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# **Elections in Burkina Faso**

## *November 29 General Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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## **Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?**

Voters will be electing the President of Burkina Faso and the Deputies who will represent them in the National Assembly.

## **When will the vote take place?**

The election date is set for Sunday, November 29, 2015. Voting will take place from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 pm. In the case that none of the candidates for President obtains an absolute majority of votes in the first round, a second round will be held within 15 days after the Constitutional Council's announcement of the final results.

These elections were originally scheduled for October 11, 2015, but were postponed until November 29 due to a coup d'état on September 17.

## **Who is eligible to vote?**

According to Article 42 of the Electoral Code, the electorate consists of all Burkinabé of both sexes who are 18 years or older on Election Day, enjoy their civil and political rights, are registered on electoral lists and have legal capacity.

According to Article 43 (paragraph 1) of the Electoral Code, naturalized foreigners, including those who acquired the Burkinabé nationality by marriage, are eligible to vote. Foreigners can participate in local elections, under certain conditions prescribed under Article 43 (paragraph 2) of the Electoral Code.

## **How many voters are registered on the electoral lists?**

According to the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), slightly more than 5.5 million voters are registered, 5,517,015 of who will be of age for the November 29 elections. Article 49 of the Electoral Code provides for the registration of voters who do not meet the age or residency requirements at the time of registration on the electoral roll, but who will meet them by the end of the exercise. The electoral register was audited by a mission of independent experts, appointed by the International Organization of the Francophonie.

## **What type of electoral system will be used for the general elections?**

As per Articles 132 and 133 of the Electoral Code, the President of Burkina Faso is elected according to a majority voting system in two rounds. If a candidate receives an absolute majority of votes in the first round, he/she is elected; otherwise, a second round is held between the two candidates who won the most votes in the first round.

The National Assembly is made up of 127 Deputies, elected by proportional representation. One hundred-eleven Deputies are elected by the list system, with proportional representation in 45 provincial constituencies. Per Article 156 Electoral Code, two to nine Deputies are elected in each provincial constituency. Sixteen members are elected by the list system with proportional representation in the national constituency.

## **Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?**

According to Articles 5 and 6 of the Law on Gender Quota, lists of candidates for parliamentary elections that do not include at least 30 percent of people of the other gender lose 50 percent of the public funding set aside for election campaigns. Those who meet that quota benefit from additional funding. There are, thus, financial incentives to include women candidates.

## **What institution has the official mandate to implement these general elections? What are its powers?**

The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) is the election management body in Burkina Faso; for some operations, it is assisted by the public administration. According to Article 3 of the Electoral Code, the CENI is responsible for:

- The creation, management and conservation of the national electoral roll. For these operations, the CENI is assisted, at its request, by the public administration; and
- The organization and supervision of elections and referendums.

The CENI has several branches, including the Independent Provincial Electoral Commission at the provincial level; the Independent Municipal Electoral Commission at the local level; and the Independent District Electoral Commission (CEIA) at the communal district level.

The cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso have a special status and are divided into districts, with each having its own CEIA.

## **What is a polling station?**

Every sector and town in every village has at least one polling station. Each polling station has 800 voters or less. The polling station must be located in a public place, ensuring the serenity of the elections, it cannot, under any circumstance, be located in a private estate, a place of worship, a market, a clinic or military or paramilitary camp.

For general elections, polling station administration is composed of five members including a Chairman, two Assessors and two Secretaries. Election Officers are chosen from persons deemed fit, residing in the

electoral district, and listed on the electoral lists in the electoral division. If necessary, the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) may call on any apt person, registered or not on the electoral roll and despite the residency requirement, to serve as an Electoral Officer. According to Article 72 of the Electoral Code, polling station officers are designated by either the Independent Municipal Electoral Commission or the Independent District Electoral Commission at the commune or district levels.

## **How many polling stations will there be on Election Day?**

According to information provided by the National Independent Electoral Commission, there will be 17,898 polling stations on Election Day.

## **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

No, not for the November 29 general elections. The provisions on voting for Burkinabé living abroad will only be made available after 2015, under Section 265 of the Electoral Code, as revised by the last amendment.

## **How can voters with disabilities participate in the general elections?**

Any voter with a disability is allowed to be assisted to vote by an elector of his/her choice or by a polling station worker. The National Independent Electoral Commission's televised communications are accompanied with sign language.

## **Where will the voting, counting and compilation of results take place?**

The voting process and counting will take place in polling stations. The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) is responsible for the centralization of the voting results at the national level. The CENI organizes the centralization of all votes at the national level at its headquarters from secure data from the protocols transmitted by satellite by the Communal Results Compilation Centers (CCCR).

The candidate delegates and the candidates themselves may attend the compilation of results in the CCCRs, and are invited to sign the results compilation report.

## **Who can observe the elections? What are the procedures to be accredited as an observer?**

According to Article 147 of the Electoral Code, observers from legally established, specialized, organizations are allowed in the polling stations and in the results compilation centers. The accreditation application forms can be submitted to the National Independent Electoral Commission's (CENI) central mail service. The file must include the following documents:

- A request specifying the coverage area, addressed to the President of the CENI;
- A list of names of persons to be accredited, with their contacts, email addresses and two photographs; and
- The full address of the observer organization.

Over 100 Burkinabé civil society organizations have adopted a harmonized observation platform for the Burkina Faso electoral process called the Convention of Civil Society Organizations for Domestic Election Observation (CODEL). The objectives of CODEL are, among others, to harmonize and coordinate the election observation strategies of member organizations, to coordinate the deployment of national observers (4,000 planned) across the territory and the deployment of the observers who will focus on parallel vote tabulation. Other national organizations have also announced the establishment of election observation missions.

International missions have announced their intention to deploy observers, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the European Union.

## **Are political parties and/or candidates represented in the polling stations?**

According to Article 77 of the Electoral Code, each party, political organization or independent candidate has the right to monitor electoral operations from the opening of the polls to the announcement and display of results. Political parties and independent candidates can designate, for this purpose, a delegate and an alternate for each polling station, chosen from voters on the electoral roll of the constituency.

Delegates can freely enter the polling stations where they have jurisdiction, proceed to the identification of voters, and require registration of the protocols of their observations and objections. They sign the protocols containing their comments and objections and are also invited to countersign the polling station's protocols.

## **When will the final results be announced?**

The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) has seven days to announce provisional results, however, with the use of the election results satellite transmission system, the interim results will be announced in a shorter period. According to Article 98 of the Electoral Code, the CENI can ask the Constitutional Council or the Council of State, depending on the election, for an extension that cannot exceed three days.

All appeals in relation to any disputes to the interim results are received by the Constitutional Council within seven days from the announcement of the provisional results. The Constitutional Council announces the final results within 15 days following the expiration of the deadline for appeals.

## **How will election disputes be adjudicated?**

In the context of the presidential election, the Constitutional Court deals with disputes regarding the candidates, electoral operations, and the counting and resolution of disputes of results.<sup>1</sup> For the legislative elections, the Constitutional Court also has jurisdiction, with the exception of disputes regarding the list of candidates established by the National Independent Electoral Commission, which can be contested by candidates before the Administrative Tribunal up to three days following its publication.<sup>2</sup> Candidates have a period of seven days, after the announcement of provisional results, to raise disputes to the Constitutional Court.

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<sup>1</sup> As stipulated by Articles 98, 131, 149, 150, 151 and 152 of the Electoral Code.

<sup>2</sup> As stipulated by Articles 98, 183, 193, 194, 195, 197 and 199 of the Electoral Code.

## Resources

- [National Independent Electoral Commission \(French\)](#)