

Tens of Thousands Pledge to Resist an Imperialist-backed Intervention in Niger

ECOWAS continues to threaten an invasion to reimpose a western-allied leader while being pressured from below to pursue a diplomatic resolution

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Millions across the West Africa Sahel region and around the world have loudly objected to the imperialist-instigated threats against the newly installed National Council for the Defense of the Homeland (CNSP) government in Niger.

From left political groupings to more moderate and even conservative forces recognize the grave danger inherent in the proclamations of some members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to stage a military intervention into Niger aimed at restoring the former **President Mohamed Bazoum**.

In Niger itself, thousands of young people have appeared at the main stadium in the capital of Niamey to sign up as volunteers committed to defend the uranium-rich state in the case of a hostile invasion. Despite the threats issued by ECOWAS Chairperson and Federal Republic of Nigeria President **Bola Tinubu**, the regional organization seems to be moving towards utilizing a more political approach by engaging the CNSP government.

Rallies held in Niamey since the July 26 change of government have attracted the support of the broad masses of people. Sanctions levelled at the CNSP have not impacted the determination to maintain the course of charting a new direction for the country. Transitional military governments in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso have joined the CNSP in building an anti-imperialist front in the midst of the military and intelligence units of France and the United States which have drone stations and nearly 3,000 soldiers in Niger.



The August 19 mobilization was designed to create a mass organization among youth who are committed to defending the Nigerien territory. Since the July 26 overthrow of Bazoum the weight of the imperialist states and their allies in ECOWAS has had the effect of building greater animosity against France and the U.S.

A leading Nigerian newspaper, Vanguard, [published an article](#) on August 19 on the current situation in neighboring Niger saying:

“Supporters of Niger’s junta were forced on Saturday (Aug. 19) to halt a census of people willing to volunteer for non-military roles in defense against a possible intervention by West African powers, saying they had been overwhelmed by the numbers who turned up. Thousands of mostly young men had massed outside a stadium in the capital Niamey hours before the scheduled start-time of the event – a sign of the strong support in some quarters for the junta, which has defied international pressure to stand down after the July 26 ouster of President Mohamed Bazoum. ‘In all our calculations and our understandings, we never thought we could mobilize (this number of people),” said Younoussa Hima, co-organizer of the initiative dubbed ‘The Mobilization of Young People for the Fatherland’.”

Any objective observer of the level of enthusiasm displayed by people in Niger, should surmise that any attempted intervention would not be an easy task for the ECOWAS military forces who claim they are prepared to restore the ousted government by force. This position related to threats of military force has been reiterated by ECOWAS defense ministers at a recent meeting in Accra, Ghana, where President Nana Akufo-Addo is a close ally of Washington. The outcome of the Accra meeting was that ECOWAS designated what it described as a “D Day” for the CNSP to leave office and return authority back to Bazoum.

Nonetheless, quotes from youth in Niger reflect a sense of patriotism and hope for a better future. This West African state is categorized as one of the least developed in the world

even though the territory is well-endowed with uranium, gold and other valuable natural resources. The current siege against Niger, in part through the imposition of sanctions, will only worsen the social conditions inside the country.

Vanguard in the same above-mentioned report noted:

“Organizers of the Niamey recruitment drive said they did not intend to sign up volunteers for the army, but rather to gather a list of people willing to lend their civilian skills in case ECOWAS attacks. But many of those around the stadium appeared keen to fight. ‘They called on the youth to respond to a possible attack on our soil. And we are ready for any attack,’ said blogger Tahirou Seydou Abdoul Nassirou. ‘My life, I give my life to my country,’ he said, wiping a tear from his eye as other young men nodded and cheered his words.... At the stadium on Saturday, 35-year-old Kader Haliou said patriotism was not the only motivation for those wanting to help the junta. ‘Most of the young people who have come are unemployed. Getting registered is a blessing for us given the idleness and lack of work,’ he said.”

Regional Solidarity

The pledge by neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali to view any attack on Niger as a declaration of war against their states as well has been exemplified by the deployment of fighter jets from Ouagadougou and Bamako to Niamey. Delegations have been travelling between the three West African states in obvious preparation for the possible eventuality of an imperialist-engineered invasion.



TRT World confirmed the sending of military aircraft to Niger [in an article](#) which emphasized:

“Mali and Burkina Faso have dispatched warplanes to Niger in a show of solidarity against possible military intervention by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

A report aired on Niger’s state television highlighted joint efforts by Mali and Burkina

Faso in support of Niger and the deployment of warplanes within Niger's borders on Friday (Aug. 18). 'Mali and Burkina Faso turned their commitments into concrete action by deploying warplanes to respond to any attack on Niger,' it said, noting the planes were Super Tucano fighter jets."

The solidarity with the CNSP in Niger is not only being demonstrated on an official level. Various commentators, journalists, unions and civil society organizations have objected to the course which ECOWAS has taken in alliance with France and the U.S.

Consequently, after repeating threats to intervene at its meeting in Accra, ECOWAS sent a delegation to Niamey on August 18 to discuss the crisis with CNSP leaders. The new government stated that it would implement a three-year transitional process in the country. It also reiterated that Bazoum was not going to be reinstated and that there is a possibility to place the former president on trial for treason against the Nigerien people.

France, the U.S. and the African Union (AU) Differ on Handling the Crisis

There are reports that Washington and Paris have differences over how to resolve the crisis in Niger. The U.S. is more inclined to engage diplomatically with the CNSP government in order to sustain its military and intelligence operations in West Africa. Whereas the French administration of President Emmanuel Macron wants to limit any discussions between NATO states and the CNSP, thinking that it would eventually break the capacity of the new government to resist the demands of imperialism.

This obstinate position by Paris may complicate efforts by the administration of President Joe Biden to continue its presence in Niger where the Pentagon has two drone bases and the presence of 1,100 soldiers from the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). If the Biden administration can reach a compromise with the CNSP it will not have to take down its drone bases and other intelligence operations in Niger. See [this](#).

However, contingency plans are underway by AFRICOM to possibly disable the drone bases in Niger. Reports have been published suggesting that the Russian-based Wagner Group has been invited to assist the CNSP government in security matters. An ambush on Niger troops on the border with Mali on August 14 has been blamed on Islamist armed rebels by the western corporate and government-controlled media outlets. Nevertheless, any attack on the new government in Niamey is objectively aiding the imperialist military forces occupying the country.

The 55-member African Union (AU) in a meeting on August 14 rejected the plans for a military intervention by ECOWAS in Niger. Reports emerging from a meeting of the AU's Peace and Security Council (PAS) [revealed that](#):

"The African Union's Peace and Security Council, the organ in charge of enforcing the bloc's decisions, met in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Monday (Aug. 14) for talks on the crisis in Niger that one African diplomat described as 'difficult'. According to several sources cited by French media, the council rejected an ECOWAS proposal to stage a military intervention unless the Nigerien military junta cedes power and reinstates President Mohamed Bazoum. Bazoum has been under house arrest since the July 26 coup. Speaking to FRANCE 24's sister station RFI, a diplomat who attended the meeting said many southern and northern African member countries were 'fiercely

against any military intervention'. On Wednesday (Aug. 16) the council had still not issued a joint statement on the bloc's stance."

These responses by governments, political parties and mass organizations across the continent should reinforce the antiwar and anti-imperialist movements in the western countries to categorically oppose any NATO-backed intervention in Niger and other states within the West Africa region. African states have a right to self-determination and sovereignty. Any violations of these rights should be met with fierce resistance both inside and outside the continent of Africa.

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