

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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The Assemblée nationale (national assembly) votes on 2 April to accept revisions to the amnesty law passed in March 2024 under former president Macky Sall (2012-2024), which offered amnesty for offences committed by both security forces and protestors during the 2021-2024 political protests. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) concludes a visit to Senegal on 26 March, led by Edward Gemayel, to reviewing the findings of the Cour des comptes (court of auditors) February report that revealed that there had been significant underreporting of Senegal's debt and fiscal deficits between 2019 and 2023. The amendments means prosecutions could be pursued. The Division des investigations criminelles (DIC) (criminal investigation division) and Haute Cour de Justice (high court of justice) begin pursuing individuals connected to the mismanagement of Covid-19 funds in 2020 and 2021.

MPs amend Amnesty Law

The **Assemblée nationale** (national assembly) voted on 2 April to accept revisions to the amnesty law passed in March 2024 under former president **Macky Sall** (2012-2024) that offered amnesty for offences committed by both security forces and protestors during the 2021-2024 political protests. The amendments mean prosecutions could be pursued. A total of 146 lawmakers voted, with 126 in favour and 20 abstentions.

Sall's administration passed the law weeks before the end of his presidency in a bid to ease tensions but civil society has been opined that the law was passed to prevent security forces from being prosecuted over deaths of protestors. **United Kingdom (UK)**-headquartered **Amnesty International** reported that at least 65 people were killed, of whom 51 died of bullet wounds.¹ Government has reported that at least 80 people were killed.² Prime minister **Ousmane Sonko** declared in December that the law would be debated and repealed so investigations could take place, adding:

*"It's not a witch hunt and even less vengeance... It's justice, the foundation without which social peace cannot be built."*³

It should be noted that the initial law benefited both Sonko and President **Bassirou Diomaye Faye** (2024-present), as they were released from jail after the law took effect. While the law was not repealed, members of parliament (MPs), who began debating the law on 26 March, voted to 'interpret' the law to exclude the offences of murder, killings, torture and forced disappearances from amnesty. The **Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité (Pastef)** MP who wrote the new law, **Amadou Ba**, noted that it aims to "remove all ambiguities and controversies about the categories of offences covered by the amnesty law".⁴ Ba added that international law, including that to which Senegal is signatory, such as the **Rome Statute** and **Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, does not allow for amnesty for violations of human rights and therefore, Senegal's amnesty law could be in contravention of these.

The opposition has been critical of the limited repeal of offences, arguing that the revised law protects protestors – many of whom were in support of the ruling Pastef – from facing charges for inciting

¹ AFP, 31 Mar 2025

² Jeune Afrique, 3 Apr 2025

³ AFP, 31 Mar 2025

⁴ Le Monde, 2 Apr 2025

violence and causing damage.⁵ Former minister and lawyer **El Hadj Amadou Sall** has also noted that the issue of political motivation has been brought in under the new law, as protestors could claim they acted out of political motivation while security forces cannot.⁶ Civil society organisations called on MPs to postpone the 2 April vote and allow for consultations with stakeholders, but the vote went ahead without delays.⁷

The debate and subsequent passing of the amended law is a win for Sonko, who had made this a key point to pursue in his December speech, but whether it will truly bring about ‘social peace’ as he intended is unclear, especially given that civil society had argued for a delay in the vote for consultations.

IMF concludes mission to Senegal

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** concluded a visit to Senegal on 26 March, led by **Edward Gemayel**, to reviewing the findings of the **Cour des comptes** (court of auditors) February report that revealed that there had been significant underreporting of Senegal’s debt and fiscal deficits between 2019 and 2023. The report found that at the end of 2023, total outstanding debt was equal to 99.67% of GDP, compared to 74.41% reported by the former administration in 2023, and the budget deficit for 2023 stood at 12.3% of GDP, significantly above the 4.9% reported.⁸ **United States-**headquartered global ratings agency **S&P** has forecast that debt stood at 106% of GDP at the end of 2024, compared to its 77% of GDP estimate made in December.⁹ Gemayel was in Senegal to determine how this happened and what the new administration will do to avoid a similar situation.

The IMF has now revealed its estimates, including that the budget deficit was 11.7% of GDP at the end of 2024 and that debt stood at 105.7% at the end of 2024. Debt is forecast to reach 114% of GDP by the end of this year.¹⁰ This will make Senegal one of the top five most indebted countries on the continent. Despite the high levels, Gemayel confirmed that Senegal’s debt is still sustainable.

Gemayel noted in a series of interviews following the mission that it was clear that there was a “*conscious decision*” to misreport the data, confirming that the IMF agrees with court’s report.¹¹ He also outlined that the new government needs to focus on its current budget and implementing reforms that will allow it to access another IMF programme, adding that the parties need to settle on the misreporting before a programme can be discussed. The IMF paused Senegal’s \$1.8-billion programme after it was made aware of the misrepresentation.

Notably, media questioned Gemayel on why the IMF disbursed \$770.5m of the loan to Senegal, to which he replied that the IMF does not audit or certify public accounts, rather requesting clarifications and highlighting inconsistencies.¹² He acknowledged that the IMF has responsibility and that it will be working on takeaways from the situation.

Part of these reforms should be energy subsidy cuts and the gradual phasing out of fuel subsidies, which have increased to 4% of GDP.¹³ This is always a difficult reform to implement, as it impacts citizens and, as seen in other countries¹⁴, can spark social grievances. The IMF will complete a full review of the report and discuss with its executive board before engaging with Senegal on a new programme, but sources have reported to the media that this could be before June.¹⁵

⁵ Reuters, 3 Apr 2025

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 3 Apr 2025

⁷ Jeune Afrique, 3 Apr 2025

⁸ Business Day, 12 Feb 2025

⁹ S&P, 28 Feb 2025

¹⁰ IMF, 26 Mar 2025; Jeune Afrique, 28 Mar 2025

¹¹ RFI, 25 Mar 2025

¹² Jeune Afrique, 28 Mar 2025

¹³ Reuters, 24 Mar 2025

¹⁴ In 2023, protests took place in Angola which was also cutting fuel subsidies per IMF recommendations.

¹⁵ Jeune Afrique, 25 Mar 2025

Tensions mount between government and employees

The **Division des investigations criminelles (DIC)** (criminal investigation division) and **Haute Cour de Justice** (high court of justice) have begun pursuing individuals connected to the mismanagement of **Covid-19** funds in 2020 and 2021. The court of auditors published a report on 14 December indicating that there had been embezzlement, mismanagement and overspending of funds set aside to tackle the health and economic impacts of Covid-19 and the government's measures to contain the disease.¹⁶ The court made 85 recommendations to the government, including the prosecution of the alleged perpetrators on charges including lack of justification of expenses, absence of supporting documents, payments without services rendered, over-invoicing and embezzlement (*see ARC Briefing Senegal Jan 2023*).

The DIC carried out an initial wave of arrests and summonses on 15 April, targeting administrative and ministerial staff including health ministry administrative and finance director **Ousseynou Ngom**, **Kaffrine** hospital director **Babacar Sène**, and accountants from three other hospitals.¹⁷ Local media also reported that the high court of justice is set to summons former ministers under Sall's administration.¹⁸ The implication of former ministers is likely the reason no action was taken when Sall was still in power.

The investigations have highlighted other cases of corruption. Singer **Baba Hamdy Diawara** confirmed that he had received 112.67m FCFA (\$195,234) from the culture ministry from a fund intended to support the cultural sector. However, Diawara had only justified losses of 30.94m FCFA (\$53,612), raising questions about why the ministry disbursed a much higher amount.¹⁹ Fashion designer **Alimatou Sadiya Guèye** has reportedly already been charged with embezzlement and been granted bail, as has the former director general of administration and equipment in the sports ministry **Mamadou Ngom Niang**.²⁰

Faye and Sonko campaigned on a strict campaign of no corruption and the DIC pursuing perpetrators aligns with this. The clamp down will also create a positive impression for the IMF and show that the new administration is working to implement reforms and changes.

Planner

2027 (**Senegal**) **Yakaar-Teranga** gas project set to begin production;

Chronology

15 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *SeneNews*. Prime minister **Ousmane Sonko** announces a record 130 billion FCFA (\$225.26m) for the 2025/2026 agricultural campaign;

14 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *SeneNews*. Prime minister **Ousmane Sonko** says through renegotiation of public contracts, the state has saved 60 billion FCFA (\$104.25m);

13 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Agence Ecofin*. Senegal raises 405 billion FCFA (\$703.73m) on the regional market, above its 150 billion FCFA (\$260.41m) target;

12 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APA News*. Citizens' coalition **Y'en a Marre**, which translates to 'We're Fed Up', appoints a new national coordinator, **Oumar Cyrille Touré**;

11 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APA News*. President **Bassirou Diomaye Faye** sends finance minister **Abdourahmane Sarr** to meet with **Angola's** President **João Lourenço** to discuss cooperation;

¹⁶ Le Quotidien, 30 Dec 2022

¹⁷ Senego, 15 Apr 2025

¹⁸ Senego, 15 Apr 2025

¹⁹ Senego, 15 Apr 2025

²⁰ Senego, 16 Apr 2025

- 8 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Senego*. President **Bassirou Diomaye Faye** receives **Mauritania's** foreign affairs minister, Dr. **Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug**, as part of strengthening relations;
- 8 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *APA News*. An operating note indicates that production of the **Sangomar** oil field development reached 3.08 million barrels in March, with production forecasts of 30.53 million barrels in 2025;
- 3 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Reuters*. Parliament approves revisions to the amnesty law covering the political protests that took place between 2021 and 2024, allowing for possible prosecutions for crimes committed;
- 3 Apr 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Europe1*. **French** police arrest **Amadou Daff**, a known close associate of former president **Macky Sall** and the former ruling **Alliance pour la république (APR)** coordinator in France, on suspicion of embezzling public funds while he served as mayor of **Mantes-la-Jolie** (France);
- 31 Mar 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Le Soleil*. Economy, planning and cooperation ministry releases a study that calls for reform of the investment code and other legislative measures to help keep the economy competitive and attract private investment;
- 26 Mar 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Reuters*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** says Senegal needs to streamline tax exemptions and phase out energy subsidies as part of reforms to bring down public debt;
- 24 Mar 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Trading View*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** says a new programme for Senegal cannot go ahead until the government addresses the misreporting of economic data under the former administration;
- 22 Mar 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sene News*. The former ruling **Alliance pour la république (APR)** calls for peaceful demonstrations on 2 April in opposition to the amnesty interpretation law;
- 21 Mar 2025 **Dakar (Senegal)** *Sika Finance*. Industry and trade minister **Serigne Guèye Diop** announces plans to launch a regional mining hub development project at a cost of 509 billion FCFA (\$838.21m) that will generate approximately 6,000 direct and indirect jobs;

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