

Mali: Gold refinery in Bamako

The military government has signed an agreement with Russia to build a refinery that will process 200 tonnes of gold per year. Gold is Mali's most important export product in terms of value. 23.11.2023

Nigeria: Prisoners released to reduce overcrowding

4,068 of the 80,804 inmates in the 253 correctional centres who were imprisoned due to their inability to pay fines were released. The fines totalling 585 million naira (€ 650,000) were cancelled. According to the United Nations, Nigerian prisons are 147% overcrowded and prisoners often wait years to be tried. 22.11.2023

Russian grain shipments

The first recipients of free grain from Russia in about a week - 25,000 tonnes each - will be Somalia and Burkina Faso. Relations between Russia and Somalia have intensified. In July, Russia granted the East African country debt relief of up to USD 13 billion. Russia also offered to supply the Somali army with military equipment for the fight against terrorism. The list of beneficiaries also includes the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali and Zimbabwe (200,000 tonnes in total). The delivery planned for Zimbabwe around the end of the year is large enough to significantly distort the market, in which South Africa is a major supplier. 22.11.2023

Mystery of desert glass solved

Libyan desert glass is a rare and enigmatic type of natural glass found in the Great Sand Sea Desert. It is known for its beauty, rarity and mystery. Its origin has been disputed for decades; now recent research has revealed that Libyan desert glass was formed by the impact of a meteorite on the Earth's surface. The glass is around 29 million years old and contains small minerals called zirconium oxides (ZrO₂), which can only form at high temperatures and high pressure. This discovery is clear evidence that the glass was formed by a meteorite impact, but the exact location of the original crater remains a mystery. 22.11.2023

Malawi: Strict savings programme

President Lazarus Chakwera has suspended all international travel for himself and his entire government in order to save money. All ministers who are currently abroad are to return immediately. The aim is to cut expenditure in times of acute shortages. Malawi is to devalue its kwacha by 44% in order to receive further aid from the World Bank. The measure is to remain in force until March 2024. As a result, Chakwera will not be able to travel to the COP 28 climate summit in Dubai in November/December. 22.11.2023

EU export ban on plastic waste

The EU Parliament has decided that plastic waste can no longer be exported to non-OECD countries within two and a half years of the new regulation coming into force; this means that plastic waste exports to Africa or large parts of Asia are initially prohibited. The export of plastic waste to OECD countries will be subject to stricter conditions. New regulations will then come into force. Non-OECD countries have the option of applying for exemptions, provided that their waste management fulfils certain conditions. *OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development with 38 member states.* 21.11.2023

"Compact with Africa"

The "Compact with Africa" conference has been in existence since 2017. The central topics are: Migration, energy and climate change. Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo emphasised that simply exporting raw materials is a thing of the past. Federal President Steinmeier addressed the demands of African countries to move away from "the traditional division of roles between donors and recipients". 13 African countries belong to the group of states: Egypt, Ethiopia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. Other countries are interested in joining. 21.11.2023

Liberia: Peaceful transition of power

The country's electoral commission announced that 78-year-old Boakai, a former vice president, won a narrow victory with 50.9 % of the vote to Weah's 49.1 %. Weah, the incumbent president, in an address to the nation said: "The Liberian people have spoken and we have heard their voice ...I urge you to follow my example and accept the outcome of the elections. 20.11.2023

Harare - state of emergency declared due to cholera

A state of emergency has been declared in the capital Harare due to an outbreak of cholera that has claimed dozens of lives across the country. Harare, a city of 1.5 million inhabitants, has been hit hard by cholera. This outbreak comes at the height of the country's economic crisis. Most public hospitals are closed due to a shortage of medicines and the exodus of health workers. Comparisons are being drawn with 2008, when cholera claimed at least 4,000 lives in Zimbabwe and sickened at least 100,000 people. 20.11.2023

No sanctions against Russian diamonds

At the plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process in Victoria Falls, there was disagreement over the imposition of sanctions against Russian diamonds. Sulayem (Chairman of the Dubai Diamond Exchange) said that a ban on Russian diamonds would have a negative impact on Africa. The USA's main concern was that Russia would use the proceeds from its diamond trade to finance its war in Ukraine. The CAR (Central African Republic), a strong ally of Russia, where the paramilitary Wagner Group is most active in Africa, joined Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in opposing an expansion of the definition of conflict diamonds. No communiqué was published at the end of the meeting.

Protests against TotalEnergies' Mozambique project

Environmental lobby groups are calling for banks and other financiers to withdraw their support for TotalEnergies' \$20bn liquefied natural gas terminal in Mozambique. The French company is preparing to restart Africa's largest foreign direct investment project. Dutch lawmakers insist they be consulted on safety and human rights issues before they could approve a \$1.06bn loan guarantee for the project, which has been blocked since April 2021. Activists warn that the project could exacerbate climate change and encourage human rights abuses in the impoverished southern African country.

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