

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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** (ret), 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 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2023. However, late at night of 8<sup>th</sup>, 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.



**Ambassador Victoria Nuland, Acting Deputy Secretary of State and Under Secretary for Political Affairs, USA** on her third visit to Niamey during the last 2 years, met with members of the civil society and **General Moussa Salaou 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.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) 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 4<sup>th</sup> August, the Coup Leaders ended Niger's military cooperation with France. [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) has not been able to determine the status of the French,



