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In Algeria, 2024 is an election year, with President Abdelmadjid Tebboune expected to seek a new term. First elected in 2019 amid a historic mass protest movement, Tebboune hopes a decisive victory will silence doubts about his legitimacy. To achieve that, he directs Algeria's recent oil and gas revenues windfall toward key constituencies, including the country's powerful army. After doubling the defense budget in 2023, Tebboune plans to expand it a further 12 percent next year to \$22 billion. His 2024 budget also covers wage and pension hikes for state employees, 460,000 new public housing units, and \$20 billion in public subsidies. Still, Tebboune's reelection is not guaranteed. Persistent inflation and Sahel insecurity remain challenging, and concerns over the President's age and health weigh on votes. Though Tebboune has muzzled dissenting voices and eliminated many rivals, 2024 could still bring surprises.

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Forecasts of 2024 Libya tend towards kakistocracy, underpinned by the growing kleptocratic culture of impunity and serving to benefit those looting state coffers. The repercussions of this plunder have cast a pall over Libya's political economy, yielding consequences. Over the past year, Libya's once institutionally sclerotic oil sector adopted a kleptocratically-driven modus operandi and displayed alarming levels of profligacy. The deliberate obfuscation of state spending is a strategic subterfuge to veil the corruption accompanying this transformation. The orchestrated opacity serves the vested interests of a detached political elite, bereft of both the capacity and inclination to institute reforms or catalyze political advancements to change the status quo. Unless coerced to course correct, it is all but likely this clique will irreversibly steer Libya into the precipice of decay to the detriment of its population.

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Trapped between a critical economic situation and multiple crises on the borders, President al-Sisi's Egypt is gearing up to face a complex domestic scenario and an unpredictable geopolitical landscape in 2024. The greatest challenge was not winning the elections but will be governing a country afflicted by persistent systemic dysfunctions: three currency devaluations in the past year, soaring inflation, and a chronic shortage of foreign currency will make economic recovery impossible without support from the International Monetary Fund and the traditional aid from Gulf countries. On the external side, along with the already critical situation in neighboring Sudan and the persistent instability coming from the Libyan border, Cairo has to manage the consequences of the war in Gaza, which poses additional security threats. In this context, will the president be able to steer the country away from potential economic collapse while maintaining the regional grandeur he has struggled to build in recent years?

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In 2024, Tunisia faces a grim outlook, with President Kais Saied confronting significant challenges that threaten his ability to maintain power. The economy remains in a downward spiral, and there is little clarity regarding Tunisia's actual foreign currency reserves. Despite the government's claim of a projected 2.1% economic growth for 2024, experts widely believe these figures are exaggerated, casting doubt on Tunisia's capacity to meet international obligations. Concern among Tunisians is mounting as essential goods like coffee, sugar, and olive oil remain absent from store shelves. Concurrently, the unabated influx of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa persists, with frequent police crackdowns occurring in the city of Sfax. Tunisians are growing increasingly impatient, demanding decisive action from the president. As the 2024 Presidential elections loom, Saied grapples with the urgent need to address these formidable challenges, all while deflecting blame onto the International Monetary Fund and refusing to engage in bailout negotiations.

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The race for World Cup 2030 has started in Morocco, as the kingdom is set to co-host with Spain and Portugal the one-hundredth anniversary of the event. In preparation, Rabat is poised to undertake several major national and regional projects in 2024 to modernize its infrastructure, increase connectivity with Europe and Africa, and transition to sustainable energy. King Mohamed VI recently concluded a state visit to Abu Dhabi, where he met Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and signed twelve memorandums of understanding, including investing in the Africa-Atlantic Gas Pipeline linking Nigeria to Europe through Morocco. Madrid and Rabat also revived the project linking the two countries with an underground tunnel through the Strait of Gibraltar. The project, which will be the cornerstone of connectivity between the two continents ahead of the World Cup, will start in 2024 and cost over \$6 billion.

Socially, the kingdom will have to battle on many fronts as its population struggles to feel the benefits from the country's ambitious titanic projects on its daily livelihoods. The education crisis will likely continue despite the government's attempts to appease striking teachers. Aziz Akhannouch's cabinet will also have to address the soaring fuel prices and limited subsidies in a country that, despite its promising green energy attempts, has a long way to go to divest from fossil fuels successfully. More importantly, in the new year, conservatives and liberals with opposing value systems will have to reach a middle ground in the long-anticipated reforms of the family code, promising to advance the status of women further.

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