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Senegal

Macky Sall is the gravedigger of democracy in Senegal

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Unable to win the next elections, the incumbent president of Senegal is attempting yet another manoeuvre to ensure that the radical opposition does not win the presidential election.

True to the motto of African potentates: "You don't organize an election in order to lose it", President Macky Sall has undertaken a veritable constitutional coup by postponing the ballot until December 2024, just hours before the official election opening.

Plan A fails

Following the revision of the Constitution in 2016, President Sall had attempted to run for a third term, but to no avail in the face of opposition both within the country and internationally. He therefore appointed his successor, current Prime Minister Amadou Ba. This solitary decision provoked discontent and opposition. The presidential camp was divided and weakened by the emergence of dissident candidates.

Although the outgoing president had prepared the ground by removing his main rival Ousmane Sonko from the electoral game, dissolving his PASTEF (Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité) party, imprisoning dozens of opponents and muzzling the free press, his protégé's candidacy was not a success. And the imprisoned Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who is replacing Sonko, has a great chance of winning the election.

This is a real nightmare for the Senegalese elites, because PASTEF's programme aims to break all ties with the former colonial power, in particular by leaving the CFA franc, closing the French military base and adopting a policy independent of the hexagon [France].

Plan B falls apart

Faced with such a situation, willy-nilly, Macky Sall had to incorporate the candidacy of Karim Wade, the son of the former president, into his plan. He was forced into exile for many years as a result of corruption scandals. But if for a time Sall and Wade were opposed, necessity being the law, their union against Sonko's supporters was sealed. But then the press revealed Wade's dual French and Senegalese nationality, leading to the cancellation of his candidacy by the Constitutional Council. His party's MPs counter-attacked and demanded a commission of enquiry into allegations of corruption by two judges of the Constitutional Council. Secondly, the MPs from the President's camp voted in favour. Macky Sall took advantage of this situation, which his supporters had created, to talk of an institutional crisis and postpone the elections.

After having the opposition MPs removed by the gendarmerie, the majority of the National Assembly validated the new election date of 15 December and the presidential extension by the same amount. That's ten months, long enough to allow Macky Sall to reshuffle the deck so that the election results are in line with his wishes. Like a gambler cancelling a game because he has no trump cards left! From now on, anything is possible, including the streets overturning the table.

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15 February 2024

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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