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PRESS RELEASE

U. S. EMBASSY STATEMENT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SENEGAL

The United States has closely followed the debate surrounding changes to Senegal's constitution proposed by the Council of Ministers last week. Senegal has long been a valued model of stability in the region, and its democratic traditions have been among the strongest in Africa.

We recognize that the Senegalese people, through their elected representatives, have the sovereign right to change their constitution. However, the U. S. is concerned that a constitutional law that would so fundamentally change the system used to elect Senegal's President for the past 50 years has been proposed without the benefit of a thorough, meaningful and open debate among a broad spectrum of groups and concerned citizens, and that making this change so close to the next elections could result in weakening Senegal's democratic institutions.

The U. S. calls on the Government of Senegal to develop an inclusive process that fully addresses the concerns currently being raised by its citizens before making revisions to long-standing electoral processes or other changes to the constitution.

For more information, please contact Ndeye Fatou WILANE by phone at 33 829 2128 or by mail at WilaneNF@state.gov.

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