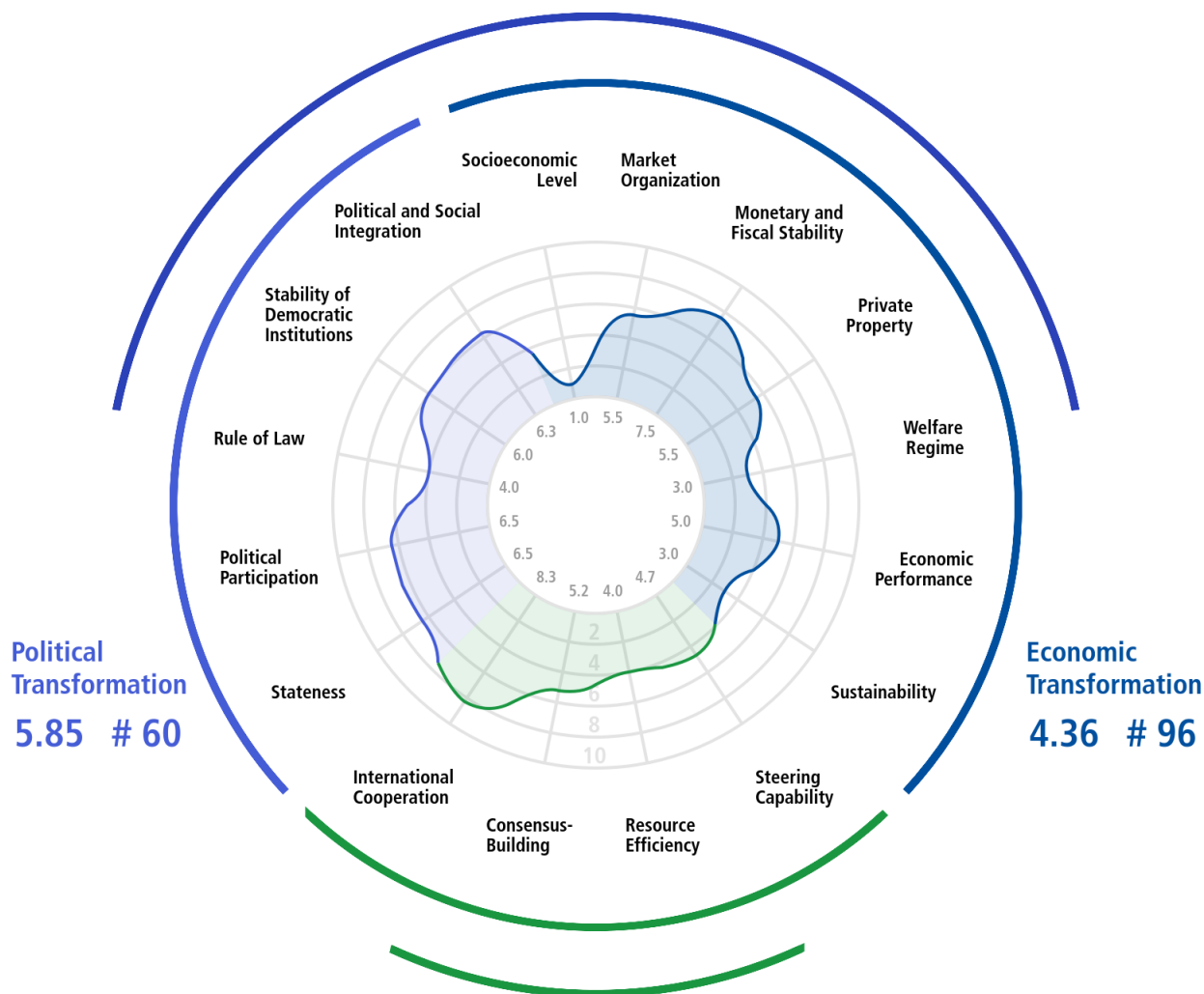


Burkina Faso

Status Index

5.10 # 70

on 1-10 scale out of 137



Governance Index

5.24 # 50

on 1-10 scale out of 137

This report is part of the **Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2022**. It covers the period from February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2021. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. More on the BTI at <https://www.bti-project.org>.

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Key Indicators

Population	M	20.9	HDI	0.452	GDP p.c., PPP \$	2279
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	2.8	HDI rank of 189	182	Gini Index	35.3
Life expectancy	years	61.6	UN Education Index	0.312	Poverty ³	% 76.7
Urban population	%	30.6	Gender inequality ²	0.594	Aid per capita \$	56.5

Sources (as of December 2021): The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2021 | UNDP, Human Development Report 2020. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.20 a day at 2011 international prices.

Executive Summary

The period under review saw serious challenges, conflicts, and instabilities that pose a threat to human, social and economic development. The current president, Roch Kaboré, and his government have been re-elected for a second term. Since many leading figures in politics, administration, and business come from the elites of the previous regime, it is hardly astonishing that the change in government has not led, to date, to the political and economic transition that many Burkinabé had hoped for. Previous core problems persisted more or less unaltered in the period under review: these include a political system based on patronage relationships; elites more interested in maintaining power and distributing resources within their clientelist networks than in dealing with the claims and interests of the population and promoting common welfare; slow, ineffectual persecution of political and economic crimes and human rights violations.

The threat of terrorist attacks has significantly increased in the period under review. Almost 4,000 people have been killed in inner-state conflicts, including civilians, members of self-defense groups, and state security forces. Since 2017, more than 120 attacks on schools have been reported, half of them in 2019. Two thousand five hundred schools have been closed due to the security situation, with catastrophic consequences for access to education. More than 1,000,000 people are internally displaced. Most of the attacks have targeted institutions of the Burkinabé state, but also schools, churches, and religious leaders are common targets. Initially concentrated in the north of the country, in the period under review, the terrorist threat has gradually spread to several other regions, especially the east. The recent creation of a transnational anti-terror military operation, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, has not yet succeeded in improving the security situation; nor has the French military presence. The latter, in fact, has led to increasing anti-French resentments in the country.

Economic growth has consolidated in the period under review and at least some indicators of human development have slightly improved. Agriculture and mining are the most important economic sectors. Gold is the by far most important export product, followed by cotton. However, the World Bank is projecting negative growth due to the COVID-19 crisis. The economic slowdown due to COVID-19 has translated into an economy-wide reduction in income; most employees, non-farm businesses and farm activities experienced a reduction in income. Yet, Burkina Faso has significant potential that allows for moderate hope for the social and political development of the country: a highly motivated young generation, a vibrant civil society, relatively strong cultural and social cohesion, and strong efforts to create solidarity and national unity. Investments in education and infrastructure are urgently needed to enable the country to adequately benefit from its social, cultural, human, and natural resources.

However, human security remains a major challenge, not solely with regard to the massive increase in attacks by Islamist armed groups in the north and east. There has also been a significant increase in criminal attacks in Ouagadougou, as well as in alarming human rights violations by state and non-state armed actors. In conflict-ridden regions, self-defense groups and state-sponsored civil militias continue to play a controversial and difficult-to-estimate role with regard to security.

Burkina Faso has been affected relatively less by the COVID-19 pandemic than many other countries, with 10,958 confirmed cases and 127 deaths (as by February 5, 2021); however, with very poor sanitary conditions and health facilities and a high level of poverty and social inequality, it is extremely vulnerable to pandemic effects. The first COVID-19 cases were confirmed on March 9, 2020. The government's COVID-19 management measures included the temporary shutdown of all public services; a mix of social distancing; movement and visa restrictions; health screening at airports and border crossings; and closure of certain economic sectors. On March 12, 2020 public gatherings were banned until at least April 30. By virtue of making social gatherings illegal, protests have been virtually banned; several cases of police brutality in curfew enforcements have been reported. Voter registration has been temporarily suspended. On March 18, schools were closed until at least March 31.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

After achieving independence from France in 1960, Burkina Faso endured decades of political instability, characterized by mass strikes and military coups. The 1983 coup led by Captain Thomas Sankara, stands out for its anti-imperialist and populist leanings. In 1987, Sankara was assassinated in a military coup organized by Blaise Compaoré. By 1991 several new parties had been formed and legalized. A new constitution was also approved in June 1991 via referendum, albeit with low voter turnout. The first presidential elections were held in 1991. The only candidate on the ballot, Compaoré, was elected with only 25% of the electorate participating.

In 1992, Burkina Faso held its first multiparty parliamentary elections. Facing weak opposition, Compaoré's party achieved a two-thirds majority. In 1996, it repeated its success. The National Assembly's ability to govern was theoretical at best, and lawmaking was reduced to a one-party affair. Political opposition began to form outside parliament. Institutions of representative democracy began losing credibility among the population. Human rights violations, notably by the security forces, occurred frequently. A culture of impunity prevailed. Consistent political pressure forced Compaoré to make concessions. Numerous institutional and electoral reforms represented an improvement over the previous system.

Compaoré was re-elected president in 2000, 2005 and 2010. The population's discontent has grown continuously, and criticism of the political system increased also from within the ruling circle. Massive protests arose after the death of a young man who died in 2011 after being detained by the gendarmerie. These protests triggered a severe political crisis: soldiers mutinied and the presidential guard revolted. Compaoré could only re-establish his authority by dissolving the government.

In 2013 and 2014, ten thousand people took to the streets and protested against Compaoré's attempt to revise article 37 of the constitution in order to enable himself to run for another term. The proposal for constitutional revision passed the National Assembly on October 21, 2014. In consequence, students and workers went on strike. When the proposal finally was supposed to be adopted on October 30, protesters stormed into the parliament building. On October 31, Compaoré was forced by the military to resign. The army commander-in-chief took over power transitionally. After two weeks of military control, a transitional Charta was signed by political parties, the military, civil society groups and traditional authorities on November 16, 2014.

Presidential elections were scheduled for October 11, 2015. A core conflict turned on the question of whether candidates who had come out in favor of the disputed revision of Article 37 of the constitution were allowed to run for election. The transitional government decided that they were not, and as a consequence, several confidants of former President Compaoré were excluded from announcing their candidacy.

On September 16, 2015, this resulted in a coup by the RSP, led by its commander, General Gilbert Diendéré. Mass protests emerged immediately. The following day, Diendéré declared the transitional government to be dissolved and himself president.

The trade unions went on a general strike, and virtually all civil society groups mobilized to mass resistance against the putsch. Six days after the coup, on 23 September, Diendéré turned himself in.

Presidential elections were finally held on November 29, 2015. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, chairman of the Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès (MPP), succeeded in the first ballot. From the point of view of most observers, this does not indicate a serious change in political orientation: Kaboré had already been minister and prime minister during the presidency of Compaoré. He left Compaoré's party together with 72 other politicians and founded the MPP in January 2014. According to many civil society groups, the transition ultimately amounted to one faction within the CDP succeeding against another.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

The state's monopoly on the use of force is in principle established nationwide, but de facto not enforced all over the country. It showed seriously worrying signs of erosion during the period under review, in particular in the state's periphery near the borders of Mali and Niger and in the eastern region, but also – to a lesser degree – in the capital. Extensive economic grievances (poor pay, housing, etc.) among the security forces persist despite the government's efforts to meet their demands. The political aspects of the incidents have not been addressed at all. These grievances, combined with political and ethnic fractionization of the security forces have long threatened to weaken the state's monopoly on violence to an extent that could destabilize the regime at any time.

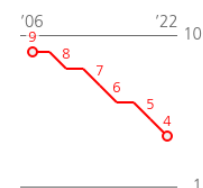
Army, gendarmerie, and police bases, as well as public institutions such as schools and municipal administrations, were attacked repeatedly in 2019-2020 by non-state armed groups (most likely, linked to al-Qaeda Maghreb/AQIM), and at different locations in many regions of the country – mostly, but by no means limited to the periphery. More than 2,200 people were killed in 2019 and 2020, respectively, due to inner-state conflicts, including civilians and members of state security forces and non-state armed groups, a terrifying increase compared to the approximately 300 fatalities in 2018. The vast majority of deaths are reported in the Northern Sahel region, but the security situation in the east significantly worsened in the period under review, too. More than one million Burkinabe people have been displaced by fighting.

The weakness of the state's security forces to ensure a monopoly on violence can no longer be ignored. This is also reflected in the strengthening and spreading of the Koglweogo and other local self-defense groups all over the country, who also come into conflict with each other and are being instrumentalized by political actors. In view of escalating violence, but also as a reaction to communities demanding the legal right to defend themselves, parliament reacted by approving a law (no. 002-2020) on civil defense, the “Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie” in January 2020. The law enables the government to financially and technically

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force

4



support “Volontaires” that are supposed to protect their communities. However, the idea of involving civilians in the national security did not come as suddenly as outsiders perceived it coming. Already in 2016, the government attempted to institutionalize the Koglweogo as a neighborhood police force. Although the groups’ national representatives rejected this, the respective law was adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2016. The new law led to the institutionalization of the “Volontaires” in January 2020. Especially in the north, the “Volontaires” frequently act without being controlled by the army or other state agencies. Little is also known about the militias’ training and recruiting process.

Burkina Faso has a relatively high degree of ethnic diversity (more than 60 ethnic groups, with the Mossi constituting almost half of the population). The major ethnic group, the Mossi, have a dominant role in politics. Interethnic marriages are common and not condemned by the government. In general, ethnicity barely presents a politically relevant category with respect to state identity. Ethnic, religious or other identity groups are seldom systematically discriminated against by legal or state institutions. However, since the intercommunal clash in Yirgou in January 2019 and in Barga in 2020, discriminating narratives against the Fulbe (Peulh) occur more frequently than previously. In general, inner-state conflicts are not ethnically shaped. However, political ethnicizing of conflicts significantly increased in the country’s north during the period under review. Still, a majority of the population generally acknowledges the state’s constitution and accepts the nation-state as legitimate.

The state is constitutionally defined as secular. Religious dogmas have no relevant influence on politics or legal order. Pentecostal church groups have gained prominence and social influence over the past two review periods, but do not influence on politics or legal order. However, the religious authorities (Catholic, Muslim, and traditional religious authorities) play an important role in Burkinabé society and often express opinions publicly. They frequently act as mediators in local and national political and social conflicts. According to the census about 61 % of the population are Muslims, Christians (mostly Catholics) represent 29.9 % and animists 7.3 %. There are few tensions between religious groups, though some voices complain that Muslims are disproportionally represented in the political elite and civil service, given their overall share of the population. Islamic fundamentalists have considerably increased their influence in the north and east of the country. In the period under review, Christian (especially Catholic) churches and priests have increasingly been targeted by violent attacks of jihadist groups. This could be interpreted as a way of attacking and undermining the state, since Catholics in the north are frequently state functionaries who originate in other parts of the country. There are fears that the east is becoming a corridor for jihadist terrorists. Kidnappings in northern Benin in May 2019, with the hostages transported through Burkina Faso to Mali, are cited as a case in point.

State identity

10



1

No interference of religious dogmas

7



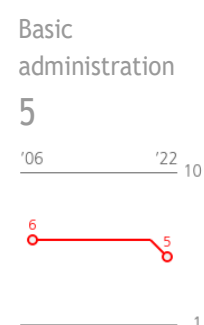
1

However, many religious leaders, both Catholic and Muslim, in the north and nationwide, frequently call on the population to refuse instrumentalization through allegedly religious discourse. It is much more likely that people, particularly marginalized (male) youth, join jihadist groups or become accomplices due to intimidation, lack of perspective, or grievances against the state than out of ideological conviction. Nevertheless, the latest research indicates that there are some tendencies toward religious radicalization.

The state administration suffers from corruption on all levels. As a consequence, the existing structures provide the most basic public services, but they show functional deficiencies and lack capacity in many areas. In particular, the population complains about shortcomings in basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, education (particularly regarding secondary schools and universities), and health care. Apart from main roads (Ouagadougou via Bobo-Dioulasso to the Ivorian border; Ouagadougou to Kaya, Kongoussi, and Koupela; etc.), roads and bridges are frequently in bad condition or nonexistent. Officially, decentralization was designed to devolve some political decision-making to local authorities and to bring social services and basic administration closer to the people of the country's 302 rural communes (in addition, 49 urban communes exist, among them two with "particular status," Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso). In practice, however, thin financial, technical and human resources severely limited the extent to which this autonomy could be exercised and local administration could be strengthened. Yet some success has been achieved in the period under review: In early 2020, the first payments from the Mining Fund for Local Development (Fonds Minier de Développement Local, FMDL) were made to municipalities. The fund was introduced as a result of reforms to the national mining law in June 2015. The law obliges mining companies to pay 1% of their monthly turnover into the fund. Moreover, 20% of state revenue from the surface tax is added to the fund. The FMDL is redistributed to municipalities, which means a considerable increase in their funding and improvement to their financial autonomy. Bi- and multilateral development cooperation provide technical support to municipalities, particularly for counseling and training local councilors and administrative staff.

However, the worsening security situation seriously affects the functionality of several municipalities in the north. This became obvious during the presidential elections on November 22, 2020, when, according to the national election authority, 15 municipalities (out of 351 in the country) were unable to carry out elections.

Basic infrastructure services have not been seriously disrupted due to COVID-19 and policy measures to prevent the spreading of the virus, as most measures that concerned basic infrastructure (school closures, etc.) were limited to a period of a couple of weeks in March and April 2020.



2 | Political Participation

The constitution guarantees all citizens the right to vote in direct, general, uniform, and free elections, as well as the right to run for political office. General elections are regularly conducted on the national level and universal suffrage with secret ballots is ensured.

National elections, both for the National Assembly and the president, were held at last on November 22, 2020. Voter turnout was 50.79%. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré (Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès, MPP), the incumbent, succeeded in the first ballot with 57.87% (second-place candidate was Eddie Komboïgo with 15.47%). From the point of view of many observers, this does not indicate broad support and people's satisfaction, but rather a perceived lack of alternatives. Though a significant number of polling sites (926 out of 19,836) were unable to open due to security risks, according to the government and to independent observers from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and civil society, elections proceeded without any significant irregularities.

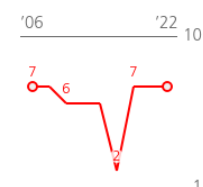
Sixty-one parties ran in the legislative elections. The MPP placed first with 56 out of 127 seats. Other major parties were the CDP (20 seats), the NTD (13 seats) and the UPC (12 seats).

Municipal elections were last held in May 2016. Again, the MPP, UPC, and CDP won the vast majority of seats.

While several parties with different platforms are able to run, the principles of equality and fairness were (and still are, even after Compaoré's resignation) heavily constrained by the extensive patronage network maintained by the CDP and MPP and their control of the state administration and political institutions. Their exclusive access to substantial resources allows for nationwide campaign machinery, including media coverage, and opponents have difficulty countering this. The incumbent uses public resources to campaign, reinforcing inequality among competitors. At the same time, despite some efforts to build coalitions, the opposition still suffers from extreme fragmentation and is unable to offer convincing political alternatives.

Free and fair elections

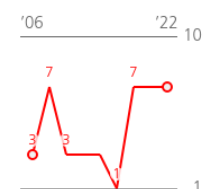
7



In general, the elected government has the power to govern, but both the military and civil opposition groups have serious potential for acting as a veto power. Since the putsch and presidential elections in 2015, the extent to which army officers influence political decisions or exercise veto power remains unclear. The precarious security situation also limits the government's effective power to govern, particularly in parts of the north and east.

Effective power to govern

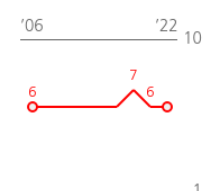
7



Freedoms of assembly and association are constitutionally guaranteed and exercised extensively by oppositional political parties and civil society groups (in particular, trade unions, students, and human rights groups). However, human rights groups complain, that protesters frequently face repression by state security forces (e.g., in Ouagadougou on September 16, 2019, during a march of the trade unions, or on January 15, 2019, during a student march in Dori). On Friday, May 31, 2019, two activists from the Democratic Youth Organization of Burkina Faso (Organisation Démocratique de la Jeunesse, ODJ) were killed in the province of Yagha in the northeast of the country, bordering Niger. Civil society organizations demand an investigation and prosecution – however, to date, the authorities have taken no decisive steps. An alliance of trade unions, human rights and student organizations, and other civil society associations immediately condemned the killing and demanded an official investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators and those responsible for the murder.

Association / assembly rights

6

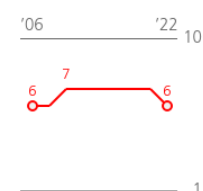


Related to the state of emergency that has been in effect in several provinces since December 31, 2018, due to the increase in terrorist attacks, the authorities have restricted the right to assembly. Nevertheless, more than 150 protests and riots were reported in 2019. Related to the COVID-19 crisis, public gatherings were banned from March 12 – April 31, 2020. Nevertheless, there have been marches for peace in Ouagadougou in reaction to the violent clash in Barga on March 8, 2020.

Freedom of the press and freedom of speech are nowadays relatively secure. Radio is the most important media; numerous broadcasting stations exist. Journalists working for state-owned media often avoid political controversial issues. The private media are relatively independent and often critical of the government. Occasionally, journalists are sentenced to jail or fined for offenses such as insulting an officeholder. The Information Code grants journalists free access to sources of information, with exceptions for information pertaining to the internal or external security of the state, military secrets, strategic economic interests, ongoing investigations or legal proceedings, and anything that threatens people's dignity and privacy. In practice, officials use these exceptions frequently, and accessing government information remains difficult. There are no government restrictions on access to the internet, which only a small percentage of the population has access to.

Freedom of expression

6



Internet access is growing but all in all, still limited to urban areas. In recent years, social media have become relatively important also for political debates among a certain segment of society (notably young, relatively well-educated urban groups).

In June 2019, the Criminal Code was amended by adopting a new law (no. 044-2019) that in Article 312-11 criminalizes any acts that “demoralize” the state security forces “by whatever means.” Human rights groups complain that the law is frequently used to intimate and persecute human rights activists, journalists and bloggers. This happened to newspaper editor Adama Ouédraogo even before the law was approved, on February 8, 2019. On November 12-13, 2019, blogger Naïm Touré was arrested and accused of an “attempt of demoralizing the state security forces.” On December 26, activist Kémi Séba received a two-month suspended sentence and a fine for “public insults” and “contempt toward the president and foreign heads of state” after a public conference in Ouagadougou.

The Reporters without Borders’ Press Freedom Index ranked the country 38 out of 180 countries in 2020 (2019: 36 and 2019: 41).

3 | Rule of Law

The institutional separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches is guaranteed in the constitution, but significantly limited in practical terms. The president’s position is, de jure and de facto, strong, whereas the unicameral National Assembly’s authority and involvement in decision-making suffers from limitations in its efficiency and its mechanisms of oversight. Moreover, the strong role of parts of the military, and the shortcoming of the elected institutions to control them, is a potential threat to the legislative, as became obvious in the course of the 2015 crisis.

The Senate, a relatively new institution established in 2012, could help strengthen the legislative branch against the powerful executive. However, it needs to be assured that the second chamber will not suffer from the same weaknesses as its predecessor. The country’s first Senate was abolished in 2002 amid different political concessions to the opposition, which considered the body duplicative, costly and insufficiently independent from government. The judiciary can at best partially balance the dominance of the executive since the latter has a strong influence on the appointment of judges. Widespread corruption in the judiciary makes an independent stance toward the political branches almost impossible.

According to the Global States of Democracy Index, Burkina Faso declared on March 27, 2020, a “state of sanitary emergency” in accordance with existing constitutional rules that was lifted at the end of April 2020. The state of emergency and other temporary measures were overseen by a parliamentary commission. Remaining measures were lifted in May 2020.

Separation of powers

4

'06 '22 10



1

The judiciary is formally independent and institutionally distinct but dominated and politicized in practice by the executive branch. The executive orchestrates judicial appointments and promotions, and prosecutors are part of a hierarchy headed by the justice minister; because of this, the executive interferes in judicial decisions. The judicial system suffers from corruption, which stems from an overall system that is inefficient, poorly trained, and poorly equipped. The economic vulnerability of its members makes them susceptible to exploitation, and they operate under extreme political pressure. Efficient court proceedings are conducted when critics of the government are put on trial, but rarely when politically or economically powerful people are concerned.

In the period under review, this became obvious (e.g., in the case of the killing of two activists in the province of Yagha on May 31, 2019, which to date has not been investigated and prosecuted). In contrast, cases of journalists and social media activists who criticized the authorities and were accused of “demoralizing” the state security forces were quickly prosecuted in 2020.

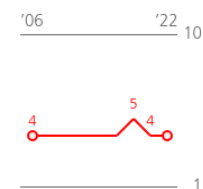
Legal processes also accelerate when they serve the government’s interests. Notably, this is the case when quick legal proceedings against members of the army and the police were necessary to calm the outraged Burkinabé population and their demands for justice. Fighting government officials’ impunity has ranked among the population’s main demands since the murder of journalist Norbert Zongo, but the judiciary only hesitantly moves toward solving this or other crimes with suspected government involvement.

Public officials can be sued for the abuse of power or for other inappropriate actions. The leading figures of the government, however, are rarely subject to such measures. In general, lawsuits against public officials are only conducted in cases of disloyalty, or if public pressure requires the government to offer up a political scapegoat. Most politicians enjoy de facto immunity from prosecution. Fighting rampant political and bureaucratic corruption, including the criminal prosecution of corrupt officeholders, has been one of the public’s main demands for many years and that demand continued during the period under review. Isolated cases of corruption are prosecuted, but often without consequence. Corruption is widespread in all sectors of the economy and on all government levels. Officeholders in the municipalities are regularly associated with bribery and favoritism. In 2015, the government has passed new anti-corruption legislation. However, enforcement is weak, due to poor access to information, impunity, clientelist relationships and ill-equipped institutions. Furthermore, people who witness corruption are afraid to report it. They worry about losing their jobs and being socially excluded, but also more serious consequences, like black magic, which can result in death.

The national anti-corruption network (Réseau national de lutte anti-corruption, REN-LAC), in its 2019 study, reports that 30.3 % of respondents state that they have been subjected to or witnessed corruption. This represents a slight reduction compared to 2017 (36.6 %). Most frequently, corruption is reported with respect to the municipal police, customs, and the national police.

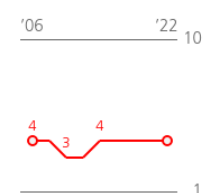
Independent judiciary

4



Prosecution of office abuse

4



The constitution forbids torture, but, in practice, security forces often subject citizens to torture and inhumane and degrading treatment. During the period under review, repeated acts of brutality, torture and ill-treatment by security forces have been reported, both in police stations and the over-crowded prisons all over the country, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Ethnic Fulbe (Peulh) are reported to be particularly subjected to ill-treatment by state armed forces. They are under general suspicion of collaboration with Islamist groups. The army has repeatedly been accused of perpetrating human rights violations against Fulbe who are suspected of being terrorists. Burkinabé President Roch Kaboré, on September 24, 2020, in a speech at the U.N. General Assembly explicitly promised to prosecute human rights violations committed by the state security forces.

Security forces frequently intervene violently in demonstrations by trade unions, students and other citizens. Prison conditions are harsh and at times life-threatening. Cases of long-term detention without trial or access to legal counsel are widespread. Equality before the law and due process under the law exist in theory, but, in practice, it is citizens with financial means who can secure a fair or speedy trial. The farther away citizens live from urban centers, the higher the probability to have no access to equality before the law. In addition, the right to fair trial is limited by a continuing shortage of magistrates. Protected by a corrupt and easily swayed judiciary, the government cultivates a culture of impunity.

In contrast to the state-sponsored “Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie,” who were formed to defend communities from terrorist attacks, it was impunity that led to the emergence of the Koglweogo self-defense groups. They mushroomed in the whole country to fight theft, robbery, and cattle rustling as crime rates have risen significantly during the last 15 years. Both the “Volontaires” and the Koglweogo are frequently accused of violent acts against suspected criminals or terrorists. In 2020, more civilians died from the violence by local militias and national forces than attacks by violent extremists.

Freedom of religion and a ban on discrimination, both guaranteed by the constitution, are generally respected. However, in the north and east, where the state is unable to fully enforce a monopoly on violence, Islamist groups restrict freedom of religion and systematically violate civil rights. A law condemns all kinds of discrimination, including gender discrimination, but the government does not effectively enforce it. Homosexuals, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS are often confronted with social and economic discrimination, and women’s rights (including reproductive rights) are not always guaranteed in practice.

Civil rights

4

'06 '22 10



1

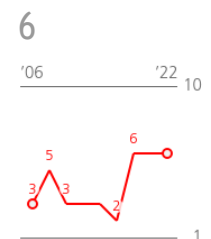
4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

Democratic institutions exist but are functional only to a limited degree and still suffer from limitations with regard to intra- or inter-organizational stability, though this has improved after the turnover of Blaise Compaoré. On the national, regional, and local level stability suffers from shortcomings in the rule of law and a dysfunctional, politicized, and often corrupt administration that lacks both materials and qualified personnel. In the past, the National Assembly was weak and has not been much more than a rubber stamp for the government's legislative propositions. After the government and regime change, this improved slightly. However, from top to bottom, institutions suffer from corruption, which limits their performance. Local institutions, in particular, very often lack material, financial means, staff, and capacities to perform the tasks assigned to them. Moreover, central state authorities bypass local institutions when it comes to politically and economically important issues. From 2015, we can see that institutions responsible for financial control improved their performance, while other institutions such as the executive and the judiciary are not performing their duties in terms of sanctioning mismanagement of public resources.

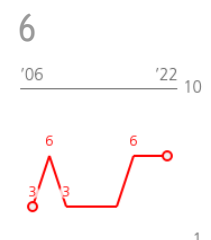
Acceptance and support for democratic institutions is restrained both among the government and large segments of the population. Though this has improved as a consequence of the popular protest that stopped the Presidential Guard's coup d'état and the presidential elections of November 2015, national institutions are still deemed nearly irrelevant to large parts of the rural population. A significant number of associations and civic organizations actively contribute to strengthening commitment to democratic institutions. Commitment by government bodies and political parties, by contrast, seems to be rather instrumental: They support democratic institutions whenever these are likely to serve their respective interests. Notwithstanding this, many actors confirm in public discourse their commitment to democratic institutions rhetorically. The military still presents a significant veto power with the potential to weaken and threaten democratic institutions. At the same time, in Burkina Faso's history, the military has also sided with the population against former governments.

The growing frequency of terrorist attacks and intercommunal conflicts has increased doubts about the reliability of the states' institutions. This became obvious during the electoral campaign in 2020, when almost half the candidates stated that they did not feel safe running their campaigns in their election districts.

Performance of democratic institutions



Commitment to democratic institutions



5 | Political and Social Integration

In Burkina Faso, nearly 200 political parties exist, though most of them are inactive or dysfunctional. Sixty-one were registered by the national election commission for the 2020 national elections. In the National Assembly, nine are represented.

The CDP's decades of hegemony have led to a semi-authoritarian, dominant-party system. However, in January 2014, 75 CDP politicians, some of them with considerable influence, declared their resignation from the party and founded the Mouvement pour le peuple et le progrès (MPP), which is now the country's strongest political party, followed by the CDP. However, the secession did not emerge from fundamental programmatic or ideological differences but from discontent with Compaoré's intention to establish his younger brother, François, as his successor.

Except for the CDP and MPP, the party system is highly fragmented and the level of organizational stability is low. The parties' fragmentation and the inability of the opposition parties' representatives to build stable coalitions have been two of the main obstacles to the country's democratization process for the last 20 years.

The system lacks programmatic capacities and shows grave weakness with regard to the population's social integration and political education. Parties can, therefore, if at all, only partially fulfill their political role. A personality-based rather than a party-based vision of politics prevails. Ethnic and regional loyalty, as well as clientelistic networks, play a relevant role in decisions about votes. Ideologies and programmatic issues do not play a significant role in party membership. Ethnicity and religion continue to influence political behavior, including voting, especially in rural areas.

Many non-parliamentary groups and an active civil society exist in Burkina Faso. Most important are the trade unions, student and youth associations, and human rights organizations. Other interests, in particular of rural groups and women, however, are underrepresented, though some important and well-organized rural interest groups (e.g., the Fédération Nationale des Groupements Naam) and NGOs (e.g., the Association Monde Rural, AMR) exist. Yet the quality of representation is high. Interest groups, cooperative associations or civil society organizations are able to cooperate when pursuing a common goal, better than political parties. In the period under review, this was demonstrated on the occasions of the killing of two youth activists in the province of Yagha on May 31, 2019, and the trade union demonstration on September 16, 2019. Human rights organizations are steadily putting pressure on the authorities to investigate human rights violations.

Party system

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Interest groups

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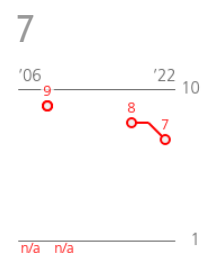
During the period under review, civil society groups continuously engaged in collective action in order to defend local people's rights and claims related to industrial mining (e.g., the gold mines in Houndé (Tuy province) and Bissa (near Kongoussi, Centre Nord)). Protests against French influence (the presence of French military forces, the CFA franc zone) and against human rights violations by state security forces increased in 2019. Civil society activities and political protests were restricted by the ban of public gatherings in March and April 2020 (COVID-19 related), the state of emergency that has been in effect since 31 December 2018, and the recent law (2020) criminalizing any attempt to "demoralize" state security forces.

Meaningful data is available from the Afrobarometer's Round 8 survey, whose results were published in 2019. According to the results, a strong majority (79%) of Burkinabé reject one-party rule – a slight increase from Round 7 (2018: 74%). By contrast, less than half of respondents (42.7%) strongly oppose military rule (disagree that the army should intervene in ruling the country) – a significant decrease, compared to 74% in the previous survey. This is probably explained by the worsening security situation in the period under review. A proportion of 69.9% of Burkina Faso's citizens prefer democracy to any other kind of government. According to the survey, 77.8% favor a two-term limit on presidential mandates. However, Burkinabé see the extent to which democracy is achieved critically: 21.2% feel that Burkina Faso is a full democracy (28% in the previous round); 42.1% see only minor problems with democracy in the country (as compared to 36% in the previous survey), 26.2% identify major problems (as compared to 25%); 8.7% say that in their view, Burkina Faso is no democracy at all (5% in the last survey). This shows a slight decline in approval of democracy, which may be explained by the general increase in insecurity.

Nonetheless, the majority of Burkinabé still trust their democratic institutions (though this has declined slightly compared to Afrobarometer's Round 7, too): A share of 58.8% of the population trusts the president, 54.4% the electoral commission and 51.7% the courts. Compared to this, a striking large majority of 78.1% trust the state security forces; this reflects how significant the overall (in)security in the country is.

There is no indication that COVID-19 responses have affected approval of democracy in the country.

Approval of democracy



There are a large number of autonomous, self-organized groups, association and organizations in Burkina Faso that address social, political, cultural, environmental or other topics. In Afrobarometer’s Round 7 survey, more than one-third of respondents stated that they were either a member or a leader of a civil society organization. In many areas, civic organizations take on a representative function that government institutions (i.e., parliament and state agencies) are not able (or not willing) to perform. Civic organizations are cooperative and strategic. They generally operate under the principles of self-regulation and are a voice of political and social concern. What they struggle with, however, are weak institutional capacities and a lack of resources.

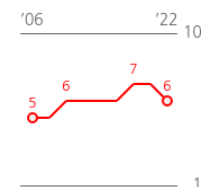
It is difficult to assess the level of trust among the Burkinabé population. The most recent Afrobarometer survey paints a cautious picture: 87% of Burkinabé answered that it is necessary to be very careful before trusting people. An important factor, in any case, is the culture of “pleasantry,” which permits members of certain ethnic groups to make jokes about each other and communicate sensitive issues without causing bad feelings. However, some Burkinabé scholars point to the need to more strongly educate youth about joking relations, as corresponding knowledge falls into oblivion. Nevertheless, this cultural trait is still widely praised as a reason why interethnic relations in the country have been amicable.

The strong approval for interethnic and intercommunal solidarity and cohesion became obvious, for instance, in January 2019: An intercommunal clash in Yirgou (Centre Nord) in which nearly 50 people were killed, was followed by a strong broad nationwide solidarity campaign by a broad range of local and national associations (interest groups, civil society organizations, NGOs, political parties, and others).

Even so, intercommunal conflicts increased in the period under review, and are frequently framed in ethnic terms, which risks eroding social capital at the local level in the concerned regions. The erosion of trust in the north and east seems to mainly concern relationships between farmers and herders. What further complicates the situation is that more than one million people in Burkina Faso have been displaced and resettled in areas where resources are already scarce. This potentially intensifies rivalries and exacerbates conflicts over resources.

Social capital

6



II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Poverty and social exclusion are quantitatively and qualitatively extensive and structurally ingrained. The 2019 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) Update ranks Burkina Faso 182 out of 189 countries, despite steady but minor improvements in the country's Human Development Index since 1975. In the context of extreme poverty and widespread inequalities, social exclusion is severe and structurally reinforced, especially in rural areas and for women. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) value stood at 0.594 in 2019. Burkina Faso lost 30.1% of its Human Development Index (HDI) due to inequality as of 2018 and its value at the Gini Index was 35.3 in 2014, which is the most recent available figure.

Despite recent improvements, social indicators remain weak, and Burkina Faso is unlikely to meet the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. Gross national income (GNI) per capita was \$590 in 2017 (\$630 in 2015). The incidence of poverty is high: 83.8% of the population live in multidimensional poverty (severe multidimensional poverty: 64.8%), while 43.7% live on less than \$1.90 a day (2014), according to the World Bank and UNDP.

The COVID-19 pandemic does not seem to have a strong effect on the already-high level of social exclusion. However, a quantitative report from the journal, *Science Advances*, in February 2021 indicates that more than 50% of the population experienced loss of income.

Economic indicators		2017	2018	2019	2020
GDP	\$ M	14107.0	16059.9	15990.8	17369.1
GDP growth	%	6.2	6.7	5.7	2.0
Inflation (CPI)	%	1.5	2.0	-3.2	1.9
Unemployment	%	5.1	4.7	4.6	5.0

Question
Score

Socioeconomic
barriers

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Economic indicators		2017	2018	2019	2020
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	0.0	1.7	1.0	-
Export growth	%	8.5	12.8	-5.5	-
Import growth	%	10.1	16.5	10.1	-
Current account balance	\$ M	-896.3	-664.8	-523.8	-
Public debt	% of GDP	33.6	38.0	42.0	46.5
External debt	\$ M	3166.8	3317.7	3686.9	4492.9
Total debt service	\$ M	142.0	152.4	165.3	164.8
Net lending/borrowing	% of GDP	-6.5	-4.2	-2.9	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	15.3	15.1	15.7	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	17.7	17.0	19.0	-
Public education spending	% of GDP	5.6	5.4	5.8	-
Public health spending	% of GDP	3.0	2.4	-	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	0.6	-	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	1.6	2.2	2.6	2.7

Sources (as of December 2021): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database.

7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

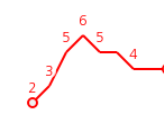
The institutional framework for market competition remains weak, with significant entry and exit barriers, pervasive corruption, a weak judicial system, a lack of access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises. In principle, the constitution and investment laws guarantee the rights of foreign and domestic private entities to establish and own enterprises and engage in all forms of remunerative activities. There are no restrictions on the establishment of businesses.

The informal sector is large: 75% of the workforce employed outside of agriculture is informally employed. The Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom 2020 describes Burkina Faso's economy as "mostly unfree," ranking it 117 out of 180 economies (2019: 96). With an overall score of 56.7, Burkina Faso is slightly above the sub-Saharan African average (which is 55.1) and below the world average (61.6). Similarly, the World Bank Doing Business 2020 survey ranks Burkina Faso 88 on the ease of starting a business (2019: 79, 2017: 72). According to the 2020 survey, it takes about 13 days on average to start a new business and involves three procedures. The cost of registering a business is calculated at 42.8% of GNI per

Market organization

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capita (2019).

Despite slightly negative ranking trends, some improvement in the last years and the successful implementation of recent reforms can be noted. Burkina Faso has made moderate progress in some areas of economic freedom, such as the simplification of the business start-up process, the set-up of two commercial courts in the two major cities, and ongoing tax administration reforms. Also, the World Bank reported some progress in the business environment, as the government recently launched a credit bureau, adopted the public-private partnership (PPP) law, and initiated reforms regarding business licenses and financial infrastructure. However, important reforms are still required concerning access to electricity, tax payment, access to land, and enforcement of contracts.

Prices are set freely according to market principles. The government may however monitor, control, fix and freeze the prices of certain products, such as sugar, cereals, bread, milk, soap, cement, hydrocarbons, essential generic medicine, water, electricity, school supplies and tobacco.

The formation of monopolies and oligopolies is not regulated consistently. No clear and comprehensive legal provisions exist. Some public enterprises continue to enjoy a monopoly in their markets – including the electric and water utilities, the national lottery, mail, rail equipment, and fuel imports. Until 2023, three companies in the cotton subsector have a monopoly on the purchase of seed cotton in the areas allocated to them. The independent competition authority, the National Commission of Competition and Consumption (Commission Nationale de la Concurrence et de la Consommation, CNCC) was established in 1994. In the telecommunications market, competition is monitored by the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Postal Services. Competition in the financial services subsector is the responsibility of West African Economic and Monetary Union's (WAEMU) Banking Commission.

On April 27, 2017, a new Competition Act was passed, modifying the provisions of the previous Competition Act of 1994. The new act harmonizes national and regional rules (e.g., regarding state aid and subsidies) and clarifies the relationship between the national and regional competition authorities. Moreover, it significantly increases the penalties payable by transgressing firms for violations of competition laws.

Competition policy

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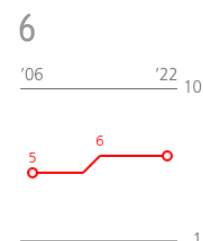
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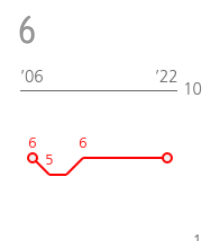
While foreign trade officially follows nondiscrimination principles, supplementary taxes on imports, targeted import bans, as well as significant non-tariff barriers such as inadequate infrastructure and corruption, all limit foreign trade. The MFN applied simple average tariff stood at 12.2 in 2018. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Burkina Faso's objective is to adapt national regulations according to the Treaty on the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). Despite the harmonization of the majority of trade policy instruments, mainly import measures, the implementation is far from complete in all areas. A landlocked country, Burkina Faso depends heavily on its neighbors, especially Côte d'Ivoire, for non-regional trade. According to a 2010 WTO report, Burkina Faso has improved its institutional and regulatory framework since the previous review of the country's trade policy, in 2004. Burkina Faso is a member of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes and hence participates in the peer review process, which encourages all countries to adopt an effective exchange of information in tax matters. The latest review was published in 2016 and rated Burkina Faso overall "largely compliant." Round two of the rating is scheduled for 2022. Corruption is pervasive. Since 2007, the surveys of the Burkinabé NGO Réseau National de Lutte Anti-corruption (REN-LAC) have ranked the customs service as the country's most corrupt institution.

Liberalization of foreign trade



Burkina Faso's banking system is supervised by the regional central bank, the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO), which serves all members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Previously regulated and controlled by the government, the banking system continues to undergo restructuring to promote competition and improve the microfinance sector. Despite some progress in terms of diversification and increased access to financial services offered by banks, the banking system has still limited abilities to finance the economy. Besides general weaknesses in the judicial and regulatory system, the sector lacks innovative financial instruments, notably access to credit for small to medium-sized enterprises. The banking sector is composed of 15 commercial banks and four specialized credit institutions. Access to banking services remains low, with 3.078 branches of commercial banks per 100,000 adults (2019). Per every 1,000 adults 181.8 had a deposit account at a commercial bank (2019), according to World Bank data. There are no reliable figures available on the bank capital to assets ratio and non-performing loans.

Banking system



As of May 2017, Burkina Faso received a sovereign rating of B (stable) by Standard and Poor's (outlook: stable). Regional and national fixed income markets are still in their early development stages.

The Heritage Foundation acknowledges that the government has pursued banking liberalization and restructuring, encouraging competition in the financial sector. However, according to this source, the banking sector remained underdeveloped, providing a low level of access to banking services in general.

8 | Monetary and fiscal stability

As a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Burkina Faso cannot pursue an independent policy with regard to currency and foreign exchange rates. The common currency has a fixed parity with the euro, which is guaranteed by the French treasury. The Central Bank of West African States (Banque Centrale des États de l’Afrique de l’Ouest, BCEAO) is fully independent but the exchange rate policy is heavily influenced by that of the European Central Bank (ECB) and thus the currency felt the effects of the euro’s depreciation and the crisis in the eurozone.

Between 2013 and 2016, consumer price inflation was quite low (ranging between -0.3% and 0.7%). By 2018 it increased to 2.0% but dropped to -3.2% in 2019, according to the World Bank. Data on the real effective exchange rate is not available.

The government’s fiscal and debt policies generally promote macroeconomic stability, but there remains a moderate risk of debt distress due to Burkina Faso’s excessive dependence on commodity exports, low diversification of the export sector, and its reliance on external financing for most of its public investment programs. Public debt increased in the last decade from 25.6% of GDP in 2007 to 36.5% in 2017 and to 42.7% in 2019. The net lending/borrowing was in 2018 -4.2% of the GDP, according to World Bank data.

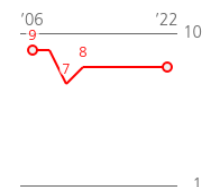
Economic growth seems stable during the period under review. A recent IMF African Department publication identifies Burkina Faso as one of the few non-resource-rich low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have been able to achieve consistently high growth rates over a 15-year period. According to the IMF, Burkina Faso has a good track record of maintaining macroeconomic stability even in the face of severe shocks in recent years, but higher, more diversified, and more sustainable growth is essential in order to substantially reduce poverty and inequality.

While natural resource wealth particularly from gold (and potentially other commodity) exports has the potential to accelerate the country’s development, resource-rich developing countries that plan to increase public investment financed in part by external borrowing may carry substantial debt risk.

According to IMF data, total debt service in 2019, was \$157.1 million. The current account balance was \$-664.8 million (2018). External debt stock was \$3,662.4 million (2019). General government consumption expenditure is 14.4 % of GDP (2019). After the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Burkina Faso requested participation in the Debt Service Suspension Initiative by the World Bank. The country’s risk to external or overall debt distress is rated as moderate. In April 2020, the World Bank has approved \$21.15 million to help the country respond to the pandemic and strengthen the public health system.

Monetary stability

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Fiscal stability

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9 | Private Property

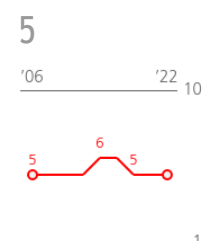
Property rights and rules regarding the acquisition of property are adequately defined under the law, but weaknesses in the judicial system complicate or prevent their protection or implementation even though the state itself does not interfere with property rights. The International Property Rights Index (IPRI) score decreased by -0.112 to 5.243, placing Burkina Faso 7th in the Africa region and 72nd in the world. Doing Business 2020 ranks it 151 out of 190 for ease of doing business. Burkina Faso's laws permit private ownership. However, traditional systems and traditional authorities (chiefs) play an important role in allocating and protecting rights to land and, in practice, agricultural land is mostly governed by customary tenure systems. Land tenure insecurity is a serious and increasing problem. Structural deficiencies remain in enforcing property rights, including the arbitrary removal of land titles. Other pressing issues in Burkina Faso are theft, robbery, and cattle rustling, to which state security forces have no effective answers. This gave rise to the mobilization of the "Koglweogo" self-defense group, whose initial agenda is the tracking of stolen property and punishment of property-related crimes.

The exercise of privatizing state-owned enterprises has occurred since 1997 and generally followed market rules; however, privatization is not fully realized, with a few strategic sectors (e.g., electricity) remaining under government ownership. Though it has lost its marketing monopoly, Burkina Faso's main cotton company SOFITEX (Société Nationale des Fibres et Textiles) is still state-owned.

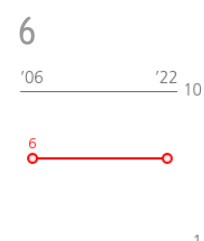
The national development plan calls for boosting the private sector. However, the public sector so far remains a significant driver of growth and accounts for one-third of GDP. Private investment is low (an annual \$1.5 billion). This is mainly due to limited investment opportunities inherent to a generally underdeveloped private sector. Except for mining and cotton, most economic activities are small-scale with low productivity.

Private companies can, in principle, act freely but they may encounter economic, political and social barriers to development, such as a lack of financing. According to the Doing Business 2020, it takes about 13 days on average to start a new business and three procedures are involved. Burkina Faso scores 88 for the ease of starting a business. In previous years it stood at 79 (2019) and 72 (2017). Most Burkinabé firms are in commercial and service sectors, which contribute about half of GDP.

Property rights



Private enterprise

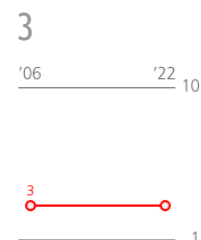


10 | Welfare Regime

Rudimentary measures to preserve social welfare do exist but are extremely diverse in terms of territory, social strata, and sector. International, national and local civil society play a major role in compensating multidimensional deficiencies. The country cannot systematically combat poverty on its own. More than 75% of non-agricultural employment exists in the informal sector of the economy; thus, only a very small group of salaried workers, including state employees, benefits from the country's modest social security system. Existing social welfare laws provide pensions, disability insurance, occupational injury insurance, and health insurance. Workers and unions have demanded improved social welfare networks for years and continued to make this a key issue during strikes. The government, in cooperation with donors, has continued its efforts to increase access to education and health care, in addition to basic needs such as clean water and sanitation services, and to promote income-generating activities for vulnerable social groups. The poorest households will benefit from subsidies and school nutrition programs, reduced fees for health services, and the introduction of cash transfer schemes. The main target of the development policy SCADD (Stratégie de croissance accélérée et de développement durable) is to combat poverty and improve people's well-being based on an enforced stimulation of the annual GDP growth. These efforts have shown some (though minor) success and slightly increased the level of school enrollment (see 10.2). Life expectancy at birth was at 61.2 years in 2018. Public expenditure on health was at 3% of GDP in 2017. Particularly worrying is that more than 100 health facilities in poor and remote areas in the north and east were closed during the period under review due to increasing insecurity. At the same time, the need for health care is considerably increasing, given the high number of more than 1,000,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the high incidence of malaria and other severe illnesses. COVID-19 has affected Burkina Faso comparatively less than many other countries; however, it is alarming that in the whole country no more than 15 intensive care unit beds are available.

Reciprocal relationships play a major role between relatives, in villages, and in larger social units. Those who are socially excluded from corresponding relations usually belong to the most vulnerable groups in the community.

Social safety nets



Women and members of other vulnerable social groups have limited access to education, social services, public office, etc.

The literacy rate is significantly lower for women (32.7%) than for men (50.1%). Gender parity index (GPI) for gross enrollment ratio is 1 at primary and secondary level but only 0.6 at tertiary level. Overall gross enrollment ratio is 94.5 (primary), 41.3 (secondary), and 7.1 tertiary). Female participation in the labor force was 44.5% of the total labor force in 2020. Inequalities and disparities remain widespread across the sectors. There are many voices claiming that girls are disadvantaged at school. Sexual harassment at schools and early maternity of girls are common. In the agricultural sector, women have less access to micro-credits, land rights, technology, and know-how.

In the peripheral regions, non-citizens are sometimes regarded with mistrust, but overall, on the intercommunal level, there is no clear evidence for explicit discrimination. Ethnic Fulbe (Peulh), particularly if they are nomadic, are considered to be disadvantaged by some institutions. The displacement of approximately one million people in the country's north and east is likely to worsen economic opportunities, employment and access to education, especially for women and members of particular ethnic groups.

11 | Economic Performance

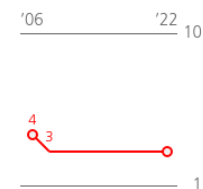
The economy is heavily reliant on agricultural production, 24.7% of the active population employed in the sector. Cotton is the country's most important cash crop, but gold is the most important export. Burkina Faso is currently Africa's fifth-largest gold-producing country (after South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, and Mali). In 2019, 50.3 tons of gold were produced, a continuation of the trend of increasing gold production in the country. After some years of slowdown due to the political crisis and exogenous shocks (Ebola crisis, fall in the price of raw materials), GDP growth stabilized and reached 5.7% in 2019. GDP per capita increased in the last decade from GK\$ 1,261 in 2007 to GK\$ 1,870 in 2017 and to GK\$ 2,274.72 in 2019. The GDP per capita growth was 2.7% in 2019.

The strong growth of the extractive industries is increasingly structured around the industrial sector, but the tertiary sectors continue to be the main driver of growth, accounting for 44% (services) of the GDP, as estimated for 2019 (industry: 22.4%, agriculture: 20.3%). Annual consumer price inflation was around -3.2% in 2019.

The World Bank is projecting negative growth due to the COVID-19 crisis. The economic slowdown due to COVID-19 has translated in an economy-wide reduction in income; most employees, non-farm businesses and farm activities experienced a reduction in income. Closure due to COVID-19 and lack of customers are the main reasons for the lower income of non-farm businesses. Since

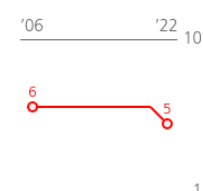
Equal opportunity

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Output strength

5



mid-March, most farmers (90.1%) have had difficulties mainly due to the season and COVID-19 related restrictions. In a recent survey, around 10% of respondents used to work before the COVID-19 outbreak, but do not work now. Fear of COVID-19 is the second most important reason for ceasing to work. Remittances from relatives and friends have also decreased for many households, according to the study.

As the CFA franc is pegged to the euro, the exchange rate is relatively stable. Burkina Faso's current account balance is chronically negative and amounted to - \$523.8 million in 2019. The current account deficit also deteriorated from 4.1% of GDP in 2018 to 5.52% of GDP in 2018.

Public deficit was 4.4% in 2018 and 3.5% in 2019. Tax revenues are stagnating (15.3% of GDP in 2017 and 15.1% of GDP in 2018) and insufficient to offset increases in wages, transfers, and public investments. To finance the public deficit, the government combined concessional aid and borrowing on the regional market. Burkina Faso has benefited from various initiatives, including Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The employment to population ratio is at 62% according to estimations by the ILO in 2020.

12 | Sustainability

Large parts of the population, namely poor people in the rural areas, directly depend on natural resources (land and water) for livelihood and are exposed both to the impacts of climate change and politically induced land-use change. In 2020, 106,228 people in the country were impacted by flooding and violent winds, according to the national disaster management agency, SP/CONASUR. The agency provided emergency assistance in the form of food and non-food supplies. The National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) focuses on identifying and reducing disaster risk through monitoring, early warning, and response systems. Projects by NGOs, the government, donors and others aim at raising awareness of environmental issues. They engage in sustainable forest and water management, fight desertification and land degradation, and so on. Yet, environmental methods and knowledge of the international community often diverge with traditional knowledge, creating conflict and rejection by the population. Another problem is that – against the background of severe poverty and rapidly increasing insecurity – the protection of the environment is only a secondary priority for most people (and de facto for most authorities, too). Harsh living conditions, a lack of free time, knowledge and resources makes it difficult for many people to engage with environmental concerns. The economic activities of vulnerable parts of the population are based on short-term needs to ensure survival. Nevertheless, there are some NGO approaches to sensitize the population and to support it with needed

Environmental
policy

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resources (e.g., for agroecological farming and reforestation). Connected methods spare the environment and have promising harvest yields. This is very important, as a majority of the Burkinabé population lives from agriculture. Nonetheless, for the current national development plan (Plan national de développement économique et social, PNDES, for 2016-2020) environmental policy is not a core topic but subordinated to economic development. One of 13 strategic goals in the national development plan is to “reverse the tendency of environmental degradation and to sustainably ensure the management of natural and environmental resources” (Strategic Goal 3.5). Yet, the strategy of promoting the extractive sector as an alleged driver of national development clearly contradicts the existing sustainable environmental policy.

The state’s system of primary, secondary and tertiary education remains inadequate despite increased investment and some improvements, such as the expansion of the free school program for all children from three to 16 years under the new Strategic Development Program for Basic Education (PDSEB) running from 2012 to 2021. Burkina Faso’s value on the UN Education Index was 0.312 in 2019 (2018: 0.300).

Despite some minor improvements in the education sector, literacy and school enrollment rates remain low with an average literacy rate of 41.2% of the population age 15 and above. In 2018, gross enrollment ratio in primary education improved to 96% (2016: 91.1%; 2014: 86.9%) and at secondary level to 41% (2016: 35.8%; 2014: 28.4%). Gender equality in education has not been achieved yet: The female enrollment ratio (2018) is at 95.3% primary and 40.7% at the secondary level. Access to education is constrained by large disparities from province to province and between urban and rural areas. The situation in the north and somewhat in the east is alarming with more than 60 attacks by armed groups on schools in 2019: 2,500 schools remain closed due to insecurity. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, 76,000 children do not have access to education. From March 12 – May 4, 2020, schools all over the country were closed as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown.

Deficits in the education sector are due to weak infrastructure and the low quality of education. Permanent infrastructure and investment in science, as well as research and development, remain underdeveloped, despite increased government expenditure in education and rising donor assistance over the years. According to the World Bank, government expenditure on education was at 5.4% of GDP (2018), still a low rate. Public spending in the research and development sector was 0.7% of GDP in 2017.

Education policy /
R&D

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Governance

I. Level of Difficulty

The structural constraints on effective governance in Burkina Faso are still massive. Chief among them is the extremely high poverty rate, as reflected in all common indicators such as the low GDP per capita and Burkina Faso's bottom ranking in the Human Development Index (HDI), that is, 182nd out of 189 countries in 2019. Other constraints include a weak infrastructure, in both physical and institutional terms; vulnerability to weather risks (floods and droughts), which regularly affects the country's ability to produce staples as well as part of its export commodities (cotton and livestock); the low diversification of the economy; its high dependency on imported fuel and food; and its concomitant exposure to fluctuation of world market prices (particularly for gold, Burkina Faso's main export). The country's landlocked situation adds a further level of difficulty. Burkina Faso's current account balance remains negative and is characterized by high imports of services and capital goods imports. The country lacks an educated labor force due to a rudimentary education system and a low literacy rate.

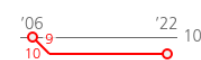
Increasing insecurity in the period under review and the high number of IDPs pose additional severe structural constraints.

COVID-19 has hit Burkina Faso comparatively less than other countries: As of February 5, 2021, there were 10,958 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 127 deaths, according to the WHO.

Burkina Faso has comparatively strong civil society traditions. The fragmentation and fluctuation of a number of political parties do not reflect these traditions and one should not mistake the relative strength of civil society with particularly strong political influence. Numerous organizations and associations, which partially have their roots in pre-colonial history, partly emerged in the colonial period (often in more or less open opposition to colonial rule), constitute one of the society's key strengths. These organizations include "groupement villageois" (village groups, such as the Groupements Naam) and other community/village-based associations, which were originally self-help groups or traditional warrior associations (e.g., the Dozo). Associations engaging in the development sector suffer from weak institutional capacities. As they increasingly work as implementors of donor programs, their institutional capacities are further weakened as a result of unsustainable partnership policies. Trade unions, student unions, human rights groups, and a wide spectrum of literacy, environmental, and women's advocacy groups, such as trade and professional organizations, are vital to civil society in Burkina Faso.

Structural
constraints

9



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Civil society
traditions

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The trade unions in Burkina Faso are organized along ideological lines. Overlaps in personnel among the civil society associations are commonplace. Virtually all functionaries in the Confédération générale des travailleurs du Burkina (CGT-B), Burkina Faso's biggest trade union, and its member organizations were previously organized in the student movement, notably in the Union Générale des Étudiants Burkinabé (UGEB) and Association Nationale des Étudiants Burkinabé (ANEB).

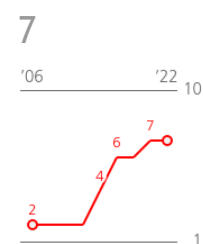
Trade unions, human rights organizations, students, and political opposition parties have a long tradition of joining forces. The Mouvement burkinabé des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP), the trade union federation CGT-B and the student union UGEB had already collaborated since the late 1980s. After the assassination of journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998, they founded a "collectif" to organize protests, which still exists today. In the course of the protests against the constitutional referendum in October 2014, a new civil society group came into existence in July 2013, the Balai Citoyen (literally 'citizens'). The founders and frontmen of Balai Citoyen are the reggae musician Sams'K le Jah and the rapper Serge Bambara aka "Smockey." The group still exists but is relatively inactive.

There have been significantly more violent incidents in the period under review than previously. The north of Burkina Faso is partly under influence of non-state armed groups (most likely, linked to al-Qaeda Maghreb Islamique/AQMI). In the period under review, violent attacks by Islamist terrorists increased in the eastern and northern regions. These attacks were targeted at military sites but also at civilians. In early January 2019, a serious intercommunal clash occurred in Yirgou (Centre Nord province, about 200 kilometers north of Ouagadougou) which particularly targeted ethnic Fulbe (Peulh). Almost 50 people were killed. The incident was followed by an enormous wave of solidarity and endeavors to create national unity. Nevertheless, the activities of different vigilante groups intensify the potential for intercommunal conflict. Moreover, the activity of Islamist groups increases the potential for religious and/or ethnic division.

Social cohesion in Burkina Faso is still relatively high but risks being eroded by the increasing insecurity and its social and economic impacts. The cohesion and solidarity that have emerged from the protests against the Compaoré regime in 2014 and the coup d'état continue to have an effect today. In the period under review, the increase in terrorist attacks also had the effect of strengthening solidarity and endeavors for creating and maintaining national unity.

However, the growing gap between a small circle of wealthy, powerful figures and the poor masses continues to widen dangerously, mainly as a result of the government's policies, which are more oriented toward maintaining power and clientelist relations rather than the well-being of the population. Therefore, the potential for conflict has grown over the years.

Conflict intensity



During the period under review, many conflicts related to the mining sector, both industrial and artisanal gold mining. Currently, 15 industrial gold mines and 1 zinc mine are active; almost all of them have started within the last 15 years. Virtually all mines are accompanied by local conflicts between local communities, and particularly artisanal miners, on the one hand, and state and company security forces on the other. Particularly in the southwest, around the town of Gaoua, conflicts also emerge frequently related to artisanal mining, which are sometimes framed in ethnic terms.

II. Governance Performance

14 | Steering Capability

The government has, by and large, adequately pursued strategic economic priorities that correspond with the normative framework in terms of striving for a market economy. Economic growth has been relatively consolidated during the period under review. As related to the PNDES (National Plan for Economic and Social Development, 2016 – 2020), the government has put emphasis on investment in the development of infrastructure, on promoting the agricultural and livestock sector, on (professional) education, and on water and health. A national steering committee and a permanent secretariat have been established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the PNDES.

In the period under review, however, no significant socioeconomic or political reforms were introduced. With regard to the political system and democratization, it remains unclear how far the government's priority is to enhance political transformation and democratization or to stabilize its own power position. The deterioration of the security situation also distracts from development-related problems; security and conflict management have become the government's priorities but reactively instead of strategically and systematically.

COVID-19 and response measures have not seriously impacted the government's long-term development plans.

The government's "National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES)" for the period of 2016-2020 focuses on the structural transformation of its economy and its people's welfare. To date, no reliable information on its implementation and achievement are available. However, it is obvious that Burkina Faso remains extremely sensitive to developments in the global markets and dependent on donors' goodwill, a situation that is aggravated by the structural constraints facing the country. Improvements in conditions are not expected in the

Question
Score

Prioritization

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Implementation

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short or medium term. On the contrary, the aggravation of insecurity, its impact on social development (closure of schools, health care and administration in certain locations), and high numbers of internal displaced have considerably increased constraints to the implementation of mid-and long-term development plans. In general, even if reforms are properly prepared and legally enacted, they often fail to become fully implemented. In many cases, the government simply does not have the required capacity to monitor results. Lack of qualified personnel is also a severe challenge. Poverty reduction measures have not been effective, and poverty levels remain high, and most social development indicators (health, education, gender equality, etc.) are, despite slight improvements, still alarming. Furthermore, decentralization and the strength of self-help initiatives mean that the implementation of measures is typically left to local institutions or organizations. In many cases, organizations' financial support is dependent on foreign donors, which relieves fiscal pressure on the state budget. Moreover, the effective impact of reforms is subject to the constraints of a global market economy. The COVID-19 pandemic does not seem to have a great impact on the government's implementation of policies.

Burkina Faso's path of transformation has long been characterized by partial and shortsighted democratic reforms that only go as far as necessary to address instances of social unrest and intense popular pressure. During the period under review, this trend seems to continue. However, it is still quite early to evaluate its policy learning performance. Moreover, the worsening security situation and preparations for the November 2020 national elections dominated the period under review. Still, it can be presumed that none of the policies implemented so far have fundamentally touched the underlying problem that prevents substantial democratization and social development: the continued grip on power exerted by a small elite unwilling to be held accountable for the abuses, corruption, and mismanagement, and fundamental social and economic inequality. On the contrary, the government seems to prioritize the fight against terrorism (which is reasonable) and external (donor) relations instead of tackling core internal structural problems. Institutional learning does not seem to have improved since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

Policy learning



15 | Resource Efficiency

Available human, financial and organizational resources are utilized efficiently in very few areas. Huge amounts of resources are wasted due to corruption, clientelism, favoritism, poor coordination, and the country's lack of infrastructure and official monitoring.

Moreover, the fillings of jobs or dismissals of public servants often serve favoritism or political motivations, hindering effective management. The country's youth, who as a whole are economically disenfranchised and lack adequate education and employment, have become increasingly frustrated with the selfish behavior of the political leadership and are essentially being ignored en masse as a valuable resource. In the period under review, this became, once more, visible in frequent protests by trade unions, students, and urban youth.

Officially, decentralization was designed to bring basic administration closer to the people. In practice, however, thin financial, technical and human resources severely limit the extent of local autonomy and improved efficiency in administration.

The country cannot manage the level of state debt on its own and has benefited and will continue to benefit from debt relief under the IMF and World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. According to the 2020 IMF review, all quantitative performance criteria and indicative targets have been met, as well as most structural benchmarks. Tax revenues have increased during the transition period, according to the IMF. The mining sector is an important source of taxes and non-tax state revenues, indicating Burkina Faso's dependency on and vulnerability with regard to world market developments.

On March 14, 2018, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a new three-year arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Burkina Faso for Special Drawing Right (SDR) of about \$157.6 million in support of Burkina Faso's economic and financial reform program. On November 13, 2020, the fourth and fifth reviews of the ECF were completed. This unlocks access to about \$51.28 million in Special Drawing Right (SDR), bringing total disbursements to about \$152.58 million.

The public deficit has increased to 3.47% of GDP in 2019. Tax revenue increased slightly from 15.0% of GDP in 2017 to 15.4% in 2019. This modest increase was not sufficient to offset increases in the wage bill, transfers, and public investments. According to the IMF, revenue collection was significantly hampered by frequent labor disputes.

The overall deficit declined from almost 8% of GDP in 2017 to just over the WAEMU convergence criterion limit of 3% of GDP in 2019. At the same time, growth remained robust and largely resilient to the security crisis. The path of fiscal consolidation was disrupted in 2020, however, as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the

Efficient use of assets

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security crisis to a lesser extent, negatively impacted growth and revenues. For 2020, the fiscal deficit is projected, according to the IMF, to widen to 5.3% of GDP, as opposed to 3% of GDP in the authorities' initial budget. Real GDP is also projected to decline by 2.8%.

The government revised the 2020 budget to address the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. Several measures have been taken under the revised budget. It is difficult to assess the extent to which reallocation of resources related to COVID-19 responses has occurred in an efficient and transparent manner.

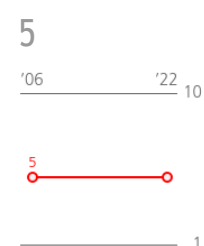
The population's skepticism about reforms helps to explain the government's conflicting objectives, even in cases where it may show foresight in seeking necessary change. Too many times, the authorities have made vast promises of far-reaching political reforms but have mostly failed to deliver. Peasants and urban employees fear, with good reason, that their efforts are misused to benefit only a small group of elites. Although the government does try to coordinate conflicting objectives and interests, it is not always successful. Effective institutions and mechanisms of coordination, both horizontally between the ministries, departments and other national agencies, and vertically between political and administrative levels, are virtually absent. The self-interest of powerful individuals and elites furthermore continues to hinder policy coordination.

Policy coordination has not been affected by the pandemic in 2020.

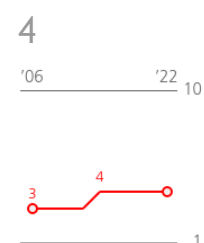
According to the national anti-corruption network (Réseau national de lutte anti-corruption, REN-LAC), the majority of the population considers politics and administration in Burkina Faso fundamentally corrupt. REN-LAC is a civil society network created in 1997 by around 20 Burkinabé civil society organizations. It conducts and publishes annual surveys on the state of corruption in Burkina Faso and organizes workshops for civil society and public authorities. With lobbying, press and information campaigns, it aims to hold the government accountable. It collaborates with state authorities in terms of training and workshops (e.g., with the national authority fighting corruption and national polices).

The perception of corruption is widespread and the government's rhetoric and institutional action in fighting corruption is significant. Besides the Superior Authority of State Control (ASCE), an entity under the authority of the prime minister that merges the High Commission for the Coordination of Anti-Corruption Activities, the State Inspector General, and the National Commission for the Fight against Fraud, there is the Public Accounts Court, which audits the government's accounts and complements the functions of the ASCE, and the Regulatory Authority of Government Tenders, which monitors government contract processes. All of these bodies have comprehensive mandates, and they have already exposed corruption at different levels of government and administration. In almost no cases, however, have their findings or recommendations been followed by action. Though the law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, the government hardly implements it effectively.

Policy coordination



Anti-corruption policy



Multilateral development cooperation financially supports the UNODC project, Accelerating UNCAC (UN Convention against Corruption) Implementation in Africa, to implement anti-corruption strategies in the police, gendarmerie and customs. Investigators and judges are trained to effectively prosecute corruption, in the anti-corruption authority and the court for economic and financial crimes.

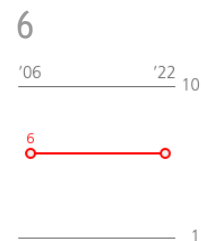
There are few reliable public sources of information about corruption, and the media are often left to publish rumors and accusations. Few government agencies provide customer-friendly services (for example on websites), which seriously compromises citizens' ability to obtain information about government operations, including the proposed national budget. Laws or regulations guaranteeing information access do not exist; nor does a provision for the president and major officeholders to declare assets acquired during public service. In 2013, Burkina Faso was accepted as a compliant in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Within this context, civil society organizations were granted a structured mechanism for accessing powerful contacts within mining companies and government.

16 | Consensus-Building

A consensus on the tenets of democracy is driven by opportunism rather than a deep conviction of the benefits of such a system. Consequently, further democratization has, so far, always been carried out only with reluctance and particularly in response to civil society pressure. The relatively broad range of actors that were united in the resistance against the September 2015 coup d'état, despite political disagreements among them, demonstrates a principal consensus on goals such as strengthening democratic institutions, and rejection of military rule. In the period under review, this was shown through broad support for national cohesion and solidarity in face of frequent terrorist attacks that was shared by opposition parties and critical civil society actors. However, the recent Afrobarometer survey indicates that, with the worsening security situation, confidence in democratic institutions and opposition to the military rule seem to have decreased.

Virtually all political actors (except for one party that is however not recognized officially) agree on the tenets of a market economy. However, the majority of the population hardly benefits from a socially responsible market economy but, in contrast, suffers from the negative effects of privatization, restructuring and liberalization. Consensus on democratic institutions turns out to be shared by a broader range of actors than on the market economy. A considerable share of civil society organizations is engaged in the enhancement of democracy, but not necessarily link it to a liberal market economy.

Consensus on goals



Burkina Faso is still a more or less neo-patrimonial state, and politics is dominated by clientelism and political patronage. Within such a system, maintaining power becomes the primary or only objective for the political elite, and democratic reforms that could undermine this strategy will be circumvented by any means, which include exclusive access to the state's machinery and its financial resources. In such a system, real reformers are rare, though they have grown both in numbers and influence since the ousting of the Blaise Compaoré. In the period under review, non-state armed groups – Islamists in the north and the east, in particular – pose a serious threat both to security and democracy. The growing political power of the vigilante groups called “Koglweogo,” who are heavily armed, could pose a threat to the state and its democratic institutions at some point. However, the Koglweogo evidence large regional differences and the majority do not hold anti-state attitudes but collaborate with state institutions. The groups also enjoy legitimacy within the population. Nevertheless, the growing availability of weapons in the country and the fact that armed actors have gained political power pose a threat to reforms.

Beyond that, large parts of the ruling elite, including both party politicians and wealthy businessmen, do not promote basic ideas of democracy, but mostly support democratic institutions as far as these serve their own interests. While the exact influence of businessmen on policy-making is unknown, it must be assumed that they do have some degree of veto power. The customary authorities (traditional chiefs), also play an important role, both within and parallel to the power structure.

It remains to be seen how far the current government, during its second term in office, will be willing and able to seriously push democratization forward.

In Burkina Faso, societal cleavages along socioeconomic, politico-ideological, and increasingly also ethnic lines are manifested in social conflicts or tensions. Political aspects of discontent have increasingly figured in demonstrators' social and economic grievances. The period under review revealed that state authorities not only lack conflict management capacities but are parties in conflicts themselves. This became obvious, for instance, in conflicts related to rents and housing in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso; in a considerable march by the trade unions on September 16, 2019; and in numerous conflicts related to the mining sector.

Furthermore, at the local level, both political conflicts reflecting those on the national scale, and social tensions, for instance, related to land use and tenure between autochthon and migrant land users or farmers and herders, are frequent. In the period under review, government and state authorities were mainly concerned with political conflicts on the national level and the fight against terrorism, but increasingly acknowledged the relevance of local conflicts and grievances, too. This is an effect of increasing insecurity and increasing numbers of intercommunal conflicts, frequently framed in ethnic terms, in the north and increasingly in the east. Due to these increasingly violent events, many express concerns for intercommunal and national peace in Burkina Faso. In the period under review, the

Anti-democratic actors

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Cleavage / conflict management

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authorities have begun to react to this with creating a department of “social cohesion” in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization and establishing “neighborhood police” (“police de proximité”). It is yet too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures. However, the government has made an effort to improve management of local conflicts and cleavages.

While civil society participation is permitted in general, organizations’ influence on the political leadership’s democratization efforts becomes apparent only in situations when ignoring civil society would seriously endanger the government’s power. Though in the protests that overthrew former President Blaise Compaoré in 2014, and in the transition period, particularly during the resistance against the coup d’état in September 2015, political (opposition) parties, including the now ruling MPP, and civil society organization have acted side by side and increasingly collaborated. This has decreased since Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and the MPP have seized power. In general, political and economic reforms in Burkina Faso are mainly the result of pressure from opposition parties and different civil society actors, primarily trade unions and professional associations, student associations, and human rights organizations. In this way all these groups exerted considerable influence over the political agenda. This influence touched not only economic and social welfare policy but also issues such as impunity, the judiciary, corruption, and others.

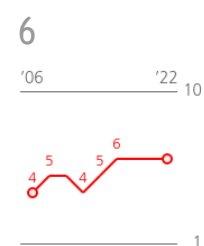
Civil society has not been involved in political decisions in response to COVID-19. On the contrary, measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus constrained civil society activities, particularly between mid-March and May 2020.

A straightforward strategy to deal with historical acts of injustice in Burkina Faso remains one of the most important steps toward further democratization and reconciliation of society. The political leadership, neither the previous regime nor the “new” one, has hardly started serious attempts at reconciliation. Burkina Faso has yet to establish anything resembling a truth and reconciliation commission, for example, to examine past human rights violations and, in particular, the circumstances of the assassinations of Thomas Sankara, Norbert Zongo and Dabo Boukary. Also, human rights violations and killings related to the protests in October 2014, the popular resistance against the coup d’état in September 2015 have not yet been fully and seriously investigated, as civil society organizations point out.

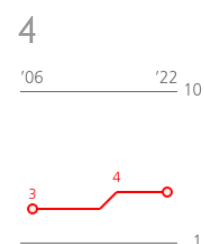
In the period under review, human rights violations by vigilante groups “Koglweogo” and the state-sponsored “Volontaires,” as well as by the state security forces occurred, which thus far have neither been investigated nor prosecuted.

In March 2016, a “High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity” (Haut Conseil pour la Réconciliation et l’Unité Nationale, HCRUN) was officially installed. The body of 21 members has a five-year mandate and shall “shed light on

Civil society participation



Reconciliation



crimes and all other kinds of severe human rights violations from 1960-2015” (meaning that potential human rights violations committed after the current government has seized power are not included).

Furthermore, in response to the increase in intercommunal conflicts across the country, the issue of “social cohesion” has been added to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization’s portfolio. A national strategy of social cohesion is supposed to be implemented for the period of 2021 – 2033. To date, however, activities by the HCRUN and the ministry’s department for social cohesion seem to be limited to occasional workshops, trainings and seminars.

17 | International Cooperation

Burkina Faso has advanced in implementing its development programs supported by the international community. A May 2012 debt sustainability analysis prepared by the World Bank and the IMF observed significant improvements in the authorities’ capacity to manage debt, upgrading Burkina Faso’s debt distress from “high” to “moderate.” This allowed Burkina Faso to receive financing other than grants, providing both new opportunities and new challenges. In its 2015 analysis, however, the IMF emphasized that debt management capacity should be strengthened in the future. This was confirmed, once more, in the IMF country report released on October 29, 2020.

On March 14, 2018, the IMF approved a new three-year arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Burkina Faso for about \$157.6 million in support of the country’s economic and financial reform program. It aims at maintaining macroeconomic stability,

reducing poverty and creating fiscal space for priority spending. On November 13, 2020, the fourth and fifth reviews of the ECF were completed. This unlocks access to about \$51.28 million Special Drawing Right, bringing total disbursements under the SDR arrangement to about \$152.58 million.

The current development plan “plan national de développement économique et social est le nouveau référentiel de développement du Burkina Faso“ (see 14.1) covers the period of 2016-2020. It is supported by the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Extended Credit Facility (ECF).

Burkina Faso shows strong performance under the program despite the frequency of social unrest and adverse external shocks, which is mostly due to the threat of terrorist attacks. Burkina Faso’s economic policy remains strongly dependent on international aid. In 2018, Burkina Faso received, according to the World Bank, \$1.110 billion (\$56.228 per capita) of net Official Donor Assistance (ODA). ODA remains at a very high level. Burkina Faso has benefited and will continue to benefit from debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Effective use of support

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On July 9, 2020, parliament approved the revised 2020 budget, which seeks to address the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. The revised budget included, according to the IMF, a wide array of measures to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, such as the lowering of import duties and VAT for hygiene and health care goods and services critical to tackling COVID-19; lowering other selected tax rates; suspending government fees charged to informal sector operators; donating food and providing assistance to households and local small businesses.

Since coming into office in 2015, the current president and government have obtained some confidence with the international community. Burkina Faso ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2004 (but not the amendments to Articles 8 and 124) and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the ICC in 2005. It has ratified most international treaties on human rights, such as the Convention against Torture (1999), the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2009), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1987), the Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural rights (1999), the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers (2003), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009).

In international environmental regimes, Burkina Faso is party to the Kyoto Protocol (2005) and has ratified the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC (2016). As of 2019, it ratified international treaties on biodiversity, desertification, endangered species, hazardous waste, the law of the sea, marine life conservation, ozone layer protection and wetlands.

Almost all states in the industrialized world maintain diplomatic and development relationships with Burkina Faso. Increasing military cooperation might also be assessed as an indicator of Burkina Faso's perceived credibility. For instance, the United States and Burkina Faso engage in a number of military training and exchange programs (e.g., Flintlock), particularly in counter-terrorism. Burkina Faso hosts two regionally-oriented national schools financed by French cooperation, which take in trainees from third countries: ISEPC, the higher education institute for civil protection (Institut Supérieur D'Études de Protection Civile), and the technical military academy École militaire technique de Ouagadougou (EMTO). In addition, in the framework of Operation Barkhane, which was launched in August 2014, France has enforced a military presence in Burkina Faso (which is contested both in Europe and in the Sahel countries and has led to increasing anti-French resentment among the Burkinabé population). Operation Barkhane has now been flanked by the special operation Task Force Tabuka, in which several European countries are engaged to varying degrees. It operates fully in 2021 with a mandate of three years.

International credibility has not been affected by COVID-19 responses, as the pandemic hit Burkina Faso relatively less than it did other countries.



Working within a regional context is a key element of Burkina Faso's statehood. More than 60 ethnic groups in the country have cross-border settlements; nomads and migrant workers depend on pastures and jobs in neighboring countries; the fight against desertification, non-state armed groups/terrorism and trafficking is impossible without regional collaboration; seaport access for landlocked Burkina Faso is dependent upon agreements with neighbors to the south; and the CFA franc pegs the country to other states with the same currency. The international fight against terrorism in the region further strengthened security cooperation with regional partners. Beginning in 2014, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania, created the G5 du Sahel alliance. In February 2017, G5 Sahel states decided to set up a joint military force of 5,000 military and police forces to fight terrorism and criminal trafficking groups. In the period under review, cooperation within the G5 Sahel Joint Force have intensified, not least due to massive European reinforcement of the G5.

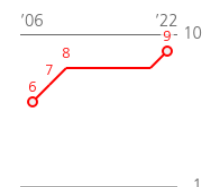
Despite the signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in June 2015, insecurity continues to hamper conditions conducive for return of refugees to Mali. Nearly 20,000 Malian refugees still remain in Burkina Faso; most of them live in and around two consolidated camps in the Sahel region. Given the increasing insecurity in the region, it is possible that Malian refugees will continue to relocate to safer areas.

The African Regional Integration Index awards Burkina Faso a high level of commitment to regional integration, namely within the ECOWAS and under various pan-African integration frameworks, such as Agenda 2063 and the Abuja Treaty.

On September 14, 2019, Burkina Faso hosted the ECOWAS special summit on fighting terrorism in the Sahel. The governments of Chad and Mauritania, both members of the G5 but not of the ECOWAS, also participated in the summit. The summit was considered as potentially reinforcing regional cooperation of the G5 and the ECOWAS. The participating governments agreed upon a joint action plan and financial commitments to the fight against terrorism in the region.

Regional cooperation

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Strategic Outlook

The challenges Burkina Faso faces are enormous. Since decolonization, the political system has been characterized by putsches and military rule – half of this period was under Blaise Compaoré. Hopes for a fundamental political transition were quickly disappointed after Compaoré was ousted. Now that the current government has completed its first term in office, this disappointment is confirmed: Neither political nor socioeconomic fundamental changes are in sight. With regard to core problems, such as impunity, corruption and reprocessing of human rights violations, its achievements lag behind its ambitions. This is hardly surprising, given that many leading figures in politics, administration and business are the elites of the Compaoré regime.

In addition to this, the threat of various non-state armed groups, Islamists and criminals now poses a considerable risk to human, social and economic development. Moreover, intercommunal conflicts have increased in several regions, and are increasingly framed in ethnic terms.

The government faces several challenges at once. Security is a major challenge, not only with regard to the massive increase in attacks by mostly Islamist armed groups in the north and east, a significant increase in criminal attacks in the peripheral districts of Ouagadougou, and alarming human rights violations by state and non-state armed actors. Beyond this, the role of the self-defense groups “Koglweogo” and the state-sponsored “Volontaires” remains difficult to assess from the outside.

A party system still has to be developed to make representative democracy possible. To date, party politics in Burkina Faso have mainly served as a way to secure access to state resources and their distribution to one’s own clientele – and not as mechanisms for developing political will and political majorities. There must be a legal reappraisal of cases of murders and “disappearances” that probably were politically motivated – not only the well-known cases of Thomas Sankara and Norbert Zongo, but also those of a number of activists from among the student, human rights, and trade union movements. An important requirement for ensuring that future governments in Burkina Faso do not use the same violent methods to deal with opposition as those in the past have is clarification and public reexamination of these cases, and legal proceedings against the perpetrators and the politicians and military figures responsible.

Key issues that need to be addressed include democratic transformation; investigation of political and economic crimes and human rights violations; combating impunity and corruption; managing natural resources and economic growth in an inclusive way, so that all Burkinabé, and in particular the poor and marginalized, can benefit from the country’s potential. The latter includes rethinking whether the more or less unrestricted promotion of the extractive sector will work out as a development strategy for a country that does not have the institutional nor the human capacities to control the sector and benefit from it. The development effects that

largescale mining, to date, has generated in the country by no means counterbalance the negative ecological and socioeconomic impacts. The output of the agricultural sector will depend heavily on weather conditions while lack of irrigation and of reservoirs persist. The diversification of the sector, support to small-scale farmers and the expansion of irrigation systems are urgently needed. The level of support and the impact of measures envisaged by the government will influence growth in agriculture – the sector upon which the livelihoods of the majority of the population are based.

Better targeting of poverty alleviation measures remains an urgent task upon which the government has not yet fully embarked, and which also faces structural constraints. Furthermore, the country must continue improving its difficult business environment, for example by strengthening the judicial framework, consequently pursuing corruption, and investing in its most important resource: the highly motivated, young generation whose future depends on their opportunities for education. Secondary and tertiary education should be particularly developed, as well as professional training. Burkina Faso should enforce the diversification of its main sectors and increase public spending to support further development of the agricultural sector development, and it should invest in public works to reduce high vulnerability to external shocks and to provide employment opportunities. A stronger emphasis should be put on social protection and gender policies to achieve a certain level of socioeconomic development.