

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Senegal Summary 23 August 2022

The ruling Benno Bokk Yakaar (BBY) coalition wins Senegal's legislative elections after establishing a new alliance with opposition member of parliament Pape Diop. BBY's slim majority reduces the likelihood that President Macky Sall (2012-present) will gain support if he runs in the 2024 presidential elections. Senegal's military releases a statement denying claims by official opposition leader Ousmane Sonko that Senegal is withdrawing troops from Mali. Sonko announces his bid to run for the 2024 presidential elections and vows to send troops in support of Mali's pro-Russian military junta. Senegal's largest gold mine, Sabodala-Massawa, gets an off-grid energy boost from the Finnish Group, Wärtsilä. Flash floods in Senegal worsen and leave one person dead. This is the second flash flood in less than a month, indicating the impacts of climate change on Senegal.

A slim win for the ruling coalition in legislative elections

The constitutional council announced the official results of the 31 July legislative elections on 11 August, with the ruling coalition of President **Macky Sall's** (2012-Present) camp, **Benno Bokk Yakaar (BBY)**, achieving a narrow win of 83 of 165 seats retaining a majority.¹ BBK established a new alliance with **Pape Diop**, an opposition member of parliament (MP) and a former president of the national assembly and senate, which helped win an extra seat.²

Voters elected deputies on 31 July to fill the 165 seats in the **Senegalese** national assembly for a five-year term (*see ARC Briefing Senegal Jul 2022*). Preliminary results, announced by the **commission nationale de recensement des votes** (national commission for the census of votes) on 4 August, counted a mere 82 seats in BBY's favour, one seat short of an absolute majority.³ The official opposition, including **Yewwi Askan Wi (YAW)** and **Wallu Senegal** of the **Yewwi-Wallu** coalition, collectively won 80 votes, whilst three other MPs, including Diop, each won one seat. Diop announced he would join forces with Sall's camp on 11 August, increasing BBY's seats to 83. The kingmaker justified his alliance based on his concern for Senegal's stability if Sall's presidential rule coincided with a ruling opposition parliament:

"Given the presidential nature of our political system, a National Assembly placed under the control of the opposition will necessarily lead to an institutional crisis."⁴

The initial 82-seat outcome obtained by Sall's camp is a significant drop of 43 seats from its 125 seats won in 2017.⁵ The APR's declining support is a historical first for a party that has dominated parliamentary rule since it gained independence in 1960 and has not faced such a slim margin before. Political analyst, **Maurice Soudieck Dione**, said to **French media** house, **France24**, that the "ruling coalition is running out of breath."⁶

¹ VOA, 12 Aug 2022

² VOA, 12 Aug 2022

³ France24, 12 Aug 2022

⁴ Africa News, 12 Aug 2022

⁵ Reuters, 5 Aug 2022

⁶ France24, 4 Aug 2022

Senegal has enjoyed a relatively stable democracy, but various factors have brought the commitment, of both the ruling and contesting powers, to democracy into question. The 21-day election campaign between 10 and 29 July 2022 was peaceful, but prior to the campaign period, in March and June, three people died in anti-government demonstrations (see *ARC Briefing June 2022*).⁷ BBY and an opposition leader both announced victory on Monday, 1 August, while votes were still counted. **Aminata Toure**, a BBY MP and former prime minister, announced an “*unquestionable majority*” based on partial results. The Wallu Senegal party announced later on 1 August that:

*“The provisional results from the legislative elections show that President Macky Sall lost the elections...and that he will not have a majority in the National Assembly.”*⁸

Khalifa Sall, opposition leader of the **Manko Taxawu Senegal** alliance also made an announcement on 1 August based on partial results and said:

*“What is undeniable is that it is we who won this election [...] We won and we will not accept that victory is stolen from us.”*⁹

Members within the official opposition announced, after the official results were declared, that it would not challenge the outcome at the constitutional court as the opposition believes the court is not independent.¹⁰

Sall is serving in his second presidential term but has been vague about his future political ambitions.¹¹ Senegal’s constitution limits a president’s tenure to two five-year terms, however, a constitutional revision put in place in January 2016 on this adjustment effectively “reset” Sall’s terms as it only came into effect during his second term, allowing Sall to run for a third term (see *ARC Briefing Senegal Jan 2016*).¹²

Opposition leaders fear that Sall will run for a third term in the 2024 presidential election, however, APR’s waning support reflects the likely loss of Sall if he is to contest the next presidential race. On 4 August, after the announcement of preliminary election results, Sall commended Senegal’s democracy on his official **Twitter** account:

*“I salute the Senegalese people, following the provisional proclamation of the results of the legislative elections, for the exemplary nature of our democracy, the credibility of our electoral system. I congratulate all the actors for the excellent organisation and coverage of the election.”*¹³

The BBY’s drastic decline reflects increasing distrust and a lack of confidence in BBY’s capability to effectively rule the country. A local resident congratulated Sall for his victory but further pleaded that Sall renew trust and said:

*“Now I advise you to review your entourage, ministers, DGs [Director Generals] and others promoted to arrogant positions of responsibility [...]”*¹⁴

⁷ Deutsche Welle, 2 Aug 2022

⁸ Africa News, 2 Aug 2022

⁹ Africa News, 2 Aug 2022

¹⁰ Africa News, 12 Aug 2022

¹¹ Africa News, 2 Aug 2022

¹² Deutsche Welle, 2 Aug 2022

¹³ www.twitter.com, 4 Aug 2022

¹⁴ Facebook, 11 Aug 2022

Ousmane Sonko stokes tensions with presidential run announcement

Ousmane Sonko a leading opposition figure of YAW and runner-up in the 2019 presidential election announced that he would be running in the 2024 presidential election, insinuating in the announcement that **Forces armées du Sénégal** (armed forces of Senegal) has withdrawn from Mali, stoking tensions. Sonko stated during the announcement on 18 August:

“We saw that Macky Sall repatriated the few Senegalese elements who were there because they were not there as Senegalese, they were there because France had asked him to bring troops.”¹⁵

Shortly after the announcement, the armed forces released a statement confirming that its troops will remain in **Mali** on a peace-keeping mission, the **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)**.

MINUSMA, one of the **United Nations (UN)** most dangerous missions, was launched in 2013 after the **National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA)**, backed by several jihadist groups, launched a rebellion in northern Mali and staged a coup to overthrow then president **Amadou Toumani Toure** (2002-2012).¹⁶ The jihadist-backed insurgency’s rule was quelled by MINUSMA in 2013, but the conflict between Malian authorities and rebel forces remains. MINUSMA currently has around 17,500 men and women, including 13,000 police and soldiers of which Senegal contributes 1,300 soldiers, police, and gendarmes.¹⁷

The Senegalese armed forces debunked rumours of its withdrawal from Mali which circulated in the media shortly after Sonko’s statement. The Senegalese armies’ statement said that it is in a periodic rotation in the week of 15-19 August and justified the rotation as:

“[...] a normal operation designed to replace one for one the troops that have been committed (by Senegal) since the onset of the crisis.”¹⁸

Sonko said that if he is elected as president, he would remove troops working for MINUSMA and send the armed forces to support Mali’s transitional leader, Colonel **Assimi Goïta** (2020-Present) specifically. Goïta leads a military junta that staged two coups, including one in August 2020 against former Malian president **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita** (2013-2020), a democratically elected leader, and another in May 2021, taking power from a civilian-led government appointed to oversee the transition of Mali’s rule to democracy. Sonko also said that if he is elected that he would commit to *“end this gangrene”* referring to the jihadist-backed rebellions which have caused major instability in Mali.¹⁹

A spokesman for BBK, **Pape Mahaw Diouf**, accused Sonko of *“attacking the image of Senegal on an international scale.”*

Sonko’s support for Mali’s military government is one indicator of a general decline in support for maintaining democracy in Senegal and an implicit show of support for pro-**Russian** interventions in Mali. Sonko’s statement shows his intention to rally support from anti-**French** groups that are increasingly garnering support in **West Africa**.

Relations between Mali and France have soured, notably after a visit between French president **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-Present) and Goïta was cancelled in December 2021. French troops completed their withdrawal from Mali on 15 August 2022, while Goïta maintains his preferred relationship with the Russian **Wagner Group**, a private military group, which has been supporting anti-jihadist military operations in Mali since December 2021. President Sall and

¹⁵ Africa News, 19 Aug 2022

¹⁶ www.cfr.org, 12 May 2022

¹⁷ Africa News, 19 Aug 2022

¹⁸ AFP, 19 Aug 2022

¹⁹ Africa News, 19 Aug 2022

Macron have maintained friendly relations and during a meeting in June 2022, Macron urged Sall to retain pressure on Mali's military junta to relent Wagner forces.²⁰

Finish group boosts energy for mining

Finland's Wärtsilä announced on 18 August the conclusion of an engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contract with **Canadian**-headquartered **Endeavour** for the **Sabodala-Massawa** gold mine in the **Kedougou** region.²¹ Wärtsilä services and manufacturers technologies for the maritime and energy markets, and currently has an installed capacity of 543MW across 20 power plants in Senegal.

Wärtsilä will provide a power supply boost to the mine through the installation of 32 engines in Sabodala-Massawa, set for completion in 2023, which will boost the Sabodala-Massawa mining complex's energy efficiency by 20%.²² The new power production unit at Sabodala-Massawa will supply an off-grid capacity of 18MW. Wärtsilä's business director, **Marc Thiriet**, considers these new installations more sustainable:

"Not being connected to the grid means that the captive plant has to be capable of providing a reliable supply of electricity at all times, since no power equals no production. The Wärtsilä 32 engines selected for this expansion project have established a strong reputation for high efficiency and reliability under even the most difficult ambient conditions, eliminating revenue losses from power shortages."²³

Endeavour acquired the Sabodala-Massawa mining complex in February 2021, in which the government owns a 10% stake. The Kedougou region holds 98% of Senegal's gold mines, but the Sabodala-Massawa complex is the country's largest gold mine.²⁴ In 2021 it produced 346,280 ounces of gold and in 2022, the owners are aiming to increase gold production to around 360,000 to 375,000 ounces.²⁵ In 2020, Senegal exported \$735m in gold, making it the number one export for 2020.²⁶

Dakar flood kills one person

A deadly flash flood struck **Dakar** on 5 August 2022, killing one person, severely injuring one other and causing damage to several buildings in Dakar's second flash flood in less than a month.²⁷ The capital's streets were flooded after a record 126 millimetres of rain fell within six hours.²⁸ Roads were submerged and businesses in the capital were forced to stop operations after citizens were unable to move around or get to work. On 9 August, the Senegalese government confirmed the fatality.²⁹

Tahar Trabelsi, a **Tunisian** engineer residing in Dakar, described his experience and the severity of the recent floods:

"There were a lot of traffic jams, we were completely blocked [...] We weren't moving forward and - with the rain- there was a lot of water coming in - and little by little, the water was rising. So we were blocked [...] when I saw that the car began to fill with water, I took the decision to get out of the car [...] My car was flooded 100 percent."³⁰

²⁰ Africa News, 10 Jun 2022

²¹ www.agenceecofin.com, 16 Aug 2022

²² www.agenceecofin.com, 16 Aug 2022

²³ www.powerengineeringint.com, 17 Aug 2022

²⁴ www.issafrica.org, 23 February 2022

²⁵ Agence Ecofin, 16 Aug 2022

²⁶ Oec.world, accessed 22 Aug 2022

²⁷ www.floodlist.com, 21 Aug 2022

²⁸ Africa News, 6 Aug 2022

²⁹ www.reliefweb.int, 9 Aug 2022

³⁰ Africa News, 6 Aug 2022

The **Sénégal Agence Nationale de l'Aviation Civile du Sénégal** (national aviation and meteorological agency) consider rainfall that surpasses 50 millimetres as “*extreme*”. The recent flash flood is the second within a space of a month timeframe after 84 millimetres of rain was recorded on 20 July, when one of Dakar’s main highways collapsed.³¹ Senegal’s heavy rainfall season usually occurs annually between July to October. Floods are common, but residents are experiencing heavier rainfall each year because of climate change.³²

The erratic rainfall has also affected Senegal’s agricultural sector. The interior ministry reported in 2021 that Senegal’s harvest of main food and cash crops declined after wetter than usual growing seasons. The agriculture ministry also reported in 2021 that the national production of groundnut fell from 1.8m tonnes in 2020 to 1.6m tonnes.³³ Groundnuts are Senegal’s main cash crop and in 2020 the country exported \$200m, making it the 7th largest exporter of the crop in the world.³⁴

A hydrologist and lecturer from **Cheikh Anta Dop University** in Dakar, **Abdoulaye Faty**, commented on the recent Dakar floods and attributes the cause of flooding as a systemic problem in Africa, exacerbated by climate change, poor urban design and other factors:

“Flooding in Africa is due to climatic variations inherent in the disturbance of atmospheric conditions. But it is mainly the result of a rural exodus that leads to the development of cities with housing systems that are not adapted to natural drainage systems.”³⁵

³¹ www.swissinfo.ch, 20 Jul 2022

³² Africa News, 6 Aug 2022

³³ News84Media, 30 Jul 2022

³⁴ Oec.world, accessed 22 Aug 2022

³⁵ IPP media, 22 Aug 2022

Planner

1 Sep 2022 **(Senegal) MSGBC** Oil, Gas & Power 2022;
 7-18 Nov 2022 **(Egypt) COP 27** Climate Change Conference;
 2022 **(Senegal) 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;
 Feb 2024 **(Senegal)** Presidential elections;

Chronology

21 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Le Soleil**. Water ministry releases an alert that the **Senegal** and **Gambia** rivers have a high probability of overflowing after heavy rains. Residents who carry out activities near the rivers are warned to be vigilant;

18 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Africa News**. **Senegal's** military releases a statement confirming that they are not withdrawing from a peace-keeping mission in neighbouring **Mali**;

18 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Le Soleil**. **Ousmane Sonko**, leader of the opposition party, **Yewwi Askan Wi**, announces he will run for president in **Senegal's** 2024 presidential elections;

18 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Agence Ecofin**. **Wärtsilä**, a **Finnish** group that services and manufactures technologies for maritime and energy markets, announces the conclusion of the formulation of a contract with **Canadian** gold mine-owners, **Endeavour**, to upgrade the power supply at **Sabodala-Massawa**, **Senegal's** largest gold mine;

17 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Lejecos**. **Agence nationale de la statistique et de la démographie** (national statistics agency) indicates that exports rose by 12.8% in June compared to May, from 342.5 billion FCFA (\$518m) against 303.6 billion FCFA (\$463m);

15 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) APS**. President **Macky Sall** leaves for a working visit to **Mali** followed by a visit to **Chad** and then **Gabon**;

11 August 2022 **Washington (United States of America) VOA**. **Senegal's** constitutional council announces the official election results of **Senegal's** legislative elections with President **Macky Sall's** coalition, **Benno Bokk Yakaar**, winning a slim majority;

11 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Africa News**. **Pape Diop**, an opposition member of parliament (MP) and a former president of the national assembly and senate, becomes a kingmaker as he announces his alliance with **Benno Bokk Yakaar**;

5 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) Flood List**. Extreme rainfall and flash floods in **Dakar** kill one person, hinder mobility and halt business in the capital city;

5 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal) AFP**. President **Macky Sall's** government signs a peace agreement with **Casamance** rebels who have pledged to lay down their arms and work for the definitive return of peace in this region;

4 August 2022 **Paris (France) France24**. **Senegal's National Commission for the Census of Votes** announces preliminary results for the legislative elections, counting a mere 82 seats in **Benno Bokk Yakaar's** favour, one seat short of an absolute majority, while the official

opposition, including **Yewwi Askan Wi (YAW)** and **Wallu Senegal** of the **Yewwi-Wallu** coalition, collectively win 80 seats;

3 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Le Soleil*. President **Macky Sall** chairs a council of ministers, to address the modernisation of **Senegal's** national crafts sector at the **Palace of the Republic** in **Dakar**;

3 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Le Soleil*. Opposition calls for the suspension of the publication of the results of Sunday's legislative elections to examine its complaints over alleged "irregularities" and "fraud";

2 Aug 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APS*. Provisional election results indicate that the ruling coalition **Benno Bokk Yaakaar** has won 30 of the country's 46 administrative departments, maintaining the coalition's majority in the national assembly;

1 August 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Africa News*. Leaders of **Wallu Senegal** and **Benno Bokk Yakaar** both claim election victory while votes are still being counted;

31 July 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Africa News*. **Senegal** holds its legislative elections for voters to elect 165 deputies for a five-year term;

10-29 July 2022 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Africa News*. Political parties start campaigns in the lead-up to **Senegal's** legislative elections on 31 July;

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