

Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Burkina Faso – July to December 2024

31 December 2024

08 July 2024

Kidnappings of media professionals

At least three Burkinabe media professionals were kidnapped in the capital Ouagadougou in June 2024: Journalist and columnist Adama Bayala has been missing since 28.06.24. According to media reports, he voiced criticism of the military government during political debates on television programmes, among other things. Supporters of the military regime are said to have attacked him on social media.

Unknown actors allegedly kidnapped the publishing director of the newspaper L'Événement, Serge Atiana Oulon, on 24.06.24. The incident reportedly occurred after the Conseil Supérieur de la Communication (CSC) ordered a one-month suspension of L'Événement's online publication on 19.06.24 and after Oulon reported on an alleged embezzlement of funds for the army's civilian auxiliary forces. Sldo Kalifara Séré, a commentator on the BF1 Télévision television channel, has been considered as missing since 19.06.24.

In recent times, there have been repeated kidnappings and arrests of prominent opposition figures in Burkina Faso (cf. BN of 29.01.24 and 26.02.24). Burkina Faso ranks 86th in the world in terms of press freedom in 2024. In 2021, before the current head of the military government, Ibrahim Traoré, came to power in a coup in September 2022, the country still ranked 37th.¹

15 July 2024

Draft law on the criminalisation of homosexuality

On 10.07.24, the Burkinabe military government under Ibrahim Traoré passed a draft amendment to the Personal and Family Code (CPF), which criminalises homosexuality. According to the draft law, homosexuality and related practices are prohibited and punishable. The media report that the specific penalties are not known. The law has not yet come into force as it needs to be adopted by parliament first. On 24.08.23, the Supreme Council for Communication of the Burkinabe government had already banned the broadcasting of television channels that publicly address homosexuality (cf. BN of 28.08.23).²

29 July 2024

Military personnel accused of mutilating corpses

Since 16.07.24, four videos have been published on social media showing members of the Malian and Burkinabe army mutilating corpses. According to media reports, the soldiers' conversation apparently indicates cannibalistic practices. The videos allegedly show members of the Malian Forced Armées Maliennes (FAMa), the Malian

Paratroopers Command, the Burkinabe Eighth Battalion d'Intervention Rapide (BIR) and the paramilitary group Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP). The General Staff of the armed forces of Burkina Faso and Mali condemned the acts in the videos. Opposition members of the military governments and others, are calling on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the alleged crimes.³

19 August 2024

Dozens killed in jihadist attack

Members of the al-Qaeda group Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) killed more than 140 members of the Burkinabe military in an attack on a military convoy near the towns of Fada N'Gourma and Boungou in the eastern province of Gourma in the Est region on 09.08.24, according to their own statements published on 13.08.24. JNIM maintains that the attack is a response to several acts of violence committed by the military against civilians. According to media reports, JNIM also captured several vehicles, dozens of weapons, ammunition and military equipment. This attack caused the highest number of casualties that JNIM has claimed in Burkina Faso since the beginning of 2023.⁴

Forced recruitment of members of the judiciary

According to media reports of mid-August 2020, members of the Burkinabe military arrested six members of the judiciary in Ouagadougou and ordered them to support the fight against jihadist groups for a period of three months from 14.08.24. The administrative court of Bobo-Dioulasso ruled that the arrests and recruitment orders were unlawful.

Since Ibrahim Traoré took office in October 2022, members of the judiciary allegedly repeatedly criticised the military government and took decisions against people close to Traoré.⁵

26 August 2024

Centre-Nord: Fatal attack

Members of an armed group killed around 200 people in an attack on a village near the town of Kaya in the Centre-Nord region on 24.08.24. Among those killed were civilians, Burkinabe military members and members of the paramilitary group Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP). Over 100 people more were injured. The attackers struck when the villagers were helping the security forces to dig protective trenches against armed groups. They are said to have refused to take part in the work previously for fear of reprisals from armed groups. According to media reports, no armed jihadist group active in the region has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.⁶

28 October 2024

Hundreds arrested for spying

The ministry of security announced on 17.10.24 that between 04.09. and 04.10.24 Burkinabe security forces had arrested 350 people throughout the country on spying charges. According to the ministry, hundreds of reports from the Burkinabe public had enabled individuals suspected of having conspired against the military government to be arrested. The military government had called on the public to report any suspicions after claiming that a propaganda and destabilisation operation had been launched against it. According to his own accounts, Ibrahim Traoré, the head of the military government who came to power by way of a coup, has already thwarted a number of attempted coups in which civilians and members of the military were involved (cf. BN of 09.10.23 and 22.01.24). At the beginning of October 2024, the minister of security published a list of the names of some 15 political and military figures who are suspected of aiming to take action against the military government.⁷

Djibo: Doctors Without Borders (MSF) suspends activities

On 21.10.24 the medical emergency aid organisation Doctors Without Borders (MSF) announced that it was suspending its activities in the town of Djibo in the Sahel region of northern Burkina Faso on security grounds, as the town close to the borders with Niger and Mali has been surrounded by jihadist groups since 2022. According to

reports in the media, MSF health centres and facilities have frequently been targeted by violent actors in the past. Back in February 2023, MSF suspended its work throughout the country for three weeks after two Burkinabe staff were killed by armed actors. In July 2024 the organisation's water supply stations were destroyed and in September 2024 a further member of its staff was killed. In Burkina Faso there are more than two million internally displaced people, who are for the most part dependant on aid from humanitarian organisations. NGOs report that the number of internally displaced people in the town of Djibo has risen from 60,000 to over 200,000 in the space of five years.⁸

Voice of America news channel (VOA) banned

On 07.10.24 the Burkinabe media supervisory authority suspended the Voice of America news channel (VOA) for three months after it made critical comments about members of the Burkinabe military in the fight against jihadism. The media supervisory authority has reportedly also placed a temporary ban on local news channels referring to reports in the international media. After promising to clamp down on jihadist groups, since the security situation in the country has deteriorated the military government has reportedly become increasingly intolerant of critical voices.⁹

18 November 2024

Coup attempt thwarted

On 08.11.24 Burkinabe security personnel arrested an individual in the capital, Ouagadougou, on suspicion of having planned a coup against captain Ibrahim Traoré's military government. According to reports in the media, the individual concerned is said to have handed over approx. 8 billion CFA francs (approx. EUR 7.7 million as per 18.11.24) to members of the Burkinabe army who were pretending to accept his plan for a coup. This was reportedly the sixth attempted coup against Ibrahim Traoré since he was declared head of the country as the leader of the military junta on 05.10.22 (cf. BN of 09.10.23 and 22.01.24).¹⁰

Military government aiming to introduce the death penalty

The justice minister announced on 08.11.24 that the military regime headed by captain Ibrahim Traoré intends to include the death penalty in the draft of a new Burkinabe criminal code. According to reports in the media, the death penalty was abolished under former president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré at the end of May 2018. The last recorded execution of the death sentence officially took place in 1988.¹¹

Bamako: Arrest for criticising Burkino Faso's military junta

On 13.11.24 unknown actors arrested Malian opposition politician Issa Kaou N'Djim in Bamako under pressure from the Burkinabe authorities. He is accused of having expressed criticism of the military government in Burkina Faso in a television programme. According to reports in the media, he is said to have claimed that the alleged latest attempted coup against the head of the Burkinabe military government, Ibrahim Traoré, was a sham.¹²

25 November 2024

Over a hundred people accused of involvement in terrorism

The government announced on 19.11.24 that it was freezing the assets of some 115 civilians and members of the judiciary for at least six months. The individuals concerned are accused of involvement in terrorist activities and/or funding terrorism. According to reports in the media, they include alleged members of jihadist groups as well as former president Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, former ministers, media representatives, members of the military, students, opposition figures, farmers and other civilians. Between 04.09. and 04.10.24 Burkinabe security forces arrested more than 350 people throughout the country on charges of spying and alleged conspiracy against the military government (cf. BN of 28.10.24).¹³

02 December 2024

TV station has licence revoked for criticising Burkina Faso

According to a report in the media, the Malian high authority for communication (HAC) has withdrawn the broadcasting licence of private news channel Joliba TV News with effect from 26.11.24, in response to a complaint by the Burkinabe Superior Council for Communication (CSC). The ban was sparked by an appearance by Issa Kaou N'Djim in which he accused the Burkinabe junta of having orchestrated the most recent alleged attempted coup. N'Djim was arrested in Bamako on 13.11.24 (cf. BN article of 18.11.24). His court hearing is said to be scheduled for 23.12.24.

Shortly after the ban on Joliba TV, on 28.11.24 Burkina Faso and the CSC duly subpoenaed the Burkinabe daily newspaper L'Observateur Paalga in connection with a controversial article on the promotion of generals in Mali.¹⁴

09 December 2024

Prime minister dismissed; government dissolved

On 06.12.24 the interim president of the Burkinabe military government, Ibrahim Traoré, dissolved his entire government and removed the prime minister, Apollinaire Joachim Kyélem de Tambèla, from office. He issued a decree announcing, among other provisions, that the ministers are to continue to discharge their duties until a new government is formed. According to reports in the media, no grounds have been stated for Tambèla's dismissal. Since his nomination in October 2022, Tambèla had reportedly been appointed as prime minister three times. On 07.12.24 Traoré appointed the former minister of communications, culture and tourism, Rimalba Jean Emmanuel Ouédraogo, as the new prime minister in a decree which was announced on television.¹⁵

23 December 2024

Withdrawal from ECOWAS

At a summit in the Nigerian capital Abuja, the heads of state and government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced on 15.12.24 that Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, all of which countries are ruled by military juntas, would be withdrawing from the organisation as of 29.01.25 and that they would be granted a six-month transition period during which they could rejoin the community. The military juntas of the three countries rejected ECOWAS's call for the restoration of democratic government and announced in January 2024 that they intended to leave ECOWAS. The transition period is reported in the media as being a final attempt to dissuade Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from permanently leaving the community. The military regimes stated on 13.12.24 that their planned withdrawal from ECOWAS would not be reversible. In 1975, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger were founding members of the community, with the aim of improving economic and political integration in West Africa. In September 2023 Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali formed the Alliance of Sahel States. Citizens of the ECOWAS sites are able to travel throughout all member states without a visa. The Alliance of Sahel States wishes to retain this arrangement despite leaving ECOWAS.¹⁶

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration
Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de

1 Committee to protect journalists (CPJ): Three journalists disappear, 3 media outlets suspended in Burkina Faso, 03.07.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: disparition du journaliste Adama Bayala, critique du gouvernement de transition, 03.07.24; Reporter ohne Grenzen (RSF): Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2024, ohne Datum; Reporter ohne Grenzen (RSF): Rangliste der Pressefreiheit 2021, ohne Datum; RFI: Journalistes enlevés au Burkina: "un climat de peur et d'autocensure qui met en péril la liberté de la presse", 05.07.24.

-
- 2 Africa News: Severe penalties for homosexuality in Burkina Faso, 11.07.24; BBC News: Burkina Faso's military junta to ban homosexual acts, 11.07.24; Reuters: Burkina Faso junta adopts draft law to criminalise homosexuality, 11.07.24; News24: Burkina Faso junta to criminalise homosexuality and 'related practices', 11.07.24; Le Monde Afrique: Le Burkina Faso veut interdire l'homosexualité, 11.07.24.
 - 3 Le Monde Afrique: Au Sahel, des accusations de cannibalisme contre des militaires relancent les appels à la justice internationale, 25.07.24; RFI: De nouvelles vidéos de soldats cannibales au Mali et au Burkina, 24.07.24; Africa Newswire: Burkina: The army searches for alleged soldiers responsible for mutilations, 24.07.24.
 - 4 BBC Monitoring: Al-Qaeda claims Burkina Faso ambush that reportedly killed over 140 soldiers, 14.08.24; BBC Monitoring: Suspected militants 'kill 148 soldiers' in eastern Burkina Faso, 11.08.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: nouvelle attaque contre un convoi des forces de défense et sécurité dans l'Est, 11.08.24.
 - 5 RFI: Burkina Faso: six magistrats retenus hors de tout cadre legal, 15.08.24; RFI: À la Une: au Burkina Faso, des magistrats réquisitionnés pour aller au front, 14.08.24; SenePlus: Burkina Faso, 4 Magistrats réquisitionnés pour aller au front, 13.08.24; Afrik.com: Burkina Faso: des magistrats réquisitionnés par le pouvoir pour aller au front, 14.08.24.
 - 6 Le Monde Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, plusieurs dizaines de morts dans une attaque dans le centre-nord, 26.08.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: de nombreux morts dans le Centre-Nord après une attaque terroriste, 25.08.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: l'hôpital de Kaya confronté à l'urgence après le massacre de samedi, 25.08.24; Jeune Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, très lourd bilan après une attaque attribuée à des "terroristes", 26.08.24; La Presse: Des dizaines de morts dans une attaque dans le Centre-Nord du pays, 25.08.24.
 - 7 Jeune Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, des centaines d'arrestations en un mois pour «espionnage de nature terroriste», 18.10.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: plus de 350 arrestations pour «espionnage à visée terroriste», se félicite le gouvernement, 18.10.24; Voice of America (VOA): Au Burkina, plus de 350 arrestations pour "espionnage de nature terroriste" selon le ministère de la Sécurité, 17.10.24.
 - 8 RFI: Burkina Faso: face à l'insécurité, Médecins sans frontières suspend ses opérations à Djibo, 22.10.24; Voice of America (VOA): MSF suspend ses activités dans la ville de Djibo au Burkina Faso, 21.10.24; Le Monde Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, Médecins sans frontières suspend ses activités dans la ville de Djibo, 21.10.24; Le Faso.net: Burkina/Situation humanitaire: Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) suspend ses activités à Djibo, dans le Sahel, 22.10.24.
 - 9 VOA News: Burkina Faso suspends VOA broadcasts, 08.10.24; Reporters without borders (RSF): Burkina Faso: repression of press freedom continues with suspension of VOA and ban on rebroadcasting foreign radio programmes, 09.10.24; Reuters: Burkina Faso's junta suspends VOA over insurgency comments, 08.10.24.
 - 10 Africa Newswire: Burkina: Coup foiled thanks to honest soldiers, 11.11.24; The Street Journal: Fresh coup attempt on Burkina Faso's head of state, Ibrahim Traore, foile, 16.11.24.
 - 11 RFI: Burkina Faso: la junte militaire au pouvoir veut rétablir la peine de mort, 10.11.24; Human Rights Watch (HRW): Le Burkina Faso envisage de rétablir la peine de mort, 11.11.24; DW: Vers un rétablissement de la peine de mort au Burkina Faso, 11.11.24; Jeune Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, la peine de mort comme cadeau de Noël?, 12.11.24; France 24: Burkina Faso: le régime militaire envisage de rétablir la peine de mort, 09.11.24.
 - 12 Le Monde Afrique: Mali: un opposant arrêté après avoir mis en cause la junte burkinabée, 13.11.24; Jeune Afrique: Au Mali, Issa Kaou N'Djim de nouveau dans le collimateur des militaires, 14.11.24; BBC News Afrique: Qui est Issa Kaou N'Djim, le Malien arrêté suite à une plainte du Burkina Faso?, 14.11.24; TV5 Monde: Mali: un opposant arrêté après avoir mis en cause le pouvoir militaire burkinabè, 13.11.24; Sahel Intelligence: Mali: un opposant arrêté après avoir critiqué la junte burkinabè, 14.11.24.
 - 13 RFI: Burkina Faso: gel des biens d'une centaine de personnes accusées de participation à des actes terroristes, 21.11.24; Jeune Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, Ibrahim Traoré vise ses adversaires au portefeuille, 21.11.24; Le Monde Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, la junte gèle les avoirs d'une centaine de militaires et d'opposants, 21.11.24.
 - 14 Jeune Afrique: Le Mali décide de fermer Joliba TV News, 23.11.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: «L'Observateur Paalga» convoqué devant le Conseil supérieur de la communication, 28.11.24.
 - 15 Reuters: Burkina Faso junta fires prime minister, dissolves government, 06.12.24; Reuters: Burkina Faso junta appoints new prime minister, 07.12.24; Africa News: Burkina Faso leader names new premier after dissolving government, 08.12.24; Jeune Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, la junte nomme Jean Emmanuel Ouédraogo Premier ministre, 08.12.24; Jeune Afrique: Burkina Faso: Ibrahim Traoré dissout le gouvernement, 07.12.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: Rimalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo nommé au poste de Premier ministre, 07.12.24; BBC News: Military leader dissolves Burkina Faso's government, 07.12.24; Le Monde Afrique: Au Burkina Faso, le chef de la junte limoge le premier ministre et dissout le gouvernement, 07.12.24; RFI: Burkina Faso: le chef de la junte, Ibrahim Traoré, dissout le gouvernement, 07.12.24.
 - 16 BBC News: West African bloc approves historic exit of military-run states, 16.12.24; Al Jazeera: Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger agree to grace period in ECOWAS withdrawal, 15.12.24; Le Monde Afrique: Le Niger, le Mali et le Burkina Faso affirment que leur retrait prévu de la Cedeao est «irréversible», 14.12.24; Le Monde Afrique: Rupture entre l'AES et la Cedeao: un départ en forme de faux-semblant, 17.12.24; France 24: Sommet de la Cédéao: les chefs d'États laissent six mois de réflexion aux États de l'AES, 15.12.24; RFI: La Cédéao acte la sortie du Niger, du Burkina et du Mali de l'organisation avec un délai de rétractation de 6 mois, 15.12.24; RFI: Cédéao: six mois de plus après le retrait des pays de l'AES, pour faire quoi?, 16.12.24; RFI: Cédéao: le retrait des pays de l'AES met la question de la libre-circulation sur la table, 18.12.24; Zeit Online: Ecowas beschließt Austrittszeitplan für Niger, Mali und Burkina Faso, 16.12.24.

Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-1069

Valid as of

12/2024

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

You can also download this publication as an accessible PDF document.

This publication is issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees as part of its public relations work. The publication is distributed free of charge and is not intended for sale. It may not be used by political parties or by election campaigners or election workers during an election campaign for the purpose of election advertising. This applies to federal, state and local elections as well as to elections to the European Parliament.

www.bamf.de