Coup in Niger: The Response of ECOWAS and the World August 10, 2023

August 10, 2023: Abuja: Leaders of 15-member ECOWAS met to discuss the response to its demand to restore back the democratically elected President **Mohammed Bazoum,** who was ousted in a military coup on July 26, 2023.



August 10, 2023: Abuja: ECOWAS meeting

The military junta of Niger has refused to release President Bazoum and his family. Instead, a few hours before the meeting at Abuja, Niger's coup leaders appointed a new interim government. **Mahamane Roufai Laouali**, cited as **"Secretary General** of the **Government**", named 21 ministers. (*Appendix 1 on the last page gives the complete List of Ministers.*)

An official communique, after the meeting of ECOWAS, read out a statement, which included a resolution asking the bloc's defense chiefs to "activate the ECOWAS Standby Force with all its elements immediately". Another resolution asked for "deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger". A 3rd resolution asks for restoring democracy in Niger "through peaceful means".

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, the ECOWAS Chair, said that "diplomatic negotiation and dialogue" should be the bedrock of the ECOWAS response to the coup in Niger. He added, "No option is taken off the table, including the use of force as a last resort." He said that "All is not lost yet".

Presidents of **Mauritania**, which withdrew from the bloc in December 2000, and **Burundi** participated in the meeting. No information about the presence of representatives from **Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** was provided. **Burkina Faso,**

and **Mali** have military heads of state and they have sided with Niger, through a statement last week.

INTERNAL OPPOSITION IN NIGERIA to any ACTION against NIGER:

- The Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) stated its opposition to war and asked for a reversal of sanctions on Niger.
- The Nigerian **Senate** had also **rejected** a **military option** and called on President Tinubu to continue with dialogue.

August 9, 2023: Niamey, Niger: **The military junta rebuffs the Tripartite Commission of UNO, AU and ECOWAS**: The Tripartite Commission, led by former Head of State, **Gen Abdulsalam Abubakar** (retd), from the **Economic Community of West African States** (ECOWAS), the **African Union** (AU), and the **United Nations** (UN) was scheduled to be in Niamey on 8th August, 2023. However, late at night of 8th, the military junta informed that Niger would not receive the Commission.

The junta leaders continue to hold **President Mohammed Bazoum**, his wife and son captive in the presidential palace.



Under Secretary Victoria Nuland Image Image Provided Content of the secretary Victoria Nuland Image Image Provided A Secretary Provided A Secretary And Secre

Barmou, the **Chief of Defense of Niger's new ruling junta**, and three of the Colonels supporting him. *Gen Barmou had been working with US Special Forces for many years*.

Victoria Nuland was able to meet Gen Barmou and three Colonels of the ruling junta of Niger for two hours. However, she could not meet President Bazoum.

Nuland knew about the meeting of **Yegevny Prigozhin**, the Chief of **Wagners's Army**, with some African Heads of State in **St. Petersburg** during the **Russia-Africa Summit**

of Jul 27-28. She also knew about the support to coup, voiced by **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**, in both of which Wagner's Army was active. So, Nuland reminded Gen Barmou and the three Colonels that security gets worse, that human rights get worse and that sovereignty of Niger could be dented when Wagner's Army enters. However, she could not learn much about their thinking about Wagners.

<u>www.DiGiNews360.com</u> notes that while France, Germany and the European Union have called the takeover by the military officers a coup, US has not yet named it as a coup. NBC News has reported that a State Department official said that the attempted military coup in Niger has been marked by "confusion, shifting alliances and fluidity." That uncertainty and the existence of a narrow opportunity to reverse are the reasons the U.S. government has not yet declared it a coup.

Earlier on July 29, 2023, Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State had said that continued American assistance to Niger — which totals roughly \$400 million — would depend on the release of Bazoum and the restoration of democratic rule. But the Biden administration has not set a deadline.

Though Nuland could not meet the ousted President Bazoum, **General Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno**, the President of Chad, was able to meet him on July 30, 2023. President Bazoum seemed to be unharmed physically.



July 30, 2023: Niamey: President of Chad with the ousted President of Niger

On 4th August, the Coup Leaders ended Niger's military cooperation with France. <u>www.DiGiNews360.com</u> has not been able to determine the status of the French,

European and US troops, stationed in Niger, to help Niger and other countries in the region to resist Boko Haram and other Jehadi groups.

August 9, 2023: The military junta of Niger had declined a meeting with representatives of African Union (AU), Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and a top US diplomat. But the former Emir of Kano Lamido Sanusi, along with the Sultan of Damagaram, has met with coup leaders in Niger Republic.



The former **Emir of Kano, Alhaji Muhammadu Sanusi II** is also the **Khalifa of Tijjaniya sect**. Tijjaniya sect has a large following in Niger also. Sanusi is a former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

On Wednesday, 9th of August, Sansui, along with "Sarkin Damagaram" **Abubakar Oumarou Sanda**, met the Junta leaders, in his personal capacity (but with the knowledge of President Tinubu Bola), for averting a war.

Damagaram is the third largest city in Niger. "Sarkin Damagaram" is the title for, the Sultan of Damagaram.



Head of Niger's transitional government **Abdourahmane Tchiani** in Niamey with the 14th Emir of Kano and Sultan of Damagaran

Military Junta moves from one GROUND to another: In justification of the coup of July 26th, the Junta had said that **President Bazoum** had to be removed since his **government** had **failed to save the people from Jehadi attacks**.

The ground was later **changed** to exploit **anti-France feelings** among the poor:

- The Government declared that they were terminating the agreement for stationing the French troops to help Niger fight Jehadi attacks.
- Demonstrations at the French embassy were organized in Niamey.
- A Tik-Tok meme shows two old French men being assaulted by young Nigereans.

The military junta is withdrawing facilities from the Presidential Palace for the ousted President, his wife and son. The electric supply and water supply to the Palace has been discontinued and the food is running out.

<u>www.DiGiNews360.com</u> understands the dilemma of President Bola Tinubu. He has assumed power on 29th May 2023 with a heavy agenda of change in Nigeria. If ECOWAS should initiate military action against the military junta in Niger, it may be a fast operation. Or the conflict could last some time. This would entangle the President. The military operation can succeed in restoring back democracy, it can stem the future coups in other countries in Africa and it can establish President Bola Tinubu as a Leader of the whole of Africa. But it may be at the cost of his Agenda for change in Nigeria.

----Appendix 1: List of Ministers, appointed by the Military Junta on August 10, 2023----

- 1. Prime Minister/Minister of Economy and Finance Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine
- 2. Minister of State for Defense Salifou Mody

3. Minister of State for Internal Area of Public Security and Territory Administration – Mouhamed Toumba

4. Minister of Youth and Sports – Colonel Abdourahamane Amadou

5. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Nigerien Abroad – Bakary Yaou Sangare

6. Minister of Public Health and Social Affairs – Colonel Garba Hakimi

7. Minister Director of the Cabinet of Public Relations of CNSP – Dr Soumana Boubacar

8. Minister of Agriculture and Husbandry – Mahana Elhadj Ousmane

9. MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION – MAHAMADOU SAIDOU

10 MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF LITERACY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND PROMOTION OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES – DR ELISABETH CHERIF

11. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT – SALISSOU MAHAMAN

12. MINISTER OF HYDRAULICS, SANITARY AND ENVIRONMENT – COLONEL MAIZAMA ABDOULAYE

13 MINISTER OF JUSTICE HUMAN RIGHTS, GUARDIANS OF SEAL – ALIO DAOUDA

14. MINISTER OF PUBLIC FUNCTION, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT – AISSATOU ABDOULAYE

15. MINISTER OF URBANISM AND HABITATION – SALISSOU SAHIROU ADAMOU

16. MINISTER OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT – AISSA LAWAN

17. MINISTER OF OIL, MINES AND ENERGY – MAHAMANE MOUSTAPHA BARKE

18. MINISTER OF CRAFTS AND TOURISM – GUICHEN AGA RECHA ATTA

19. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION, POSTS AND DIGITAL ECONOMY – SIDI MOHAMED RALIOU

20. MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY – SAYDOU ASMAN

21. DELEGATE MINISTER AFTER THE PRIME MINISTER IN CHARGE OF FINANCE – MOUMOUNI BOUBACAR SAIDOU