

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Morocco is likely to feel the impact of higher fuel prices and lower capital inflows as a result of the conflict in Ukraine, although it only imports 1.9% of its grain needs from Russia and Ukraine. After showing signs of shrinking at the end of 2021, Morocco's trade deficit is rising again under the weight of rising energy and grain prices, as the trade gap increases by 75% year-on-year. Rainfall in March has filled Morocco's dams and slightly eased fears of another drought-stricken agricultural season. The prime minister of Spain, Pedro Sanchez, has officially endorsed Morocco's autonomy for the Western Sahara as "the most serious, realistic and credible basis for settling the dispute". Covid-19 cases in Morocco continue a downward trend, dropping for the seventh consecutive week, leading the health ministry to suggest that the epidemiological situation in the country is under control.

Ukraine conflict impacts Moroccan fuel prices

Morocco is likely to feel the impact of higher fuel prices and lower capital inflows as a result of the conflict in **Ukraine**. Although Morocco only imports 1.9% of its grain needs from **Russia** and **Ukraine**,¹ recent reports by both the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** and the **World Bank** have warned that the conflict may have a "compounding" negative impact on food security and social peace in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region.² **Russia** and **Ukraine** are significant exporters of grains and the conflict is expected to have a direct impact on global food security, particularly for poor countries.³ The UNCTAD report, published on 16 March, notes that Morocco ranks 17th globally in terms of imports of agri-food from **Ukraine** and **Russia**.⁴

UNCTAD's report echoes that of the World Bank, which predicted in a report published on 7 March that the conflict is likely to impact MENA countries in five ways:

*"1) food price shocks (especially wheat), 2) oil and gas price hikes, 3) global risk aversion/flight to safety which could impact private capital flows to emerging markets as a whole, 4) remittances, and 5) tourism."*⁵

Morocco is already feeling the impact of rising fuel prices. Passenger and freight transport operators on 7 March called for a 72-hour nationwide strike to denounce rising fuel prices.⁶ Transport operators on 10 March decided to extend their strike against a spike in fuel prices for two additional days after the government failed to respond to their demands.⁷ However, authorities assured citizens that the protest would not affect the movement of goods and individuals. The government announced on 18 March that it would streamline tax procedures

¹ Morocco World News, 20 Mar 2022

² World Bank, 7 Mar 2022

³ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 16 Mar 2022

⁴ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 16 Mar 2022

⁵ World Bank, 7 Mar 2022

⁶ Arab Weekly, 7 Mar 2022

⁷ Morocco World News, 10 Mar 2022

through a digital platform as a way of addressing the crisis around high gas prices.⁸ A local source told **Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** that government is not to blame for the crisis:

*“Prices worldwide have risen by at least 50%, and the price skyrocketed in the **United States [US]** where it used to be extremely cheap. And protestors are making it look like the price rise only happened in Morocco.”⁹*

Coupled with lingering **Covid-19**-induced supply chain disruptions, and country-specific domestic issues, the conflict is likely to worsen the trajectory of rising prices of food, particularly wheat, and energy.¹⁰ Due to global restraint of grain imports, pressure on local production is expected to increase, resulting in rising production costs and lower income for vulnerable agriculture-reliant farmers.¹¹

The World Bank predicts that the Ukraine crisis will affect the flow of capital into MENA and emerging markets, as investors and residents flee for safety amid reductions in remittance flows and tourists in the region.¹² However, oil exporting countries such as **Algeria** are expected to benefit from rising demand for non-Russian oil, while non-oil production states such as **Jordan** and **Egypt** are likely to struggle under the strain of rising oil prices.¹³

Morocco did not participate in the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** vote condemning Russia’s military operations in Ukraine. The ministry of foreign affairs said on 2 March that its non-participation in the UNGA resolution should not be subjected to any interpretation.¹⁴ Morocco was among a short list of countries that did not participate in the vote. Neighbouring Algeria was one of 35 country’s that abstained from voting.

... as Morocco’s trade deficit soars amid high energy and grain prices

After showing signs of shrinking at the end of 2021, Morocco’s trade deficit is rising again under the weight of rising energy and grain prices. The **Office des Changes** (exchange office) on 31 January reported a 75% year-on-year increase in the trade gap, to MAD 20.260 billion (\$2.1 billion) at the end of January 2022.¹⁵ Morocco’s imports increased by 39.5%, amounting to MAD 50.905 billion (\$5.3 billion), while exports rose by 23%, settling at MAD 30.645 billion (\$3.1 billion), reflecting Morocco’s overall economic recovery.¹⁶

The volume of imported energy remained relatively stable, from 502 million tonnes at the end of January 2021 to 579 million at the end of January 2022.¹⁷ However, rising grain, gas and oil prices have sent Morocco’s trade deficit soaring. Gas prices increased at an annual rate of 60.4%, triggering a 67% rise in energy spending and weighing down the trade balance.¹⁸ A mixture of geopolitical tensions in **Western Europe**, coupled with the Covid-induced economic crisis, has sent energy and gas prices skyrocketing over the past two years.¹⁹ Within the same period, the government spent MAD 1.706 billion (\$177.8m) on imported grains amid an unprecedented hike in prices globally. Grain prices increased at an annual rate of 21.3%. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is expectedly to continue the negative trend. Government has subsequently moved to subsidise wheat to preserve Moroccans’ purchasing power.²⁰

⁸ Morocco World News, 18 Mar 2022

⁹ ARC Source, Morocco resident

¹⁰ Morocco World News, 11 Mar 2022

¹¹ World Bank, 7 Mar 2022

¹² World Bank, 7 Mar 2022

¹³ Morocco World News, 11 Mar 2022

¹⁴ Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la coopération, 2 Mar 2022

¹⁵ Office des Changes, 31 Jan 2022

¹⁶ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

¹⁷ Office des Changes, 31 Jan 2022

¹⁸ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

¹⁹ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

²⁰ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

The Office des Changes noted that between 2021 and 2022, domestic grain consumption increased from 338 million tonnes to 805 million tonnes.²¹ North Africa is the world's second-largest wheat importer, and harvests can fluctuate substantially from year to year. Even when grains are abundant, North African countries rely on grain from abroad to supplement output and help produce staples of local diets such as bread and couscous.²² The negative fallout from the conflict in Ukraine is likely to cause an uptick in government spending and widen the trade deficit for all North African countries, including Morocco.²³

Recent rainfall in March has filled Moroccan dams and slightly eased fears of another drought-stricken agricultural season.²⁴ In February, there was growing concern that North Africa's grain belt was facing its worst drought in over 30 years (see *ARC Briefing Morocco Feb 2022*).²⁵ The drought threatens the grain yield and the expected record low rainfall will deepen the region and Morocco's reliance on imports.²⁶ The concerns echo those of the US **Department of Agriculture**, which on 15 February called the drought "*exceptional*".²⁷

The ministry of equipment, transport, logistics, and water announced on 1 March that Moroccan dams levels had exceeded more than 5.3 billion cubic metres (m³), a filling rate of about 32.7%.²⁸ This is lower than the 49.1% filling rate (over 8 billion m³) measured during the same month a year ago.²⁹ Government has initiated plans to mitigate the impact of the drought. King **Mohammed VI** (1999-present) on 16 February launched a MAD 10 billion (\$1.02 billion) programme to alleviate the economic impact of the drought and assist the agricultural sector.³⁰ In February, the water ministry set aside MAD 2.42 billion (\$260m) for the 2021-2022 emergency plan to ensure the country's drinking water supply.³¹ The ministry will build more dams, search for new groundwater sources, and build a desalination water facility in **Nador**.³²

Morocco, Spain end diplomatic rift...

The prime minister of **Spain, Pedro Sanchez**, on 18 March officially endorsed Morocco's autonomy for the **Western Sahara** as "*as the most serious, realistic and credible basis for settling the dispute*".³³ Morocco considers the Western Saharan territory as its own, however, the Algerian-backed **Polisario Front** movement demands a sovereign state.³⁴ Spain's endorsement has eased the diplomatic dispute between the two countries, which flared up in 2021 when its government secretly allowed Polisario leader **Brahim Ghali** to travel to Spain for medical treatment in **Madrid**, without prior notification to **Rabat**.³⁵ Morocco described the move as against the partnership and friendship between the two countries. Morocco subsequently relaxed border control measures with **Ceuta**, a Spanish enclave in northern Morocco, resulting in an influx of at least 8,000 migrants, most of whom were later returned.³⁶

Foreign affairs minister **Nasser Bourita** expressed his appreciation on 18 March for Sanchez's official endorsement of Morocco's autonomy plan for the Western Sahara conflict. According to

²¹ Office des Changes, 31 Jan 2022

²² Bloomberg, 9 Feb 2022

²³ Bloomberg, 9 Feb 2022

²⁴ Morocco World News, 18 Mar 2022

²⁵ Morocco World News, 13 Feb 2022

²⁶ Bloomberg, 9 Feb 2022

²⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, 15 Feb 2022

²⁸ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

²⁹ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

³⁰ Morocco World News, 16 Feb 2022

³¹ Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

³² Morocco World News, 2 Mar 2022

³³ Reuters, 18 Mar 2022

³⁴ Reuters, 18 Mar 2022

³⁵ Morocco World News, 18 Mar 2022

³⁶ Reuters, 18 Mar 2022

the royal palace in **Fez**, Sanchez addressed a letter to King Mohammed VI confirming Spain's position and stressing that the *"two countries are inextricably linked by affections, history, geography, interests and a shared friendship"*.³⁷ Sanchez highlighted the extensive Moroccan efforts to work within the UN framework to find a peaceful solution to the three decades-old conflict. Spain's foreign minister will travel to Rabat by the end of March, followed by a visit from Sanchez at a later date.³⁸ Morocco's ambassador to Spain, **Karima Benyaich**, returned to her office in Madrid on 20 March under royal instructions, marking the end of the diplomatic crisis.³⁹

Following Spain's announcement of its decision to support Morocco on the Western Sahara dispute, Algeria's government on 19 March recalled its ambassador to Madrid for *"consultations"*.⁴⁰ Tension between Algeria and Morocco dates back to 1976, after **Algiers** started supporting the Polisario Front.⁴¹ Recent tensions stem from the recognition on 10 December 2020 by the administration of former US president **Donald Trump** (2017-2021) of Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara, when the US became the first country to recognise Morocco's claim and reaffirmed its proposal to grant limited autonomy to Sahrawis under Moroccan control.⁴²

The Polisario Front has accused Spain of making a *"grave error"* after the **European** country changed its position on the Western Sahara.⁴³ In late 2020, the Polisario Front said it was resuming an armed struggle after a ceasefire that had lasted since 1990; however, there has been no sign of serious fighting.

Covid-19 cases drop for seventh consecutive week...

Covid-19 cases in Morocco continue their downward trend, dropping for the seventh consecutive week. The health ministry said on 15 March that this indicates that the epidemiological situation in the country is under control.⁴⁴ The ministry announced on 1 March that the Omicron wave, which lasted three months, was over.⁴⁵ However, the ministry has stressed the need to respect health preventive measure in order to maintain stability domestically amid a global increase in Covid-19 cases for the first time in five weeks. **National Centre for Public Health Emergency** coordinator **Mouad Mrabet** presented a bimonthly report on 15 March on Morocco's epidemiological situation, which revealed a marked improvement in all regions:

*"The spread of the new Covid-19 variant remains low in all regions of the Kingdom, where a considerable drop in cases has been recorded for the seventh consecutive week."*⁴⁶

Mrabet's report noted that Morocco had recorded 450 new cases in the previous week, representing a significant decline of 40% in comparison to the week before. The rate of positive Covid-19 tests in the country has also decreased, registering only 0.8%, which is the lowest positivity rate since the outbreak of the pandemic in Morocco in 2020.⁴⁷ The report highlighted that the basic production number of cases has remained at an index of less than one for 52 days. Mrabet added that number of critical and severe cases of Covid-19 in the country marked a

³⁷ Morocco World News, 18 Mar 2022

³⁸ Reuters, 18 Mar 2022

³⁹ Morocco World News, 20 Mar 2022

⁴⁰ Middle East Eye, 19 Mar 2022

⁴¹ Morocco World News, 9 Sep 2021

⁴² Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

⁴³ Morocco World News, 20 Mar 2022

⁴⁴ Ministère de la Santé, 15 Mar 2022

⁴⁵ Ministère de la Santé, 1 Mar 2022

⁴⁶ Morocco World News, 16 Mar 2022

⁴⁷ Morocco World News, 16 Mar 2022

decline for the sixth consecutive week, and the number of Covid-19 deaths registered a decline for the fifth consecutive week, with 22 cases in the previous week, down 44% from the week before.⁴⁸ The ministry, however, emphasised that all citizens must continue adhering to the national vaccination campaigns by getting three doses of a Covid-19 vaccine and respecting precautions.⁴⁹

According to its update on 21 March, the health ministry has fully vaccinated 23,241,363 of Morocco's 36.4 million citizens against Covid-19 since beginning its vaccination campaign at the end of January 2021.⁵⁰ At least 24,775,675 people have received a first dose and 6,030,910 have received a third or booster dose. On 21 March, Morocco registered 42 new cases of Covid-19 and the seven-day average as of the same date was 59 daily cases.⁵¹ As of 21 March, Morocco had recorded a total of 1,162,497 cases, with 1,145,853 recoveries and 16,052 Covid-19-related deaths.⁵²

The government is expected to extend the country's health state of emergency for another month on 24 March.⁵³ As of early December, there are no restrictions on inter-state or inter-city travel in effect.⁵⁴ However, several domestic restrictions remain in place nationwide. Vaccination certificates are required to enter most public and private spaces, including hotels, restaurants, cafes, gyms, public baths, grocery stores, and to use public transport.⁵⁵ Cafes, public baths, public swimming pools, gyms, sports facilities and stores can operate with up to 50% capacity. Public and private gatherings are limited to 50 people. Domestic flights and public transport, including bus and rail service, are in operation, and international travel has now resumed. Wearing a facemask is mandatory in public spaces. Authorities could reimpose, extend, further ease, or otherwise amend any restrictions with little to no notice depending on disease activity over the coming weeks.

The **Office National des Aéroports (ONDA)** (national airports office) said on 1 March that Covid-19 screening tests are no longer mandatory for all passengers arriving at Moroccan airports, but a small proportion of passengers will be exposed to antigen testing at random. Other requirements, such as having a vaccine pass, a negative PCR test within 48 hours, and a traveller's health card, remain in effect.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ Morocco World News, 16 Mar 2022

⁴⁹ Ministère de la Santé, 15 Mar 2022

⁵⁰ Liqah Corona, 21 Mar 2022

⁵¹ Johns Hopkins University Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 21 Mar 2022

⁵² Morocco World News, 16 Mar 2022

⁵³ Morocco World News, 16 Mar 2022

⁵⁴ Morocco World News, 1 Mar 2022

⁵⁵ Morocco World News, 1 Mar 2022

⁵⁶ Morocco World News, 1 Mar 2022

Planner

2022 **Marrakech (Morocco) International Monetary Fund and World Bank** annual meetings to take place in Morocco;

10-12 May 2022 **Marrakech (Morocco) Annual meeting of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**;

11-13 May 2022 **Tangier (Morocco) Worldwide Network of Port Cities (WNPC) 17th World Conference on Cities and Ports**;

24-26 Oct 2022 **Marrakech (Morocco) Airports Council International (ACI) conference**

Chronology

21 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Morocco World News. Spanish** government spokesperson **Isabel Rodriguez** commends the new phase in relations between **Madrid** and **Rabat** saying it will help bring more political stability between the two states;

21 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Morocco World News. France** reiterates its support for Morocco's autonomy plan, describing it as a "*serious and credible basis*" to help resolve the dispute over the **Western Sahara**;

20 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Yahoo News.** Moroccan ambassador **Karima Benyaich** returns to her office in **Spain** under royal instructions after Spain announces a new position in favour of Morocco's territorial integrity and sovereignty over **Western Sahara**, marking the end of the Spain-Morocco diplomatic crisis;

20 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Morocco World News. Spain's** minister of presidency, **Felix Bolanos**, says his country's new position on the **Western Sahara** is a logical extension of its view of Morocco as an important and essential ally, while the **Polisario Front** accuses Spain of making a "*grave error*" in changing its position on the Sahara;

19 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Morocco World News.** The **World Bank** says that only 17% of Moroccans use digital payment services; while the majority of citizens have access to the internet, they tend to refrain from buying online;

19 Mar 2022 **Algiers (Algeria) Middle East Eye.** **Algeria's** government decides to recall its ambassador to **Spain** for "*consultations*" following its decision to support Morocco on the **Western Sahara** dispute;

18 Mar 2022 **Laayoune (Western Sahara) Morocco World News.** A **Spanish** delegation visits **Laayoune** to explore the assets and development programmes in Morocco's southern provinces as part of Morocco's development plan benefiting locals;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.** The 2022 **World Happiness Report** ranks Morocco second in **North Africa** and 100 out of 146 in the world amid the ongoing **Covid-19** pandemic;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Morocco World News.** Foreign affairs minister **Nasser Bourita** expresses appreciation for **Spanish** prime minister **Pedro Sanchez's** official endorsement of Morocco's autonomy plan for the **Western Sahara** conflict;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco) Map News.** Morocco has been elected to chair the heritage committee at the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**;

18 Mar 2022 **Brussels (Belgium)** *Morocco World News*. The **European Commission** in **Brussels** says it is looking forward to signing a border deal with Morocco, which will be conducted through **Frontex**, **Europe's** border guard organisation;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Map News*. Morocco once again addresses **Amnesty international** with demands for proof to substantiate its accusations that the government misused **Pegasus** software;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *News.in-25*. National carrier **Royal Air Maroc (RAM)** launches a marketing and communication campaign to mark its accession to the **Oneworld Alliance**;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Government announces it will streamline tax procedures through a digital platform and address the ongoing crisis surrounding high gas prices;

18 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Japan** has granted roughly MAD 1.7 million (\$172,658) in assistance to two Moroccan associations to finance their local micro-projects;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Atalayar*. The **Philippines** embassy is inaugurated in **Rabat** with attending officials describing the new diplomatic office as a symbol of the two countries' positive relations;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Arab Weekly*. **Spanish** prime minister **Pedro Sanchez** conveys Spain's official endorsement of **Morocco's** autonomy plan for the **Western Sahara** as "*the most serious and credible basis*" to resolve the dispute over the region;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **Spanish** government is reportedly doubling its high-level efforts to negotiate with **Algeria** regarding the reopening of the **Maghreb-Europe** pipeline;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Zawya*. The **Office National Marocain du Tourisme (ONMT)** (national tourist office) and low-cost **Irish** airline **Ryanair** announce 10 new summer routes linking **Europe** to Morocco, aiming to promote Morocco's attractiveness and boost the tourism sector after being on stand-by for two years;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **United States (US)** lawmakers have proposed to temporarily set aside import tariffs on fertiliser imports, and again allow Moroccan fertilisers into the US market at competitive prices;

17 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Arab News*. Morocco ranks first in the **Maghreb** region in the **Global Soft Power Index 2022**, and seventh in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region;

16 Mar 2022 **New York (United States)** *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*. Morocco's exposure to the conflict in **Ukraine** is relatively low as the country only imports 1.9% of its grain needs from **Russia** and Ukraine;

16 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. State-owned phosphate giant **OCP Group** announces plans to increase fertilisers' input by 10% in 2022 to meet rising global demand for fertilisers;

16 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Ministère de la Santé*. Morocco's **Covid-19** cases drop for the seventh consecutive week, indicating the peak in cases is well over;

15 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **Office National Marocain du Tourisme (ONMT)** (national tourist office) and **United States (US)** online travel company

TripAdvisor sign a partnership agreement in **Rabat** to promote Morocco's tourism destinations in key markets, with Tripadvisor generating over a half million visitors to Morocco in the pre-pandemic period;

15 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Diplomatie*. Morocco has been elected as a member of the **United Nations (UN) Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)** for the 2022-2027 term;

15 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The court of auditors calls on Moroccan authorities to double efforts towards rationing water use amid the country's lingering water challenges;

15 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. **United Kingdom**-headquartered company **Sound Energy** announces the signing of an agreement on the **Maghreb-Europe** gas pipeline with Morocco's **Office National des Hydrocarbures et des Mines (ONHYM)** (hydrocarbons and mines office), aiming to revive the pipeline that was suspended after **Algeria's** decision to terminate the contract last year;

15 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United Kingdom (UK)** announces that its agri-food imports from Morocco have seen a 40% increase since January 2021;

14 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Telegraph*. **United States (US)**-headquartered shoe company **Converse** has opened its first store in **Morocco Mall Casablanca**, representing the brand's first store in Morocco and **Africa**;

14 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** and Morocco have decided to create a joint working group to explore industrial cooperation opportunities;

14 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Telegraph*. **Korea National Railway (KNR)**-led consortium has secured a MAD 310m (\$32m) contract with Morocco's **Office National des Chemins de Fer (ONCF)** (Moroccan national railways office) to design the high-speed line set to connect **Marrakech** to **Agadir**;

14 Mar 2022 **Tel Aviv (Israel)** *North African Post*. National carrier **Royal Air Maroc (RAM)** signs in **Tel Aviv** a codeshare agreement with **Israeli** flagship airline carrier **El Al**;

12 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Former **United States (US)** vice president **Mike Pence** cancels planned Morocco trip to make a detour to the **Ukrainian** border;

12 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Anadolu Agency*. **Israel's** foreign ministry announces the appointment of **Dorit Avidani** as the country's consul in Morocco;

11 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **World Bank** says that the **Ukraine** conflict threatens food security and welfare in the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region and will affect the inflow of capital, remittances and tourism to the region while restricting food imports;

11 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Diplomatie*. **Mauritania** and Morocco sign 13 collaboration agreements to boost cooperation in various sectors, including maritime fishing, aquaculture, environment protection, and sustainable development;

11 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United States (US)** has donated two field hospital systems to Morocco to strengthen its future **Covid-19** response capacities;

10 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Latest News*. Morocco and the **European Union (EU)** sign a new agreement seeking to boost cooperation on different levels related to the **Link Up Africa project**, which will prioritise employment and socio-economic integration of youth

who benefited from Moroccan know-how, as well as intra-**African** mobility and contribution to the development of Africa;

10 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Transport operators in Morocco decide to extend their strike against a spike in fuel prices for two additional days after the government fails to respond to their demands;

10 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la coopération*. Morocco's ambassador to **Ukraine**, **Faouz El Achabi**, reports that 7,000 Moroccans have left Ukraine as part of government's efforts to repatriate stranded citizens; Moroccan students represent the second largest community of students in Ukraine with over 8,000 Moroccans enrolled in Ukrainian universities;

10 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Government will suspend daylight savings time at 3am 27 March exclusively for the holy month of **Ramadan** as it affects the fasting time;

10 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's plans to import liquefied natural gas from **Spain** through the **Maghreb-European** gas pipeline are reportedly progressing well;

8 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Middle East Eye*. The **United States (US)** issues a first-of-its-kind waiver to maintain military cooperation with Morocco, set to become an annual tradition after recent changes in the latest US defence bill implemented a superficial barrier to US-Morocco military cooperation;

7 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Arab Weekly*. Passenger and freight transport operators call for a 72-hour nationwide strike starting to denounce rising fuel prices;

7 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United States (US)** dollar exchange rate against the Moroccan dirham reaches its highest value in two years at MAD 9.86;

5 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Latest News*. **Spain's** interior minister, **Fernando Grande-Marlaska**, notes that cooperation with Morocco on migration matters is "perfect", highlighting the recent collaboration between the countries' security bodies to stop migration attempts in **Melilla**;

5 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Shafaqna*. Government Introduces plan to protect food supply during Ramadan amid substantial increases in the prices of food products;

4 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Rabat** hosts conference on south-south cooperation at the **Mohammed V University**, to discuss strengthening ties between Morocco and **Latin America**;

4 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Map News*. The ruling **Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI)** holds its seventh conference, with over 2,800 attendees, under the theme "Pathway to Trust";

4 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. **United States (US)** deputy secretary of state **Wendyr Sherman** kick offs a regional trip that will include Morocco;

4 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Government ratifies the legislative changes required to start Morocco's domestic legal cannabis industry, authorising the issuing of licences in several Moroccan regions where it is legal to cultivate cannabis, as well as monitoring and regulating its production;

3 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Maroc*. Morocco and **Romania** have agreed to resume cooperation to ensure the safe reception of Moroccans fleeing **Ukraine**;

3 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Foreign affairs minister **Nasser Bourita** has reviewed Morocco's efforts in response to the **Ukrainian** conflict, noting that Morocco is one of the few countries that have mobilised teams to facilitate border crossing and repatriation of its citizens;

3 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Office des Changes*. The **Office des Changes** (exchange office) reports that the net flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) registered 14.9% growth from MAD 618m (\$64.4m) at the end of January 2021 to MAD 710m (\$74m) at the end of January 2022;

2 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's unemployment rates remain above pre-pandemic levels at 11.8% despite robust rebound of economic activities in 2021;

2 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *OCP Group*. State-owned phosphate giant **OCP Group** and **United States (US)** company **Koch Ag & Energy Solutions** sign an agreement in terms of which Koch can acquire a 50% stake in **Jorf Fertilizers Company III (JFC III)** from OCP Group;

2 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Office des Changes** (exchange office), reports that Morocco's trade deficit is rising again on the backdrop of rising energy and grain prices, settling at MAD 20.260 billion (\$2.1 billion) at the end of January, a 75% year-on-year increase;

2 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la coopération*. Foreign affairs ministry says its non-participation in the **United Nations General Assembly** resolution on **Russia's** military offensive in **Ukraine** should not be subjected to any interpretation with Morocco among a short list of countries that did not participate in the vote;

1 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Equipment, transport, logistics and water minister **Nizar Baraka** says that Morocco's dams reached a capacity of 5.3 billion cubic meters at the end of February;

1 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **United Nations (UN)** high commissioner for human rights **Michelle Bachelet** commends King **Mohammed VI's** role in the social and human rights fields and welcomes Morocco's cooperation with the UN on human rights;

1 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Ministère de la Santé*. Health ministry announces the end of the three-month wave of the Omicron variant of **Covid-19**;

1 Mar 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Office National des Aéroports*. The **Office National des Aéroports (ONDA)** (national airports office) says **Covid-19** screening tests are no longer mandatory for all passengers arriving at Moroccan airports but other requirements, such as having a vaccine pass, a negative PCR test within 48 hours, and a traveller's health card, remain in place;

27 Feb 2022 **Taroudant (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Food manufacturer **Gopag** invests MAD 197m (\$20.8m) in the construction of two industrial units in **Taroudant**, south-eastern **Morocco**;

21 Feb 2022 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters*. **Morocco** and **Israel** signs trade and economic cooperation agreement to facilitate investments, as the two countries look to broaden cooperation since they normalised ties in 2020;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

ARC's core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for a routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistleblower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

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ARC Briefing is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

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Getting in touch

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