

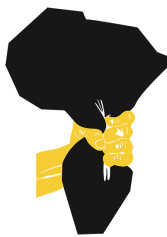
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Senegal

How to deal with illegitimate debt in Senegal?

- IV Online magazine - 2026 - IVP617 - June 2026 -



Publication date: Wednesday 24 June 2026

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Faced with abysmal levels of debt, Senegal's leaders are divided on the measures to be adopted, although in both orientations, the consequences for the populations are harmful.

The dismissal of prime minister Ousmane Sonko by president Diomaye Faye puts an end to the slogan of the PASTEF party, founded by Sonko: "Sonko mooy Dimayye" ("Sonko, it's Diomaye"), put forward during the 2024 presidential election, where Faye represented plan B since Ousmane Sonko was blocked from running.

Reasons for the breakup

A few months after the presidential election, which was won handily in the first round with 54% of the vote, the first differences between the two men emerged on justice issues, concerning the arrests of senior officials of the former regime for corruption. Sonko appeared to be the guardian of the orthodoxy of the PASTEF program, while Faye seemed anxious to preserve national harmony by opening dialogue with the former leaders of the Macky Sall regime.

Another source of divergence lies in the abysmal debt left by the previous regime. It amounts to 132% of the country's GDP. Many progressive economists unanimously agree: "Senegal's external debt and the obligations associated with its servicing are unsustainable." And for good reason: the country's revenues for 2025 are estimated at 4,382 billion CFA francs, while debt service for the same year was 4,400 billion CFA francs. So how do you deal with the problem?

Tactical differences

For Faye, a debt restructuring must be negotiated with the IMF. This implies the implementation of structural adjustment policies, even if we now speak of "budgetary consolidation". The result for the people remains the same: reduction in public services, particularly in education and health, as well as the removal of subsidies on electricity and gas prices. Experience shows that IMF policies only lead to debt perpetuation.

Sonko defines another way: to repay without going through the IMF, by mobilizing the country's internal resources. However, this sovereignist approach amounts to carrying out a policy of austerity against the population. At no time is there a challenge to the legitimacy of the debt by highlighting the responsibilities of the IMF and the previous regime of Macky Sall. The latter, with the benevolence of France, is now applying to succeed António Guterres at the head of the United Nations.

The solutions proposed by Faye and Sonko, although different, lead to the same result: the people will have to bear the burden of a debt that has in no way served to improve the living conditions of citizens.

On the other hand, the two leaders seem to agree to offer an outlet for social anger by stigmatizing the LGBT+ community, which is an integral part of the country's history. In the absence of social change, it is hate speech that is proposed, under the guise of tired reactionary verbiage.

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

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