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Burkina Faso

The proper use of conspiracies

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The announcements of coup attempts, whether real or imagined, are evidence of the junta's weakness, as it is unable to curb the advance of the jihadists.

Announced on social media by groups close to the government, then confirmed a few hours later by the Burkinabe authorities, through the voice of police commissioner Mahamadou Sana, yet another coup attempt has reportedly been foiled. This news prompted several hundred people to gather in the streets of the capital, Ouagadougou, and the country's second city, Bobo-Dioulasso, to defend President Ibrahim Traoré.

The argument of effectiveness

According to the confession of an accomplice, the mastermind behind this coup attempt was Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, himself a former coup leader who was overthrown by Traoré and fled to Togo. Togo does not appear to be involved, and the accusations made by the junta are instead directed at Côte d'Ivoire, with which Burkina Faso has a conflictual relationship.

The army has always been a key player in Burkina Faso's political life. What is new is that the justification for the sedition is now based on the ineffectiveness of security responses to the jihadist threat. Sandaogo Damiba used this argument to overthrow President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, and Ibrahim Traoré did the same during his coup on 30 September 2022.

Given the sharp deterioration in the country's security situation, Traoré can only be on his guard. According to the junta, plots are regularly foiled, reinforcing the idea of a besieged citadel and justifying purges and arrests within the army. For example, in October 2023, Commander Ismaël Touhogobou was arrested and executed; in January 2024, it was the turn of the former chief of staff of the gendarmerie, Lieutenant-Colonel Evrard Somda, to be abducted.

A junta obsessed with control

This repression is not limited to the army, but targets society as a whole. The abductions of journalists, lawyers, artists, trade unionists and political opponents are creating a climate of fear in the country. Informers in the main cities scrutinise the slightest statement by ordinary citizens against the government, who may find themselves overnight in prison or on the front line as Volunteers for the Defence of the Fatherland, a militia created by the government to fight Al-Qaeda and Islamic State organisations.

These coup attempts, real or imagined, and their repressive corollary are the result of a warmongering policy that refuses to tackle the social and economic problems fuelling this armed conflict. The consequences for the population are disastrous: there are approximately two million internally displaced persons and some six million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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