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Call for Proposals: Study on Alternatives towards Peace in Burkina Faso

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung – a German political foundation close to the German left party DIE LINKE – operates in West Africa since 2008 and has established a permanent regional office in Dakar in 2010. It organizes national, regional and international political dialogues and supports thematic research in the perspective of a more just world. Specifically, the foundation works with civil society organizations in order to strengthen democratic participation as well as social and environmental justice. It is particularly committed to the field of political education, which it defines as the ability of individuals to understand and act in their society, their history and their relations with the world.

RLS West Africa Office has published last year Rahmane Idrissa’s study: “[Tinder to the Fire. Burkina Faso in the Conflict Zone](#)”. This study is one point of departure for the further research RLS office West Africa seeks to contract. The author summarized his findings as follows: “The cause of the violence, the study asserts, are external to Burkina and found in the contest between militant Salafism and the Western ‘War on Terror’, but the reasons why the conflicts have become entrenched are related to structural issues in Burkina’s internal geopolitics, political economy, and state formation.” The author’s recommendations focus on the internal structural issues, i.e. revitalizing the regalian state and framing a new blueprint for society.

The study has been criticized that it reduces “western” interests to the “war on terror”. Notwithstanding if this criticism holds or not, further research should be based on a comprehensive understanding of western interests and the history and continuation of imperialist policies, especially by the former colonial power France, in Burkina Faso and the wider Sahel region.

In addition, the situation in Burkina Faso is changing rapidly and new developments must certainly be taken into account.

Another point of departure is Jan van Aken’s text “[Left perspectives on civil crisis prevention](#)”. This text lays the foundations for an approach of the German political left to preventing and intervening in crises and violent conflicts. RLS is a German organization of the political left.

This call is for proposals that seek to concretize the approaches and recommendations laid out by the abovementioned papers. Authors should answer several but not necessarily all of the questions of the following fields of intervention. We expect to contract several papers dealing with different sets of questions as we are aware that it is impossible for one author to cover all the aspects below:

1. Critically review the findings of Rahmane Idrissa: What can you validate? Where do you disagree?
2. How can the emergence of the security crisis in Burkina Faso be related to economic and political relations and interventions with the European Union and its member states in the long-term since independence.
3. Who from the outside benefits in economic and geopolitical terms? Who benefits in the country from the conflicts? What are internal interest groups in support for armed groups?

On German policy options:

4. May 29, 2020, the German Bundestag not only extended the deployment of troops to Mali in the MINUSMA and EUTM missions, but also agreed to extend the radius of operation of the EU Training Mission to all countries of the G5-Sahel, thus including Burkina Faso. : How do people in Burkina Faso evaluate this endeavor? What are potential ways of implementing this decision? What are its potential positive and negative effects?
5. What are possible complementing or alternative measures the German government (including German Development Cooperation) could take to address the root-causes of the conflict (in reference to the van Aken paper)? What could they contribute to the policy options for the government of Burkina Faso (ref. to questions 8-12)?
6. What could non-state actors in Germany contribute?
7. What could non-state actors from Germany working in Burkina Faso contribute?

Policy options for the government of Burkina Faso

8. Idrissa recommends developing a strong regalian state (p. 50 ff.) and outlines some reforms in that sense. How would these reforms look like in detail and what agencies and departments of government would need to implement them? What does the government need to do to enable these agencies etc to implement them?
9. What are policy proposals to the Burkinabe government to transform the economy from a source of conflict to a source of co-operation, both internally and in the larger Sahel region?
10. What can the Burkinabé government do to end the militarization of locals? What policy must be taken in relation to self-defense groups like the Koglweogo or the Dozo? Could these play a positive role in providing security and managing conflicts reducing their violent escalations? How is the law establishing the patriotic defense volunteer status to be evaluated regarding its potential effects?
11. How can artisanal mining be politically treated so it ceases to be trigger of frequent violent clashes?
12. What are the regional implications of the conflict in Burkina-Faso?

Options for actors in Burkina Faso outside government and for civil society

13. How can land conflicts that often underpin rural conflicts be resolved? In this context: is there a need to revise the 2009 Rural Land Law and if so, how?
14. What are potential contributions of Burkinabé civil society? We have a specific but not exclusive interest in the following civil society organizations and movements and what can be recommended to them:
 - Balai Citoyen
 - CGT-B
 - ODJ
15. What role can religious organizations and leaders play? Can a theological discourse around liberation or contextual theology (Christian and Muslim) be of any help?

Proposals must be sent to claus-dieter.koenig@rosalux.org no later than August 31st, 2020.

Authors should state which of the above questions they aim to address. They should state their theses (hypotheses) and outline how these will be tested/validated/argued.

Individual contributions should not exceed 20.000 words. Honorariums will follow the applicable scheme of RLS West Africa. Authors should state with their proposal what remuneration they expect.

We expect to have several authors looking at each part of the questions from different perspectives. Authors will meet in an authors' workshop as a first step to finalize the concepts of the subsequent studies.