

High-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission

“Prevention and Peacebuilding in Burkina Faso”

Thursday, 26 September 2019, 10:00am
ECOSOC Chamber

Concept Note

The context

The security situation in Burkina Faso has continued to deteriorate, with persistent armed attacks in the Sahel, North and East regions that have had serious humanitarian consequences. The 19 August attack on a military camp in Koutougou, in the Province of Soum, was one of the deadliest attacks in the country since the beginning of the year.

While cross-border dynamics, particularly with Mali and Niger, are integral to the challenges facing the country, violent extremism is taking root in the northern regions of Burkina Faso and is spreading to other parts of the country. The difficulty of providing public services such as education, health, energy, and security in remote and insecure areas has eroded trust in the Government, rendering populations more susceptible and vulnerable to extremist groups. Despite efforts to combat insecurity throughout the country, the manipulation of populations by armed and extremist groups, coupled with the active role played by self-defense groups in some regions, has led to an increase in inter-communal violence that is further weakening the country's social fabric. Collective responses to strengthen social cohesion at the local and national level are increasingly needed. Moreover, in some instances, counter-terrorism operations have resulted in allegations of arbitrary arrests and abuses and extrajudicial killings.

The Government declared a "state of emergency" in several provinces of Burkina Faso in December 2018 and has sought to combat insecurity through implementation of the *Programme d'urgence pour le Sahel/BF* (PUS-BF), which was launched by the Government in 2017 to address basic infrastructure deficits and tackle drivers of conflict in the northern regions.

The scope of the PUS-BF was expanded in 2019 in response to increased security threats and consequences of the violence.

United Nations peacebuilding support

At the request of the Government, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) have been mobilized to accompany the country and provide programmatic support to the Government's efforts to respond to existing and emerging threats to sustainable peace and development in Burkina Faso.

Since 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has allocated a total of \$ 13.3 million to support peacebuilding programmes in the areas of Security Sector Reform, National Reconciliation and for cross-border security & social cohesion in the Liptako-Gourma region.

In 2018, the PBF approved \$8 million in support of the PUS-BF, particularly Government's efforts to tackle rising inter-communal violence in the Northern regions, with a strong focus on women's and youth empowerment. Projects supported by the PBF focus on: 1) Building confidence between local population and local authorities, including Security and Defense Forces; 2) Prevention of Violent Extremism, including a focus on youth in religious schools and women, through their participation in local decision-making; 3) Support to conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms to address local conflicts, including agro-pastoralist conflicts. In 2019, the PBF has committed an additional \$6 million for two new cross-border projects, which are currently being developed: the second phase of the Liptako-Gourma project (with Mali and Niger] focusing on transhumance and community security, and a new Burkina Faso-Benin-Togo cross-border project with a strong prevention of violent extremism dimension. Moreover, in 2019 Burkina Faso will benefit from additional funding in the framework of the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative for programmes in the regions covered by the PUS-BF.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) met on 16 May 2019 to discuss the situation in Burkina Faso. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burkina Faso, H.E. Mr. Alpha Barry, attended the meeting and briefed PBC members. PBC members exchanged views on emerging threats to stability in Burkina Faso and ways to mobilize the international community in support of the Government-led response.

In a statement issued following the meeting, “the members of the Commission condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, and expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims. They reiterated the solidarity of the United Nations to the people and the Government of Burkina Faso. The members of the Commission expressed their grave concern over the recent deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso, with repeated and increased number of violent attacks against civilians and security and defense forces. They welcomed the on-going efforts by the Government to respond to the security situation and to the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, including through its National Development Plan and the Emergency Program for the Sahel, *Programme d’Urgence pour le Sahel*. The members of the Commission welcomed on-going initiatives by the United Nations and international partners to strengthen and accelerate their support to the people and Government of Burkina Faso, including the Peacebuilding Fund. They reiterated the need to enhance coherence, coordination, synergies and complementarities across international efforts to support national peacebuilding priorities. They encouraged the Secretary General to swiftly pursue the current assessment process aimed at adapting United Nations support on the ground to the evolving needs of the population, in line with the priorities of the Government of Burkina Faso.” They reiterated the Commission’s readiness “to pursue their engagement with Burkina Faso in these critical moments, including reconvening when there is an opportunity to review current efforts to improve coherence among actors and advocate for additional support to the Government’s programmes.”

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. The mission overlapped with the visit of Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita and benefited from her presence to increase support for the mission. The scoping mission produced an Aide Memoire intended to guide the development of action plans across the 5 regions most impacted by the violence and covering four sectors: Security and Rule of Law, Social Services, Local Governance, Resilience and Social Cohesion. The Aide Memoire also outlines the process for setting medium-term prevention and peacebuilding priorities aligned with upcoming planning cycles of partners.

The UN system has been engaged at the highest level to provide support to the Government to meet the multi-sectoral challenges posed by growing insecurity. In February 2019, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel conducted a mission to Burkina Faso. The report of the mission led to the Secretary-General's decision to establish a UN Emergency Task Force for Burkina Faso. Chaired by ASG Keita, this mechanism has brought together Secretariat entities, Agencies, Funds and Programmes to steer the mobilization and deployment of surge capacity and a reinforced UN integrated presence in the country. Under this integrated presence, the UN is opening regional offices in Kaya, Dori, Fada-N'Gourma, Ouahigouya and Bobo-Dioulasso to support Government initiatives.

In follow-up to the PBC meeting of 16 May, the Government has requested the PBC to organise a High-Level Meeting with the President of Burkina Faso on 26 September in the margin of the General Assembly in order to sustain international attention to the situation in Burkina Faso and foster coherence among key partners.

Objective of the meeting

The objective of the meeting is to update on peacebuilding challenges and threats to the stability of the country and discuss opportunities to provide adequate and coherent support for the Government's peacebuilding priorities, including through the PPBA recommendations.

Format of the meeting

- Introduction, by the Chair of the PBC;
- Remarks, by H.E Roch Marc Christian Kabore, President of Burkina Faso;
- Briefing by the United Nations;
- Remarks by the World Bank;
- Exchange of views by Member States;
- Concluding remarks, by H.E Roch Marc Christian Kabore, President of Burkina Faso;
- Conclusion, by the Chair of the PBC.