

Niger Soldiers Overthrow Western Allied Government

President Mohamed Bazoum was reportedly detained as a military grouping declared the suspension of the constitution and the closing of borders.

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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Throughout the day on July 26, members of the presidential guard in Niamey, the capital of the West African state of Niger, were reportedly in the process of seizing control of the government headed by a key United States and western ally, President Mohamed Bazoum.

Bazoum is an important player in the military operations of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the French Armed Forces.

The AFRICOM units in Niger operate two Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) drone stations ostensibly designed to fight Islamic insurgent organizations in conflict with the central government in Niamey. U.S. AFRICOM documents indicate that some 1,100 U.S. special forces are based in Niger to carry out military missions and the training of Niger troops. See [this](#).

Several years ago in October 2017, four U.S. Green Berets were killed in a clash with armed elements operating in Niger. The U.S. government under the then administration of President Donald Trump, never provided a clear explanation as to how the Pentagon soldiers were killed.

This seizure of state power on July 26 appears to be led by Colonel-Major Amadou Abdramane who announced the formation of a National Council for the Safeguard of our Homeland (CNSP). In a television address, Abdramane declared the dissolution of the administration headed by Bazoum citing what he described as the rapidly declining security situation inside the country.

In addition, Abdramane noted the poor economic and social conditions inside of Niger, which contains large deposits of uranium. This important natural resource is largely controlled by the French through a multinational corporation, Orano, based in Paris.

An indication of the importance of Niger and its president to the U.S. imperialist project in Africa was revealed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to the country in March. The administration of President Joe Biden is desperately seeking to maintain the influence of Washington and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in various geo-political regions of the African continent which has experienced five military coups since 2020.

A [Guardian newspaper report](#) revealed the position of the U.S. noting that:

“The White House said as the situation unfolded that the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, had spoken to the captive Bazoum and ‘conveyed the unwavering support of the United States ... the strong U.S. economic and security partnership with Niger depends on the continuation of democratic governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights’

Blinken, visiting New Zealand, later said: ‘I spoke with President Bazoum earlier this morning, and made clear that the US resolutely supports him as the democratically elected president of Niger. We call for his immediate release. We condemn any efforts to seize power by force. We’re actively engaged with the Niger government, but also with partners in the region and around the world and will continue to do so until the situation is resolved appropriately and peacefully.’

In neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso, the military regimes which have taken power are highly critical of the longtime alliances with France, the former colonial power. France has maintained its military presence and economic control of key sectors within these states.

In many ways Niger remains the closest West African ally of Paris and Washington in light of the shifting policies within Mali and Burkina Faso where French military and economic influence has been under attack. In Mali, the new government has demanded the withdrawal of French and United Nations troops from the country.

A coup in Burkina Faso last October was marked by mass demonstrations and violent attacks on symbols of French interests inside the country. Youthful protesters took to the streets waving Russian flags demanding that the government shift its security alliances from Paris to Moscow.

Mali’s military government headed by Col. Assimi Goita, has invited the Wagner Group to assist the state in fighting several Islamic rebel groupings in the northern areas of the landlocked country. France objected to the presence of Wagner in Mali threatening to withdraw its military forces. The Malian government welcomed this announcement from France and went on to encourage their troops in leaving the country.

Generally, the atmosphere in Mali is hostile toward Paris. The military government recently called for the removal of French as the national language of the country.

Will the U.S. and France Back Military Operations to Reinstate Bazoum?



Several reports from western media sources claim that there are elements within the military outside the presidential guard which remain loyal to Bazoum. The governments of the U.S. and France seem to be encouraging such a move to reinstate the civilian administration of its close ally.

Image: President Mohamed Bazoum (Licensed under Wikimedia Commons)

Jack Sullivan, the Biden administration's National Security Adviser, condemned the seizure of power by the CNSP. Blinken, the top U.S. envoy at the State Department, echoed this sentiment saying that the coup represented a threat to the democratic government in Niamey.

According to an [article published by Al Jazeera](#):

“Bazoum supporters tried to approach the presidential complex but were dispersed by members of the presidential guard who fired warning shots, according to an AFP reporter. One person was hurt, but it was not immediately clear if he was injured by a bullet or from falling as the crowd scattered. Al Jazeera, however, could not independently verify the incident. But there was calm elsewhere in Niamey. Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from Abuja in neighboring Nigeria, said there was a directive from the army for troops loyal to Bazoum to move in to quell what seemed to be a coup attempt. He said there were reports from the Nigerien capital signifying that there was 'some form of negotiations', with one report suggesting that the coup plotters wanted Bazoum to 'surrender power'. 'Right now, we also heard about mobilization in the outskirts of Niamey where military barracks are situated,' he added.”

Other entities have condemned the coup in Niger as well. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the 15-member regional organization now chaired by the newly inaugurated President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Tinubu, has called for the resumption of civilian rule. Benin President Patrice Talon has reportedly flown into Niamey in efforts to mediate a solution to the crisis of governance between the Bazoum administration and the coup makers within the presidential guard.

The African Union (AU) on behalf of the Commission Chair, Moussa Faki Mahamat, [issued a](#)

[statement](#) on July 26 emphasizing:

“Informed of an attempt by certain members of the military to undermine the stability of democratic and republican institutions in Niger, which is tantamount to an attempted coup d’état, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, strongly condemns such actions by members of the military acting in total betrayal of their republican duty. He urges them to immediately cease these unacceptable actions. The Chairperson further calls on the people of Niger, all their brothers in Africa, particularly in ECOWAS, and around the world, to join their voices in unanimous condemnation of this coup attempt, and for the immediate and unconditional return of the felon soldiers to their barracks.”

Crisis of Governance Linked to Imperialist Influence

Previous military coups which have taken place in West Africa since 2020, although being condemned by ECOWAS and the AU, have not been reversed. Sanctions imposed by ECOWAS are not effective enough to apply the necessary economic pressure on the coup regimes.

Moreover, the legitimacy of the ousted civilian governments in Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Conakry since 2020 have been questioned by broad segments of the civilian populations. In Guinea, protests have occurred demanding the holding of elections in order to transition to elective rule. However, the military regime of Colonel Mamadou Doumbouya has still not relinquished power to the politicians and their many political parties.

Widespread discontent over the failure of AFRICOM and the now-defunct French-dominated Operation Barkhane has provided a rationale for popular support of the military coups over the last three years. The unstable security situations in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have exposed the dubious role of western military presence in Africa.

Despite the thousands of AFRICOM and French Armed Forces troops on the continent, the purported anti-terrorism campaigns have resulted in greater insecurity and economic underdevelopment. Consequently, the African states backed by the majority of workers and farmers provide the only potential solutions to the crisis of insecurity and impoverishment.

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Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of the Pan-African News Wire. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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