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Russia's Nuclear Courtship of Ethiopia

Rosatom, Vladimir Putin and Alexander Novak all bid for a role in Ethiopia's energy future, and Abiy Ahmed answers in kind. Also here: African demands for Security Council seats, Lavrov's talks with the Sahel states and a curfew in Madagascar.

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Four stories in this issue show Russia courting Ethiopia from several directions at once. Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev declared readiness to meet the country's clean energy needs as Addis Ababa moves toward Ethiopia's first nuclear power plant, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called atomic power "a strategic step toward industrialization and innovation," Vladimir Putin named Ethiopia a "long-standing and reliable partner," and Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak offered to modernize hydro and thermal plants built in Soviet times.

The *Africa Now* bulletin of September 25, 2025 sets these stories against 28 others from across the continent, drawn from official statements, bilateral meetings and speeches at the 80th UN General Assembly.

Scope

At the UN General Assembly, African leaders pressed for a larger say in global institutions. Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra demanded two permanent Security Council seats with veto power, Ghana's John Dramani Mahama called for sovereignty over natural resources, Namibia's Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah urged the lifting of US and EU sanctions on Zimbabwe, Cuba and Venezuela, and Ethiopian President Taye Atske Selassie announced the commissioning of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Somalia's Hassan Sheikh Mohamud spoke of preparations for the country's first general elections in 57 years.

Russian diplomacy reaches well beyond Ethiopia. Sergey Lavrov met the foreign ministers of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, discussed South Sudan's internal situation with his

counterpart Monday Semaya Kumba, prepared the second Russia-Africa Partnership Forum ministerial conference in Cairo with Egypt, and said he expected a “powerful signal” from the G20 summit in Johannesburg. In the Republic of Congo, Rospotrebnadzor specialists raised daily cholera testing from eight to 200 analyses and found the cholera vibrio resistant to ciprofloxacin.

Security and domestic politics complete the picture: defense agreements between Cameroon and Chad and between Kenya and Ethiopia, a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Antananarivo after protests over power cuts exceeding 12 hours a day, the fire at George Weah’s home in Liberia, and the Seychelles election, shadowed by a lawsuit over the lease of Assumption Island to a Qatari company. Kenya’s William Ruto agreed with Emmanuel Macron to co-host an Africa-France summit in Nairobi, and Mauritius appointed its first female central bank governor.

Excerpt

“ Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed affirmed Ethiopia’s intention to expand nuclear energy cooperation with Russia, describing atomic power as “a strategic step toward industrialization and innovation.” Abiy emphasized readiness to partner with Russia by combining Ethiopia’s skilled workforce with Russian expertise to create continental inspiration. He outlined plans for developing nuclear infrastructure, training personnel, establishing regulatory frameworks, and opening a Nuclear Science and Technology Center while adhering strictly to international standards.

*Sergey Konyashin, Russia’s Nuclear Courtship of Ethiopia
(Africa Now, Démarche, September 25, 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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