Republic of Guinea and Emirates Global Aluminium Reach Amicable Settlement in Bauxite Mining Dispute

By:

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In a joint statement released on 6 May 2026, the Republic of Guinea, Emirates Global Aluminium (EGA), and its subsidiary Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC) announced that they had reached an agreement to “definitively” settle the disputes arising from the suspension of GAC’s activities and the interruption of Guinean bauxite supplies to EGA.[1]

Background to the Dispute

In August 2025, the Republic of Guinea revoked the operating rights of Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC) for one of the country’s largest bauxite operations located in the Boké region. Although no further details regarding specific violations were formally disclosed, this decision followed the company’s failure

to commit to the domestic construction of an alumni refinery.[2] The Guinean authorities subsequently imposed a series of restrictive measures on the operations of EGA and GAC, including the suspension of GAC's bauxite exports and the revocation of the company access to the shared railway network.[3] In addition, the *Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée* (CBG), in which the State holds a 49% stake, suspended all bauxite supplies to EGA's Al Taweelah Alumina refinery in Abu Dhabi.

Moreover, the government of Guinea transferred EGA's assets to Nimba Mining Company (NMC), a newly-established state-owned entity. NMC reportedly loaded its first shipment less than three months after acquiring the license and announced plans to export 10 million tons of bauxite before the end of 2026, build an alumina refinery by 2030, and cooperate with Resolute Mining, an Australian company focused on Africa, in gold exploration activities in the eastern part of the country.[4]

EGA and GAC's Response

EGA strongly condemned these measures, which caused its net profit to decline from USD 715 million in 2024 down to USD 578 million in 2025,[5] considering them as a clear violation of contractual rights of its subsidiary. The company noted that the suspension of GAC's mining activities since mid-May 2024 placed more than 3,000 local jobs at risk. Abdulnasser Bin Kalban, Chief Executive Officer of EGA, stated that "these actions make it impossible to continue GAC's operations and to develop the alumina refinery," adding that the resulting employment losses and forgone revenues for the Guinean economy were "deeply regrettable."[6] EGA further emphasized that GAC constituted a significant contributor to the long-term socio-economic development of the Boké region, as it contributed approximatively USD 244 million to the national economy in 2024 and invested nearly USD 700,000 in local social development projects.[7]

EGA described the government's action as an "unlawful and hostile takeover" and an unjustified termination of the Basic Agreement under which GAC had operated in Guinea. The company consequently characterized these measures as amounting to an illegal expropriation of its investments in the country.[8] EGA and GAC initially indicated their intention to seek compensation before

international tribunals for the damages incurred, but they ultimately opted to pursue a negotiated settlement.

Terms of the Settlement

After more than 18 months of negotiations facilitated by the President of the Paris Bar Association, the Government of Guinea – represented by the Minister of Mines and Geology, Bouna Sylla, and the Minister of Economy, Finance and Budget, Mariama Ciré Sylla – and EGA and GAC reached an amicable settlement. The negotiations were conducted under the supervision of the *Comité Stratégique de Simandou (CSS)*, a body composed of representatives of the Guinean government, key partner companies, as well as technical and financial experts specializing in mining and infrastructure development.[9]

The terms of the settlement, which is subject to certain conditions, are essentially twofold. First, the Republic of Guinea agreed to pay a lump-sum amount to GAC in exchange for the transfer of the company's assets to NMC.[10] Although the amount was not disclosed, some experts familiar with the case indicated that is approximatively USD 300 million.[11] This arrangement enables NMC to continue the exploitation of the Sangarédi bauxite project in the Boké mining corridor. Second, the disputing parties agreed to renew the bauxite supply agreements between EGA and CBG under revised commercial terms deemed mutually beneficial.[12]

The agreement spares the parties from entering a potentially lengthy and costly international arbitration process. Indeed, this dispute resolution mechanism has been struggling to deliver on its promise of efficiency, as arbitral proceedings continue to suffer from low settlement rates.[13] Louis Degos, who led the mediation process in his capacity as President of the Paris Bar Association, described the matter as one of the most significant mining disputes of recent years, and emphasized that amicable dispute resolution can play a major role in large-scale international business conflicts.[14]

The amicable settlement also preserves the parties' commercial relationships. As Patrice L'Huillier, Chief Executive Officer of NMC, noted, "EGA needs Guinean bauxite, and Guinea has every reason to secure balanced and lasting partnerships."[15]

Similar Pending Disputes

With this agreement, the Republic of Guinea has defused a major dispute arising from measures adopted in the broader context of state control over natural resources. Mamadi Doumbouya, who came to power following a coup d'état in September 2021 and was elected President in December 2025, has made the profitable exploitation of Guinea's mineral resources one of his key priorities of his administration. In line with the Simandou 2040 development vision, which seeks to promote industrialization, infrastructure development and local value addition, the government has increasingly pressured foreign mining companies to move beyond the export of raw ore and invest in domestic processing capacity.[16] As a result, several mining companies operating in Guinea have seen their permits revoked for failing to comply with this policy.

The Republic of Guinea has settled its dispute with EGA and GCA. Yet, it continues to face several ongoing disputes as a consequence of the widespread revocation of mining licenses in 2025. Among these cases, Axis International Limited has initiated arbitral proceedings before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), seeking USD 28.9 billion in compensation following the revocation of its bauxite mining permit in Boffa. In addition, Falcon Energy Materials has filed a USD 100 million claim before the same institution for the withdrawal of the exploitation license of its graphite project in Lola.[17]

A constructive outcome would be the implementation of the amicable agreement between Guinea, EGA and GAC, along with the satisfactory resolution of the pending disputes. This would allow the companies involved to fully realize the value of their investments, while enabling the Republic of Guinea to derive greater benefits from its natural resources as desired by the government.

Footnotes

[1] See Comité Stratégique de Simandou, Communiqué de presse, 6 mai 2026.

[2] Reuters, Guinea revokes Emirates Global Aluminium concession, transfer assets to local firm, 5 August 2025, available at https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guinea-revokes-emirates-global-aluminium-concession-transfers-assets-local-firm-2025-08-05/

[3] GAC Guinée, EGA confirme que la République de Guinée a déclaré sans justification valable la résiliation de la Convention de Base de sa filiale GAC, 9 July 2025, available at https://www.gacguinee.com/fr/media-releases/ega-confirme-que-la-republique-de-guinee-a-declare-sans-justification-valable-la-resiliation-de-la-convention-de-base-de-sa-filiale-gac

[4] Ecofin Agency, “EGA Needs Guinean Bauxite, and Guinea Has Every Reason to Secure Balanced and Lasting Partnerships”–Patrice L’Huillier, NMC CEO, Interview by Emiliano Tossou, 05 May 2026, available at https://www.ecofinagency.com/news/0505-55258-ega-needs-guinean-bauxite-and-guinea-has-every-reason-to-secure-balanced-and-lasting-partnerships-patrice-l-huillier-nmc-ceo

[5] The National, EGA Settles Disputes with Guinea over Bauxite Mines Project, 6 May 2026, available at https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/2026/05/06/ega-settles-disputes-with-guinea-over-bauxite-mine-project/

[6] GAC Guinée, EGA confirme que la République de Guinée a déclaré sans justification valable la résiliation de la Convention de Base de sa filiale GAC, 9 July 2025, available at https://www.gacguinee.com/fr/media-releases/ega-confirme-que-la-republique-de-guinee-a-declare-sans-justification-valable-la-resiliation-de-la-convention-de-base-de-sa-filiale-gac

[7] GAC Guinée, EGA condamne le retrait du titre minier de GAC par la République de Guinée, 5 August 2025, available at https://www.gacguinee.com/fr/media-releases/ega-condemns-republic-of-guinea-s-withdrawal-of-gac-s-mining-title

[8] GAC Guinée, GAC se retire de la Guinée à la suite des mesures d’expropriation prises par la République de Guinée, 22 August 2025, available at https://www.gacguinee.com/fr/media-releases/gac-se-retire-de-la-guinee-a-la-suite-des-mesures-d-expropriation-prises-par-la-republique-de-guinee

[9] The CSS was established in 2022 and granted additional responsibilities in 2025. It is tasked with managing, coordinating and overseeing the various initiatives and partnerships related to the Simandou project, regarded as “the largest untapped iron ore deposit in the world.” See Financial Afrik, The Simandou Strategic Committee, 17 July 2024, available at https://www.financialafrik.com/en/event-organizer/the-simandou-strategic-committee/

[10] Comité Stratégique de Simandou, Communiqué de presse, 6 mai 2026.

[11] Radio France Internationale, Guinée : « Accord à l’amiable » après le retrait d’une concession minière à un géant émirien, 7 May 2026, available at https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20260507-guin%C3%A9e-accord-amiable-apr%C3%A8s-le-retrait-d-une-concession-mini%C3%A8re-g%C3%A9ant-%C3%A9mirien-ega

[12] Comité Stratégique de Simandou, Communiqué de presse, 6 mai 2026.

[13] See Pedro J. Martínez-Fraga, Settlement a Risk Assessment in International Commercial Arbitration, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2026, pp. 7-8.

[14] Louis Degos’ statement is available at https://www.linkedin.com/posts/degoslouis_bauxite-la-guin%C3%A9e-et-ega-annoncent-un-accord-activity-7458416133885415424-Uh7R/?originalSubdomain=fr

[15] Ecofin Agency, “EGA Needs Guinean Bauxite, and Guinea Has Every Reason to Secure Balanced and Lasting Partnerships”–Patrice L’Huillier, NMC CEO, Interview by Emiliano Tossou, 05 May 2026, available at https://www.ecofinagency.com/news/0505-55258-ega-needs-guinean-bauxite-and-guinea-has-every-reason-to-secure-balanced-and-lasting-partnerships-patrice-l-huillier-nmc-ceo

[16] Guinea Mining Insights, Guinea, EGA and GAC Reach Landmark Settlement Under Simandou Strategic Framework, 9 May 2026, available at https://www.guineaminginsights.com/news-insights/guinea-ega-and-gac-reach-landmark-settlement-under-simandou-strategic-framework

[17] Ecofin Agency, Guinea Reaches Settlement With EGA Over Revoked Bauxite License, 7 May 206, available at https://www.ecofinagency.com/news-industry/0705-55321-guinea-reaches-settlement-with-ega-over-revoked-bauxite-license

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