



ALERT +

*Apparent Military Coup*

Guinea – *September 2021*  
*Political Risk*

# SITUATION SUMMARY

On 5 September, soldiers under the command of a Guinean army colonel launched an apparent coup in the country's capital, Conakry. In a televised national address on Sunday night, the leader of the coup, Colonel Mamadi Doumbouya, announced he had dissolved the constitution, closed land and air borders and had detained President Alpha Conde.

As details of the coup emerged, the perpetrators released a video that showed President Alpha Conde being held captive by military personnel. The exact whereabouts of the 83-year-old president were not disclosed, but speaking to France24 in an interview, Colonel Doumbouya said: "The president is with us, he's in a safe place."

Colonel Doumbouya's announcement on Sunday night followed heavy gunfire in the city's administrative district of Kaloum, where the presidential palace and many government ministries are located. At the time of writing, there had been no official reports of any casualties.

In his address on state TV, the colonel called on members of the military to "unite in order to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of Guinea." He also quoted ex-Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings, who also staged two coups, saying "If the people are crushed by their elites, it is up to the army to give the people their freedom."

The coup has been condemned by the international community, including the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. However, many in Guinea celebrated the development. Hundreds of people took to the streets of the capital to rejoice at the president's deposition.

Following the coup, Colonel Doumbouya and other military officials met with the ousted administration on 6 September to discuss plans to establish a unity government to lead a transition back to civilian rule. Despite offering reassurances, the details of the junta's plans and the impacts of the coup on the country's security and economic circumstances remain to be seen.

# SOLACE GLOBAL COMMENT

Sunday's coup appears to have successfully ousted President Conde. The president was once a beloved opposition figure who came to power with popular support and promising to bring about positive change for the West African nation.

However, despite bringing a degree of stability and economic improvement, many Guineans remain impoverished. Moreover, in recent years the president had become increasingly authoritarian, sanctioning the detention of opposition figures and critics of the regime amid mounting rights abuses.

In March 2020, after serving two terms in office, Conde amended the constitution so that he could run for another two six-year terms. The move sparked widespread protests that were met by harsh crackdowns by security forces, resulting in dozens of deaths. Anti-Conde sentiment was fueled further last year following the presidential election. Similar scenes to those in March were seen following the electoral commission's announcement of Conde's victory in October last year.

The coup in Guinea marks the fourth (including failed attempts) in West Africa in the past year, underscoring concerns the region is witnessing a [democratic backsliding](#).

Despite condemnation from the international community and concerns of an erosion of democracy, many Guineans celebrated the coup. Indeed, Colonel Doumbouya has claimed to be acting in the interests of the country and its people, saying he was motivated by a desire to end "poverty and endemic corruption". The coup leader also said, "We're here to allow Guineans to live together and for all of us to enjoy the benefits of this country."

Although Doumbouya has indicated plans to form a government of national unity and a return to civilian rule, as yet there is no clear timeframe. Similar promises of transition have been made in Mali and in Chad, but with little action. As such, there is a possibility the country's security, political and economic situations may worsen in the near-term.

# SOLACE GLOBAL ADVICE

- Avoid all non-essential travel to Guinea. The situation is evolving and it is unclear how it may impact the security situation in-country.
- Those in Guinea should closely monitor developments to the situation via trusted sources, media outlets and Solace Secure Alerts.
- Additionally, remain vigilant and limit all non-essential movements in country.
- Strictly adhere to any directives (including curfews and possible movements restrictions) issued by authorities.
- Avoid all large gatherings and protests as a safety precaution. There is a heightened risk of violent unrest that poses significant incidental risks to bystanders.
- Avoid large concentrations of military or security personnel as this may presage an imminent security operation.
- Anticipate disruptions to domestic and international travel. Land borders may be shut with little to no warning.
- If caught in the vicinity of unrest/protests, leave the area immediately and seek secure shelter.
- Anticipate disruptions to regular state functions and essential services in the near-term.
- Ensure contingency plans are prepared in case of a deterioration of the local security environment. Plans should include a shelter-in place option, possible evacuation routes and in-country security assistance.
- Ensure that all important documents are kept in a safe place, look to make photocopies of these documents and back them up online.
- Have a grab bag with food, water, important documents and battery packs to recharge devices ready in case of a time limited evacuation



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