

**COP28**  
**UAE**



# **Africa Report**

## **November 2023**



# Introduction

- The November Africa Report takes a look at the upcoming 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai and what it means for Africa.
- The report covers the continent's division over the Israel-Palestine conflict, and Lesotho's political situation following the bid to oust Prime Minister, Sam Matekane.
- From an economic perspective, the report looks at the US' restoration of Mauritania's AGOA trade benefits alongside the exclusion of Uganda, CAR, Niger, and Gabon; Germany's commitment to fund African Green Energy Projects by 2030, and the admission of Somalia into the East African Community (EAC).
- From a security perspective, report covers the recapture of Mali's strategic northern town of Kidal by military forces, as well as Sudan's call for the termination of the United Nation's political mission amidst the ongoing conflict.
- The report looks at the outcomes of the recently concluded elections in Liberia and Madagascar, Gabon's proposed election timeline, and the selection of Bassirou Diomaye Faye as Senegal's opposition candidates for the 2024 elections.



# ENERGY UPDATES

## COP28: What Does it Mean for Africa?



- From 30 November to 12 December, United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) will be held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- This year's summit will feature a contentious set of issues for countries working to find a common ground in tackling climate change, including whether to phase out fossil fuels and how to finance the transition to greener energy sources in developing countries and to go about a just energy transition.
- The main task at COP28 is a first-time assessment of countries' progress towards meeting the 2015 Paris Agreement's goal of limiting the global temperature rise to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius, while aiming for 1.5C. The other part of the assessment is about how far the developed world has gone to finance the transition.

- South Africa requires about R1.5 trillion for its transition and has had just less than US\$10 (an equivalent of R185.4 billion) committed thus far. Yet, it is not clear how much of this commitment has been translated into actual financing. If we take into account Africa's requirements, the figure required for the continent could be exceedingly high.
- Africa has the lowest per capita fossil fuel emissions of any region globally and between 1850-2021 was responsible for only 2.8% of global fossil fuel emissions. Yet according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it faces the most severe challenges due to climate change.
- The negative effects of climate change on the African continent have become increasingly vivid through disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and drought. Seven out of the ten most vulnerable countries affected by climate change in 2021 were African.
- Climate change is forecasted to push an additional 78 million people into chronic hunger by 2050, over half of them in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 45% of Africa's urban population live in slum households.
- Slum households and informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to flooding. Almost 600 million people in Africa have no access to electricity, more than the combined population of France, Japan, the US, and the UK.
- Earlier in September, the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) took place in Nairobi, Kenya, where African leaders signed the Nairobi Declaration which will serve as a basis for Africa's common position in the global climate change process to COP28 and beyond. It calls for economic transformation that is in line with Africa's climate needs.
- Rich, high emitting countries in the Global North promised to deliver a paltry \$100 billion in climate finance by 2020, but that deadline was missed

## Possible Implications

- COP28 presents an opportunity for the African continent to articulate its climate needs as well as the valuable solutions that the continent has for the global crisis. It is also a chance to ensure that the continent's development priorities are streamlined into the global climate agenda because for Africa, the climate challenge is a development challenge.
- African countries should collaborate closely and present a unified front at the summit. By working together, they can amplify their voices and have a stronger impact on negotiations. They must be vocal about the way their transitioning to green energy takes place and reiterate that their transitioning to renewables can only happen at a pace that caters for their developmental needs.
- The narrative from the inaugural ACS and its resulting Nairobi declaration, which has resonated well globally, positioned Africa not as a victim of climate impact but rather a key player in the global climate narrative willing to contribute its vast resources to drive climate-positive growth.
- In exchange, the world must commit to the right type of financial resources at the right scale as well as innovative technologies to help unlock the raw potential the continent has. This will not only mitigate environmental risks but also stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities.
- Overall, COP28 should not be a talk shop but provide real implementable solutions coupled with funding that addresses the needs communities already living through the crisis. False solutions that give polluters the license to pollute whilst placing the burden on countries of the Global South to sequester the carbon produced by rich nations should be placed in the dustbins of history.

## Germany Commits €4 Billion for African Green Energy Projects by 2030

- On 21 November, the German government, led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz, pledged €4 billion (\$4.37 billion) for African green energy initiatives until 2030. Scholz made the announcement during a news conference at the G20 Compact with Africa summit in Berlin.
- He emphasised the need for African nations to benefit more from their rich raw materials. Although specific projects were not mentioned, Scholz highlighted the importance of processing materials for green energy within the African countries of origin, promoting job creation and prosperity.

- Earlier in November, Scholz visited Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa, his third trip to Africa in two years, where he sought to deepen economic ties between Germany and the two African nations.
- Much of the discussions during his visit to the two African Nations revolved around energy, agriculture, and digitisation.
- As Europe's biggest economy, Germany has been seeking to reduce its reliance on Russia for gas since the onset of the Russia- Ukraine war in February 2022, and it sees the energy sector in Africa as one possible alternative.



## Possible Implications

- Germany's emphasis on diversifying its energy resources by seeking partnerships with African nations is a strategic move to enhance its own energy security, and Scholz's visit to both Nigeria and Ghana which are well endowed gas and oil energy is indicative of the mounting pressure that Germany is undergoing to ensure energy security.
- Germany's commitment to funding Africa's green energy projects can boost local industries, create jobs, and attract further foreign investment. This investment can contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, and improved living standards in Africa.
- While Germany seeks to ensure its energy security and promote green energy initiatives, it is vital for African countries to negotiate fair terms and ensure that they benefit adequately from their rich raw materials.
- Thus, balancing economic cooperation with the protection of natural resources and respect for sovereignty will be essential for a successful partnership.

# POLITICAL UPDATES

## Africa Divided Over the Israel-Palestine Conflict

- The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict in the Gaza strip has left the African continent deeply divided, with some countries choosing to remain silent while some have openly shown solidarity with either Israel or Palestine.
- Kenya, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are some of the African countries whose leaders have shown support for Israel despite growing global condemnation, while Ethiopia, which has a strong historical attachment to Israel is yet to make its stance clear on the conflict.
- Meanwhile, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria have strongly condemned the Israeli attacks on Gaza and expressed solidarity with Palestine. On 21 November, South Africa lawmakers voted to sever diplomatic ties with Israel and to close the embassy in Pretoria, until Israel commits to a United Nations-led mediation in the conflict. The South African government has also referred Israel and its Prime Minister to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for investigation into war crimes and genocide in Gaza.
- Fighting has raged in the Gaza Strip for a month since Hamas fighters launched an unprecedented attack across the border into Israel on 07 October. Apart from the 1,200 Israelis killed on 07 October, there are approximately 14,000 on side of Gaza and thousands of others (including Israeli soldiers, journalists and health and aid providers). Of course, the actual numbers remain contested as both Israel and Hamas have seemingly embarked on some form of propaganda war.
- On 28 November, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was extended by 2 days to allow for a prisoner exchange by both sides, mediator Qatar and Hamas said, hours before an initial four-day truce in Gaza had been set to expire.



## Possible Implications

- Africa's division over the Israel-Palestine conflict does not come as a surprise especially considering that African nations do not have a common stance when it comes to most foreign policy issues.
- Thus, African countries have to a large extent taken different positions on the matter based on their political and geopolitical interests.
- A closer look on the division indicates that most African nations that support Israel are simply looking to safeguard their economic interests, while those who have maintained silence, or a neutral stance do not want to upset their allies.
- Afterall, most African countries heavily rely on aid coming from the West and the United States through foreign funding, and as such cannot risk the wrath of the West and the US by standing against Israel.

## Lesotho: Prime Minister Rewards New Coalition Partner in Extended Cabinet



- On 08 November, Lesotho's Prime Minister Sam Matekane, rewarded new coalition partner Professor Nqosa Mahao with the energy ministry in an extended cabinet after the latter rescued Matekane from a vote of no confidence motion.
- Mahao is the leader of the Basotho Action Party (BAP). BAP received 5.65% of the vote in last year's general elections, representing six seats. The deputy leader of BAP, Motlatsi Maselepo, a former health minister under former prime minister Moeketsi Majoro, is the new tourism and culture minister.



- Matekane also announced the addition of six new ministries and five deputy ministers in Lesotho's extended coalition government. The ministers were sworn in by the Acting Chief Justice Tseliso Monaphathi at the Royal Palace in Maseru.
- When he came into power, Matekane reduced his cabinet from 37 to 16 ministries as he tried to run a tight and effective ship. But a threat to his government has seen him add more to appease the new coalition partners.

## Possible Implications

- The appointment of Mahao and the expansion of the cabinet reflect Matekane's need to secure his government's stability and survival. By responding to the threat of a vote of no confidence, he is attempting to maintain his grip on power and avoid potential political crises.
- Mahao's rescue of Matekane from the vote of no confidence suggests that he holds considerable influence and bargaining power within the coalition. Thus, appointing him as the energy minister is a strategic move aimed at consolidating support, placating the coalition, and maintaining political stability.
- While appeasing coalition partners is crucial for maintaining stability, the expanded cabinet may introduce potential challenges such as conflicting interests and increased demands from coalition members in the future.
- Matekane will need to carefully navigate these dynamics to keep his government intact.

# ECONOMIC UPDATES

## US Restores Mauritania's AGOA Benefits, Relegate Uganda, CAR, Niger, and Gabon

- On 01 November, the US announced it would reinstate Mauritania's benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) programme following an eligibility review.
- According to the US Trade Office, the reinstatement will be done in January 2024 after the north-west African country made "substantial and measurable progress on worker rights and eliminating forced labour". The trade benefits were suspended in 2019 following concerns over workers' rights violations in Mauritania.
- Mauritania's reinstatement follows US President Joe Biden's announcement the previous day to terminate the AGOA programme for Gabon, Niger, Uganda, and the Central African Republic (CAR).
- The US said Gabon's and Niger's AGOA eligibility was terminated because of recent coups, while Uganda's and CAR's benefits were terminated because of human rights violations. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea have also been expelled from AGOA after military takeovers in those countries.
- AGOA introduced in 2000, gives eligible sub-Saharan African countries duty-free access to the US for more than 1,800 products.

## Possible Implications

- The reinstatement of Mauritania's trade benefits can be seen as a validation of the progress made by the Mauritanian government in addressing concerns related to workers' rights violations. It signifies that the US has recognised the efforts made by Mauritania to improve its labour practices and bring them in line with international standards.
- It also opens significant economic opportunities for the country. AGOA provides duty-free and quota-free access to the US market for eligible African countries, which can lead to increased exports and trade for Mauritanian businesses. This can positively impact the country's economy and contribute to its overall development.
- The exclusion of CAR, Niger, Gabon, and Uganda from AGOA has significant implications for their economies and trade relations with the United States. For these countries, the loss of AGOA benefits can result in reduced export earnings and economic development.
- Furthermore, questions remain on how the US will respond to South Africa's stance over the ongoing Israel-Palestine as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflicts. However, the US recognises the importance of having the country as an ally on the continent. As a result, it is highly improbable that South Africa will lose its AGOA benefits.
- While South Africa needs to pull off an exceptional balancing act in managing its international relations in a sensible way that protects and advances its economic interests, the US will have to think of how the programme can be used to increase its influence and counter BRICS, as it continues with negotiation to extend AGOA beyond 2025.

## Somalia Officially Joins East Africa Trade Bloc

- On 24 November, Somalia was admitted into the East African Community (EAC) as the eighth member of the bloc as it seeks to expand free trade across the region.
- "We have decided to admit the Federal Republic of Somalia under the treaty of accession," outgoing EAC chair, Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye, said at a summit of the grouping in Tanzania.
- Somalia joins Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda in the regional bloc.
- The EAC, headquartered in the Tanzanian town of Arusha where the summit was taking place, was founded in 2000 and works to encourage trade by removing customs duties between member states. It established a common market in 2010.



- Excluding Somalia, combined EAC countries covered a land area of 4.8 million sq. kilometres (1.8 million sq. miles) and had a combined gross domestic product of \$305bn, according to the bloc's website. Total EAC trade was \$78.75bn in 2022.

## Possible Implications

- The entry of the fragile Horn of Africa nation, which has a population of 17 million, will boost the EAC market to more than 300 million people.
- However, the admission of Somalia could portend more security challenges for the bloc as the country is struggling to stem a deadly rebellion by the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabab group.
- Furthermore, Somalia's "poor track record in governance, human rights and the rule of law" could hinder its smooth integration into the bloc.
- In addition, the country has also been embroiled in disputes with its neighbours, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya, sometimes leading to a breakdown in diplomatic relations.

# SECURITY UPDATES

## Mali: Military Seize Control of Kidal Rebel Stronghold

- On 14 November, Mali's army announced that it had recaptured the strategic northern town of Kidal, a stronghold of Tuareg-dominated separatist groups that has long posed a major sovereignty issue for the ruling junta.
- "Today our armed and security forces have seized Kidal," the head of the junta, Colonel Assimi Goita said in a statement read by a presenter during a special news flash on state television.
- Violence has escalated in the north of Mali since August, with the military, rebels and jihadists vying for control as the United Nations' stabilisation mission, MINUSMA, withdraws from the country and evacuates its camps, triggering a race to seize territory.
- The news was greeted by celebrations in the capital Bamako, which saw dozens of people gathered on Independence Square waving Malian flags. The government of neighbouring Burkina Faso also welcomed the news, calling it a "pivotal" moment in the fight against armed groups in the Sahel region.
- The army and the state have for years been virtually absent from the town of Kidal, which has been controlled by the predominantly Tuareg armed groups. Meanwhile, the rebels have vowed to fight back.



## Possible Implications

- The recapture of Kidal is likely to be seen as a symbolic victory for the ruling junta, as it reasserts the government's authority over a region previously under the control of separatist groups. This achievement provides a boost to the legitimacy and credibility of the military forces and the junta, within Mali.
- However, it is important to note that the conflict in Mali is multi-faceted, involving not only separatist groups but also jihadist elements. While the recapture of Kidal may weaken the influence of the separatists in the region, jihadists and other armed groups may still pose a considerable challenge to the stability and security of Mali.
- The vow by the rebels to launch a fightback underscores the potential for continued violence and conflict in the region. As the UN peacekeeping mission withdraws and evacuates its camps, it is crucial for the Malian government to address the underlying issues that fuel the separatist sentiment and the grievances of marginalised communities in the north.
- Thus, fostering dialogue, inclusivity, and socio-economic development are crucial steps towards achieving lasting peace and stability in Mali.

## At the Height of Ongoing Conflict, Sudan Requests the Termination of UN Mission

- On 17 November, Sudan's transitional government asked the United Nations (UN) to immediately terminate the political mission in the country. The United Nations' Integrated Transition Assistance Mission (UNITAMS) in Sudan, was established in 2020 with an overarching objective to support the democratic transition in the country.
- In a letter to the UN Secretary-General, Sudan's Ambassador Al-Harith Idris said, "The Sudan's current situation requires a full overhaul, a real change in the mission which no longer meets the needs of the people and the government, nor the priorities for the political change, but rather aims to achieve other objectives".
- Meanwhile, Sudan's acting Foreign Minister Ali Sadeq assured the world body's chief that the government of Sudan was committed to engaging constructively with the Security Council and the Secretariat.
- Tensions between the Government and the UN Secretariat escalated in the aftermath of the eruption of fighting between two military factions in April – the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.
- The Secretary-General's latest report on Sudan points to a situation that continues to deteriorate, fighting expanding to new areas, with over 6 million displaced and rising. Peace talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia have thus far failed to produce a ceasefire as concerns grow around the risk of genocide and related atrocity crimes in the Darfur region.

## Possible Implications

- Sudan's request to terminate the UN political mission indicates a desire for increased autonomy and self-governance. This may be seen as a step towards consolidating power and exercising greater control over the country's affairs.
- However, it also raises questions about the government's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the respect for human rights, as oversight from international actors can play a crucial role in ensuring these principles.
- If the UN political mission is terminated, Sudan may experience a reduction in international support and assistance. The UN mission plays a vital role in facilitating dialogue, providing capacity-building support, and addressing key issues such as governance, human rights, and peacebuilding.
- Displaced populations face a lack of access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and shelter. The termination of the UN political mission may further hinder humanitarian efforts, making it difficult to address the needs of the affected population.
- To ensure sustainable peace and stability, it is essential for the government to engage in dialogue with the international community and work towards addressing the root causes of the conflict while prioritising the needs and well-being of the Sudanese people.

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## ELECTIONS UPDATES

### Liberia Boakai Formally Declared Winner of the Election



- On 20 November, Liberia's National Elections Commission chairperson Davidetta Browne-Lansanah announced that Joseph Boakai won the run-off election after securing 50.64% of the total votes cast while the incumbent President George Weah got 49.36%.
- Boakai who served as vice-president in the government of Nobel peace laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has promised, in his words, to "rescue" the West African nation and make it a country Liberians could be proud of. He also lauded Weah, 57 for accepting defeat after one term in office.
- The international community also commended Weah for accepting the smooth transition. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also took pride in the fact Liberia had shown the region that "change is possible through peaceful means."

- The 2023 poll was the tightest presidential race since the end of the country's civil war two decades ago. Boakai will be sworn in sometime in January next year.

## Possible Implications

- A closer look reveals several reasons why voters denied Weah a second term, including his failure to establish a war crimes court for the country and the ripple effects of a drug epidemic. However, one issue that stands out is corruption. It drove some of the biggest protests the country has seen since the end of Liberia's second civil war in 2003.
- Weah's acceptance of defeat and his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition of power is a positive development for Liberia and reflects a strong commitment to democratic principles.
- It will also help to maintain stability in Liberia. This is crucial for the country's ongoing development and economic growth. A peaceful transition of power allows for continuity and predictability, ensuring that Liberia can move forward without disruptions.
- Overall, the peaceful transition of power in Liberia serves as a positive example for other countries in West Africa, where coups and political instability have been prevalent in the past.
- Boakai has a huge task ahead of him and will have to work around the clock to stem corruption and spur economic development in Liberia.

### Madagascar: Rajoelina Re-elected as Opposition Denounces Irregularities

- On 25 November, Madagascar's electoral body, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante for Transition (CENI) announced that President Andry Rajoelina has effectively secured a third term after obtaining the most votes in an election marked by low turnout and an opposition boycott.
- Provisional results announced by CENI at the end of tallying showed Rajoelina garnered 58.9% of the vote followed by Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko, a lawmaker, who got 14.4%.
- Meanwhile, Randrianasoloniaiko announced that he had appealed to the country's apex court to demand the cancellation of the vote result, while other opposition candidates also declared that they would not accept the results.





- In the buildup to the election, the majority of the opposition, boycotted the election. The group also led street protests in the capital Antananarivo almost every day in recent weeks, several of which were dispersed with tear gas and police arrested many participants and bystanders.
- In June, Madagascar was rocked by the revelation that the president had acquired French citizenship in 2014, which the opposition argues should result in the loss of his Madagascan nationality and disqualify him from running in the race.
- Roughly 46.4% of voters cast their ballots, according to CENI, with the opposition describing it as the lowest turnout in the country's history.
- Rajoelina first rose to power in the Indian Ocean island nation in a 2009 coup. He then stepped down after almost five years as leader of a transitional authority and then became president again after winning a 2018 election.

## Possible Implications

- Rajoelina's election victory does not come as a surprise, especially considering that the majority of the opposition boycotted the election and thus, leading to a low voter turnout. Simply put, boycotting the election was never a wise decision as this meant most voters who took part in the election were those in support Rajoelina.
- However, his victory is likely to portend limited mining sector reforms, lucrative government contracts with foreign entities, and little change to the country's rampant corruption, poverty, and crime rates.
- Meanwhile, Randrianasoloniaiko's appeal to the country's apex court to cancel the vote results reflects a lack of confidence in the electoral process and a belief that there may have been irregularities or violations of election laws. This signals a potential legal battle and political instability as the court will have to review the case and make a decision.
- The opposition's appeal and rejection of results can potentially lead to prolonged legal battles and political unrest. Political instability can have adverse effects on the overall development, investment climate, and economic growth of the country. It may also undermine social cohesion and hinder efforts towards national reconciliation and unity.

## Gabon: Military Authorities Announce Elections For August 2025

- On 13 November, Gabon's military government that overthrew President Ali Bongo Ondimba announced that presidential and legislative elections will be held in August 2025.
- Announcing the plan, the junta said the proposed timetable was not final and would need approval from the public during town hall-style meetings next April.
- General Brice Oligui Nguema seized power in August from his cousin, Ali Bongo, vowing to rescue the country from a "severe institutional" crisis. The central African nation had been ruled by the Bongo family for 55 years.
- A new constitution is to be presented in October next year and adopted by the end of that year in a referendum.
- Although members of the interim government cannot stand in the upcoming elections, the transitional charter does not bar Gen Oligui Nguema from doing so. It is not yet clear whether he intends to.

## Possible Implications

- While the announcement signifies a step towards returning the country to civilian rule, it is important to note that the proposed timeline is subject to approval from the public during the national dialogue in April 2024, indicating that adjustments remain possible.
- Thus, despite the announced timeline, uncertainties remain regarding the potential delays, changes, or challenges that may arise during the process. The national dialogue in April 2024 will be a critical juncture to gauge public sentiment, address concerns, and potentially revise the election timeline.
- The imposition of sanctions by the US and EU likely played a role in the military's decision to set a timeline for elections. Gabon relies on international cooperation, investments, and trade, and thus, the need to alleviate sanctions-induced challenges could have contributed to this move.
- Until then, sanctions are most likely to remain until civilian rule is restored. The international community will keep a close eye on any developments regarding the political landscape in Gabon.

## Senegal: Opposition Finds Alternative Candidate for the 2024 Elections

- On 19 November, the party of Senegal's jailed opposition leader, Ousmane Sonko, announced it was sponsoring its number two politician, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, as candidate for the February 2024 presidential election.
- The announcement came just days after the country's Supreme Court effectively blocked Sonko's own bid. The dissolved Patriots of Senegal (Pastef) party said, however, that Sonko's candidacy has been maintained.
- Although Diomaye Faye does not enjoy the same popularity as the party's leader, his choice has been welcomed by a large number of its supporters. However, one person said that while it was clear the Sonko would be ineligible and he had to choose a "plan B", a concern was that Bassirou Diomaye Faye is not well known.
- Incumbent President Macky Sall ended years of speculation in July when he announced that he would not seek a third term in office. The ruling party has since coalesced around Prime Minister Amadou Ba as its candidate of choice.

## Possible Implications

- The decision of (Pastef), to sponsor Bassirou Diomaye Faye as their candidate for the 2024 presidential election shows their determination to continue challenging the ruling party despite the imprisonment of their leader, Ousmane Sonko.
- However, Faye himself is also confronted with criminal charges, which could potentially disqualify him from running for the presidency.



- This poses a significant hurdle for the opposition party, as they may struggle to find an eligible candidate if Faye is also barred from the race.
- Overall, the candidacy of Faye and the legal challenges faced by both him and Ousmane Sonko have significant implications for the political landscape and public perception in Senegal.
- The outcomes of these legal cases will have a profound impact on the upcoming presidential election and the future of opposition politics in the country.

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