

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso: Introduction

Kouassi Yeboua

Last updated 28 June 2025 using IFs v8.34

Burkina Faso: Introduction

Chart 1: Political map of Burkina Faso

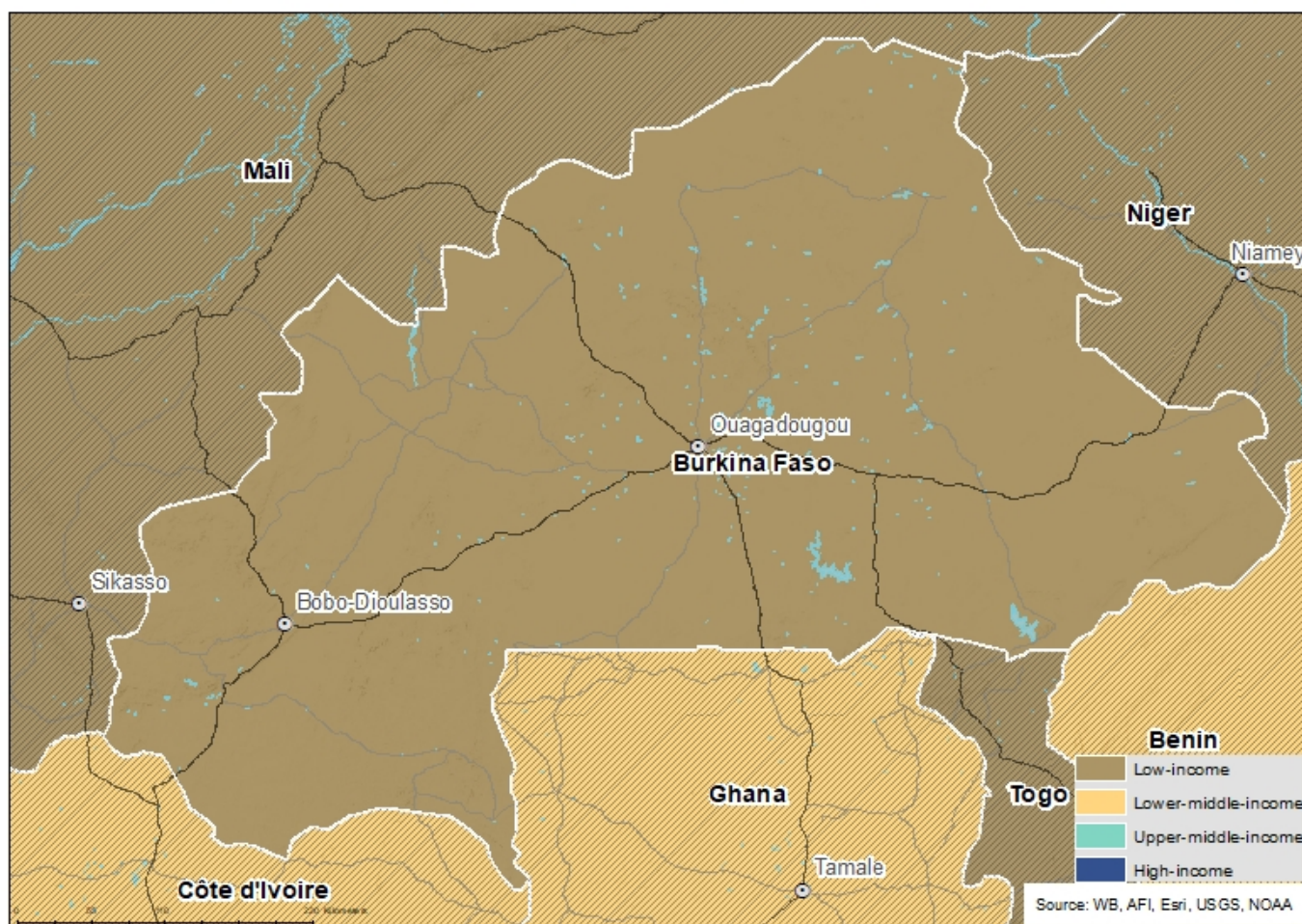


Chart 1 is a political map of Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in the heart of West Africa with a land area of 274 200 km². It lies between the Sahara Desert and the Gulf of Guinea, south of the loop of the Niger River. Burkina Faso borders Mali to the northwest, Niger to the northeast, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and Côte d'Ivoire to the southwest.

The country's post-colonial history is characterised by recurring political instability. It has experienced six coups (1966, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1987, and two coups in 2022), two attempted coups (1989, 2015), and one popular uprising in 2015.

Blaise Compaoré became president after the coup against charismatic leader Thomas Sankara in 1987, and ruled until his removal on 31 October 2014. After a one-year transition period (2014-2015) and two presidential elections (2015 and 2020), two coups occurred in 2022, against the backdrop of dire jihadi violence carried out by groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and Islamic State groups. In September 2022, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, the current head of the state, took power from Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who eight months earlier (January 2022) had ousted the re-elected president Christian-Roch Kaboré in 2020.

According to the 2024 [Global Terrorism Index](#), Burkina was the country most affected by terrorism in the world in 2023.

Fatalities from terrorism were up by 68% in 2023 since the start of the jihadi violence in 2014. While there were fewer than 50 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in January 2019, the country had 2.01 million IDPs by 30 March 2023 (the latest census to date), according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The crisis has severely **impacted** the health and education sectors. As of December 2023, 20% of healthcare facilities (413 in total) have been affected, restricting access to care for approximately 3.8 million people. Similarly, 5 330 primary and secondary schools—20% of the country's educational infrastructure—are closed, disrupting education for 820 865 students, including 396 716 girls.

Under Traoré, Burkina Faso drastically overhauled its external relations, breaking off the country's security cooperation with France and moving closer to Russia. The country used to be a member of the G5 Sahel alliance until it withdrew in December 2023. Similarly, Burkina Faso, which had been a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since its founding in 1975, announced its decision to withdraw from the organisation in January 2024, and formally exited on 29 January 2025. In August 2024, it established the Confederation of Sahel States (CSS) together with Mali and Niger. The Confederation originated as a mutual defense pact signed on 16th September 2023, following the 2023 coup in Niger. The confederation aims to promote cooperation and integration among its member states, particularly in areas such as security, defense, and economic development. Although the CSS is still part of WAEMU and uses the West African Franc (CFA), it has stated its intention to create a common currency to end the use of the CFA.

Burkina Faso is classified as a low-income country with an economy primarily reliant on subsistence farming and livestock raising. Persistent challenges include highly variable rainfall, poor soil quality, and inadequate communication networks and infrastructure. The country also depends heavily on mining, particularly gold, which accounts for approximately 16% of its GDP and 80% of its exports.

The country is classified among nations with low human development. According to the **2023/2024** Human Development Report, it ranked 185th out of 193 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI). Additionally, it placed 149th out of 167 countries on the **2024 SDG Index**, which assesses performance across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Burkina Faso's development outlook hinges on the security situation and the expected impacts of a full ECOWAS withdrawal: lower trade with non-WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union) ECOWAS states, and the associated higher investors' risk premiums, and increased regional financing costs.

Donors and sponsors



Reuse our work

- All visualizations, data, and text produced by African Futures are completely open access under the [Creative Commons BY license](#). You have the permission to use, distribute, and reproduce these in any medium, provided the source and authors are credited.
- The data produced by third parties and made available by African Futures is subject to the license terms from the original third-party authors. We will always indicate the original source of the data in our documentation, so you should always check the license of any such third-party data before use and redistribution.
- All of our charts [can be embedded](#) in any site.

Cite this research

Kouassi Yeboua (2025) Burkina Faso. Published online at futures.issafrica.org. Retrieved from <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/burkina-faso/> [Online Resource] Updated 28 June 2025.

About the authors

Dr Kouassi Yeboua previously worked as a Senior Researcher at AFI, where he led significant ISS studies on the long-term development prospects of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Horn of Africa, Nigeria, Malawi, and Mozambique. His research focuses on development economics, macroeconomics, gender, and economic modeling. He holds a PhD in Economics.

About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.