

Three African Military Governments Say They Will Resist Any Western-backed Intervention in Niger

Mali, Burkina Faso and the CNSP based in Niamey have cautioned ECOWAS, France and the United States to refrain from any attempt to reinstall the administration of ousted President Mohamed Bazoum

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General Abdourahamane Tchiane, the chairman of the ruling military administration in the West African state of Niger, has rejected the call by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to relinquish power to the former President Mohamed Bazoum.

The Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP) staged a coup against the Bazoum government on July 26.

Tchiane is the commander of the presidential guard which led the putsch. The following day on July 27, the leadership of the conventional armed forces in Niger announced their support for the coup.

On July 31, a joint statement was issued by the military governments in Burkina Faso and Mali expressing their solidarity with the CNSP in Niger. The declaration went further to send a message to the ECOWAS Chair, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, that any intervention aimed at removing the current regime in Niger would be viewed as an attack on their countries as well.

[This statement](#) begins by acknowledging that Burkina Faso and Mali:

“Express their fraternal solidarity and that of the peoples of Burkina Faso and Mali with the brotherly people of NIGER who have decided in full responsibility to take their destiny into their own hands and to assume before history the fullness of their sovereignty; denounce the persistence of these regional organizations in imposing sanctions aggravating the suffering of the populations and jeopardizing the spirit of Pan-Africanism; refuse to apply these illegal, illegitimate and inhuman sanctions against the people and authorities of Niger; warn that any military intervention against Niger would

amount to a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali; warn that any military intervention against Niger would result in the withdrawal of Burkina Faso and Mali from ECOWAS, as well as the adoption of self-defense measures in support of the armed forces and the people of Niger.”

Such a political position portends much for the future stability of the entire West Africa region as the rhetoric of ECOWAS Chair Tinubu of Nigeria indicates a determination to attempt the reinstatement of Bazoum by military means. Undoubtedly, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the French Armed Forces would play a critical role if such an intervention was authorized.

AFRICOM and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are in charge of two drone stations in Niger which ostensibly are there to assist in the battle against Islamic rebel groupings which have grown since the Pentagon-NATO war of regime change against Libya in 2011. Niger is the site of large deposits of uranium which is mined and exported by a French multinational corporation (Orano). See [this](#).

The same above-quoted statement from Burkina Faso and Mali goes on to:

“Warn against the disastrous consequences of a military intervention in Niger which could destabilize the entire region as was the unilateral NATO intervention in Libya which was at the origin of the expansion of terrorism in the Sahel and West AFRICA. The Transitional Governments of Burkina Faso and Mali are deeply indignant and surprised by the imbalance observed between, on the one hand, the celerity and the adventurous attitude of certain political leaders in West Africa wishing to use armed forces to restore constitutional order in a sovereign country, and on the other hand, the inaction, indifference and passive complicity of these organizations and political leaders in helping States and peoples who have been victims of terrorism for a decade and left to their fate.”

France has already begun the evacuation of its nationals wishing to leave. Other people from the European Union (EU) and the U.S. have been transported out of the country by the French Armed Forces.

The State Department says that it will evacuate what it describes as “non-essential staff” at the U.S. embassy in Niamey. As of early August, the White House has not announced any intentions to close the embassy in Niger.

Sanctions Are Acts of War

ECOWAS, the 15-member West African regional organization, has already imposed sanctions against the CNSP in Niger. This follows a similar pattern of what has already occurred with respect to Mali, Guinea-Conakry and Burkina Faso over the recent period of 2020-2023, in the aftermath of the seizure of power by military regimes.

However, the degree of economic sanctions and threats to remove the CNSP by force reveals that there is much more at stake for the imperialist states and their allies in Niger. The fact that Niger is a formidable base for purported “counterterrorism” activities by Washington and Paris means that there is a concern over the exposure of AFRICOM forces, intelligence personnel and military hardware if the Russian Federation was invited to come to the aid of the military administration in Niamey.

On August 2, it was announced that neighboring Nigeria had cut power supplies to Niger by 90%. Niger, a country of 25 million people, is listed by the United Nations as one of the poorest countries in the world.

Sanctions which deprive the people of power sources can only worsen the already existing humanitarian crisis inside the country.

ECOWAS defense ministers began a two-day conference on August 2 in the Nigerian capital of Abuja to map out its strategy for Niger. Former Nigerian military leader General Abdulsalami Abubakar is leading an ECOWAS delegation to Niamey for further talks with the CNSP.

Ousted President Mahamed Bazoum has not been harmed by the military government since he was taken down from office on July 26. Photographs of Bazoum with the Chadian transitional President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno were released over numerous international news agencies on July 31.

Meanwhile, the government of Burkina Faso received a delegation from Niger to the capital of Ouagadougou where the transitional head-of-state Captain Ibrahim Traore pledged the government's backing of the CNSP in Niamey. A communique from the Burkina Faso government said of the talks:

“A CNSP delegation was received by the Head of State (Ouagadougou, August 2, 2023). The President of the Transition, Head of State, Captain Ibrahim TRAORE received this Wednesday (Aug. 2) at the end of the afternoon, a delegation from the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Fatherland (CNSP) of Niger headed by General of army corps, Salifou MODY.

Discussions with the President of the Transition focused on the situation in Niger, which is calm and under control according to the head of delegation. We also talked about support. It must be said, we received very strong support from Burkina Faso.”



Burkina Faso and Niger military leaders hold meeting in Ouagadougou, Aug. 2, 2023 (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

Intervention Could Further Destabilize Entire West Africa Region

France has already been forced to depart Mali after the transitional administration leader Colonel Assimi Goita suggested the presence of foreign forces were related to the escalation in rebel violence against civilians and the state. In addition, Burkina Faso has been the scene of anti-French demonstrations which enjoy widespread grassroots support.

The anti-French organization known as the M62 Movement has been operating in Niger. They have been credited with the mobilization of youth and workers against the continued military presence of France in Niger. (See [this](#))

In demonstrations since the early days of the CNSP coup, people have been burning French flags, attacking symbols of colonial and neo-colonial rule while many carried both the Nigerian and Russian flags. Although there is no indication that the Russian Federation or the Wagner Group had a hand in the ascendancy of the CNSP to power, President Vladimir Putin recently announced his opposition to a western-backed military intervention in Niger. Putin urged the resolution of the conflict in Niger through dialogue and negotiations.

Overall, throughout the Sahel and other areas within the West Africa region, the economic situation is worsening. In Nigeria, which is the most populous state in Africa and designated as the continent's largest economy, a food emergency was declared by President Tinubu.

The specter of sharply rising prices and food shortages prompted the two largest worker organizations, the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), to stage a national day of protest across the oil-rich state on August 2. President Tinubu met with the leadership of the union federations and agreed to grant some of their demands. Reports in the Nigerian press suggest that the mass actions by the unions will not continue as previously threatened by the NLC and TUC.

Therefore, the newly inaugurated administration of President Tinubu in Nigeria could very well be aggravating the social situation inside the country by threatening to deploy troops to Niger. Even the Italian Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani, whose country has troops along with Germany, France and the U.S. in Niger, proclaimed that a military intervention by the West to bring down the CNSP would result in charges of re-colonization.

Anti-imperialist and antiwar forces in the western industrialized states must oppose the military interventions by France, the U.S. and other NATO countries in Niger. Another disastrous invasion and occupation by the Pentagon and NATO will only create more displacement, underdevelopment and political divisions.

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