



Southern China International MUN

Official Background Guide

*Security Council: On measures to counter extremism and terrorism
in Burkina Faso*

Agenda overseen by: Theo Ryu

1. Description of the Issue

1.1 History of the Issue

The Sahel, the transitional zone between the Sahara and African tropical savannas, is largely considered to be one of the most violent and unstable regions of today. The frequency and severity of extremism in the region can be attributed to weak and often incapable central governments, complicated economic situations, and the growing absence of counterterrorism support. Religious extremist organizations, such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), and non-state actors, including private and even state-funded military companies, continue to fuel and capitalize on the crises ¹.

Burkina Faso, like its fellow countries in the Sahel region, is facing a “multi-dimensional crisis marked by a deterioration of the security situation”². Burkina Faso began to face current crises as its current government came into power through a coup in 2022. Since then, Burkina Faso struggled to find stable regional support in important organizations, a critical problem exacerbated by the withdrawal of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS on January ³. Since February, Islamist armed groups have staged numerous conflicts in Burkina Faso, increasingly targeting civilians, claiming responsibility for killing hundreds in villages, churches, and IDP camps ⁴. State forces are allegedly also contributing to the violence ⁵.

The UN has been taking steps to mitigate the situation in Burkina Faso. So far, the UNSC has convened sessions to discuss and assess the implications of the crisis on social and economic stability in the Sahel. By cooperating with regional organizations, the UNSC tried to restore peace and protect civilian populations ⁶. However, with the lack of support and access, the UN has yet to make significant progress in relieving the needs of Burkina Faso.

1.2 Recent Developments

The impact of ongoing extremist attacks and instability within political and economic foundations in Burkina Faso is increasingly severe. As of 2024, Burkina Faso marked first place on the Global Terrorism Index, outranking conflict centers in the Middle East such as Israel ⁷. Today, Burkina Faso holds more than 6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, with 2 million, roughly 10 percent of its population, IDPs ⁸.

According to the UNOCHA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the amount of funding Burkina Faso requires has risen from 2023's \$877 million to 2024's \$934 million, which is a significant rate of increase considering that only 42 percent has been covered. The UNOCHA projects that certain regions in Burkina Faso will soon face an even more severe lack of assistance, as they are separated from the rest of the country and require special means which will cost "12 to 50 times more than overland transport" ^{9 10}.

Key Terms

Extremism – A belief system built upon the adoption of radical ideologies, often on religious or political aspects, to the point of being intolerant and violent toward others.

Terrorism – The use of violence, threats, or intimidation to achieve political, religious, or ideological means. Terrorism is directed at government institutions, infrastructure, and even civilians to maximize physical and psychological impact.

Sahel – A semi-arid region in Africa that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and is characterized by ecological challenges and increasing socio-political instability.

Jihadist Groups – Organizations that advocate for a particular interpretation of Islam are often characterized by their militant and extremist ideologies, including groups like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda.

IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) – Individuals who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, or human rights violations but remain within their country's borders.

Coup d'état – The sudden, unconstitutional seizure of power from a government, often involving military force and resulting in significant political upheaval.

Regional Stability – The state of being stable within a region, often referring to the absence of conflict and the presence of effective governance, security, and cooperation among neighboring countries.

2. Emphasis of the Discourse

2.1 Right-Wing Approach

From a conservative perspective, the current priorities in Burkina Faso are restoring national security and state sovereignty. A traditionalist policymaker will advocate for strong measures, including military intervention, to prevent extremist groups from further controlling Burkina Faso. Efforts will also be made to reestablish and maintain the authorities of the central government in Burkina Faso.

While this approach can lead to timely and direct provision of assistance to vulnerable populations, it also carries significant costs. Collateral damage, such as civil casualties, will be inevitable in military actions enough to deter future extremism in Burkina Faso. Additionally, reliance on military force may prevent the government from investing in the recovery of indirect drivers of extremism, such as poverty and inequality.

2.2 Left-Wing Approach

In contrast, the left-wing approach utilizes social, economic, and political reforms in addressing extremism. Liberal policymakers emphasize the importance of tackling systemic inequalities, through means such as funding education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. To align with liberal ideals and to fund programs in Burkina Faso, international collaboration is another important concept in this approach.

However, an explicitly liberal set of policies may fail to perform effectively in the current context of Burkina Faso. Long-term sustainability can only be aimed for when the immediate security issues have been addressed. Dependency on other nations can also be considered a threat to Burkina Faso's sovereignty.

2.3 Stance of Intergovernmental Organizations

The role of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) is a truly significant point of focus, especially considering the actions Burkina Faso has taken in recent years. As briefly mentioned, the UN is at the forefront of IGO efforts. The UNSC passed multiple resolutions focusing on the Sahel regions, urging member states to take action and providing for platform discussion. The UN has also provided humanitarian aid for Burkina Faso. Regional organizations such as ECOWAS and

the G5 Sahel have continuously made efforts to address security issues in Burkina Faso and the Sahel, but the lack of funding and other obstacles have resulted in the withdrawal of key members.

2.4 Stance of Developed Countries

Among developed countries, France has historically been the most active member in the Sahel, leading multiple military operations and calling for military and humanitarian aid. Some developed countries, like the United States, contributed by providing training and data to support counterterrorism. Similarly, other developed countries often align their efforts with IGOs, particularly the UN, by providing financial and logistical support. However, developed countries sometimes face criticism for prioritizing their geopolitical interests over the needs of local populations, and differing interests and strategies pose difficulties.

2.5 Stance of Developing Countries

Developing countries, especially those in the Sahel region, are at the heart of the crisis in Burkina Faso and are directly impacted by its security and humanitarian repercussions. Nations like Mali, Niger, and Chad share porous borders with Burkina Faso and face similar threats from extremist groups. These countries often struggle due to limited resources, weak central governments, and internal political instability, which hinder their ability to fully cooperate for sustainable solutions. Additionally, despite shared interests, tensions among developing countries occasionally arise due to differing priorities or competition for international support.

3. Possible Solutions

3.1 In Favor of Developed Countries

With their economic capabilities, established networks of cooperation, and experience in providing international aid, developed countries are uniquely positioned to address funding shortfalls in Burkina Faso. According to UNOCHA reports, Burkina Faso faces an acute lack of funding, leaving numerous humanitarian and social crises unresolved despite their potential to be mitigated with adequate financial support. From food insecurity to healthcare and infrastructure challenges, targeted funding from developed countries could have a transformative impact on the lives of Burkina Faso's citizens.

Above all, developed countries can play a vital role in strengthening Burkina Faso's participation in regional cooperation frameworks, such as ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel. By mediating within these bodies, they can foster collaboration between Burkina Faso and its neighbors to address shared security and development challenges. For example, developed countries could negotiate ways to balance financial and technological support with policies tailored specifically to Burkina Faso's needs. By doing so, they can help Burkina Faso stabilize and progress while ensuring that these efforts align with broader UN objectives for peace and development in the region.

3.2 In Favor of Developing Countries

Developing countries will inevitably face more obstacles when trying to reach out to Burkina Faso, as they would be restricted by their economic capabilities or facing challenges of their own. Furthermore, Burkina Faso's major trade partners are mainly developing nations, giving them more direct opportunities to assist its economy. Localized solutions are often the most sustainable and healthy, giving developing countries unique roles.

However, considering that the problem of funding will be put aside in the due course of the conference, developing countries will play key roles in maximizing the impact of assistive programs. Currently, Burkina Faso faces many economic challenges, such as declining economic growth, rising inflation, and increasing trade deficit, and such challenges can only be tackled with the cooperation of trade partners. Additionally, each developing country can utilize funds through the provision of educational, medical, and military (another topic needing discussion) aid, or other in which they hold expertise or regional influence.

4. Keep in Mind the Following

Like it is helpful in all MUN conferences, make sure to dive into the stance of your nation before anything else. In the process, researching how your nation has already contributed to the mitigation of the crisis can be helpful. Then, consider some potential solutions on both regional and international levels while referencing the guidance given above. Below are some guiding questions to aid your research:

- 1. How has your country been affected by extremism or terrorism in the past, and how does this influence its stance on Burkina Faso's crisis?*
- 2. How does your country perceive Burkina Faso's withdrawal from ECOWAS and other aspects of the current regional cooperation dynamics in the Sahel, and what steps can it*

- take to promote regional stability in the region?*
3. *How can your country contribute to strengthening the role of the UN, particularly through the UNSC or other agencies, in mitigating the crisis?*
 4. *How does your country address concerns over state-perpetrated violence in Burkina Faso and balance this with the need to support counterterrorism measures?*
 5. *In what ways can your country collaborate with both developed and developing nations to enhance humanitarian aid, economic stability, and governance in Burkina Faso?*
 6. *What specific recommendations can your country make to improve funding mechanisms for humanitarian aid and to increase accessibility in remote or conflict-prone areas of Burkina Faso?*

5. Evaluation

As the UNSC, it is our responsibility to maintain stability through means of international cooperation, especially when threats are coming from sources of extremism, which directly conflict with our standards of human rights, global peace, and sustainable development. Today, in Burkina Faso, we see a series of crises that we have allowed to grow with neglect – as we can see from how trends of terrorism spread into its borders from its Sahelian neighbors due to the lack of intervention from the member states. Through this conference, it is imperative that a feasible solution is reached to help the civilians of Burkina Faso return to daily life and its economy back to global standards for its development. Such a task will not be possible with selfish and careless perspectives and without international cooperation through the UNSC.

6. Bibliography

1. Center for Preventive Action [CFR]. “Violent Extremism in the Sahel.” Global Conflict Tracker, 23 Oct. 2024, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel.
2. UNDP. Prevention of Violent Extremism and Community Resilience in Burkina Faso. 1 Jan. 2020, www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/africa/TICAD-BURKINAFASO_FACTSHEET.pdf.
3. Wong, Vicky. Ecowas: Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso Quit West African Bloc. 28 Jan. 2024, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68122947.
4. Human Rights Watch [HRW], “Burkina Faso: Islamist Armed Groups Terrorize Civilians.”, 18 Sept. 2024, www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/18/burkina-faso-islamist-armed-groups-terrorize.

