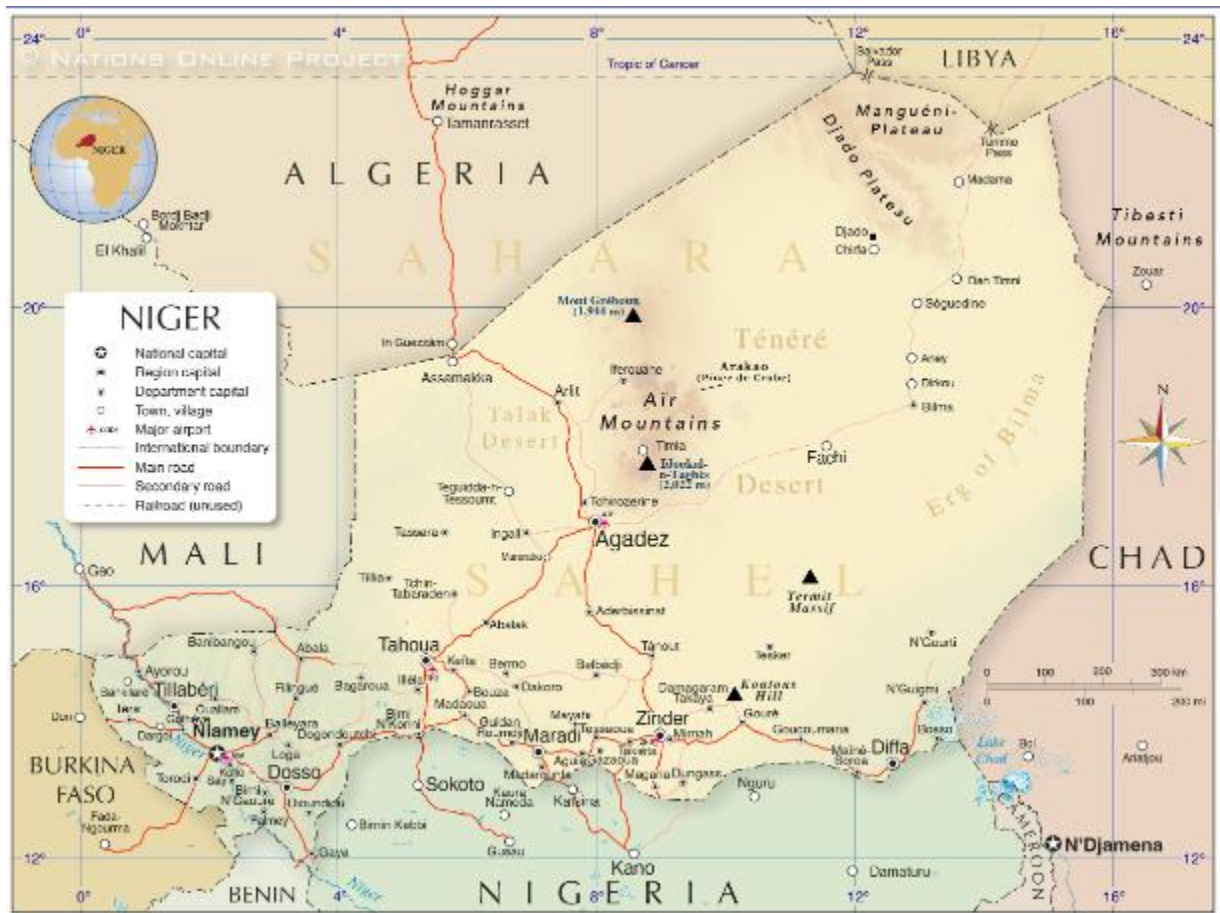


NIGER COUP: French Withdrawal of Troops and US Plans

October 7, 2023

October 6, 2023: The US State Department is preparing to **officially designate the military takeover in Niger as a coup d'état** as soon as next week. The US embassy can continue to operate and the US military will be able to legally keep forces in Niger even if a coup designation is made. US has 1,000 troops stationed in Niger for training Niger's forces in facing the challenge of Jehadi forces.



October 5, 2023: “The **withdrawal of troops** and military equipment begins this week,” said **France’s Armed Forces Ministry** in a statement. The French troops stationed in Niger will start withdrawing from border areas this week. The Ministry added,“ Coordination with the Nigerien army is essential to the operation's success. All measures have been taken to ensure that the movements proceed in good order and security.”

The military junta that has been running Niger since a **coup on 26 July, 2023** had asked France to leave.

French Air Force mechanics maintain a Mirage 2000 on the French base in Niamey, Niger, since 2021. The base will be decommissioned and dismantled by the end of 2023, and all French troops will leave the country, following French President **Emmanuel Macron's** announcement last month of an end to military cooperation with Niger's ruling military junta.



After recalling France's ambassador, President Macron last month announced the end of military cooperation with Niger and said he would not be “held hostage” by the junta.

FIRST STEP in a two-step withdrawal: The first to leave will be some 400 soldiers, who are currently deployed in **Ouallam** and **Ayorou**, in the north-western zone of the country, that borders Mali and Burkina Faso. The Islamic State armed group is active in the North-West of Niger and the French troops were helping Niger in securing the region against the Jehadi attacks. The French troops will head back to Niamey, leaving their joint operation to Niger to handle. The retreat will take a few days, given the poor security conditions on the road. The soldiers will then immediately head back to France by air.

Dismantling the French air base in Niamey will require more planning, as it is made up of hangars for aircrafts, hundreds of containers of offices and command centers, as well as tanks, bulldozers and other heavy equipment.

The material cannot be airlifted as Niger has prohibited French aircraft from flying in its airspace, and road options are limited. Equipment could be driven to the French base in neighboring Chad, though Niger authorities have been reluctant to allow the military to move around freely.

WEST'S PLANS: As Macron plans 'noticeable reduction' of French military in Africa, US mulls over its military options. Since 2013, the base in Niamey has been used as a transit hub for anti-terrorist activities in Mali and had become the center of France's regional operations since the retreat of troops from Mali and Burkina Faso. **The withdrawal of French troops from Niger leaves a hole in Western efforts to counter a decade-long Islamist insurgency.**

It is also a further blow to French influence in the Sahel and **could allow Russia to expand its influence over the region.**

BACKGROUND: July 26, 2023: A coup d'état occurred in Niger when the country's presidential guard detained **President Mohamed Bazoum**, and Presidential Guard commander **General Abdourahamane Tchiani** proclaimed himself the leader of a new military junta.

Bazoum had been elected in 2021 and took power in what was the first peaceful and democratic transition of power since Niger gained its independence from France in 1960.

www.DiGiNews360.com calls upon the military junta to plan the transition to democracy in Niger at an early date. President Bazoum, a Professor of Philosophy might not have been able to eradicate the evil of Jehadi attacks fully. But he did try to involve many tribes from the northern parts near the sandy middle parts. One could see the results within the two years of his presidency, Long spells of military rule have impoverished the people of Niger and they have lost belief in themselves.

We call upon all the Nigereans, particularly its youth, to start working for at least one hour out of 24 hours, on an average, for working for their society and their country. If there are a few thousand such young persons in Niger, the face of Niger can be changed.

By—Abel in Burundi