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Senegal Summary 16 April 2021

Armed forces minister Sidiki Kaba announces the creation of an independent commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the anti-government protests that took place from 3-8 March and led to a reported 13 deaths. President Macky Sall (2012-present) says the government will allocate 80 billion FCFA (\$145.9m) towards recruiting 65,000 youths across various domains from May in order to address grievances related to youth unemployment. Economy, planning and international cooperation minister Amadou Hott reports Senegal has obtained commitments amounting to 1,640 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion) from private investors and institutional donors to support the government's objective to provide universal access to electricity by 2025, surpassing its target of 732 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion). The health ministry has vaccinated 334,236 individuals against Covid-19 and hopes to produce a local Covid-19 vaccine by 2022.

Government announces commission to investigate March protests

Armed forces minister **Sidiki Kaba** has announced the creation of a commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the anti-government protests that took place from 3-8 March.¹ The demonstrations, which resulted in an estimated 13 deaths, were the most violent protests **Senegal** has seen since the start of President **Macky Sall's** (2012-present) tenure as head of state (see *ARC Briefing Senegal March 2021*).² The government has denied claims that it was responsible for the deaths.³

During the government's weekly press briefing on 8 April, Kaba said the government would establish an independent and impartial commission to determine responsibility for the recent demonstrations.⁴ The protests were sparked by the arrest and detention of opposition **Patriotes du Senegal pour le Travail, l'Éthique et la Fraternité (PASTEF)** president and member of parliament (MP) **Ousmane Sonko** on 3 March. Sonko is accused of raping and making death threats to a female massage parlour employee (see *ARC Briefing Senegal March 2021*).⁵ He was charged with rape, released from detention and placed in custody under judicial supervision.⁶

Opposition and civil society organisations have accused the government of causing the deaths that occurred during the protests.⁷ Global advocacy organisations support these allegations. **United Kingdom**-based **Amnesty International** and **United States**-based **Human Rights Watch (HRW)** claim that police and gendarmes deployed to disperse protesters used excessive force, using live ammunition on demonstrators and employing "thugs" to help quell the demonstrations.⁸ Civil society organisations describe the government's decision to temporarily cut off internet access and the broadcasting operations of two local television stations that were covering the protests as a violation of freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by the Senegalese constitution.⁹

¹ Dakar Actu, 8 Apr 2021

² VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

³ Jeune Afrique, 9 Apr 2021

⁴ Dakar Actu, 8 Apr 2021

⁵ Jeune Afrique, 3 Mar 2021

⁶ The Continent, 13 Mar 2021

⁷ VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

⁸ VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

⁹ VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

While Kaba refuted allegations that the government was fully responsible for the protests, he did not rule out the possibility that security forces carried out isolated cases of abuse. Kaba said the commission would determine how many people had died and who was responsible for their deaths, stating “*there will be no impunity*”.¹⁰ Kaba noted that President Sall had given orders that security forces should not shoot demonstrators and praised the police for showing restraint and professionalism, despite what he considered the “*difficult circumstances*” they confronted.¹¹ Kaba claimed that Sonko’s arrest provided fertile ground for the protests against existing grievances over the unfavourable economic situation.¹² The minister said the commission did not intend to call into question the judiciary’s work with respect to the protests but instead aimed to complement their efforts.¹³

Despite the government’s assurance that the commission will be impartial, civil society consortium **Mouvement de Défense de la Démocratie (M2D)** released a statement on 8 April noting that it would remain “*vigilant*” over the commission’s work and expressing scepticism about the government’s partiality vis-à-vis Sonko.¹⁴ PASTEF coordinator **Bassirou Faye** claims the commission aims to place the blame on Sonko. Faye accused the government of attempting to spread misinformation about the nature of the protests, saying the government’s heavyhandedness in arresting Sonko was the reason for the protests.¹⁵

The misgivings expressed by M2D and PASTEF members may be justified in light of a 24-page report the government released on the same day the commission was announced, which outlined its version of how the protests evolved.¹⁶ The government report defended the way in which security forces handled the protests, reiterating that they had received instructions not to shoot demonstrators. The report claimed Sonko was the instigator of the protests, having turned a personal matter into a political saga, and defended the impartiality of the judiciary, which had launched legal proceedings against Sonko.¹⁷

Sall announces plans to employ 65,000 youths

President Macky Sall announced that the government will allocate 80 billion FCFA (\$145.9m) towards the recruitment of 65,000 youth across various domains.¹⁸ The decision forms part of Sall’s recent efforts to address the issue of youth unemployment, which was a major theme articulated during the anti-government protests in March.¹⁹

Sall delivered a speech on 3 April, on the eve of the commemoration of Senegal’s 61 years of independence, which focused largely on employment and entrepreneurship.²⁰ Sall acknowledged that a new impetus was required to fight the scourge of youth unemployment following the economic downturn caused by the **Covid-19** pandemic.²¹ Sall declared that the government would recruit 65,000 youths for job opportunities in the domains of education, reforestation, public hygiene, security, road maintenance and city paving, amongst others.²² A special quota will be established to employ 5,000 youths as teachers from pre-school to secondary levels, as well as at modern Koranic Schools (*daara’s*). Sall noted that 80 billion FCFA (\$145.9m) will be available from May in order to finance the youth employment programme. The funds will come from the 450 billion FCFA (\$820.8m) **Programme d’Urgence pour l’Emploi et l’Insertion Socio-Économique des Jeunes (PUEISE-**

¹⁰ VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

¹¹ VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

¹² VOA Afrique, 8 Apr 2021

¹³ Dakar Actu, 8 Apr 2021

¹⁴ RFI, 8 Apr 2021

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique, 9 Apr 2021

¹⁶ Jeune Afrique, 9 Apr 2021

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 9 Apr 2021

¹⁸ APS, 3 Apr 2021

¹⁹ ARC Senegal analyst

²⁰ Financial Afrik, 3 Apr 2021

²¹ Sud Quotidien, 6 Apr 2021

²² APS, 3 Apr 2021

Jeunes) (emergency youth employment and socio-economic placement programme) that Sall created in March.²³ The PUEISE-Jeunes is a financial assistance package that aims to support employment and training initiatives focused on women and youth.²⁴ Its details will be finalised during the presidential council scheduled for 22 April.²⁵

In a bid to ensure that youths nationwide will benefit from the initiative, Sall announced the creation of the **Pôle-Emploi et Entreprenariat pour les Jeunes et les Femmes**, a one-stop-shop to be set up in each of Senegal's 45 local administrative districts (*départements*).²⁶ The framework will allow the presentation of youth employment projects as well as advice and potential funding for project initiators.²⁷ Representatives of institutions such as the **Direction de l'Emploi** (employment directorate) and the **Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes (Anej)** (national agency for youth employment) will be present at each one-stop-shop centre.²⁸ Sall noted that the government plans to extend the **Convention État Employeurs** (state employers' agreement) to the agriculture and agribusiness sectors, which will target the creation of 15,000 jobs and support efforts to improve food security and local food processing.²⁹ The government intends to raise the financial allocation from the current 1 billion FCFA (\$1.8m) to 15 billion FCFA (\$27.3m) under this agreement.³⁰

In the aftermath of the March anti-government protests, Sall has demonstrated a sense of urgency to address the issue of youth unemployment. Before the protest action, critics accused him of being oblivious to the problem, despite the 16.8% unemployment rate registered in 2019³¹ and the increase in poverty from 38% in 2019 to 40% in 2020, according to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.³² While Sall's action are praiseworthy, it remains to be seen whether the programmes, and the funds allocated to support them, will achieve their stated goals and improve the livelihoods of an increasingly restive Senegalese youth.

Electricity projects get investment boost

Senegal has obtained commitments amounting to 1,640 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion) from private investors and institutional donors towards financing universal access to electricity.³³ The government raised more than double its initial target, demonstrating that the energy sector stimulates significant interest from international institutional partners as well as private sector operators.³⁴

Economy, planning and international cooperation minister **Amadou Hott** and petroleum and energy minister **Aïssata Sophie Gladima** co-hosted a round table video conference from 6-8 April to present the government's strategy to provide universal access to electricity by 2025 under the **Plan Complémentaire pour l'Accès Universel à l'Électricité** (universal electricity access plan).³⁵ The conference aimed to raise 732 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion) from financial and technical partners as well as private sector actors to finance this goal.³⁶ Government representatives highlighted that although 76% of Senegalese had access to electricity by 2019, distribution is highly skewed: 94% of urban residents have access to electricity compared to only 53.9% of rural inhabitants.³⁷ Gladima noted that providing universal access to electricity will help to generate 20,000 jobs, giving 8,000 service

²³ Dakar Actu, 4 Apr 2021

²⁴ Sud Quotidien, 11 Mar 2021

²⁵ Financial Afrik, 3 Apr 2021

²⁶ Dakar Actu, 4 Apr 2021

²⁷ Sud Quotidien, 6 Apr 2021

²⁸ Financial Afrik, 3 Apr 2021

²⁹ Dakar Actu, 4 Apr 2021

³⁰ Dakar Actu, 4 Apr 2021

³¹ Sika Finance, 11 Mar 2021

³² MF, 18 Jan 2021

³³ APS, 8 Apr 2021

³⁴ APS, 8 Apr 2021

³⁵ APS, 5 Apr 2021

³⁶ APS, 5 Apr 2021

³⁷ APS, 5 Apr 2021

providers access to economic opportunities in the energy domain and promoting the renewable energy sub-sector.³⁸

The **World Bank** agreed on 7 April to contribute 166.5 billion FCFA (\$300m) towards the government's energy efforts.³⁹ World Bank director of operations for **Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and The Gambia, Nathan Belete**, described the government's goal of universal access to electricity by 2025 as "noble" and acknowledged the efforts it has made to reach a high level of electrification. The funding will finance two electricity projects in Senegal, one national and the other a regional project that falls under the **Organisation pour la mis en Valeur du Fleuve de Gambie** (organisation for the development of the **Gambia River**).⁴⁰

Concluding the round table, Hott declared that private investors had pledged \$1,400 billion (\$2.5 billion) of the promised 1,640 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion).⁴¹ Hott said the government would sign **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** agreements with some contributors, while others would pursue projects individually.⁴² Hott encouraged participants to initiate discussions with state-owned electricity provider **Senelec**, the **Agence Sénégalaise d'Électrification Rurale (ASER)** (Senegalese rural electrification agency), and the petroleum and energy ministry to make the national electrification programme a reality.⁴³

President Macky Sall earmarked energy infrastructure development and renewable energy as a priority focus in the launch of the **Plan Senegal Emergent II (PSE II)**, the second phase of Senegal's medium-term economic development agenda (see *ARC Briefing Senegal January 2019*). The success of Senegal's economic recovery plan, the **Programme d'Actions Prioritaires 2 Ajusté et Accéléré (PAP2a)** (second adjusted and accelerated priority action plan), which was launched in September (see *ARC Briefing Senegal October 2020*) and cites industrialisation as one of its five pillars, will be contingent on Senegal's ability to provide a reliable electricity supply.⁴⁴ As part of this push, Senegal intends to increase renewable electricity's contribution to national production from the 2020 figure of 22% to 30% by 2025.⁴⁵ Private sector engagement will be key in Senegal achieving its electricity production and access targets. Hott noted that the massive commitment by private sector operators is an indication of their confidence in the government's energy strategy.⁴⁶

Covid-19 vaccine campaign continues amid plans to produce vaccine locally

Senegal is currently experiencing a downward trend in Covid-19 infections, according to the public health and social action ministry. As of 10 April, only 3-4% of Covid-19 tests were recorded as positive.⁴⁷ As of 14 April, Senegal had confirmed 39,606 positive cases and 1,085 deaths in its population of 16.3 million since registering its first case on 2 March 2020.⁴⁸ There are currently 178 active cases.⁴⁹

Lower Covid-19 numbers are good news for Senegal, which launched its national Covid-19 vaccination plan on 18 February.⁵⁰ Senegal received 200,000 doses of the **China**-manufactured **Sinopharm** vaccine in February, followed by 324,000 doses of the **United Kingdom**-manufactured **AstraZeneca/Oxford** vaccine in March, through the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**-

³⁸ Sika Finance, 9 Apr 2021

³⁹ Sika Finance, 7 Apr 2021

⁴⁰ Sika Finance, 7 Apr 2021

⁴¹ APS, 8 Apr 2021

⁴² APS, 8 Apr 2021

⁴³ APS, 8 Apr 2021

⁴⁴ ARC Senegal analyst

⁴⁵ Financial Afrik, 25 Feb 2020

⁴⁶ APS, 8 Apr 2021

⁴⁷ APS, 10 Apr 2021

⁴⁸ Worldometer, accessed 16 Apr 2021

⁴⁹ Worldometer, accessed 16 Apr 2021

⁵⁰ AA, 3 Mar 2021

coordinated **Covax** vaccine procurement initiative.⁵¹ The health ministry noted that by 10 April, 334,236 individuals had received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.⁵²

President Macky Sall, having set the example, encouraged Senegalese to get vaccinated and “*listen to the advice of scientists*”.⁵³ Sall said the government was taking steps to acquire the **Russia**-manufactured **Sputnik V** and **United States**-manufactured **Johnson & Johnson** Covid-19 vaccines.⁵⁴ WHO Senegal representative **Lucile Imboua Naiva** said the organisation planned to educate the population on the benefits of vaccination.⁵⁵ To this end, the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** donated 1.1 billion FCFA (\$2m) on 14 April to provide technical assistance for Senegal’s national vaccine campaign.⁵⁶

Public health minister **Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr** reported on 13 April, during a conference organised by the **Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Africa)** that Senegal is taking steps to develop a Covid-19 vaccine by 2022.⁵⁷ The government has signed partnership agreements with **France**, the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** and Senegal-based **Institut Pasteur** to pursue this objective.⁵⁸ The government lifted the national health state of emergency on 19 November.⁵⁹

Planner

2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** Municipal elections (TBA);

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

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

Jul 2021 **Montpellier (France)** France-Afrique Summit;

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

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

Chronology

14 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sud Quotidien*. Public health and social action minister **Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr** announces that Senegal intends to produce a **Covid-19** vaccine by 2022;

12 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Financial Afrik*. Senegal has raised 55 billion FCFA (\$99.7m) through a treasury bill issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

8 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *CGTN*. **Spain’s** prime minister, **Pedro Sanchez**, discusses migration and economic cooperation at a meeting with Senegal’s President **Macky Sall** in Dakar;

8 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. Economy, planning and cooperation minister **Amadou Hott** announces that Senegal has obtained 1,640 billion FCFA (\$2.9 billion) in commitments to finance electricity provision projects from private investors and institutional donors following a round table from 6-8 April on Senegal’s effort to ensure universal access to electricity;

8 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *RFI*. Armed forces minister **Sidiki Kaba** announces that the government will create an independent and impartial commission of inquiry to investigate anti-government protests that took place in March;

⁵¹ APS, 10 Apr 2021

⁵² APS, 10 Apr 2021

⁵³ APS, 9 Apr 2021

⁵⁴ APS, 9 Apr 2021

⁵⁵ *Sud Quotidien*, 12 Apr 2021

⁵⁶ *LeJocos*, 14 Apr 2021

⁵⁷ *Sud Quotidien*, 14 Apr 2021

⁵⁸ *Sud Quotidien*, 14 Apr 2021

⁵⁹ AA, 11 Mar 2021

7 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Le Soleil*. **World Bank** director of operations for Senegal, **Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia** and **Cabo Verde, Nathan Belete**, announces the World Bank will provide \$300m to support Senegal's efforts to provide universal access to electricity by 2025;

3 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. President **Macky Sall** announces the government will allocate 80 billion FCFA (\$144m) in May towards recruitment of 65,000 employees in the public sector and through government-coordinated programmes;

2 Apr 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. Information and digital technology minister **Yankhoba Diatara** launches a programme to train 23,300 women in information and communication technologies (ICT);

31 Mar 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Africa Oil & Power*. Senegal-based **Elton Group** will invest approximately 70 billion FCFA (\$121m) as the concessionaire of the gas terminal at the **Port Autonome de Dakar** (autonomous port of Dakar);

31 Mar 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. Senegal aims to electrify 2,000 rural areas by 2025 through the **Programme d'Urgence de Développement Communautaire (PUDC)** (emergency community development programme);

30 Mar 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. Urban planning minister **Abdoulaye Saydou Sow** says the government will construct 20,000 social housing units in 2021 as part of a five-year plan launched in 2017 to build 100,000 social housing units;

26 Mar 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. The governments of **Mauritania** and Senegal sign a joint agreement to construct the 57.7 billion FCFA (\$103.2m) **Rosso Bridge** that will link the two countries, to be built by **China-based Poly Changda**;

25 Mar 2021 **Dakar (Senegal)** *RFI*. The council of ministers announces the postponement of municipal elections, which were constitutionally required to be held on 28 March, but are now likely to take place in 2022;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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