

## JAFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Gabon Monthly Briefing July 2025

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#### Gabon Summary 17 July 2025

*President Brice Oligui Nguema (2025-present) officially launches his own political party, Union démocratique des bâtisseurs (UDB), on 5 July, cementing his political ambitions. The launch comes after the adoption of a new law on political parties that outlines new criteria by which both existing and new parties must abide. Gabon and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) sign a \$3.8 billion memorandum of understanding aimed at funding development of the mining, energy and infrastructure sectors. United States (US) president Donald Trump (2017-2021; 2025-present) hosts five African leaders, including Nguema, at the White House on 10 July.*

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#### Nguema launches political party

President **Brice Oligui Nguema** (2025-present) officially launched his own political party, the **Union démocratique des bâtisseurs (UDB)**, on 5 July in **Libreville** after running as an independent in the April presidential election, completing his transition into a politician. His party launch came ahead of the announcement of the electoral process for the local and legislative elections on 13 July and will allow the UDB to partake in these elections, cementing Nguema's role in Gabon's political arena.<sup>1</sup>

The UDB's launch follows the adoption of a new law on political parties that has changed criteria for the creation and maintenance of political parties.<sup>2</sup> Amongst notable requirements according to the new law, a party must be represented in at least five of the nine provinces, have a minimum of 12,000 members (identified by their personal identification numbers), have an official headquarters, and undergo an annual review of its funding. A party will automatically be deregistered if it does not participate in two successive elections.<sup>3</sup>

Existing political parties have a year to comply with the new law. This could lead to a significant decline in the number of registered parties – currently approximately 103 – in Gabon due to smaller parties not having the resources to meet the requirements.<sup>4</sup> Former prime minister **Alain-Claude Billie-By-Nze** has criticised the new law, stating at a press conference on 11 June that “*what is being sold to us as a structural reform of political life is in reality an attempt to domesticate pluralism*”.<sup>5</sup>

While Gabon has around 103 registered political parties, it has effectively been a one-party state, with the former ruling **Parti démocratique gabonais (PDG)** in power from 1961 to 2023. However, heading into the legislative and local elections, it can be expected that the UDB will dominate. It appears Gabon will be moving from one era of political dominance into another for now.

#### Gabon and Afreximbank sign \$3.8 billion financing agreement

Gabon and the **African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)** signed a \$3.8 billion memorandum of understanding (MoU) during the Afreximbank's annual meetings between 25 and 27 June. The agreement aims to fund development of the mining, energy and infrastructure sectors. Specifically,

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<sup>1</sup> Africanews, 13 Jul 2025

<sup>2</sup> Jeune Afrique, 25 Jun 2025

<sup>3</sup> Jeune Afrique, 25 Jun 2025

<sup>4</sup> Direct Infos Gabon, 20 Jun 2025

<sup>5</sup> Gabon Media Time, 16 Jun 2025

the agreement is aimed at the development of gold and manganese, energy infrastructure and expanding the railway network.<sup>6</sup>

Gabon is the world's second largest producer of manganese and holds the world's largest manganese mine, **Moanda**.<sup>7</sup> In the first half of 2024, Gabon produced 4.91 million tonnes and exported 4.39 million tonnes, worth \$652.26m.<sup>8</sup> In early June, the government announced its intention to ban the export of unprocessed manganese ore from 1 January 2029. Part of the Afreximbank funding is set to help build local processing facilities.<sup>9</sup> The expansion of the railway network will help to improve movement of goods from mines to industrial zones, where processing facilities are likely to be housed.

Conversely, gold remains a largely untapped sector in Gabon. The country has over 40 tonnes of proven gold reserves but approximately 70% of the sector's production is from informal miners.<sup>10</sup> Gabon opened its first gold refinery, **Raffinerie Gabonaise de l'Or (RGO)**, in June 2023. However, gold output remains low, and in 2023, reached approximately just two tonnes.<sup>11</sup>

Under the Afreximbank agreement, approximately \$235m has been allocated to finance the construction of three power plants in Libreville, **Port-Gentil** and **Lambaréné**, to add a total of 300MW to the national grid. Gabon has been struggling to maintain a reliable and consistent power supply and has launched a strategic investment plan for the energy and water sector that requires over \$5 billion in financing.<sup>12</sup>

## Trumps hosts Nguema

**United States (US)** president **Donald Trump** (2017-2021; 2025-present) hosted five **African** leaders, including President Nguema, at the **White House** on 10 July. Nguema was hosted alongside the presidents of **Senegal, Liberia, Mauritania** and **Guinea-Bissau**. The US removed Gabon from its preferential trade programme, the **African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**, in January 2024, and imposed sanctions following the August 2023 coup d'état but lifted these in May after elections were held.<sup>13</sup> The impact of Gabon's removal from AGOA was very limited and with AGOA potentially set to not be renewed under the new administration, this was not a talking point. However, during the talks, Trump confirmed that it was unlikely that the five countries would face tariffs on their exports to the US. In April, when Trump announced his so-called Liberation Day tariffs, Gabon was hit with a 10% tariff.<sup>14</sup>

A key focus of the meeting was natural resources. Gabon possesses large deposits of iron-ore, manganese and potash. During the meeting, Nguema promoted Gabon's mineral resources, noting that the country is open to investment but requires large investment to process them locally.<sup>15</sup> Following the meeting, US **International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** head of investments **Conor Coleman** announced on 10 July that the DFC would provide \$3m in project development financing for the **Banio** potash mine in Gabon.<sup>16</sup> The mine, which would be Africa's first potash mine, is being developed by **Canada**-headquartered **Millennial Potash**. The agreement was witnessed by Nguema, Coleman and Millennial Potash CEO **Jason Wilkinson** and chairman **Farhad Abasov**.

Another issue reportedly discussed during the meetings was a plan for the five countries to take in migrants from other countries when they are deported from the US. However, no further details have

<sup>6</sup> Business Insider Africa, 27 Jun 2025

<sup>7</sup> Mining Weekly, 27 Jun 2025

<sup>8</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Oct 2024

<sup>9</sup> Agence Ecofin, 30 Jun 2025

<sup>10</sup> Arise IIP, accessed 17 Jul 2025

<sup>11</sup> Agence Ecofin, 12 Jun 2024

<sup>12</sup> Agence Ecofin, 30 Jun 2025

<sup>13</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Jul 2025

<sup>14</sup> White House, 2 Apr 2025

<sup>15</sup> Reuters, 9 Jul 2025

<sup>16</sup> Green Building Africa, 10 Jul 2025

been released on this or confirmation of whether Nguema agreed to such a plan. Overall, the meeting was an indication that Trump is maintaining his transaction style of diplomacy and that while Gabon stands to benefit from this, as seen in the potash deal, there are likely to be conditions attached to any agreement.

## Planner

14 Jul – 12 Aug 2025 **(Gabon)** Electoral roll revision  
 27 Jul – 7 Aug 2025 **(Gabon)** Nominations for legislative and local elections open  
 27 Sep 2025 **(Gabon)** Parliamentary elections  
 11 Oct 2025 **(Gabon)** Local elections  
 Nov 2025 **(Gabon)** Senatorial elections  
 23 Dec 2025 **(Gabon)** Constitutional court judges sworn in  
 2026 **(Gabon)** Cap Lopez LNG terminal to start production

## Chronology

17 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. Gabon is reinstated to the **Commonwealth** after its suspension in August 2023 following the military coup d'état;

15 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. **Banque de Développement des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (Central African states development bank)** announces 20 billion FCFA (\$35.59m) in funding for infrastructure development in Gabon;

11 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *APA News*. Government launches the new electoral process for the legislative and local elections, setting the date for 27 September, with a revision of electoral lists starting on 14 July and submissions for candidacy due between 27 July and 7 August;

8 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. Libreville-based **Petro Gabon's** CEO, **Jean-Baptiste Bikalou**, announces plans to build an 8,000-cubic metre liquefied petroleum gas storage depot and a 4-km pipeline in the port area of **Owendo**;

8 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. **United States (US)**-headquartered **Millennial Potash** secures \$3m in project development funding for its **Banio** potash mine in Gabon from the **US International Development Finance Corporation**;

7 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Direct Infos Gabon*. Gabon has reportedly entered talks with **United States**-headquartered aircraft manufacturer **Boeing** to purchase three aircrafts by 2029 at an estimated cost of between \$600m and \$750m;

5 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. **France's** state-owned power utility **Électricité de France (EDF)**, through its **Cameroon** division, signs a technical support agreement with Gabon's state-owned power and water utility **Société d'Énergie et d'Eau du Gabon (SEEG)** to address Gabon's energy crisis by strengthening technical capacity, modernising infrastructure and optimising electricity grid management;

5 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Jeune Afrique*. President **Brice Oligui Nguema** officially launches his **Union démocratique des bâtisseurs** party;

5 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Direct Infos Gabon*. Gabon votes against an **OPEC+** decision to increase crude oil production by 548,000 barrels per day starting in August;

3 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *APA News*. Oil and gas minister **Sosthène Nguema** launches a deep-water oil and gas exploration campaign aimed at attracting investors and boosting production;

3 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *RFI*. Former first lady **Sylvia Bongo** and her son, **Noureddin Bongo**, release a statement alleging they were kidnapped, arbitrarily detained and subjected to torture during their 20-month detention in Gabon, and stating that they have filed a case in **France**;

1 Jul 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. **Société Gabonaise d'Entreposage de Produits Pétroliers (SGEPP)** (Gabonese petroleum products storage company) report a net profit of 848m FCFA (\$1.49m) in 2024, a 105% increase compared to the previous year;

30 Jun 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Direct Infos Gabon*. President **Brice Oligui Nguema** meets with a delegation from **United Kingdom**- and **France**-headquartered **Perenco** for a strategic exchange focused on the oil sector's prospects;

27 Jun 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Business Insider Africa*. Gabon signs a \$3.8 billion memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)** to fund major national development projects across mining, energy, and transport sectors;

25 Jun 2025 **Libreville (Gabon)** *Le Nouveau Gabon*. Government expresses disappointment in **United States**-headquartered credit rating agency **Fitch Ratings'** decision to affirm Gabon's sovereign rating at CCC, also known as junk status;

### About Africa Risk Consulting:

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