

## **MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE**

**“We Were Promised Development. We Got Dust and Silence.” Communities sound the alarm as Simandou mining project is set to begin.**

**Background:** Simandou, a beautiful mountain range in the south-east of Guinea, West Africa, is home to some of the world’s most biologically diverse, and endangered, ecosystems.

Local communities have been raising concerns about the impact of the Simandou iron ore mine, railroad and deepwater port construction for years. In a region where 65% of the population depends on agriculture, livestock, and fishing, the destruction caused by this large-scale mining operation will only worsen food insecurity and accelerate the impacts of the climate crisis.

Despite promises to meet high international safety standards, the latest reports from community monitoring committees across the Simandou mining corridor — Mamou, Kindia, Forécariah, Kérouané, and Beyla — tell a different story.

As the Simandou mining project is about to swing into full-scale production, communities are demanding mining companies Rio Tinto, WCS and their subcontractors communities’ concerns, uphold their commitments and address the growing list of unresolved grievances.

### ***Key impacts in the latest monitoring report***

- Health impacts
  - Increases in respiratory illnesses and eye issues in Kindia
- Environmental impacts
  - Contaminated water sources in Konsankoro
  - The Miyah river remains polluted, despite company claims and borehole installation.
- Loss of livelihoods
  - Bakia fishing port rendered unusable due to sedimentation from port construction.
  - Farmland in Sékhousoria degraded due to dust and heavy vehicle traffic from CRCC operations.
  - Kamandou farmers report total crop loss due to runoff; no compensation received.
- Destroyed homes
  - Homes structurally damaged by blasting
  - 34 households in Bantamaya still await relocation promised by the company.
  - Fissures in homes in Wataférédou II persist without company follow-up.

- Partial, delayed compensation, even after advocacy efforts, with some allegations of fraud in compensation distribution

### **Legal action pending against the project**

Under Guinean law — including the Mining Code, Environmental Code, and Civil Code — companies are legally obligated to prevent environmental harm and to fairly compensate affected communities. Articles 106, 142, and 143 of the Mining Code require thorough environmental impact assessments and safeguards for community health. Article 9 of the Environmental Code reinforces the polluter-pays principle, mandates prevention, and guarantees public participation in environmental decision-making.

Despite these legal protections, violations continue unchecked.

A formal administrative lawsuit has been filed, calling for the suspension of WCS's environmental clearance certificate and a halt to its operations. The case is based on multiple breaches: failure to comply with the Environmental and Social Management Plan meant to protect communities from pollution and soil erosion; lack of proper community consultation; and operations that violate Guinea's international environmental commitments — including the Paris Climate Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and international environmental law principles such as the precautionary principle.

The lawsuit is currently pending.

### **What Needs to Change / Demands**

To Companies (Rio Tinto, WCS, subcontractors):

1. Immediately acknowledge and address all outstanding grievances.
2. Fully implement PGES and share grievance procedures in local languages.
3. Ensure compensation is timely, adequate, and transparently managed.

To Government and Local Authorities:

1. Publish independent environmental and social audits annually.
2. Increase oversight of company compliance through field inspections.
3. Involve community monitors in grievance handling and follow-up.

To Civil Society and Partners:

1. Support communities with legal education and grievance tracking.
2. Advocate for enforcement of legal obligations by all parties.