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# **Elections in Burkina Faso**

## *2017 Municipal Elections*

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### *Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Burkina Faso elections authorities as of May 22, 2017 to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## **When is Election Day?**

Elections will take place on May 28, 2017.

## **Who will citizens be voting for in the municipal elections?**

Burkinabé voters in 19 communes will elect municipal councilors, who will in turn elect their mayors and deputy mayors. Due to violent incidents during and immediately following Election Day in May 2016, three communes were not able to hold the May 2016 elections. In addition, 16 other communes experienced difficulties establishing councils of local authorities due to incidents that prevented the election of local executive members. This led to the dissolution of all 16 councils in March 2017, in line with the General Code of Territorial Collectivities. The May 2017 municipal elections will therefore be held for those communes that did not participate in the May 2016 elections and those that had their municipal councils dissolved.

The communes holding municipal elections on May 28, 2017 are: Andemtenga, Barani, Beguédo, Bouroum, Dablo, Dandé, Karangasso Vigué, Kantchari, Kindi, Kombori, Kougny, Madjoari, Saponé, Séytenga, Zabré, Ziga, Zoaga, Zogoré, and District 4 of Ouagadougou.

Burkina Faso's last municipal elections were held on May 22, 2016. The election had a 29.8 percent voter turnout against the voting age population, and 49.02 percent against registered voters.

Twenty political parties will compete in municipal elections in 19 communes. The ruling People's Movement for Progress party won the majority of seats (56.1 percent) in the 2016 municipal elections.

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

Article 42 of the electoral code states that all Burkinabés, from both sexes, who are 18 years or older by the date of the vote, are registered on the voters list, and who have not, on any occasion, been made ineligible to vote by law are eligible to vote.

Article 43, subparagraph 1 of the electoral code specifies that naturalized foreigners, including those who have received their Burkinabé nationality by marriage, are eligible to vote.

Burkina Faso has a voting age population of 9,100,031.

## **How many registered voters are there?**

Five and a half million voters are registered.

## **What type of election system will be used?**

According to Article 239 of the electoral code, municipal councilors are elected based on proportional representation using the largest remainder allocation method.

## Are there reserved seats for women?

Lists of candidates for the municipal 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 respect the quota benefit from supplementary financing. So, there are financial incentives for the inclusion of female candidates.

There are at least two seats in competition for each constituency.

## What is the election management body? What are its powers?

The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), created on May 7, 1998, is the election management body in Burkina Faso. For certain activities, the CENI is assisted by the public administration. According to Article 3 of the electoral code, the CENI is responsible for:

- The management and conservation of the national voter roll (for these activities, the CENI receives assistance, at its request, from the public administration); and
- The organization and supervision of electoral and referendum-related activities.

The CENI is composed of:

- Independent provincial electoral commissions;
- Independent communal electoral commissions; and
- The Communal District Independent Election Commission for the residents of Ouagadougou that are under the jurisdiction of a special statute.

## What is a polling station?

Each municipality and town has at least one polling station. Each polling station handles a maximum of 800 voters. According to Article 72 of the electoral code, polling stations must be situated in public places to ensure peaceful elections, and will never be on private property, in a place of worship, market, clinic, or at a military or paramilitary camp. For municipal elections, each polling station has four polling station workers, with a president, two assessors and a secretary. Election officials are chosen from people who have been judged as capable, are residents in the electoral district, and registered on voter lists for the electoral district. If needed, the National Independent Electoral Commission can call on anyone who is capable and registered on the voter list or not, regardless of residential criteria, to serve as a polling station worker.

According to article 79 of the electoral code, polling station workers are chosen by municipal independent election commissions, and in the case of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, by the Communal District Independent Electoral Commission.

## **How many polling places are set up on Election Day?**

According to information provided by the National Independent Electoral Commission, there will be 889 polling stations.

For municipal elections, each polling station has four polling station workers, a president, two assessors, and a secretary. Polling stations must be set up in public places to ensure peaceful elections.

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

Out-of-country voting is currently not allowed in Burkina Faso, but the new agenda of the National Independent Electoral Commission includes the introduction of out-of-country voting schedule to take effect in 2020.

## **How are electoral authorities guaranteeing equal access for persons with disabilities?**

According to Article 91 of the electoral code, any voters with disabilities preventing them from voting are authorized to receive assistance from a voter of their choice or from a member of the polling station. Measures are in place to integrate sign language into televised communications by the National Independent Electoral Commission.

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

Voting procedures and vote counting will take place at the polling stations. District compilation results centers (CCCR) will be in charge of compiling results at the municipal level. The results are then transmitted to the headquarters of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) via an electronic tabulation system. Candidate delegates and the candidates themselves can assist with the compilation of results in the CCCRs and are invited to sign the results report. The CENI is then charged with the validation of the results of each municipality.

## **Who will observe during Election Day? How can they get accreditation?**

According to Article 147 of the electoral code, observers are admitted into polling stations and district compilation results centers. Applications for accreditation must contain the following:

- A request specifying the area of coverage, addressed to the president of the National Independent Electoral Commission;
- The list of names of people to be accredited with their contact information and two photos; and
- The address of the organization requesting accreditation.

More than 100 Burkinabe civil society organizations have adopted an observation platform called the Convention of Civil Society Organizations for the Domestic Observation of Elections (CODEL). The objectives of CODEL are to harmonize and coordinate election observation strategies of member organizations and coordinate the deployment of national observers throughout the country as well as those who will focus on the parallel vote tabulation.

## **Will the candidates be represented at the polling stations?**

According to Article 77 of the electoral code, each political party, coalition, and independent organization with a candidate has the right to observe election preparations from the opening of the polling stations until the announcement and posting of results at these stations. Political parties, coalitions, and candidates from independent organizations who choose to do so can designate a delegate and an alternate for each polling station, chosen among registered voters on an electoral list from the electoral district. Delegates can enter polling stations freely where they have jurisdiction, proceed with the identification of voters and require registration of all observations and disputes, which will then be recorded.

Candidate delegates are invited to countersign the observation and dispute report. The refusal of a delegate to countersign does not nullify the reporting process. According to Article 96 of the electoral code, the reasons for a delegate's refusal to sign must be mentioned in the report.

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

According to Article 98 of the electoral code, the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) has seven days to announce provisional results.<sup>1</sup> All decisions related to provisional results disputes are received by the State Council within the seven-day period following the announcement of provisional results, per Article 98 of the electoral code.

The National Independent Electoral Commission published the provisional results of the 2016 municipal elections within three days.

The State Council will make a decree on appeals and announce the definitive results or cancellation of the election within an eight-day period following the expiration of any extension allowed for resolution of disputes, per Article 262 of the electoral code. In the case of a cancellation, a new vote will be organized within 60 days.

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

For municipal elections, the administrative courts are responsible for adjudicating, with the possibility of recourse by the State Council.

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<sup>1</sup> If needed, the CENI can ask the Constitutional Council of the Council of State for an extension not to exceed three days.

## Resources

- [Constitution of Burkina Faso](#) (French)
- [Electoral Code](#) (French)
- [National Independent Electoral Commission](#) (French)