



WEATHER IN THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

**ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL AND SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAHEL
AND WEST AFRICA.**

WEEK 1 – JUNE 2026

Mali : chronic insecurity, between internal failings and power rivalries

Since the coordinated attacks last April in several towns across the country, one thing has become clear: the persistence of assaults by armed groups. For many years now, the country has been embroiled in an increasingly intensifying war on terrorism . Since the 2012 coup, clashes were mainly concentrated in the north, but in recent years the conflict has become increasingly felt across the country, despite the support of foreign armed forces. Following the withdrawal of French troops, instability has worsened as the number of attackers has grown. To address this situation, collaboration with Russia has intensified with the arrival of the Africa Corps to replace Wagner. It established itself in the region following the successive coups d'état in Burkina Faso and Niger, carving out a place for itself within this already highly unstable region. With the arrival of these new forces, expectations were higher due to their reputation, but the reality on the ground quickly revealed the limitations of this military strategy. In truth, the Africa Corps' intervention appears to serve more to consolidate the ruling power than to secure the territory. Research shows that the brutal methods employed by these forces, frequently targeting civilian populations, fuel a vicious circle by facilitating the recruitment of armed groups that exploit the distress of local residents. Rather than a solution, the presence of these external forces is turning the Sahel into a theatre of geopolitical rivalries, keeping the region in a state of militarisation and chronic instability, with civilians remaining the primary victims.

Security cooperation: Mali and Burkina Faso join forces

Mali and Burkina Faso have chosen to join forces to combat armed groups that move from one country to the other. By sharing intelligence and conducting joint operations along the borders, the two armies hope to be more effective. This alliance also allows the governments to demonstrate that they can manage security on their own, without the help of Western countries. It is a way of showcasing their independence and reassuring the population. On the ground, however, the situation remains difficult. Both countries lack equipment, particularly aircraft to monitor the vast desert areas. Furthermore, getting two armies to work together requires flawless coordination, which appears difficult to achieve. For this partnership to succeed, it will not be enough to simply sign agreements; the soldiers will need to achieve concrete results to secure the tri-border area in the long term. The population has high hopes for this cooperation, as the closure of borders and insecurity are stifling the economy and trade. If the two governments succeed in restoring calm to the affected areas, they will prove that their alliance is a sustainable solution for the Sahel. If not, public disappointment could undermine the support they currently enjoy.

The port of Conakry, a new strategic corridor for Malian military equipment

The port of Conakry, in Guinea, has become a key transit point for the transport of military equipment destined for Mali. Due to sanctions and diplomatic deadlocks with other neighbouring countries, Bamako has had to find new routes to allow the entry of new equipment purchased from its partners, notably Russia. Guinea, which shares a long border with Mali and maintains good relations with the authorities, emerged as the simplest and safest solution. These shipments of heavy equipment are unloaded at the port before being transported by lorry to the Malian- . For Bamako, securing this corridor is vital to continue equipping its army and maintaining its operations on the ground. It also shows that despite the country's isolation on the international stage, solutions exist thanks to the solidarity of neighbours such as Guinea. However, this situation is attracting the attention of foreign intelligence services and international observers, who are closely monitoring the nature of the deliveries and movements in the region. For Guinea, accepting this role as a "bridge" carries diplomatic risks, but it strengthens its position as a key partner for the landlocked states of the Sahel. The long-term viability of this route will depend on political stability in Conakry and the ability of both countries to secure the road link to Bamako against attacks.

Between military operations in Koulikoro, a road tragedy on the Kita-Bamako route and supply operations under strain

In the Koulikoro region, the Malian armed forces have carried out operations that have resulted in the neutralisation of more than 60 terrorists. This offensive signals a clear determination to destroy the strongholds of armed groups near towns. By striking these bases, the army aims to reduce the armed groups' capacity to cause harm and to restore confidence among local populations. These actions demonstrate that military pressure remains constant in the strategic areas surrounding the capital, even though the complete eradication of the threat requires long-term stabilisation efforts. Despite these efforts, the vulnerability of transport routes remains a daily challenge for civilians, as evidenced by the tragic explosion of a passenger coach on the road between Kita and Bamako, which killed five people and left dozens injured. This fatal incident serves as a reminder of the constant danger facing the movement of people and goods across the country. For the authorities, securing the national roads is proving just as crucial as frontline fighting, as the sense of insecurity on major roads is paralysing the economy and directly undermining public support for the transition. Meanwhile, economic pressure continues to mount due to the blockade of the capital. To break this isolation and alleviate the energy crisis, a strategic convoy of 765 fuel tankers has successfully reached Bamako under heavy military escort.

Anti-terrorist strategy: ban on motorbikes

In an attempt to curb the mobility of armed groups, the Malian authorities have taken a radical step by banning motorbikes from roads outside major cities. In many parts of the country, motorbikes have become the preferred means of transport for armed groups to carry out surprise attacks and retreat quickly to areas that are difficult to access. By restricting their use on secondary and rural roads, the government aims to deprive terrorist networks of their main means of transport and to facilitate the armed forces' control of the territory. However, this strict ban is having a severe impact on the daily lives and economy of rural communities. In local communities, the motorbike is often the only way to transport crops to markets, access health centres or maintain links between isolated villages. Residents thus find themselves penalised by a measure that complicates their daily lives and limits their income-generating activities. The challenge for the state will be to successfully maintain this necessary security restriction without alienating local populations, who are already suffering the economic consequences of the conflict.

The government's military strategy in the face of criticism

The debate over the situation in Mali is intensifying. Some observers and stakeholders in the region believe that the current government's exclusively military approach is showing its limitations. In their view, the authorities' responsibility for the current difficulties can no longer be concealed, particularly due to the lack of dialogue and the country's international isolation. Critics argue that a solution based solely on force, without a return to civilian rule, will not be able to bring lasting peace to the country. For their part, government supporters reject these accusations. For the current government, the current insecurity stems mainly from the mistakes of former leaders and the failure of international armed forces. The authorities refuse to negotiate with armed groups in order to protect the country's sovereignty. For the government, the main objective remains to keep the population united behind its army. This is a significant challenge, as this war is taking an ever-greater toll on the daily lives and economy of Malians.

The hunt for JNIM leaders at the heart of a propaganda war

The fight against jihadist leaders in Mali has sparked an intense information war between the army and the armed groups. Reports recently claimed that JNIM's second-in-command had been killed in a targeted airstrike in the centre of the country. However, the organisation quickly issued an official denial, asserting that its leader was still alive. This situation highlights the difficulty of verifying actual casualties on the ground in conflict zones. For JNIM, denying the loss of its senior figures is essential to prevent its fighters from becoming demoralised. For the government, these announcements of successful strikes serve to highlight the army's effectiveness and reassure a population severely affected by insecurity. At the same time, the authorities have decided to step up the manhunt by offering a bounty for the capture of Iyad Ag Ghaly and other terrorist leaders. The main leader of JNIM, considered the most wanted man in the Sahel, is now directly targeted by a statement promising a substantial financial reward for information leading to his arrest. This raises the question of whether, through this measure, the Malian government hopes to provoke internal divisions within the group or encourage the public to share any information they possess. In any case, this strategy appears aimed at disrupting the command structure of a terrorist group that continues to harass the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) and block major roads. By targeting so visibly the historic figurehead of the rebellion and jihadism in the Sahel, the government is demonstrating its determination to reject any dialogue and resolve the crisis solely by force.

Niger: Asserted sovereignty put to the test by economic and security realities

The prolonged closure of the border between Benin and Niger continues to weigh heavily on the economies of both countries. Trade blockades are stifling the transport sector, depriving local markets of essential goods and driving up the cost of living for border communities. The port of Cotonou, which historically served as Niger's main maritime outlet, is suffering significant financial losses due to the slowdown in goods transit. Faced with this untenable situation, which is penalising economic actors on both sides, the urgent need to find a way out of the crisis has become an absolute priority. Faced with this economic deadlock, the Beninese authorities have opted to prioritise diplomatic channels to avert the crisis. The new Beninese President, Romuald Wadagni, has therefore made an official visit to Niger and Burkina Faso to restart discussions with the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). This initiative aims to restore trust, resolve disputes relating to the transport of Nigerien oil and consider a gradual reopening of transport routes. For Cotonou, resuming dialogue with the two countries is essential to stabilising neighbourly relations within West Africa.

Demolitions in neighbourhoods near Niamey Airport spark controversy

The Nigerien transitional authorities have launched a large-scale demolition operation in the neighbourhoods located in the immediate vicinity of Niamey International Airport. The residents affected have been ordered to leave the area quickly, leaving many families in a state of utter distress at the loss of their homes and small businesses. The authorities justify this decision on the grounds of national security and urban planning. The aim is to secure the airport area but also to clear the surroundings of the infrastructure to prevent any risk of attack or infiltration. However, the lack of immediate rehousing solutions is causing intense anger and great distress among the local population affected by the measure.

Major seizure of weapons and ammunition by security forces

Nigerien defence and security forces have carried out a seizure by intercepting a large shipment of weapons and ammunition. This operation led to the seizure of a significant quantity of arms intended to supply the armed groups responsible for the wave of insecurity in the region. For the authorities, this seizure confirms the effectiveness of the strengthened border controls, whilst highlighting the persistent flow of illicit arms into the country. As a result of this seizure, the armed groups have been deprived of essential combat resources; this demonstrates the security forces' determination to protect the capital and the whole country.

Niger and Turkey strengthen their partnership

The President of Niger, General Abdourahamane Tiani, made a significant official visit to Ankara to formalise the strengthening of strategic relations between Niger and Turkey. This rapprochement has resulted in the signing of several cooperation agreements covering key sectors such as defence, the economy and the exploitation of mineral resources. For Niger, this partnership with Turkey represents an opportunity to diversify its international alliances and modernise its military capabilities in the face of terrorism, whilst moving away from its traditional Western partners. For its part, Ankara is consolidating its diplomatic and economic influence in the Sahel by establishing itself as a key player for the countries of the Alliance of Sahel States.

Senegal : At the top of the state, a time of dual legitimacy?

Since the dismissal of Ousmane Sonko and the appointment of Ahmadou Al Aminou Mohamed Lô as Prime Minister, all eyes have remained fixed on the Presidential Palace, awaiting the formation of the new government. Predictions and speculation were rife, particularly around one central question: with or without Pastef? Finally, on 1st June, President Bassirou Diomaye Faye appointed a new 30-member government, marked by the virtual absence of Pastef, the party led by the new Speaker of the National Assembly, Ousmane Sonko. The new cabinet is mainly composed of technocrats and figures close to the president. Several influential figures from Pastef, who previously held strategic ministries such as the Interior, Justice or Petroleum, have been excluded. Among the few party members retained in the government is Yankhoba Diémé, appointed Minister of the Armed Forces, who, like his colleagues, chose not to follow his party's instructions, as the party had announced its refusal to participate in the government due to disagreements over its composition.

The same applies to several political figures allied with Pastef, such as the Minister for National Education, Moustapha Guirassy, and Déthié Fall at Infrastructure. Against a backdrop of severe financial crisis, Finance Minister Cheikh Diba has been reappointed with his remit expanded to include the Economy, whilst El Hadji Abdourahmane Diouf takes the helm of the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum. At the Ministry of the Interior, Mouhamadou Makhtar Cissé succeeds Sonko's lawyer, Maître Bamba Cissé. Presented as a "government of mission and accountability", this new executive appears, however, to be weakened from the outset by the absence of Pastef, the majority party in the National Assembly. All things considered, the new government team will have to operate against a backdrop of growing and ongoing tensions. Furthermore, Pastef's refusal to join the government due to disagreements over its composition marks the tangible beginning of a major political rift at the highest levels of state, long hinted at by the Head of State and his former Prime Minister.

Abdoulaye Wade's centenary : a backdrop to tensions between Diomaye and Sonko ?

Before an audience of dignitaries gathered at the Grand Théâtre National, President Faye celebrated the 100th birthday of Abdoulaye Wade, an iconic figure in Senegalese political history. In a lively and spirited speech, the Head of State elevated the 'Pope of Sopi' to the status of national heritage, whilst delivering a political message. "You have taught us that today's adversary is not an enemy and may even become tomorrow's partner (...) You have taught us that no quarrel, however fierce, is worth tearing apart the country we share," he declared, referring to Wade. Praising the values of patience, resilience and overcoming adversity which, in his view, have marked the centenarian's " " journey, President Faye reminded his audience that the intensity of political debate must not overshadow the duty to preserve "the Senegalese home". It is hard not to see this as a reference to the current political tensions between the Sonko and Diomaye camps, especially when the latter asserts that "democracy is not a prize to be snatched and jealously guarded". Furthermore, could this move be seen as an attempt by the Head of State - in search of a political base - to build closer ties with the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS)? It is true that the party has been more or less on the sidelines of Senegalese politics for the past few years. Nevertheless, the party still has a solid electoral base, and is well aware of this. In this regard, it is noteworthy that after backing the Diomaye-Sonko ticket for the 2024 presidential election, the PDS subsequently joined the opposition by supporting Macky Sall's Alliance for the Republic (APR) in the legislative elections. At present, the two political parties form a parliamentary group in the National Assembly.

Pastef Congress : a show of strength

Following Ousmane Sonko's swift election as Speaker of the National Assembly after his dismissal as Prime Minister, Pastef's political response was, to say the least, eagerly anticipated. It came in the form of the party's first congress, held on 6 June, twelve years after its founding. At this veritable mass gathering in Diamniadio, Ousmane Sonko was, unsurprisingly, unanimously elected party president. Amidst a jubilant atmosphere and cheers from the crowd, he sought to reassure on the political tensions whilst setting a clear course. There is "no institutional crisis" in Senegal, he asserted. Whilst, since his ousting from the Prime Minister's office, some activists have branded President Faye and those Pastef members who agreed to join the new government as "traitors", the new head of the legislature urged his supporters to refrain from any insults or verbal attacks. "I will never betray the party's ideals and principles (...). The entire living party has gathered here to reflect, debate and prepare for the future," he assured in his speech. Furthermore, he was keen to emphasise Pastef's positioning as a "force for thought, organisation and transformation", underpinned by an "ideological framework [which] is a sovereignist Pan-Africanism of democratic transformation". Thus, as far as can be said, this congress appears to be a political reaffirmation aimed at reminding everyone that, despite his departure from the Prime Minister's Office, Sonko intends to remain the centre of gravity of Pastef as well as a key player in Senegal's power equation.

Burkina Faso: Between security bulwark and diplomatic openness

Faced with the combined challenges of regulating domestic trade and combating insecurity, the Burkinabe authorities are stepping up control measures in sectors deemed sensitive. Thus, at the crossroads of commercial and security issues, Ouagadougou is tightening its grip on the two-wheeler market. Through an interministerial decree published on 4 June by the Ministry of Trade, the government announced the introduction of new regulations strictly governing the import, assembly and sale of bicycles and motorcycles within the country. The operators concerned are now required to submit a quarterly report to the Ministry of Trade detailing their stock levels, customer base, as well as their prices and sales volumes. They have been granted a grace period of three months to one year to comply, failing which they face closure. This measure comes against a backdrop of ongoing tension between the Ministry and traders over price-setting, but also addresses security concerns. The ban on certain categories of motorcycles, in force since 2022, has in fact proved difficult to enforce. Around a year ago, some 900 vehicles belonging to prohibited categories were intercepted, suspected of being intended for the logistical supply of armed terrorist groups active in the sub-region.

In the same vein of prioritising security imperatives, the Burkinabe Council of Ministers has approved a package of security projects worth 5.737 billion CFA francs, to be funded from the 2026 national budget. These funds are earmarked for the procurement of materials and equipment for the National Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, as well as several specialised agencies: the National Office for the Security of Mining Sites (ONASSIM), the National Road Safety Office (ONASER), the National Police and its training colleges, the Directorate General of Water and Forests, and the LAABAL Brigade. These investments aim to strengthen the operational and logistical capabilities of the entire security apparatus in a context marked by the persistent jihadist threat. Furthermore, Burkina Faso's Prime Minister Jean Emmanuel Ouédraogo has mandated, via an administrative note dated 1 June, the systematic use of the term 'comrade' in all correspondence, speeches and public statements within the country's ministries and institutions. Presented as a vehicle for equality, fraternity and solidarity between leaders and citizens, this directive follows in the wake of the "Progressive and Popular Revolution" that Ouagadougou intends to embody.

Between diversification and regional cooperation

Burkina Faso's diplomatic activity has remained particularly intense in recent days, marked by several high-level meetings on security, economic and international cooperation issues. On 1 June, a Portuguese delegation led by the Special Envoy for Africa, Rita Laranjinha, was received in Ouagadougou by Burkina Faso's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karamoko Jean Marie Traoré. Discussions focused on the situation within the AES Confederation and the prospects for multilateral cooperation. The head of Burkinabe diplomacy outlined the Confederation's foundations and ambitions, calling on the special envoys to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground. The delegation left with, in its own words, a more nuanced understanding of the reality in the Sahel. Two days later, on 3 June, a delegation of Serbian parliamentarians led by Slavenko Ristic, Chair of the Serbian Parliament's Defence and Security Committee and CEO of the defence technology firm Tehnicki Remont Bratunac, was received in Ouagadougou by Burkina Faso's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karamoko Jean Marie Traoré. Discussions focused on prospects for bilateral cooperation, particularly in the fields of defence, security and training. The Serbian delegation expressed its admiration for Ibrahim Traoré's leadership and his commitment to strengthening Belgrade's presence on the African continent. On the Burkinabe side, this visit was presented as part of the junta's policy of diversifying international partnerships, with a particular focus on Eastern European countries.

Finally, the warming of relations between Burkina Faso and Benin, following a long period of strained ties, is now clearly evident. During an official visit to Ouagadougou on 2 June, Benin's President Romuald Wadagni was welcomed by Captain Ibrahim Traoré. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to reviving bilateral cooperation, with a particular focus on security (the fight against terrorism and cross-border crime) and economic exchanges, notably the role of the port of Cotonou in supplying Burkina Faso. The counterparts agreed to expedite the holding of the fifth session of the Joint High Commission on Cooperation and to finalise several pending agreements. The visit concluded with an official invitation extended to Ibrahim Traoré to visit Benin. This clearly demonstrates Ouagadougou's desire to consolidate its regional presence whilst expanding its network of international partners, against a backdrop of shifting geopolitical balances in West Africa.

Togo: Lomé continues its strategy of positioning itself as a regional hub

Togo features prominently in the good-neighbourly diplomacy initiated by Benin's President Romuald Wadagni since his accession to the presidency. During this sub-regional diplomatic tour, Togo's President Faure Gnassingbé received his Beninese counterpart on 4 June in Lomé. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral ties on several fronts.

On the economic front, they welcomed the growth in trade and agreed to strengthen connectivity infrastructure, improve the flow of cross-border corridors and enhance the attractiveness of the region for private investment. On the security front, they expressed their shared concern regarding the terrorist threat and cross-border crime, committing to intensify their coordination in this area. Both sides also reiterated their commitment to West African integration and to the principle of the free movement of people and goods. The visit concluded with Wadagni inviting Gnassingbé to pay an official visit to Benin, an invitation accepted in principle, the details of which will be finalised through diplomatic channels. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Togo is endeavouring – relatively speaking – to position itself, like Benin, as a bridge between the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and ECOWAS. In this regard, Lomé appears to be deriving particular benefit from presenting itself as an alternative logistics hub. Indeed, as West Africa's only natural deep-water port, the port of Lomé is capturing a growing share of Sahelian trade flows and accounted for 29.5% of transport services related to WAEMU exports in 2024, generating 185 billion CFA francs in revenue.

Further proof, if any were needed, of the country's desire to position itself as a continental mediator: since 7 June, Lomé has been hosting the biannual review meeting on the mediation process regarding the crisis in eastern DRC, under the auspices of the African Union. Bringing together representatives from the EAC, SADC and ICGLR, the meeting aims to review the AU's roadmap and harmonise African peace initiatives, against a backdrop of ongoing violence and a resurgence of Ebola in certain parts of the country. The panel of facilitators, which includes former presidents Catherine Samba-Panza and Sahle-Work Zewde, reaffirmed its alignment with the approach of the AU's designated mediator, Togolese President Faure Gnassingbé, who had already hosted a similar initial meeting in January.

A simmering social unrest

However, Togo – a country whose leaders readily present on the international stage as a logistics hub and a key regional mediator – faces growing social unrest at home. Several opposition and civil society organisations have responded to the call of the 6 June Movement (M66) by launching a day of peaceful protest dubbed "Togo on Hold" on 6 June 2026. The signatories – including the DMK-Originale, the DMP and the "Touche Pas à Ma Constitution" movement – have called on citizens to suspend their activities to protest against rising fuel prices, deteriorating living conditions and what they describe as poor governance and restrictions on freedoms under Faure Gnassingbé's regime. A "pot-banging protest" was also planned for the night of 5 June as a prelude to this mobilisation. Consequently, contrary to the image of a regional mediator, a more structural challenge continues to emerge for Lomé: reconciling geopolitical ambitions, economic performance and a continuing demand for political participation and social justice.

Ivory Coast: In search of a peaceful electoral system?

Following the surprise dissolution of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) ordered by President Alassane Ouattara in May 2026, Côte d'Ivoire is entering a phase of rebuilding its electoral architecture, with a growing number of voices (religious, civil and political) calling for the definition of a future body capable of meeting the requirements of transparency and consensus. Meeting in plenary session in Abidjan, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Côte d'Ivoire has taken a stance on the electoral reform initiated following the dissolution of the CEI. Whilst acknowledging the government's decision, the bishops are calling for a future electoral body that is independent of any partisan influence and representative of all the country's political sensibilities, urging the authorities to broaden consultations. In the same vein, several civil society organisations are working on concrete proposals, drawing inspiration in particular from the Senegalese, Ghanaian and Beninese models, which are renowned for their consensual nature. These initiatives converge towards a single objective: to provide Côte d'Ivoire with a transparent electoral system capable of restoring, in a sustainable manner, the confidence of citizens and political parties in future elections.

With this in mind, the Rally for Peace, Progress and Sharing (RPP) is proposing a new 11-member electoral body, that is entirely independent and free of political party representatives. It would be composed of prominent figures from civil society, academic and legal circles, the public and private sectors, traditional chiefdoms and religious communities. The party insists on strict criteria of independence and transparency, as well as a ban on members having held recent partisan positions. The RPP also calls for a national dialogue and for this body to be enshrined in the constitution to guarantee its autonomy. In the meantime, government spokesperson Amadou Coulibaly sought to reassure the public regarding the suspension of payments for May's salaries and service providers' invoices, following the dissolution of the CEI. Transitional measures, in line with standard practice in the event of the dissolution of a public body, will enable the settlement of all financial liabilities, he assured.

The resumption of evictions

Evictions are once again taking place in Abidjan. Following the clearance of three informal settlements in Cocody at the end of May, the Autonomous District of Abidjan launched a new wave of evictions on 2 June in Vridi-3 (nicknamed Zimbabwe), a 28-hectare fishing neighbourhood adjacent to the autonomous port. Thousands of residents were brutally forced to leave their homes. Despite the justifications offered by Minister-Governor Ibrahim Cissé Baongo, who claimed that these were "operations to clear areas at risk of landslides, drainage channels and sites prone to rockfalls", criticism of the severity of these evictions is mounting. In a statement published on 4 June, the Pan-African Congress for Justice and Equality of Peoples (COJEP), led by Charles Blé Goudé, condemned what it described as an "essentially coercive approach". This situation, which is nothing new, once again highlights the structural tensions between the urban modernisation imperatives pursued by the authorities and the right to housing of vulnerable populations who continue to believe that the state is not offering them genuine rehousing solutions.

Benin: Is Wadagni taking the reins to restore regional balance ?

As the saying goes, a good neighbour is a good start to the day. Clearly, Benin's new president, Romuald Wadagni, seems to have taken this adage to heart. Since the much-appreciated and widely noted presence of representatives from the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) at his inauguration, it is evident that Cotonou is seeking to improve its relations at the regional level. Thus, in the space of four days, the Head of State has demonstrated remarkable diplomatic vigour in his dealings with his neighbours: Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo and, finally, Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, on 1 June, at the invitation of his Nigerian counterpart Bola Tinubu, Wadagni travelled to Lagos. Discussions focused mainly on bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly issues of border security, cross-border trade, energy and regional cooperation within ECOWAS. Then, the following day, 2 June, the Beninese president was given a formal welcome in Niamey, by the Nigerien head of state, Abdourahmane Tiani. The two leaders announced their intention "to work towards removing all obstacles to strengthening cooperation between the two countries, notably the reopening of the Benin-Niger border", according to the final joint communiqué. To this end, a joint committee of Beninese and Nigerien experts has been officially established (and has 15 days from 5 June) to examine the conditions for reopening the border between the two countries.

On the same day, Wadagni travelled to Ouagadougou, where discussions with his counterpart Ibrahim Traoré focused mainly on security issues related to terrorism and cross-border crime, as well as economic matters, notably trade, infrastructure and the role of the port of Cotonou in supplying Burkina Faso. In Lomé on 3 June, strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, transport and cross-border security, were the main topics of discussion with Togolese President Faure Gnassingbé. At the final stage of his regional tour, where he was received in Abidjan by his counterpart, President Alassane Ouattara, the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss regional dynamics, notably relations with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries as well as the economic reforms currently underway within the WAEMU region.

Towards a peaceful sub-region

In this instance, this diplomatic sequence appears to mark the start of a phase of strategic repositioning for Benin within the West African region, characterised by a desire to balance its relations between regional blocs with divergent political trajectories. Clearly, Cotonou is aware of the cross-border issues on the bilateral agendas at stake, particularly regarding security and economic integration. An immediate benefit is the consolidation of these exchanges with the aim of redefining regional cooperation mechanisms around more pragmatic and flexible approaches. Furthermore, this dynamic of rapprochement could gradually contribute – at least this is what Cotonou seems to hope – to reducing the mistrust that currently underpins relations between states in the sub-region, by fostering more continuous dialogue mechanisms that are less dependent on political circumstances alone. Finally, with a view to strengthening collective resilience in the face of security and economic crises, it simultaneously opens up the possibility of reconfiguring modes of regional cooperation, based more on shared pragmatic interests than on strictly institutional alignments.

Cameroon: Behind the executive vacuum, a silent overhaul of the institutional apparatus ?

This is an unprecedented institutional situation in the country since 1992. Since President Paul Biya's re-election in October 2025, Cameroon has still not formed a government. Whilst the country remains in limbo, the appointment of a new government team does not appear to be a priority for the Head of State. At least at the highest levels of government, it is the overhaul of the institutional framework that is currently the focus of attention. According to Jeune Afrique, among the projects under consideration are the creation of new ministries and the transformation of certain existing portfolios, such as expanding the Ministry of Justice to include human rights or reorganising the Ministry of State Audit to incorporate public transparency.

Further restructuring is also being considered in the mining, infrastructure and women's affairs sectors, as well as in higher education and research, with a view to strengthening the coordination and effectiveness of public policies. Furthermore, the institutional overhaul also includes major innovations, notably the possible creation of a post of Deputy Prime Minister and preparations for a future Vice-Presidency of the Republic. Furthermore, projects relate to digital security, with the establishment of a dedicated agency attached to the intelligence services, as well as to territorial reorganisation, including administrative redrawing and a shift in the role of local and traditional authorities withi . Thus, the executive vacuum and apparent stagnation seem to be the silent signs of power struggles in which the balance of power within the regime is at stake and, by extension, the continuity of the Biya system.

Pending this comprehensive reorganisation, on 2 June 2026 the Head of State appointed the members of the High Council of the Judiciary, primarily by reappointing the incumbent members of this body. This decision follows a long period of paralysis lasting nearly six years, during which the Council had not met, which had severely affected the functioning of the judicial system. This deadlock had led to numerous consequences, notably a freeze on the recruitment and induction of magistrates from training colleges, as well as a halt to appointments across the various courts.

An opposition on the wane

Whilst institutional restructuring is well under way in the corridors of power, the political opposition, losing momentum, is struggling to survive. In a statement issued on 3 June, opposition figure Maurice Kamto announced that he had referred the matter to the Constitutional Council to challenge the legality of the presidential decree extending the term of office of municipal councillors until April 2027. According to him, this decision constitutes a violation of the Constitution. In his petition, the MRC president argues that the Head of State has exceeded his powers by unilaterally extending the terms of local elected representatives, describing this measure as a "flouting of the law" and an attack on democratic principles.

Meanwhile, the pre-trial detention of opposition figure Djeukam Tchameni has been extended by six months, until 5 December 2026, a decision contested by his lawyer, who deems it "illegal". Arrested shortly before the announcement of the results of the presidential election on 12 October 2025 and charged, among other things, with undermining state security, he is currently being held at Kondengui Prison in Yaoundé. The defence argues that this extension is based on an irregular procedure, with no clear progress in the investigation or sufficient justification, which calls into question the exceptional nature of pre-trial detention. Ultimately, the current political situation in Cameroon highlights the position of an opposition that is the victim of a huge imbalance of power in its relations with an executive that has time and institutions at its disposal.

Nigeria: The worrying resurgence of the kidnapping spiral

Nigeria is once again facing a worrying resurgence of kidnappings, affecting both school areas and the civilian population, and reigniting concerns about persistent insecurity in several regions of the country. Two weeks after the abduction of 39 pupils and 7 teachers from two schools in Oyo State by individuals identified as belonging to Boko Haram, the hostages remain missing. This exasperating situation has prompted the teachers' union to launch an indefinite strike on 1 June in schools across this southern state. While Abuja has made numerous announcements (recruitment of forest rangers, a special investigative unit, the dispatch of a high-level federal delegation, etc.), the army continues to describe the attack as an isolated incident, with no permanent jihadist base identified in the region.

This contrasts with the scale of the official mobilisation and the anger of a teaching staff who say they are waiting, without any concrete response, for the rescue of their own. Consequently, whilst on 3 June seven students were abducted from a student residence in Zamfara State, the sense of fear has become so acute that a false rumour of a kidnapping caused panic in Abuja on 4 June, requiring a police denial. Meanwhile, public anger is mounting in the face of insecurity perceived as being out of control. In total, over the last ten years, 1,500 young people and teaching staff have been abducted by armed groups targeting them with the aim of negotiating a ransom in exchange for their release. With the presidential election just a few months away, this notable resurgence lays bare not only the ongoing erosion of security but also the limitations of state measures in the face of violence that is now deeply entrenched in people's daily lives.

360 hostages released

Against this backdrop of ongoing security tensions, the military authorities have, however, claimed credit for a major operation carried out in the Mandara Mountains, in Borno State, which led to the release of 360 hostages held by a Boko Haram faction. According to the military authorities, the operation involved special forces and combined several intelligence techniques, enabling the captives to be located and the insurgents to be taken by surprise. The assault reportedly led to the dispersal of the fighters and the rescue of the kidnapped individuals, comprising men, women and children from various localities. The hostages were evacuated and taken into care, although the army reported the deaths of two infants due to the conditions of their captivity.

Meanwhile, on the political front, as the presidential election approaches, an alleged leak of personal data from the files of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is causing serious concern. Indeed, an assistant to the Minister of State for the Interior, Nyesom Wike, posted confidential data on X from the INEC database concerning the actor Emeka Ike, an opposition candidate in an Abuja constituency. These documents, which show that he transferred his voter registration just fifteen days before their disclosure, are said to have been extracted directly from the electoral commission's databases, raising questions about the conditions of access to this sensitive information. Two investigations have been launched, with INEC claiming to have identified the account used whilst downplaying the scale of the breach, failing to convince an opposition which, eight months ahead of the general election on 16 January 2027, sees this incident as a warning sign regarding the neutrality of the body overseeing the vote.