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News Worth Knowing

Editor's note

Authorities in Guinea-Bissau this week [announced the seizure of 1.8 tonnes of cocaine](#) - the largest in the country's history - said to be en route from South America to Islamist militants in West Africa's Sahel.

The meeting of the two sinister worlds is the latest reminder of the region's [mounting problems](#). Fueled by climate change and insecurity an estimated 6.7m people have been displaced in recent years, with at least 30m facing acute food insecurity.

Efforts to counter flourishing criminal networks and Islamist militancy, including the internationally backed G5 Sahel Joint Force, [are floundering](#).

The confluence of factors is making it all but impossible to tackle the underlying problem of chronic underdevelopment.

All of this is obviously bad news for the region's population, but the Sahel's troubles could have deeper consequences for West Africa.

Burkina Faso's government, for example, has repeatedly warned about the [potential for instability to spill over](#) into coastal countries, including key economies like Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. There have already been cross-border attacks, underlining the point.

All of these countries are facing significant economic and social problems in their own right. The last thing they need is the kind of instability we're seeing in the Sahel.

It's well worth keeping an eye on the region.

Today's picks

From the continent

Sudan's newly appointed prime minister Abdalla Hamdok on Thursday unveiled the country's first cabinet since the ousting of longtime president Omar al-Bashir in April. The announcement is seen as an important step towards implementing a recent three-year transition deal to civilian rule. **More:** [France 24](#)

Sanlam, South Africa's biggest insurers, has said it may invest in Egypt in the next 12 months. The company is on an expansion drive outside its home market, part of a strategy to become a pan-African insurance provider. **More:** [Reuters](#)

The Daily Stat

25.5%

The percentage by which gold exports from Tanzania rose in the year to July according to figures from the country's central bank. **More:** [Reuters](#)

The Global Perspective

China and the African Union have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation on food safety and security on the continent. This comes amid rising hunger across Africa, fueled by climate change and a struggling agriculture sector. **More:** [CGTN](#)

Oil trading giant Vitol has said it expects oil prices to remain weak in 2019, following

sharp drops in August from a 2019 peak of \$75 per barrel in April. A slowing global economy and the U.S - China trade war have weighed on prices, counteracting the OPEC-led output reduction deal. **More:** [Reuters](#)
