

*Burkina Faso orders three
French diplomats to leave the
African country for subversive
activities*



Quagadougou, April 18 (RHC)-- Burkina Faso has ordered three French diplomats to leave the coup-hit country within two days over "subversive activities", a year after the junta ruling the African nation cut off ties with France, the landlocked country's former colonial ruler.

In a letter posted on social media on Thursday, the junta, which assumed power through a military coup in 2022, declared three French diplomats "persona non grata" and gave them 48 hours to leave the West African country.

According to the letter, which was addressed to the French embassy on April 16, two of the expelled French diplomats were listed as political advisers, without elaborating on what they were exactly accused of. Citing an unnamed source, Reuters reported that the diplomats were expelled because of meetings that they had with civil society members.

The French foreign ministry denied the allegation, saying that it regretted the decision to expel its diplomats and staff from Burkina Faso. "We reject the unfounded accusations made by the Burkina Faso authorities against our staff," it said in a statement.

"The decision of the Burkina Faso authorities is not based on any legitimate basis. We can only deplore it," added French foreign ministry spokesman Christophe Lemoine, who also slammed the allegation as "unfounded."

Since the coup, Ouagadougou has since expelled hundreds of French troops, pushed France to recall its ambassador, and suspended some French media amid growing anti-French sentiment.

Being one of the poorest countries in the world, Burkina Faso has been under the influence of terrorist groups linked to al-Qaeda and Daesh that have killed thousands of its citizens, creating one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises in Africa.

Niger, which is bordered by Burkina Faso to the southwest, demanded a "negotiated framework" for the French troop planned pull-out from the West African country in September last year.

The last French troops deployed in Niger left the country in December, marking an end to more than a decade of French military presence in West Africa's Sahel region. Niger's junta also decided to suspend a military agreement with the United States last month.

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