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The former head of Guinea's 2008 military junta has been recaptured and returned to prison hours after an apparent jailbreak led by a heavily armed commando, the army and his lawyer said.

At least two other former officials on trial alongside Moussa Dadis Camara over a 2009 massacre during his presidency were taken in the earlier operation that sparked heavy gunfire in the capital Conakry, a minister and lawyers said.

"Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has been found safe and sound and taken back to prison," an army spokesperson told AFP, without specifying the circumstances of the capture.

One of Camara's lawyers, Jocamey Haba, told AFP his client was back behind bars.

Guinea's justice minister, Alphonse Charles Wright, said earlier that at about 5 am GMT "heavily armed men" burst into the prison and "managed to leave with four (prisoners) ... notably Captain Moussa Dadis Camara".

He said the borders had been closed. It was unclear whether Camara had escaped of his own free will.

The army described the operation as an attempt to "sabotage" government reforms and swore its "unwavering commitment" to the current military-led authorities.

A judicial source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the masked and heavily armed soldiers who arrived at Conakry's central prison declared they "had come to free" Camara. Inside, the group headed towards his cell, appearing to already know its location, the source said.

Haba told AFP he believed his client had been "kidnapped" and his life was "in danger". "He has confidence in the justice of his country, which is why he would never try to escape," he added, referring to the ongoing trial against Camara.

Wright also said Col Moussa Tiegboro Camara – another of the men taken from prison – had since been “recaptured”.

Guinea is governed by the military leader Mamady Doumbouya, who took power in a coup in 2021 – one of eight in west and central Africa in the past three years.

Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Gabon are also run by military officers.

Source: The Guardian

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