

Burkina Faso: Military Coup in Ouagadougou

Rebecca Lougheed & Chris Shieff
25 January, 2022



On January 24, news broke that an attempted coup was underway by military rebels in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou. The president has since been detained.

Here is a look at the ongoing situation and the potential impact on international flight operations.

What is happening there?

The Western African region is an area of significant unrest and one we highlighted to watch throughout 2022 for potential conflicts.

Burkina Faso itself has been volatile since it gained its independence in 1960, and **several coups have been attempted** over the decades. It has also been struggling with increased levels of Islamist Insurgency given its proximity to Mali.

Tensions have been escalating for some time, and on January 22 there were reports of **anti-government protests** in the capital, Ouagadougou. Gunfire was reported near DFFD/Ouagadougou airport, and **several military bases were attacked**. There were fears an armed coup was underway.

Then on January 24, the president was reportedly detained by soldiers. It's not clear yet if the entire military is involved, or just a smaller faction.



Air Burkina is the national carrier.

What is the impact so far on international ops?

Security

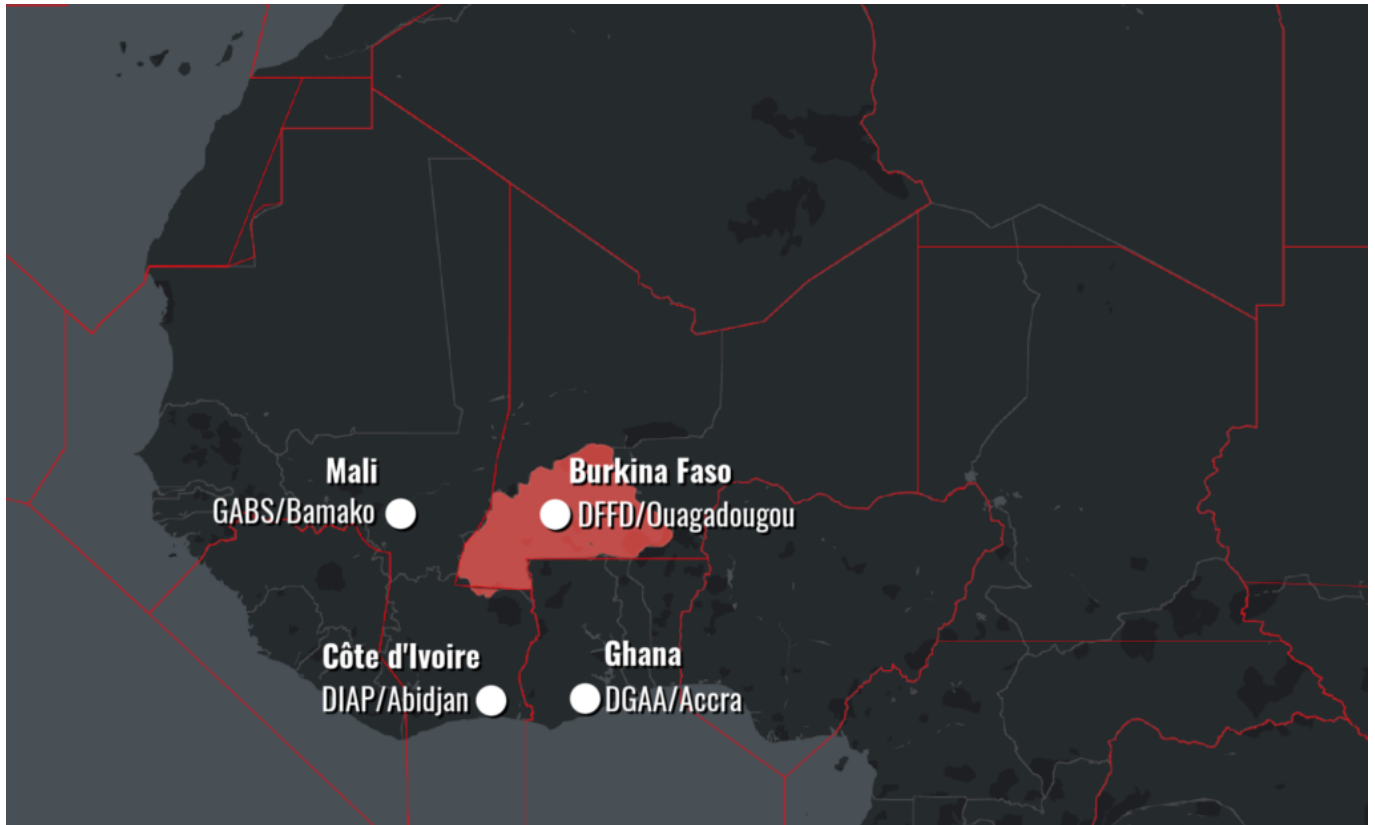
The US Embassy advise that scheduled flights have been suspended at **DFFD/Ouagadougou** until the security situation stabilises. The airport itself appears to still be open, and on January 25 the government confirmed the **air borders were open**, but land borders remained closed.

The primary risk to aviation is **security on the ground**. As things could change quickly, it should be considered dangerous to stop here at this time. There are reports that non-essential embassy staff have been asked to leave. The ability of embassies in Burkina Faso to help foreigners should be considered limited.

This may create problems for flight planning as DFFD is often used for en-route and destination alternates for aircraft transiting Africa. It is considered to have better infrastructure and support available.

GABS/Bamako in Mali is another option, but things are volatile there as well. So extra thought may need to put into crew security in the event of diversions.

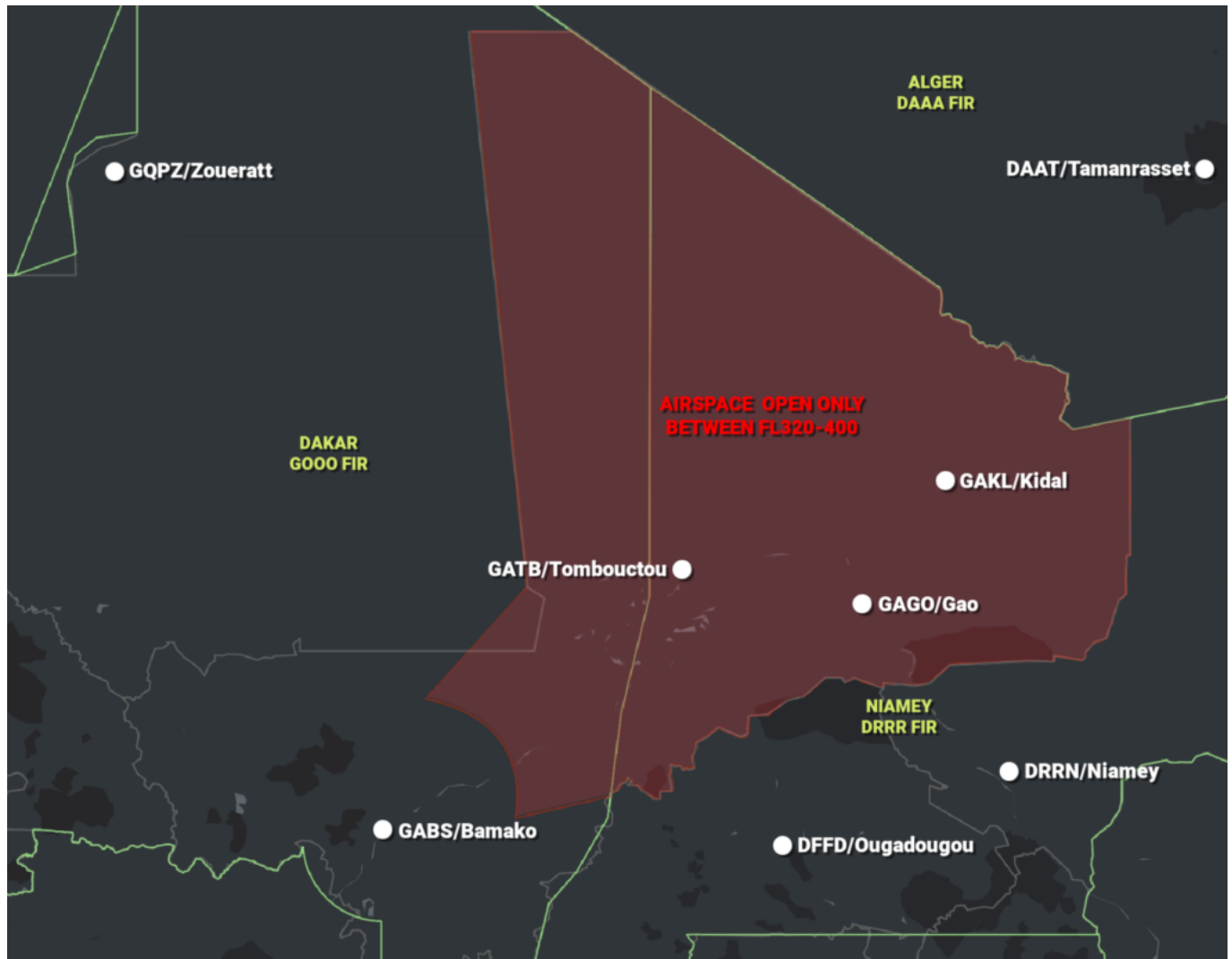
Consider **DGAA/Accra** airport in Ghana as a safer option. The security situation there is more stable than neighbouring countries, and the airport has good and reliable facilities. We recommend Apogee as your agent – you can contact them at fly@apogee.aero, or +971 4 295 40 41.



The FIR boundaries do not coincide with state boundaries.

Overflights

Burkina Faso is not responsible for its en-route airspace. It is found within the **DRRR/Niamey FIR**, and controlled from neighbouring Niger. Therefore overflights are not likely to be affected by the events in Ouagadougou. Check Safeairspace warnings for Mali and impact on flights through the Niamey FIR.

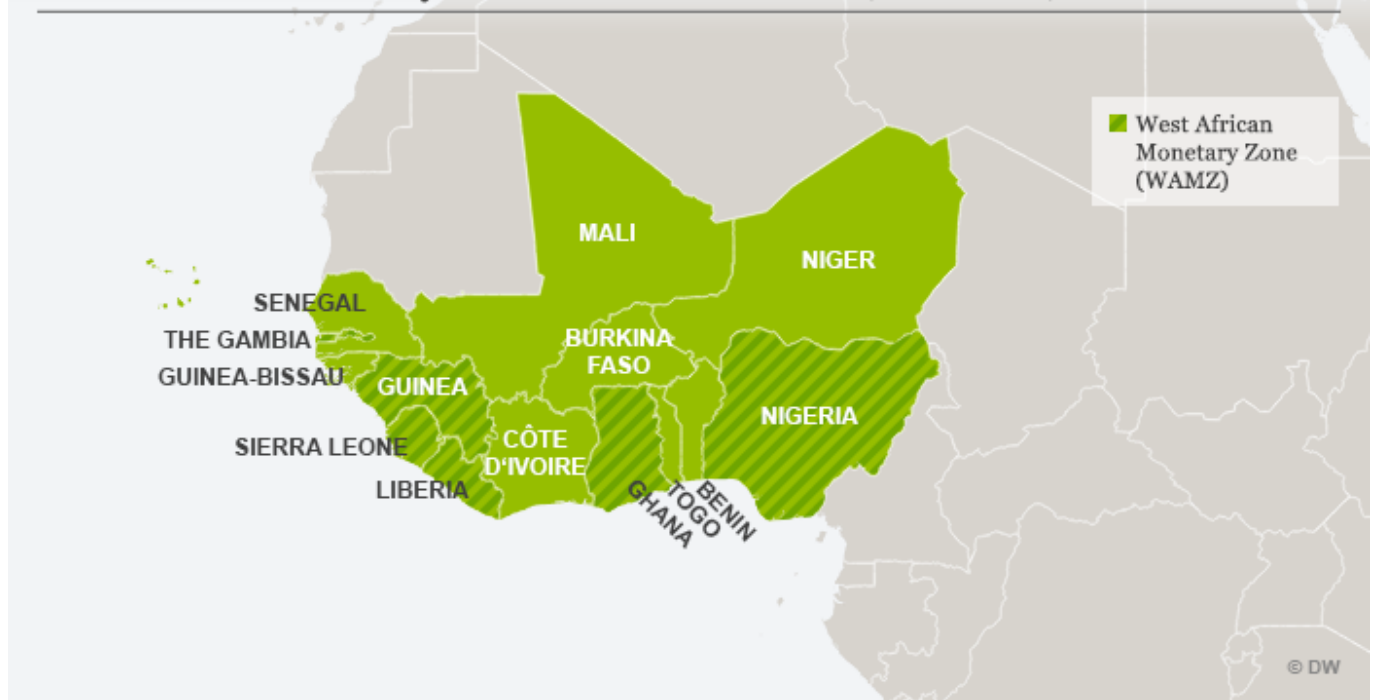


Warnings are in place for the Niamey FIR.

The Mali Situation

There was also a **coup in Mali this month** and civil unrest is ongoing. It was condemned by other countries in the region and has led to sanctions against Mali. The US Department of State maintain its highest level of travel warning for Mali, which should also be considered a dangerous option.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)



The ECOWAS region is generally very volatile.

The Overall Risk Assessment

The impact on aviation safety is generally low. However stops in Burkina Faso should be avoided until the situation stabilises. The risk is ground based – the security of crew and passengers cannot be guaranteed at this time. However airports and communication infrastructure remain up and running at time of writing.