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Labs, Schools and a Church: Russia's Toolkit in Africa

Moscow trains Sahel lab teams for “epidemiological sovereignty,” builds schools in CAR and lays a church stone in Kenya. Also here: Chad’s vote for unlimited seven-year terms and Sudan’s ban on private gold exports.

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September 16, 2025

Russia’s Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev spoke of the need to “strengthen epidemiological sovereignty” as specialists from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger joined mobile laboratory exercises in St. Petersburg alongside participants from 29 countries. The same issue shows the rest of the toolkit: the Russian House is building schools in the Central African Republic, the Russian Orthodox exarch for Africa laid a church foundation stone in Kenya, and Burkina Faso received its invitation to the Russia-Africa ministerial conference in Cairo.

The *Africa Now* bulletin of September 16, 2025 brings together 18 stories, drawn from official statements, RFI, AFP and Reuters reporting, and a Zimbabwe Peace Project report.

Scope

In West Africa, 171 of 188 deputies in Chad’s National Assembly voted for seven-year presidential terms without limits, Guinea’s referendum campaign went ahead with no campaign against it, ECOWAS chair Julius Maada Bio pledged solidarity with Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou, and Mali’s prime minister called attacks on fuel convoys a sign of armed groups’ desperation.

In East Africa, Sudan’s central bank banned private gold exports to curb smuggling to the UAE and Egypt, SPLM-IO called on its supporters to pursue regime change in South Sudan after charges against Riek Machar, and a Kenyan court issued an arrest warrant for a former British soldier in the Agnes Wanjiru murder case.

The issue also covers the Zimbabwe Peace Project's count of over 3,000 human rights victims in August, Egypt's 16 billion euro Marassi Red Sea resort, vote counting in Malawi, and Zambia's approval of \$414 million in solar projects.

Excerpt

“ Russia considers African states important partners in countering dangerous infectious diseases, according to Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev's greeting to participants in the IV International Mobile Laboratory Rapid Response Training Exercises. “Today Russia attaches great importance to developing international cooperation in countering dangerous infectious disease threats, and African states are important partners in this sphere,” the minister noted. Tsivilev recalled his July visit to Alliance of Sahel States countries — Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger — where decisions were made to intensify practical cooperation, including training African professionals. “I note that today's exercises include representatives from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. This clearly demonstrates Russia's practical readiness to strengthen epidemiological sovereignty with our friends and partners. I'm confident the exercises will increase specialists' readiness to protect people's health,” the minister emphasized. The exercises, held September 16–18 in St. Petersburg, involve 130 representatives from sanitary-epidemiological services, medical organizations, and scientific institutions from 29 countries, including Ethiopia, Senegal, Guinea, Burundi, Uganda, Gabon, Congo, and other African states. During his late July Burkina Faso visit, Tsivilev presented President Ibrahim Traoré with a certificate for a mobile anti-epidemic laboratory developed by Rospotrebnadzor.

Sergey Konyashin, Labs, Schools and a Church: Russia's Toolkit in Africa
(Africa Now, Démarche, September 16, 2025)

ABOUT

I am Sergey Konyashin, a former Russian diplomat. I spent nearly a dozen years in the Russian Foreign Ministry, with postings in Yemen (2010–2013), Sudan (2014–2018) and Algeria (2019–2021), and left Russia in 2022, after Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Démarche is my independent journal on Russian policy in the Middle East and Africa: analysis from inside the system, for readers outside it. I also write for *The Moscow Times*, *Republic*, *The Insider* and other independent outlets; see konyashin.com/elsewhere for that work.

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