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Senegal

Pop: 12.4mn. GDP: \$12.9bn. Growth: 4.7%
Violence could mar the regional, municipal and rural elections in the first quarter of 2009. President Abdoulaye Wade's PDS is divided and the opposition PS has a chance of revival after losing in 2007.

Gambia

Pop: 1.7mn. GDP: \$0.8bn. Growth: 4.5%
International pressure will grow on President Yahya Jammeh's autocratic regime for its record of extrajudicial killings, torture and kidnappings. Plans for uranium and oil production will yield little; farm sector remains weak.

Cape Verde

Pop: 0.5mn. GDP: \$1.7bn. Growth: 5.1%
Under President Pedro Pires' pragmatic rule, Cape Verde's good governance and high growth will continue in 2009, qualifying it to be one of the few African countries to meet most of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

Guinea-Bissau

Pop: 1.7mn. GDP: \$0.4bn. Growth: 2.8%
The PAIGC's winning of 67 seats in the November 2008 parliamentary elections offers President João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira a slim chance to stabilise the fractious political system amid threats from the military and foreign drug traffickers.

Guinea

Pop: 9.4mn. GDP: \$5.3bn. Growth: 3.7%
A junta led by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara seized power in December 2008 and is under international pressure to hold elections and cede power by July. It will review bauxite, gold and iron ore mining contracts.

Sierra Leone

Pop: 5.8mn. GDP: \$1.8bn. Growth: 5.1%
President Ernest Bai Koroma must manage a power struggle within the ruling APC, after which a cabinet reshuffle is likely. He must also start to deliver on his electricity and healthcare promises.

Liberia

Pop: 3.8mn. GDP: \$1.2bn. Growth: 11.0%
China Union's \$1.2bn. investment in iron ore mining boosts economy as will the restart of diamond and timber exports. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's minority government will remain under pressure in parliament.

Côte d'Ivoire

Pop: 19.3mn. GDP: \$22.7bn. Growth: 3.1%
National elections are postponed until October due to political problems with voter registration. President Laurent Gbagbo wants to undermine an alliance between oppositionists Alassane Ouattara and Henri Konan Bédié.

Ghana

Pop: 23.4mn. GDP: \$16.8bn. Growth: 5.6%
The narrow victory of President John Atta Mills and the NDC in presidential and parliamentary elections will constrain the new government's ability to tackle economic problems before oil production starts in 2010.

Togo

Pop: 6.6mn. GDP: \$2.8bn. Growth: 2.4%
Key constitutional reforms are set to be approved and implemented ahead of national elections in 2010 when President Faure Gnassingbé will face oppositionist Gilchrist Olympio.

Benin

Pop: 9.0mn. GDP: \$5.9bn. Growth: 5.1%
Since President Thomas Yayi Boni's FCBE lost control of the National Assembly to a united and determined opposition, he has tried to rule by decree. He will also attempt to reform the constitution.

Nigeria

Pop: 147.9mn. GDP: \$210bn. Growth: 5.8%
Worries about President Umaru Yar'Adua's health continue in 2009, prompting a jostling for power in the ruling PDP. A constitutional review will report in March. Oil Minister Rilwanu Lukman will oversee the sector's reforms.

Morocco

Pop: 30.9mn. GDP: \$84.4bn. Growth: 4.0%
King Mohammed VI celebrates ten years in power in July, having set up truth and reconciliation commissions. Yet Premier Abbas el Fassi's government is much criticised. Fears of a new war in Western Sahara.

Western Sahara

Pop: na. GDP: na. Growth: na
Polisario is threatening to restart the war - for the first time since 1991 - due to Morocco's intransigence on holding a referendum on the territory. United States diplomat Christopher Ross takes over as mediator.

Mauritania

Pop: 3.1mn. GDP: \$3.0bn. Growth: 5.9%
Coup leader General Abdel Aziz can expect tougher African, European and US sanctions after the junta announced unconvincing plans for elections in May. Economic pressures will mount due to lower revenues from oil and mining.

Algeria

Pop: 33.9mn. GDP: \$159bn. Growth: 3.8%
Parliament's passing of constitutional changes in 2008 allows President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for a third term in April: he is justifiably confident of winning.

Mali

Pop: 12.3mn. GDP: \$7.3bn. Growth: 3.9%
Recent attacks by Tuareg rebels have elicited a strong response from President Amadou 'Toumani' Touré, whose government faces local elections in March. ATT is to review constitutional reform proposals and sell off more state firms.

Tunisia

Pop: 10.2mn. GDP: \$39.2bn. Growth: 3.7%
President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali's fifth term in office will begin after he wins October's presidential elections. He has no recognised successor. Premier Mohammed Ghannouchi's government is full of lightweights.

Burkina Faso

Pop: 14.8mn. GDP: \$8.3bn. Growth: 4.6%
President Blaise Compaoré is preparing his next and perhaps final run for the presidency in 2010. Despite a poor record on corruption and human rights, his government will continue to receive EU aid.

Niger

Pop: 14.2mn. GDP: \$4.9bn. Growth: 3.6%
President Mamadou Tandja's supporters want to change the constitution to allow him to stand for another term in the December elections. Niger is selling its uranium to China and France; oil production is due to start in 2010.

Libya

Pop: 6.2mn. GDP: \$78.9bn. Growth: 7.8%
Huge investment is promised in housing, transport and power to mark 40 years of Colonel Moammar el Gaddafi's rule. A constitutional reform may separate the Guide from day-to-day government; his children compete to succeed him.

Chad

Pop: 10.8mn. GDP: \$8.8bn. Growth: 2.8%
President Idriss Déby Itno's survival this year will depend on strengthening his grip on his own forces, more military support from France and the weakening of Sudan's capacity to sponsor rebel attacks on Ndjamena.

Central African Rep.

Pop: 4.3mn. GDP: \$2.0bn. Growth: 4.2%
President François Bozizé will try to move forward with his plans for a power-sharing government with oppositionists and an amnesty for rebel factions, despite scepticism.

Uganda

Pop: 30.9mn. GDP: \$12.9bn. Growth: 5.9%
The long march to the 2011 elections continues as President Yoweri Museveni promotes cabinet and military loyalists. The FDC's Kizza Besigye can expect to face dissent; Norbert Mao will be the DO candidate.

Egypt

Pop: 75.5mn. GDP: \$151bn. Growth: 4.5%
Octogenarian President Hosni Mubarak wants to boost his son Gamal's position in the succession stakes against political and military rivals. The government will increase pressure on clandestine Muslim Brotherhood activists.

Sudan

Pop: 38.5mn. GDP: \$37.0bn. Growth: 8.0%
A tumultuous year starts with the International Criminal Court issuing an arrest warrant for President Omer el Beshir for war crimes in Darfur. The census and election plans may further weaken the North-South peace deal.

Eritrea

Pop: 4.8mn. GDP: \$1.5bn. Growth: 2.0%
President François Bozizé will try to force Ethiopia to accept the virtual boundary demarcation and will continue to back Ethiopian oppositionists and Islamist forces in Somalia. Economic pressure grows.

Ethiopia

Pop: 79.1mn. GDP: \$23.5bn. Growth: 6.0%
Enmity with Eritrea will continue to dominate Addis Ababa's foreign policy following its withdrawal from Somalia. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi will ramp up pressure on oppositionists and civic activists ahead of the 2010 elections.

Djibouti

Pop: 0.8mn. GDP: \$0.9bn. Growth: 5.6%
An opposition boycott of the 2008 parliamentary elections means that President Omar Guelleh's ruling UMP coalition will continue to dominate the legislature. Djibouti's territorial dispute with Eritrea will rumble on.

Somalia

Pop: 8.7mn. GDP: na. Growth: na
Fighting between Islamists loyal to Al Shabaab and those loyal to ARS is set to intensify in early 2009. Plans for a government of national unity will rely on regional commitment and well-equipped peacekeepers.

Kenya

Pop: 37.5mn. GDP: \$30.3bn. Growth: 3.7%
The grand coalition between President Mwai Kibaki and PM Raila Odinga will work uneasily while its members quarrel over investigations into political violence and corruption, and the census, due by the end of 2009.

Tanzania

Pop: 40.4mn. GDP: \$19.8bn. Growth: 6.3%
President Jakaya Kikwete will boost his anti-corruption and economic management credentials ahead of national elections that he and the CCM are slated to win in 2010. A major cabinet reshuffle looms in 2009.

Seychelles

Pop: 0.1mn. GDP: \$0.8bn. Growth: 0.5%
President James Michel's government faces growing pressure as tourism earnings plummet but improving relations with Mauritius may help plans for joint oil and gas exploration beyond their maritime borders.

Comoros

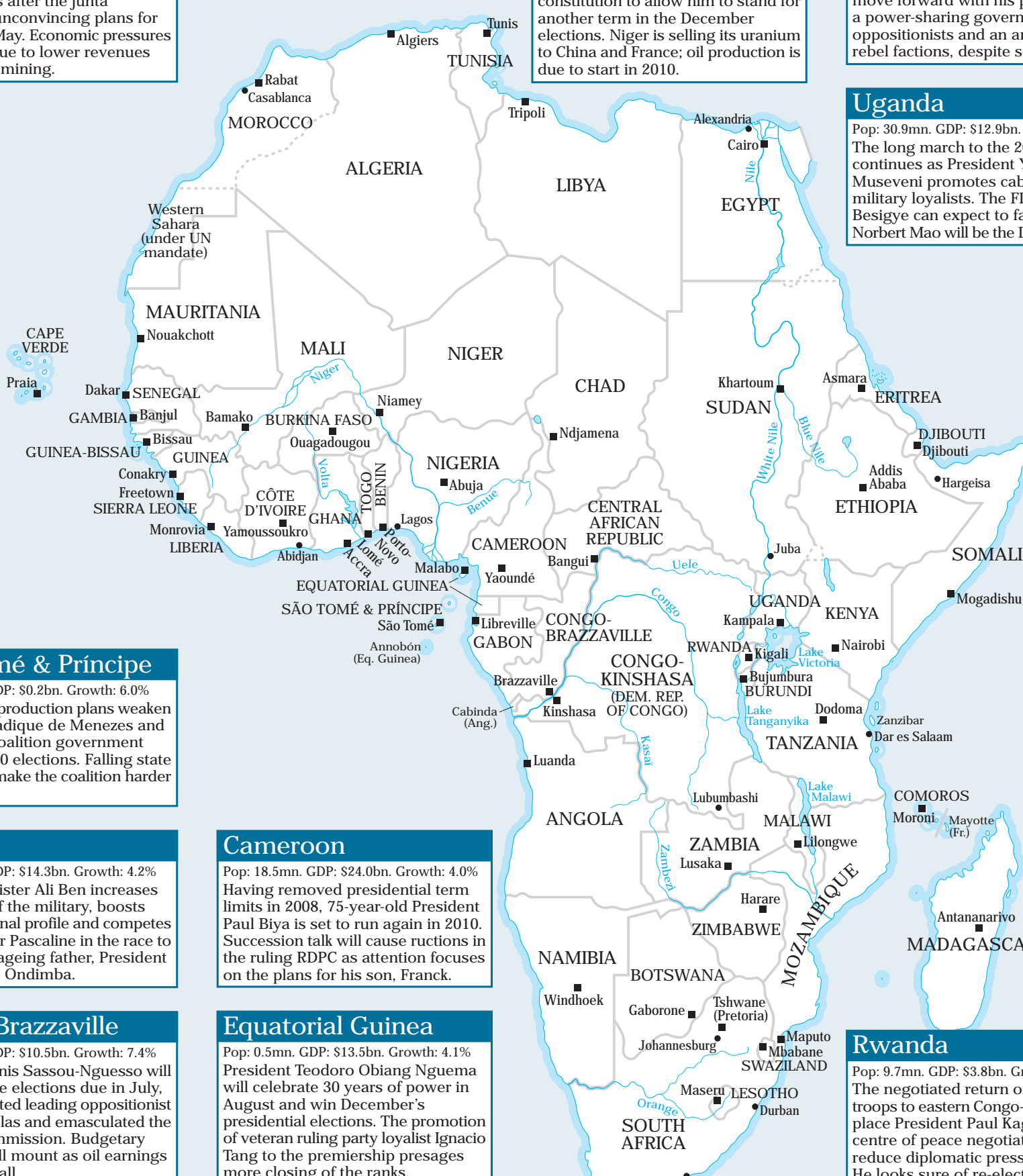
Pop: 0.6mn. GDP: \$0.5bn. Growth: 1.2%
President Ahmed Sambi has been greatly strengthened by the AU's March 2008 intervention against Mohammed Bacar's secessionist regime in Anjouan. China and the IMF are lending the government \$6 mn.

Madagascar

Pop: 19.7mn. GDP: \$9.0bn. Growth: 6.0%
President Marc Ravalomanana's TIM faces a new opposition group led by Roland Ratsiraka, after an opposition victory in the mayoral elections in the capital. A major new ilmement project will start exports in 2009.

Mauritius

Pop: 1.3mn. GDP: \$7.9bn. Growth: 3.8%
Ahead of the 2010 elections, Premier Navin Ramgoolam's Labour government will try to mitigate the economic slowdown's effects on sugar and textile exports. Paul Berenger will struggle to form an opposition alliance.



Pop: 2008 population GDP: 2008 Gross Domestic Product Growth: GDP growth prediction for 2009 Sources: World Bank Development Indicators; IMF

2009 Calendar

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
Monday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	Monday
Tuesday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	Tuesday
Wednesday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	Wednesday
Thursday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	Thursday
Friday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	Friday
Saturday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	Saturday
Sunday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	Sunday