

## **SENEGAL AFTER THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

### **POLE OF STABILITY IN VOLATILE REGION**

*Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé*

After a pre-election and election period in the first half of 2012 that put the country under a great amount of tension and was marred by violence, Senegal is back on course to become one of the more stable democracies of the continent. But relief about the elections running smoothly cannot obscure the fact that Senegal was at a crossroads and may even have been teetering on the edge of an abyss. An aged, autocratic head of state, a government party intent on holding on to power, a highly dissatisfied population full of anger and the desolate state of the country's economy made for a situation fraught with risks. Looking back, the presence of thousands of domestic and foreign election observers and the reporting by the media confirmed that many of Senegal's inhabitants and observers feared the country could descend into a continuing cycle of violence. With it being the last stable "buffer country" in a region affected greatly by geopolitical tensions, particularly in the neighbouring country of Mali, Senegal sliding into chaos might have resulted in a West African catastrophe. In the post-election period, the country believes that it is once again making progress in stabilising its democracy. Senegal will, however, have to retain its course in a volatile region. The stability of the West African region has been put under great strain lately, especially as a result of the crisis caused by the coup d'état in Mali and by Islamists subsequently taking control of large swathes of territory in northern Mali.



Dr. Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé is a Programme Officer and Research Associate at the Senegal/Mali office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

### A DEMOCRACY UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Senegal is Africa's first democracy. Directly after independence in 1960, the elected head of state Leopold Sedar Senghor declared his commitment to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and the separation of powers, which were enshrined in the constitution – although it would take another fourteen years for a multi-party system to be put in place. Senghor's successor Abdou Diouf, to whom he handed over power in 1980, expanded democratic rights and opened up the party landscape.<sup>1</sup> Over 170 parties have been founded since 1981. In 2001, there were 65 parties in Senegal,<sup>2</sup> ten years on, they numbered almost three times that many. Last year, the former Minister of the Interior Ousmane Ngom even demanded stricter criteria for party formation, as a proliferation of political parties was not necessarily beneficial to democracy.<sup>3</sup> Freedom of the press and freedom of opinion have also become embodied since the 1980s. There are now over 20 independent daily newspapers, some 70 national and local radio stations as well as two public and five private national television stations.<sup>4</sup>

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Despite democratic achievements, Senegal has moved to a relatively high position on the list of countries judged to have very high levels of corruption. And there have also been cases of human rights violations uncovered and denounced. Amnesty International's 2011 Annual Report<sup>5</sup> details not only the Casamance conflict with all the lapses on the part of the state and of the rebel faction but also human rights violations in other areas. The rule of law and the separation

1 | On Senegal's political history see Gerti Hesselning, *Histoire politique du Sénégal*, Karthala, Paris, 1985; Momar Coumba Diop, *Le Sénégal contemporain*, Karthala, Paris, 2002.

2 | Cf. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Centre d'études des sciences et techniques de l'information (eds.), *L'annuaire des partis politiques du Sénégal*, Dakar, 2001.

3 | Ferloo.com, "Me Ousmane Ngom: '173 partis politiques au Sénégal, ce n'est pas raisonnable'", 16 Nov 2011, <http://ferloo.com/Me-Ousmane-Ngom-173-partis> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

4 | Cf. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Centre d'études des sciences et techniques de l'Information (eds.), *Les médias au Sénégal Cahier de l'Alternance*, Dakar, 2005.

5 | Amnesty International, "Senegal. Rapport 2011 – La situation des droits humains dans le monde", <http://amnesty.org/fr/region/senegal/report-2011> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

of powers are not functioning properly in all instances. Some time ago, the Senegalese association of judges complained about the high levels of corruption in the judiciary, which it thought was frequently doing the bidding of the executive.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, Senegal's economy is only developing sluggishly. There have been repeated accusations that the elites are enriching themselves at the cost of the population. One indication might be the real-estate boom in Dakar and other large cities. In the countryside, on the other hand, many people still live without electricity, running water, adequate medical care, schools and transport infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> The rural exodus, city sprawl, extremely high levels of unemployment and an unstable electricity supply in the last few years have all been fuelling dissatisfaction among the population – a potential time bomb for the democratic country. Last year, blackouts caused violent unrest on several occasions in Dakar's large suburbs, which spread to provincial towns as well.<sup>8</sup> Fears of an election period marred by terror and the possibility of Senegal drifting into a cycle of violence were by no means unfounded.

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#### **ABDOULAYE WADE: FROM OPPOSITION LEADER TO POWER-OBSSESSED PRESIDENT**

But what had actually happened to make Senegal regress so spectacularly both in terms of its democracy and its economy in a relatively short period of time? During the first forty years of its existence as an independent state, Senegal was governed by the Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste, PS), which was re-elected repeatedly in elections that were democratic, but often accompanied by controversy. After the first changing of the political guard in 2000, the

- 6 | Ndèye Khady Lo, "Les magistrats sénégalais se rebiffent", *SlateAfrique*, 20 May 2011, <http://sateafrique.com/2193/les-magistrats-senegalais-se-rebiffent> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).
- 7 | République Sénégal, *Document de Stratégie pour la croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté 2006-2010, Oktober 2006*, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/intsenegalinfrench/Resources/DSRP-II.pdf> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).
- 8 | Audrey Pelé, "Dakar: des bâtiments publics incendiés par les habitants", *Le Figaro*, 28 Jun 2011, <http://lefigaro.fr/international/2011/06/28/01003-20110628ARTFIG00334-dakar-des-batiments-publics-incendies-par-les-habitants.php> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

Senegalese government was run by the liberal party Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS), with its founder Abdoulaye Wade at the helm. During the course of his terms in office, which had started out quite promisingly, the long-term opposition leader turned into a power-obsessed autocrat who was reminiscent of the era of presidents with their "white elephants" and other prestige projects.<sup>9</sup> As the crowning glory of his megalomania, which was beginning to appear increasingly cynical in view of the worsening impoverishment of the population, Wade had a towering monument to "African rebirth" erected during his last year in office, presumably as a means to gain immortality.<sup>10</sup>

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Wade took a variety of actions to hold on to power, in particular a strategy to "divide and rule". He did not, for instance, shy from creating and fuelling tensions between sections of the population (based on religious, ethnic and social differences), which occasionally resulted in dangerous situations. He transferred part of the governmental responsibilities and the management of the well-funded ANOCI agency<sup>11</sup> to his son and official management tasks including in particular the running of the Festival of Black Cultures and Arts<sup>12</sup> to his daughter, and he strove consistently to introduce a dynastic succession for the head of government. At the same time, government institutions were losing their prestige and people's respect, large parts of the population saw their living standards decline, and a class of politicians and business people toadying to Wade became ever wealthier. His opponents called Wade the "President of the informal". They accused him of permanently overriding the

9 | Cf. Abdou Latif Coulibaly, *Wade, un opposant au pouvoir. L'alternance piégée? (Wade, an opponent in power. The political reform movement in a trap?)*, Editions Sentinelles, Paris, 2003.

10 | Cf. Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Denkmal sorgt für politisch-religiöse Spannungen", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 7 Jan 2010, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/18563> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

11 | Abdou Latif Coulibaly, *Contes et mécomptes de l'ANOCI (Fairy tales and miscalculations by the ANOCI)*, Hamrattan, Paris, 2009.

12 | Vgl. Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Senegal, internationales Festival der schwarzen Kulturen und politische Stimmung im Vorwahljahr", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 4 Feb 2011, [http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_21826-1522-1-30.pdf](http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_21826-1522-1-30.pdf) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

values and virtues of democracy and republican principles in order to satisfy the interests of his family and followers and stay in power indefinitely.<sup>13</sup>

### **DEMOCRATIC MATURITY OF THE POPULATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CIVIC MOVEMENT**

In the end, Wade's hunger for power proved to be his undoing because it caused the Senegalese people and democracy to undergo a development towards greater awareness and maturity. Several months before the presidential elections, on 23 June 2011, the National Assembly – which was akin to a “rubber stamping chamber” as 93 per cent of the deputies belonged to the governing coalition – was set to vote on legislation that would have permitted Wade to be re-elected with just 25 per cent of the votes. While the deputies, including those from the government coalition, were arguing about whether the bill could be approved, thousands of angry citizens demonstrated in front of the parliament building. They were supported by the rappers of generation “Y'en a marre” (We've had enough), who with their music protested against the “planned confiscation of office” by Wade, thereby setting off an avalanche. To large parts of the population, the rapper movement became a symbol of the general desire among the people to be rid of Wade. Although the security services arrested numerous demonstrators during this protest and one human rights activist was even beaten up by Wade supporters, both the Senegalese and observers agreed on one thing: The demonstration illustrated the fact that the Senegalese people were prepared to stand up for the democratic constitution and for their rights in a peaceful but assertive manner, and that in this manner they could make an impact. The bill was retracted, which was greeted with great relief by the parliamentarians and with triumph by the civic movement. This was one of the first victories of democracy. Those who had participated in the demonstration, namely opposition politicians, civil society organisations, rappers and human rights organisations, would

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13 | This is also a problem on which prominent lawyer and political analyst Abdou Latif Coulibaly has commented: *Une démocratie prise en otage par ses élites* (A democracy taken hostage by its elites), Harmattan, Paris, 2006.

subsequently constitute the civic movement of 23 June, known as Mouvement 23 or M23 for short.<sup>14</sup>

### **WADE'S CONTROVERSIAL THIRD CANDIDACY**

Despite all this, one fundamental question remained unanswered: Would Wade find a way of running for President for a third time? The constitution gives an unequivocal answer: Nobody is allowed to run for President more than twice. Wade and his supporters, on the other hand, argued that the new constitution did not come into force until after the referendum in 2001, which meant the restriction to two terms had not begun until Wade's election in 2007. The question ignited a heated debate between the opposition and members of the government, with both sides basing their arguments on lawyers' statements; the majority of lawyers, however, spoke out against Wade standing yet again. In the end, it came down to a decision by the Constitutional Council. Tensions reached fever pitch when Wade issued a statement saying that although he did say in 2007 he would not run again in 2012, he had changed his mind since then. This statement would go on to fire up the "Y'en a marre" and M23 movement during the pre-election period and the election campaign. In the end, the Constitutional Council, which comprised five judges appointed by Wade, decided at the end of January that Wade could run one more time; protest actions against his candidacy had actually begun a long time before then and had already resulted in several deaths.

The question about Wade's candidature dominated the pre-election period and the election campaign itself. Once a week, M23 supporters streamed to Obelisk Square in Dakar where thousands or tens of thousands of citizens demonstrated against Wade running again for President. The response by law enforcement personnel was occasionally so excessive that deaths ensued. Senegal's democracy was in danger of descending into chaos.<sup>15</sup>

14 | Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Volksaufstand in Senegal – Massenproteste zwingen Regierung zur Rücknahme eines Gesetzesentwurfs", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 29 Jun 2011, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/23256> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

15 | Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Unruhe vor den Wahlen", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 1 Feb 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30082> (accessed 5 Oct 2012). In this heated atmosphere, KAS Senegal organised a dialogue forum for ▶

Crisis teams and crisis management committees were set up in the European and U.S. embassies, the press interpreted every conflict as a negative omen for an election period that would be marred by violence. Wade and his ministers, for their part, conducted numerous charm offensives towards some and made threatening gestures towards others, seeking to shore up their position. **Wade and his ministers conducted numerous charm offensives towards some and made threatening gestures towards others, seeking to shore up their position.**

While the government had regularly requested assistance from international organisations with voter mobilisation during previous election periods, there was total silence this time. The Ministry of the Interior, which used to be responsible for organising elections in the past, passed this job on to the Ministry of Elections, which was set up especially for this purpose. Wade's government went this route to invalidate any accusations that the powerful Minister of the Interior Ousmane Ngom would try to manipulate the elections in advance.

When the Constitutional Council, which was made up of five judges appointed by Wade, declared the candidature of the incumbent to be legitimate and constitutional<sup>16</sup> at the end of January, the demonstrations continued. Some of the candidates deliberately abstained from campaigning in the provinces and concentrated on making an impression in the capital. They set out each day to demonstrate at the centrally located "Independence Square" and were hindered by the police with equal regularity. This resulted in frequent injuries, and some candidates were temporarily arrested. This dangerous "game of chicken" added greatly to the popularity and success of some opposition politicians. The Movement of 23 June continued its protest rallies in

representatives of the government, elected bodies and civil society to underline their role and importance in maintaining peace in society. Event report in: <http://www.kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/23414> (accessed 5 Oct 2012). Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Beitrag der Zivilgesellschaft zum sozialen Frieden – Rolle der gesellschaftlichen Akteure", *KAS-Veranstaltungsbeiträge*, 15 Jul 2011, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/23414> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

16 | Vgl. "Candidature d'Abdoulaye Wade: la décision du Conseil constitutionnel attendue dans la journée", *Jeune Afrique*, 27 Jan 2012, <http://jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20120127091553> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

Obelisk Square. Acts of violence occurred repeatedly both in Dakar and in the regions. The pre-election scenario did not bode well for the election campaign itself. But events actually ended up confounding expectations, thanks on the one hand to the level-headedness of most of the opposition candidates and to the calm determination of the population on the other, which had decided it would exert its power at the ballot box.

### THE AGED PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGERS

**Some observers even feared that Wade might be re-elected purely because there was no convincing challenger. Only a few were considered to have a chance of overcoming the one per cent hurdle.**

After scrutiny by the Constitutional Council, 14 official candidates were left out of 23 original contenders, including four highly skilled politicians, but also many relatively unknown faces from civil society.<sup>17</sup> Some observers even feared that Wade might be re-elected purely because there was no convincing challenger. Only a few were considered to have a chance of overcoming the one per cent hurdle. The Constitutional Council barred one prominent contender for the office of President: the musician Youssou N'Dour, apparently for formal reasons. But then the sudden candidature of fashion designer Diouma Dieng aroused great astonishment.

The opposition coalition Benno siggil Senegal (in the Senegalese official language Wolof: Unite to Empower Senegal) comprised the Socialist Party, some of its subsidiary parties and a small number of former or current communist parties. However, the coalition was deeply divided because while many of its members wanted to see a joint candidate supported by all, the PS and the social-democratic Alliance des Forces de Progrès (AFP) insisted that their respective leader become the unity candidate. Shortly before the 2000 elections, the AFP had separated from the PS and contributed significantly to the victory of the PDS and of Wade, and its leader Niasse had been regarded as "king-maker". The PS never forgave him for that. In the end, the PS leader Ousmane Tanor Dieng stood as the PS candidate and Moustapha Niasse stood for the AFP and the remaining parties of the opposition coalition.

17 | Andrea Kolb and Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Senegal: Wahlen oder nicht Wahlen?", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 24 Feb 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30283> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).



Tanor Dieng began his political career under Senghor and acted for many years as Prime Minister under Abdou Diouf, Senegal's second President. The uncharismatic party leader was often accused of being distant from the party grassroots. PS politicians who were more in touch with the people, such as Dakar's mayor Khalifa Sall and party speaker Abdoulaye Willane, tended to overshadow Dieng's actions. Moustapha Niasse was the first Prime Minister of the Wade government from 2000 to 2001, until Wade dismissed him from government along with all his ministers due to political differences. His political career had also started back in the Senghor and Diouf governments, where he took on various ministerial roles. Unlike many of his colleagues, Niasse is actually not a professional politician but a successful businessman, who places more importance on economic achievements than on state subsidies.

During its twelve years in government, the PDS followed the same course as the previously all-powerful PS. It assimilated numerous smaller parties and many politicians from other parties, and became a conglomerate of diverging political interests, which led to tendencies, tensions and schisms. Prime Minister Ideissa Seck, for instance, initially lauded by the President but then fallen from favour, an economist, former mayor of Thiès and a long-time supporter of Wade, founded a party of his own in 2005:

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Rewmi (Wolof: the country). Former Prime Minister Macky Sall, who had fallen out of favour as well, also founded a new party, the Alliance pour la République (APR) after his dismissal. Among all the opposition candidates, Sall was the only one who had planned his election campaign well in advance and then conducted it very efficiently. He decided to follow in Wade's footsteps, which meant that many people, consciously or unconsciously, linked his person to a position of power. Sall had been travelling to all regions, départements and rural communities for years, making intensive efforts to establish contact with the people and indicating his interest in the presidency at the same time.

## **TWO ELECTION ROUNDS, TWO WINNERS: MACKY SALL AND DEMOCRACY**

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Contrary to people's fears, things ran smoothly and peacefully on election day at the end of February.<sup>18</sup> Just under 53 per cent of the Senegalese population voted, with queues starting to form at the polling stations early in the morning. The turnout, which was relatively low for presidential elections, was actually not caused by a lack of interest but by the fact that many voters did not receive their voting cards, up to 50 per cent in some cities. Opposition politicians criticised the Ministry of the Interior, which claimed that the failure to deliver the cards was due to organisational errors – the opposition suggested that it was actually a subtle type of election manipulation. Similar to earlier elections, cases of vote buying and other manipulation attempts were uncovered. But these could not prevent Wade from failing to achieve the required absolute majority this time.<sup>19</sup>

No doubt, the work and coordination activities of the over 5,000 domestic and foreign election observers<sup>20</sup> helped to ensure that attempts at fraud were uncovered and vote-rigging could be prevented. The provisional results were received with restrained and almost incredulous joy. A second election round looked to be in the offing. One week later, the official results were published and a date was set for the runoff.

Wade had won just 35 per cent of the votes, followed by Macky Sall with 26 per cent. Moustapha Niasse attracted 13 per cent, which ranked him above his rival Tanor Dieng,

18 | Andrea Kolb and Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Senegal: Ruhige Wahlen, erste Tendenzen – Mäßige Wahlbeteiligung, zweiter Wahlgang zeichnet sich ab", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 27 Feb 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30306> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

19 | Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Die Demokratie hat gesiegt! Machtwechsel durch demokratische Wahlen – Freudentemonstrationen nach dem Erdrutschsieg von Macky Sall", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 26 Mar 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30590> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

20 | Cf. Electoral knowledge network, *Senegal: Observation Report 2012*, <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/SN/senegal-observation-report-presidential-election-2/view> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

who won 11 per cent. At 8 per cent, Idrissa Seck won a mere half of the votes he had attracted in 2007; many observers put this down to the fact that he had not disengaged from Wade and the PDS in a sufficiently decisive and convincing manner. Dakar's large suburbs such as Pikine and Guediawaye in particular but also regional capitals such as St. Louis, Thiès and Kaolack had voted decisively against Wade; only the regional capitals of Kedougou and Ziguinchor remained "loyal" to him, as did part of the rural population. The breakthrough by the opposition in the large cities had already been heralded at the local elections in 2009.

After the second election round had also proceeded peacefully and smoothly on 26 March, that evening turned into a celebration party for the Senegalese people. When President Wade, who had just been voted out, congratulated the election winner Macky Sall by phone, this served as an ice-breaker that brought the Senegalese people out onto the streets – this time to celebrate the victory won by Macky Sall and by democracy. The enthusiastic response swept through the entire country. In various interviews, politicians and members of the public expressed their pride in the political maturity of the country's inhabitants, who were now aware of the power of the ballot box and had used this power purposefully. The unpopular President had been voted out of office, but what was equally important was that the experience and the conviction of each individual citizen counted.

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#### **THE NEW PRESIDENT**

At 51, Sall is Senegal's youngest President to date. He was born in the town of Fatick in Central Senegal. His parents originally came from Northern Senegal and belong to the ethnic group of the Haalpulaar. Macky Sall stresses that his family was not rich, but that he had a happy childhood. Besides Wolof, he is fluent in Serer, the language of the Fatick region, Pulaar, the language of his parents, the official language French as well as English.



Macky Sall, here as a guest at the World Economic Forum 2011 in Cape Town, won the second ballot on 26 March. | Source: World Economic Forum / Eric Miller (CC BY-SA).

His political career started in the 1980s in the formerly Maoist party AJ/PADS. Sall says that he never actually subscribed to Marxism or Maoism. In 1989, he joined Abdoulaye Wade's liberal PDS, where he set out on a meteoric political career. As a mining engineer, he was given the post of Director General of the Senegalese oil company Petrosen. He was appointed presidential adviser in matters of energy and mining and two years later Energy Minister, and he was simultaneously elected mayor of Fatick. After a short period as Minister of the Interior and Government Spokesman, Sall became Prime Minister in 2004. In 2007, he acted as Wade's election campaign director, making a significant contribution to his re-election. As had happened to his predecessor in both roles, Idrissa Seck, Sall fell out of favour, but he still became President of the National Assembly for one year – until he showed a little too much interest in the use of state funds by the President's son and Transport Minister Karim Wade. When a piece of legislation tailor-made for his situation catapulted Macky Sall from the presidency of the National Assembly into the void, he resigned his membership of the PDS and founded a party of his own, the Alliance for the Republic/Hope (APR/Yaakar).

## THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Professional expertise, commitment and experience were the criteria that the new President of Senegal used when forming his government. The existing 40 departments were amalgamated into 25. Most regions of the country are represented, with priority given to experts who offer professional experience, but political commitment as well. Sall's government is not a purely "political" one, although the most important strategic posts are held by APR members: Foreign Minister, Minister of the Interior, Justice, Education and Communication. Nor is it a purely technocratic government, because many posts went to members of the APR and coalition parties in recognition of their commitment, as long as their profile satisfied the requirements of the particular department. Key posts were filled with experts, economists making up a noticeably high proportion.

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The large allied parties were awarded two departments each, the smaller ones one each. The selection was a delicate matter and caused some resentment particularly among the socialist parties. A further criticism concerned the low proportion of women. Just six of the 25 ministers are women, but they do hold strategically important posts: Justice, Health, Women, Commerce and Industry, Livestock and Urban Development and Housing.<sup>21</sup> The appointment of the singer Youssou N'Dour as Minister of Culture caused a sensation. This choice was particularly popular with the younger generation, but cultural activists have also voiced their approval. The appointment of environmental activist Ali Haidar was also greeted with joy and hope. Originally from the Lebanon, he set up the Oceanium, an environmental centre in Dakar, years ago and has campaigned energetically for the protection of the coastal areas, the mangroves and the last forests of the country. He is President of the West African Greens Parties Federation (FÉPEV-RAO).

21 | Vgl. "Gouvernement Macky 1: Six femmes à la barre", *Nouvel Horizon*, 822, 13-19 Apr 2012.

## THE CHALLENGES

Sall and his new government have taken on a country burdened by numerous “legacies”, with fundamental problems in many areas; solving these speedily and particularly in a sustainable manner is at the very top of the agenda. When Macky Sall stated in his inaugural address that “everything was urgent”,<sup>22</sup> he was talking about topics that kept coming up in the election campaign, namely the university and school crisis, the Casamance conflict, unemployment, the electricity supply and the crisis in agriculture. As soon as Sall had taken office, first efforts were made to tackle the problems affecting university and school education. Months of striking by teachers and lecturers in the spring had caused enormous delays in delivering the curricula; consequently, the Minister of Education extended the school year, postponed examinations and thus “salvaged”

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the year. Whether this action may not merely have been an illusory solution remains to be seen. What is certain is that the Senegalese education system is in severe crisis. The University of Dakar, whose student numbers have tripled in ten years, is seen as symptomatic of the situation. The current state of affairs is untenable as neither the infrastructure nor the human resources are adequate to cope with the numbers. The education system requires an in-depth analysis. Sall has also promised a new university to be constructed outside the city of Dakar. There is a need for apprenticeships, for new schools and universities to be set up; but above all the quality of education and vocational training must be reviewed and improved. Reflecting about the quality and orientation of education is also at the top of the To-Do list.

Similarly high priority is given to efforts to restore peace in the Casamance region, which has seen an increase in attacks and incursions over the last few months. The rebels frequently attack soldiers of the Senegalese army and continue to carry out attacks on the civilian population. In 2000, the Wade government had promised to resolve the crisis “within a hundred days”, but twelve years later there

22 | “‘Tout est urgent’ au Sénégal, déclare le nouveau président Macky Sall”, *Afriqinfos*, 4 Apr 2012, <http://afriqinfos.com/articles/2012/4/4/tout-urgent-senegal-declare-nouveau-president-macky-sall-199910.asp> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

is still no sustained peace in sight.<sup>23</sup> Sall already held talks with all the involved parties in his first few weeks in office, including the rebels and the neighbouring states of Gambia and Guinea Bissau. He signed an agreement with the Gambian President on a bridge over the Gambia River – a sign of hope for many inhabitants of the Casamance region.

The battle against unemployment, which affects particularly young adults and graduates, and the agricultural crisis are synonymous with the “social issue”. In this area, department ministers collaborate closely with employers’ organisations, trades unions and agrarian associations.<sup>24</sup> Fishing licences for European and Asian fishing fleets must also be reviewed and renegotiated as soon as possible. Senegal has already revoked around 30 fishing licences back in April.<sup>25</sup> Access to electricity and running water represents an issue of similar importance, as well as the expansion of infrastructure in rural areas and the fight against flooding and increasing criminality in Dakar. Sall is keen to improve public health with a universal health insurance system and wants to respond to complaints about the excessive prices of staple foods by boosting the affordability of basic commodities through a reduction in the VAT on staple foods.

Of course there is the question of how to fund the solutions to these most urgent problems. One prerequisite is the immediate implementation of reforms. One of the most troubling legacies of the Wade government is the loss of credibility affecting state institutions, which many observers think require rehabilitation. A first step in

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23 | Cf. Stefan Gehrold and Inga Neu, “Caught Between Two Fronts – In Search of Lasting Peace in the Casamance Region”, *KAS International Reports*, 10/2010, <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.20669> (accessed 17 Oct 2012). The Casamance conflict has also been analysed by the Senegalese lawyer and human rights activist Boucounta Diallo, *La crise casamancaise. Problématique et voies de solution*, Harmattan, Paris, 2009.

24 | Cf. the interview with the president of the largest Senegalese employers’ umbrella association and KAS partner CNP, Baidy Agne, who demanded more “economic patriotism”, in: *La Gazette*, 153, 5-12 Apr 2012, 22-23.

25 | The news website SeneNews had this to say on the subject: APS, “Gouvernement du Sénégal: Annulation de 29 licences de pêche”, *SeneNews*, 30 Apr 2012, <http://senenews.com/2012/04/30/gouvernement-du-senegal-annulation-de-29-licences-de-peche> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

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this direction is to shorten the presidential term from seven to five years. In addition, the new government has started to take stock of the finances of all public institutions and to publish the figures, which has already resulted in the arrest of some of the people in positions of responsibility under the "ancien régime" due to various financial misdemeanours. To some people, this approach is a witch hunt, to others it's a logical consequence. In this context, Sall has put the moral rehabilitation of the political culture on his agenda. Wheeling and dealing as well as corruption are to be banned, and all citizens are to be treated equally before the law and in public life. The Senegalese press has reported extensively on these cases and devoted entire issues to it, as did the *Gazette*, for instance, which was founded by Abdou Latif Coulibaly, a committed lawyer, who had repeatedly analysed and harshly criticised Wade and his regime.<sup>26</sup>

One issue that is intimately linked to this question is that of land ownership. Ever since Senghor's rule all agricultural land in Senegal has been in state ownership. However, Wade's government did not take this principle, which is enshrined in law, very seriously. Vast tracts of land were thus handed over to political office holders, such as deputies, ministers, chairmen of local councils, religious dignitaries as well as domestic and foreign investors.<sup>27</sup> Their hunger for land has caused riots in the Senegal River basin and even some deaths as members of local councils and the illegally dispossessed inhabitants of Mbane and Fanaye protested against the seizure of land tracts by ministers Karim Wade (the ex-President's son) and Djibo Ka (former Minister of the Environment) as well as other dignitaries. The land issue is also linked closely to the objective of social justice in other regions as well. In Kedougou, multinational companies mine for gold, and the displaced population frequently receives no compensation.<sup>28</sup> In the Thiès

26 | The issue of 12-19 April is devoted to the financial wrongdoing of the "ancien régime" and bears the title: "These machinations, which have contaminated the state".

27 | *La Gazette* entitled: "Les nouveaux 'saigneurs' de la terre", with a play on the homophones "Seigneur" (master) and "Saigneur" (butcher), 21 Nov 2011, <http://lagazette.sn/spip.php?article3415> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

28 | Cf. Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Hohe Haftstrafen nach Unruhen in Kedougou – Rechtsstaat im Senegal auf dem Prüfstand", \*



region, licences for the extraction of phosphate and calcium are causing anger, and in the capital region of Dakar, there is virtually no square metre that has not been built on, not even in the coastal area that is officially unsuitable for building along its entire length because it is under threat of erosion. The issue of the environment has not yet been reviewed adequately either. Waste disposal problems are not only suffocating the capital, Dakar, but are also becoming ever more urgent in the regional centres. The only way the energy crisis as well as the increasing deforestation and desertification can be tackled in the long term is through the use of renewable energies.

### **A NEW PARLIAMENT, A NEW BEGINNING?**

Contrary to the conflict and emotionally laden presidential elections in February and March of this year, both the election campaign and the parliamentary elections progressed with hardly any passions being aroused.

Only just under 37 per cent of those eligible actually voted. This behaviour, which might almost suggest a lack of interest, was due to a number of factors. While the presidential elections were considered crucial in a presidential republic based on the French model, many voters are not aware of the importance of parliamentary elections. A further reason for the low turnout was the lack of a single ballot paper. Due to the high number of parties, 24 separate ballot papers were handed out at the polling stations. This meant that only well-informed and committed voters were able to find their way quickly through the paper jungle and submit their vote. The numerous illiterate voters in particular were rather at a loose end.

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As expected, the results of the parliamentary elections in Senegal gave the governing coalition a comfortable majority in the National Assembly with 119 of 150 seats. The liberal "parent party" PDS managed to secure a creditable 24 seats as the major opposition faction, while the liberal splinter group of the President of the Senate Pape Diop only won four, as did the civic movement around Mansour Djamil Sy. Three further Muslim party leaders are also

represented in the parliament. The number of women has risen to 65, making up 43 per cent of the total number of seats.

The party constellation in the new parliament is quite interesting. The opposition comprises the PDS and several small parties. But not all small parties are actually in opposition; many are still keeping to the side lines and are more sympathetic to the government coalition Benno Bokk Yaakaar (United in Hope). The government coalition, for its part, is a conglomerate with greatly varying ideological roots:

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liberals, social democrats and socialists. On the one hand, this guarantees considerably more lively debates. On the other hand, it will probably make for some lengthy decision-making processes and a great deal of controversy.<sup>29</sup> We have already seen an indication of this in the election of the National Assembly Bureau and of the Committees, which occasioned serious disputes between the President's majority party APR and its allies. The latter felt that they had been overlooked and underrepresented when the most important posts were assigned; but they have at least one reason for satisfaction: Moustapha Niasse, once again "kingmaker" during the runoff and Sall's most important ally, was voted President of the National Assembly by a large majority. With his even temperament and his political experience he is now chairing a parliament that is composed mainly of inexperienced representatives and encompasses diverging political tendencies.

However, the question that occupies the members of Tanor Dieng's PS and the AFP of the President of the National Assembly Niasse is this: Will they be able to define and develop their profile during the years of the government coalition? In spite of the disparity in numbers, the socialists, comprising 17 deputies of the PS and 18 of the AFP, do form a counterweight to the 71 liberals (61 APR, 10 Rewni).

29 | Cf. "Après législatives. Benno et ses 4 pièges cardinaux" (Benno and his four main traps), where *Nouvel Horizon* of 6-12 July 2012 analyses the problems of the new government coalition on pages 12-14, focusing on the presidency of the National Assembly, institutional reforms, local elections and governance generally. *Nouvel Horizon*, 6-12 Jul 2012, 12-14.

The proportion of women deputies has more than doubled in the current legislative period as a result of a bill on gender equality in elected bodies approved last year. It should and could have been 50 per cent had there not been organisational problems. All parties actually adhered to the law and alternated men and women on their lists. Only one woman, however, was given top ranking; all other lists were headed by men. Added to this was the fact that the parliament is composed of deputies from national lists and regional lists. Ultimately, 65 women were voted into the National Assembly. Many observers assume that some changes will result from this configuration. The female deputies are expected to use a more pragmatic and creative approach to their role and make greater efforts to champion issues concerning people in the regions. We shall have to wait and see. There was a disappointment straightaway in the way the presidents of committees were chosen. Only four of the eleven posts went to women.

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#### **MARABOUTS AND IMAMS AS DEPUTIES – THE DESIRE FOR GREATER MORALITY IN POLITICS**

One group that is gaining in importance is that of the marabouts, who themselves form part of the religious brotherhoods in Senegal (Mourids, Tijani, etc.).<sup>30</sup> The caliph is the head of a dynasty that is based on the model of Senegal's historic power structures. The position of the caliph is similar to that of a king, with the marabouts representing the princes and minor dignitaries.<sup>31</sup> But what is often considered an anachronism by foreign observers is actually a functioning social model in Senegal, in which "modern" democratic structures have been built on a traditional substrate, with constant interaction between the two. In the past, the marabouts held no political power, but in many respects they did exercise a strong influence on political decision-making.<sup>32</sup>

30 | Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Islam und Demokratie in Senegal", *KAS-Auslandsinformationen*, 12/2007, <http://kas.de/wf/de/33.12801> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

31 | Cf. Christina Coulon, *Le marabout et le prince. Islam et pouvoir au Sénégal*, Pedone, Paris, 1981; Moriba Magassouba, *L'Islam au Sénégal*, Karthala, Paris, 1985.

32 | Cf. chapter "Marabutische Wahlhilfe von den Anfängen der senegalesischen Demokratie bis heute" in: Gierczynski-Bocandé, "Islam und Demokratie in Senegal", n. 30, 121.

Many observers described the entry of four Muslim dignitaries into the National Assembly as surprising and even disconcerting. It was considered an indication of a fusion between religion and politics, conjuring up a fear of the "religious faction" deploying religion to exert political pressure. While Senghor, Diouf and Wade were in office, marabouts would regularly issue voting recommendations. But as time went on, people took less and less notice. In the elections of the recent past, citizens no longer let religious leaders dictate to them who they should vote for.

But now that the marabouts have actually entered the political arena their opinion has suddenly become relevant once more. It would be wrong, however, to impute religious ambitions to them. Mbaye Niang, for instance, is a high-ranking official and an imam, who actually sat in the National Assembly during the previous legislative period as an elected deputy and not as a representative of his religion. He stresses that religion is important to him as a repository of values and a touchstone, but that he would not use Islam as a political argument in any dispute. He maintains that he is and remains a citizen and only performs his duties as an imam in his free time.

The marabout Serigne Mansour Djamil Sy furnished the greatest surprise of the parliamentary elections. The well-travelled representative of the Tijani brotherhood, which represents moderate Islam in Senegal, acted as one of the drivers of the civil rights movement of 23 June; after his return from New York and Jeddah, where he worked in the Islamic Development Bank, he campaigned for Wade to be voted out of office. He attracted a circle of well-known intellectuals and politicians, who were not able to get near the top of the lists in the conventional parties. Occupying the second place on the list was Elene Tine, who worked as a competent and committed party spokesperson for the social-democratic party AFP for many years and was not considered at government level nor at parliamentary list level in the coalition with Sall. She entered the National Assembly as a practicing catholic together with marabout Djamil Sy and two other members of the civic movement. Sy is regarded as a model of a religious dignitary who is uncompromising in his civic commitment to democracy and to the republic.

The great popularity of this marabout is an indication of what probably crucially motivated people to vote for a "religious" party. They expect qualities from the religious dignitaries that "conventional" politicians have apparently frequently been lacking: morality, respectability, loyalty, honesty and transparency. In a country in which politics are often equated with opportunism, egotism, corruption, cronyism and lax morals, it appears that the religious representatives are expected to play a special role.

### **OUTLOOK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND PARTIES**

The new deputies are faced with enormous challenges. The government coalition and the opposition must do everything in their power to support the government in its numerous reform projects and to provide efficient oversight. In addition, voters expect the deputies to be more accessible to members of the public and want them to become publicly and permanently involved in their constituencies. During previous legislative periods, deputies and senators were frequently accused of enjoying benefits at the expense of the taxpayer without making any attempt at championing their interests and concerns. Demands for a higher level of morality in political life are voiced frequently, and there are also calls for more democracy and greater co-determination within the political parties. It will no doubt also be interesting to see how the party landscape will develop over the next few years. The liberal PDS of former President Abdoulaye Wade has suffered several splits. First, the deposed Prime Minister Seck and Sall founded their parties Rewmi and APR. After Wade's defeat, the Bokk guiss guiss alliance (United vision, united direction) split off under the leadership of the President of the Senate Pape Diop. It alone secured 4 parliamentary seats.

**Demands for a higher level of morality in political life are voiced frequently, and there are also calls for more democracy and greater co-determination within the political parties.**

The voters' demands for institutional reforms were satisfied to some extent when the Senate was abolished in September. The National Assembly approved the respective bill put forward by the government by a great majority; the intention is to use the funds previously spent on the senators and on the running of the Senate on urgent government tasks. These include a solution to the recurring problem

of entire quarters of Dakar being flooded. Some people, however, complained that the abolition of the Senate was a bogus solution, that the institution as such was beneficial to a pluralistic democracy, but that the electoral system and the functions required review and reform.<sup>33</sup>

**After election periods marred by violence, Senegal has once more become the stabilising element in a region plagued by conflicts.**

Like the parliament, the party landscape also has a turbulent future ahead of it. Everybody is in agreement about wanting to lead Senegal on a course towards sustainable development. The challenges are enormous, as is the responsibility. The reason for this is that after election periods marred by violence, Senegal has once more become the stabilising element in a region plagued by conflicts. The country might be able to provide political impulses once again and become the trailblazer for democracy in West Africa. But is this noble desire actually realistic? Developments in Mali and in other neighbouring states are giving cause for concern.

#### **SENEGAL, MALI AND THE ISLAMIST THREAT TO THE SAHEL REGION**

On 22 March, one month ahead of the scheduled election date, President Amadou Toumani Touré of Mali was deposed by his own army. Although the military junta appointed a civilian interim president, he is considered to be doing the bidding of the military and does not carry much weight in his divided country anyway. The north of the country is controlled by the Islamists, the Tuareg having paved the way.<sup>34</sup>

33 | Some senators and deputies have made critical statements about the abolition of the Senate in the online daily newspaper *Rewmi*: [http://rewmi.com/suppression-senat-reactions\\_a67675.html](http://rewmi.com/suppression-senat-reactions_a67675.html) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

34 | On the genesis of the coup d'état and its repercussions see Andrea Kolb, "Malis unerwarteter Staatsstreich", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 22 Mar 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30568> (accessed 5 Oct 2012); Andrea Kolb, "Mali: Der Staat im Umbruch – Neue Hoffnung nach der Ernennung eines Übergangspräsidenten", *KAS-Länderbericht*, 13 Apr 2012, <http://kas.de/senegal-mali/de/publications/30730> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

After the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, thousands of Tuareg who had left Mali some years previously made their way back to Mali from Libya through the Sahara, heavily armed and intent on setting up the Tuareg state of Azawad in northern Mali, Niger and Mauretania. The Mali government had been seeking compromises and invited proposals for solving the Tuareg conflict for years and partly succeeded. But it was not prepared for this massive invasion from the north. The militant Tuareg movement MNLA killed a large number of Mali soldiers, who were poorly armed and thus offered virtually no resistance and ended up fleeing south. The soldiers' frustration manifested itself in several demonstrations and culminated in the coup d'état. Azawad remained a dream, because islamists from al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and other factions entered the fray and captured the large northern cities: Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu fell into their hands. Islamic law was introduced and Mali was in effect divided in two. The most important Tuareg rebel leader Iyad Ag Ghaly joined the Islamists and is now promoting the merciless application of sharia law.

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The Mali government and army are powerless to combat this development. After having rejected international support for their fight against the Islamists for several months, the President made an appeal to the UN in September 2012.<sup>35</sup> Although willingness to intervene in Mali was expressed in principle, nothing will happen before 2013. There was also hesitation to take action on the part of the security section of the African economic association CEDEAO; in the end, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast agreed to form an intervention force. Senegal will not be joining them, for understandable reasons; there are fears in the neighbouring country that Islamic terrorism might cross the border. The only way in which Senegal might conceivably provide support is through its experienced politicians offering political advice, as has already happened on several occasions "behind the scenes". The former opposition politician and now Senegalese minister Abdoulaye

35 | The French *Express* writes the following on this subject:  
 "Intervention in Mali. Everything still needs to be done",  
[http://lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/intervention-au-mali-tout-reste-a-faire\\_1169444.html](http://lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/intervention-au-mali-tout-reste-a-faire_1169444.html) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

Bathily had this to say on the topic: "Mali and Senegal, it's the same country, the same people, the same history. The Sahel constitutes a cultural entity."<sup>36</sup>

**Niger has approached the Tuareg issue with a great deal of skill and made some inroads into integrating this nomadic ethnic group, which is found throughout the northern part of West Africa.**

In many respects, Mali represents West Africa's Achilles heel, because a threat that is present in all Sahel countries had manifested itself here: the division between North and South, white and black populations, Islam and Christianity or African religions. Niger has approached the Tuareg issue with a great deal of skill and made some inroads into integrating this nomadic ethnic group, which is found throughout the northern part of West Africa. In spite of this, President Issoufou is afraid that the rebellion might spill over into his country.<sup>37</sup> In Mauretania, on the other hand, there have been repeated clashes, which nearly led to armed conflict with Senegal some twenty years ago.<sup>38</sup> The other countries adjoining Senegal, Guinea Bissau<sup>39</sup> and Guinea, are politically unstable and lack solid institutions. The Gambia is controlled by a dictator, who might not declare himself as such, but has sent a clear signal with the death penalty, which also applies to foreigners. Ivory Coast is still relatively vulnerable after its civil war, and Nigeria is suffering repeated Islamist attacks by Boko Haram, while Chad is by no means an established democracy. Wherever there is poverty, frustration and political instability, Islamist movements will find fertile ground.

36 | "Abdoulaye Bathily: le nord du Mali est 'une affaire de sécurité internationale'", interview with Abdoulaye Bathily, *Radio France Internationale (RFI)*, 1 Oct 2012, <http://rfi.fr/afrique/20121001-abdoulaye-bathily-le-nord-mali-une-affaire-securite-internationale-senegal> (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

37 | Cf. Christophe Châtelot, "Mahamadou Issoufou, 'La situation au Mali nous préoccupe beaucoup'", interview with Mahamadou Issoufou, *Le Monde*, 14 Feb 2012, [http://lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/02/14/mahamadou-issoufou-la-situation-au-mali-nous-preoccupe-beaucoup\\_1643250\\_3212.html](http://lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/02/14/mahamadou-issoufou-la-situation-au-mali-nous-preoccupe-beaucoup_1643250_3212.html) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

38 | Bruno Callies De Salies in *Le Monde diplomatique* (Feb 1997) explains Mauretania's situation in greater detail; there has not been a great deal of change since then. [http://monde-diplomatique.fr/1997/02/callies\\_de\\_salies/7747](http://monde-diplomatique.fr/1997/02/callies_de_salies/7747) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).

39 | Ute Gierczynski-Bocandé and Stefan Gehrold, "Guinea-Bissau: Präsident ermordet, Verfassung bleibt in Kraft", *KAS-Auslandsinformationen*, 3/2009, [http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_16373-544-1-30.pdf](http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_16373-544-1-30.pdf) (accessed 5 Oct 2012).



The situation in the Sahel region is serious. Military intervention can only be part of the solution. It will be necessary to pay particular attention to education and opinion-forming among the political and military elites, and Senegal will play a leading role in this area. Democratic development and firm action by a loyal and republican army can provide important guidance to decision-makers in other countries and contribute to greater peace and democracy in the region in the long term.