

“The Country Is Now Governed”: Reactions To New Financial Regulation For NGOs In Burkina Faso

Tracking Aid Narratives on Social Media: Recent Observations from the Sahel
22 October 2025

This briefing by Insecurity Insight analyses public social media activity from 13-19 October 2025, assessing observed narratives based on 14 months of systematic social media monitoring in [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#) and [Niger](#).



SUMMARY: Between 13-19 October 2025, **352 public posts** on the aid sector across Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger generated **565 comments**, marking an **71.9% decline** in engagement compared to the previous monitoring period (06-12 October) when online conversations were highly active following the espionage allegations and arrests of INSO staff in [Burkina Faso](#). In the current period, online discussions on Burkina Faso's new requirement for NGOs to use the state-run Banque des Dépôts du Trésor (BDT) generated 61% of comments. Additionally, a high number of posts, mainly shared by aid agencies, highlighted various gender-related initiatives which generated limited but largely positive engagement.

PAST EDITIONS: [We must kill them](#) (06-12 Oct) | [Without Transparency](#) (29 Sept-05 Oct) | [It Is A Disgrace](#) (15-28 Sept) | [Keep Eyes on Agadez](#) (01-14 Sept) | [Burkina Faso !\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f_img.jpg\) 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) | [All](#)

Key Takeaways

Burkina Faso: NGOs Ordered To Bank With State Treasury

Between 13-19 October 2025, **46 public posts (30 on Facebook and 16 on X) generating 314 comments** on Burkina Faso government's new decree requiring INGOs, and local associations to open and hold their operating accounts exclusively with the state-owned Banque des Dépôts du Trésor (BDT). The stated aim of this measure is to enhance financial traceability and strengthen anti-money laundering controls.

The sentiment of 92.3% of the comments is neutral toward NGOs but pro-government. Although critical comments specifically mentioning the aid sector were 7.3%, several expressed deep distrust of international NGOs, accusing some of acting as fronts for terrorist financing, neocolonial influence, or foreign interference. This decision might be aligned with a broader shift in the Burkina Faso government's stance toward the International NGOs, following several suspensions covered in previous reports. Notable government decisions also include for example the suspension of the **Target Malaria Project** on [August 22](#) and [12 other NGOs in July](#).

Last week's report (covering the period 7–8 October) recorded 1,789 comments, 91% of which were negative towards the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) or the wider aid sector. Many of these comments included direct threats against aid workers. This strong negative sentiment reflects broader public approval of the government's recent measures to assert greater control over NGOs, including the suspension and arrest of INSO staff.

Narratives

- **Transparency & Security:** Few users linked NGOs with terrorism, and requested tighter surveillance of NGO finances and operations.

“There may be some NGOs that finance terrorism in our countries. This is a very good initiative and everything must be closely monitored.” (“Il se pourrait qu'il y ait certaines ONG...qui finance le terrorisme dans nos contrées, l'initiative est très bonne,tout doit être suivi de près..”

“We have now touched the nerve of terrorism.” (“On a touché le nerf du terrorisme à présent.”)

- **Sovereignty, pro-Russia and Anti-imperialism:** In a number of comments the government's move was well celebrated, in one comment NGOs were implicitly linked with Western/colonial powers that claim to uphold human rights.

“...Colonialism and neocolonialism did not just kill bodies - they tried to kill memory... The great leader, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, is a model leader for all of Africa. Thank you, Russia. Thank you, Gaddafi. Thank you Thomas Sankara...” (“...le néocolonialisme n'ont pas seulement tué des corps — ils ont tenté de tuer la mémoire...Le grand leader, le capitaine Ibrahim Traoré, est un modèle de dirigeant pour toute l'Afrique..Merci la Russie. Merci Kadhafi. Merci Thomas Sankara..”)

“Great decisions, symbols of dignity, sovereignty, and responsibility. We have never been so proud to be Burkinabè.” (“ De grandes décisions, symboles de dignité, de souveraineté et de responsabilité. On a jamais été aussi fier d'être burkinabè”)

- **“Comply or leave” NGOs seen as complicit:** Frequent comments that genuine NGOs will accept being monitored, while those who refuse might **have something to hide from the government**, and should **depart**.

“Many will flee the country. Because they will be naked in front of the entire nation. These NGOs and associations... We will know where their money is going now.” (“Beaucoup vont fuir le pays. Car il seront nu devant toute la nation. Ces ONG et associations..On va savoir où leur argent quitte maintenant”)

- **Critics and Concerns:** A smaller set of users questioned the genuinity of the government's motive, and some shared concerns on potential job losses if NGOs left.

“Ridiculous. Who's going to give you their money? Bunch of thieves.” (“Ridicule. Qui va vous donner son argent ? Bande de voleurs”)

“It's good to toughen up and continue to seek transparency. But oh, these are parents, mothers, and especially Burkinabe people who work in these places. They find themselves unemployed overnight with no alternatives or support; it's not simple.” (“C'est bien de durcir de continuer a chercher la transparence. Mais oh ce sont des parents, des mères et surtout des Burkinabè qui travaillent dans ses endroits. Ils se retrouvent du jours au lendemain au chômage sans alternative ni accompagnement cest pas simple.”)

What This Tells Us

- **Overwhelming governmental support expressed by accounts that comment on aid policy.** The majority of comments express strong admiration for the leader and government. Many users display a deep sense of pride, believing the country has finally broken free from foreign influence.
- **A small but vocal opposition.** A minority of comments are critical, with some accusing the government of dictatorship and highlighting ongoing security issues that remain unresolved. Others fear that the new rules could lead to job losses for Burkinabè citizens or worsen the country's economic situation.
- **Increasing government control.** The recent suspensions, arrests, and new banking rules indicate a tightening of government control over the aid sector in Burkina Faso. NGOs are likely to continue to face increased scrutiny and operational restrictions, potentially hindering access and programmes.

Insights from gender-based initiatives and projects: Between 13-19 October 2025, 62 social media posts related to gender-related topics were identified across Mali (56 posts), Burkina Faso (4 posts), and Niger (2 posts). Of these, 53 originated from NGO accounts, four from the Malian government, and five from edited media sources. Comments under NGO posts were all positive. These posts generated a total of 27 comments of which 66.7% positive which focused on the activities organized by NGOs working to empower women, particularly in Mali. The posts highlighted various initiatives, such as economic empowerment through training programs, distribution of essential kits, and workshops aimed at tackling violence against women and promoting social cohesion.

Although overall engagement was limited, the discussion was **largely positive and supportive**. This contrasts with previous instances where gender-related topics have proven polarising, such as reactions to campaigns on **FGM** and girls' education.

Narratives

- **Positive reception.** Many comments celebrated the gender-related initiatives, suggesting a trust in the work of NGOs.

"Courage to all of you" ("Courage à vous tous"); **"Congratulations"** ("Félicitations")

- **Inclusive participation.** One comment asked about the inclusion of women with disabilities in these activities, signaling that there is still a gap in ensuring empowerment programs.

"How many of these women have disabilities?" ("Combien de ces femmes sont en situation de handicap ?")

"Woman is a symbol of productivity, joy and living together! Long live woman!" ("la femme est un symbole de productivité ,la joie et le vivre ensemble ! vive la femme!")

"Stop GBV for a better world" ("Stop au VBG pour un monde meilleur")

Patterns of Aid Narratives on Social Media Continued

Data from the period **13-19 October 2025** reveals a notable decrease in overall engagement compared to the previous week (06-12 October). During this period, **565 comments** were recorded across all monitored posts, marking a **71.9% decline** from the **2,014 comments** of the previous week.

The sentiment dynamics shifted significantly during this period. In the prior week, **100%** of the negative sentiment was directed at INGOs, following the INSO case, where **91%** of comments were hostile toward INGOs. This week, the sentiment was more broadly spread, with **60.5%** of negative sentiment aimed at INGOs, while **39.5%** of the negativity was directed toward **UN agencies**.

Distribution of engagement by organization type also showed significant changes:

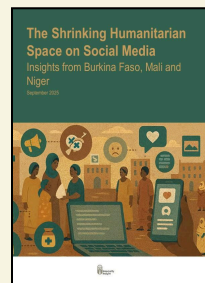
- **INGOs** accounted for **68%** engagement
- **LNGOs** (local NGOs) represented **6%**
- **UN agencies** received **26%** of the engagement.

This represents a reversal from earlier weeks, where commentators had focused on the UN (between 60 to 80% of all comments since August 2025).

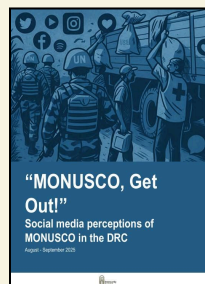
As in earlier periods, these findings should be read with caution. Technical issues affecting geolocation may still lead to under-detection of posts from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. These findings are based solely on publicly accessible content and may not reflect discussions on private or encrypted platforms.

Other resources

The Shrinking Humanitarian Space on Social Media: This report provides an in-depth analysis of how public online narratives are reshaping the operating environment of the aid sector in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The report focuses on the risks and harms posed by harmful public narratives that frame aid as illegitimate, politicised or foreign controlled. These narratives are steadily shrinking the humanitarian space. As online and offline threats increasingly converge, the report argues that safeguarding digital legitimacy is no longer optional - it is essential to the continuation of principled, neutral, and effective humanitarian action. The findings are especially urgent given the fragility of the Sahel context. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger face overlapping security, political, and humanitarian crises. Available in [English](#) and [French](#).



MONUSCO, Get Out! Social media perceptions of MONUSCO in the DRC. Public frustration with MONUSCO is compounded by documented deliberate disinformation campaigns. Armed groups and their allies actively spread false narratives to discredit the mission and shield their own abuses from scrutiny. Such campaigns have tangible consequences: during a wave of anti-MONUSCO disinformation in early 2025, women peacekeepers received online threats of sexual violence that directly curtailed their freedom of movement and ability to operate. 68% of peacekeepers reported that mis- and disinformation significantly hindered their work, while 76% said it endangered their safety. At the same time, senior mission officials highlight a fundamental gap between public expectations and MONUSCO's actual mandate. For many Congolese, any civilian death in areas where peacekeepers are present is seen as a failure of protection, this fundamentally mischaracterises the peacekeepers as soldiers. This gap - between what people expect and what peacekeepers can realistically deliver—fuels the anger and mistrust that shape online discourse about MONUSCO. Full report available in [English](#) and [French](#).



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.

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