

# AFRICAN UNION SLAMS 'WAVE' OF COUPS, DODGES ISRAEL VOTE

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Bankole Adeoye

The African Union has condemned a recent “wave” of military coups that has seen an unprecedented number of member states suspended from the bloc, a senior official said Sunday, the last day of its annual summit.

The putsches were among the main issues expected to be discussed at the summit, along with the AU’s ties to Israel and its response to a grinding war in the north of host country Ethiopia.

## String of suspensions

Less than two weeks before the summit began on Saturday, Burkina Faso became the fourth country to be suspended by the AU after disgruntled soldiers toppled President Roch Marc Christian Kabore.

Guinea, Mali and Sudan are also currently suspended.

“Every African leader in the assembly has condemned unequivocally... the wave of unconstitutional changes of government,” Bankole Adeoye, head of the AU’s Peace and Security Council, told a press conference Sunday.

“Do your research: At no time in the history of the African Union have we had four countries in one calendar year, in 12 months, been suspended,” Mr. Adeoye said.

Addressing African Foreign Ministers ahead of the summit, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chair of the African Union Commission, denounced a “worrying resurgence” of such military coups.

But the AU has been accused of an inconsistent response, notably by not suspending Chad after a military council took over following the death of longtime President Idriss Deby Itno on the battlefield last April.

And while Mr. Adeoye touted the AU’s use of suspensions to punish coup leaders, analysts say the body must be more proactive to prevent putsches.

“It is only when crisis hits that we say, ‘Gosh, how come this country is falling apart like this so quickly?’” Solomon Dersso, founder of the AU-focused Amani Africa think-tank, said.

Also on Sunday, leaders agreed to suspend debate on Mr. Faki’s controversial decision to accept the accreditation of Israel, postponing a potentially divisive vote.

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