



PRESS RELEASE ON POLITICAL SITUATION IN BURKINA FASO

Press Release

30th October, 2014

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP has monitored with keen interest the current dynamics in Burkina Faso ahead of the presidential elections in 2015 and expresses profound regret over the on-going violent demonstrations that have so far claimed lives and properties. Burkinabes have embarked on widespread demonstration, since October 27 to express their disapproval over what they term President Blaise Compaore's attempt to perpetuate himself in office after 27 years in power.

WANEP observes that the political turbulence which gained momentum in 2011 with public dissension over economic hardship, lack of inclusive governance and unresolved issues escalated on October 30 2014, as parliamentarians prepared to vote on the amendment of Article 37 of the Constitution. The amendment, which allegedly would have paved way for President Compaoré to contest the 2015 election, was aborted when scores of Burkinabes thronged the streets and headed to the National Assembly to stop the parliamentarians from voting on the law. This action turned violent when the protesters set the parliament and other government structures ablaze; prompting security operatives to use lethal force on the demonstrators.

WANEP recalls its policy brief titled; *Burkina Faso's Test of Resilience and Democratic Stability: The 2015 Political Dynamics and Drifts*, March 29, 2014¹, wherein it alluded to the current situation as a worst-case scenario that is avoidable. In this wise, WANEP regrets that all its recommendations on the said policy brief were not fully exploited.

As the current situation remains hazy and uncertain with news of the Military having taken over the country, WANEP condemns all acts of violence and believes that dialogue and diplomacy aimed at a peaceful transition is still possible and should be employed immediately to arrest the situation and prevent the country from plunging into further chaos. In this regard, WANEP recounts its recommendations as contained in the above policy brief and reiterate the following;

¹ http://www.wanep.org/wanep/files/2014/mar/pb_burkina_faso_mar_2014.pdf

- ECOWAS through its Authority of Heads of State and Government as well as the Council of Ministers should immediately embark on high level preventive diplomacy that will ensure a smooth transition that respects the wishes of Burkinabes within the ambit of the rule of law
- ECOWAS should ensure the enforcement of its zero tolerance to unconstitutional change of government.
- ECOWAS should place Burkina Faso as a country of special focus and ensure timely response to all emerging dynamics to prevent further deterioration of law and order in the country.
- WANEP calls on the military to demonstrate professionalism and as a matter of urgency restore calm to assuage public anxiety. They should urgently strengthen border security to prevent any potential incursions by insurgency groups.
- Citizens should refrain from all acts of violence and explore legal options and peaceful means of expressing their grievances.
- ECOWAS should show leadership and coordinate all response strategies to avoid duplication of efforts and inefficiency amongst the international actors.

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