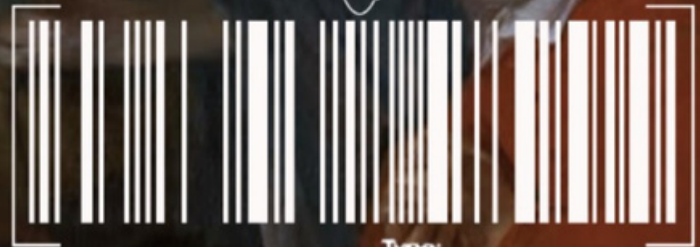
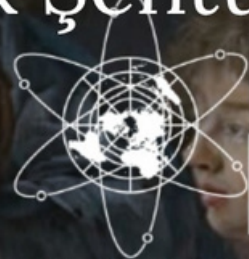


AFMUN SPECPOL

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SPECPOL

*Agenda: The Question of Evaluating Foreign Intervention and Post-Colonial
Influence in the 2023-2024 Nigerien Crisis*

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1. Letter from the Secretaries General

Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to AFMUN'26. As the Secretaries-General, we are truly pleased to see this conference once again bring together so many bright and motivated young individuals who believe in dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation.

First and foremost, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our academic and organization teams. This conference would not have been possible without their dedication and commitment, and we are deeply grateful for the effort they have put in.

We are living in a time where it is almost impossible to ignore what is happening around the world. Many of us often find ourselves thinking that certain situations could have been handled differently, or questioning the decisions that were made. However, AFMUN is not only a place for reflection, but also a platform for initiative. Through our committees, you will have the opportunity to express your ideas, challenge perspectives, and engage in meaningful discussions. As young people in today's world, your voice is truly important.

We hope this conference will be both inspiring and memorable for all of you.

And as we say, a realm cannot endure without its sovereign.

Yours truly,

Kaan MUŞTU & Ömer Talha Demirel

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2. Letter from the Co-Under-Secretary General

Dear delegates,

It is with the utmost respect and sincere aspiration to welcome you all to this prestigious conference and committee. Before prelude, I would like to extend my thanks to the Secretariat, the rest of the Executive Team, and the Academic and Organization Teams for their meritorious efforts on the creation of this conference.

Besides, I would like to thank my Co-Under Secretary General Begüm Demirörs and my Academic Assistant Doruk Şentürk for their quite precious efforts. As your Under-Secretary-General, I am highly suggesting you read this document thoroughly. We wrote a highly elaborated study guide for you all. It includes every detail you would need generally. You should be completely prepared with all of the information you require; your allocation's policies, positions, opinions, etc. In conclusion, I assure you all have your best times in this committee. Best wishes for your endeavors.

Kind regards,

Under-Secretary-General,

Ali Bedirhan Cura

Mail: alibedirhanedu@hotmail.com

3. Letter from the Co-Under-Secretary General

Distinguished Delegates,

My name is Begüm Demirörs, and I am honoured to serve as your Under-Secretary-General for the SPECPOL Committee at AFMUN'26. I am currently a first-year student at Antalya Bilim University, studying Political Science and International Relations. It is my great pleasure to welcome each and every one of you to this committee.

In this session, SPECPOL will address the agenda item “The Question of Evaluating Foreign Intervention and Post-Colonial Influence in the 2023–2024 Nigerien Crisis.” This agenda invites delegates to examine the complex relationship between foreign involvement, post-colonial dynamics, national sovereignty, and regional stability in Niger. The committee will explore the roles of international and regional actors, the lasting impact of colonial legacies, humanitarian concerns, and the broader

implications of external influence on peace, security, and self-determination in the Sahel.

This agenda requires critical thinking, comprehensive research, diplomatic negotiation, and a nuanced understanding of historical and contemporary international relations. I encourage each of you to approach the debate with open-mindedness, professionalism, and a commitment to finding balanced, practical, and sustainable solutions.

Should you have any questions before or during the conference, please do not hesitate to reach out. I look forward to witnessing your diplomacy, dedication, and enthusiasm throughout our committee sessions.

Kindest regards,

Under-Secretary-General of SPECPOL

Begüm Demirörs

4. Letter from the Academic Assistant

Dear delegates, distinguished academic team and fellow participants;

I am honored to welcome you all to the Antalya Yusuf Ziya Öner Science and Technology High School Model United Nations Conference (AFMUN'26). As Doruk ŞENTÜRK, it's a pleasure to serve you as an Academic Assistant of the SPECPOL committee with my Co-USGs Bedirhan Cura and Begüm Demirörs.

I am currently studying chemical engineering at Hacettepe University.

In this committee, you will discuss “The Question of Evaluating Foreign Intervention and Post-Colonial Influence in the 2023–2024 Nigerian Crisis.” The events in Niger extend far beyond a domestic political crisis. They have renewed international debates concerning military coups, foreign military presence, regional security, resource politics, sovereignty and the continuing effects of colonial influence in Africa. Delegates will evaluate the legitimacy and consequences of external intervention, the role of regional organizations in restoring constitutional order and the growing influence of emerging powers in the Sahel.

Lastly, I want to thank the executive team for giving me an opportunity to serve as academic assistant in this delightful conference and my Co-USGs Bedirhan Cura and Begüm Demirörs for their partnership and offer. I cannot wait to meet all of you personally and I hope you can have a great time with the time you spend in the conference. You can contact me at any kind of situation or problem, do not hesitate to ask me any questions about the committee. See you soon!

Sincerely,

Academic Assistant of SPECPOL

Doruk ŞENTÜRK

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5. Introduction

5.1. Introduction to SPECPOL

Special Political and Colonization Committee (SPECPOL) is the 4th committee of the General Assembly. It was created in 1993 with the purpose of handling problems which Disarmament and International Security (DISEC) fails to handle. Considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

5.2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

On July 26, 2023, a military take-over took place in the Nigerien capital, Niamey. The commander of the Presidential Guard, General Abdourahamane Tchiani proclaimed himself the leader of a new military junta, National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP). The coup leaders cited rising insecurity and a lack of economic growth as their reasons for ousting President Mohamed Bazoum, who is being held captive despite calls from the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), International Organisations such as the United Nations (UN), and Western powers such as France and the United States for his release.

According to the UN Human Development Index (2022), Niger ranked 189th, among the world's poorest countries. Though the country is rich in uranium and other natural resources, yet it is largely underdeveloped. It also faces security challenges from violent extremism which has disrupted livelihoods and created a humanitarian crisis. It shares borders with seven countries (Mali, Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Benin) in both the Sahel and Saharan regions affected by security threats such as violent extremism,

transnational organised crime, and multi-nature localised conflicts. Armed groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic State of Iraq, and West Africa (ISIS-WA), Islamic State of Iraq in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS), and Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin operate in the country heightening the insecurity.

6. Historical Background

6.1. French Colonial Rule in Niger

The French colonial administration in Niger began with a great deal of violence as a result of the 1899 Voulet-Chanoine military expedition, a campaign which involved the complete destruction of villages in order to put down local resistance. To maintain their authority in the face of a hostile population and to deal with anti-colonial uprisings, such as the major Tuareg rebellion of 1916, led by Kaocen Ag Mohammed, the French military imposed strict martial law and, in 1900, designated the area a military territory. It wasn't until 1922 that Niger had achieved enough stability to become a civilian colony, at which point it was incorporated into French West Africa (AOF). The colonial capital was moved from Zinder to Niamey in 1926 to better control regional trade routes.

The French set up a system of direct rule which disturbed the traditional political arrangements. The native rulers had their powers taken away and the local chiefs were reduced to administrative agents who were responsible for carrying out the unpopular colonial policies. The administration made heavy use of the *indigénat*, a legal code which denied Africans their citizenship and allowed forced labour to be imposed for infrastructure projects and the collection of heavy head taxes. In terms of the economy, France saw Niger as a peripheral area, putting only a small amount of money into public education, healthcare and infrastructure, and instead concentrated on growing cash crops such as peanuts and on the extraction of raw materials for the benefit of the mother country.

Following World War II, a rise in nationalist feelings together with changes in the international situation forced France to reform its colonial administration. The 1956 Loi Cadre (Overseas Reform Act) gave Niger internal autonomy and universal suffrage, which in turn resulted in intense political competition

between progressive leaders like Djibo Bakary and more moderate people such as Hamani Diori. Since he supported maintaining close ties with France, Diori eventually took political leadership and was in charge of Niger's move to become an autonomous republic within the French Community in 1958. Full independence was achieved by Niger on August 3, 1960, with Diori serving as its first president. Nevertheless, the country stayed closely linked to France through neocolonial economic arrangements, military pacts, and France's exclusive access to Niger's uranium resources.

6.2. Niger's Post-Colonial Political Development

Nigeria was granted independence on October 1, 1960. A new constitution established a federal system with an elected prime minister and a ceremonial head of state. The NCNC, now headed by Azikiwe who had taken control after Macaulay's death in 1946, formed a coalition with Balewa's NPC after neither party won a majority in the 1959 elections. Balewa continued to serve as the prime minister, a position he had held since 1957, while Azikiwe took the largely ceremonial position of president of the Senate. Following a UN-supervised referendum, the northern part of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons joined the Northern region in June 1961, while in October the Southern Cameroons united with French Cameroun to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. On October 1, 1963, Nigeria became a republic. Azikiwe became president of the country, although as prime minister Balewa was still more powerful.

After a brief honeymoon period, Nigeria's long-standing regional stresses, caused by ethnic competitiveness, educational inequality, and economic imbalance, again came to the fore in the controversial census of 1962–63. In an attempt to stave off ethnic conflict, the Mid-West region was created in

August 1963 by dividing the Western region. Despite this division, the country still was segmented into three large geographic regions, each of which was essentially controlled by an ethnic group: the west by the Yoruba, the east by the Igbo, and the north by the Hausa-Fulani. Conflicts were endemic, as regional leaders protected their privileges; the south complained of northern domination, and the north feared that the southern elite was bent on capturing power. In the west the government had fallen apart in 1962, and a boycott of the federal election of December 1964 brought the country to the brink of breakdown. The point of no return was reached in January 1966, when, after the collapse of order in the west following the fraudulent election of October 1965, a group of army officers attempted to overthrow the federal government, and Prime Minister Balewa and two of the regional premiers were murdered. A military administration was set up under Maj. Gen. Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, but his plan to abolish the regions and impose a unitary government met with anti-Igbo riots in the north. The military intervention worsened the political situation, as the army itself split along ethnic lines, its officers clashed over power, and the instigators and leaders of the January coup were accused of favouring Igbo domination. In July 1966 northern officers staged a counter coup, Aguiyi-Ironsi was assassinated, and Lieut. Col. Yakubu Gowon came to power. The crisis was compounded by intercommunal clashes in the north and threats of secession in the south.

Gowon's attempt to hold a conference to settle the constitutional future of Nigeria was abandoned after a series of ethnic massacres in October. A last-ditch effort to save the country was made in January 1967, when the Eastern delegation, led by Lieut. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, agreed to meet the others on neutral ground at Aburi, Ghana, but the situation deteriorated after differences developed over the interpretation of the accord. In May the Eastern region's consultative assembly authorized Ojukwu to establish a sovereign republic, while, at the same time, the federal military government promulgated a decree dividing the four regions into 12 states, including 6 in the north and 3 in the east, in an attempt to break the power of the regions.



6.3. The Nigerian Civil War

On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu declared the secession of the three states of the Eastern region under the name of the Republic of Biafra, which the federal government interpreted as an act of rebellion. Fighting broke out in early July and within weeks had escalated into a full-scale civil war. In August Biafran troops crossed the Niger, seized Benin City, and were well on their way to Lagos before they were checked at Ore, a small town in Western state. Shortly thereafter, federal troops entered Enugu, the provisional capital of Biafra, and penetrated the Igbo heartland. The next two years were marked by stiff resistance in the shrinking Biafran enclave and by heavy casualties among civilians as well as in both armies, all set within what threatened to be a military stalemate. Peacemaking attempts by the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) remained ineffective, while Biafra began earning recognition from African states and securing aid from international organizations for what was by then a starving population. The final Biafran collapse began on December 24, 1969, when federal troops launched a massive effort at a time when Biafra was short on ammunition, its people were

desperate for food, and its leaders controlled only one-sixth of the territory that had formed the Biafran republic in 1967. Ojukwu fled to Côte d'Ivoire on January 11, 1970, and a Biafran deputation formally surrendered in Lagos four days later.



General Gowon was able, through his own personal magnetism, to reconcile the two sides so that the former Biafran states were

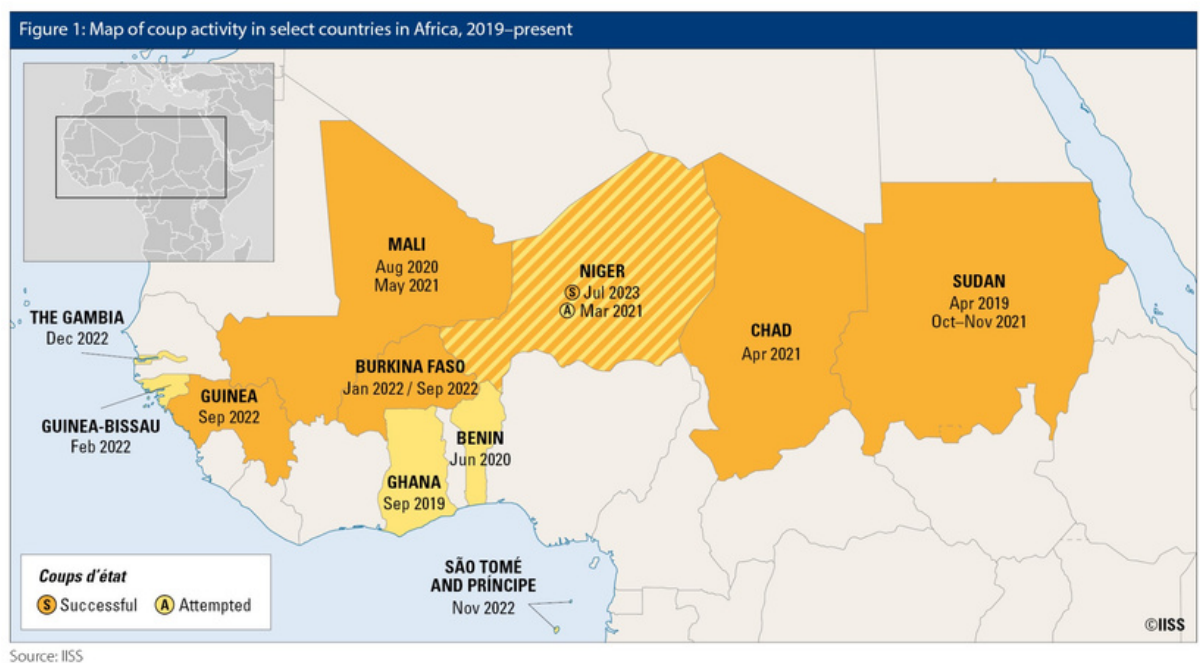
integrated into the country once again and were not blamed for the war. The oil boom that followed the war allowed the federal government to finance development programs and consolidate its power. In 1974 Gowon postponed until 1976 the target date for a return to civilian rule, but he was overthrown in July 1975 and fled to Great Britain. The new head of state, Brig. Gen. Murtala Ramat Mohammed, initiated many changes during his brief time in office: he began the process of moving the federal capital to Abuja, addressed the issue of government inefficiency, and, most important, initiated the process for a return to civilian rule. He was assassinated in February 1976 during an unsuccessful coup attempt, and his top aide, Lieut. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, became head of the government.

7. The 2023 Nigerien Coup and Political Crisis

The first military coup in Africa occurred in Egypt in 1952 and since then the wind of military coups has been blowing across the continent, with the four decades between 1960 and 2000 being the ‘golden decades’ of military coups. Each of the four decades witnessed at least 40 coup attempts. In recent times, coups have occurred in Burkina Faso, and Mali including Niger Republic. Generally, coups have many different root causes, including weak institutions, political unrest, economic hardships, corruption, and ethnic conflicts. These coups pose a threat to regional stability and democracy. Niger Republic, a West Africa country, has experienced multiple military coups since gaining independence from France. Military coups in Niger republic have been characterized by a cycle of instability that serves as a threat to democratic governance in the country. The first military coup in Niger occurred in 1974, when Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountché ousted President Hamani Diori. Since then, the country has witnessed several other coups and attempted coups, reflecting underlying political instability and struggles for power within its borders. Other military coups in the country included 1996 Coup that saw the overthrow of President Mahamane Ousmane by Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara, 1999 Coup, which led to the assassination of Maïnassara, Daouda and Malam Wanké took power. Also, the attempt by President Mamadou Tandja to extend his term through constitutional changes led to the 2010 Coup. Other military coups in the country included 1996 Coup that saw the overthrow of President Mahamane Ousmane by Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara, 1999 Coup, which led to the assassination of Maïnassara, Daouda and Malam Wanké took power. Also, the attempt by President Mamadou Tandja to extend his term through constitutional changes led to the 2010 Coup. The most recent coup in 2023 in the republic was led by General Abdourahamane Tchiani, and removed President Mohamed Bazoum from power. The coup leaders cited corruption, economic mismanagement, and security concerns as their reasons for the takeover.

The most recent coup in 2023 in the republic was led by General Abdourahamane Tchiani, and removed President Mohamed Bazoum from power. The coup leaders cited corruption, economic mismanagement, and security concerns as their reasons for the takeover. The coup has not only shaped the internal dynamics of Niger but also

had significant implications for its relations with neighboring countries, particularly in the context of Nigeria-Niger relations. Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa and a regional power, has a vested interest in stability in its neighboring countries. Instability in Niger, whether political or security-related, can have ripple effects on Nigeria, affecting issues such as trade and security cooperation. The coup threatens bilateral engagements, hinder cooperation on security and economic issues, and create uncertainties in diplomatic relations. Moreover, the socio-economic and political instability resulting from military coups in Niger can exacerbate security and economic challenges along the Nigeria-Niger border. Furthermore, the coup d'état in Niger can hamper efforts toward economic cooperation and development between Nigeria and Niger. It is against this background, the study explored the impact of the 2023 Niger military coups Niger-Nigeria relations.



8. Foreign Actors and External Intervention

8.1. France and the European Union

After gaining independence in 1960, France remained Niger's most important European partner, the bilateral relations focusing on military cooperation, development aid, diplomatic influence, and access to strategic resources, especially uranium. French companies kept a major presence in Niger's uranium industry and French troops were sent as part of regional

counterterrorism operations. Those in favour of the partnership argued that it improved Niger's security and had helped in containing armed groups in the Sahel. On the other hand, the critics saw the relationship as being a continuation of the informal political, economic and military system commonly known as "Françafrique".

Before the military coup in July 2023, France came to place greater strategic importance on Niger after having withdrawn its forces from Mali and Burkina Faso. Around 1,500 French military personnel were based in Niger, mainly in order to assist with counterterrorism operations and to work alongside the Nigerien armed forces. President Mohamed Bazoum was seen as an important security partner of the West. At the same time, however, this close association aroused domestic resentment since many Nigeriens felt that the presence of foreign military forces had not stopped the spread of terrorism and had instead limited the country's political independence.

Following the removal of President Bazoum, France refused to acknowledge the military authorities as the legitimate government of Niger and kept on supporting the restoration of constitutional rule. Relations between the two countries worsened quickly. The military regime cancelled the military agreements with France, required the withdrawal of French troops, and instructed the French ambassador to leave. Although France at first maintained that such requests could only be made by Niger's recognized constitutional authorities, increasing political pressure and public demonstrations eventually led Paris to withdraw its ambassador and to have withdrawn its troops by the end of 2023.

The European Union took a similar position, strongly denouncing the coup, calling for the safeguarding and freedom of President Bazoum, and suspending its direct budgetary aid to Niger. It also supported the diplomatic efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) directed at reestablishing constitutional government. In October 2023, the EU set up a sanctions framework which allowed measures to be taken against people considered to be responsible for undermining democracy, political stability and the rule of law in Niger.

The crisis represented a major change from earlier European policy. Before the coup took place, the European Union had carried out large-scale investments in Niger's security forces; in March 2023 it approved €40 million worth of military aid for equipment, infrastructure and training, and additional support was given in June to improve the operational capacity of the Nigerien armed forces. The Union also ran the civilian EUCAP Sahel Niger operation and the EUMPM Niger military partnership mission; after the military government abolished the legal basis on which these operations were carried out, the EU personnel were withdrawn and the EUMPM mandate was officially allowed to expire in June 2024.

Even though political and military cooperation had been suspended, the European Union continued to provide humanitarian aid to the civilians in Niger. Programs funded by the EU supplied food, healthcare, protection, water and emergency aid, and at the same time deliberately refrained from giving direct financial support to the military authorities.

8.2. ECOWAS and the African Union

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) became a major external player in the crisis in Niger. After the military coup on 26 July 2023, ECOWAS strongly criticised the removal of President Mohamed Bazoum and called for the immediate restoration of the constitutional government. The organisation saw the coup as not only a domestic political crisis but also as part of a wider pattern of military takeovers in West Africa which threatened the region's democratic standards.

In response, ECOWAS suspended Niger from its decision-making bodies and introduced extensive economic and financial sanctions. The sanctions included the closure of the borders, restrictions on commercial and financial transactions, the freezing of certain state assets, and the suspension of regional financial aid. Nigeria also stopped exporting electricity to Niger, thereby increasing the pressure on the country's economy and on its civilian population. Initially, ECOWAS set a deadline for the military authorities to

restore President Bazoum and made it clear that all options, including the possibility of using force, were still under consideration.

The idea of carrying out a military intervention caused considerable division among the countries in the region. Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Senegal backed a strong response, but Mali and Burkina Faso stated that any military action taken against Niger would be seen as an attack on their own countries. Algeria also opposed the military intervention, warning that it might have a destabilising effect on the wider Sahel area. As a result, ECOWAS found itself faced with the task of protecting constitutional government without risking a broader regional conflict. Those in favour of ECOWAS's response maintained that sanctions and military pressure were necessary in order to prevent future coups and to protect democratic institutions. On the other hand, the critics pointed out that such measures had a disproportionate impact on ordinary Nigeriens rather than on the military leadership. The restrictions had caused prices to rise, disrupted the trade routes and made it harder to obtain food, medicine and electricity in a country which was already going through serious humanitarian and security difficulties. This criticism allowed the junta to present ECOWAS as an organisation influenced by France and other Western powers, instead of viewing it as an independent African body.

Before 2024 ECOWAS changed its approach as a result of humanitarian concerns and because the sanctions had failed to restore Bazoum. The organization removed its major restrictions and decided to focus on negotiations. At the same time, ECOWAS aimed to preserve regional unity since Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso had declared their intention to pull out of the bloc. The three countries were increasingly coordinating via the Alliance of Sahel States, thus undermining ECOWAS's political authority and its efforts at regional integration.

The position taken by the African Union was mostly in agreement with that of ECOWAS; it denounced the coup, demanded the release of President Bazoum, and backed the restoration of constitutional order. The African Union Peace and Security Council suspended Niger from taking part in AU activities and

asked the military authorities to take part in the regional mediation initiatives and to set up a credible and time-limited transition.

The African Union as a whole preferred negotiation and sought to prevent the situation from worsening. Although it supported the decisions of ECOWAS, it continually promoted dialogue and raised concerns regarding the detention of Bazoum and the possibility of wider instability. The crisis therefore brought to light a fundamental dilemma facing African regional organisations: whether strict actions taken against military governments are in line with democratic principles, or whether sanctions and the threat of intervention damage African unity and increase the suffering of civilians.

8.3. Russia and Other Emerging Powers

The worsening of Niger's ties with France, the European Union, and the United States has given Russia and other rising powers a chance to increase their influence. The military rulers in Niger presented these new alliances as proof of a more independent and diversified foreign policy. Rather than depending on the former colonial powers, the military junta sought out military, economic and diplomatic assistance from countries that did not impose such strict conditions on cooperation. Russia in particular became the most important alternative security partner. Although Moscow formally joined the United Nations Security Council in its condemnation of the unconstitutional change of government, it opposed the idea of an ECOWAS military intervention and criticised the kind of external pressure that might intensify the conflict. This attitude allowed Russia to present itself as a defender of Niger's sovereignty while at the same time keeping its diplomatic options open.

It was clear during the rallies in Niamey that some of the protesters displayed Russian flags and demanded that the French forces should be removed. However, this did not mean that the public generally supported Russian policy, since the flags usually expressed opposition to France and resentment at

Western influence. Despite this, the military regime took advantage of the situation to strengthen its relations with Moscow.

In January 2024 the Nigerien defence minister, Salifou Modi, went to Moscow to talk over military and military-technical cooperation with Russian officials. Russia said that it was willing to help in improving the combat readiness of Niger's armed forces. In April 2024 Russian military instructors and equipment arrived in Niger, allegedly in order to train Nigerien personnel and to help develop air defence capabilities. Russia's increasing involvement was part of its broader strategy in the Sahel; Moscow had already built up strong security ties with Mali and Burkina Faso. Military personnel linked to Russia, having previously been connected with the Wagner Group and later becoming more closely aligned with structures linked to the Russian Ministry of Defence, provided military training, equipment and assistance relating to regime security. In return, Russia obtained diplomatic influence and possible access to strategic economic opportunities.

Those in favour of working with Russia said that Moscow had provided Niger with an alternative to the ineffective Western anti-terrorist partnerships, one that respected national sovereignty and took into account the security concerns of African governments. On the other hand, critics warned that Russian aid might strengthen military rule, reduce transparency, and replace one kind of foreign dependence with another. There were also further concerns regarding the behaviour of Russian-associated forces in other parts of Africa and their supposed involvement in abuses of civilians.

Before the coup, China had already built up a considerable economic presence in Niger, especially through investments in oil production, infrastructure, and construction. Unlike France, China usually followed a policy of political non-interference and maintained working relations with both civilian and military governments; this strategy allowed Beijing to protect its investments without becoming directly involved in controversies over political legitimacy. Turkey has also boosted its engagement with Niger. In July 2024 a high-ranking Turkish delegation went to Niamey in order to talk about cooperation in the fields of defence, intelligence, military training, mining and

energy. The involvement of Turkey gave Niger with extra access to investment, technology and security cooperation, free from the colonial legacy linked to France.

Iran became a significant player because of the speculation surrounding uranium, the sanctions, and possible defence cooperation. Even though the number of confirmed agreements stayed low during the period 2023 to 2024, the increased contacts between Niger and Iran caused concern among the Western governments. Likewise, the Gulf states and other middle powers had the ability to provide investment and humanitarian aid. The greater the involvement of these various parties is, the clearer it becomes that the Nigerien crisis has gone beyond a simple bilateral conflict between Niger and France. In fact, it has been part of a wider struggle over political influence, natural resources, and security alliances in the Sahel. For Niger, having a range of partnerships could help to improve its diplomatic independence and decrease its dependence on one external power. At the same time, such diversification might also lead to the country becoming a theatre of geopolitical rivalry, with foreign powers pushing forward their own strategic objectives. Their own strategic interests.

Regional reactions to Niger's coup

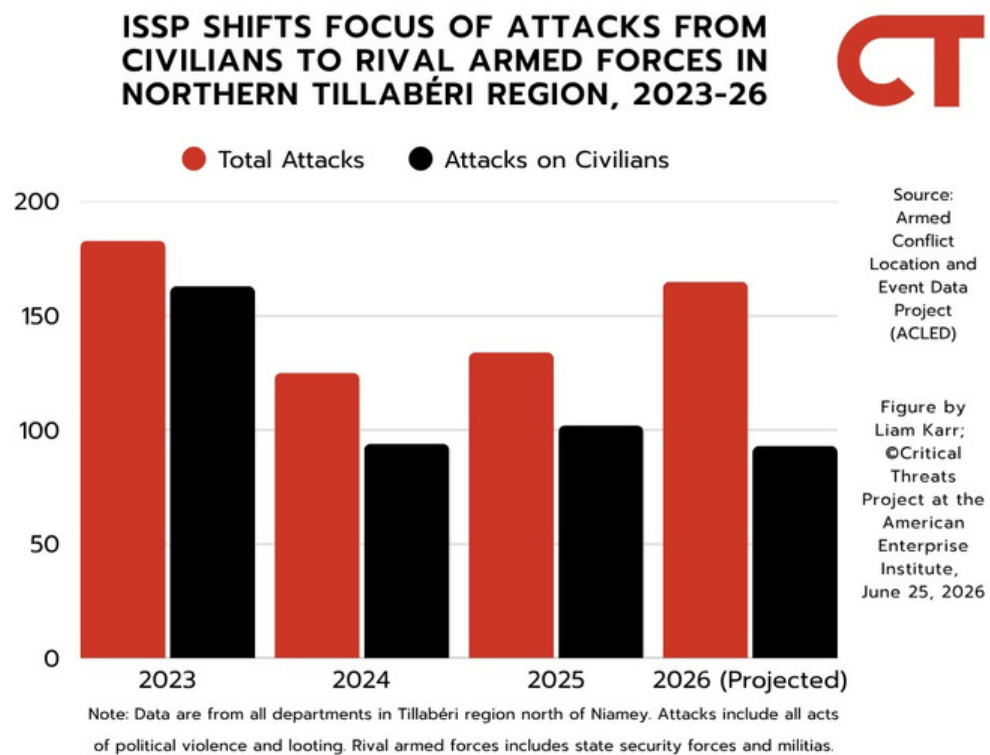
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9. Post-Colonial Influence in Niger

9.1. Military Presence and Security Cooperation

After Niger gained independence in 1960 France kept a political and security connection with the country. Even though Niger officially became a country on its own, its defense and foreign policy were still shaped by the range of political, economic and military links that are usually connected with Françafrique. French military help involved training, sharing intelligence, providing support and taking part in counterterrorism efforts. These links grew more important as instability spread across the Sahel especially after groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State started to grow.



In the years leading up to the coup in 2023, Niger had emerged as one of France's most critical military allies in the Sahel. Niger has emerged as a hub for French counterterrorism operations after French forces were forced to withdraw from Mali and Burkina Faso amid a deterioration of relations with their military governments. Before the coup, around 1,500 French troops were

stationed in Niger working alongside Nigerien forces and involved in regional operations against armed groups. Supporters of the cooperation argued that foreign military assistance increased Niger's ability to fight terrorism and provided it with critical intelligence and logistical capabilities. But critics said the long-term deployment of foreign troops had not eliminated insecurity and gave an impression that Niger was still dependent on outside powers for its national defence.

There was another significant security alliance formed by the United States with Niger. Within the time period of about ten years, U.S. forces provided training to the troops of Niger and carried out counterterrorism operations against Al-Qaeda and Islamic State-aligned militants. The U.S. built and maintained Air Base 201 in Agadez, which served as an important location for intelligence, surveillance, and unmanned aircraft operations in the Sahel. The base signified an important investment made by America in the security sector of Niger due to its strategically important location.

The 2023 coup has fundamentally changed Niger's relationship with its Western security partners. The military authorities charged foreign powers with meddling in Nigerien affairs, and said the current security partnerships had failed to provide sufficient protection against terrorism. The junta demanded the withdrawal of French forces and France completed its military withdrawal from Niger by the end of 2023. Also in March 2024, the Nigerien authorities announced the termination of the military cooperation agreement with the United States. American forces withdrew from Air Base 101 in Niamey and Air Base 201 in Agadez later, ending their presence in Niger in September 2024. In the same period, the military government started to strengthen security links with Russia, including the presence of Russian military personnel and instructors.

The shift in Niger's security partnerships shows how post-colonial influence is changing in the Sahel. The junta framed the withdrawal of Western troops as a return to national sovereignty. However, this move raised concerns about Niger's future security abilities. After French and American forces left, the country still dealt with armed insurgencies and border insecurity. As a result, the crisis prompted a larger question for the international community. Is a foreign military presence a form of neo-colonial influence, a necessary security partnership, or a mix of both based on the political and local situation?

9.2. Uranium, Natural Resources and Economic Dependence

The natural resources of Niger have been an integral part of the interaction between Niger and external forces over time. This is because the country has a lot of natural resources like uranium, gold, oil, and many more, while economically, it relies greatly on agriculture and the exports of primary products. Uranium has been important for the country because it has traditionally been one of the biggest producers of uranium in the world. Uranium mining started in Niger in 1971, mainly through firms affiliated with France, such as Orano.

The uranium sector was a key symbol of the economic relations between France and Niger. French companies secured long-term access to Nigerien uranium, which was of strategic importance to France given the role of nuclear energy in the French economy. However, the benefits of uranium mining did not always lead to broad-based economic development in Niger. The country remained one of the poorest states in the world. Local communities in uranium producing areas continued to express concerns about environmental

degradation, health risks, employment opportunities and the distribution of mining revenues. The contrast between the strategic value of Niger's natural resources and the country's chronic poverty helped generate growing criticism of the economic structures established after independence.



The ties between foreign natural resources firms and the Nigerien government also took on more of a political hue. Those opposed to the status quo pointed out how Niger had been caught up in a vicious cycle of exporting raw materials but not gaining much industrial/developmental advantage from the practice. Being reliant on a relatively few commodities made the nation vulnerable to any changes in international prices/demand. Not only that, but lack of diversification in the export sector left Niger vulnerable to economic volatility that would impact government revenues and foreign exchange.

Uranium was not the thing that shaped Niger's economic relationships. Oil production grew during the twenty-century especially because of Chinese investment and the development of the Agadem oil fields. Gold mining also

became more important through both small-scale industrial work and small-scale or artisanal mining. Because of this Niger's economic connections slowly became more varied than with France. China became more involved in the oil industry while Russia and other outside groups tried to increase their economic power all across the Sahel. So the rise of new partnerships did not mean that economic dependence disappeared. Instead it made people wonder if Niger was really gaining freedom or just swapping one set of outside partners for another.

The 2023 coup fueled these tensions; the coup authorities framed the renegotiation of its international partners and closer management of its natural wealth as part of a process for restoring state sovereignty. The regime criticized the distribution between actors and powers of the wealth produced by its natural resources and questioned the privileged relationship between Paris, and Traditional EU interlocutors by highlighting resource curse narratives. However, Niger's own reliance on outside investment, capital, and knowledge for the exploitation of its resources and for their entry to international markets placed limits upon its ability to instantaneously gain economic independence.

The question of resources continues to be relevant when studying the post-colonial impact on Niger. The country has plenty of natural resources, but at the same time, its economy has always been susceptible to outside intervention, changes in commodity prices and the lack of industrial production inside the country. As far as the international community is concerned, the key task is to find out how developing countries, which have an abundance of resources, could attract foreign investments without being economically dependent on the rest of the world. In terms of the Niger crisis, representatives must figure out whether foreign involvement in the resources sector can be changed to something else.

10. Humanitarian and Regional Consequences

Forced displacement in the Niger triggered by conflict, malnutrition, recurrent health epidemics, cyclical floods and drought has placed 4.3 million people, including 2.4 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024. Insecurity makes many of those in need hard to reach with humanitarian assistance.

Armed conflicts continued to afflict the areas of the country that border Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Nigeria, primarily impacting residents in Diffa, Maradi, Tillabéri and Tahoua Regions. Hostilities among parties to the conflict and attacks by non-state armed groups have displaced more than 660,000 people.

Niger is one of the most vulnerable countries to various shocks, including climate hazards, floods, epidemics, insecurity and a migration crisis. At the same time, community resilience is low due to a rate of extreme poverty of 44 per cent. Political and economic sanctions put in place following a military coup in July 2023 have worsened this situation: restricted access to banking services and trade have led to price increases for essential goods, making it difficult for families to meet their basic needs. This comes while more than 2.3 million people are already food insecure, with 436,348 children aged 6–59 months requiring treatment for severe wasting.

Several epidemics have been recorded in 2023, including measles, malaria, meningitis and diphtheria (more than 1,000 reported cases and 69 deaths).¹⁷ As of 9 October 2023, more than 161,000 individuals¹⁸ had been left with significant needs due to floods (which also caused 52 deaths). And flooding and displacement only heighten WASH needs, with 1.5 million people requiring access to safe water.

Additionally 444,290 students (52 per cent girls and 4.2 per cent children with disabilities) are in need of emergency education assistance. As of 1 September 2023, 987 schools remained closed due to insecurity, mainly in Tillabéri Region, where 93 per cent of schools were closed.²¹ The security crisis in the country has also led to an increase in grave violations committed against children in the Niger, including

abductions, killing and maiming, and 1,085,458 children require child protection services.

Niger remains a significant transit hub for migration to Europe, with thousands of people passing through Agadez Region annually. Many migrants, among them unaccompanied and separated children, arrive in precarious situations and once arrived face dangers and exploitation.

11. Past International Coups

1974

In April 1974, Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountche orchestrated a military coup that terminated President Hamani Diori's fourteen-year administration. The constitution was suspended, the National Assembly was dissolved, and Kountche formed a twelve-member Supreme Military Council to govern Niger. Reports cited by Al Jazeera indicate that approximately twenty individuals were killed during the coup.

1996

In January 1996, military officers deposed President Mahamane Ousmane and Prime Minister Hama Amadou. The officers justified their actions by asserting that a prolonged political deadlock threatened the country's economic reforms. Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, then chief of staff of the armed forces, assumed leadership and stated that the coup aimed to provide Niger with a new beginning rather than abolish multiparty democracy.

1999

In April 1999, President Ibrahim Bare Mainassara was assassinated by dissident soldiers in an ambush at Niamey airport, resulting in Niger's third successful coup. Daouda Malam Wanke, commander of the presidential guard, assumed power and pledged a return to civilian government by 2000. Mamadou Tandja subsequently won the presidential election against former Prime Minister Mahamadou Issoufou, and international observers characterized the election as generally free and fair.

2010

In 2010, a group of military officers known as the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy, led by General Salou Djibo, detained President Mamadou Tandja and his ministers following an armed confrontation. The constitution was suspended and state institutions were dissolved. The military authorities accused Tandja of extending his rule by amending the constitution after dissolving parliament in 2009. Legislative elections were held in early 2011, and Mahamadou Issoufou subsequently won the presidential run-off.

2023

On 26 July 2023, members of the presidential guard under the leadership of General Omar Tchiani surrounded the presidential palace in Niamey and detained President Mohamed Bazoum. The military announced the suspension of state institutions, closure of Niger's land and air borders, and imposition of a nationwide curfew. Foreign Minister Hassoumi Massoudou urged the soldiers to release Bazoum and address their demands through dialogue, while ECOWAS, France, the United States, and the United Nations condemned the takeover as unconstitutional.

12. Questions to be Addressed (QTBA)

1. How can future crises caused by racial, ethnic and communal disputes in African regions be prevented?
2. What measures can African states and international organizations take to prevent the exploitation of natural resources and ensure that revenues from uranium, oil, gold and other strategic minerals benefit local populations?
3. How should African states respond to racist or discriminatory approaches adopted by foreign governments, media institutions and political actors?
4. How can unequal access to education and low literacy levels in Niger and other African states be addressed to reduce political instability and social division?

5. How can military intervention in domestic politics and the recurrence of coups in Niger and the wider Sahel be prevented?
6. How can misinformation, foreign propaganda and political manipulation surrounding the Nigerien crisis be addressed?

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