West Africa This Week – A weekly highlight on political, security, socio-
political and health happenings across the West African region

August 5th to August 11th 2022

SENEGAL AND MALI

Highlights this week focus on the results of the Senegalese legislative elections, the possibility of a third term for Macky Sall, the internal strife in Mali’s M5-RFP, the Mali-Russia relation, and updates on the case of the 49 Ivorian soldiers arrested in Mali

SENEGAL

Political Dynamics

Legislative election results

The victory battle between the ruling coalition BBY and the opposition coalition Yewwi Askan Wi has finally come to an end in favour of the opposition, with the ruling opposition losing the majority. Out of the 165 seats, BBY secured 82 deputies, a little below the 83 seats required for an absolute majority. However, the main opposition coalitions also failed to win the majority of the National Assembly’s 165 seats. Yewwi Askan Wi and Wallu Senegal won 56 and 24 seats respectively, making a total of 80 seats. The remaining three seats were split among smaller parties and coalitions1.

With the absence of an outright majority, and the President’s dire need of the majority, how will the presidential and the opposition coalitions manage the other three legislators? This has brought on an interesting twist to the Senegalese legislative history. Senegal has reportedly never had a National Assembly without an outright majority, and a Senegalese president has never governed without his party holding the majority2. The unfolding of events in the 14th Legislature is worth looking forward to.

1 A list of the winners and losers in the ballot can be found on https://www.seneweb.com/news/Politique/elections-legislatives-2022-les-gagnants_n_385462.html
How did the ruling coalition miss the majority?

A cartographic analysis of the legislative election results shows that many groups, associations, cities, etc previously ruled by the presidency voted against Macky Sall and the ruling coalition – Benno Bokk Yaakar (BBY). Instances of such are Touba-Mbacké, a former presidential territory that was secured by the opposition coalition Yewwi-Wallu inter-coalition with 100,000 votes while BBY had much lesser. In Darou Moustic, home to ruling coalition top leaders, was won over by Yewwi Askani Wi coalition. Similarly, Tivaouane, a city formerly controlled by Macky Sall since he came to power, was also overtaken by the opposition. The same also in Seydi El Hadj, Thiès, Kaolack, Yoff (Dakar) and Cambérène. One thing these cities have in common is that they are all considered religious cities.

A further explanation of this outcome links the unexpected turn of events to Macky Sall's "ambiguous position" on homosexuality. This is justified by the National Assembly Bureau’s rejection of the bill criminalizing this practice. In addition, the non-signature by the ruling coalition of the memorandum of the association “And Sàmm Jikko yi” against the LGBT agenda. The two leading opposition coalitions had signed the memorandum, Yewwi Askani Wi expressed reservations on the content and/or terms relating to certain questions and Wallu agreed on the criminalization of homosexuality and the fight against the pro-LGBT agenda, while the ruling coalition made no comment.

An appeal against the election result

However, one of the opposing coalitions - NAATAANGUE ASKAN WI - has lodged an appeal against the provisional results of the legislative elections of July 31, 2022. With 25,833 votes, Sheikh Alassane Sène, president of Naataangue Askani Wi coalition accuses the ruling coalition of theft in its quest for seats to make a comfortable majority, and the confiscation of the post of deputy which belonged to him by right.

According to Sheikh Alassane Sène, Benno Bokk Yaakaar reportedly had 57 seats on the majority list with his 1,518,137 votes. He went on to explain how injustice was done by Benno to acquire

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82 deputies instead of 81 and cited article 1 of the electoral code that prohibits such⁴. To expose the injustice and restore justice, he, therefore, lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Council on August 10.

Similarly, the Yewwi-Wallu inter-coalition (coalition of the two leading opposition coalitions) also denounced the stuffing of ballot boxes in the north of the country, during the legislative elections of July 31⁵. However, the coalition leaders have decided not to appeal to the council. Constitutional due to the lack of trust in the Constitutional Council. Thus, they would rather reform the constitutional council if they manage to control the assembly.

**Macky Sall’s Third Mandate**

Macky Sall has been Senegal’s president since April 2012. Elected for a 7-year term in 2012, he was re-elected in 2019 for a 5-year term ending in 2024. However, with the curse of third terminism plaguing most West African countries, Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire for instance, Macky Sall is yet to make any official or public acknowledgement of a third term. Nevertheless, nagging questions on Mack Sall’s third candidacy became more apparent during the legislative elections of July 31.

Furthermore, during the legislative election campaign, a comment⁶ made by Mansour Faye, the Minister of Infrastructure and Sall’s brother -in-law insisting that the Head of State is in his first 5-year term, has further emphasized on the possibility of Sall’s third term candidacy. While the comment is necessarily not false, this is already Sall’s second term in office, irrespective of the duration of each respective term. And lest one forgets, in 2012, Sall had defeated Abdoulaye Wade who was seeking a third term in office amidst controversies.

Thus, to enhance the third term candidacy come 2024, it was necessary for the presidential coalition to secure majority votes in the just concluded legislative elections. However, the opposition groups and parties went all out, coordinating across cities and rural areas and forming a broad alliance, and as such, were able to successfully break the ruling alliance's grip on

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⁶ The comment was made in this video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAkV3gE09JY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAkV3gE09JY) ... Macky est à son premier mandate de cinq ans
parliament. Would the opposition’s near victory in the legislative elections deter Sall’s third-term aspirations? Several opposition leaders have warned Sall against a third term. Should he persist, shall his end be like that of his predecessor?

HCCT – abolish or post elections?

The elections for the Haut Conseil des collectivités territoriales (HCCT) – High Councillors of Local Authorities are scheduled to hold on September 4, 2022. The HCCT was created through the referendum of March 20, 2016 and Organic Law No. 2016-24 of July 14, 2016, albeit protests to such an institution by civil society and political actors. Given its six years of existence and ahead of the renewal by elections on September 4, the Collective of Civil Society Organizations for Elections (COSCE) is demanding transparency in the management of the High Council of Local Authorities (HCCT)\(^7\). COSCE is calling on political actors and stakeholders to take stock of the six years of the HCCT, to determine its usefulness which has always been questioned.

On the political end, the Yewwi-Wallu inter-coalition is already promoting a boycott of the elections. The Yewwi-Wallu inter-coalition announced its decision not to take part in the upcoming HCCT election during a press briefing on August 10\(^8\). The inter-coalition shares the same opinion with COSCE, reiterating that the HCCT is useless and misappropriation of funds that should be used to relieve suffering instead. This decision is however not surprising, as one of the campaign promises of the inter-coalition during the legislative election campaign was to abolish the HCCT once they secure a majority in the assembly.

In addition, the Gueum Sa Bopp movement has also declared its intention not to participate in the HCCT elections, despite possessing 800 departmental and municipal councillors across Senegal. In their opinion, the HCCT only serves to fit in and recondition political personnel and in line with the movement’s agenda, the institution has no real impact on the Senegalese population and should therefore be abolished. The President of the Gueum Sa Bopp movement also used the occasion to demand the opposition majority in the next legislature to investigate all the financial scandals in the Mack Sall led administration\(^9\).

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Contrary to the opinions of abolishment, a deputy re-elected under the Yaw-Wallu inter-coalition, Cheikh Abdou Mbacké Bara Dolly, is calling for the postponement of the HCCT election. This is due to the damage caused by the flood in Dakar and other localities of the country, which repairs and control might have consumed the funds for the organization of this election\(^ {10} \).

**Risks on Security Dynamics**

**Scores of properties lost to Flood**

The capital of Senegal, Dakar, suffered the adverse effects of torrential rain on August 5. Heavy downpour led to flood resulting in at least one death, several injuries and loss of property. Roads were turned to muddy rivers and submerged underpasses\(^ {11} \).

At the Council of Ministers\(^ {12} \) on August 10, President Sall sympathized with the bereaved families and expressed his solidarity with the affected populations. He urged the government to reinforce the implementation of the National Relief Organization Plan (ORSEC) and step up actions to prevent flooding with respect to the respective Codes of Town Planning, Construction, Sanitation, and Environment, in line with the National Plan for Territorial Planning and Development (PNADT). He also highlighted the urgency to accelerate the implementation of the last phase of the Ten-Year Flood Control Program (2012-2022), while demanding the formulation of new programs in sanitation before December 2022.

**MALI**

**Political Dynamics**

**Bilateral relations between Mali and Guinea**

A delegation of five Malian ministers was in Conakry from August 3 to 4 on a diplomatic mission. The Malian delegation was welcomed by the Guinean counterpart for discussions on bilateral

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cooperations to further strengthen the ties between the two countries. This was followed by a reciprocating visit to the Malian Transition team by the Guinean ministerial delegation on August 6th. Outcomes of the diplomatic meeting include agreement on the supply of fuel to Mali, the fluidity of customs operations, a railway project linking the two countries as well as the hassle at security posts.

In line with the cooperation, sectoral committees were set up to operate on more than twenty joint instructions from both countries at the custom level. Several projects by the committee have already been implemented while others are still in progress. On transportation, the committee has been set to facilitate the establishment of national transport. Additionally, plans are also underway concerning a railway project between Mali and Guinea and the supply of fuel to Mali.

**The Malian Opposition insists on the resignation of the Prime Minister**

Following the calls for the resignation of the Prime Minister, a new proposition has been made to the Transition Government by the Opposition through the Framework for Exchange of Political Parties and Groups for a Successful Transition, made up of about sixty (60) political parties and groups. In a conference held on August 5, the Malian Opposition requested a new Prime Minister who is non-partisan, consensual, competent and honest, with proven knowledge of the political, economic and security dynamics of the country. The Framework also expressed concern over the slow pace of the organization of general elections, as well as the high cost of living.

It can be recalled that the Exchange Framework had demanded the immediate resignation of Prime Minister Choguel Kokalla Maiga late July because of the Prime Minister's remarks during his meeting with certain political actors in the country. The Framework opined that the remarks did not befit a manager leading a neutral and consensual transition.

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13 [https://maliactu.net/le-president-de-la-transition-du-mali-depeche-une-delegation-ministerielle-a-conakry/](https://maliactu.net/le-president-de-la-transition-du-mali-depeche-une-delegation-ministerielle-a-conakry/)

14 [https://maliactu.net/mali-guinee-accord-sur-un-projet-de-chemin-de-fer-reliant-les-deux-pays/](https://maliactu.net/mali-guinee-accord-sur-un-projet-de-chemin-de-fer-reliant-les-deux-pays/)


Immediate departure of foreign forces

Amid the volatile security situation in Mali, the Malian Airport authorities have demanded the immediate departure of foreign forces within 72 hours from Tuesday, August 2. This was made known in a statement by Colonel Lassina Togola, CEO of Aéroports du Mali, to the manager of Sahel Aviation Services (SAS).

This order was issued because the presence of the foreign forces creates risks to the internal and external security of the State and constitutes a violation of SAS contractual obligations, in particular article 2 entitled "destination of the property" which stipulates that: the property made available to the concessionaire is given to him on a strictly personal basis to be used for the construction of offices, hangar and the development of traffic lanes"17.

Similarly, the Yerewolo-Debout Movement which celebrated the departure of the Barkhane force and demanded the departure of other foreign forces is still campaigning for the departure of peacekeepers and more generally of all foreign forces in Mali. They visited the UN Mission building in Mali to reiterate this request underlining the failure of MINUSMA on all counts18.

26,000 ex-combatants integrated into Malian armed forces

A joint statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission has shed light on the integration of 26,000 ex-combatants into the armed and defense forces and other State services. While expressing their satisfaction, the statement also elucidated that the decision stems from the consensus reached between the Malian government and armed forces with respect to a decision-making level meeting held in Bamako from August 1 to 5 on the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation19. The Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation was signed on May 15 and June 20, 2015 by the Malian government and armed separatist movements.

The armed separatist movements gained stronghold in Northern Mali since 2012, occupying certain regions and cities, followed by demands of political and economic integration of the

17 More details can be found on https://maliactu.net/mali-les-autorites-aeroportuaires-exigent-le-depart-des-forces-etrangeres-dans-un-delai-de-72-heures/
18 https://maliactu.net/au-mali-decryptage-des-objectifs-du-mouvement-yerewolo/
northern regions of Mali. To ensure peace, the Malian transitional government and the signatory movements of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APR) resulting from the Algiers process is reported to have agreed on August 5, the integration of 26,000 ex-combatants into the constituted bodies of the State, into the Armed and Security Forces, as well as on the case-by-case management of the senior civilian and military executives of the signatory movements. Consequently, the Malian government and armed movements announced the integration of 26,000 ex-combatants in two tranches of 13,000.

A new faction of the M5-RFP created

A new faction of the M5-RFP identified as M5-RFP Malikura is now in existence in Mali. The faction majorly consists of members who defected from the former M5-RFP20. In a press conference held on August 3, the new group announced its existence, distancing itself from the M5-RFP headed by the Prime Minister, Dr. Choguel Kokalla Maïga. The defection stems from the group’s belief that the former M5-RFP betrayed the ideals of the movement, with most actors fighting for their interest instead of Mali.

The Mouvement du 5 Juin-Rassemblement des Forces Patriotiques (M5-RFP) was created for demonstrations calling for the end of the reign of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (IBK). It consists of three organisations: La Coordination des mouvements, association et sympathisants (CMAS) by Imam Mahmoud Dicko, Espoir Mali Koura (EMK) and Front pour la sauvegarde de la démocratie (FSD). While they yielded a lot of force against IBK, they have been unable to respond coherently to the military junta in power ever since the junta seized power.

Mali receives new military equipment from Russia

Sequence to previous humanitarian and military aid by Russia, Mali has yet again enjoyed the benevolence of Russia. The reception of new military equipment was confirmed by Mali’s Defense Minister Colonel Sadio Camara. The new supplies include a dozen L-39 and Su-25 type fighter planes, Mi-8 type utility helicopters, a tactical transport type Airbus Casa 295, as well as ammunition21.

20 https://maliactu.net/ca-se-passe-au-grin-les-revoltes-au-m5-rfp/
21 https://maliactu.net/la-russie-dote-de-nouveau-le-mali-de materiel-de-guerre/
The new supplies, in addition to previous equipment in use, would help the Malian armed forces consolidate their attacks and reinforce mobility. It can be recalled that on December 31, 2021, Mali had received four MI-171 type helicopters, and other weapons and ammunition. Similarly, two Russian-made MI-35P type helicopters, radars, and ammunition were also received on March 31.

The case of the 49 Ivorian soldiers - Interventions

The 49 Ivorian soldiers who were arrested on arrival in Mali on July 10 are still in detention, having been mistaken for mercenaries, and thus undermining Malian internal security. Already a month old in detention in Mali, this strains the fragile relationship between Mali and Cote d’Ivoire, given the fact that latter had been accused by the former of supporting harsh sanctions against Mali.

While justifications for their arrival have been inconsistent both from Mali and Cote d’Ivoire, with mediation from Togo, negotiations are ongoing for their release. Initially, the negotiations yielded no result, but subsequent ones witnessed the establishment of conditions for Cote d’Ivoire, during which Mali demanded that Côte d'Ivoire recognize its responsibility and express "regret" for the deployment of soldiers on its territory without a legal framework. Another condition was also that Cote d’Ivoire should hand over wanted Malian personalities in Cote d’Ivoire. However, Cote d’Ivoire is yet to meet these conditions. Thus, discussions are ongoing with a view to a peaceful settlement and the fastest possible release of the prisoner soldiers.

From the Ivorian end, the Ivorian CNS deplored that the Malian authorities as they “continue to detain these soldiers, arbitrarily, despite all the explanations and evidence provided by the Ivorian authorities, to attest to the legal and regular nature of their assignment”22. But since the military attaché of the Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire in Mali was finally able to meet the 49 soldiers and confirmed their good state of mind, the President assured family members of the detained soldiers that they will not be abandoned and that everything possible would be done to ensure their release.

Apart from Togo, several other organizations and influential personalities have also intervened in the case. The president of the Islamic High Council of Mali, Chérif Madani Haïdara, and the archbishop of Bamako, Jean Zerbo, Chérif Bouyé Haïdara, an influential religious leader of Nioro, etc., all intervened for an amicable settlement. The communique23 from the National Security

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22 https://maliactu.net/liberation-de-soldats-ivoiriens-detenus-au-mali-ce-sera-peut-etre-long-admet-abidjan/
Council of Côte d'Ivoire also shows the intervention of ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) and Macky Sall, President of Senegal. The Malian diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire also called the Ivorian and Malian authorities to a peaceful settlement and the release of the soldiers.  

**Socio-political Dynamics**

**Transitional justice in Mali**

The Association Noyau dur pour la Justice transitionnelle au Mali (AND-Mali) is implementing a project "Improvement of citizen participation in transitional justice process (APC-JT)". In view of this, an advocacy document on enhancing "the voice of victims of human rights violations for their full and effective participation in the mechanisms of transitional justice in Mali" has been developed. Through the project, AND-Mali aims to give voice to the victims through forums that it organized in the regions of Ségou, Mopti, Koulikoro and the district of Bamako, with a view to improving the level of participation of these in the transitional justice mechanism.

The forums also served as avenues for victims of violations to share their opinions on their participation in transitional justice process and subsequently, peace and reconciliation. Observations, expectations, and recommendations gathered from the forum were thus documented in the advocacy document. Other organizations involved in reparation and transitional justice include the Memory Centre for Unity and Peace (CMUP), the DDR/RSS mechanism, the committees of peace and reconciliation put in place by the Ministry of Reconciliation, Peace and Social Cohesion.

**Risks on Security Dynamics**

**Incessant Attacks**

On August 5, the commune of Dimbal in the region of Bandiagara once again suffered the harsh blows of terrorism that resulted in the death of at least 12 peasants. Unidentified armed men reportedly murdered a peasant in his field and then trapped the corpse with an improvised

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explosive device. When the parents and relatives came to collect the body, the explosion killed them all causing 5 deaths. Additionally, six people were also killed by the assailants, including three in the village of Sokanda and three others in the village of Dembà. People were also reportedly missing. As a result, people in neighbouring villages fled their residences in fear. Consequently, five (5) people were killed in an attack through an explosive-trapped dead body, and six others by the bullets of unidentified armed men.

While the toll of attacks in Mali is incessantly spiralling at an alarming rate, the target victims are not only civilians but uniform men as well. Target locations are also expanding to the southern parts of the country. This is evident in recent records of attacks. On August 7, a border control post in the Koury-Koutiala area in south Mali was the target of an explosive device and heavy gunfire, which led to the death of at least five (5) police officers. One officer was also injured while three (3) were missing, as outlined by the Inspector General of Police in a press release. The attack against the Sona Border Police Station has been claimed by Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) or Support Group for Islam and Muslims (GSIM), the official branch of al-Qaeda in Mali.

Concurrently, an announcement by the Department of Information and Public Relations of the Armed Forces has revealed the death of four (4) soldiers, two (2) civilians, five (5) terrorists, and several injured during a coordinated attack by terrorist armed groups in Tessit (Ansongo, Gao region) reacted vigorously against a complex and coordinated attack by the Terrorist Armed Groups (GAT),” the statement said. Additionally, in a statement by the Armed Forces Information and Public Relations Department (DIRPA) on August 7, the death of four (4) Malian soldiers, two (2) civilians and five (5) terrorists was announced. This was the result of a face-off between the terrorists and the army when the latter reacted against a coordinated attack by the former in Tessit on August 7. The coordinated attack is suspected to have been launched by armed terrorist groups, probably from “Daech au Grand Sahara” and benefiting from drone and artillery support with the use of explosives and vehicle bombs”.

26 https://maliactu.net/mali-12-paysans-tues-dans-le-centre-du-pays/
27 https://maliactu.net/mali-5-policiers-tues-dans-une-explosion-de-vehicule-a-koury-officiel/
28 This was revealed in a press release by the Support Group for Islam and Muslims in which they announced how they had launched the attack https://maliactu.net/mali-le-groupe-de-soutien-a-islam-et-aux-musulmans-revendique-embuscade-contre-la-police-frontiere-de-sona/
30 https://maliactu.net/mali-4-soldats-2-civils-et-5-terroristes-tues-dans-des-combats-a-tessit-armee/
Although the initial provisional death toll showed 4 dead soldiers and 2 wounded, subsequent ones showed an increase to 17 dead soldiers\textsuperscript{31}. The current provisional assessment of the attack reports 07’ terrorists neutralized, 07 motorcycles destroyed and an unknown number of dead and wounded on the attackers’ end. While on the FAMA side, 17 dead, 22 injured, and 9 missing. 4 civilians were also killed and significant material damage including 3 vehicles and homes destroyed.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has strongly condemned the attack\textsuperscript{32}. Meanwhile, reports of a second terrorist attack in Tessit have been making rounds on social networks\textsuperscript{33}. There are reports on social networks of a second terrorist attack. DIRPA and FAMa have officially termed this as pure disinformation and non-corresponding to the realities on the ground. Accordingly, security surveys in the Tessit area are continuing as normal and reprisal operations were carried out on August 9 on 2 pick-up vehicles.

**UN accuses Mali of the death of 33 civilians**

The result of investigations into the death of 33 civilians (29 Mauritanians and 4 Malians) in March 2022 in the region of Ségou, near the Mauritanian border has revealed the involvement of Mali and ‘foreign’ soldiers. The involvement of the Malian Armed Forces and white-skinned soldiers is highlighted in witness statements contained in a report released on August 5 by a group of experts under the UN. The report states that “The soldiers rounded up the men, including the teenagers, tied their hands behind their backs and blindfolded them. They were then gathered in the middle of the village” while “the women and children were ordered to go home and not watch”\textsuperscript{34}. Furthermore, “A group of FAMa (Malian Armed Forces) arrived in the village around 11 am. They started beating the bound blindfolded men using the sticks used by the shepherds on their flocks. The women locked in the houses could only hear the cries of the men who were beaten”, declared the same UN source. The report adds that “The FAMa then freed some of the younger men, and took away 33 men, 29 Mauritanians and 4 Malians [Tuaregs]”. Their dead bodies were reportedly discovered the next day 4 kilometers from Robinet El Ataye. They had been shot and then burned” evoking a “similar pattern of looting and beating” in five other

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\textsuperscript{31} https://maliactu.net/mali-le-bilan-salourdit-a-17-soldats-maliens-tues-dans-une-attaque-a-tessit/

\textsuperscript{32} https://maliactu.net/lonu-condamne-lattaque-perpetree-contre-armee-malienne-a-tessit/

\textsuperscript{33} This was obtained from the official Twitter account of the Forces Armees Maliennes @FAMa_DIRPA

\textsuperscript{34} https://maliactu.net/mali-lonu-confirme-limplication-de-soldats-maliens-et-blancs-dans-la-mort-de-33-civils/
localities in the area between March 5 and 6. On the involvement of foreign soldiers, witnesses are reported to have seen a “helicopter carrying the white-skinned soldiers.”

When the dreadful incident occurred, Mauritania had accused the Malian army of "recurring criminal acts" against Mauritanian citizens in this border region. Back then, Mali had refuted the accusations, claiming that nothing implicated its army and that further investigations would be launched. However, more than four (4) months later, there has still not been any investigation update from the Malian government on the issue until this investigation outcome by UN.