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Burkina Faso Says Country Prefers Russia Partnership Over France

By AFP

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Burkina Faso's foreign minister praised cooperation with Russia on Saturday as "suiting" his country better than its historic ties with France.

Following a 2022 military coup, Burkina Faso's new leadership broke with Paris and has embraced Russia, which has sent army instructors to help Ouagadougou's fight against an Islamist insurgency.

Attending a Russia-Africa summit in the southern Russian city of Sochi, Foreign Minister Karamoko Jean-Marie Traore said Russia was a "partner with whom we can make progress" and that there was "no fear" of becoming militarily dependent on Moscow.

"The offer which has been made through cooperation with Russia, is better suited to the people" of Burkina Faso, he told AFP in an interview on the sidelines of the Sochi summit.

He said Russia, like Burkina Faso, has suffered from “cliches constructed by other partners” in the West.

Russia is seeking to advance its diplomatic, political and economic clout in Africa as its troops fight in Ukraine.

Moscow's narrative blasting neocolonialism and Western hegemony resonates strongly with many leaders on the continent.

Burkina Faso was a French colony for the first half of the 20th Century, and relations have soured with Paris following the 2022 coup.

Moscow has sent military instructors there — as well as to several other African countries — to help in a decade-long fight against Islamist violence.

Traore dismissed the idea the country could become too reliant on Moscow.

“There is no room for fear, because we know what we want and where we want to go. And we know how we want to work with our new partners,” he told AFP.

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