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AFRICA NEWSBRIEF

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Welcome to this week's edition of the Africa Weekly Brief

Each week, we bring you a selection of the most significant political, security, and economic developments across the continent. Key stories that reflect the dynamics shaping Africa today.



This week's topics:

1. Johannesburg, the first G20 in Africa
2. The Sahara, Washington's New Strategic Priority?
3. In less than a month, the Africa Cup of Nations begins in Morocco
4. Between Ivory Coast and Guinea, who will emerge as the challenger for West African gold?

1. Johannesburg, the first G20 in Africa

American boycott.

Hosting the G20 in South Africa is “a disgrace,” according to Donald Trump, reports special correspondents in Johannesburg. Pretoria has quickly become the U.S. president’s favorite target, influenced in part by Elon Musk, the “inventor of the white genocide,” who convinced “the American administration to grant refugee status to Afrikaners.” Furthermore, South Africa’s complaint

before the ICC accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza has further angered the White House.

Debt. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa placed debt at the center of the first G20 meeting ever held on the continent. The African experts’ group submitted a report advocating “systemic change rather than temporary debt relief.” A key recommendation is the creation of a borrowers’ club—a platform to give African nations more collective leverage.

New geopolitical landscape. The summit “is part of a broader geopolitical reconfiguration. Africa has become a zone of intense competition between China, which has massively invested in infrastructure; the United States, which is trying to regain influence; the European Union, torn between cooperation and migration control; and emerging powers such as India, Turkey, and Brazil.



2. The Sahara: Washington's new strategic priority?

For decades, the United States avoided direct involvement in Western Sahara. But to reinforce the Abraham Accords, counter Chinese and Russian advances, and stabilize the Sahel, Donald Trump abandoned that neutrality.

Persuasion without pressure. Washington's approach aims to push Algeria toward minimal de-escalation with Morocco—without damaging ties with Algiers—keeping the conflict at a manageable level.

Economic diplomacy. The strategy is part of a wider plan. Further south, the Sahel is crucial for the U.S., which seeks to secure an Atlantic corridor linking Sahelian resources (gold, lithium, uranium, critical minerals) to stable port infrastructures such as those in Morocco.



3. Less than one month before AFCON begins in Morocco

Place your bets. In twenty-nine days, the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations will kick off, running from December 21 to January 18. The competition looks open as usual. Here is a quick overview of favorites and potential surprises.

The expected contenders.

Morocco, playing at home, has a strong squad and faces huge expectations. Fourth at the 2022 World Cup and benefiting from an easy group, the Atlas Lions are among the big favorites. Côte d'Ivoire (title holder), Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt, and Algeria are also strong contenders.

Those who can hope.

AFCON is also the tournament of surprises: Cameroon, ever unpredictable; Tunisia, brilliant in qualifiers but often disappointing later; South Africa, third in 2024; as well as DR Congo, Mali, and Burkina Faso—all capable of making a deep run. See you in a month.



4. Côte d'Ivoire or Guinea: Who will become West Africa's gold challenger?

Rising powers. Surging gold prices are intensifying competition in West Africa. While Ghana remains the leader, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea are rapidly advancing thanks to attractive legal frameworks and promising geology.

Full speed ahead. Côte d'Ivoire is experiencing a wave of major discoveries, while Guinea is attracting large foreign investments. Both hope to capitalize quickly amid the relative decline of Mali and Burkina Faso, plagued by political and security instability.

How to win? The momentum is fragile: Guinea raises concerns with opaque decisions, and Côte d'Ivoire is preparing mining reforms. Only stable, predictable governance will allow either country to convert potential into lasting regional leadership.

