

# Senegal

## **Diouf Lifts State of Emergency; To Meet Wade**

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[Speech by President Abdou Diouf broadcast nationwide from Dakar at end of Ramadan on 17 May — live or recorded]

[Text] Senegalese: Today is the Day of Korite [*'Id al-Fitr*] for part of the Muslim community, while it is the eve of Korite for the other part of the Muslim community. This is an opportunity for me to address to each of you my congratulations and my wishes. I address these congratulations and these wishes to the entire Muslim community and its religious leaders for whom this sacred month of Ramadan, the anniversary of the revelation of the holy Koran, has been a period of meditation, abstinence, and purification, in short, a period of greater closeness with God. I hope that the merciful God will add us to those whose works are accepted and grant us His generous grace which indeed constitutes the light that lights up our hearts, purifies our souls, and guides us on the way of righteousness. I also address my congratulations and wishes to the other religious communities and their leaders, in short, to all the faithful and all citizens of our country. Together, let us give thanks to God for having made our country a respected one and having made our people a people of faith, courageous and tolerant, in whom I have always found the best support and the surest rampart in times of trials.

Permit me, on this blessed occasion, to reaffirm my commitment not to spare any effort to safeguard the social peace and consolidate the unity of the Senegalese people. It is in this regard that, guided by a deep and sincere sense of patriotism, I have made a number of decisions that I believe are likely to restore that atmosphere of social peace and national harmony that we all pray for. I have first of all decided to lift by this weekend the state of emergency which I declared in the Dakar region after the elections.

My dear countrymen, you know that I did not make the decision to impose the state of emergency in joy. Each of you remembers the circumstances of that time. I wanted to give myself the means to restore public order and at the same time guarantee the security of persons and goods, which has always been the prime responsibility of the state. But it has never been my intention to prolong this exceptional measure beyond what was strictly necessary. Today, since the circumstances have changed, I feel that it is possible to put an end to it. By this, I want to express my conviction that the troubled period is over, and my strong desire to pursue the process of returning to normalcy so that everything that has happened up until now will be a thing of the past.

I have also decided to present to the National Assembly a draft amnesty bill. This measure, once adopted by our deputies, will annul the sentences given to some of our fellow countrymen by the courts for behavior punishable by law. As president of all the people of Senegal, elected for a new 5-year term of office, it is my duty to tell these sons and daughters — daughters because there are some women involved — that the nation does not intend to reject them forever. They followed the wrong path, they

should not be penalized for it all their lives. I want to give them a new chance so that they can become reintegrated among their families, their friends, their villages, their wards, and once again contribute toward the construction of Senegal.

I have finally decided to call Counselor Abdoulaye Wade, leader of the parliamentary opposition, to a meeting so that we can discuss the major issues affecting Senegal: the consolidation of our democracy, economic and social issues, problems of the youth, education, and employment. The opposition has its opinion to give about all these problems and we have to listen to it. Who can pride himself on being in possession of the truth on all these problems that I have just cited and many others? Who can pride himself on monopolizing the truth? Who can lay claim to the miraculous solution which will suddenly save our country from these difficulties? It certainly behooves each of us, the leader, those whom you have democratically elected, and with the help of our foreign friends, to tirelessly seek means of improving the living conditions of the Senegalese people. Once again, I say in this search, no people with free will will be excluded. Let us all therefore begin the task at hand.

Senegalese, in my opinion, there is no better way of proving my trust in the people than taking the aforementioned measures at the present time. Thus, I making an optimistic assessment of the maturity, the patriotism, and the wisdom of each of our country's politicians. I was encouraged in this way by my strong conviction that in unity and solidarity, in spite of the current difficulties, we shall lead Senegal to the prosperity and greatness that its history and the genius of its people have ordained for it. Devenetti [salutation in vernacular] to all. May God the merciful grant our dear Senegal an abundance of blessings. Thank you.