

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Former president Abdoulaye Wade (2000-2012) and opposition Patriotes du Senegal pour le Travail, l’Ethique et la Fraternité (PASTEF) MP Ousmane Sonko have created separate opposition electoral coalitions ahead of the January 2022 local elections. Agence Nationale du Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD) (national agency for statistics and demographics) results of a nationwide survey report household poverty at 50.9% in Senegal, while 8% of households live in extreme poverty. The United States has granted Senegal a \$550m subsidy through the Senegal Power Compact, which falls under its Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC), to improve access to electricity. Senegal experiences a significant drop in Covid-19 cases ahead of the Grand Magal de Touba pilgrimage, which could attract 4 million pilgrims.

Leading political parties establish coalitions ahead of local elections

Senegal’s leading opposition parties have established electoral coalitions in the build up to the 23 January 2022 local elections, aiming to improve their chances of electoral success against the ruling **Benno Bokk Yakaar (BBY)** presidential coalition.¹ The **Yewi Askan Wi** (free the people) electoral coalition of over 20 parties launched on 2 September, with **Patriotes du Senegal pour le Travail, l’Ethique et la Fraternité (PASTEF) MP Ousmane Sonko**; **Taxawa Sénégal** leader and former mayor of **Dakar, Khalifa Sall**; and the **Parti de l’Unité et Rassemblement (PUR)**, led by **Serigne Sy**, as noteworthy members.² The alliance aims to present single electoral lists in each commune (district), town and department, in order to reduce competition amongst the opposition and improve their chances of securing more votes.³ Yewi Askan Wi aims to remain intact for the 2022 legislative and 2024 presidential elections and says it will not participate in any coalition government.⁴

The idea of creating an alliance gained traction following Sonko’s arrest in March on allegations of sexual assault (see *ARC Briefing Senegal March 2021*). Sonko claims the incumbent regime fabricated the charges as a way to sideline him from political activities. Sonko finished third in the 2019 presidential elections and is the de facto leader of the Senegalese opposition.

The **Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS)** of former president **Abdoulaye Wade** (2000-2012) is notably absent from the Yewi Askan Wi coalition. While it was part of the initial discussions that led to the creation of Yewi Askan Wi, the PDS said it would not be part of the coalition due to failure to address “*unresolved matters*”.⁵ Instead, the PDS will lead a second opposition coalition that was launched on 9 September. Other leading members include former prime minister **Abdoul Mbaye**, ex-mayor of Dakar, and **Diop Pape**.⁶ Like the Sonko-coordinated coalition, the PDS-led alliance will present single lists at all levels of the local elections.

Senegal-based political analyst **Abdou Lo** says the establishment of the two coalitions is a good development for the Senegalese political landscape as both consist of highly experienced politicians,

¹ ARC Senegal analyst

² Jeune Afrique, 2 Sep 2021

³ Jeune Afrique, 2 Sep 2021

⁴ RFI, 2 Sep 2021

⁵ RFI, 2 Sep 2021

⁶ RFI, 2 Sep 2021

who understand Senegal's political terrain.⁷ However, Lo claims the PDS-led coalition may split the opposition vote in favour of the ruling coalition.⁸

Survey data reveals household poverty at 50.9% in Senegal

The **Agence Nationale du Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD)** (national agency for statistics and demographics) has released results of a nationwide survey, reporting that 50.9% of households in Senegal live in poverty, while 8% live in extreme poverty, below the threshold of \$2 per day.⁹ The survey data shows that the number of poor people increased from 5,832,008 in 2011 to 6,032,379 in 2018,¹⁰ calling into question the effectiveness of the government's recent poverty reduction measures.¹¹

The ANSD published findings on 13 September for its **Enquête Harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (EHCVM)** (harmonised survey on household living conditions), undertaken from September-December 2018 and April-July 2019.¹² The EHCVM was commissioned by the **Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)** (**West African Economic and Monetary Union**) and financed by the **World Bank**, and aims to evaluate the extent of poverty and living conditions in UEMOA member states.¹³

EHCVM data shows that, while poverty is most prevalent in rural areas, affecting 53.6% of households versus 19.8% of urban households, the rural poverty incidence rate fell by 5.2% from 2011 to 2018, compared to a 2.1% decrease in urban areas during the same period.¹⁴ On a national scale, the following regions experienced the highest percentage of household poverty:¹⁵

Sédihou	65.7%
Kédougou	61.9%
Tambacounda	61.9%
Kolda	56.6%
Kaffrine	53%
Ziguinchor	51.1%

The economy, planning and cooperation ministry issued a detailed statement on 14 September, defending government efforts to reduce poverty and downplaying the importance of the ANSD report.¹⁶ The economy ministry stated that Senegal has achieved favourable results with respect to rural and urban poverty, as well as the reduction of extreme poverty, which decreased from 12.2% in 2011 to 6.8% in 2018/19.¹⁷ The ministry outlined several government initiatives that have helped to reduce poverty, including the 100,000 FCFA (\$171) annual family grant, instituted in 2017 and benefitting 316,941 households, and the **Couverture Maladie Universelle (CMU)** (universal healthcare scheme), which provides free healthcare for children under five years of age, amongst other benefits.¹⁸ The economy ministry suggested these efforts have led to a lower incidence of poverty in female-headed households (21.8%) compared to that experienced in households with a

⁷ RFI, 10 Sep 2021

⁸ RFI, 10 Sep 2021

⁹ APS, 13 Sep 2021

¹⁰ APS, 13 Sep 2021

¹¹ ARC Senegal analyst

¹² Lejocos, 14 Sep 2021

¹³ Lejocos, 14 Sep 2021

¹⁴ Lejocos, 14 Sep 2021

¹⁵ Lejocos, 14 Sep 2021

¹⁶ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

¹⁷ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

¹⁸ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

male head of the household (42.7%).¹⁹ The ministry noted that the increase in the number of people living in poverty from 2011 to 2018 was significantly lower than the population increase by 3,205,415 inhabitants during the same period.²⁰

However, economy minister **Amadou Hott** admitted during the joint economic and social policy annual review technical workshop on 17 September that while poverty has decreased in Senegal, it is still a problem.²¹ Hott reiterated the need to focus on the positive aspects of the ANSD report, stating:

“We must do better to eradicate poverty in Senegal. It is not a question of more, but better. We do not deny the existence of poverty, it is there, it is increasing in all countries of the world.”²²

Hott said more jobs need to be created to further reduce the poverty rate, promising that the government will do more in this regard.²³ During the implementation of the first phase (2011-2018) of its medium- to long-term economic development agenda, the **Plan Sénégal Emergent (PSE)**, Senegal experienced economic growth of 6%.²⁴ Senegal’s growth is expected to reach 5% in 2021, higher than the initially projected figure of 3.7%.²⁵ Nevertheless, the poverty statistics suggest that significant portions of Senegal’s population have not benefited from this robust economic growth.²⁶ The anti-government protests that occurred in March were largely attributed to grievances regarding youth unemployment and rising poverty (see *ARC Briefing Senegal March 2021*).²⁷ Before the protests, the government displayed no sense of urgency regarding issues such as the rise in clandestine migration, a result of increasing daily hardships faced by Senegalese (see *ARC Briefing Senegal November-December 2020*).

Nevertheless, Senegal has largely fared better than its UEMOA counterparts in the domain of fighting poverty:

National Poverty Rate	
Benin	38.5%
Côte d'Ivoire	39.4%
Burkina Faso	41.4%
Mali	42.1%
Togo	45.5%

The launch in May of the 450 billion FCFA (\$804.7m) **Xeyu Ndaw Gni** emergency youth employment programme, following the March protests, is testament to the government’s recent understanding of the need to address poverty-related issues (see *ARC Briefing Senegal May 2021*). President **Macky Sall** (2012-present) has called on cabinet members to ensure the disbursement of funds for projects stipulated in the programme.²⁸ Furthermore, following the **International Monetary Fund** approval on 23 September for Senegal to receive 246.7 billion FCFA (\$441.1m) in **Special Drawing Rights** (SDR’s), Sall declared at the 2 September cabinet meeting that the funds will be used to support households.²⁹ Sall cited strengthening the resilience of the health system, supporting purchasing

¹⁹ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

²⁰ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

²¹ Le Quotidien, 18 Sep 2021

²² APS, 17 Sep 2021

²³ APS, 17 Sep 2021

²⁴ Financial Afrik, 14 Sep 2021

²⁵ APS, 17 Sep 201

²⁶ ARC Senegal Analyst

²⁷ Al Jazeera, 9 Mar 2021

²⁸ Lejocos, 16 Sep 2021

²⁹ APS, 2 Sep 2021

power by maintaining the price of basic consumer products as some of such measures that will be undertaken in this regard.³⁰

US grants \$550m subsidy to support energy sector development

The **United States (US)** government has granted Senegal a \$550m subsidy to improve access to electricity and upgrade electricity infrastructure through the **Senegal Power Compact**, falling under its **Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)**.³¹ The MCC is a US government-administered international development agency, which aims to reduce poverty through economic growth and provides fixed-term grants to countries that meet standards of good governance, the fight against corruption and the respect for human rights.³² President Macky Sall chaired the ceremony for the official launch of the Senegal Power Compact on 9 September. The enactment of the Senegal Power Compact follows the agreement signed between the US and Senegal on 10 December 2018, which confirmed Senegal as a beneficiary of the programme.³³

The Senegal Power Compact project is expected to benefit an estimated 12 million individuals and connect 181,000 people to grid electricity.³⁴ Over 70% of the funds allocated through the MCC will go towards the construction of high voltage overhead and submarine transmission lines, substations and automatic load shedding system, in order to increase electricity supply, especially in **Dakar Region**.³⁵ The remaining funds will be used to improve electricity networks outside of Dakar.³⁶

MCC CEO **Mahmoud Bah** said Senegal was selected as a beneficiary of MCC financial assistance thanks to its adoption of regulatory reforms in the energy sector.³⁷ These include the adoption in June of two bills that saw the end of state electricity provider **Senelec**'s monopoly of wholesale electricity purchase and opening up of the electricity sector to private sector investment. The **Code de l'Électricité** will transform Senelec into a holding company,³⁸ create an independent electricity regulator and grant private companies access to electricity transmission and distribution networks.³⁹

Sall noted that the implementation of the second compact, the **Plan Complémentaire pour l'Accès Universel à l'Électricité** (universal electricity access plan), will help to significantly improve Senegal's performance in terms of electricity supply and raise the access rate in rural and peri-urban areas.⁴⁰ Sall said the MCC complements the objectives outlined by the **Plan Senegal Emergent (PSE)** relating to energy, and reiterated his commitment to meet the deadlines set for the project.

Petroleum and energy minister **Aissatou Sophie Gladima** similarly expressed the government's satisfaction with the launch of the second MCC, which he said demonstrates the "*fruitful cooperation*" between Senegal and the US.⁴¹ Gladima reiterated that energy sector development, a pillar of the PSE, will support Senegal's efforts to pursue structural economic transformation. US ambassador to Senegal **Talinabo Mushingi** was present at the launching ceremony and described the investments in the electricity sector as "*another step forward in ensuring that all Senegalese have access to reliable energy*".⁴²

In April, Senegal obtained commitments amounting to 1,640 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion) from private investors and institutional donors towards financing universal access to electricity (see *ARC Briefing*

³⁰ APS, 2 Sep 2021

³¹ Jeune Afrique, 10 Sep 2021

³² Lejocos, 6 Sep 2021

³³ Lejocos, 6 Sep 2021

³⁴ APS, 9 Sep 2021

³⁵ Jeune Afrique, 10 Sep 2021

³⁶ Jeune Afrique, 10 Sep 2021

³⁷ Jeune Afrique, 10 Sep 2021

³⁸ Jeune Afrique, 10 Sep 2021

³⁹ Financial Afrik, 9 Sep 2021

⁴⁰ Jeune Afrique, 2 Sep 2021

⁴¹ Lejocos, 6 Sep 2021

⁴² Lejocos, 6 Sep 2021

Senegal May 2021).⁴³ The **Programme d'Urgence de Développement Communautaire (PUDC)** (emergency community development programme), a rural electrification programme aiming to provide electricity to approximately 880,000 individuals in 2,000 villages, launched in May. This has been complemented by the government's significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure (see *ARC Briefing Senegal June 2021*).

Covid-19 infections drop ahead of Grand Magal pilgrimage

Senegal has experienced a significant reduction in **Covid-19** cases, following a surge in cases from the end of June into August.⁴⁴ However, there are concerns that **Grand Magal de Touba**, an annual pilgrimage carried out by members of the **Mouride** Muslim order set to take place from 26-27 September, may lead to a resurgence of cases.⁴⁵ President Sall instructed health minister **Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr** to increase efforts to work with organisers of the upcoming Grand Magal de Touba pilgrimage, which brings together upwards of 4 million pilgrims, almost a quarter of the Senegalese population, to the city of **Touba**.⁴⁶ **Serigne Bas Khadre**, spokesperson for the **Calpihe General** of the Mouride brotherhood, expressed confidence that the pilgrimage would not lead to mass infections and assured that all necessary precautionary measures were in place.⁴⁷

Centre des Opérations d'Urgences Sanitaires (health emergency operations centre) director **Alioune Badara Ly** noted on 13 September a significant decrease in positive cases and hospitalisations in Senegal.⁴⁸ Dakar Region remains the epicentre of the pandemic, with an average of 66% of cases originating there. Dakar was followed by **Thiès** with 11% of cases, while **Diourbel**, **Koalack** and **St. Louis** Regions account for between 3-5% of positive cases.

As of 20 September, Senegal had registered 73,668 cases of Covid-19, 70,295 recoveries and 1,848 deaths in its population of 16.3 million, with 1,226,082 vaccine doses administered.⁴⁹ Senegal received a donation of 405,600 doses of the **United Kingdom**-manufactured **AstraZeneca** vaccine from **Belgium** on 11 September.⁵⁰

⁴³ APS, 5 Apr 2021

⁴⁴ ARC Senegal analyst

⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2021

⁴⁶ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2021

⁴⁷ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2021

⁴⁸ APS, 13 Sep 2021

⁴⁹ Ministère de la Santé et Action Sociale, 21 Sep 2021

⁵⁰ APS, 10 Sep 2021

Planner

7-9 Oct 2021 **Montpellier (France)** France-Afrique Summit;

2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** 7th **Forum International de Dakar sur la Paix et la Sécurité** (Dakar International Forum for Peace and Security (TBA));

2021 **Turkey-Africa** Summit (TBA);

23 Jan 2022 **(Senegal)** Municipal elections;

2022 **Sangomar** offshore oil field: production of crude oil set to begin

2023 **(Senegal)** **Grand Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA)** offshore gas field production of natural gas set to begin.

Chronology

20 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. **United States**-based consulting firm **Advisian** announces plans to build the 144-km **Yakaar-Téranga** gas pipeline;

14 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Financiel Afrik*. The **Agence Nationale du Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD)** (national agency for statistics and demographics) releases results of a nationwide survey, reporting that 50.9% of households in Senegal live in poverty, while 8% live in extreme poverty below the threshold of \$2 per day

10 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. Former president **Abdoulaye Wade**, leader of the opposition **Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS)**, launches a new opposition coalition that will contest the January 2022 local elections;

10 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. President **Macky Sall** signs into effect the **Senegal Power Compact** initiative, a 350 billion FCFA (\$630.9m) energy investment programme falling under the **United States**-coordinated **Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)**;

3 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Teranga News*. Senegal is expected to lose 47 billion FCFA (\$85.1m) in tax revenue following the decision to suspend the import tax on refined sugar from 30 August to 15 October, in a bid to stem the rise in the cost of food products and basic necessities;

3 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Financiel Afrik*. The finance and budget ministry reports that Senegal raised 55 billion FCFA (\$99.6m) through the issue of an *obligations de relance* (ORD) (stimulus bonds) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market

2 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Lejocos*. President **Macky Sall** instructs cabinet ministers in charge of employment, planning and finance to evaluate the implementation of the 450 billion FCFA (\$814.9m) youth employment programme, which was created in March following anti-government protests;

2 Sep 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *RFI*. Senegalese opposition leaders including opposition **Pastef** president **Ousmane Sonko** and former Dakar mayor **Khalifa Sall**, head of **Taxawu Senegaal** opposition party, launch new opposition coalition ahead of the January 2022 local elections;

31 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. State-owned airline **Air Senegal** CEO **Ibrahima Kane** estimates the newly launched **Dakar-New York-Washington D.C (United States)** route will attract 300,000 passengers annually;

28 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Germany**-based conglomerate **Siemens** vice president **Fadi Abou Ghantous** expresses the firm's interest in investing in renewable energy projects in Senegal, following talks with Senegal's President **Macky Sall** during his visit to **Berlin** (Germany);

26 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. Senegal is set to receive 246.7 billion FCFA (\$445.2m) from the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in order to support its Covid-19 economic recovery efforts;

23 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal) APS**. Land transport minister **Mansour Faye** announces that rehabilitation of the **Bamako (Mali)-Dakar (Senegal)** railway will commence soon;

23 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal) Lejocos**. The **Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie (ANSD)** reports that production in the extractive industries increased 56.1% year-on-year in June 2021;

19 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal) Agence Ecofin**. The government expects to receive 1,965 billion FCFA (\$3.5 billion) from **Canada**, through the **Canadian Commercial Cooperation (CCC)**, to finance the **Dakar-Tamba** fast track railway project;

18 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal) APS**. **Acteurs Portuaires du Sénégal** (Senegal port workers) secretary general **Mamadou Corsène Sarr** estimates the activities of **Malian** freight transport trucks generate 253 billion FCFA (\$452.9m) in revenue annually for the Senegalese economy;

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