

US government restricts import licences

Uganda is no longer a beneficiary of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa). The US has also removed three other African countries, the Central African Republic, Gabon and Niger, from the Agoa with effect from 1 January. The decree issued by US President Joe Biden on 29 December will deprive Kampala of the ability to export certain goods to the US without additional taxes. This could have a serious impact on the Ugandan economy, which has benefited significantly from the programme since its introduction in 2000. 03.01.2024

Cocaine seizures on key route

Police in Morocco have seized 1.488 tonnes of cocaine in a joint operation with Spanish security forces. The cocaine was found hidden in banana boxes in a shipping container on board a ship in the harbour of Tangier Med. The ship came from South America and was en route to Turkey. The raid came just one day after the authorities seized almost 363kg of cocaine from a lorry attempting to enter Morocco via the border with Mauritania. The North African country is considered a key route for drug smuggling from South America to Europe. 03.01.2024

Congo DRC: Incumbent declared election winner

According to the preliminary results, incumbent Félix Tshisekedi received 73.3% of the votes cast. Moïse Katumbi received 18%, Martin Fayulu 5% and Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege less than 1%. Around 44 million people were eligible to vote; around 18 million voted (voter turnout 40%). The preliminary results will be submitted to the Constitutional Court for confirmation. The opposition speaks of electoral fraud and calls on people to take to the streets en masse. The elections on 20 December were marred by widespread logistical problems that were deliberately created.

Port agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland

The Somali cabinet has convened an emergency meeting to discuss a port agreement between Ethiopia and the breakaway region of Somaliland on the use of the Red Sea port of Berbera. The agreement, signed by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi, paves the way for Ethiopia to establish commercial maritime operations with access to a leased military base on the Red Sea. In return, Somaliland receives a share in the state-owned airline Ethiopians. Since Eritrea gained independence in 1991, Ethiopia has been a landlocked country and therefore relies on neighbouring Djibouti for most of its maritime trade. 02.01.2024

Russian Embassy in Ouagadougou

Russia has reopened its embassy in Burkina Faso, which was closed in 1992, and is thus continuing its rapprochement with the country in the Sahel region, which has been led by a military regime since last year and is redefining its partners following the break with France. 30.12.2023

Morocco: Social benefits from today

Almost one million disadvantaged families are to receive direct monthly benefits for the first time, a system that has not existed in the kingdom for many years. In total, almost one million families are expected to benefit. These targeted family subsidies are part of a comprehensive

social reform introduced by King Mohammed VI in 2020. According to Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch, beneficiaries will receive at least 500 dirhams (just over 51 dollars) per month, regardless of the composition of the family. A budget of 25 billion dirhams (around 2.5 billion euros) is required for 2024 to implement this programme. 28.12.2023

Zimbabwe: Unmanned border posts

By the end of next year, Zimbabwe is set to become the first country besides Dubai to have an unmanned border crossing where travellers can enter and exit the country with their electronic passports and have their fingerprints and faces scanned without having to go through traditional manned border control. This system uses the biometric data stored in the passport, such as fingerprints and facial recognition, to verify the identity of the traveller, whose face and fingerprints are scanned and compared. As soon as the traveller's identity has been verified, the barrier is lifted, and the traveller is allowed to pass through the unmanned border crossing. 22.12.2023

Kenya: New partners: Congo River Alliance

Kenya has distanced itself from Congolese opposition figure Corneille Nangaa, who has formed an alliance with militants in Nairobi, leading to a diplomatic row with Kinshasa. The Congo River Alliance was founded in Nairobi on 15 December 2023. The new alliance, which according to Nangaa is intended to bring together various Congolese armed groups, militias and social and political organisations, is an additional problem in a region where insecurity has prevailed for decades, fuelled by ethnic rivalries and the struggle for resources. The Kenyan Foreign Ministry announced a clear disassociation from the politico-military alliance and promised to investigate the matter after the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) recalled its ambassador in protest.

Kenya: Trade agreement with the EU

The agreement was signed in the presence of President Ruto and EU Commission President Von der Leyen, but will only come into force once it has been ratified by both parliaments. Kenya is to receive duty-free and unlimited access to the EU for selected products. In return, Kenya must gradually open its market to EU products. The EU is already Kenya's most important export market and second largest trading partner with a total value of around €3.3 billion in 2022. 19.12.2023

Egypt: New term in office

According to the electoral commission, President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi has won a third term in office with just under 90% of the vote. 3 insignificant opponents could not challenge him. In his first and second elections in 2014 and 2018, Fattah el-Sissi even received 97% of the vote. He can now remain in power until 2029. There have been no free elections in Egypt since he seized power in 2013. 19.12.2023

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