



Plenary sitting

B9-0465/2022

14.10.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Burkina Faso following the coup
(2022/2865(RSP))

Marc Botenga
on behalf of The Left Group

B9-0465/2022

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Burkina Faso following the coup (2022/2865(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, ratified by Burkina Faso on 4 January 1999,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Burkina Faso on 4 January 1999, and to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, ratified by Burkina Faso on 7 July 2010,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, ratified by Burkina Faso on 6 July 1984,
 - having regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, ratified by Burkina Faso on 3 December 2009,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Burkina Faso on 14 October 1987,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Burkina Faso on 4 January 1999,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Burkina Faso,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the country is riven by violence and has experienced two coups in eight months; whereas on 30 September Captain Ibrahim Traoré overthrew Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who himself had come to power by force in January, overthrowing the elected President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré;
- B. whereas, according to the Burkinabè authorities, by September 2022 more than 10 000 people had been killed as a result of terrorist attacks since 2015; whereas, according to the situation report of 3 October 2022¹ by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as at 30 April 2022, Burkina Faso had 1 520 012 displaced persons, 59.13% of whom were children and 23.28% women, and 708 341 pupils affected by the closure of 4 258 schools; whereas in June 2022, more than 35 657 people were in exile in the region; whereas in October 2022, 4.9 million people were in humanitarian need; whereas USD 805.1 million is needed for the

¹ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/burkina-faso/>

OCHA's 2022 humanitarian response plan, but whereas currently only 33.3% of this amount has been funded;

- C. whereas in recent months increasing attacks on dozens of civilians and soldiers have been occurring in the north and east of Burkina Faso, where towns are now under a jihadist siege; whereas on 26 September, 37 people, including 27 soldiers, were killed (according to official figures) in an attack on a supply convoy heading to the town of Djibo; whereas that attack was claimed by al-Qaeda, and whereas 70 truck drivers have gone missing (according to their union); whereas this new attack was seen as a catalyst for the coup on 30 September;
- D. whereas Ibrahim Traoré, like Mr Damiba before him, justified his military coup by the inability of the authorities to counter the continuing deterioration in the security conditions; whereas, according to the Burkinabè trade unions, the coup is also the result of the failure of a national army constituted from clans preoccupied with business and the management of power;
- E. whereas, according to a decree signed by Ibrahim Traoré on Saturday 8 October, a national consultation must be held on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 October to enable an agreement on the content of the Transition Charter and to appoint a transitional president before elections are held in 2024; whereas more and more people are calling for Ibrahim Traoré himself to be the transitional president;
- F. whereas the insecurity in the Sahel is a consequence of the destabilisation of the region and the proliferation of arms caused by the invasion of Libya in 2011; whereas, like other countries in the region, Burkina Faso is facing an increasingly difficult security situation; whereas the country is facing an increasingly frequent series of terrorist attacks, especially in the north, near the border with Mali and Niger; whereas there is a growing risk of the security crisis becoming sectarian, and of people stigmatising others and falling back on their identities;
- G. whereas in recent years the country has experienced an explosion in gender-based violence against women and girls; whereas the threats to women and young people are particularly serious, including sexual and economic exploitation, gender-based violence, forced recruitment and trafficking; whereas it is Burkinabè women, whose access to education is half that of men, who are the most affected by extreme poverty;
- H. whereas recent years have seen growing resentment in the region against the French state and its symbols; whereas the presence of the French army in the Sahel is increasingly being called into question by local people and political leaders; whereas, since it was launched in August 2014, Operation Barkhane, led by French forces together with the G5 Sahel countries and the United Nations (Minusma), has been incapable of putting an end to the actions of terrorist groups in the region; whereas more and more protests are taking place against the presence of the French army;
- I. whereas, despite the announcement in November 2021 of the declassification of the assassination of Thomas Sankara as a 'defence secret', France has still not transferred all the relevant archives; whereas the support provided by France to the regime of the dictator Blaise Compaoré is one of the elements that contributed to the rejection of the French authorities in the country and region;

- J. whereas Burkina Faso is deeply affected by neocolonialism and imperialism, which are reflected, in particular, in the grabbing of resources and land by multinationals and the imposition of both free-trade agreements (EPAs) aggravating the economic situation and dramatic neoliberal reforms for the people; whereas the rate of corruption in the country remains high; whereas the neoliberal shift that occurred under the regime of Blaise Compaoré (1987-2014) and relations between the state and the private sector around gold are root causes of the current insecurity in Burkina Faso;
- K. whereas in this context of rejection of the former colonial power, Captain Traoré has made it clear that he wishes to work with new international partners; whereas the People's Republic of China has expressed its willingness to join the international community in playing a role; whereas the Russian Government and private military companies such as the Wagner Group are seeking to profit from this situation;
- L. whereas, with a GDP per capita of USD 851 in 2021, Burkina Faso is among the countries that produce the least wealth; whereas Burkina Faso's GDP in 2021 amounted to almost USD 18.3 billion; whereas in 2014, 43.8% of the local population lived below the national poverty line, according to the World Bank; whereas maternal and child health indicators have still not reached the rates set in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the National Economic and Social Development Plan;
- M. whereas the economy is heavily dominated by agriculture, which employs almost 80% of the active population, and particularly by cotton growing; whereas the country is vulnerable, on the one hand, to climate shocks linked to variations in rainfall levels and, on the other hand, to the volatility of global prices for its export products; whereas at the end of February 2022, Russia's invasion of Ukraine contributed to an increase in the price of nitrogen fertilisers, mostly imported from Russia and Belarus, whose prices doubled or even tripled on some markets; whereas Burkina Faso has the biggest shortage of these products in the region; whereas farmers fear catastrophic consequences for the crop year, already severely impacted by jihadist violence, the effects of climate change and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- N. whereas the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification published in January 2022² estimated that in the period from August 2021 to July 2022 some 699 000 children aged 6-59 months would suffer from acute malnutrition; whereas, according to that report, the closure or malfunctioning of health facilities in provinces to which humanitarian access is limited has reduced people's access to care; whereas the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the blockage of raw materials, are major causes of the poor nutritional situation of the most vulnerable, including women and children under the age of five;
- O. whereas the Sahel is on the front line of the climate emergency; whereas temperatures are rising there by 1.5 times more than the global average, exacerbating conflicts for scarce resources and facilitating the rise of non-state armed groups, among other threats;
- P. whereas the country saw a phenomenal rise in its gold production in the 2000s and 2010s, following the strong growth in the price of gold and massive investments by

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/burkina-faso-analyse-ipc-de-la-malnutrition-aigu-ao-t-2021-juillet-2022-publi-en>

international firms such as the Canadian company True Gold; whereas, within the space of five years, Burkina Faso became Africa's fourth largest gold exporter; whereas this is reflected in the 17 industrial mines in operation and 60 tonnes of gold produced in 2020; whereas the number of artisanal mines grew from 200 in 2003 to over 700 in 2014; whereas working conditions in the mines are very poor and present major risks to health and the environment; whereas artisanal gold mines, at which almost 2 million people work, are at risk of deadly landslips caused by the use of explosives and by rainwater; whereas these mines are also being sought after by terrorist groups to finance their activities;

- Q. whereas, since July 2018, there have been public protests in several African countries and in the Paris region demanding the abolition of the CFA franc which, just like debt and the EPA, has perpetuated France's domination of the 14 countries that use it;
- R. whereas a report by the Ministry of Defence to the French Parliament in July 2017 estimated that arms contracts (for satellite surveillance systems, patrol vessels and other equipment) between France and Africa were worth USD 1.166 billion in 2016; whereas, according to official figures in the EU's annual report, since 2013 EU Member States have granted 506 military equipment licences to Mali and Burkina Faso, worth EUR 205 million;
- S. whereas there are estimated to be around sixty Burkinabè subsidiaries of French private enterprises (in the strict sense of the term) and around one hundred Burkinabè enterprises whose capital is held and/or which are managed by French nationals; whereas this is the case in most sectors of the economy, including agriculture (particularly cotton, with Geocoton), the agri-food sector (Castel brewery which owns Brakina, oil works), the processing industry, construction and public works (Vinci), logistics and transport (Air France, Bolloré Group), commerce, distribution (CFAO, Total) and services, including banks (BNP Paribas and Société Générale) and insurance (Allianz and Gras Savoye, etc.);
1. Expresses particular concern at the climate of growing violence and insecurity in Burkina Faso since 2015; takes note of the decree signed by Ibrahim Traoré on Saturday 8 October on the holding of the National Assises on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 October; stresses the need to restore constitutional order as swiftly as possible and to hold free and transparent elections;
 2. Strongly condemns all attacks by jihadist groups against civilians, places of worship and police and defence forces; expresses its condolences to the victims of these attacks and their families;
 3. Stresses that terrorism cannot be combated at the expense of people's rights; calls therefore on the Burkinabè authorities to guarantee full respect for human rights, including freedom of religion, belief and conscience; entreats the country's authorities to guarantee the total prohibition of torture and ill-treatment in all circumstances, and particularly in counter-terrorism operations, and to bring to justice those responsible for the use of violence;
 4. Stresses, similarly, that the best way to eliminate terrorism is to prevent the financing of armed groups and to address its root causes of poverty and inequality; believes that in

these circumstances resorting to the use of mercenaries and private security companies will not help end the spiral of violence;

5. Calls on the authorities to support and facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations in Burkina Faso, guaranteeing them unhindered humanitarian access and enabling them to report on the plight and the needs of displaced persons;
6. Stresses the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination without external interference; condemns, therefore, the interference and economic exploitation by external powers, and particularly the former colonial power; emphasises its opposition to any form of neocolonialism, including in Burkina Faso;
7. Notes the growing rejection of the former colonial power and of European diplomacy across the continent; stresses that the only way to regain people's trust is to replace military, economic, monetary and political dominance with relations as equals, in accordance with international law and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs;
8. Considers it necessary for the European Union to assess the effectiveness of the G5 Sahel and to build a new framework for relations with the Sahel countries, focusing more closely on the defence of human rights and economic and social development; demands that cooperation with that region not be subordinated to the economic interests of multinationals; calls for the establishment of new security frameworks in the region, following a multi-dimensional approach based on human rights and development;
9. Opposes the defence policies, the security-first vision of migration policies and the externalisation of the borders of the Union; demands that the right to asylum, and international law, be fully respected in all circumstances;
10. Agrees with the criticism, levelled by peoples and political leaders, that military operations cannot provide a solution to problems of insecurity; condemns once again the illegal invasion of Libya under NATO auspices, which has destabilised the entire region, resulted in arms proliferation and led to an increase in terrorist attacks and human trafficking;
11. Stresses the fact that all the EU Member States must respect their human rights obligations and abstain from any policy liable to fuel violations of those rights in Burkina Faso and the Sahel;
12. Expresses its support for civil society in Burkina Faso in its demands for democratisation and respect for human rights, including trade union rights;
13. Agrees with the demands of movements and mobilisations in Africa and Europe calling for an end to the CFA franc and the ECO, EPAs and other tools of political and economic domination in Africa; supports the call of the trade unions in Burkina Faso for the Burkinabè army to return to its barracks immediately and for the removal of – in particular French – foreign bases and troops from the territory of Burkina Faso;
14. Stresses that Burkina Faso must be free to cooperate with the countries of its choice; shares the view of the Burkinabè trade unions, however, that Burkina Faso should

- diversify its partnerships while ensuring respect for its national sovereignty;
15. Takes note of the launch in October 2021 of the trial on the death of Thomas Sankara; demands that his death be thoroughly clarified and that those responsible be held to account; calls for all the documents classified by France as ‘defence secrets’ to be declassified immediately and for the French Government’s responsibilities vis-à-vis his murder to be elucidated;
 16. Reiterates the need to ensure Burkina Faso’s right to food sovereignty is observed, including the right of farmers to produce foodstuffs to feed its population, by putting an end to land-grabbing and ensuring that farmers have access to land, seed and water;
 17. Calls on the international community to remove obstacles to the development of Burkina Faso by cancelling the debt and interest which the country continues to pay and by establishing genuine international cooperation that respects the fundamental rights and sovereignty of that country; calls for an audit of Burkina Faso’s debt and for the cancellation of all illegitimate debts to foreign creditors;
 18. Calls on the EU and its Member States to increase their financial support and humanitarian aid in order to meet the urgent needs of the people of Burkina Faso, not least those of displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring countries; calls for EU and Member State aid to be provided in the form of grants and not in loans, in order not to increase the debt burden; deplores the fact that the majority of EU Member States have not achieved the target of paying 0.7% of their GNI as official development assistance and that some have even reduced the percentage allocated for such assistance;
 19. Reiterates that the activities of EU companies operating in non-EU countries must be entirely consistent with international human rights standards; calls on the Member States to ensure that undertakings governed by their national laws are still required to respect human rights and to comply with the trade union, social, health and environmental standards imposed on them if they set up or carry on activities in a third country; urges the Commission and the Member States to take the requisite action against EU companies which do not comply with those standards or which do not properly compensate victims of human rights violations for which they are directly or indirectly responsible;
 20. Calls, in particular, on Burkina Faso to launch an independent inquiry into the social and environmental standards applied by European companies, particularly in the gold mining and agri-food industry;
 21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, the institutions of the African Union, the East African Community, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the President and Parliament of Burkino Faso.