



BURKINA FASO FLASH-NOTE

## Proposals masquerading as an agreement

*The news announced by the ECOWAS<sup>1</sup> mediators yesterday evening represents anything but a diplomatic breakthrough. Ostensibly paving the way for a prompt return to the status quo ante last Wednesday's military coup, the so-called "draft agreement"<sup>2</sup> amounts to no more than a list of proposals.*

2) In fact, **the document barely constitutes a preliminary draft**, presented as it was, before it had been approval by any of the relevant stakeholders<sup>3</sup> – i.e. Parliament, the (non-Compaore) political parties, trades unions and civil society organizations.

3) The actual list of 13 terms proposed is even more problematic<sup>4</sup> as it **includes several items rejected as non-negotiable by the stakeholder groups** cited above - most egregiously:

- **amnesty** for all acts committed during the course of the coup<sup>5</sup>, the enabling legislation to be passed "no later than Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>";
- **prospective candidates disqualified** by the Constitutional Council from standing in the presidential and parliamentary elections, **to be deemed eligible**;
- the withdrawal of all military personnel serving in the Transitional government<sup>6</sup>;
- the ultimate **status of the RSP unit to be determined by the next president**.

4) These one-sided proposals, which **effectively endorse every one of the fatuous claims by the coup's perpetrators**<sup>7</sup>, have virtually no chance of being accepted by the people of Burkina Faso.

- Chérif Sy, **the president of the Transitional parliament, has condemned the draft agreement outright**, calling for a mass demonstration in Ouagadougou's Place de la Révolution – the venue for several previous rallies against the RSP's repeated interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. President Macky SALL (Senegal), the current chairman of ECOWAS, and his counterpart from Benin, Yayi Boni. .

<sup>2</sup> Officially, "*Un projet d'accord politique de sortie de crise*" - i.e. a Draft Political Agreement to End the Crisis.

<sup>3</sup> Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, leader of the Mouvement populaire pour le progrès (MMP), noted drily that the methodology employed by the mediators' had been "curieux.

<sup>4</sup> Beyond the headline-grabbing provisions calling for the reinstatement the Transitional government and elections to be held by Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> In terms of civilian casualties, the current toll stands at 11 dead and 108 wounded.

<sup>6</sup> As will be recalled, this one of the demands made by the RSP in the aftermath of its proto-coup, on June 28<sup>th</sup>, aimed at sidelining their *bête noire*, Prime Minister Isaac Zida.

<sup>7</sup> See Proclamation issued by so-called Conseil national pour la démocratie (CND), on morning of Sept. 17, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The organization played a leading role in the campaign to block then Pres. Compaore's efforts to circumvent the term limits stipulated in Burkina Faso's Constitution and in the Oct. 2014 protests that culminated in his enforced resignation.

<sup>9</sup> *Nous, nous considérons tout simplement que les chefs d'Etats de la Cédéao ne peuvent pas cautionner, légitimer ainsi un coup d'Etat* – quoted by Guillaume Thibault in "*Réactions divisées au «projet d'accord politique»*", posted on [RFL.com](http://RFL.com), Sept. 21, 2015.

- Guy Hervé Kam, leader of the *Balai citoyen*<sup>8</sup> movement has denounced the “ECOWAS proposals (sic)” as legitimating the coup d’état<sup>9</sup>.
- *L’union d’action syndicale*, the trades union confederation which refused to meet with the ECOWAS negotiators<sup>10</sup> has since renewed its **demands for the demobilization of the RSP and the immediate arrest, prosecution and punishment of all those accused of political violence**<sup>11</sup>.

5) As for ECOWAS’ Extraordinary summit due to convene tomorrow in Abuja, it is **inconceivable that Heads of State such as President Buhari<sup>12</sup> or John Mahama<sup>13</sup> will endorse the one-sided proposal that Messrs. Sall and Boni have cobbled together**. Harboursing no illusions about the nature of realpolitik in francophone Africa, they are bound to suspect that the real explanation for this diplomatic fiasco is to be found on the banks of the Seine.

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<sup>10</sup> They refused to be party to even indirect negotiations with “terrorists”, as the coup’s perpetrators had already been designated by the African Union – see Title XII of the Final Communiqué issued by the AU’s Peace and Security Council, on Sept. 19, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> The UAS has also reaffirmed its commitment to the nationwide strike it declared on Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> to protest the coup.

<sup>12</sup> Buhari’s term as Nigeria’s military ruler in (1983-85), overlapped with that of the late Pres. Thomas Sankara who was murdered in 1987 by troops led by then Lt. Gilbert Diendéré.

<sup>13</sup> The founder of whose party, ex-Pres. Jerry J. Rawlings was a close friend and comrade-in-arms of the late Thomas Sankara.

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