

# Clashes erupt in Guinea-Conakry as Condé declared president for third term

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A week after the Oct. 18 presidential elections in Guinea, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) declared incumbent President Alpha Condé elected to an unprecedented third term. It claimed that he obtained 59.49 percent of the vote against his opponent, Cellou Dalein Diallo, who declared himself the victor the day after the election.

After this announcement, Diallo denounced the CENI for having “validated massive organized fraud after the election,” adding that he would mount a legal challenge against the election result. Diallo called on “the populations to mobilize themselves to defend by all legal means the truth of the ballot box,” repeating his earlier claim that he had won 53.8 percent of the vote.

Diallo’s campaign had announced the publication of election results allegedly compiled by its representatives. They contradicted results published earlier by the CENI, which placed Condé ahead in four electoral districts where results were already available: Matoto (where Condé had allegedly won 49.13 percent), Matam (51.39 percent), Kaloum (51.87 percent) and Boffa (56.69 percent).

The week that has unfolded since the election was marked by violent clashes between supporters of the rival election campaigns. According to Diallo’s party, the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, there have been 27 dead and nearly 200 wounded by gunshot.

No clearly accepted election result has emerged, as the government held closed-door meetings with the diplomatic corps to prepare Condé’s third term and bloody repression of opposition parties. *Jeune Afrique* (Young Africa) magazine reported on “a meeting held behind closed doors in the Foreign Ministry during which the head of the diplomatic corps recalled that observers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had certified the election

result. The minister alleged that it was Cellou Dalein Diallo who triggered all the violence of recent days by claiming victory. The foreign minister said his recount had fallen from the sky and threatened possible legal charges.”

While ECOWAS praised the way the election was held, forces inside the CENI itself challenged the vote count. RFI reported that, in a statement they issued to the press, two election commissioners withdrew from the certification of vote totals, denouncing “serious anomalies” detected in the counting of the vote: “Our observations on how to guarantee transparency, reliability, and sincerity of the results have not been taken into account.”

The Condé government sent army troops and a Security and Defense Forces (FDS) unit, fearing that opposition from the Fulani community, to which Diallo belongs, coming from the north suburbs of Conakry, could mount further protests against Condé.

Souleymane, a resident of the Bambeto neighborhood in the north of Conakry, said that after Condé’s victory was announced, “Youth began to come out, and shots started being fired. We told the kids to get inside. We went back to our homes, but they were still firing. Since 9 p.m. yesterday, Red Berets have acted to back up police and military police units.”

Mamadou Bailo Barry of the National Front to Defend the Constitution (FNDC), a group that has mounted street protests against a Condé third term since April 2019, said: “There is at the highest levels of the state a group of men from several ethnicities who, to satisfy their private interests and by lack of vision, play on ethnic issues in order to terrorize and divide Guineans among themselves. In reality, many ethnicities live side by side here. But this issue has become a political weapon.”

The FNDC has called to restart this week protest marches launched across Guinea before the elections, “until dictator Alpha Condé leaves.” These protests have already seen brutal crackdowns that left 90 dead.

The current political crisis in Guinea erupted with the vote to amend the Constitution in March by Condé in order to allow him a third term, whereas presidents were previously limited to two terms. This provoked protests starting in April against Condé called by the opposition parties in the name of the defense of democratic rights.

The Stalinist bureaucracy and then, after it dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991, capitalist Russia were historic allies since Guinea’s independence from France in 1958, establishing diplomatic relations and cooperation in numerous industries. Sixty percent of the Guinean army’s equipment comes from Russia. It oversees the mining the country’s vast mineral resources, in particular bauxite, which is key to the production of aluminum.

In Guinea, a former French colony, French imperialism and its NATO allies have gradually lost market share under Condé to China, Russia and Turkey. China became Guinea’s second-largest trading partner, and Turkey has seen the volume of its trade with Guinea double since 2016.

The passage of the constitutional amendment depended on support from Moscow and Beijing. Russian Ambassador Alexander Bregadze said: “Constitutions are not dogmas, Bibles or Korans. Constitutions adapt to reality, it is not reality that adapts to constitutions. We support you, Mr. President. ... Guinea really needs you, today more than ever! And as the popular Russian saying goes, one does not change horses in midstream. Currently, Guinea is in midstream. Stand with her, this beautiful and wealthy woman!”

The Condé regime is a brutal dictatorship attempting to maintain itself in power by bloody repression. However, the workers and oppressed masses of Guinea cannot rely on any of the bourgeois factions now competing for power in the country.

Diallo, a former top official of Guinea’s central bank, is profoundly tied to imperialism. His party is linked to the “Liberal International” whose sections include the right-wing Free Democratic Party in Germany and the Reform Movement in Belgium. He has nothing to offer

to working people.

The bourgeoisie in Guinea has proven historically incapable of overcoming tensions between Fulani, Malinke and other ethnicities—conflicts now inflamed by the bloody imperialist war waged by France with German aid in neighboring Mali. The Condé regime even provided troops for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN force fighting under the control of Paris in Mali.

Recent months have seen powerful movements of workers and oppressed masses across the region, from the mass “hirak” protests against the Algerian military junta to teachers and railway strikes in Mali. There is rising anger in Ivory Coast against the 2011 French intervention to install President Alassane Ouattara in power, ousting Laurent Gbagbo, just before the French invasion of Mali. The international unification of strikes and struggles in Africa with class struggles in Europe and internationally for socialism is the only way to establish and defend democratic rights in the region.



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