



Army Rule in Burkina Faso

For Prelims: Location of Burkina Faso and other West African Countries, United Nation, African Union, ECOWAS, Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration.

For mains: Regional Groupings, Important International Institutions, Reason for Recent Coups in Africa and its Impact

Why in News

Recently, Burkina Faso's **army announced that it had ousted President Roch Kabore, suspended the constitution, dissolved the government** and the national assembly, and closed the country's borders.

- Army has toppled governments over the past 18 months in [Mali](#) and Guinea.
- The military also took over in [Chad last year \(2021\) after President Idriss Deby died fighting rebels](#) on the battlefield in the country's north.

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Key Points

▪ Burkina Faso:

- A former French colony, **Burkina Faso has suffered chronic instability since gaining independence in 1960**, including several coups.
- The country's name, meaning "**land of the honest men**", was picked by revolutionary military officer Thomas Sankara who took power in 1983. He was toppled and killed in 1987.
- Since 2015, the **country has been fighting an Islamist insurgency** that spilled over from neighbouring Mali. This has fuelled anger in the military and damaged the once important tourist industry.
- Landlocked Burkina Faso, **one of West Africa's poorest countries despite being a gold producer**, has experienced numerous coups since independence from France in 1960.
- Islamist **militants control swathes of Burkina Faso's territory and have forced residents in some areas to abide by their harsh version of Islamic law**, while the military's struggle to quell the insurgency has drained scarce national resources.
- **Kabore had faced waves of protests** in recent months amid frustration over killings of civilians and soldiers by militants, some of whom have links to Islamic State and al Qaeda.
 - The discontent escalated in November 2021, when 53 people, mainly members of the security forces, were killed by suspected jihadists.

▪ About:

- The announcement cited the deterioration of the security situation and what the army described as **Kabore's inability to unite the West African nation and effectively respond to challenges**, which include an Islamist insurgency.
- The statement was made in the name of a previously unheard-of entity, **the Patriotic**

Movement for Safeguard and Restoration, or **MPSR**, its French-language acronym. MPSR, which **includes all sections of the army**.

- The MPSR said **it would propose a calendar for a return to constitutional order** "within a reasonable time frame, after consultations with various sections of the nation."
- The military also announced the **closure of Burkina Faso's borders**.

▪ **Global Response:**

- African and Western powers **denounced what they called an "attempted coup"** and the **European Union** demanded the "immediate" release of the President.
- The **United States also called for the President's release** and urged "members of the security forces to respect Burkina Faso's constitution and civilian leadership."
- **The United Nations'** Secretary-General **strongly condemns any attempted takeover of the government by the force of arm** in Burkina Faso and calls on the coup leaders to lay down their weapons.
- The **African Union** and regional bloc, **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, have also condemned the forceful takeover of power, with ECOWAS saying it holds the soldiers responsible for the deposed president's well-being.
 - The **African Union** is a continental body that consists of 55 states belonging to the African continent.
 - **ECOWAS** is made up of fifteen member countries that are located in the Western African region.

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