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# A 49-Year Deal for Russian Industry in Egypt

Russian firms get a tax regime frozen for 49 years at Ain Sokhna, and a Russian payment platform opens in Harare and Lagos. Also here: the Sahel's move to quit the ICC and a UN report calling South Sudan a looted state.

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September 17, 2025

The Russian Industrial Zone in Egypt now has its terms. At Ain Sokhna on the Suez Gulf, Russian residents will work under a tax and customs regime fixed by intergovernmental agreement for 49 years, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Roman Chekushov said, and over 30 Russian companies have expressed interest. The same visit brought an Egyptian offer to widen tourism routes for Russians. Further south, PSB Bank's A7 platform opened offices in Harare and Lagos, a project its deputy chairman described as aimed at a sanctions-resistant settlement system.

The *Africa Now* bulletin of September 17, 2025 brings together 17 stories, drawn from official statements, Reuters, BBC and *Jeune Afrique* reporting, and a UN commission report.

## Scope

In the Sahel, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger prepared to announce their withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, which Niger's Mohamed Toumba called "a repression instrument against African countries." Burkina Faso opened the Tiéfo Amoro military institute and reported 60.8 tons of gold output in 2024, with 13.049 tons bought for a national reserve.

Russia's other channels run through Moscow and beyond: Sergey Vershinin discussed the UN roadmap for Libya with Hanna Tetteh, a new Russian military attaché was presented in Maputo, Niger's communications minister signed a protocol with MTUCI covering drone training, and the FSB detained a North African national in Astrakhan on charges of spying for Ukraine.

Beyond Russia, a UN commission called South Sudan “a looted state” that has received over \$25 billion in oil revenue since independence, a US House bill would repeal the Zimbabwe sanctions law of 2001, Zambian farmers filed an \$80 billion lawsuit against Chinese mining companies, and African manufacturers made a final push to extend AGOA.

## Excerpt

“ Russian companies will enjoy unique tax and tariff conditions in the Russian Industrial Zone (RIZ) near the Suez Canal for 49 years. Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Roman Chekushov announced this following the Russian delegation’s visit to Egypt. “This tax and customs duty collection regime is unique for our Russian residents and enshrined in an intergovernmental agreement, not subject to change for 49 years,” Chekushov emphasized. The RIZ will be located in Ain Sokhna city in the Suez Gulf of the Red Sea. “Excellent logistics location. All business mission participants noted complete infrastructure equipment and excellent access roads — the Suez-Hurghada highway adjacent to our land plot and railway freight lines,” the deputy minister added. Chekushov noted priority sectors include mechanical engineering, chemical and petrochemical industries, pharmaceuticals, and medical device production. “Egypt is the gateway to the African continent: duty-free trade regime with all African countries and more. Egypt has concluded over 70 preferential trade agreements,” he stated. The deputy minister added that discussions also covered technical regulation issues to enable Russian companies to access the market, obtain necessary certificates, and participate in tenders. “We’ll work to ensure our companies understand demand for products they plan to produce before making investment decisions,” Chekushov declared. Over 30 Russian companies have expressed interest in placing production facilities in the zone.

*Sergey Konyashin, A 49-Year Deal for Russian Industry in Egypt  
(Africa Now, Démarche, September 17, 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](https://konyashin.com/elsewhere) for that work.

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