

## **Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission**

### **“Peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Burkina Faso”**

5 March 2020, 10:00 AM  
Conference room 1  
UNHQ, New York

#### ***Concept Note***

#### **The context**

The security situation in Burkina Faso continues to deteriorate, particularly in the Sahel, North, Central North, East, Central East and Boucle de Mouhon regions. Over the last two years, the evolving nature and the increasing number and lethality of attacks by non-state armed groups against security forces, civil servants and local authorities, public infrastructures, worship venues/events and the private sector, have urged rapid and intense intervention by the State and the international community. The year 2019 was marked by rising level of violence, particularly in those regions. Some particularly worrying incidents include the assassination of Oumarou Dicko, the Djibo city mayor and parliament member for Djibo province and two other men by alleged armed extremists who ambushed their car on 3 November 2019; the ambush on 6 November of a convoy carrying employees of a Canadian mining company, West Africa Mining Exploration Corporation (SEMAFO), during which 37 people were killed and at least 60 people wounded some 340 km east of Ouagadougou; the attack by gunmen on 1 December during a church service in Hantoukoura (some 300 km northeast of Ouagadougou), which resulted in 14 deaths; and simultaneous attacks against a gendarme base and an informal internally displaced persons camp in Arbinda (some 230 km north of Ouagadougou) on 24 December that killed 7 security force personnel and at least 35 civilians, mostly women.

There are increasing reports of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and other terrorist groups presence and operations in the cross-border region straddling Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. Currently, different terrorist organizations have been reportedly active in Burkina Faso and across its borders with the neighboring countries. Besides the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliate groups have claimed responsibility for attacks in Burkina Faso. Ansar-ul-Islam is a home-grown terrorist group created by a radicalized Burkina Faso preacher, Ibrahim Malam Dicko, from Soum. Boko Haram is also believed to operate in Burkina Faso from areas nearby Nigeria. While cross-border dynamics, particularly with Mali and Niger, are integral to the security challenges facing the country, home-grown violent extremism is also taking root in the northern regions of Burkina Faso and is spreading to other parts of the country. Lack of state presence and public services such as education, health, energy, and security in remote areas has eroded trust in the Government, rendering the population, particularly the youth, more

susceptible and vulnerable to extremist groups. Despite efforts to combat insecurity across the country, the manipulation by armed and extremist groups, coupled with the negative influence by self-defense groups at the community level, has been feeding into inter-communal violence that is further weakening the country's social fabric. Counter-terrorism operations by the State have allegedly resulted in arbitrary arrests and abuses as well as extrajudicial killings.

The recent attacks have also generated serious humanitarian challenges in the country. According to OCHA, there was a sharp increase of IDPs from 87,000 at the end of January 2019 to 765,517 in February 2020. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased from 1.5 million in December 2019 to 2.2 million in January 2020, according to the Humanitarian Needs Overview. In response, the humanitarian community is targeting 1.8 million people to receive multisectoral humanitarian assistance in 2020 and calling for \$312 million in funding.

To respond to these humanitarian, development and peacebuilding challenges, in 2017, the Government launched the *Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel/BF* (PUS-BF) to address basic infrastructure deficits and tackle drivers of conflict in the Sahel and North regions. In December 2018, a "state of emergency" was declared by the Government in several provinces affected by terrorism and violence. In June 2019, the Government further expanded the PUS-BF to cover four additional regions impacted by the insecurity (PUS elargi). In parallel, the Government continues to implement the national economic and social development plan (PNDES) for 2016-20. The PNDES seeks to diversify the economy away from its dependence on gold and cotton exports by boosting investment in infrastructure. The government tries to integrate aspects of crisis prevention and peacebuilding, developed in PUS elargi, into the next phase of PNDES, and continues to seek international support for both the PNDES and the PUS elargi, and additional collective efforts for strengthening social cohesion at the local and national levels.

During the PBC meeting of 16 May 2019, the Government's representative noted the high cost of efforts to restore and maintain security in the country, indicating that 20-25 percent of the national budget was now devoted to security expenditures.

## **United Nations peacebuilding support**

At the request of the Government, the UN has been accompanying the country in its efforts to respond to existing and emerging threats to sustainable peace and development. Since 2017, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has invested approximately \$18 million to help tackle rising inter-communal violence in the northern regions; build confidence between population and local authorities; prevent violent extremism, including by reaching out to youth in religious schools; and support local conflict resolution mechanisms, including in the area of transhumance. All these investments include strong support for youth and women. The UN also supported Burkina Faso in implementing its action plan as it held the presidency of the G5 Sahel.

UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes are implementing programmes under the Sustaining Peace initiative in the areas of rule of law, sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, multidimensional poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, conflict prevention and governance, as well as on humanitarian response. The initiative was revised following an inter-agency mission in February 2019, led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel to Burkina Faso. To implement the recommendations of this mission, the Secretary-General established a UN Emergency Task Force (ETF) for Burkina Faso, chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, bringing together Secretariat entities, Agencies, Funds and Programmes to steer the mobilization and deployment of surge capacity and reinforce the UN integrated presence in the country (opening UN Burkina Faso regional offices in Dori, Kaya, Fada N'gourma, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Ouahigouya). This field presence has enhanced the UN capacity to deliver programs to support the PUS-BF in close alignment with the Government's Emergency Response Plan (PUS élargi). The UN has also been supporting the implementation of cross-border programmes with a focus on security and social cohesion in the Liptako-Gourma region across the Burkina, Mali and Niger borders. In November 2019, the UN began another programme in the Liptako-Gourma region to strengthen the resilience of communities and human security in the Sahel.

In addition, in June 2019, the Government asked its main multilateral partners, the UN, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union, to jointly undertake a Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA) exercise to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives, particularly in areas most affected by instability and insecurity. A PPBA scoping mission took place from 1-10 July 2019. It resulted in the development of action plans, approved by the Government on 7 February 2020, across the 6 regions most impacted by the violence and covering four sectors: Security and Rule of Law, Social Services, Local Governance, Resilience and Social Cohesion.

The PBC engagement in 2019 focused on supporting the country's prevention and peacebuilding efforts, against the background of a deteriorating security situation in some parts of the country. In May 2019, following a briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Commission expressed grave concern over the rapidly deteriorating security situation, particularly in the Sahel, North and East regions, and its negative impact on the humanitarian situation and the increasing security expenditures on the Government budget, to the detriment of social sectors. In September 2019 the Commission held a high-level meeting, chaired by the President of Colombia and attended by the President of Burkina Faso, the AU Chairperson, the WBG Vice-President for Africa, the ECOWAS Commission President, and the UN SRSG for West Africa and the Sahel. The Commission welcomed the ongoing Government's response at country-level and regional efforts including through ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel. The Commission welcomed the Prevention and Peacebuilding Assessment (PPBA), as an important tool to reinforce focus and coherence of support to agreed priorities.

## **Objective of the meeting**

Building on past PBC meetings on Burkina Faso, the PBC meeting will discuss current and upcoming international response to address the country's peacebuilding challenges, including cross-pillar synergies between different initiatives. The objective of the meeting is to help mobilize adequate and coherent international support for the Government's peacebuilding priorities, as articulated in the action plans emanating from the PPBA.

## **Format of the meeting**

- Welcome and opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Marc-André Blanchard, Chair of the PBC
- Remarks by:
  1. H.E. Mr. Lassané Kaboré, Minister of Economy, Finance and Development, Burkina Faso
  2. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo
  3. Mr. Stefano Tomat, Director of the Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate, European External Action Service, European Union
  4. Ms. Soukeyna Kane, Country Director, and Ms. Emilie Jourdan, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank (via VTC)
  5. Mr. Pascal Yembiline, Country Manager, African Development Bank Group (via VTC)
  6. Mr. Ahmed Aziz Diallo, Mayor of Dori (via VTC)
  7. Ms. Sabine Ouedraogo Compaore, President, *Coordination Régionale des Organisations Féminines du Sahel* (via VTC)
- Interventions from the floor
- Closing Remarks

## **Outcome of the meeting and follow up**

The Chair will share a summary of the main points and conclusions of the discussion. The PBC will further issue a statement capturing the commitments of partners to support Burkina Faso to implement the priority actions identified in the PPBA.

Following the PBC meeting, the Chair of the PBC will work with the Government of Burkina Faso to track commitments made by partners and sustain partner engagement. The Government will use the PBC platform to update on progress on the ground and partners will update on their commitments.

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