



SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA WEATHER

Political and security analysis of the Sahel and West Africa

September 2024

The security issue still seems to dominate the news in the Sahel and West Africa during September 2024. At a time of pressing social and political emergencies, the Sahel and now, increasingly, coastal countries, are greatly concerned by the fight against the terrorist threat. Indeed, while some movements have almost been forgotten, such as Boko Haram, which is resurfacing with new attacks, others are extending their tentacles, advancing into hitherto unsuspected areas. This situation is all the more worrying given that some countries are seeking new alternatives by strengthening their military cooperation, even if it means renewing their partnerships.

While the management of the terrorist threat remains complex and delicate for certain States and their partners, attempts at destabilization are denounced by others, not to mention the tensions surrounding the prolongation of political transitions and the tragedies of irregular migration. Even if a paradigm shift in the political outlook of certain governments is discernible, the security situation in September, which is the subject of this *Météo*, remains rather mixed, and offers little in the way of enlightening reading and forecasting for the months ahead.

Benin

Benin: Political turmoil in Cotonou and alerts in the North

The news was greeted with astonishment by public opinion in Benin. On the night of Monday to Tuesday, September 25, Olivier Boko and Oswald Homéky, two public figures, were arrested for allegedly attempting a "coup d'état". The former, a businessman, is a long-standing friend and partner of President Patrice Talon. The second is a former sports minister under Talon. "It appears that the commander of the republican guard in charge of the Head of State's security was undertaken by Minister Oswald Homéky on his behalf and that of

Mr. Olivier Boko to operate by force a coup d'état on September 27, 2024", declared Elom Mario Mètonou, Prosecutor of the Court for the Repression of Economic Offences and Terrorism in Benin (Criet), in a press release issued on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the prosecutor's version, former minister Oswald Homéky was arrested while handing over six bags of banknotes - a sum of 1.5 billion CFA francs - to Djimon Dieudonné Tévoédjrè, commander of the Republican Guard, who was arrested at the same time. At the same time, the public prosecutor announced the opening of an investigation to "identify all those involved" in the alleged coup. Although the commander was subsequently released, Boko and Homéky are due to appear before the Criet on Tuesday October 1.

Businessman Olivier Boko had been displaying his political ambitions for some time. According to some tongues, this attitude suggests that he could be a candidate for the 2026 presidential elections. This is evidenced by the launch of the "OB26" support group movement, officially called "Objectif Bénin 2026", but which is reminiscent of Olivier Boko's initials. Some say that it is this upheaval that has displeased Patrice Talon, weakening relations between the two men. As for former minister Oswald Homéky, he resigned from his post in 2023, after calling for support for Olivier Boko's candidacy.

The attacks continue in the North

Meanwhile, terrorist incursions in the north continue unabated. Indeed, two attacks have been recorded in the space of a few days. First, an ambush on September 15 in the village of Kompa in the commune of Karimama, where two policemen lost their lives. Then, on the 19th, a terrorist attack by the Hanifa Katiba (of the JNIM group) in Malanville - on the border with Niger - where the assailants targeted the defense and security forces. Two police officers

died. To this end, as part of the drive to strengthen the capacity of its soldiers to combat terrorism, Benin will shortly be taking delivery of fifteen new armored vehicles, provided by France and the European Union.

In addition, the thawing and normalization of diplomatic relations between Cotonou and Niamey are being consolidated. The foreign ministers of Benin and Niger, Shegun Bakary Adjadi and Bakary Yaou Sangaré, met on Friday September 27, 2024, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. It was the second formal meeting between the two men in the space of a month.

Finally, the grey areas surrounding the "Frère Hounvi" affair have not yet been completely dispelled. To say the least, the case has had a rather curious outcome. Jimmy Gandaho and Géraud Gbaguidi, accused of orchestrating the kidnapping of Steve Amoussou, were sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment, including 12 months' imprisonment, in addition to 5 million FCFA in damages to be paid to the victim. For the moment, Steve Amoussou alias "Frère Hounvi" is awaiting his court appearance scheduled for October 7. As a reminder, he has been placed under a committal order for "provocation to rebellion, initiation and publication of false news and harassment by electronic means."

Burkina Faso

Between growing insecurity and political suspicions at every turn

In Burkina Faso, military authorities claim to have foiled several attempts to destabilize the presidential palace. These attempts are said to involve foreign foreign powers, the former junta strongman Damiba, as well as civilian and military figures. The authorities have accused Abidjan of participating in the "destabilization" of the country.

At the same time, the people of Djibo are calling for help following threats from jihadist groups. Since the ultimatum given by the terrorist groups in the area, there have been massive displacements of the population since September 14. The security situation in the area is worsening by the day, to such an extent that the Deputy Chief of the General Staff made a visit to the area to hold talks with the "forces vives". Colonel Moussa Diallo was keen to reassure the population of the authorities' determination to combat terrorism on Burkinabe soil.

In the same vein, security is being stepped up in Ouagadougou, with tighter controls on incoming vehicles in particular.

This reinforcement is intended to thwart any attempt by terrorist or criminal elements to infiltrate the capital. This year, the country of men of integrity is one of the ten countries most affected by terrorism, alongside the other two states of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), according to the Global Terrorism Index report.

In addition, reprisals against former dignitaries continue. For example, Burkina Faso's former Foreign Minister, Djibril Bassolé, is still under pressure from unidentified individuals. Recently, his daughter Yasmine was the victim of a house search. Prior to this, his aide-de-camp and eldest son were arrested.

The latest developments in Burkina Faso reveal a critical security situation, with the country caught between suspicion of destabilization and the persistence of the terrorist threat, which justifies the reinforcement of security measures in the capital.

Ivory Coast

Côte d'Ivoire: Between political turmoil and social tensions

Meeting on September 21 in Bouana (Grand Bassam), opposition leaders including the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, the Mouvement des Générations Capables and the Congrès Panafricain pour la Justice et l'Égalité des Peuples (COJEP) demanded a thorough reform of the electoral process to prevent potential conflicts. In their joint declaration, they emphasized the reliability of the electoral process and the independence of the electoral commission. As a reminder, previous elections have been marred by violence, resulting in enormous loss of life.

On the government side, the uncertainty surrounding ADO's candidacy seems to be becoming clearer by the day, according to statements made by officials in his camp. For the mayor of Dimbokro, there is no plan B the choice of the Houphouëtists is Alassane Ouattara. There is no candidate other than their leader for the next elections.

And with the latent tensions that risk opening up of again a Pandora's box of Pandora in the country, civil society organizations are acting as peacemakers, multiplying their appeals for calm. These civil society organizations fear that hate speech and violence could trigger a political and social earthquake. The 14 September last, a local local organization called Mouvement Citoyen pour la Recherche de la Justice et de la Paix (Citizen Movement for the Search for Justice and Peace) was keen to carry out an action de sensibilisation et d'éducation pour la paix, la non-violence et la cohésion précisément à Attinguié (sud Abidjan) pour des élections calmes et apaisées.

The case of accusations of destabilization against Abidjan continues to occupy the headlines in the country. Burkina Faso accuses its "brother" country of participating in the destabilization of its country. A new development has added fuel to the fire. The Ivorian government has summoned the Burkinabe chargé d'affaires to explain the substance of the case.

Gambia

Adama Barrow's declared candidacy does not overshadow the migration debate

It's official: Adama Barrow has declared his candidacy for the next presidential election in 2026. September's news in Gambia was marked by the controversy surrounding Adama Barrow's candidacy for the next presidential election. Despite the Gambian president's warning about a rumor according to which he had chosen businessman Mohamed Jah as his successor, a Gambian media outlet, namely "The Voice", reportedly relayed this information, which has now been confirmed, prompting the predictable reaction of President Adama Barrow's People's National Party, which took up the cause. "If the defamatory article is not definitively withdrawn and the above undertakings are not respected, we will take the necessary steps to initiate legal proceedings without further correspondence," Barrow's lawyers warned. For this reason, the Gambian president had asked "The Voice" to issue an urgent denial in its next front-page issue, with a public apology. What's more, the media outlet was even asked to pay damages to President Adama Barrow for having "tarnished his reputation", as well as for the inconvenience caused.

In the dock were the editor-in-chief of "The Voice Newspaper" Musa Hydera and his deputy Momodou Darboe, who were arrested on September 27 and taken into custody on separate dates. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Gambia Press Union (GPU) deplore these sanctions in the strongest terms.

Migrant trafficking and security loopholes

Since Gambia's return to stability following the fall of Yaya Jammeh, many repatriated Gambian migrants have been keen to return to Europe, on the grounds that they have few opportunities. As The Gambia is a transit country for irregular migrants due to its geographical location, some are considering risking their lives to make the crossing in search of better economic and social conditions.

Unlike the Gambian returnees who want to return to Europe, "Jungler" Bora Colley, former henchman of President Yaya Jammeh, has surrendered to the Gambian armed forces after eight years in exile, while other Junglers already captured have been released.

In doing so, the issue of security at Gambia's borders remains worrying in many respects. The government has received much criticism from human rights activists such as Madi Jobarteh for its "security failings". In an interview with the media outlet Justice Info, he stated: "This directly implicates the country's political and security leaders, who have failed to implement reforms

of the security sector, which should have led to a more efficient and professional security apparatus.

The fact that such a dangerous man can enter the country and spend several days undetected calls for an urgent overhaul of the security system so that radical changes can take place. This incident clearly demonstrates that the much-touted security sector reforms have not been a success".

Guinea

After the commemorations, the questions on transition?

Political events in Guinea continue to be marked by the celebration of anniversaries, firstly the military's three years in power, and secondly the 15th commemoration of the September 28, 2009 massacre. The transition has just celebrated its third anniversary, on September 5, but until then its extension seems more likely than its end, initially scheduled for the end of 2024. Although some voices are calling for an end to the transition, the junta remains impassive to these calls.

"A transition must necessarily be limited in time. Even a mandate conferred by the people has a limited duration.

"These are the words of a member of the National Transition Council (CNT). The opposition, for its part, denounces this slippage in the timetable as a failure on the part of the CNT, which is incapable of fulfilling its commitments. To this end, it reiterates its opposition to any attempt to prolong the transition and, at the same time, to the junta leader's desire to be a candidate in the next presidential election; hence the call for mobilization by the Forces Vives de la Guinée (FVG) and certain political leaders. The military regime seems to be in an awkward position in view of all the voices raised against a transition beyond the duration agreed with the partners, even if the regime has never hidden its desire to remain in power until 2025.

Diplomatic advances or a return to international confidence?

Earlier this year, the news site Africa Intelligence revealed that junta emissaries were lobbying between Paris and Berlin to secure their support for extending the transition. While it is difficult to say with certainty that these diplomatic efforts will bear fruit, we do know that Guinea's diplomatic efforts to rejoin the Organisation Internationale de Francophonie (OIF) have been successful. Suspended from the organization following the coup d'état in September 2021, Guinea was reinstated at an extraordinary general assembly chaired by the OIF secretary general. At the same time, Guinean justice remains under the spotlight.

After an "extraordinary" trial hailed by human rights organizations, the question of reparations for the victims remains central in a context where civic and democratic space in Guinea is shrinking as a result of measures taken by the junta to stifle all forms of protest. The trial continues to keep Guinean citizens on the edge of their seats, especially as one of the main defendants in the massacre, Claude Pivi, was arrested at the border between Liberia and Guinea, after his spectacular escape from Conakry's central prison.

Mauritania

Intensive diplomatic activity following Ghazouani's re-election

Following the re-election of President Ghazouani, the formation of a new government headed by Prime Minister Moktar Ould Diay was not long in coming. From then on, the crucial step eagerly awaited by the representatives of the people was the Declaration of General Policy, to give them a clearer vision of the main thrusts of the government's program.

On September 04, Prime Minister Mokhtar Ould Diay presented the Government's General Policy to the National Assembly. This grand oration, provided for in article 42 of the Constitution, focused on five priority areas: speeding up ongoing projects, launching new ones, improving living conditions, encouraging citizen participation, and launching studies for strategic reforms. This is certainly the reason why the National Assembly largely adopted the General Policy Statement, with 140 deputies approving the document as opposed to 25 who voted against it.

Furthermore, "slavery practices in their traditional and hereditary form
"In 1981, Mauritania became the last country in the world to abolish slavery. With a view to combating this practice, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, the National Assembly ratified a new bill on September 09, the objectives of which were detailed by the Minister of Justice.

Among the proposed reforms is the creation of a specialized jurisdiction with national competence. The new entity will also be expected to harmonize the judicial system across the country. Hence the need for ongoing dialogue between the various players and local communities to ensure the success and ownership of this initiative, which aims to strengthen the protection of human rights in the country.

On the international front, the Minister of Defense travelled to Beijing to take part in the 11th Xiangshantenu forum from September 12 to 14 on international security issues and military cooperation, and took the opportunity to sign a memorandum of understanding with his Chinese counterpart. This document is a milestone in Sino-Mauritanian military cooperation, and Mauritania's involvement in this forum expresses the country's ambition to play a decisive role in defense and security on the international stage.

Also in Beijing, Malian and Mauritanian Presidents Goita and Ghazouani met for the first time on September 4 on the sidelines of the ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The meeting, which took place against a backdrop of border tensions between the two countries, was seen as a move to ease diplomatic relations between Bamako and Nouakchott, which are concerned by common security and development challenges.

Mali

Between persistent security challenges and ESA reforms

According to the General Commissioner for Refugees and Stateless Persons, the security situation in the central Sahel deteriorated during 2023, with an upsurge in violence aggravated by rivalry between the two main jihadist groups operating there, namely the Groupe de Soutien à l'Islam et aux Musulmans (GSIM- JNIM) and the Etat Islamique dans le Grand Sahara (EIGS). This is without consequence for Mali, which is seeing the deterioration of the situation in the North spread to other regions in the Centre and South.

On September 17, 2024, gunfire and bangs were heard in several areas of Bamako, around the Gendarmerie School and Modibo Keita airport, according to a Reuters witness and a security source. The attack was premeditated and claimed by jihadists affiliated to Al Qaeda. In a video published by Le Monde, a jihadist is seen setting fire to the engine of the Malian presidential Boeing. According to the Malian authorities, the attack claimed only a few victims, whereas the Malian officer contacted by Le Monde spoke of around sixty. Military sources speak of at least 80 victims, which could call into question the effectiveness of the transitional government's security policy.

As a result, the Malian army has issued a statement reassuring Malians who were awakened by detonations and gunfire, describing the incident as an attempt by terrorists to infiltrate the gendarmerie school. Interviewed on RFI, Arthur Banga, a teacher-researcher and specialist in defense issues at Abidjan's Félix Houphouët-Boigny University, seems to be surprised by these attacks, even more so by the choice of targets. "We didn't expect Bamako - and mainly military targets, not even civilian ones - to be attacked yesterday morning," he says. He argues that psychologically and strategically, the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) and those of its allies are far superior. And this - according to the teacher-researcher - explains the desire to slow them down or weaken them.

The rebels of the Cadre Stratégique Permanent (CSP) have also announced the use of drones in their operations. The announcement was made on September 11, 2024, following an attack on a Malian army base some 50 km from Timbuktu.

It wouldn't be the first time they'd used it, and it's likely to change the balance of war between the Malian army and its allies and the rebels in northern Mali. Bamako was quick to retaliate, attacking the area around Tinzaouatène. At this point, it's important to remember that Sahelian armies are making increasing use of aircraft in their operations against jihadists. On the same day, TV5 Monde's signal was cut off in Mali by the Haute Autorité de la Communication (HAC), on the grounds that the information announced in TV5's Journal Afrique, announcing some fifteen victims during drone raids in Tinzaouatène, was given without consulting the Malian army's version. This measure comes on top of the other suspensions to which certain French media, such as France 2, LCI, France and RFI, have been subject since the beginning of 2024.

With a view to harmonizing travel documents, ESA member countries are to create a new common biometric passport. The announcement was made by the head of Mali's transition, Colonel Assimi Goïta. "We will work to put in place the necessary infrastructures to strengthen the connection of our territories through transport and communication networks," he declared.

There have also been several cases of disappearances, reappearances, arrests and releases. The disappearance of Idrissa Sankaré, former deputy for Bankass, civil servant at the Malian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and third vice-president of the Tabital Pulaaku Mali association, is a cause for concern. According to information provided by RFI, he is being held in a secret prison run by Mali's State Security. Tabital Pulaaku International, an association defending the culture and rights of the Peuhl community, is demanding his immediate release. We are very concerned for the physical integrity and life of Idrissa Sankaré," continues the vice-president of Tabital Pulaaku International. We call on the Malian authorities to release Idrissa Sankaré without delay, and without taking any extrajudicial measures against him. If Idrissa Sankaré is to be judged, let it be done in accordance with the law, and let the whole world know what he is accused of, and why he should be taken away like this", announced the members of the aforementioned association.

Also, the former head of Malian intelligence, Colonel Kassoum Goïta, missing since 2021 after the Coup d'État, has reappeared at Camp 1 of the Bamako Gendarmerie.

anonymous judicial source on September 30, 2024. In continuation of the release of detainees, eleven political cadres, members of the "March 31st Declaration", detained for "opposition to the exercise of legitimate authority" since June, were released on September 12, 2024.

Finally, Mali is adopting a new law to provide a framework for magistrates' freedom of expression, without hindering their rights and duties. This law would give them all the freedoms enjoyed by Malians, but with "respect for the authority of the State and public order".

The outstanding question is where he has been held since his arrest. Boubacar Traoré, a former close associate of Prime Minister Choquel Maïga, was released after being imprisoned for signing a document against the authorities. According to the junta, the publication of the communiqué in question could have damaged the Prime Minister and the soldiers who appointed him.

In a singularly tense period between foreign mining companies and the junta, four Malian-born executives of the Canadian mining company Barrick Gold were reportedly arrested for alleged financial crimes. They were finally released, according to a

Niger

Counter-terrorism and bilateral cooperation redefined with the USA and Nigeria

More than a year after the military putsch that overthrew him, President Mohamed Bazoum and his wife are still being held in the Presidential Guard camp, where the former Commander was the main leader of the coup d'état of July 23, 2023. This detention has since been denounced by African leaders, the international community and human rights defenders. Recently, illustrious personalities including Nobel Peace Prize winners such as Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka and Congolese doctor Denis Mukwege have called for the release of the Nigerian President, whose immunity has been lifted by a "Court of State" that has replaced the Council of State and the Court of Cassation.

One of the consequences of the military putsch was the withdrawal of American troops from Niger. This event marks a new page in U.S.-Niger cooperation, without breaking it. With this in mind, a delegation from the US Congress met Niger's Minister of State, Minister of the Interior and Public Security, on September 6, to discuss new bases and directions for bilateral cooperation, which should be further extended to other areas such as economic and social development, while respecting Niger's sovereignty.

Terrorist groups continue to decimate the population with targeted attacks on defense and security forces. A further 12 soldiers were killed and some 30 wounded in three attacks on the 15th, 16th and 17th in the east, west and north of the country. More than a hundred assailants were neutralized in the retaliation, and among the targets of the criminal groups were the military camp and gendarmerie post in the Chirfa locality, in Agadez towards the Libyan border. Nevertheless, on September 16, four terrorists were arrested in Tillabéry, in the tri-border area in the south-west of the country, as part of a reconnaissance mission carried out by the defense and security forces. They were handed over to the anti-terrorist unit for further investigation and legal proceedings. In addition, as part of Operation Lankal kaney, a mission specifically dedicated to securing agricultural activities, the deployment of defense and security forces in Tillabéri resulted in the recovery of 220 head of cattle and the neutralization of some 60 terrorists and a spy.

As a reminder, Niger, like several other Sahelian countries, faces recurrent attacks from terrorist groups. Despite the creation of the Confederation of Sahel States, the security threat still hangs over the country. To combat terrorism more effectively, the government set up a national file at the end of August, under which individuals and entities will have their financial assets frozen, and will be prohibited from leaving the country or traveling within it. These measures testify to Niger's commitment to use all possible means to guarantee peace and stability in the face of multifaceted security threats.

The other news item that has shaken Niger in recent weeks is the mysterious disappearance of Ivorian journalist Serge Marthurien Adou on August 31, and the recent news of his arrest by the Niger police. A sports correspondent for the BBC and journalist with Canal 3, Adou had received a summons from the judicial police, to which he responded, before not being heard from again for weeks. Reactions continued to mount until Burkina Faso's Minister of Security, Mouhamadou SANA, revealed the journalist's involvement in a project to destabilize the Sahel region.

The Union of Journalists of the Free African Press and the National Union of Journalists of Côte d'Ivoire had expressed their concern about this event.

In its latest press release, the Cadre d'Action des Professionnels du Médias au Niger deemed it necessary to show no support for their colleague until he has been cleared. For its part, the Ivorian government has announced that it has taken the matter into its own hands.

The Ivorian and Nigerien authorities, who have been officially seized, are closely monitoring this case, which continues to dominate the headlines and risks testing diplomatic relations between Côte d'Ivoire and the Alliance of Sahel States, Niger and Burkina Faso in particular, but also between Niger and Burkina Faso.

Other rather tense diplomatic relations concern Nigeria, with which Niger had become somewhat estranged since the July 2023 coup d'état that brought General Tiani to power. However, the security situation in the region and the various challenges that the two countries have in common call for a strategic and privileged partnership. The high-level meeting held at the end of August between the Nigerian Chief of Staff, General Christopher Musa, and his counterpart from Niger, General Moussa Salaou Barmou, is part of this effort to normalize relations between Niamey and Abuja. The two countries stressed "the need to maintain and expand existing cooperation, including joint military operations, intelligence sharing and tactical coordination".

". The resumption of this close cooperation is all the more relevant given that, together with Chad and Cameroon, they form the Joint Multinational Force (FMM), a body dedicated to the fight against financial crime and terrorism.

Nigeria

Is the country sliding back into insecurity?

Such a long ordeal. For several years now, this has been the daily lot of people in the north of the country, where the terrorist group Boko Haram continues to wreak havoc. On the very first day of the month, 127 people were killed in an attack attributed to Boko Haram, according to Amnesty International. "Around 150 assailants, armed with rifles and grenades, attacked the village of Mafa in Yobe State on motorcycles, setting fire to thatched houses and burning alive those hiding inside," reports Agence France Presse (AFP). This bloody raid appears to be retaliation for the murder of two Boko Haram members by local vigilante groups. The latter are regularly accused of collaborating with the Nigerian army in its fight against terrorism. Since it began in 2009, the conflict spawned by the jihadist insurgency has already claimed more than 40,000 lives.

Already plagued by widespread insecurity, the northeastern state of Borno is now having to cope with terrible flooding. On September 10, torrential rains caused the Alau dam on the Ngadda River to burst, twenty kilometers south of Maiduguri, Borno's capital. The toll: at least 30 dead and more than a million people affected, including hundreds of thousands in camps for the displaced.

According to the World Food Program (WFP), "more than 55,000 hectares of farmland were flooded" in 2024 across the country, especially in the northeast, already plagued by chronic food insecurity. These torrential downpours also caused the walls of the Maiduguri prison to collapse, leading to the escape of 281 inmates, according to the Nigerian authorities.

Two days earlier, a tanker explosion killed at least 59 people in the northern state of Niger. According to a statement from the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (Nsema), "the incident occurred when a tanker loaded with PMS (fuel) collided with a tractor-trailer loaded with passengers and cattle." In addition, 50 cattle were also burnt alive by the explosion. Unfortunately, such explosions occur frequently. According to the FRSC (Creating Safe Road in Nigeria) - Nigeria's Federal Road Safety Corps - in 2020, 1,531 tanker accidents resulted in 535 deaths and 1,142 injuries.

In addition, some thirty people arrested during last month's demonstrations against poverty and bad governance have appeared in court. Trials are taking place in several cities, including Abuja, Kano, Kaduna and Gombe.

Finally, lawyers for Biafran separatist leader Nnamdi Kanu denounce "the violation of his rights". On September 27, RFI reports, four members of the Biafran leader's defense team were denied access to their client, without explanation. As a reminder, Nnamdi Kanu has been accused of terrorist charges since 2015. Last August, the country's Supreme Court overturned the October 2022 judgment of an Abuja appeal court acquitting the leader of the IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) secessionist group. Nnamdi Kanu had already been imprisoned between 2015 and 2017, then spent two and a half years in detention, since June 2021.

Among the accused, some leaders of the #Endbadgovernance ("Put an end to bad governance") movement are being prosecuted for "treason, incitement to violence and attempting to destabilize institutions", charges deemed excessive by Amnesty International. The organization believes that these trials are aimed above all at dissuading any further mobilization. Subsequently, in a decision handed down on September 11, the Federal High Court in Abuja granted bail of 10 million naira (over 3.5 million CFA francs, editor's note) for the ten accused of treason.

Senegal

Between and regime emergencies lawsuits socio-economic ongoing of the old

Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko presented Agenda 2050 in the presence of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on October 14, 2024, after a month of intense political and socio-economic activity in September. Indeed, Senegal is still facing an exacerbation of the phenomenon of irregular immigration. In recent weeks, the news has been strongly marked by the sinking of pirogues carrying hundreds of Senegalese heading for Europe. Indeed, after being informed of the capsizing of a pirogue involved in illegal immigration in Mbour, the Senegalese Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) Niani launched a search, a joint operation conducted off the coast of Mbour by three naval units and a Spanish maritime patrol aircraft. These events took place on Sunday, September 8. A total of 26 bodies were recovered, including that of an 18-year-old schoolgirl. Although some twenty survivors were rescued, the exact number of migrants on board remains unknown.

Clandestine emigration dampens government communication efforts

After the bodies found on the Petite Côte, another thirty or so in a very advanced state of depravity were found in a pirogue 70 km off the coast of Dakar. Senegal is also facing flooding during the winter season, with major damage as seen in Touba, where torrential rains in September caused immeasurable material damage and the death of two people. The heavy rains reached 140 mm, forcing the evacuation of around a hundred flooded homes in the space of a few hours, in the vicinity of the grand mosque. To help the people of Touba, the Mouride dahiras of Dakar launched an appeal for help; an appeal to which the mayor of Dakar Barthélémy Dias responded by mobilizing high-powered motorcycle pumps and a qualified technical team to free people from the stagnant water that was restricting their movement.

In another development, Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye announced the dissolution of the National Assembly in his address to the nation on September 12, 2024.

Article 87 of the Constitution gives him the prerogative to dissolve the National Assembly. This article states: "The President of the Republic may, after obtaining the opinion of the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, dissolve the National Assembly by decree. However, dissolution may not take place during the first two years of a legislature. The dissolution decree sets the date of the ballot for the election of deputies. The ballot shall take place at least sixty (60) days and at most ninety (90) days after the date of publication of the said decree...". In accordance with the aforementioned provisions, the President of Senegal has set the date for the legislative elections scheduled for Sunday November 17, 2024. Unsurprisingly, the opposition, which according to Jean-Baptiste Tine, "is not ready to face the ballot box", was quick to react, firstly by rejecting the meeting organized between the Minister of the Interior and Public Security and political players including the Alliance for Transparency in Legislative Elections (ATEL), and then by organizing itself into a coalition.

Towards decisive legislative elections.... Pre-campaign unpacking

In doing so, the opposition announced the creation of the "Samm Sa Kaddu Sauver le Sénégal" political coalition, whose members include movements and parties such as the Parti de l'Unité et du Rassemblement (PUR), Alliance Républicaine pour la Citoyenneté (ARC), Taxawu Sénégal, les Serviteurs,

Parti Républicain pour le Progrès (PRP), Agir and Gueum sa Bopp. The aim of this coalition would be to bring to the next legislature the main concerns of the Senegalese people in the face of the many unfulfilled promises made by the Bassirou Diomaye Faye regime, which is making daily life increasingly difficult in the face of rising prices for staple foods and rising unemployment. What's more, Idrissa Seck is said to be negotiating a future coalition with the PDS and APR, despite the departure of several of his party's leaders.

At the same time, the new regime is continuing to criticize Macky Sall's governance, especially as regards the instrumentalization of the justice system. Already, on September 04, Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, in the context of "accountability", said: "If we have to pull them up by their toes, we'll do it so that they come back. In the days to come, dozens of them will give an account." It is with this in mind that several ministers of the former regime, such as the former Minister of Urban Planning, Abdoulaye Saydou Sow, have been banned from leaving the country. Similarly, Cheikhouna Keïta, the former head of the Office Central de Répression du Trafic Illicite des Stupéfiants, was arrested at the request of the public prosecutor for spreading false news.

"President Macky Sall's regime has lied to the people and partners by falsifying figures to give an economic image that has nothing to do with reality," revealed Ousmane Sonko during his face-to-face meeting with the Senegalese press on September 26. It was an opportunity for the Prime Minister to take stock of the management of the country by Macky Sall and his former government, and what he calls the "financial carnage" they left to Bassirou Diomaye Faye's hard-pressed regime.

More specifically, the purpose of the meeting was to take stock of the current state of public finances, and also to give an account of the country's management prior to the election of President Diomaye Faye. Hence the urgent need to review the contracts signed with Senegal's partners, and renegotiate them if necessary. In any case, this is what the President of the Republic is suggesting, to be consistent with his election campaign promise.

Chad

N'Djamena, diplomacy on all fronts

Chad is on the brink of numerous diplomatic deals. Visiting Beijing for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Déby met with Chinese President Xi Ping. It emerged from their discussions that relations between China and Chad are now a strategic partnership.

In the same vein, Chadian Head of State Mahamat Idriss Déby paid a visit to Hungary, to meet Prime Minister Viktor Orban. The reason: Budapest's intention to send two hundred soldiers to Chad in the near future. While the collaboration may seem surprising, given the lack of historical ties between Hungary and Africa, for Orban, "Chad is a key country in the fight against immigration" and terrorism. In 2023, Hungary intensified its relations with Chad. According to *Le Monde*, it has opened a humanitarian aid center and a diplomatic representation, in addition to signing agreements in agriculture and education. According to Jeune Afrique, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, who is expected in France on October 4 and 5 to take part in the Summit of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), could also meet the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, as well as the President of Cameroon, Paul Biya.

At the same time, several media outlets announced the redeployment of American troops on Chadian soil. The authorities were quick to refute the information. "The government categorically denies the information relayed by certain media, reporting an alleged agreement allowing the return of American special forces to Chad", says a press release signed by government spokesman Abderaman Koullamalah. As a reminder, the American troops packed their bags at N'Djamena's request, in April 2024.

In addition, the catastrophic humanitarian crisis currently underway in neighboring Sudan could have an even greater impact on Chad. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Chad, the number of refugees and returnees could reach 910,000 by the end of 2024. At the plenary session of the Sommet de l'Avenir, a prelude to the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Chad's Prime Minister Allah Maye Halina urged greater international cooperation in the face of the security crisis affecting the Sahel in particular and Africa in general. "The impacts of climate change are not theoretical for us, they are a daily reality. (...) The Sahel is now at the crossroads of climate, security and economic issues, and this requires a concerted and inclusive response from the international community", he declared.

In response to the recent floods in the Sahel region, the European Union (EU) has announced the mobilization of 5.4 million euros in support of the six countries most affected: Mali, Niger, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad. A latest report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) in Chad put the death toll at 503, with over 1.7 million people affected.

Internally, the disappearance of Robert Gam, Secretary General of the Parti Socialiste sans Frontières (PSF), has highlighted the accusations of authoritarianism to which Déby's regime is often subjected. According to the opposition party, this "kidnapping" is part of a pattern of "harassment and intimidation".

of intimidation " of which Robert Gam in particular since the death of opponent Yaya Dillo, killed two months before the May 6, 2024 presidential election. "We fear that our comrade Gam will not be found alive, or that his freedom will not be restored immediately. (...) We want the authorities to assume their responsibilities.

"This was the warning issued by Néatobeye Bidi Valentin, national president of the PAP/JS party and member of the GCAP (Groupe de concertation des acteurs politiques).

Togo

Tense political climate and activist protests

The attack on Senegalese activist Guy Marius Sagna in Togo has provoked an avalanche of reactions from West African civil societies. An activist and member of parliament in Senegal (from the recently dissolved Senegalese parliament) and in the ECOWAS parliament, his trip was part of the third extraordinary session of the regional parliament's Commission, before responding to an invitation from Togo's political opposition. Following the attack on a Senegalese national, a member of the parliament of the Community of West African States, the Senegalese Ministry of African Integration and Foreign Affairs issued a press release expressing its "dismay and demanding an immediate investigation into this unspeakable act". It has to be said that opinion in Senegal is divided over the actions of MP Sagna, who is considered by some to be an activist.

In some of his actions, he is more of a "provocateur" than a member of parliament. Before Senegal, the Beninese courts had also ruled on the case of the activist who was kidnapped and held hostage before being handed over to the Togolese police.

For some human rights activists, the attack on the Senegalese political activist in Togo calls into question the state of democracy and political freedoms in the country, at a time when the regime is hardening and putting pressure on the opposition. The public meeting was organized by the Dynamique pour la Majorité du Peuple (DMP), an opposition platform. The Togolese opposition is at loggerheads with the government over the political reforms being undertaken to establish the Fifth Republic. While the Council of Ministers has adopted a draft ordinance amending the Electoral Code in the context of the adoption of the new Constitution, the opposition is denouncing a lack of dialogue, even though the government claims to have relied on discussions within the Cadre Permanent de Concertation (CPC) to introduce the amendment to the electoral law. Togo's political class remains very fractured on the issues of constitutional
constitutional
and institutional reforms,
making for a sensitive political context.

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