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## **SAHEL WEATHER AND WEST AFRICA**

**ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN THE  
SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA**

**JANUARY 2026**

# IVORY COAST

## Between political consolidation and regional challenges

In his New Year's speech, the Ivorian president called for "the consolidation of peace and security, the strengthening of national cohesion, and the resolute pursuit of our march toward development, in a spirit of active solidarity with the most vulnerable segments of society." The head of state, re-elected for a fourth term, thus reaffirmed his commitment to continuing to build the country and invited Ivorians to embrace what he called the "new social contract" that binds them together. In an unstable regional context, he took advantage of this solemn moment to announce that the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing would be intensified, so that the country remains a model of transparency and good governance in Africa. During his swearing-in ceremony last December, he painted a bleak picture of the fragile regional environment. According to him, "terrorist threats persist, transform, and become digital. Cyberterrorism, in particular, requires us to be vigilant at all times." Like most West African countries, Côte d'Ivoire faces increasingly complex and demanding political and security challenges.

This week was marked by the post-election period in Côte d'Ivoire, with legislative elections that resulted in a landslide victory for the RHDP. According to provisional results, the ruling party is well ahead with 197 of the 255 seats at stake. The electoral dispute was then opened until January 5 to allow political parties to file appeals in case of disagreement.

The statement specifies that "in accordance with Article 101 of the Electoral Code, the Constitutional Council informs candidates that they have five days from the date of this announcement to submit their complaints or observations in ten original copies." As a reminder, reports indicate that 15 young people were arrested in the Tonkpi region and brought before the public prosecutor. Legal proceedings were then initiated for possession of voter cards; eleven of them were released and the other four will appear in court on January 6. For its part, the opposition continues to fight for the strengthening of democracy and against abuses of power. Meeting on January 3 at their headquarters, members of the African People's Party-Côte d'Ivoire (Ppa-Ci) reaffirmed their determination to continue the fight against a fourth term and for the release of prisoners of conscience. They also plan to reorganize their party in order to be better prepared for the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, there has been a major development in Ivorian politics that has attracted a lot of attention. This is the resignation of the government, which came after two major elections in Côte d'Ivoire that saw a resounding victory for the ruling party. On Wednesday, January 7, Prime Minister Robert Beugré Mambé resigned along with his entire government, which will remain in office until the next reshuffle. After two years at the head of the prime minister's office, Robert is leaving the government.

# BURKINA FASO

## Attempted coup and fragile transition

In Burkina Faso, the news reported a major security alert on the night of January 3 to 4 in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. According to the authorities, this was an attempted coup against the transitional president. Several soldiers were arrested and population movements were observed in both cities. Calls for rallies were issued by supporters of the regime to counter this attempted coup. Once again, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, exiled in Togo, is cited as one of the masterminds behind this affair. In any case, the alleged accomplices cited in this affair have presented him as the main instigator from his place of exile. According to them, he was behind this plan, which targeted the transitional authorities and involved the mobilization of resources transiting through Abidjan.

When questioned by the military authorities, Captain Prosper Couldiaty, who was arrested during this large-scale operation targeting the institutions of the Republic, did not deny the facts.

He admitted to receiving five million CFA francs to take part in this attempted coup. He also implicated the former lieutenant colonel who had recently contacted him and, during his testimony, asked for clemency from the President of Burkina Faso, Captain Ibrahima Traoré, the Burkinabe people, and his military superiors. According to the Burkinabe government, the situation is under control. In his address to the nation, Captain Traoré emphasized that he would continue to strengthen the army's forces in order to intensify the fight against terrorists. According to him, "several operations have taken place in the theater of operations. We note in particular a daring operation launched two months ago, called 'Lalmasga', which means 'wall of ice' in English."

# TOGO

## Between appeasement and political reform: releases, pardons, and new national priorities

At the beginning of this year, the news in Togo was marked by the release of Steeve Rouyar, a French national, after eight months in prison. He returned home on January 1, after being accused of threatening state security during a large demonstration in Lomé against rising electricity prices, the arrest of critics, and the new constitution removing presidential term limits. This release comes as 1,511 prisoners have been pardoned by the Togolese authorities. The French Foreign Ministry, for its part, declined to comment on the merits of the case, describing it as an "individual legal matter." At the same time, Kpatcha Gnassingbé, half-brother of the current president of the Council and former defense minister, was also released from prison after 16 years of detention for undermining state security.

According to state authorities, these pardoned prisoners are part of a process of social appeasement and prison decongestion in Togo, and not a process of impunity. According to the President of the Council, Faure Gnassingbé, "this is neither impunity nor weakness in the face of serious crimes. Rather, it is about preventing mistakes or moments of misjudgment from becoming broken destinies. Above all, it is about allowing our country to look to the future." In his traditional end-of-year address to the nation, he set out three main priorities: "Protect, unite, transform." He also took the opportunity to revisit the reforms of the Fifth Republic, which aim to sustainably rebuild the country's political and institutional governance.

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