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The Cour Constitutionnelle (constitutional court) invalidates the candidacies of former Dakar mayor Khalifa Sall and ex-minister Karim Wade for Senegal's 24 February presidential elections. Senegal receives €21 billion (\$24 billion) in financial commitments from a host of bilateral, multilateral and private donors to finance the Plan Sénégal Emergent II (PSE II). Senegal and Mauritania sign an international cooperation agreement authorising exploitation of the Grande Torture-Ahmeyin offshore gas field.

Constitutional court quashes election hopes of Khalifa Sall and Karim Wade

The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) validated five candidacies for the 24 February presidential elections on 14 January.¹ The candidates include incumbent President **Macky Sall** (2012-present) and opposition candidates **Issa Sall, Ousmane Sonko, Madicke Niang** and **Idrissa Seck**.² This ends speculation as to whether former **Dakar** mayor **Khalifa Sall** and ex-minister **Karim Wade** would be allowed to run for the presidency.³ This will be the smallest presidential field since 1988, when only four candidates took part in the presidential elections.⁴ Would-be presidential candidates had until 26 December to register themselves on the voters' roll and submit their candidacies.⁵ The constitutional court then examined whether the candidates' files met all the legal requirements.⁶

The court announced on 2 January that it had rejected 19 candidacies out of 27 files received, mainly on the basis that the candidates had not complied with the new law related to "parrainage" or sponsorship.⁷ According to the new legislation, presidential candidates must obtain endorsements that are equivalent to 0.8% of the electorate (53,000) in order to be eligible to run for president.⁸ Justice minister **Ismaila Madior Fall** justified the adoption of the legislation by noting that all functional democracies have rules to filter presidential candidates.⁹ With only 6.6 million voters, there have been complaints in the past that there are too many candidates for such a small electorate, with the 2012 elections having 14 candidates and the 2007 elections 15.¹⁰ Although the new law was passed in parliament in April, the opposition boycotted the session during which it was voted into law, claiming the law aims to side-line potential opposition candidates.¹¹ In December the opposition formed a coalition called the **C23** to protest the application of the sponsorship requirement.¹² C23

¹ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

² Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

³ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

⁵ RFI, 27 Dec 2018

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

⁷ Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

⁸ Jeune Afrique, 19 Apr 2018

⁹ Jeune Afrique, 19 Apr 2018

¹⁰ Jeune Afrique, 10 Jan 2019

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 19 Apr 2018

¹² Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

spokesperson and former prime minister **Abdoul Mbaye**, who was one of the rejected candidates, expressed his dismay at the court's decision and described it as "*opaque and arbitrary*".¹³ C23 issued a statement on 3 January calling for the abolition of the electoral code amendments relating to sponsorship.¹⁴

Despite initially rejecting most opposition candidates, the constitutional court validated Khalifa Sall, who is representing the **Taxawu Senegal** party, and Karim Wade, the designated candidate for the **Parti Democratique Senegalaise (PDS)**, on the basis of fulfilling the sponsorship requirement.¹⁵ However, the court ultimately refused to allow the two candidates to run in the February elections on account of their ongoing legal troubles.¹⁶ Sall's application was invalidated because of his current imprisonment: on 30 August, he was sentenced to five years in jail and fined 1.8 billion FCFA (\$3.1m) for receiving cash advances.¹⁷ Article 131 of the electoral code stipulates that any individual who has been handed a prison sentence amounting to five years and above is removed from the electoral register and cannot be a presidential candidate.¹⁸ The **Cour Supreme** (supreme court) denied all 12 of Sall's appeals against this judgement on 3 January.¹⁹ Sall's lawyers, who have a final appeal to launch at a different chamber of the supreme court, claim the constitutional court judgement is unjust.²⁰ They argue that the court decision violates articles 27 and 31 of the electoral code, as the verdict prevents Sall from performing his civic duty, even though the case annulment procedure (cassation) is ongoing and a definitive verdict has not been made.²¹

Karim Wade had his candidacy thrown out for failure to comply with article 115 of the electoral code. According to this provision, the candidate's voter registration card must be placed in the candidacy file.²² Wade had included a certified biometric **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** identification card, which is used as a voter's card.²³ The constitutional court rejected the card because it did not have a registration number, which would confirm Wade is on the voters' register.²⁴ Article 131 of the electoral code would also apply to Wade, as he received a six-year prison sentence and a fine of €220m (\$250m) in 2015.²⁵ Wade was struck off the voters' roll and thus was not provided with a registration number.²⁶ Wade, who has been in self-imposed exile in **Qatar** since 2017, denounced the constitutional court decision and suggests Senegalese authorities are using the judiciary to prevent him from running.²⁷ At the time of writing, Sall and Wade had 24 hours to appeal the constitutional court's decision. The definitive list of candidates for the February elections will be released on 20 January.²⁸

¹³ Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique, 3 Jan 2019

¹⁶ RFI, 14 Jan 2019

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 30 Aug 2018

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 20 Jun 2018

¹⁹ RFI, 3 Jan 2019

²⁰ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

²¹ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

²² RFI, 14 Jan 2019

²³ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

²⁴ Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

²⁵ Jeune Afrique, 11 Dec 2018

²⁶ RFI, 14 Jan 2019

²⁷ RFI, 14 Jan 2019

²⁸ RFI, 14 Jan 2019

The ongoing legal troubles of two of Senegal's most prominent political figures have dominated the Senegalese political landscape over the past few years. It is widely believed that President Sall is using the judicial system to exclude two of the more credible opposition candidates in the person of Sall and Wade. President Sall has refuted these allegations, describing the Senegalese judiciary as "*independent and responsible*".²⁹ The exclusion of Sall and Wade from the 2019 presidential election significantly boosts President Sall's chances of winning the presidential race in the first round. President Sall would clearly prefer this scenario, as in both instances where the presidential election went to the second round, the incumbent lost (2000 and 2012). President Sall will look to highlight the numerous large-scale infrastructure projects that have been initiated since his presidency began in 2012.³⁰ These include the **Aéroport International Blaise Diagne**, the **Dakar-Diambiadio** and **Thies-Touba** highways, and the **Train Express Regional**.³¹

Sall scores \$24 billion in pledges for PSE II

Senegal has obtained financial commitments of €21 billion (\$24 billion) from a host of bilateral, multilateral and private donors to finance the **Plan Sénégal Emergent II (PSE II)**.³² President Sall visited **Paris (France)** from 17-18 December to persuade financial and technical partners to fund the PSE II, the second phase of Senegal's medium-term economic development strategy that will run from 2019 to 2023.³³ The Senegalese government had hoped to raise €4.3 billion (\$4.9 billion) during the Paris mission to ensure PSE II implementation.³⁴ However, Senegal received pledges of \$14 billion from the **Groupe Consultatif Senegal**, the collective of potential PSE II donors. The largest contributors were the **World Bank** (\$3.5 billion), **African Development Bank** (\$2.3 billion) and France (\$1.7 billion).³⁵ This amount was three times more than Sall had targeted and more than double the €5.3 billion (\$6 billion) used for PSE I in 2014.³⁶ According to economy and finance minister **Amadou Ba**, the funding was obtained through the signing of 173 finance agreements.³⁷

President Sall attributes the confidence of the donor partners to the positive results that PSE I generated.³⁸ Since 2016, Senegal has averaged 6% gross domestic product (GDP) growth.³⁹ From 2010 to 2015, GDP economic growth never surpassed 5%.⁴⁰ Senegal has also improved its position in the annual **World Bank Doing Business** rankings by 31 places over the last three years (see *ARC Briefing Senegal November 2018*).⁴¹ PSE I enabled Senegal to tackle its longstanding electricity deficit⁴² – since 2011 Senegal has doubled its electricity production to 1,141 megawatts⁴³ with the aid of significant investments in renewable energy (wind and

²⁹ Africa Confidential, 11 Jan 2019

³⁰ Africa Confidential, 11 Jan 2019

³¹ Africa Confidential, 11 Jan 2019

³² La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

³³ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

³⁴ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

³⁵ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

³⁶ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

³⁷ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

³⁸ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

³⁹ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

⁴⁰ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁴¹ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

⁴² Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁴³ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

solar) and the modernisation of production and distribution infrastructure.⁴⁴ The construction of key infrastructure projects such as the Aeroport International Blaise Diagne, the Dakar-Diamniadio and Thies-Touba highways, and the Train Express Regional (see above) are notable developments that were realised during PSE I.⁴⁵ Social welfare programmes such as universal health coverage have enabled 47% of Senegalese to have access to health insurance.⁴⁶ Family grants and the youth and female entrepreneurship programme have helped uplift the most vulnerable.⁴⁷ World Bank vice president for the **Africa** region **Hafez Ghanem** praised Senegal for the progress attained through PSE I.⁴⁸ However, he believes more can be done in the area of human development, as Senegal is faring worse in that domain compared to countries with similar levels of development.⁴⁹ This assertion was supported by a September 2018 **Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD)** report which highlighted weaknesses in Senegal's educational system, fiscal administration and bureaucracy as barriers to its socio-economic development.⁵⁰

PSE II intends to remedy these shortcomings. PSE II will be mainly executed through policies contained in the Plan d'Actions Prioritaires (PAP) (priority action plan) which consists of 700 projects.⁵¹ These projects are distributed across the seven priority areas of agriculture, infrastructure development and construction, energy, industrial activity, digital economy, tourism and finance.⁵² The PAP aims to consolidate the gains achieved through PSE I and to enable Senegal to attain 9.1% GDP growth rate by 2023.⁵³ In a cabinet meeting on 26 December Sall appealed to all government departments with projects earmarked by the PAP to complete their files.⁵⁴ Sall emphasised that steps should be taken to improve the business sector in order to increase private sector participation in the economy.⁵⁵ President Sall also called for his cabinet to take measures to improve public administration so as to maximise revenue collection and the education sector, in order to improve youth employment prospects.⁵⁶

The support from international partners towards the PSE II is excellent news for Senegalese authorities, especially since they obtained significantly greater financial commitments than they initially targeted. This is probably due in large part to Senegal's relatively stable political climate and low corruption rate. Senegal ranked 66 out of 180 countries in the **2017 Transparency International Corruptions Perception Index**.⁵⁷ In addition, Senegal has enjoyed robust economic growth, a scenario that **International Monetary Fund** managing director **Christine Lagarde** praised in September.⁵⁸ Although these factors have increased investor sentiment and business confidence, Senegal needs to grow by 7-8% annually in

⁴⁴ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁴⁶ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

⁴⁷ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁴⁸ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

⁴⁹ Jeune Afrique, 17 Dec 2018

⁵⁰ Jeune Afrique, 21 Sep 2018

⁵¹ La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

⁵² Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2018

⁵³ La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

⁵⁴ La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

⁵⁵ La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

⁵⁶ La Tribune Afrique, 27 Dec 2018

⁵⁷ Corruptions Perception Index 2017

⁵⁸ Jeune Afrique, 21 Sep 2018

order to support sustainable job creation for its growing youth population and to reduce poverty.⁵⁹ Senegal has relied heavily on public investment and an inadequate industrial policy.⁶⁰ Potential investors may regard these challenges as potential opportunities, as the PSE II has highlighted strategic sectors on which it intends to capitalise to move Senegal further along the path to becoming an emerging economy.

Senegal and Mauritania sign gas field cooperation agreement

The governments of **Senegal** and **Mauritania** signed an agreement on 21 December clarifying the terms of exploiting the **Grand Torture-Ahmeyin (GTA)** offshore gas field.⁶¹ The agreement will allow firms to fully pursue their investments in the GTA project, which has estimated gas deposits of 450 billion m³ (14% of **Nigeria's** reserves).⁶² The GTA gas deposits were discovered by **United States (US)**-based **Kosmos Energy** in 2015.⁶³ President Macky Sall and his Mauritanian counterpart, President **Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz** (2009-present), signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.⁶⁴ The convention outlines the taxation applicable to firms involved in the project and the financing agreement between Mauritania's state-owned oil corporation, **Société Mauritanienne des Hydrocarbures et du Patrimoine Minier (SMHPM)**, Senegal's state-owned oil corporation, **Petrosen**.⁶⁵ In terms of the agreement SMHPM and Petrosen have committed to investing in the construction production installations.⁶⁶ The amount earmarked for these investments as well as how they will be divided between the two parties was not revealed.⁶⁷ The contract also outlines the commercialisation of the liquefied natural gas after its production and authorises the exploitation of the GTA gas field.⁶⁸

As a result of the accord, **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **British Petroleum (BP)** and its partners announced they would invest in a production, stockage and offloading barge (FPSO) and a liquefied natural gas plant.⁶⁹ In December 2016, BP purchased 62% and 60% of Kosmos Energy's stake in the GTA gas field in Mauritania and Senegal respectively.⁷⁰ BP intends to invest \$10 billion in the GTA gas field project.⁷¹ Construction of exploitation installations is expected to commence in early 2019.⁷² BP predicts the first supply of gas will be available by 2022, with 25m tonnes of natural gas produced annually.⁷³

The December convention follows a similar international cooperation agreement signed on 9 February 2018 between presidents Sall and Abdel Aziz.⁷⁴ The cooperation agreement stipulated aspects related to development and exploitation as well as the partition of

⁵⁹ Jeune Afrique, 21 Sep 2018

⁶⁰ Jeune Afrique, 21 Sep 2018

⁶¹ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶² Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2018

⁶³ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁴ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁵ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁶ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁷ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁸ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁶⁹ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁷⁰ Jeune Afrique, 2 Jul 2018

⁷¹ Jeune Afrique, 2 Jul 2018

⁷² Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁷³ Jeune Afrique, 24 Dec 2018

⁷⁴ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2018

resources and the resolution of possible boundary disputes between both parties.⁷⁵ It also provided that Senegal and Mauritania would divide the GTA gas field equally.⁷⁶ However, Paris-based **Institute of International Relations** analyst **Francis Perrin** believes this may be reviewed in future.⁷⁷

Nonetheless, the two heads of state expressed satisfaction at their governments' ability to cooperate towards the development of this project.⁷⁸ Abdel Aziz noted that the exploitation of the GTA gas field creates "*new development perspectives for both countries*" and that "*all necessary measures will be undertaken to ensure the project fully benefits the entire population*".⁷⁹ President Sall commended efforts by Senegal and Mauritania to evenly divide the gas field resources without any major disputes:

*"We have decided to work together with President Abdel Aziz for the development of this gas field... this demonstrates that in Africa, it is possible for resources not to be a curse, but rather a source of unity, peace and development."*⁸⁰

The signing of the international cooperation agreement between Senegal and Mauritania for the exploitation of the GTA offshore gas field is positive news for all actors involved in the project, which will bring much needed investment to both countries. Senegal currently derives 89.2% of extractive sector revenue from mining activities; the beginning of gas production will diversify revenue generation for this sector.⁸¹ Natural gas production will also enable Senegal to increase its access to power and at a cheaper rate.

Planner

January 2019 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Jeune Afrique*. Third International Conference on African Emergence;

24 Feb 2019 **Dakar (Senegal)** Presidential elections;

Chronology

14 Jan 2019 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Jeune Afrique*. The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) rejects the presidential candidatures of ex-Dakar mayor **Khalifa Sall** and former minister **Karim Wade**;

14 Jan 2019 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Jeune Afrique*. President Sall inaugurates the 36km **Train Express Regional** which runs from **Dakar** to **Diamniadio** and cost €1 billion (\$1.1 billion);

21 Dec 2018 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. Senegal and **Mauritania** sign an international cooperation agreement authorising the exploitation of the **Grand Torture Ahmeyim** offshore gas field;

19 Dec 2018 **Paris (France)** *Agence Ecofin*. The **World Bank** grants \$180m loan to **Senegal** in order to develop the digital economy;

⁷⁵ *Jeune Afrique*, 12 Feb 2018

⁷⁶ *Jeune Afrique*, 2 Jul 2018

⁷⁷ *Jeune Afrique*, 2 Jul 2018

⁷⁸ RFI, 22 Dec 2018

⁷⁹ RFI, 22 Dec 2018

⁸⁰ President Macky Sall quoted in RFI, 22 Dec 2018

⁸¹ *Jeune Afrique*, 23 Nov 2018

18 Dec 2018 **Paris (France)** *Jeune Afrique* ; President **Macky Sall** obtains financial commitments of €21 billion (\$24 billion) from a host of bilateral, multilateral and private donors to finance the **Plan Sénégal Emergent II (PSE II)**;

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