

Security Advisory – Burkina Faso



Incident Summary

Late on Sunday 13 August, suspected Islamist militants killed at least 18 people and wounded several during a raid on the Istanbul restaurant on Avenue Kwame N'krumah in the Burkinabe capital Ouagadougou. The attack began at around 9:30 PM local time. A security operation has since been carried out, with security forces shooting both attackers and freeing people trapped inside the building. During a press conference on Monday 14 August, Communications Minister Remi Dandjinou confirmed that the incident was a terrorist attack, noting that the death toll was provisional as a security operation was still underway. So far no group has claimed responsibility.

Security Advisory

MS Risk advises against all travel to the following parts of Burkina Faso: all areas of the country north of the town of Boulsa; areas within 40 km (24 miles) of the western border with Mali; the W National Park in the southeast bordering Niger and Benin. MS Risk advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of the country, including the capital Ouagadougou.

Anyone currently in Ouagadougou is advised to remain alert as further incidents in other areas frequented by foreigners may occur. We further advise that you avoid the Avenue Kwame N'krumah area of the city due to the ongoing security operation. MS

Risk advises that you seek the advice of local authorities and follow their directions. Major hotels in the area are likely to be under a lockdown and you should adhere to the advice of hotel staff and security. Please be advised that a curfew and possible restrictions on routes in and around Ouagadougou may be implemented with little warning. Expect heavy security forces presence across the city in the coming days. While no intelligence is known to exist to indicate secondary attacks, it would be prudent to evaluate the local security situation and disposition of resources across the region.

Over the past year, the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Mali has continued to spillover into the region. Militant groups operating in West Africa have continued to mount attacks on hotels, cafes and restaurants visited by foreigners. Previous attacks have occurred in major cities in Mali, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. Methods of attacks have included complex attacks by militants, small arms fire and the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as well as taking victims hostage. More recently, the northern Burkina Faso Sahel region, near the border with southern Mali, has seen a sharp rise in terrorist activity. Militants operating in this region have targeted the local communities, launching attacks and threatening schools. While the Ouagadougou has been previously targeted by terrorism, in a January 2016 attack on a restaurant and hotel that killed thirty people and was claimed by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Sunday's attack is the first major such incident to occur in Ouagadougou this year. Furthermore, this latest attack comes months after the announcement that several jihadist groups were merging under the name Jama'at Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin (JNIM), also known as Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM). In June, JNIM claimed responsibility for an attack at a luxury Mali resort located just outside the capital Bamako. That attack killed at least five people. The group is known to operate in the Mali/Burkina Faso border region. While no group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack in Ouagadougou, a claim by JNIM would signify an expansion of their area of operation, and a threat of further similar attacks in Ouagadougou. For several weeks, MS Risk has been forecasting a spectacular attack following our trend analysis on JNIM. In particular, we have recorded a trend of schools being disrupted in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso and communities being threatened. Furthermore a significant growth in the terror group's size and confidence, coupled with an increase in financing and brazenness, is likely to lead to the group attempting to push further south into Burkina Faso.

MS Risk is currently monitoring the situation and will release further advisories as more information becomes available.

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 - Interim security
 - Training
 - Special assignments
- Crisis Response
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 - Business continuity management
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- Virtual Security Director service for clients lacking a full time security executive.

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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