**NEWS SITUATION TRACKING OF BURKINA FASO ELECTIONS**

**Vol. 1**

**Location:** Bobo Dioulasso (Hauts Bassins), Gourcy (Nord), Dedougou – Mouhoun (Boucle Du Mouhoun)

**Issue:** Challenges around the electioneering process

**Date:** November 8-17, 2015

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**COMMUNITY PROFILING**

**Population:**
- Bobo Dioulasso: Total Population: 537,728; Total number of registered voters: 317,048-app, percentage of voters to population 59%
- Gourcy: Total Population: unspecified; Total number of registered voters: 30,246
- Dedougou: Total Population: 38,862; Total number of registered voters: 35,348-app, percentage of voters to population 91%

**Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:**
- Bobo Dioulasso: It is a town in the Houet province located at the Hauts Bassins region. It is noted as a hotspot for political violence. It is also situated close to Oradara, a neighboring town bordering Mali. Major ethnic groups include Bobo, Djoura, Mossi and Fulani.
- Gourcy: it is a town in the province of Zoundoma at the Nord region. It has been identified as a potential hotspot for political violence in the 2015 general elections. It is bordered by Yako in the south and Ouahigouya in the North. Major ethnic groups include the Mossi, Fulani and Bobo.
- Dedougou: This is a town located in the province of Mouhoun at the Boucle uu Mouhoun region. It is also in close proximity to Kossi, a border town between Burkina Faso and Mali. It is one of the hotspot areas of political violence and considered as a place of close monitoring in the lead up to the general elections of 2015. Major ethnic group in this area is Bobo. Other ethnic groups include Marka, Samo, Dagara and Senoufo.

**Politics:**
- Bobo Dioulasso: It is a stronghold for major political parties including the MPP, UPC, CDP, UNIR/PS. During the uprising of 2014 the province was the main area of mobilization.

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**CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS**

**Direct Actors:** Peoples Movement for Progress (MPP), Union for Progress and Change (UPC), Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), UNIR/PS, PDC, CDP, Faso Autrement, Mayor of Dedougou, President of the Special delegation of Boucle Du Mouhoun, Dedougou Municipal Office

**Affected Persons:** community members, commercial vehicle owners in Bobo Dioulasso, youth groups, Citizens

**Interested Actors:** Electoral Commission (CENI), Traditional leaders in hotspot areas, Ministry of Territorial Administration and decentralization, Civil Society groups, Commission for National Reconciliation and Reforms (CNRR), the media.

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**INCIDENT PROFILING**

In the period under review, three incidences were reported and observed by WANEP National Early Warning System in three areas comprising two hotspots and one low-medium risk area of Burkina Faso. The incidences profiled focused on use of government vehicles for political campaigns and defacing of public properties by political parties.

At the start of the presidential campaign on November 8, there was report of altercation between the MPP and commercial vehicle owners at Bobo Dioulasso. This was due to non-payment of agreed amount to the vehicle owners by the party. They were hired through a contractor to transport MPP members from the provinces to Bobo Dioulasso for a meeting but the owners of the vehicle were unaware of a clause in the contract that stipulated payment to be made the next day. This led to demonstration and blockade of roads by the transporters. However, the MPP has since paid the transporters.

There were reports of altercation between the president of special delegation of Dedougou and CDP/MPP/UPC/Faso Autrement/PDC who were accused of pasting campaign posters on unapproved billboards in contravention of the electoral code that makes it illegal to use public utilities for campaign adverts by political parties. The parties objected to the accusation as they pointed to payments made to the Mayor through the municipality office over 8 months that authorizes them to use the billboards. However, a new law makes it illegal to past campaign posters in designated public places except in approved sites. They have rejected the order and fine by the prefect to remove these posters except after the elections. CDP has agreed to abide by the new law.

In Gourcy, there were reports of the use of government vehicle for political campaign by the UNIR/PS, which is against the electoral code on use of government, or public properties for campaign purposes by political parties.

The altercation between the political parties and prefect highlight the concern among political parties of limited consultations and engagement by government with political
and violence against ex President Blaise Compaoré’s government. Public properties such as the metropolitan assembly and the judge’s palace were burnt. The statue of the ex president was also destroyed., the Mayor of the municipality was also arrested over his inciting statements. **Gourcy:** It is situated in a Nord region considered to be centre of power ‘play’ and struggle for political dominance by three major political parties. These include the MPP, UPC and CDP. It is the hometown of Elie Ouedraogo, a chief in Gourcy and also a leading member of the UPC. Post September coup demonstrations by youths were reported in this area.

**Dedougou:**
It is a low-medium risk area that experienced demonstrations and blockades during the 2014 revolution. It is also the base for the army from where they were deployed to Ouagadougou following the coup of September 16, 2015.

**OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Regular peer review meetings conducted by municipality authorities to offer opportunity by political parties to review compliance to the code of conduct and the electoral code is encouraged.

- Members of the NEWS steering committee such as PDEV, WANEP, CENI, Diakonia and the Ministry of Territorial Administration can consider the need for the development of information, education and communication components that further strengthen the knowledge of youths in provinces of the electoral code and non violence to mitigate the manipulation of youths in violence in the lead up to the elections.

- The need to conduct interaction forum for national and provincial media on non-violence communication/reporting to encourage responsive information dissemination and reduce sensational reporting likely to trigger violence before and during election.

- CSOs are encouraged to organize town hall meetings between various parties, the chiefs, community members and municipality officials at the provinces to enhance platforms for information sharing, feedback and collaborative responses to threats likely to escalate violence in the lead up to the election.