"Without Transparency, No NGO Should Intervene: The Call for Accountability and Sovereignty in Burkina Faso"

Tracking Aid Narratives on Social Media: Recent Observations from the Sahel

08 October 2025

This briefing by Insecurity Insight analyses public social media activity from 29 September - 05 October 2025, assessing observed narratives based on 14 months of systematic social media monitoring in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

SUMMARY: Between **29 September - 05 October 2025**, only 276 public posts on the aid sector across Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. This week's brief highlights a shift from the usual national focus to more regional discussions, along with one prominent national narrative. There are 22 posts related to content about the UN General Assembly (UNGA), 24 posts related to UNICEF initiatives. These also included 30 posts on Burkina Faso's conference themed "Transparency and Financial Responsibility of NGOs in the fight Against Terrorism". Together, these posts generated 628 comments, with just 17 of these comments being negative, six comments of these targeting Saudi Aid.

NOTE: An online incident related to allegations against INSO in Burkina Faso emerged on 07 October 2025, after the cut-off date for this reporting period. It will be fully analysed in next week's report. However, **preliminary findings are concerning for the safety of aid workers in Burkina Faso, with early evidence of death threats and attempted doxxing** circulating online. If any colleagues or partners have immediate concerns, please reach out to us at **info@insecurityinsight.org**

PAST EDITIONS: It Is A Disgrace (15-28 Sept) | Keep Eyes on Agadez (01-14 Sept) | Burkina Faso 🇧🇫 Has To Cut All Ties With ALL International Organizations (18-31 Aug) | Mixed Opinion (11-17 Aug) | We Will Expose Them (04-10 Aug) | Attack, Suspension etc. (21 Jul-03 Aug) | Congratulations (14-20 Jul) | Good Riddance (07-13 Jul) | All

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Key Takeaways

UNICEF: Local Partnerships Strengthen Reputation and Drive Engagement

Between 01 and 04 October 2025, 24 public posts highlighted UNICEF's initiatives, including mobile clinics in Niger and the "Sultanats/Child-friendly Cantons" project in Agadez, which focuses on children's rights. In Burkina Faso, posts mentioning UNICEF centred on its support for the Back to School campaign, promoting children's education and protection. Overall, there were nine posts from Mali, eight from Niger, and seven from Burkina Faso (10 on Facebook and 14 on X) generating a total of 116 comments.

One post, by a Burkinabè artist collaborating with UNICEF to promote children's education, received 99 comments alone. Of these, 95 were neutral, mainly congratulating the artist and the education theme, while four were positive towards UNICEF. Mentions of UNICEF remained limited but were generally favourable due to their association with local influencers, musicians and representatives.

"Great and thank you for thinking of UNICEF who does so much for children around the world 💪💪" ("Super et merci d'avoir pensé à UNICEF qui fait beaucoup pour les enfants du monde entier 💪💪")

No harmful narratives toward UNICEF were detected. Light, off-topic among fans (e.g., originality debates) targeted the performer rather than UNICEF. A small subset of users also asked how to engage, while another comment suggested doing something more concrete.

"Please stop encouraging and make a gesture" ("Svp arrêter d'encourager et faire un geste").

One of the posts was shared directly by UNICEF's country representative in Niger, describing one of their engagements in the Agadez region. The post highlighted UNICEF's support for local communities. While the post did not receive any comments, it reached an estimated 246 social media users.

What This Tells Us:

- **Partnerships amplify reach but can overshadow the organisation**. The performer carried the conversation; UNICEF benefited indirectly. When posts come via trusted local figures (artists, country reps), social media users read them as community-rooted, which increases acceptance and strengthens UNICEF's reputation.
- **Education framing resonates.** Users' reactions aligned with the posts on protecting and educating children.
- **Calls for tangible action exist.** Some users looked for ways to participate or see concrete support. While the evidence remains limited, the nature of these comments suggests an emerging willingness among some users to become more practically involved, particularly when local leaders use their public platform to support aid.
- **Local leadership.** Occasional posts from the country representative can humanize UNICEF and help it stand out from agencies perceived as distant or corporate.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger: Continued UNGA Reactions

Social media engagement in response to the UNGA continued but at much reduced volume to the previous **week**, dropping from 1,146 comments during the week 22–28 September 2025, to only 189 comments between 29-30 September 2025, with only eight negative comments toward the UN and the aid sector. The proportion of negative comments remained relatively stable, staying around 4% between September 22 - 30.

Narratives around UNGA

The narratives on the UNGA this week showed both similarities and changes compared to last week. While both weeks expressed frustration with the UN, this week saw greater emphasis on calls for African countries to either withdraw from the organisation or demand stronger representation within it. Similar sentiments existed last week but were largely overshadowed by other debates.

- **Sovereignty / exit:** Calls the AES to boycott or quit the UN and a desire for concrete results at home (security, inflation, infrastructure).

  "It is not time for words but for actions, through the African Union that all African states decide to leave the UN within a year or more, that is all." ("L'heure n'est pas aux discours mais aux actes, via l'union africaine que tous les états africains décident de quitter l'ONU d'ici un an ou plus c'est tout.")

- **Reform:** One comment called for greater African representation on the UN Security Council, including the extension of veto power, arguing that this would strengthen Africa's position within the UN rather than merely providing a seat at the table.

"Not just one seat, but veto seats on the UN Security Council" ("Pas un seul siège seulement mais des sièges avec droit de veto au conseil de sécurité de l'ONU")

- **Power politics:** Some social media users view the UN as a club where influence is determined by military strength. This is linked to anti-UN views, with users accusing the UN of aligning with Western powers like France, labeling its leaders as "liars" or "incompetent" for standing with the French while non-state armed groups gain ground.

  "The UN is not just political but also military. To have a place, you need the atomic bomb." ("l'ONU n'est pas simplement politique mais aussi militaire pour avoir une place il faut avoir la bombe atomique.")

  "THESE ARE INCOMPETENT LIARS, SCOUTS. THE TERROTERROS ARE TAKING OVER THEIR COUNTRIES. THEY'RE THERE WITH THE FAT FRENCH PEOPLE." ("VOILA DES MENTEURS INCOMPETENT VAURIEN LES TERROTERROS SONT ENTRAIN DE PRENDRE LEURS PAYS ILS SONT LA AVEC GROS FRANÇAIS")

What This Tells Us

- The ongoing conversation on the UNGA reflects continued user engagement, keeping the topic relevant despite a decline in comment volume.
- The narratives largely align with those from last week, showing persistent concerns.
- Negative comments directly mentioning the UNGA and the UN agencies remain limited, mainly focused on political issues rather than aid-related matters.
- The comments revealed widespread frustration about Africa's limited influence within the UN. However, users were divided on the proposed responses: some called for stronger African representation, including the possibility of a veto power, while others argued that African countries should withdraw from the organization altogether

Burkina Faso: State-NGO Conference on Transparency and Anti-Terrorism Finance

Between **29 September and 04 October 2025**, **30 posts** (Facebook **27**, X **4**) on the national State–NGO conference themed ***"Transparency and Financial Responsibility of NGOs in the Fight Against Terrorism in Burkina Faso."*** were collected. These posts generated only **31 comments (none negative towards the aid sector)**, a relatively low number of comments for the sensitive nature of the conference which included both the aid sector and security conversations.

Some of the main narratives included:

- **Coordination & transparency praised:** There was strong approval for the State-NGO conference, which was praised for its focus on financial responsibility and promoting NGO-government cooperation. However, the praise was directed more towards the conference itself rather than NGOs, as it emphasized transparency and accountability in the development sector.

  "👏 Congratulations on this National Day of State/NGO Consultation, an essential framework for promoting transparency and financial accountability in the development sector in Burkina Faso." ("👏 Félicitations pour cette Journée Nationale de Concertation État/ONG, un cadre essentiel pour promouvoir la transparence et la responsabilité financière dans le secteur du développement au Burkina Faso. ")

- **Pro-state oversight sentiment:** Support for tighter authorization/reporting and a "transparency first" stance; some comments imply that non-transparent NGOs should be controlled by the state.

  "Without transparency, no NGO should be able to intervene. The power rests with the state!" (" Sans transparence, aucune ONG ne doit pouvoir intervenir. Force reste à l'État ! ")

- **Pro-Russian sentiment:** One of the users shared their support for the Burkina Faso government as a defender of sovereignty, addressing in their comment Ibrahim Traoré and Russia as an ally against Western influence.

  "Just like responsible countries, the fund is there to protect their people, to protect us, the youth of tomorrow, from the dangers that target us, and may God protect Putin and the AES ❤️💋IBRAHIM TRAORÉ FOR LIFE 💎💕" (" Je suis ivoirienne mais je dis merci à ce gouvernement sérieux qui a pris le destin de son peuple entre ses mains. Tous comme les pays responsables, le fond pour protèger leurs peuples , protéger nous nous la jeunesse de demain, des dangers qui nous visent et que Dieu protège Poutine et l'AES ❤️💋IBRAHIM TRAORÉ À VIE 💎💕")

What This Tells Us

- **Support for state control over NGOs:** There was some backing for government oversight and financial transparency in the aid sector, with some comments calling for stricter regulation of non-transparent NGOs. For instance, a previous weekly **report** showed users congratulating the government after the suspension of an INGO in Burkina Faso, viewing this action as a strong assertion of sovereignty.

- **Engagement on this highly sensitive issue was limited. No negative comments were detected** toward NGOs or the aid sector. This could suggest a degree of self-censorship, where many users decide not to engage in online discussions.

Patterns of Aid Narratives on Social Media Continued

Available data for the period 29 September to 5 October shows a notable decrease in both posting and comment volume compared to the previous week, 22–28 September 2025. During this week 276 posts generated 628 comments, marking a sharp decrease from the 1,610 comments from 450 posts recorded in the previous week. This represents a significant 38.7% drop in posts and a 61.0% decrease in the number of comments, suggesting a dramatic shift in the volume of engagement surrounding aid narratives.

Negative sentiment patterns also shifted between these two weeks. In the period of 22–28 September, 38% of comments were negative, with the majority targeting the UN (60%) and INGOs (38%). However, for the period of 29 September to 5 October, the negative sentiment dropped to only 2% of comments targeting INGOs. The comments were largely neutral or positive, with only a minimal amount of negative discourse observed.

The focus of engagement during these two weeks differed significantly. In the previous week, 80% of the engagement was focused on the UN, compared to 79.57% during 29 September to 5 October, indicating little change in the prominence of UN-related content. INGOs received 13.05% of the total comments, a decline from 23.70% in the prior week, while LNGOs saw a slight increase to 7.32%, up from 3.00% in the previous week. This shift highlights a slight change in the attention given to different types of organizations.

The overall tone of the conversation in the final week of this reporting period remained notably subdued, with fewer controversies or criticisms emerging in comparison to the surge in negative commentary observed during 22–28 September. The decrease in negative sentiment, along with the

reduced volume of comments, points to a quieter week in terms of aid-related debates and controversies.

As in earlier periods, these findings should be read with caution. Technical issues affecting geolocation may still lead to under-detection of posts from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

These findings are based solely on publicly accessible content and may not reflect discussions on private or encrypted platforms.

Correction: Geolocation issue impacted 14 July - 28 September data
In our reports covering the periods **14–20 July**, **21 July - 03 August**, **04 -10 August**, **11-17 August**, we noted a sharp drop in engagement around aid actors. A geolocation issue affecting the social media monitoring AI used in our analysis has since been identified resulting in an underdetection of posts originating from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger due to a technical error in IP-based location tagging used by the external provider. As a result, the low number reported for that week is unlikely to reflect an actual slowdown in activity. The technical issue has not yet been fully resolved, and we cannot confirm whether figures published in this and previous reports are complete. It remains possible that this brief may also underreport the number of posts issued with IP addresses in the three Sahel countries. The analysis below is based on the data identifiable by 31 August 2025. We will provide an updated assessment as soon as the technical issue is corrected and retroactive data can be re-processed.

Other resources

Improving guidance to mitigate the risk and consequences of violence against health care

Following the publication of the Security Risk Management for Health Care handbook (available in **Arabic**, **English**, **French** and **Spanish**), Insecurity Insight is seeking feedback from francophone health service providers. We would also like to understand what additional materials or training would be useful to support your work. We invite you to share your thoughts by completing the following questionnaire. It is available in French and intended for health professionals in francophone countries.

Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback. Please also feel free to forward this invitation to your francophone colleagues. 👉**Share your feedback**

Data Use and Privacy Disclaimer

This report includes analysis of publicly available social media content collected from open platforms. All data has been anonymised to remove or obscure identifying details, and no content from closed groups was used. The analysis was conducted in the public interest and in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), under a legitimate interest basis. The purpose of this analysis is to support humanitarian dialogue, inform policy, protect aid workers and those they help, and contribute to public interest research.

This document is published by Insecurity Insight - a Humanitarian to Humanitarian (H2H) organisation committed to the Humanitarian Principles.

We welcome questions and feedback. Share what you're observing both on the ground and online. Your insights help us keep the analysis accurate and up-to-date. Email: **info@insecurityinsight.org**. Join our efforts to protect humanitarian space. Subscribe to our **Social Media Monitoring** mailing list. Find more resources at the **Social Media Monitoring** website. **Help support our work by sharing this resource. Please copy and paste this link: https://bit.ly/29Sept-05Oct2025SMMBrief**

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