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/31/violences-a-conakry-le-groupe-des-puissances-usa-france-nations-unies-tape-du-poing-sur-la-table-du-cnrd/>

⁴¹ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/30/violences-a-conakry-un-des-leaders-du-fndc-arrete/>

FNDC, the president of the UFDG, Cellou Diallo, has condemned these actions of the CNRD as identical to the draconian practices of the past⁴². He also demanded the immediate and unconditional release of Foniké Menguè as well as the seats of the FNDC and political parties illegally occupied by the defense and security forces.

Similarly, the Executive Secretary of the Union of Republican Forces and former Prime Minister Sidya Touré was also arrested on July 30, 2022⁴³. Afterwards, Ibrahima Diallo, in charge of the FNDC's strategies, got arrested by Central Directorate of Judicial police DCPJ⁴⁴.

Accordingly, about 56 youths were arrested and brought before the Special Prosecutor's Office near the juvenile court. 34 of them were minors, including 5 aged under 13. The 5 children under the age of 13 were placed at the disposal of their parents while the 45 other minors over the age of 13 were prosecuted for acts of crowds and destruction of public and private property⁴⁵.

Prosecution of arrested march organizers

Following the disrespect of the ban on demonstrations, the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Conakry Court of Appeal has instructed the Prosecutors of the Courts of First Instance of Kaloum, Dixinn, Mafanco, Dubreka and Coyah, to initiate legal proceedings without delay against the leaders of the FNDC as well as all the demonstrators arrested⁴⁶.

The Public Prosecutor's Office requests their prosecution for alleged acts of unlawful demonstration, destruction of public buildings and private property, incitement to a crowd, intentional assault and battery, criminal association, obstruction of freedom of movement and complicity.

The trial of the FNDC demonstrators therefore opened on August 1, 2022 at the Dixinn Court of First Instance⁴⁷. 9 (nine) of the arrested people - Mamadou Diouldé Camara, Ousmane Diallo, Ibrahima Sory Barry, Sékouba Traoré, Boubacar Diallo, Alhassane Barry, Idrissa Diallo, Mamadou Saidou Diallo and Idrissa Barry – were tried⁴⁸. The prosecutor requested the court to sentence them each to 6 months imprisonment and to pay a fine of 500,000 Guinean francs. The

⁴² <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/30/arrestation-a-conakry-de-fonike-mengue-de-loin-cellou-dalein-accuse-le-cnr-d-reproduit-ainsi-a-lidentique-les-pratiques-liberticides-du-passe/>

⁴³ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/31/manifestations-a-conakry-le-secretaire-executif-de-lunion-des-forces-republicaines-arrete-fode-balde-de-lufr/>

⁴⁴ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/31/epuration-a-la-tete-du-fndc-ibrahima-diallo-responsable-des-strategies-arrete-a-son-domicile/>

⁴⁵ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/03/manifestations-du-fndc-a-conakry-45-mineurs-poursuivis-pour-des-faits-graves/>

⁴⁶ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/29/manif-du-28-juillet-le-parquet-engage-des-poursuites-judiciaires-contre-fonike-mengue-et-cie/>

⁴⁷ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/01/debut-des-proces-des-manifestants-du-fndc-devant-les-tribunaux-ce-lundi-a-conakry/>

⁴⁸ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/01/manif-du-fndc-le-ministere-public-requiert-6-mois-de-prison-assortis-de-sursis-contre-neuf-9-jeunes/>

defendant pleaded for a simple release claiming that their arrest is illegal and that the police have committed acts of torture on some detainees.

A pause in between the demonstrations

Following the violent turn of the supposed peaceful march for a rapid return to civilian rule in Guinea, the President of the Conference of Heads of State of ECOWAS, His Excellency Umaro Sissoco Embaló, has intervened to restore calm to the volatile socio-political situation in Guinea⁴⁹.

This took place during an exchange on July 29, during which the ECOWAS Heads of State President requested that the FNDC suspends demonstrations in the streets and public places for a week. In respect to this request and call for a truce, the National Coordination of the FNDC suspended all demonstrations for a period of one week.

Another protest to take place on August 15

Les Forces Vives de la Nation is also set to denounce the measures taken by the group of putschists and threaten to organize a series of unlimited demonstrations from August 15, 2022⁵⁰. This is in tandem with the demonstrations organized by FNDC against CNRD's refusal to open a constructive dialogue with the Forces Vives de la Nation on the conduct of the Transition in accordance with the provisions of Article 77 of the Charter of the Transition, and also, the CNRD's resort to repression and violation of human rights thereby driving the country towards chaos.

The End of FNDC?

Following the reawakening of violence in the aftermath of the demonstrations organized by FNDC on July 28, the Minister of Justice, Alphonse Charles Wright, has denounced the acts of violence recorded in recent days. He went on to identify organizations without legal existence and a promise of banning the activities of such organizations⁵¹. This is an indirect declaration of the end of activities for the FNDC. The minister based the ban on the involvement of minors in the demonstrations and their use of narcotics.

Responding to Charles Wright, Sékou Koundouno, FNDC's head of strategies and planning emphasized that FNDC is a citizens' movement that does not need approval or authorization

⁴⁹ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/30/guinee-le-fndc-annonce-une-pause-dune-semaine-a-la-demande-dembalo-communique/>

⁵⁰ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/07/31/un-gros-petard-sur-la-transition-guineenne-les-forces-vives-de-la-nation-menacent-une-serie-de-manifestations-sur-toute-letendue-du-territoire/>

⁵¹ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/01/violences-en-guinee-alphonse-charles-wright-sonne-pour-bientot-la-fin-des-activites-du-fndc/>

from any authority. And will therefore continue to exist despite the obstacles the government will want to impose on it⁵².

However, the Minister of Justice has lodged a complaint against Sékou Koundouno for acts of "defamation and disclosure of false information likely to undermine peace and to public safety and complicity in murder. It is stated in a letter to the Attorney General with the subject: "Injunctions for the purpose of legal proceedings for defamation and disclosure of false information likely to undermine peace and public security and complicity in murder by action and instigation against the members of a de facto group called "FNDC represented by Sékou KOUNDOUNO and others"⁵³.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The international communities and organizations should be encouraged to support the efforts of the Sahel government in fighting against terrorism.

ECOWAS Member States should be enjoined to work together, promoting dialogue as the best option for conflict resolution, to further strengthen peaceful cohabitation in the region.

⁵² <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/02/menace-du-ministre-charles-wright-de-dissoudre-le-fndc-personne-ne-peut-faire-tomber-le-fndc-cest-un-etat-desprit-sekou-koundoun/>

⁵³ <https://actuguinee.org/index.php/2022/08/02/dernieres-minutes-de-sales-draps-sur-sekou-koundouno-du-fndc/>