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Burkina Faso suffers a Coup, Grappling with Terrorism



In Burkina Faso, the junta is led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who commands a region that has been badly hit by jihadist attacks - Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina/AFP

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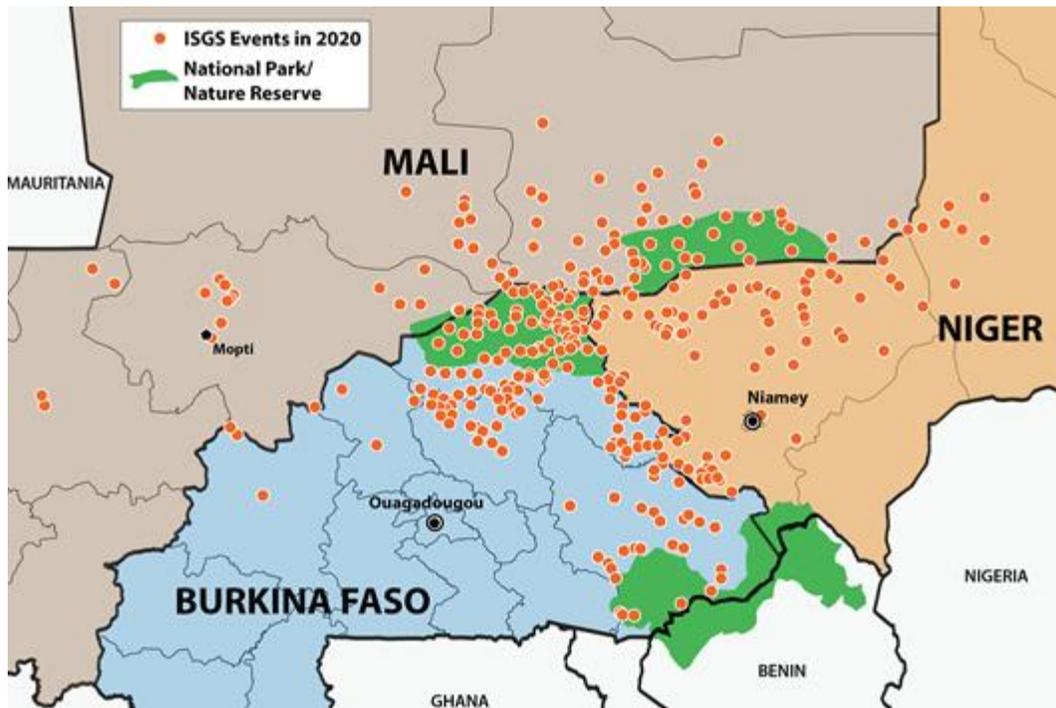
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Citizens were disappointed in the ineffectual response of the Government towards the Terror Threat.
Photo Credit: KoKo TV: Nigeria

On Monday, January 14, 2022, soldiers appeared on state television to announce the overthrow of the Kabore Administration. Junta leader Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba shut down the country's borders, suspended the constitution, and dismissed the Government. Additionally, the coup plotters arbitrarily detailed high-level government officials "without spilling any blood."

The cause behind this coup d'état is because according to the mutinous soldiers, President Kabore failed to support the country after years of conflict since his election in 2015 which has led to numerous deaths and in addition to many people becoming homeless. President Kabore has been facing Islamist insurgencies since he began his term in 2015.



Burkina Faso’s economic and political instability are largely due Islamic militants that the Government, along with France, have been unable to defeat. Burkinabes welcomed the coup d’état, seeing it as a catalyst for long needed change. They were celebrating in the streets chanting “long live Russia.” Burkina Faso seems to be following in Mali’s example, were after no progress fighting the same terrorists, a private Russian mercenary firm called the Wagner Group was engaged to provide security. It was reported by the daily beast that Lt. Col. Damiba strongly recommended former President Kabore to hire the Wagner Group earlier this month.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the regional bloc, condemned the coup d’état and requested that President Kabore be released safely. ECOWAS also suspended Burkina Faso from its governing bodies but stopped short of imposing sanctions. This clearly demonstrates ECOWAS’ lack of strong policy regarding coups because it contrasts with their response to Guinea and Mali where sanctions were levied and borders closed.

ECOWAS has struggled to deal with coup d'états over the last 18 months which saw five successful regime changes by the military. Will these trends continue? Will Russia continue to take advantage of France's struggle with its forever war in the Sahel, slowing supplanting France's niche? Burkina Faso adds to this growing trend, which runs counter to democratic development. The African Union has suspended Burkina Faso's participation until a constitutional government is restored.

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