



**AFRICA CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Burkina Faso Case Study

**Working Paper
(Preliminary Draft)**

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Introduction

Burkina Faso, is a landlocked country in the heart of West Africa. For two decades she has been experiencing daunting and evolving security challenges caused by socio-economic and political crisis in a regional context marked by violent extremism and terrorism. Burkina Faso went through a year of socio-political turmoil in 2014. A popular insurrection occurred on October 30-31, 2014 when the deposed President Blaise Compaoré, who has been ruling the country for 27 years, decided to change Article 37 of the Constitution, whose provisions prevented him from running for a third term. After one year of a tumultuous transition period, transparent and fair elections were organized and Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, former Prime Minister and Speaker of the National Assembly, was elected President. He inherited from weakened and undermined government institutions without coherent and responsive security strategies, which exposed the country to several terrorist's attacks and led to an upsurge of insecurity in both urban and rural areas. It's in this context that Burkina Faso is trying to develop her national security strategy.

1. Legal and security policy frameworks

The 2015 revised Constitution of Burkina Faso stipulates in its articles 10 and 36 that the President of Faso is the guarantor for national independence, territorial integrity and the continuity of the State. He is the Commander in Chief and chairs the Supreme Defense Council¹. The National Defense Policy of April 2004 defines the role and responsibilities of the Supreme Defense Council. This policy paper is still considered to date (by default) as the country's national security strategy Document. It defines national defense as "all the principles and practices implemented by the entire Burkinabe community to protect its territory and guarantee the security of its citizens."² National Defense in this context refers to all the institutions participating to domestic and external protection of the country. It is worth noting that no official document or policy guidance exists in Burkina Faso defining a vision and the core values to be defended or protected, even though it stands as the core objective of any national security strategy/policy.

Under the 2004 Defense Policy, Burkina Faso's strategic interests are defined as follows:

- Vital interests: The people and territory of Burkina Faso and the freedom to exert its sovereignty. These interests underpin the existence of the country and are in no case negotiable.
- Strategic interests: Sub-regional and regional security, and the fight against terrorism and cross-border crimes.

¹ Revised Constitution of Burkina Faso, 2015.

² National Defense Policy of Burkina Faso, 2004.

- Peripheral interests. Support for peace and security under the auspices of continental, regional and international organizations. These interests are rooted in Burkina Faso's international commitments³.

The general organization and articulation of national security in Burkina Faso is framed by laws such as Act N° 74-60/AN establishing the National Army, Act N° 26/94/ADP on General Organization of National Defense, Act N° 32 on Internal Security, and Decrees such as Decree N°2004-146/PRES/PM on Defense Policy, Decree N° 2010-335/PRES/PM/SECU on Internal Security Strategy, Decree N° 2015-1149/CNT establishing the National Security and Defense Council. The forthcoming national security strategy will be built on this existing legal and normative framework which will necessarily be reviewed and improved.

2. Developmental Process of Core National Security Policy documents

Burkina Faso has developed a Defense Policy since 2004 and a National Internal Security Strategy in 2010. These two documents are the core policy papers regarding national security in Burkina Faso.

The National Defense Policy: Considered (by default) as the National Security Strategy document, the 2004 National Defense Policy has never been implemented. It's also worth noting that the document developmental process was very exclusive. It was solely written by "military experts" of the Ministry of Defense without the participation of the main sovereignty ministries (Internal Security, Administration, Finance and Foreign Affairs), the civil society and academic specialists. The written document was only approved by the Government without passing through the Parliament.

The National Internal Security Strategy: In 2005, the Government of Burkina Faso decided to create a ministry fully dedicated to the fight against the rising insecurity in the country after observing poor service delivery by the State security services in protecting the population and their property. An appropriate new approach in line with the Country Defense Policy was therefore required. This approach was outlined under the form of a National Internal Security Strategy document, consisting of four (4) headings including an overview of Internal Security Stakeholders, a conceptual Approach to Security in Burkina Faso, challenges and threats to Internal Security, and strategic directions of the Internal Security Strategic Guidelines.⁴ The document was drafted through inter-departmental working level consultation including the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Water and Forestry. The first draft was validated during a workshop where the civil society and social sciences researchers were invited. The final product was submitted to the Government who reviewed and adopted it. The forthcoming national security strategy needs to link up the two documents by appropriately addressing the following challenges:

Vision: The narrow vision of both documents results in fragmentary strategy approaches. The two approaches are state-oriented in practice despite references to human security in the

³ Ibid

⁴ Stratégie Nationale de la Sécurité Nationale, Burkina Faso 2010.

documents. The forthcoming national security strategy will necessarily have to define one common and broad human-centered vision of security.

Gap between internal and external threats: Because of the transnational and trans-border dimension of threats for a landlocked country like Burkina Faso, a bridge should be built between domestic and external threats instead of addressing them separately. They are two sides of the same coin.

Lack of coherence between both policy papers: The lack of a common and broad vision results from the lack of coherence between the Defense Policy Paper and the National Internal Security Strategy.

Lack of action plans: Both policy papers were developed without action plans for the implementation.

No follow-up and review mechanisms: Both documents did not make arrangements for follow-up and review mechanisms. Today's security context in Burkina Faso has completely changed and still, strategies remained unchanged.

Involving non-State actors and balancing openness and secrecy: State security actors, especially military personnel, are still reluctant to have open discussion on security issues with other components of the society. Using the pretense of secrecy, they still want to have a full grip and total monopoly of debates regarding security. Non-State actors need to be fully involved in the development of the forthcoming policy document. Goals and values could be discussed publicly while leaving operational aspects restricted.

Budgetary Considerations: There was also no causal link between the two strategies and their budgets. Therefore, it looked difficult to align security needs with available resources. Without the appropriate finance, both strategies could not be fully implemented.

In order to address the above-mentioned challenges, the government in place decided to hold a national forum on security in Ouagadougou from 24 to 27 October 2017 with the clear objective of reforming the overall security sector.

3. The national Forum on Security

The national forum on security was the entry point for the development of a national security strategy in Burkina Faso. A wide and varied range of security threats and challenges to the country's national security were identified during the forum, including (this list does not establish priority):

- Violent extremism and terrorism;
- Inter community clashes;
- Transnational criminality;
- Climate change;
- Demographic growth;
- Corruption and financial criminality⁵.

⁵ Rapport Général du Forum sur la Sécurité, Burkina Faso.

Over 2,000 people participated in the national consultation through pre-forums, regional forums and the national forum. The following goals and objectives were identified for the forthcoming national security architecture and policy documents:

- Develop a National Security Policy, a National Security Strategy, Sectorial strategies and implementation plans;
- Develop an anti-corruption strategy;
- Consolidate security sector governance;
- Develop a counter terrorism and violent extremism strategy;
- Scale-up the implementation of Sahel security programs;
- Enhance operational capacities of Defense forces;
- Enhance confidence between Defense forces and the population⁶.

Burkina Faso has adopted an inclusive and participatory approach to the development of its national security strategy. Candid and opened debates between groups representing the population during the forum have paved the way for a consensus on national security issues. When the process is completed, a common and broader definition of security will be adopted and written in a document accessible to the public. The national forum strongly recommended an opened communication strategy for the forthcoming national security strategy document.

4. Prospects for NSSD in Burkina Faso

The National Forum on Security initiated and led by the Ministry of Security involved key actors and institutions of the security sector. An inter-ministerial committee for the preparation of the national forum was set up. Parliamentarian academics and civil society were also involved. Burkina Faso was assisted in this initiative by European Union (EU) with a technical and financial partnership, through the PARSIB Project (Burkina Faso Internal Security Reinforcement Support Project, funded by the EU and implemented by the Belgium Technical Cooperation (BCT), and the United Nations. Since its inception the national budget has financially covered core activities of the process but it's worthy to note that external partners such as France and US embassies provided technical and financial support.

The development of the National Security Policy and Strategy is in progress in Burkina Faso and this process will be helpful in:

Defining a Broader National Security Vision: This broader security vision should be able to reconcile human security with State security requirements. If shared by society in all its components, this broader, overall and holistic vision can also be a factor of coalescence and buy-in.

Establishing a National Consensus on Security: The National Security Strategy development process itself can be a factor in strengthening national cohesion and reconciliation among the various components of the society in Burkina Faso after the October 2014 popular up rise. The participatory approach will also help in building public confidence and legitimacy in state security services.

Enhancing Governance and Professionalism: The National Security Strategy will allow better use of resources according to common values and objectives to be achieved by providing clear benchmarks and strengthening governance in the security sector. Allocating resources to

⁶ Ibid.

security institutions and agencies will rely on a program-based budgeting system. Finance acts for the program of the various national security institutions are now discussed and approved by the National Assembly before prior to adoption. It will also solve issues related to cooperation between the security services and increase the efficiency of the security sector.

Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation: The National Security Policy/Strategy will undoubtedly strengthen the common security approach advocated by ECOWAS, a sub-regional organization of which Burkina Faso is a member country.

Conclusion

Burkina Faso developed a Defense Policy and an Internal Security Policy in order to curb insecurity in the country. These two instruments of the national security architecture were quickly overwhelmed in two decades by an evolving security threats which shifted from armed banditry to violent extremism and terrorism. Adapting the national security architecture to the new security paradigm is therefore an imperative. The Government then decided to develop a National Security Policy and Strategy and the process started with the National Security Forum as an entry point. An inclusive and participatory approach has been adopted since the inception of the process in October 2017. The political class is entirely committed to this national undertaking and is assisted by UN and external Partners.