



Plenary sitting

B9-0469/2022

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 d'état
(2022/2865(RSP))

Anna Fotyga, Assita Kanko, Bogdan Rzońca, Elżbieta Rafalska, Ryszard Czarnecki, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Valdemar Tomaševski, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Alexandr Vondra, Eugen Jurzyca, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Veronika Vrecionová, Ladislav Ilčík, Patryk Jaki, Angel Dzhambazki, Adam Bielan, Beata Kempa, Carlo Fidanza
on behalf of the ECR Group

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 17 February 2022 on the political crisis in Burkina Faso¹ and of 19 December 2019 on violations of human rights including religious freedoms in Burkina Faso²,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
 - having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (Cotonou Agreement)³,
 - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 4 October 2022 on the situation in Burkina Faso following the coup d'état,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since 2015, Burkina Faso has been caught up in an escalating wave of violence attributed to fighters of groups such as the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), which is aligned with al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), an offshoot of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), killing thousands of people and further displacing 2 million, thus making Burkina Faso the new epicentre of the conflict in the Sahel;
- B. whereas on 24 January 2022, Burkina Faso's army, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, ousted the civilian government of President Roch Kaboré on account of its failure to control the deteriorating security situation;
- C. whereas on 30 September 2022, Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba was deposed in the country's second coup in a year, as army captain Ibrahim Traoré took charge, dissolving the transitional government and suspending the constitution, citing as the reason for the coup Damiba's inability to deal with an armed uprising in the country that had worsened over the past nine months;

¹ OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 290.

² OJ C 255, 29.6.2021, p. 45.

³ OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

- D. whereas the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has condemned the latest coup in Burkina Faso and deems it inappropriate in the light of the progress that had been made in efforts to ensure an orderly return to constitutional order by 1 July 2024; whereas Traoré has said that a national conference will appoint a new interim leader by the end of the year and oversee a return to civilian rule by 2024;
- E. whereas according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, attacks by armed groups increased by 23 % in the five months after the former leader Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba took over; whereas in June 2022, Mahamadou Issoufou, the former President of Niger and a mediator between ECOWAS and Burkina Faso, claimed that Ouagadougou was only in control of 60 % of the country;
- F. whereas attacks carried out by armed Islamist groups, including killings, summary executions, the rape of civilians and widespread pillaging, are designed to bring about widespread displacement and to foster antagonism locally; whereas in addition to the mass killings of civilians, armed Islamist groups have launched targeted attacks to abduct, beat and rape women and young girls gathering firewood, travelling to and from the market or fleeing attacks on their village; whereas armed Islamist groups have reportedly recruited child fighters, some as young as 12, to fight within their ranks;
- G. whereas in the name of counterterrorism operations, state security forces, primarily the self-defence militia Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP), have committed summary executions and carried out enforced disappearances of civilians and suspected Islamist fighters without any evidence or trials, with the majority of victims being ethnic Peulh – a situation that has created ethnic tensions;
- H. whereas since January 2022, over 3.5 million people in Burkina Faso have been in need of humanitarian assistance, including 2 million children; whereas 1.9 million people have become internally displaced; whereas school closures have increased by 16 % in just two months, with 4 258 schools closed and 708 341 children prevented from going to school; whereas access to health resources has also been severely limited, as 183 health facilities have closed and 339 remain barely functional, depriving over 2.2 million people of the healthcare they need; whereas food security remains a serious concern in Burkina Faso; whereas the UN has singled out the country as one of several West African nations facing alarming levels of hunger and as having to contend with its worst hunger crisis in six years, with more than 630 000 people on the brink of starvation and 54 984 children treated for severe acute malnutrition;
- I. whereas since Africa became one of Russia's foreign policy priorities, the Wagner Group appeared in Libya in 2015, Sudan in 2017, the Central African Republic and Madagascar in 2018, Mozambique in 2019 and Mali in 2020; whereas the Wagner Group protects governing elites and critical infrastructure across Africa in return for payment in access to natural resources, lucrative commercial contracts, access to strategic infrastructure and support for Russia's foreign policy objectives;
- J. whereas the threat of Russian influence poses a major security concern in Burkina Faso; whereas Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of the Wagner Group, which is already active in neighbouring Mali, welcomed the coup and whereas Russian disinformation stirred up anti-French sentiment in Burkina Faso in order to exploit colonial grievances; whereas

the presence of the Wagner Group and the shift towards partnerships with Russia in Mali and Burkina Faso point to a worrying trend of growing Russian influence in the Sahel region;

- K. whereas the arrival of the Wagner Group saw a drastic rise in the number of deaths caused by the Malian security forces, undoing years of work by the EU and the UN to professionalise the security sector; whereas Wagner's presence is likely to destabilise Mali further, stoking violence and giving credence to the claims of Islamist groups; whereas achieving justice for those killed is difficult, as Russia was able to veto a UN Security Council plan to commission an independent investigation into the worst massacre to have been committed, namely that in the village of Moura; whereas Mali has blocked the UN from sending a team to the site, with the Wagner Group allowed to operate with impunity;
- L. whereas what happens in the Sahel region matters to both the rest of Africa and Europe; whereas the international community has underestimated the threat of jihadism in the Sahel region and its creeping, insidious influence, which very quickly destroys secular societies in the Sahel with repercussions for Europe in the form of a general erosion of the rule of law, compromised security, increased migration flows and poorer-quality partnerships with African countries;
- M. whereas the EU Training Mission in Mali is preparing to carry out one of the main tasks with which it has been entrusted under its fifth mandate, namely branching out into the G5 Sahel countries, starting with Burkina Faso; whereas according to the European External Action Service's strategic review of 25 May 2022 on the EU Training Mission in Mali and EU Capacity-Building Mission in Mali, the EU Political and Security Committee should invite the EU institutions to explore further possibilities for a military mission in Burkina Faso under the common security and defence policy, if conditions allow;
 - 1. Reaffirms its support for the people of Burkina Faso in their efforts to find solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing the country as well as security and cooperation in the Sahel region;
 - 2. Demands the restoration of constitutional order by the Burkinabe military and calls on the defence and security forces to remain committed to their core duties of protecting the population and defending their country's territory, and to make their demands known by non-violent means;
 - 3. Urges the EU and its Member States to support the people of Burkina Faso in their struggle for peace and democracy, while also countering the influence of non-state actors who wish to create chaos and consolidate power; supports ECOWAS's actions in defending democracy and the rule of law in Burkina Faso and demands scrupulous respect for the agreed timetable between ECOWAS and the transitional authorities of Burkina Faso for a rapid and orderly return to constitutional order by 1 July 2024;
 - 4. Urges the Government of Burkina Faso to develop a long-term strategy aimed at fostering a more inclusive and cohesive society, and to reorganise its security response across the whole country in a manner that respects and protects the fundamental rights of the people and rebuilds public trust;

5. Urges the authorities of Burkina Faso to support the efforts to bring those who committed serious human rights violations before justice, to ensure that judicial investigations are concluded and that the convicted are sanctioned;
6. Calls on the authorities of Burkina Faso to facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations in Burkina Faso by ensuring that they have unimpeded humanitarian access; calls for the EU and the Member States to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso by supporting local authorities and organisations in establishing shelter for internally displaced persons, ensuring that their rights to health and work are respected and reinstating education for children and young people;
7. Asks the EU and its Member States, when formulating their policies on the Sahel, to take account of the essential need to support good governance, civil society, development and investments for a more positive future for Sahelian communities; cautions, however, that without helping to provide security, this support risks being wasted; regrets the fact that the January coup d'état prevented Burkina Faso from participating in the sixth EU-African Union Summit held on 17 and 18 February 2022; urges the EU and its Member States to urgently establish renewed and enhanced cooperation for peace and security between Africa and the EU, as envisaged in the 'Joint Vision for 2030' statement issued at the sixth EU-African Union Summit, in order to face up to the growing security challenges facing the two continents, including the shared goal of combating radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism; insists that this should be part of a more extensive shift of mindset in EU-Africa relations away from dependency on aid and towards cooperation based on an equal partnership between Europe and Africa;
8. Asks the EU and its Member States to assess whether specific actions should be taken in Burkina Faso under the common security and defence policy and whether the European Peace Facility might be an appropriate tool for assisting the security forces in the country;
9. Urges the Commission and the Member States to counter Russia's efforts to increase its influence in the Sahel region, *inter alia* by convincing the people of Burkina Faso and its new junta that the Wagner mercenaries are objectively ineffective in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, as demonstrated in Mali, and by showing that the Wagner Group has played a major role in human rights abuses across North Africa and the Middle East including Syria and Libya, but also in the Central African Republic and Ukraine; urges the Commission and the Member States, furthermore, to work together with the African Union and the G5 Sahel to strengthen the resilience of Burkinabe society and tackle the anti-European disinformation campaign being waged by Russia in Africa and reduce the allure of the Wagner Group to African governments by highlighting the Wagner Group's failures and the counterproductive effects of its actions;
10. 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 authorities of the Republic of Burkina Faso, the Secretariat of the G5 Sahel, the Co-Chairs of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Union and its institutions, and the Economic Community of West African States.

