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Ibrahim Traoré: A New Revolutionary Leader vs. Emmanuel Macron, the Last French Colonialist? Understanding the Roots of Their Tense Relationship. Part 1

Burkina Faso's leader, Ibrahim Traoré, symbolizes the collapse of French influence in a region where Paris once reigned unchecked.



Traoré's defiance is not just about Burkina Faso—it's part of a broader geopolitical realignment in Africa, where sovereignty, resources, and ideology are being reclaimed from Western powers. For Macron, it's not only a diplomatic defeat—it's a warning of what may come elsewhere in France's former colonial sphere.

Ibrahim Traoré, the young president of Burkina Faso, is following in the footsteps of his revolutionary predecessor [Thomas Sankara](#), who was assassinated in 1987 in a coup widely

believed to have had the support or knowledge of foreign powers, including the French and possibly the CIA, in collusion with Belgian interests.

A desire to reduce Western influence, Burkina Faso has increasingly turned to Russia for military and strategic support

Today, Traoré stands as one of Africa's boldest voices against neocolonialism. His leadership aims to shift Burkina Faso—and the continent—toward a new era of sovereignty and development, breaking free from the French-backed model of mineral exploitation that for decades allowed Paris to extract near-free resources while leaving Africans in poverty. Needless to say, such a stance threatens entrenched interests.

Traoré is reportedly the target of over 25 assassination attempts, some of which, according to circulating claims and regional intelligence leaks, are believed to have French fingerprints. While such allegations are difficult to prove definitively, they echo a familiar pattern in West African history, where anti-imperialist leaders are often undermined or eliminated when they threaten Western resource interests.

This latest discourse by Traoré—asserting national control over resources and distancing the country from French military and economic influence—will almost certainly provoke more attempts to silence him. But like Sankara before him, Traoré speaks to a growing Pan-African consciousness that refuses to submit to foreign domination. The world should be watching—and listening.

Who Is Ibrahim Traoré?

Born in 1988 in Bondokuy, a town in western Burkina Faso, [Ibrahim Traoré](#) is a military officer and political leader who became the youngest head of state in the world when he assumed power at age 34. He studied geology at the University of Ouagadougou before joining the army in 2010. Traoré later became part of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Mali, gaining firsthand experience in the complexities of regional security.

On September 30, 2022, Traoré led a popular military uprising that deposed Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, citing the government's failure to contain jihadist violence and foreign interference. His coup was met with widespread support, especially among youth and rural populations tired of insecurity and French neocolonial influence.

Since taking office, Traoré has embraced Pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, often invoking the [legacy of Thomas Sankara](#), the iconic Marxist revolutionary leader of Burkina Faso in the 1980s. He has expelled French troops, denounced Western meddling, and strengthened ties with other Sahel nations seeking autonomy from France.

Traoré presents himself as a transitional leader, promising to restore stability and eventually return power to civilian hands. His popularity remains high due to his bold stance on sovereignty, natural resources, and African unity.

An Odyssey to Celebrate Victory Day in Moscow

In a display of strategic symbolism and geopolitical alignment, Russia launched a high-level logistical and security operation to ensure the safe arrival of Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré at the 80th anniversary of Victory Day in Moscow. Traoré, a vocal critic of Western influence in Africa and a key figure in the emerging Sahel-Russia axis, was invited as an honored guest by the Kremlin—a move viewed as a bold message to France, the U.S., and other former colonial powers.

Given the known risks to Traoré's life—he is said to have survived [over 20 assassination attempts](#)—Russia [dispatched a specially equipped military aircraft](#) to Ouagadougou to retrieve him, bypassing commercial aviation vulnerabilities. According to security sources, the aircraft was escorted by Russian fighter jets across sensitive air corridors, particularly over potentially hostile airspace where sabotage or interception could not be ruled out.

Russian and Burkinabè intelligence services reportedly uncovered credible threats in the lead-up to the visit, including attempts to track Traoré's movements and plans to destabilize his travel route. Counter-intelligence protocols were enacted in response, involving both FSB operatives and regional allies.

President Traoré has survived numerous assassination attempts since taking office in 2022, involving both internal and external actors, some allegedly backed by foreign entities. Notable incidents include a foiled coup attempt in September 2023 and a disrupted plot during the Africa Cup of Nations in January 2024.

In response to these threats and a desire to reduce Western influence, Burkina Faso [has increasingly turned to Russia for military and strategic support](#). Russian military instructors have been deployed to Burkina Faso, and the two nations have engaged in discussions about expanding defense cooperation. Additionally, reports suggest that Russian military personnel have been involved in providing security for President Traoré, especially following coup attempts.

Russian media portrayed his presence in the Victory Day as a triumph of South–South solidarity and defiance against neocolonial interference, while Western observers noted the high-security nature of the trip as indicative of both Traoré's growing stature and his vulnerability.

In the next segment, I will uncover the reason for the sour relationship between Emmanuel Macron and Ibrahim Traoré.

[Ricardo Martins](#), June 02, 2025

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