

MOGADOR
SOLUTIONS



AFRICA NEWSBRIEF

Week 49

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- BENIN: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ATTEMPTED COUP D'ÉTAT
- 2- EXPLOSION ON A TANKER OFF DAKAR: IS THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR REACHING SENEGAL?
- 3- GRAND INGA: CAN THE DRC FINALLY UNLOCK ITS ENERGY POTENTIAL?

1. BENIN: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ATTEMPTED COUP D'ÉTAT IN COTONOU

Cotonou woke up on Sunday, December 7, to the sound of gunfire when a group of soldiers attacked the residence of President Patrice Talon while he was inside. Shortly afterward, they announced on state television that they had “removed the Beninese president from office.” However, several of our sources quickly stated that he was safe and that the army was regaining control.



Situation Under Control

Reached by Jeune Afrique in the morning, Benin’s Finance Minister, Romuald Wadagni, confirmed that “the situation [was] under control.” “The mutineers are cornered,” he said. “We are clearing the area, but it's not over yet. We are safe.” Throughout the morning, helicopters flew over the city, and downtown Cotonou was cordoned off by armed forces.

“This is just a small group of people who only have control of the television station,” a source close to the presidency told AFP. “The regular army is taking back control. The city and the country are completely secure.” Earlier, the

French Embassy reported on X that “gunfire [had] been reported near the residence of the President of the Republic,” urging French nationals to stay indoors “as a safety precaution.”

The mutineers, who claimed to have deposed Patrice Talon, briefly took control of the headquarters of the national broadcaster ORTB, which aired their message on loop early in the morning. They were reportedly led by Lieutenant-Colonel Pascal Tigri, head of the Special Forces Group.

Before the television signal was cut, the mutineers declared they had formed a “Military Committee for the Refoundation,” suspended the Constitution along with all institutions and political parties, and announced the closure of Benin’s borders.

“A Small Group of Soldiers”

Shortly before noon, ORTB’s signal was restored. Benin’s Interior Minister, Alassane Seïdou, stated that the situation was now under control.

“Early this Sunday morning, December 7, 2025, a small group of soldiers launched a mutiny aimed at destabilizing the state and its institutions. In response, the Beninese Armed Forces and their leadership, faithful to their oath, remained republican. Their counterattack allowed them to retain control of the situation and thwart the plot,” the minister declared in a short address, before urging the population to “go about their activities as normal.”

In power since 2016, Talon was preparing to step down the next presidential election is scheduled for April, and he as designated a successor, Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni.

Latest development (7th dec. 1200 GMT)

Benin's interior minister, Alassane Seidou, said in a statement on Sunday that the West African country's armed forces had thwarted an attempted coup. His statement came after a group of soldiers appeared on Benin's state television claiming to have removed President Patrice Talon from office and dissolved all state institutions

2. EXPLOSION ON A TANKER OFF DAKAR: IS THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR REACHING SENEGLAL?

A tanker linked to Russia and carrying nearly 40,000 tons of petroleum products suffered major damage after several explosions off the coast of Dakar, raising fears of an environmental disaster and suspicions of Ukrainian involvement. The Mersin, flying a Panamanian flag but owned by Turkish company Besiktas Shipping, reported the incident during the night of November 27–28. Images of the drifting vessel circulated widely, prompting concerns about a potential oil spill in Senegalese waters.



Senegalese authorities reacted quickly: Navy divers and explosive-disposal teams were deployed to inspect the damaged hull, while anti-pollution units were activated.

The Port of Dakar later announced that the tanker was stable despite rough sea conditions. To minimize ecological risks, authorities also began transferring the fuel cargo to Dakar. Greenpeace and other environmental groups called for full transparency regarding the cause of the explosions.

Besiktas Shipping confirmed that the vessel had been struck by four “external explosive charges,” causing significant flooding in the engine room but no casualties or pollution. The company insisted that the ship remained structurally stable and posed no immediate danger.



Maritime security experts increasingly suspect an **act of sabotage motivated by the vessel's connection to Russia**. Ukraine is believed to view tankers like the Mersin as part of a “shadow fleet” used by Moscow to secretly transport oil in spite of international sanctions. Since late 2024, at least seven Russia-

linked tankers around the world have been hit by unexplained explosions. Ukraine recently acknowledged striking two sanctioned tankers off Turkey, suggesting a widening campaign targeting vessels facilitating Russian oil exports.

Besiktas Shipping has suspended all operations involving Russia, citing unacceptable risks to its crews. Turkey condemned what it called a “worrying escalation.” Senegal has not yet issued an official response. The incident underscores how the Russia-Ukraine conflict is increasingly extending into distant maritime regions, including West Africa.

3. GRAND INGA: CAN THE DRC FINALLY UNLOCK ITS ENERGY POTENTIAL?

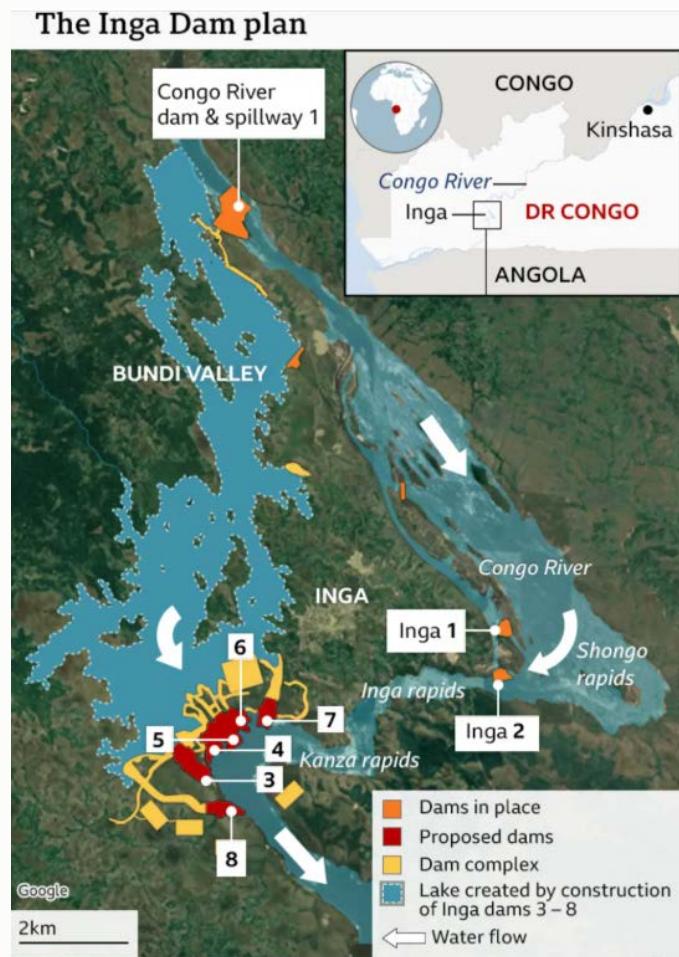
Delayed for decades, the Grand Inga hydropower project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is back in the spotlight thanks to renewed support from the World Bank. The idea dates to the late 19th century, when geographer Alphonse-Jules Wauters identified the immense hydroelectric potential of the Congo River at Inga, where a 150-meter drop occurs over just 20 km. The vision materialized partially with the construction of Inga I (351 MW) in 1972 and Inga II (1,424 MW) in 1982.



From the 1990s onward, studies expanded the ambition into a multi-phase complex known as Grand Inga, with an estimated capacity of 44 GW, enough to power more than half of Africa, where installed capacity (excluding South Africa) was only 63 GW in 2021. Yet political instability, governance issues, and financing challenges stalled progress. Inga I and II deteriorated, and Grand Inga repeatedly shifted direction, from supplying South Africa to

powering Katanga's mines. The World Bank even withdrew from the project in 2016.

Multiple consortiums: Chinese, European, and later the Australian mining group Fortescue, signed agreements to develop Inga III (the first 11-GW phase), but none has advanced. Momentum returned in 2023–2024 when the World Bank resumed its involvement, approving a first tranche of USD 250 million (out of USD 1 billion) to finance pre-construction studies. President Félix Tshisekedi called it a strong signal of confidence. The initial focus will be on improving living conditions for 1.2 million residents of Kongo Central, where the project is located.



The stakes are immense: 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack electricity, and fewer than 25% of Congolese have access. Grand Inga could be central to the World Bank and African Development Bank's "Mission 300," aimed at connecting 300 million Africans to clean power by 2030.

However, the project's estimated USD 80 billion cost, security concerns, corruption risks, and environmental challenges remain major obstacles. Even under the best conditions, electricity from Inga III would not be available for 8–10 years. Grand Inga still requires massive financing, political alignment, and long-term guarantees before it can fulfill the century-old dream envisioned by Wauters

MOGADOR

S O L U T I O N S

EMPOWERING EFFICIENCY

ENERGIZING SUSTAINABILITY

WWW.MOGADOR-SOLUTIONS.COM