

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Senegal Monthly Briefing August 2021

#### Senegal Summary 17 August 2021

*Senegal's vaccination campaign against Covid-19 infection gains momentum as it experiences a significant rise in deaths during a third wave of infections. United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Emirates Gate Investment Group (EGI) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Senegalese state to construct 30,000 housing units over two years. Infrastructure and land transport minister Mansour Faye announces that the first phase of the \$1.3 billion Train Express Régional (TER), Senegal's first high-speed train, will be operational on 24 December, following repeated delays in completion of the project.*

#### Third wave continues as Senegal accelerates vaccination campaign

Senegal's third wave of Covid-19 infections, currently in its second month, has seen a significantly higher number of deaths than was recorded during the previous two waves.<sup>1</sup> The health and social action ministry, together with the **Bureau de Prospective Economique (BPE)** (economic perspectives bureau), documented a surge in positive Covid-19 cases and deaths throughout July and into August.<sup>2</sup> Health authorities have taken steps to procure more Covid-19 vaccines amid noticeable increase in vaccine uptake, while medical personnel have noted the saturation of hospital capacity.

Senegal's Covid-19 Third Wave <sup>3</sup>		
	Cases	Deaths
5-11 Jul	2,407	20
12-18 Jul	5,921	27
19-25 Jul	5,167	61
26 Jul-1 Aug	5,739	86
2-8 Aug	4,577	115

The health ministry reported on 16 August that Senegal had registered 70,854 positive cases, 54,357 recoveries and 1,614 deaths in its population of 16.3 million since confirming its first Covid-19 case on 2 March 2020.<sup>4</sup> The BPE notes a slight weekly decrease in positive cases, with 3,100 confirmed during the 9-15 August timeframe.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, fatalities remain high, as 118 people died from Covid-19 complications from 9-15 August, an increase from 115 the previous week.<sup>6</sup>

**Comité National de Gestion des Epidémies (CNGE)** (national committee for epidemic management) president **Dr. Marie Khémess Ngom Ndiaye** attributes the surge in Covid-19 cases to the presence of the highly transmissible so-called **Delta** variant.<sup>7</sup> Ndiaye noted that an estimated 70% of new cases emanate from this variant.<sup>8</sup> The health ministry's director of emergency operations, **Alioune Badara**

<sup>1</sup> Source, ARC analyst, Senegal

<sup>2</sup> Dakar Actu, 10 Aug 2021

<sup>3</sup> Dakar Actu, 10 Aug 2021

<sup>4</sup> Ministère de la Santé et de l'Action Sociale, 16 Aug 2021

<sup>5</sup> Dakar Actu, 16 Aug 2021

<sup>6</sup> Dakar Actu, 16 Aug 2021

<sup>7</sup> BBC Afrique, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>8</sup> BBC Afrique, 3 Aug 2021

Ly, blamed the third wave on non-adherence to the government's restrictive measures,<sup>9</sup> despite an interior ministry directive on 17 July making the wearing of masks compulsory.<sup>10</sup> The interior ministry reported on 28 July that police had arrested 1,173 people for not wearing protective masks and collectively fined them 2m FCFA (\$3,587).<sup>11</sup>

Ly also blamed the rise in cases on the celebration of the **Tabaski (Eid al-Adha)** Muslim feast on 15 July, which saw thousands of residents from capital **Dakar** travel to other regions to celebrate with their families, ignoring calls by the CNGE for Senegalese to avoid such trips. State-owned public transport firm **Dakar Dem Dikk** had announced the suspension of its passenger service from 17 July to discourage individuals from travelling (see *ARC Briefing Senegal July 2021*).<sup>12</sup> Ly described Dakar region as the epicentre of Covid-19 in Senegal, harbouring an estimated 65% of cases.<sup>13</sup>

Increased hospitalisation and oxygen scarcity for patients have characterised Senegal's third wave. Health ministry director of public health **Ousmane Dia** said hospitals were at full capacity. **Centre de Traitement des Epidemies (CTE) de l'Hôpital Fann** resident medical doctor **Khardiata Diallo** confirmed the scarcity of oxygen for critical patients, forcing some hospitals to request that patients provide a deposit of up to 2m FCFA (\$3,587) to procure oxygen.<sup>14</sup> Dakar-based medical doctor **Djiba Ramos** called on the government to take greater steps to ensure the availability of oxygen in order to save lives.<sup>15</sup> Health minister **Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr** announced on 3 August that the state would take over the responsibility of providing private clinics with oxygen and patients would no longer be expected to foot the bill.<sup>16</sup> Local gas providers, including **Sahel Gaz, Molécule Gaz** and **Air Liquide**, have assured Sarr that they have reserved supplies of oxygen for Covid-19 patients.<sup>17</sup> Sarr also noted that the government had ordered 35 new oxygen generators, with delivery in Senegal expected 12 August.<sup>18</sup>

The government has also been accelerating the pace of the national Covid vaccination campaign it began in February.<sup>19</sup> As of 15 August, the health ministry reported it had vaccinated 1,109,720 people against Covid.<sup>20</sup> National vaccination campaign head **Ousseynou Badiane** attributes the rise in vaccine adherence to the growing number of young people who have been infected as well as the health pass required to travel to most **European** countries.<sup>21</sup> As of 21 July, 621,311 people had been vaccinated while the health ministry hit the 1-million vaccination mark on 7 August.<sup>22</sup> Senegal received a consignment of 136,800 and 332,118 doses respectively of the **United States-** and **China-**manufactured **Johnson & Johnson** and **Sinopharm** vaccines on 27 July.<sup>23</sup> A donation from the **United Kingdom (UK)** government of 140,160 doses of the UK-produced **AstraZeneca** vaccine on 16 August has further boosted Senegal's vaccine stock.<sup>24</sup> The health ministry has created proximity vaccination sites beyond health centres<sup>25</sup> and prioritised pregnant women as persons to be vaccinated, in a bid to further increase vaccination numbers.<sup>26</sup> The **Institut Pasteur de Dakar** announced on 31 July that it would produce rapid testing kits to support the detection of Covid-19.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>9</sup> RFI, 9 Aug 2021

<sup>10</sup> Dakar Actu, 17 Jul 2021

<sup>11</sup> Dakar Actu, 28 Jul 2021

<sup>12</sup> Dakar Actu, 18 Jul 2021

<sup>13</sup> RFI, 9 Aug 2021

<sup>14</sup> BBC Afrique, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>15</sup> BBC Afrique, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>16</sup> Dakar Actu, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>17</sup> Dakar Actu, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>18</sup> BBC Afrique, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>19</sup> ARC Senegal Analyst

<sup>20</sup> Ministère de la Sante et de l'Action Sociale, 7 Aug 2021

<sup>21</sup> RFI, 9 Aug 2021

<sup>22</sup> Ministère de la Sante et de l'Action Sociale, 22 Jul 2021

<sup>23</sup> Soleil, 27 Jul 2021

<sup>24</sup> Dakar Actu, 16 Aug 2021

<sup>25</sup> Dakar Actu, 28 Jul 2021

<sup>26</sup> Dakar Actu, 9 Aug 2021

<sup>27</sup> Dakar Actu, 31 Jul 2021

Despite the government's efforts to contain the virus, a fourth wave may be looming with the **Grand Magal de Touba**, an annual pilgrimage carried out by members of the **Mouride** Muslim order, set to take place on 28 September.<sup>28</sup> The event, which brings together on average four million individuals (one quarter of Senegal's population), risks spreading infection on a large scale.<sup>29</sup> Religious and health authorities have requested prospective pilgrims to get vaccinated and respect social distancing and other preventive measures instructed by the government during the event.<sup>30</sup> During a meeting on 30 July, **Gorgui Mbaye**, governor of **Diourbel** region in **Central-West** Senegal, where the pilgrimage is taking place, said the necessary arrangements have been made for the smooth organisation of the pilgrimage.<sup>31</sup> Mbaye said 5,760 health personnel will be assembled and 180 medical posts established for the event.<sup>32</sup> Muslim religious organisation **Jamra** spokesperson **Mame Mactar Gueye** says the resources deployed by the state for the pilgrimage warrant its authorisation.<sup>33</sup> However, fears remain that the Grand Magal could have similar repercussions in Senegal to those seen in **India** following the **Hindu** festival of **Kumbh Mela**, widely regarded as one of the catalysts of India's second wave of Covid-19 infections.<sup>34</sup> However, Senegal's Muslim religious orders have significant societal and political influence and President **Macky Sall** (2012-present) is unlikely to suspend the hosting of the pilgrimage.<sup>35</sup> There may also be a strong economic imperative to host the pilgrimage. Economist **Souleymane Digne** of the **Université de Bambey** in Diourbel region suggests that revenue generated from formal and informal activity during the pilgrimage amounts to an estimated 250 billion FCFA (\$448.6m).

Despite the on-going third wave, Senegal does not have major restrictive measures in place, such as a night-time curfew or a health state of emergency. President Sall lifted most measures following the violent anti-government protests in March and no doubt fears the outbreak of further civil unrest if restrictions are imposed (see *ARC Briefing Senegal March 2021*).<sup>36</sup> Sall has called on the population to exercise responsibility, an approach criticised by Sall's main opponent, opposition **Pastef-Les Patriotes** president and MP **Ousmane Sonko**.<sup>37</sup>

### Boost for low-cost housing

**United Arab Emirates (UAE)**-based **Emirates Gate Investment Group (EGI)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Senegalese government to construct 30,000 low-cost housing units over two years.<sup>38</sup> According to the town planning, housing and public hygiene ministry, which signed the MoU on behalf of the state, the proposed initiative is part of the government's plan to build 100,000 houses, as outlined in Senegal's long-term economic development agenda, the **Plan Sénégal Émergent (PSE)**.<sup>39</sup>

Town planning, housing and public hygiene ministry minister **Abdoulaye Saydou Sow** led a delegation to **Abu Dhabi (UAE)** from 2-3 August to present the housing construction project to EGI and Emirati authorities.<sup>40</sup> Sow's secretary of state, **Victorine Ndèye**, joined the delegation, together with Senegal's ambassador to the UAE, **Sory Sylla**.<sup>41</sup> The Emirati stakeholders discussed the location of land to be built on, areas available to undertake the large-scale project and possible fiscal and

<sup>28</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Aug 2021

<sup>29</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Aug 2021

<sup>30</sup> APS, 30 Jul 2021

<sup>31</sup> APS, 30 Jul 2021

<sup>32</sup> APS, 30 Jul 2021

<sup>33</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Aug 2021

<sup>34</sup> Jeune Afrique, 11 Aug 2021

<sup>35</sup> Source, ARC Senegal analyst

<sup>36</sup> Source, ARC Senegal analyst

<sup>37</sup> Dakar Actu, 31 Jul 2021

<sup>38</sup> APS, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>39</sup> APS, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>40</sup> APS, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>41</sup> APS, 3 Aug 2021

customs exemptions.<sup>42</sup> The MoU stipulates that the houses will be built in **Daga Kholpa**, 50 km outside of Dakar.<sup>43</sup> The project partners will establish an industrial unit in Senegal in order to fast track the progress of the project.<sup>44</sup>

Emirati secretary of state **Sheikh Shahboot Al Nhayan** expressed satisfaction at the positive relations between Senegal and the UAE, referring to UAE-based logistics firm **DP World's** presence in Senegal.<sup>45</sup> DP World, which holds the concession to operate the **Port Autonome de Dakar (PAD)** (Dakar Autonomous Port), signed an agreement in December with the Senegalese government to develop a deep-water seaport at **Ndayane** worth \$1.127 billion.<sup>46</sup> The project is DP World's largest investment in **Africa** (see *ARC Briefing Senegal January 2021*).<sup>47</sup>

The MoU with EGI is the first manifestation of the “100,000 logements” plan created in 2017 with the aim of providing low-income households and individuals the opportunity to procure decent and viable housing.<sup>48</sup> In March, Sow announced the government would finalise plans to construct 20,000 housing units in 2021, describing the project as part of the state's decentralisation plan of creating healthy living environments and economic opportunities.<sup>49</sup> In April, Ndèye declared that the purchase cost of houses envisaged within this framework would not exceed 12m FCFA (\$21,525), which she equated to an individual paying 100,000 FCFA (\$179) monthly over a 10-year period.<sup>50</sup> Ndèye pledged that the low-cost houses would also be built in other areas of Senegal.

### Senegal's first high-speed train slated for commercial use by 24 December

Infrastructure and land transport minister **Mansour Faye** announced on 5 August that the first phase of the **Train Express Régional (TER)** will be operational by 24 December.<sup>51</sup> The project has seen several delays since President Sall launched TER activities in January 2019, justifying current scepticism in Faye's announcement that the TER will be put to commercial use on 24 December. Faye predicts that authorisation for operationalisation of the TER will be granted by 20 December at the latest.<sup>52</sup> The project is currently at a 97% execution level.<sup>53</sup> All railway platforms are complete and the 15 trains delivered by **France**-based **Alstom** are available, while 85-90% of security measures have been validated.

The TER is one of the landmark projects of Senegal's long-term economic development agenda, the **Plan Sénégal Émergent (PSE)**.<sup>54</sup> The first phase of the project is the 36-km railway line linking Dakar to the newly built satellite city of **Diamniadio**.<sup>55</sup> An estimated 115,000 daily commuters will use the 780 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion) railway.<sup>56 57</sup>

Significant controversy and delays have dogged the project since President Sall launched activities of the TER in January 2019.<sup>58</sup> Passengers were initially slated to use the TER by 30 November 2019, but on 4 November 2019, former town planning minister **Abdou Karim Fofana** admitted the 30 November deadline would not be met.<sup>59</sup> Launch of the TER was subsequently slated for April 2020,

<sup>42</sup> Sika Finance, 6 Aug 2021

<sup>43</sup> Sika Finance, 6 Aug 2021

<sup>44</sup> Sika Finance, 6 Aug 2021

<sup>45</sup> APS, 3 Aug 2021

<sup>46</sup> Reuters, 23 Dec 2020

<sup>47</sup> Reuters, 23 Dec 2020

<sup>48</sup> Agence Ecofin, 30 Mar 2021

<sup>49</sup> Agence Ecofin, 30 Mar 2021

<sup>50</sup> Le Quotidien, 15 Apr 2021

<sup>51</sup> Press Afrik, 5 Aug 2021

<sup>52</sup> Press Afrik, 5 Aug 2021

<sup>53</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Aug 2021

<sup>54</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Feb 2020

<sup>55</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

<sup>56</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Aug 2021

<sup>57</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

<sup>58</sup> Source, ARC Senegal analyst

<sup>59</sup> RFI, 4 Nov 2019

but during an interview with Senegalese radio station **RFM** in February 2020, **France's** ambassador to Senegal, **Philippe Lalliot**, said the project would not be operational by April.<sup>60</sup> This led to Senegal's transport minister, **Oumar Youm**, lodging an official complaint with his French counterpart, **Jean-Baptiste Djebbari**.<sup>61</sup> During a presentation to the **Assemblée Nationale** in December, Faye stated that the TER was at a 95% execution level and would be completed by the second semester of 2021.<sup>62</sup>

The TER is operated on behalf of the state by the **Agence pour la Promotion des Investissements et des Grands Travaux (APIX)** (agency for the promotion of investments and major works), while a consortium of French, Senegalese and **Turkish** firms have carried out construction of the railway.<sup>63</sup> The second phase of the TER is 16.5 km and will run from Diamniadio to **Aéroport International Blaise Diagne (AIBD)** (Blaise Diagne International Airport). There is currently no timeline for commencement of work on the second phase.<sup>64</sup>

## Planner

7-9 Oct 2021 **Montpellier (France)** France-Afrique Summit;  
 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** 7<sup>th</sup> **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

16 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. Senegal receives 140,160 doses of the **United Kingdom**-manufactured **AstraZeneca Covid-19** vaccine through the **COVAX** initiative;  
 15 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. **Cheikh Guèye**, deputy country director of **Woodside Energy Senegal**, subsidiary of **Australia**-based hydrocarbons firm **Woodside Energy**, says Senegal will start producing its first commercially exploitable barrels of petroleum from the **Sangomar Offshore** oil deposit in 2023, with an initial projection of 100,000 barrels per day;  
 14 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. Opposition **Pastef-Les Patriotes** president **Ousmane Sonko** announces the imminent creation of a broad-based opposition coalition;  
 10 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Teranga News*. According to the **Direction de la Prévision et des Études Économiques (DPEE)** (department of forecasting and economic studies), Senegal's budget balance was in deficit of 616.5 billion FCFA (\$1.107 billion) at the end of June 2021, an improvement on the figure of 788.7 billion FCFA (\$1.416 billion) at the end of June 2020;  
 9 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. **United States**-based **Kosmos Energy** announces it has sold the floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessel of the **Greater Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA)** offshore gas project to its partner and operator, **United Kingdom**-based **British Petroleum (BP)**, for an undisclosed amount;

<sup>60</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Feb 2020

<sup>61</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Feb 2020

<sup>62</sup> Senegal 24, 7 Dec 2020

<sup>63</sup> Jeune Afrique, 14 Jan 2019

<sup>64</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Aug 2021

7 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. The mines and geology ministry reports the value of mining companies' production at 1,126.7 billion FCFA (\$2 billion) in 2019 compared to 1,048.1 billion FCFA (\$1.875 billion) in 2018;

7 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. Health authorities have administered doses of **Covid-19** vaccine to over 1 million people since the start of Senegal's national vaccination campaign in February;

5 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. Land transport minister **Mansour Faye** announces the **Train Express Régional (TER)** will be operational as of 24 December;

5 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Reuters*. **Institut Pasteur of Dakar** reaches a deal with **United States**-based **MedInstill** for the bottling of **Covid-19** vaccines, marking a step to becoming a fully-fledged maker of coronavirus vaccines for **Africa**;

4 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. The town planning and housing ministry announces that **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**-based **Emirates Gate Investment (EGI)** has signed a contract with the Senegalese state to build 30,000 housing units, within the framework of the 100,000-unit housing project;

2 Aug 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. Labour minister **Samba Sy** warns private sector operators not to prevent employees who have not received the **Covid-19** vaccine from coming to work;

26 Jul 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Dakar Actu*. The interior ministry announces that electoral list revision ahead of the January 2022 local elections will take place from 31 July to 14 September;

26 Jul 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. Tourism and air transport minister **Alioune Sarr** reports the 23 billion FCFA (\$41.3m) **Aéroport de Saint-Louis (Saint-Louis airport)** will be completed by the end of 2021;

23 Jul 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sika Finance*. The **Autorité de Régulation des Télécommunications et Postes (ARTP)** (posts and telecommunications regulatory authority) estimates the electronic communications market generated 676 billion FCFA (\$1.2 billion) in 2020, an 11.26% year-on-year increase from 2019;

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com) or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

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