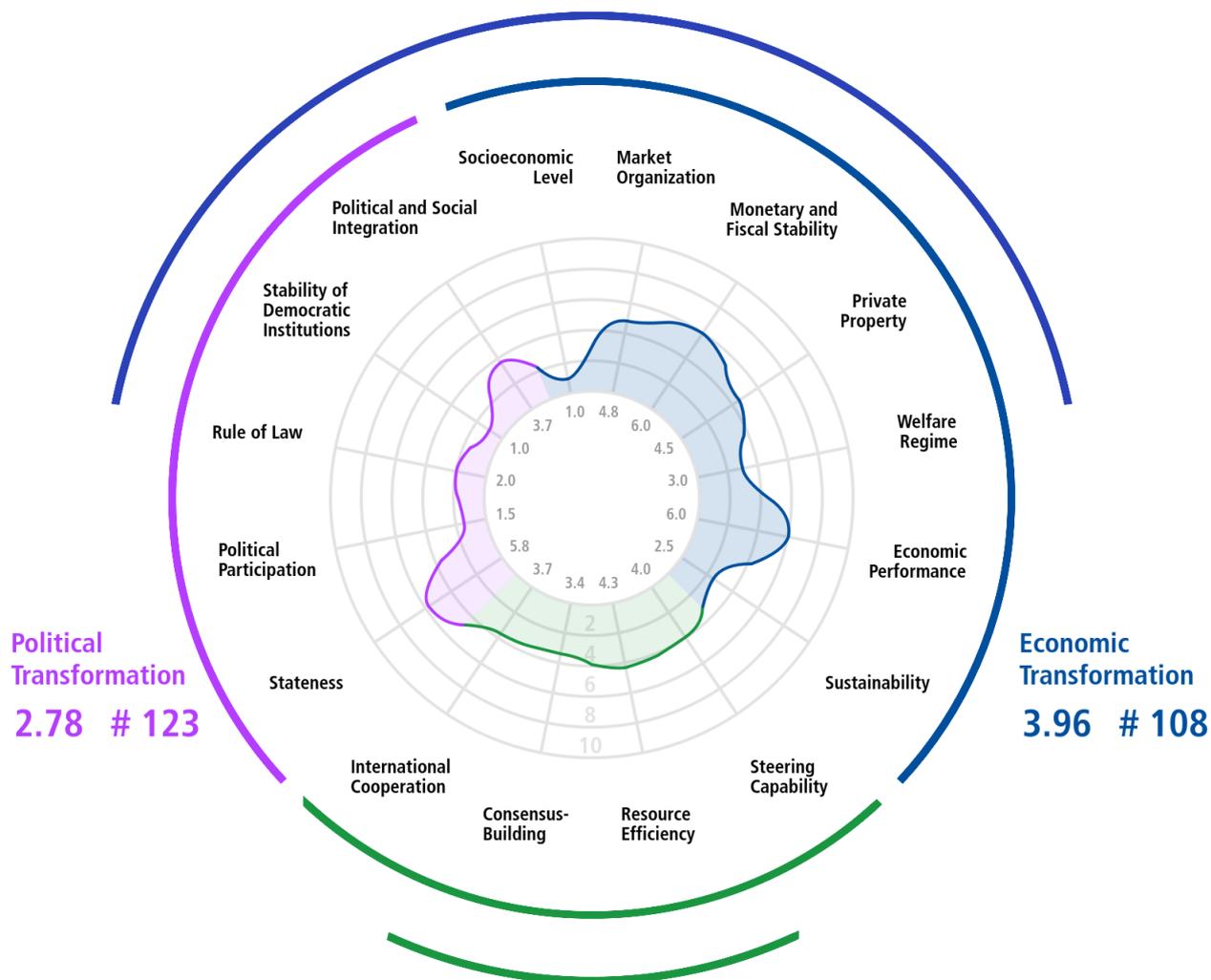


Niger

Status Index

3.37 # 118

on 1-10 scale out of 137



Governance Index

3.69 # 106

on 1-10 scale out of 137

This report is part of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2026. It covers the period from February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2025. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. More on the BTI at <https://www.bti-project.org>.

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Key Indicators

Population	M	27.0	HDI	0.419	GDP p.c., PPP \$	2015
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	3.3	HDI rank of 193	188	Gini Index	32.9
Life expectancy	years	61.2	UN Education Index	0.278	Poverty ³	% 83.1
Urban population	%	17.2	Gender inequality ²	0.591	Aid per capita \$	49.0

Sources (as of December 2025): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | UNDP, Human Development Report 2025. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.65 a day at 2017 international prices.

Executive Summary

The military coup of July 2023 represents the most significant setback in Niger's efforts to consolidate a system of constitutional multiparty democracy since 1993. Widespread hopes that Niger would remain a relatively stable anchor in an otherwise volatile and coup-prone region were not realized. The circumstances leading up to the military intervention led by Gen. Abdourahame Tiani, former head of the presidential guard, demonstrate that Niger's key political actors have yet to internalize basic democratic norms. Although there is never a single reason behind a military coup, former President Mahamadou Issoufou, who held power from 2011 to 2021, is widely suspected to have encouraged Tiani to overthrow his hand-picked successor, President Mohamed Bazoum. Bazoum had intended to replace Tiani as head of the presidential guard. Two years after his somewhat controversial election, Bazoum had succeeded in building his own power base, thereby escaping the influence of Issoufou's allies within the cabinet and Nigerien bureaucracy. Thus, the military coup was partly a consequence of the personalization of power. The coup leaders – united under the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (Conseil national pour la sauvegarde de la patrie, CNSP) – argued that the action was necessitated by corruption and the deterioration of security along the border with Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. This claim is partially correct. The prevalence of corruption had been escalating, and the influx of Western foreign and military aid that began in 2015 failed to deliver tangible benefits to the Nigerien population at large. Violence by ordinary citizens against the headquarters of the former incumbent party (PNSD) and the French embassy in Niamey had highlighted the widespread frustration with the established civilian political elites. The fact that Niger's security situation has been declining since 2017 is largely uncontested. However, immediately before the coup, the security environment was not nearly as dire as that in Mali or Burkina Faso. In early 2023, the situation slightly improved compared to previous years in terms of battleground fatalities and the number of attacks.

The conduct of the CNSP since taking power has raised serious concerns. The junta is emulating the actions of the military juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso. It has failed to provide a clearly formulated, coherent transition charter – something present in all other coup-affected countries in West and Central Africa. The CNSP formally serves as both the country’s legislative and executive branches, with the judiciary under its total control. It remains unclear if or when Niger will return to constitutional democracy. The constitution of the Seventh Republic has been suspended, as has party activity. A national forum is scheduled for Feb. 15 to 19, 2025, but many observers believe the forum will simply be used to legitimize the junta’s agenda. Critical journalists have become victims of state suppression, and the new administration has begun using the judiciary to target corrupt former politicians and civil servants.

In line with the juntas in Bamako and Ouagadougou, the CNSP has ended or provoked the end of military cooperation with many Western countries and entities, such as France and the EU, and reduced its reliance on outside Western powers such as the United States. Instead, Niamey has sought closer security relations with Russia and closer economic relations with China and Iran. Since the presence of Russian military trainers does not match the previous presence of French, EU and American military trainers, the security situation has deteriorated further. In lieu of historically close economic relations with Benin, the new power holders have engaged in economic warfare with the government of President Patrice Talon. Although the crisis was resolved by the fall of 2024, Niger’s future standing and relations with its former Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) partners is uncertain.

The new political dispensation has resulted in less Western development aid and has worsened Niger’s economic standing. Niger has defaulted on its foreign debt. It continues to receive funding from the IMF and still receives humanitarian assistance from several Western donors.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

Since independence in 1960, Niger has endured lengthy periods of authoritarian, military-dominated rule. Since the onset of multiparty democracy in 1993, the country has had five constitutions and one interim civilian government (1991 – 1993), three periods of civilian governments (1993 – 1996, 2000 – 2009 and 2011 – 2023, one period of military rule (1996 – 1999), and two interim military governments (1999 and 2010 – 2011). In 2015 and 2021, military coup attempts failed. The 2020/2021 presidential and legislative elections resulted in the country’s first peaceful handover of power from one civilian government to the next. In July 2023, the military once again took over, thereby ending the Seventh Republic. The National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (Conseil national pour la sauvegarde de la patrie; CNSP) currently governs the country on the basis of ordonnances. It remains unclear if or when the country will return to democratic constitutional rule. The coup was at least partially encouraged by former President Mahamadou Issoufou, who has had a close political relationship with coup leader Abdourahame Tiani, who had served as head of Issoufou’s presidential guard. Now acting as the interim president, Tiani has been vocal about the country’s need to ensure a modicum of stability

in the fight against jihadi Salafi insurgents along the borders with Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. The CNSP's foreign policy constitutes a sudden break with Niamey's historically close relations with the West and with ECOWAS. Niger recently left ECOWAS and became a founding member of the Alliance of Sahel States. Other member states include Mali and Burkina Faso, whose military leaders Tiani tries to emulate. Within the military, Tiani is not uncontested, but there is currently no indication that there will be a change in government in Niamey any time soon.

Authoritarian rule began in 1958, two years before the country gained independence from France, when Hamani Diori established a repressive one-party regime. In 1974, the military, led by Seyni Kountché, toppled Diori amid an economic crisis and severe drought. Following Kountché's death in 1987, the civilian-led Second Republic was established under the National Movement for the Development of Society-Nassara (MNSD-Nassara) party. Responding to regional and domestic pressure from trade unions, students and the figures behind the Tuareg rebellion, then-President Ali Saibou initiated democratic reforms in the early 1990s. Niger held a national conference in 1991 that resulted in a constitutional referendum and relatively free and fair elections in 1993 – the Third Republic.

Mahamane Ousmane of the Democratic and Social Convention (CDS-Rahama) party became the country's first democratically elected president in 1993. However, he came into conflict with parliament after opposition parties withdrew from the government coalition. Early parliamentary elections in 1994 forced Ousmane to appoint Hama Amadou (MNSD-Nassara) as prime minister. The subsequent paralysis of political institutions in this semi-presidential system ultimately provoked a military coup led by Col. Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara on Jan. 27, 1996. The coup reflected widespread dissatisfaction and persistent aspirations to power within the military. In response to foreign pressure, Maïnassara held new elections. Non-competitive conditions and a boycott by opposition parties allowed him to win the July 1996 presidential election and November 1996 legislative elections, ushering in the Fourth Republic.

Three years of superficially liberalized authoritarianism followed until Maïnassara was assassinated during a military coup launched in April 1999. The coup's leader, Maj. Daouda Malam Wanké, relaunched the process of democratization. This process led to a constitutional referendum and parliamentary and presidential elections in July, October and November 1999, respectively. President Mamadou Tandja governed with the help of a coalition between the MNSD-Nassara and CDS-Rahama. The Fifth Republic (2000 – 2009) marked a period of comparative stability. Until August 2009, the work of political institutions progressed relatively smoothly despite the potential for conflict in the semi-presidential system. The free and fair general elections at the end of 2004 confirmed Tandja and his governing coalition. This government was the first since 1992 to ensure that the public sector and military personnel received regular payments. In doing so, it prevented another vicious cycle of general strikes, which had crippled Niger's economy throughout the 1990s and had been a major source of political instability.

Stability was nonetheless threatened by a renewed Tuareg rebellion that lasted from 2007 to 2009. The rebellion had a negative impact on speech and press freedoms in Niger. Journalists reporting critically on the government's activities regarding the Tuareg or on alleged government corruption were subjected to arbitrary arrests and police violence. Beginning in 2005, Tandja and then-Prime

Minister Amadou (both from the MNSD-Nassara) began to fall out with each other. In June 2007, Amadou was forced to step down and was replaced by Seyni Oumarou. Tandja's subsequent attempts to change the constitution to allow himself to remain in office beyond 2009 initially proved successful. However, Tandja was eventually ousted by the military in February 2010. The military organized a transition to democracy that resulted in a constitutional referendum and free and fair elections being held in early 2011.

Beginning in 2013, the Issoufou government used the security services to crack down on critical journalists, civil society organizations and opposition politicians. The most prominent politician subjected to such tactics, Hama Amadou, was accused of involvement in a baby-smuggling ring and was forced to contest the 2016 elections while in prison. He was not allowed to run in the 2020 presidential elections. Issoufou's hand-picked successor, Mohamed Bazoum, continued Issoufou's approach toward the opposition and street protest.

The appalling socioeconomic conditions in Niger account for many of the political upheavals of recent decades. Since the early 1970s, drought, desertification, government intervention and poor governance have worsened an already weak economic environment. The uranium boom of the late 1970s subsided rapidly in Niger, whose economy is dominated by agriculture. The considerable national debt incurred between 1983 and 1986 necessitated an IMF structural adjustment program. Given the political instability of the era, several irregularities in implementing the IMF program led to its intermittent suspension. The implementation of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) between 1996 and 1999 met with the approval of international financial institutions. After a brief disruption, both the transitional government and the Tandja government normalized relations with international donors, paving the way for several subsequent Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) programs. In April 2004, Niger reached the completion point under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), with debt relief totaling \$663.1 million.

Despite the recent military coup, Niger continues to receive support from the IMF, albeit at a much lower level than before. The country remains plagued by extreme poverty, unsustainable and inefficient public spending, widespread illiteracy, and a rapidly growing population, and it remains dependent on uranium and oil revenues. Over the past decade, Niger's debt has worsened considerably, with the debt burden now totaling around half of its GDP. This has occurred despite solid annual GDP growth rates of between 3% and 5% over the last 10 years. These encouraging growth rates did little to lift the majority of the population out of poverty, although the Issoufou government made progress in the fight against extreme poverty. Under the CNSP, these advances are likely to evaporate given the new government's deteriorating relations with long-standing development partners in the EU and elsewhere in the West.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

A multitude of non-state actors challenge the state's monopoly on the use of force in the border regions with Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso. The most significant challengers remain jihadi Salafi groups. Notable such groups include Boko Haram (operating along the border with Nigeria), Jama'at Nusratul Islam wal Muslimine (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims) and the Islamic State in the Sahel group (operating along the border with Burkina Faso and Mali). Various other breakaway groups are also relevant in this regard. It is worth noting, however, that none of these groups have historical origins or home bases in Niger.

Their activities include attacks on military installations, the murder of innocent civilians, the killing of Nigerien soldiers and the kidnapping of Western aid workers. In late 2022 and during the first half of 2023, these attacks declined slightly in frequency but remained at a serious level. The security situation worsened in the first year following the military junta's takeover of power in July 2023, but appears to have stabilized since. In line with actions by the juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso, the Nigerien junta has ended military cooperation with France and drastically reduced its cooperation with the United States. It has also sought greater military cooperation with Russia, although this remains relatively limited. The national rehabilitation program for former jihadi fighters is now defunct.

Thus, the state's monopoly on the use of force is under severe threat. However, large areas of the country remain under state control. As elsewhere in the Sahel, the situation is fluid and could change.

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force

6

'06 '26 10



1

The vast majority of the Nigerien population views the nation-state as legitimate. It is reasonable to assume that the patriotic-nationalist rhetoric of the junta has led to increased support for the nation-state. The conflict between the Nigerien state and various jihadi groups operating in the border areas with Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger has also elevated the general sense of patriotism.

According to survey data from Afrobarometer (data collected in 2022; most recent data), three-quarters of the Nigerien population trust the police and the armed forces. More than 70% of respondents said they trusted individuals from ethnic groups other than their own. In 2018/19 (no data for 2022), more than half of respondents said they saw themselves first and foremost as Nigeriens rather than as members of a specific ethnic group. This is a notably high value in the context of sub-Saharan Africa.

Having for decades perceived themselves as a marginalized group, the Tuareg – themselves a socially and politically heterogeneous group – have initiated several rebellions (1961 – 1964, 1990 – 1995 and 2007 – 2009). Their basic demands include improved access to state services and political representation in Niamey. These demands have not been completely met, though their participation in local and national politics has improved over the last decade, especially since the signing on April 24, 1995, of the peace agreements and the institutionalization of the “*journée nationale de la concorde*.” The (secret) peace agreement between the former Tandja government and the 2007 Tuareg rebellion called for improvements regarding both demands. During the Issoufou presidency (2011 – 2021), a Tuareg, Brigi Rafini, held the position of prime minister. His tenure has had a positive effect on the relationship between the central government and the Tuareg in the north. After the military coup in July 2023, Rhissa Ag Boula, a former rebel leader and politician in Niger, launched a movement opposing the military government. He stated that his new Council of Resistance for the Republic (CRR) aims to reinstate overthrown President Mohamed Bazoum, who has been in detention at his residence since the takeover. In August 2024, Ag Boula was granted asylum in France. The future relationship between the junta and the Tuareg therefore hangs in the balance. It is important to note that Ag Boula does not speak for the Tuareg as a whole, but is the leader of a rebel faction within the broader Tuareg community.

Traditionally, the government has sought to maintain balanced representation of ethnicities among its employees and within the cabinet. This practice remains unchanged under the junta.

State identity

8



1

The CNSP suspended the constitution after it took power. Article 2 of the ordinance regulating public order in Niger after the military intervention of July 2023 states that Niger is a secular republic.

All previous constitutions provided for the separation of state and religion and prohibited religiously affiliated political parties. All political parties that have secured representation in parliament are committed to this principle – which is not shared by all societal forces, however.

Since the liberalization of the political system in November 1990 and the subsequent return of multiparty competition in 1993, conservative Islamic clerics have gained increasing influence in society. One notable example is the Izala community, a regional network of Salafi clerics that has emerged as a significant societal force. Several Salafi clerics have assumed advisory roles within the government, thereby influencing the discourse on specific policies. There are differing reports on the extent to which Shariah is practiced in local communities in Niger.

Neither political Salafism nor jihadi Salafism has a significant presence in Niger. The state-run Islamic Council of Niger, like its predecessors, has made efforts to influence Friday prayer sermons, the selection of local imams and the content of religious education throughout the country. These attempts have been relatively successful compared to other locations in the Sahel region. The incursions by Boko Haram into Diffa province have been met with little to no sympathy from the population. While many Nigeriens are devoutly religious and conservative, they persistently reject Islamic extremism. Given the circumstances in which the junta claimed power, it seems unlikely that the new government will make any concessions toward orthodox Islamic forces.

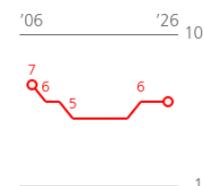
The state's administrative capacity is limited. Outside Niamey and the main cities, there is no functioning legal system. In Niamey, only a few people have the means to afford a lawyer and access the legal system.

Investments in transport and basic infrastructure are limited to Niamey and the main cities. However, because of significant migration into the capital and the world's highest population growth rates, Niamey's transport system and infrastructure are deficient. The influx of refugees from Mali and Nigeria, as well as from other African states, has further strained the fragile and inefficient national and local infrastructures.

Although the number of internet users has increased, only about 17% of the population had regular access to the internet in 2024. This marks a slight improvement compared to previous years. Internet use depends on the quality of telecommunication networks in neighboring states and therefore cannot be taken for granted. Only 49% of the population have access to a source of drinking water, 16% have access to basic sanitation services, 8% have access to safely managed sanitation facilities and 20% have access to basic electricity.

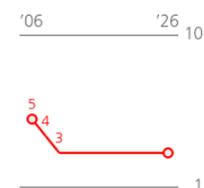
No interference of religious dogmas

6



Basic administration

3



Open defecation is practiced by more than 71% of the population, with serious consequences for health, nutrition, education and economic development. Only 22.7% of schools have access to drinking water, and 26.7% have access to sanitation facilities, according to UNICEF data. The conflict with jihadi Salafi organizations has undermined the education and business sectors in the border areas with Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso.

2 | Political Participation

National elections have been regularly held in Niger since 1993. In 1996, 1999, 2010 and 2023, military coups interrupted civilian rule. As a result of the most recent coup, the constitution has been suspended. The various ordinances the junta has issued since July 2023 do not specify if or when the country will return to multiparty rule. Following the examples of juntas elsewhere in the region, transition President Tiani is likely to postpone elections for as long as he can. In private conversations with civil society leaders, Tiani mentioned that his government prioritizes security and stability. As of the end of the review period, he had not specified any benchmarks for measuring these goals. In his recent book “Pour le Niger,” Tiani outlines his vision for the country. Elections do not feature in it.

The most recent legislative elections and the first round of the presidential elections took place in December 2020. According to reports by international, regional and domestic observers, the first round of the presidential elections and the legislative elections were held in a proper manner. The opposition questioned the integrity of the electoral register and the independence of the electoral commission in the run-up to the election. Assessing the validity of such claims – which always arise before elections – is challenging. There were also isolated reports of vote-buying.

However, the run-off in the presidential election between Issoufou’s chosen successor, Mohamed Bazoum, and former President Mahamane Ousmane (1993 – 1996) led to three days of rioting in Niamey and other cities. Serious concerns arose over the accuracy of the presidential election’s results in rural areas of the country’s interior. The absence of systematic, large-scale international or national election observation missions made it impossible to accurately assess the extent to which the presidential elections were free and fair.

This is not a new situation for Niger, where any analysis of the electoral outcome is shaped by deepening partisanship. The riots were most likely an outcome of this partisanship. Given that the new government took power and the opposition grudgingly accepted the outcome, one can assume that, although the elections were far from perfect, the results reflected the view of the majority.

Free and fair elections



The president's main political opponent, former Prime Minister Hama Amadou, was barred from running as a presidential candidate due to having been controversially charged with baby smuggling. The Constitutional Court disqualified his candidacy.

Since the military coup of July 2023, political representatives are no longer elected. Previously elected bodies have no influence. The junta has suspended all party activity, and has made clear that it will crack down on civilian dissent. The deposed president, Mohamed Bazoum, remains in detention despite international protests. As is typically the case in countries under military rule, the junta governs with the help of civilian politicians. However, these actors were not elected and cannot be seen as representative of the Nigerien people.

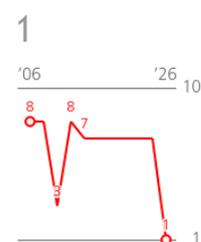
After the military coups in 1999 and 2010, the armed forces handed power to democratically elected civilians, indicating some commitment to the principle of civilian oversight in politics. Nothing suggests that the Tiani-led junta will follow their examples.

Conservative Islamic clerics, traditional rulers and some influential families represent potential veto players. They have become increasingly influential since the early 1990s. Various governments have informally consulted these clerics to avoid antagonizing them. In recent years, close collaboration between Niger and France has led to protests led by Islamic clerics. Conservative clerics also criticized the strict anti-COVID-19 measures, including the temporary closure of mosques, in 2020.

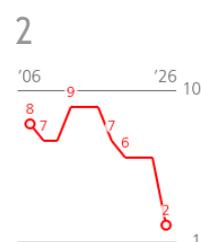
The constitution of the Seventh Republic, in place between 2010 and 2023, guaranteed freedom of association. In reality, both the Issoufou administration, which was in power between 2011 and 2021, and the Bazoum administration, in power between 2021 and 2023, interfered with these rights and frequently incarcerated critical voices, accusing them of collaboration with Boko Haram or other terrorist groups.

When taking power in 2023, the CNSP suspended political party activity until further notice and prevented civilian opposition groups from taking office, with the exception of one cabinet position held by an individual affiliated with the MODEN/FA Lumana political party. In contrast to the junta leaders in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Chad, the Tiani-led junta has not issued any formal document or decree guaranteeing freedom of association. Several high-profile political figures were arbitrarily detained. In addition to President Bazoum and his family, former Minister of Petroleum Sani Mahamadou Issoufou, former Minister of Home Affairs Hamadou Adamou Souley, former Defense Minister Kalla Moutari and former Minister of Finance Ahmad Jidoud were also detained without charge. As of January 2025, former President Bazoum remained in detention – an unprecedented state of affairs in the country.

Effective power to govern



Association / assembly rights



Nigerien associations that support the military junta can operate relatively freely. A number of associations that want to see a return to civilian rule have avoided openly challenging the junta. As a result, there is considerable self-censorship.

Although the Seventh Republic (2010 – 2023) guaranteed freedom of speech, critical journalists and other voices discussing corruption were regularly targeted by the security services. Since the coup of July 2023, this tendency has worsened. The authorities have threatened, harassed and arbitrarily arrested journalists. Many are self-censoring amid fear of reprisals.

In January 2024, the interior minister issued a decree suspending the activities of Maison de la Presse, an independent media organization, and announced the creation of a new management committee for the organization led by the Interior Ministry’s secretary-general.

In 2024, the junta-led government signed an ordinance amending the country’s 2019 cybercrime law. Article 29 of the amended law allows people found guilty of defamation or insult through electronic communication to be sentenced to one to three years in prison. Article 31 criminalizes the dissemination of data that could “disturb public order or undermine human dignity.”

Recent prominent examples of media arrests include the following: In April 2024, security forces arrested Ousmane Toudou, a journalist and former communications adviser to the ousted president. In the days following the July 2023 coup, Toudou denounced the military takeover in a widely shared social media post. In May 2024, he was charged with “plotting against state security” and sent to pretrial detention. The same month, security forces arrested Soumana Maiga, editor of L’Enquêteur, after the newspaper reported on a story published by a French newspaper about the alleged installation of listening equipment by Russian agents targeting official state buildings. In January 2025, the Ministry of Communication decided to suspend the press card of journalist Seyni Amadou from Canal 3 TV for three months, and that of the Canal 3 TV channel for one month, following the posting of a report on ministerial performance. There are many additional examples of harassment of journalists by security forces, but these are no longer covered by TV, newspapers or even blogs.

Freedom of expression

2



3 | Rule of Law

The constitution of the Seventh Republic emphasized the importance of mutual checks and balances. It established a semi-presidential system that provided for a distinct separation of powers between the president and the prime minister. Between 2010 and 2023, Niger had one of the strongest judiciaries worldwide, at least on paper.

Since the coup of July 2023, there has been no formal separation of powers, either de jure or de facto. According to decrees issued in the aftermath of the coup, the CNSP holds both legislative and executive authority. The president of the CNSP, Tiani, also controls the judiciary and appoints the prime minister.

In August 2023, Tiani appointed an anti-corruption commission and a state court. The ostensible main role of the anti-corruption commission will be to recover all illegally acquired and misappropriated public property. In practice, it serves as a front to arrest and interrogate former civilian politicians. The new state court replaces the court of cassation and the state council.

Until the July 2023 coup, the judiciary included the Constitutional Court, the Court of Appeal (Cour de cassation), the State Council (Conseil d'état), the Court of Auditors (Cour des comptes) and the ordinary courts. The Court of Appeal and the State Council have now been replaced with courts whose members are appointed by Gen. Tiani, so they cannot be considered independent. After the coup, the junta formally named Tiani, in his role as the CNSP's president, as head of the judicial system.

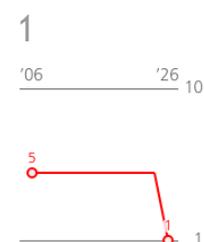
In Afrobarometer surveys in 2022, slightly more than two-thirds of the population said that reporting corruption brought a risk of retaliation. Additionally, 71% of the population said they thought that some or most magistrates were corrupt. Pursuing legal rights in court can be expensive. As a result, most of the population lacks access to the legal system, cannot afford legal fees, or is forced to pay bribes to judges or magistrates.

Public officeholders who engage in corruption or break the law are not adequately prosecuted in Niger. A prominent example is the 2020 procurement scandal within the Nigerien armed forces, which did not lead to any prosecutions by the judiciary. Civil servants and local NGOs often state that the large-scale influx of Western development aid since 2015 has led to a dramatic rise in corrupt practices within the civil service. Both the procurement scandal and the ongoing failure of various civilian administrations to prosecute corrupt officials contributed to public support for the 2023 military coup. The celebrations on the streets of Niamey following the coup were largely a response to long-standing frustration with the behavior of Niger's political elite. In Afrobarometer surveys taken in 2022, 67% of the Nigerien

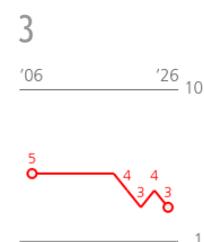
Separation of powers



Independent judiciary



Prosecution of office abuse



population said they believed that some or most government officials were involved in corrupt activities. A total of 45% of the population said that the level of corruption in the country had increased substantially or somewhat.

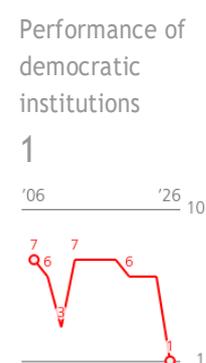
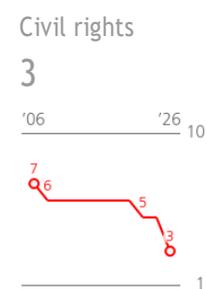
The CNSP has placed new emphasis on the importance of fighting corruption. In September 2023 the new government created the *Délinquance Economique, Financière et Fiscale (COLDEFF)*, a commission aimed at combating corruption. According to recent media reports, the commission has recovered millions of dollars in public funds. However, this information is impossible to verify. Moreover, the extent to which the commission serves as a vehicle to target potential civilian opposition leaders remains questionable. All members of the commission were replaced in January 2025 without explanation. Due to the absence of checks and balances, it is impossible to scrutinize the conduct of state officials who enjoy the support of the military or serve in the military.

Historically, Nigerien governments have respected civil rights as long as the exercise of these rights did not challenge their political and economic privileges. The principle of equality before the law has existed only on paper, as most citizens cannot afford lawyers or access to the courts. Women and sexual minorities may theoretically enjoy legal protection of their rights, but in reality they are marginalized by informal norms and strong biases in favor of men. This applies to all regions and social strata.

After the 2023 military coup, conditions in this area deteriorated significantly. Supporters of the CNSP, organized in vigilante committees, carried out acts of violence against members of Bazoum's party, the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism. Since the coup, the junta has arbitrarily arrested several officials from the ousted government. Critical journalists or civil society activists do not enjoy the right to security or protection from the state. Although the military-led government exhibits the same autocratic behavior as its civilian predecessors, there are important differences: Prior to the coup, for example, incarcerated journalists could eventually rely on the law being applied. Currently, there are no or very limited mechanisms to prosecute or redress violations of civil rights.

4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

In the past, democratic institutions suffered from inefficiencies. Institutional paralysis led to the military coup of 1996, while extensive street protests repeatedly destabilized and threatened democratic consolidation throughout the 1990s. In 2010, President Mamadou Tandja circumvented the presidential two-term limit, resulting in another military coup. During President Issoufou's tenure (2011 – 2021), opposition politicians and civil society activists faced harassment and intimidation from security forces. President Bazoum, who took office in 2021, continued in the footsteps of Issoufou, adopting a semidemocratic style of governing. The most recent military coup highlights the volatility of Niger's political dynamics and the challenges of stabilizing democratic procedures in the long run. The fact that former



President Issoufou was at least involved in the coup and thus removed his hand-picked successor attests to this dynamic. Although the current security situation certainly contributed, the coup reflects the country's historically deep-rooted political frictions and the high degree of political polarization.

Since July 2023, there have been no democratic institutions in place. In contrast with Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, the Nigerien junta has not even sought to pretend it wishes to govern with other institutions. President Tiani has made it clear he prioritizes the provision of security over the reestablishment of democratic institutions. It remains unclear if or when Niger will return to a constitutional democratic form of government.

5 | Political and Social Integration

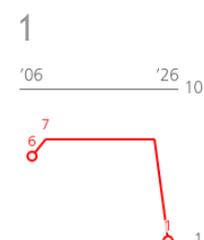
There is currently no party system to articulate interests, as the junta has halted all party activity and suspended the constitution. Prior to July 2023, even the major parties were poorly institutionalized, driven by internal rivalries, rooted in local interests and plagued by clientelism. The semiauthoritarian conduct of former President Issoufou and deposed President Bazoum fueled political polarization.

Since the early 1990s, a variety of interest groups have formed. Most of these groups have very few members and lack the ability to aggregate interests; therefore, they are unable to influence policymaking. In recent years, individual NGOs have tended to form umbrella organizations based on their mandates. This development has given civil society the capacity to mobilize larger segments of society. The most noteworthy umbrella associations focus on human rights agendas, the improvement of basic living conditions, or the representation of professional associations and trade unions. Due to the vague and opaque nature of their demands, civil society organizations have had limited influence in policy and law formulation. In recent times, religious leaders have sought to consolidate their influence and in some cases have challenged government actions. Since the 2023 coup, a large number of associations have emerged; however, many practice self-censorship, lack Western support due to government restrictions or merely support the junta's populist nationalist rhetoric.

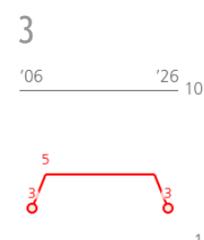
Commitment to democratic institutions



Party system



Interest groups



According to time series data from Afrobarometer (data taken between 2001 and 2022; more recent data is forthcoming but was not available at the time of writing), approval for democracy has declined slightly over time. In 2022, 61% of survey respondents stated that democracy was preferable to any other political system. In 2018, almost 70% agreed that democracy was to be preferred to any other system. At the same time, trust in the National Assembly had slightly increased. In 2022, 58% of all respondents stated that they trusted the National Assembly somewhat or a lot. In 2018, only 51% trusted the National Assembly somewhat or a lot. In 2022, approximately 50% of all respondents stated that the government was not performing well in economic terms. This was only slightly better than in 2018 or even earlier rounds. In short, prior to the 2023 coup, support for the political system, government performance and democratic institutions was higher than for the alternatives but not higher than in previous years or decades. Levels of public support for the intervention of the military in politics was remarkably high in 2021 – 2022: 48% approved the idea that the army should come in and govern the country. This was a dramatic increase from 31% in 2018.

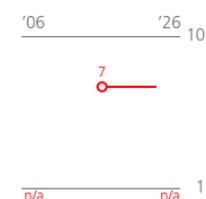
In contrast to the post-military coup environments in 1996 and 2010, the fact that large segments of the population have not protested against the continuation of military rule is, at least in part, an indication that these groups no longer approve of democratic norms.

There is limited concrete information available about self-help groups. Niger has a long history of close-knit communities, especially in rural and countryside areas. A strong sense of solidarity is clearly present in these regions. Nigeriens also continue to organize cultural, environmental and social associations. Another important form of social capital is “Parenté à plaisanterie,” a type of connection where individuals, often from different ethnic groups, tease or make fun of each other in a playful and friendly way. In 2022, Afrobarometer conducted a survey in Niger asking respondents about their level of trust in fellow citizens. About 82% expressed a high or moderate degree of trust. This suggests that the level and scope of trust are significantly greater than previously believed.

There are hundreds of formal associations and clubs organized around professional, religious and sporting activities. Thousands of self-organized neighborhood clubs, locally known as Fada, are formed mainly by youth. There is a significant level of trust among members of these clubs and associations. In recent surveys, 71% of respondents stated that they trusted members of other ethnic communities, confirming a high degree of trust in others. Social capital appears to have improved since the 2023 coup. For example, individuals, unions, associations and villages have donated billions of francs to the national solidarity fund instituted by the military to help fund security and social expenses.

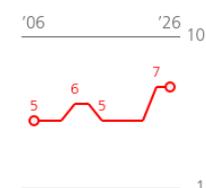
Approval of
democracy

n/a



Social capital

7



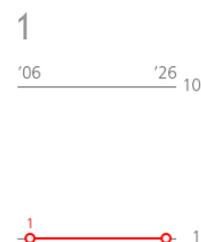
II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Niger remains one of the poorest nations in the world. The majority of its population lives in poverty, despite the fact that the U.N. SDGs and previously the U.N. Development Goals suggest there has been progress in the fight against extreme poverty. According to the World Bank, 83% of the population lives in poverty. Over the past three decades, the UN's Human Development Index has placed Niger near the bottom of its rankings, with a rank of 189 in 2022. In terms of its performance on the Gender Equality Index, Niger is among the bottom 20 countries worldwide, with a score of 0.611 in 2021. Although the Gini index suggests a moderate degree of inequality, economic studies that use night-time luminosity as an indicator demonstrate there are severe discrepancies both between individuals and between regions. Between 2015 and 2023 Western donors significantly increased aid to the country, but this did not result in sustained economic growth lifting people out of poverty. Since the military coup in 2023, there has been a decline in Western-supported development efforts, which is likely to worsen socioeconomic conditions. The worsening climate crisis is undermining the agricultural sector, and when combined with high demographic growth, this is exacerbating recurring food shortages.

Question
Score

Socioeconomic
barriers



Economic indicators		2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP	\$ M	14915.0	15433.9	16698.8	19537.6
GDP growth	%	1.4	11.9	1.7	8.4
Inflation (CPI)	%	3.8	4.2	3.7	9.1
Unemployment	%	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	4.0	6.3	6.1	2.7
Export growth	%	4.1	14.2	-8.1	48.5
Import growth	%	6.4	7.0	-12.0	-2.0
Current account balance	\$ M	-2099.1	-2500.1	-2332.8	-

Economic indicators		2021	2022	2023	2024
Public debt	% of GDP	51.3	50.6	51.8	47.2
External debt	\$ M	4966.9	5428.6	5613.0	-
Total debt service	\$ M	226.5	284.2	191.6	-
Net lending/borrowing	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	17.3	-	13.4	11.8
Public education spending	% of GDP	3.8	3.7	4.1	-
Public health spending	% of GDP	2.1	1.5	-	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	1.4	1.7	2.1	-

Sources (as of December 2025): The World Bank, World Development Indicators | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database.

7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

The Nigerien government has attempted to make access to Nigerien markets easier for domestic and international investors. The Maison de l'Entreprise facilitates the startup of new businesses through a single-window registration process. However, overall market competition operates under a weak institutional framework with uneven rules for market participants.

As in previous periods, the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom rates Niger's economic freedom status as mostly unfree (rank 128 globally; 25 out of 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa). The country's investment framework is outdated and lacks transparency. Informal rules determine entry and exit barriers. Access to bank credit is difficult both for domestic and foreign investors. The informal sector is considerably larger than the formal sector and operates independently of any formal framework. According to data from the International Labor Organization, the share of informal employment in total employment was 73.6% in 2017, the most recent data available. The vast majority of Nigeriens do not have access to the formal employment market. The formal labor market is largely limited to the state and state employees, though in recent years job opportunities in the private sector, including in banking and telecommunications firms and in NGOs, have increased. Enforcement of the tax code is highly uneven.

Market organization

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The government claims it supports the establishment of a free and dynamic market, but this is not the case. Foreign and domestic capital are legally treated equally. The Investment Code, adopted in 2014, guarantees the reception and protection of foreign direct investment and provides tax advantages for investment projects. The code allows for tax exemptions for a certain period, depending on the location and amount of the projects, to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the Ministry of Commerce. It guarantees fair treatment of investors regardless of their origin. All sectors are open to investment. However, small-scale domestic investors have virtually no access to credit. International investors face other constraints, such as corruption, nepotism, the absence of enforceable rules and a weak domestic consumer base.

Niger's membership in the CFA franc zone allows for stable exchange rates with the eurozone but limits economic interactions with Nigeria, an important political and economic neighbor.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report published by the World Economic Forum in 2019, Niger scored 48 out of 100 points and was ranked 115th worldwide, while the global average score was 61. Niger was not ranked in the 2020 report, which was the last report of its kind.

Niger has competition laws in place. The Niger Competition Law prohibits anti-competitive practices, including restricting access to the market, price fixing, dividing markets or sources of supply, tying, minimum resale price maintenance, and discriminatory or unfair prices or conditions of sale. The Competition Law also prohibits abuse of a dominant position or a position of economic dependence. The Competition Law states that anti-competitive agreements and abuses of dominance are sanctioned under West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) regulations. Cartels are automatically void in Niger

However, the West African Economic and Monetary Union Competition Commission has exclusive jurisdiction to investigate and sanction anti-competitive practices, including abuses of dominance. The bloc's merger control regime entails a voluntary notification requirement. Member states are not obliged to report company mergers, making the enforcement of antitrust laws a difficult enterprise. Niger is not a member of the International Competition Network.

There is general agreement that the state provides tax exemptions based on clientelist networks. At the same time, the government recently removed state subsidies such as support for fertilizers. The state has attempted to privatize parts of the mining and telecommunications sectors. The results have been mixed, but it is fair to say both sectors display a certain degree of competition.

Competition policy

6

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All former presidents have emphasized the importance of attracting foreign capital. This may not apply to current President Abdourahame Tiani, whose rhetoric generally has been nationalist-populist. Consequently, he has paid comparatively little attention to trade liberalization. This was most visible in the recent conflict with Benin that led to the temporary closure of the Niger-Benin border. In 2023, the junta-led government applied an average most favored nation tariff of 12%.

Since 1993, all governments have aimed to further develop the country's mineral and petroleum resources while seeking to promote agricultural enterprises that can benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. The High Council for Investment, which is responsible for supporting and encouraging foreign direct investment in Niger, is actively advocating for more foreign investment. The Council has established Guichet Exterior, a centralized online platform that provides information on foreign trade and investment.

The import tariff applied in Niger is, in principle, the WAEMU common external tariff. Niger also imposes additional duties and taxes and distinguishes among five categories of other duties: essential goods (duty rate: 0%), raw materials (5%), intermediate products (10%) and finished goods not produced locally (20%).

The Investment Code establishes a promotional regime (*régime promotionnel*), a conventional regime (*régime conventionnel*) and free zones. The Petroleum Code grants exemptions from certain taxes. The Mining Code provides exemptions from customs duties on imports and certain other taxes. Transport companies receive a 50% reduction in income tax if they expand or modernize their fleets.

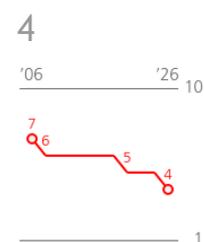
Niger has bilateral investment treaties in force with Germany, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

Investment treaties have been signed with Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, but these have not yet entered into force. The Investment Code of 2014 provides for the settlement of disputes through arbitration, subject to specified conditions. It also allows foreign nationals to seek remedy through the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. Companies must file registration documents with the Commercial Registry (*Registre du Commerce et du Crédit Mobilier* ("RCCM")) at the Company House.

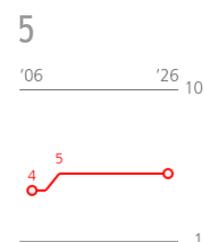
Eleven commercial banks and one financial institution operate in Niger. The system is characterized by the excessive liquidity of banks and their hesitancy to make medium- or long-term loans. The banking system is served by four medium-sized local banks: BIA Niger (*Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique*), Ecobank, Bank of Africa and SONIBANK (*Société Nigérienne de Banque*). There are also several smaller commercial banks.

The Central Bank of West African States governs the country's banking system. Niger has a small banking sector with a moderate degree of concentration. More than 85% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day and lacks access to the traditional

Liberalization of foreign trade



Banking system



banking system. Only about 8.4% of adults have formal bank accounts, one of the lowest such rates in the WAEMU region. Due to prohibitive costs, a perceived cumbersomeness of banks given high documentation requirements and a more general lack of nearby bank branches, only about 3% of the population has access to commercial banking services, according to data from the central bank. There are no available figures on Niger's bank capital-to-assets ratio or non-performing loan share.

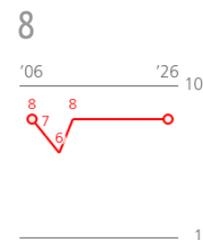
Smaller companies have difficulty accessing lines of credit. The lack of any effective mechanism to strengthen the technical capacities of women entrepreneurs in the areas of business management, financial education and entrepreneurship, as well as the informal nature of large segments of the economy, also prevents the banking sector from performing better. The implementation of ECOWAS sanctions against Niger after the coup curtailed the circulation of money. This affected many petty traders in urban areas, as well as civil servants and others employed in the formal economy. If anything, the coup and its aftermath have placed additional constraints on the banking sector due to political uncertainty and uncertainty about the future economic relations of Niger with its neighboring countries.

8 | Monetary and fiscal stability

Monetary policy is determined by the regional central bank, the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, which prioritizes inflation targeting. The West African Economic and Monetary Union has several convergence criteria that are economic and financial rules established to ensure the stability and coherence of member states' economies. These criteria aim to promote effective regional economic integration and maintain macroeconomic stability. According to these rules, the annual inflation rate must not exceed 3%. Member countries are required to adhere to these criteria, although transitional periods – as during the COVID-19 pandemic – are sometimes granted. This approach has worked somewhat well in the past. According to the Institut national de la statistique, the inflation rate in Niger averaged 2.65% from 2003 until 2024. In 2021, the inflation rate was 3.8%; in 2022, it rose to 4.5%; and in 2023, it was 3.7%, according to the World Bank. In 2024, the inflation rate is expected to be 10%.

Serious questions remain about the quality of these official statistics. In general, though, inflation poses less of a challenge to Niger than it does to other West African states. The currency is pegged to the euro. As a result, the CFA franc fluctuates in line with euro-dollar movements, and the central bank's policy is heavily influenced by the actions of the European Central Bank.

Monetary stability



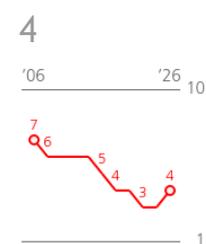
Since the onset of the Washington consensus, all Nigerien governments have attempted to reconcile two vastly contrasting objectives: ensuring fiscal stability and addressing ongoing economic and security challenges. This undertaking is no small challenge, and necessitates significant trade-offs. Given the numerous structural obstacles involved, the government strives to maintain stability.

Since the mid-1980s, Niger's trade balance has remained negative. By 2023, the country was running a trade deficit of \$2.5 billion. Public debt has increased dramatically – in 2021, public debt stood at 56.6% of GDP, compared to 18.1% in 2012. Niger owes external countries a total of \$5.4 billion. In 2021, government consumption amounted to 17.3% of GDP. Niger has consistently managed to qualify for donor funding from the IMF, bilateral Western donors and donors from the Arabian Peninsula. In July 2024, Niger was able to resume cooperation with the IMF, which provided additional funds enabling the country to keep afloat. The junta-led government has sought to expand cooperation with non-Western countries. Growing Turco-Nigerien relations may catalyze Turkish investments, potentially in the country's energy, mining (gold, uranium) and infrastructure sectors. Niger also signed a political and economic agreement with Iran in January 2025. Niger aims to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with the BRICS group of countries.

Between 2015 and 2023, a significant share of Western development and military funding was diverted to corrupt government channels, thereby worsening the country's external dependency at the expense of ordinary citizens. The current government has sought to implement additional taxes on foreign NGOs and on the population at large in order to finance its everyday expenses. The solidarity fund (Fonds de solidarité pour la sauvegarde de la patrie) seeks voluntary donations from wealthy citizens who wish to express their patriotic duty.

There have been improvements in budget transparency. According to the Open Budget Survey, Niger (data from 2023) scored 43 out of 100 points in the area of budget oversight and 33 out of 100 points with respect to budget transparency. These numbers are higher than those from previous years; however, they do not reflect events after the 2023 military coup.

Fiscal stability



9 | Private Property

Rights and regulations regarding the acquisition, benefits, use and sale of property are formally defined in laws. However, property disputes are common, particularly regarding community-owned land or land in rural areas where customary land titles remain prevalent. Land disputes between Nigerien farmers and traditional nomadic herders often center on traditional use rights. In 2014, Niger enacted measures to ease property transfer by reducing registration fees.

Property records are unreliable and frequently disputed. Currently, there is no government initiative to register land titles independently of active transactions.

The incursions of armed non-state groups from Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria affect property rights in Tillabéry, Tahoua and Maradi.

The government encourages the formation and protection of private enterprises, and has repeatedly pledged to take whatever steps are necessary to promote the development of the private sector. It has established an Institutional Framework for Improving Business Climate Indicators office (Dispositif Institutionnel d'Amélioration et de Suivi du Climat des Affaires) within the Ministry of Commerce. The goal is to create a framework that enables the implementation of sustainable reforms. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry houses a specialized institution called the Investment Promotion Center, which supports domestic and foreign investors on tasks including business creation, extension and rehabilitation.

The Investment Code adopted in 2014 provides guarantees for the reception and protection of foreign direct investment, as well as tax advantages for investment projects. The code allows tax exemptions for a specified period, based on the location and amount of the projects, to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the Ministry of Commerce. It guarantees fair treatment of investors regardless of their origin.

The Investment Code guarantees that no business will be subject to nationalization or expropriation, except when deemed in the public interest. The code requires the government to compensate any expropriated business with a just and equitable payment. However, the law is not applied evenly – there have been a number of expropriations of commercial and personal property, most of which were not conducted in a manner consistent with Nigerien law. In fact, it is rare for property owners to be compensated by the government after property expropriations. The Chamber of Commerce provides a number of services aimed at assisting the free market and private companies in operating. The same is true of the Maison d'Entreprise in Niamey.

Most sectors of the economy – with the exception of a few state-owned enterprises – have been privatized. The state-owned oil distribution company SONIDEP no longer holds a monopoly over oil exports; export authority is now equally shared between SONIDEP and the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation. Likewise, although the

Property rights
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Private enterprise

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national electricity company NIGELEC still has a virtual monopoly on electricity distribution, steps have been taken to allow third-party access to the country's electricity grid.

10 | Welfare Regime

The right to social protection was enshrined in the constitution of the Seventh Republic. Since the suspension of the constitution, the junta-led government has not prioritized the provision of a safety net. As a result, the situation remains grim. Only a very small portion of the population – about 1%, according to the World Bank – can rely on a public social safety net. Niger's population is currently doubling every 20 years and is undergoing massive generational change, which is not mirrored at the political level. Expanding coverage of social services while increasing quality is a core challenge, even if the government were able to invest in social safety nets.

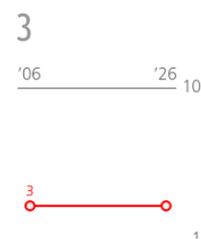
Average life expectancy is 61 years, reflecting a slight decline compared to a few years ago. The government currently spends 2.0% of GDP on health care.

The public welfare regime covers only individuals who work in the formal sector, thus including just a small fraction of the population – usually civil servants. The 2014 Investment Code provides tax incentives for sectors the government considers to be high priorities, such as social housing and health. The extent to which investors utilize these tax privileges cannot be determined.

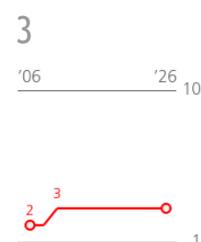
Niger experiences significant inequalities between its urban and rural populations, as well as between men and women and between the rich and the poor. Women and girls are marginalized in all sectors of society and the economy. The social origins of an individual often determine that individual's life chances and opportunities. Niger's overall literacy rate is 38%; for males it is 46%, and for females it is 30%. Across the educational system, the ratio of female to male enrollment offers additional evidence of the systematic and structural marginalization of women: this ratio is 0.9 at the primary level, 0.7 at the secondary level and 0.5 at the tertiary level. The gap in educational attainment between men and women thus increases over the various levels. The percentage of citizens enrolling in different levels of the education system also decreases at higher levels. The enrollment rate at the primary level of the education system is 69%; at the secondary level, it is 23%; and at the tertiary level, it is just 5%. Officially, women make up 41% of the labor force, but these numbers are likely overstated.

Schools and universities often experience long-term strikes, and instructional staff are generally underpaid. The influential role of Islamic leaders and the dominance of traditional gender and generational roles are significant obstacles to the emancipation of women, sexual and other minorities, and young people. Although there are no official statistics on the issue, it is likely that conflicts with jihadi insurgents in the border regions have significantly further impaired the equality of opportunity.

Social safety nets



Equal opportunity



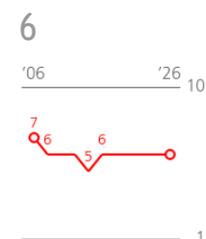
11 | Economic Performance

Prior to the coup, Niger experienced solid growth rates.

GDP per capita increased from \$1,068 in 2011 to \$1,817 in 2023. Inflation rates remained relatively low over the last decade – between 2% and 4% – but food prices at times showed high volatility. Despite this, Niger remains at the bottom of the Human Development Index ratings, and there are serious concerns about the quality of some official development data sources. There are no reliable sources regarding unemployment rates. Most of the population is underemployed, works in the informal sector or engages in subsistence economy activities. Between 2021 and 2023, foreign direct investment increased and ranged between 4% and 6%. In 2022, the trade balance was \$2.5 billion in deficit, a figure that had doubled since 2017. In 2023, gross capital formation equated to 26% of GDP, down from 32.4% in 2015. There is no reliable data about the country’s tax revenue.

It is unclear if, or how, the military coup will affect Niger’s economic performance in the long run. However, according to an IMF official’s statement in November 2024 during a visit to Niger, “Growth is projected at 8.8% in 2024, mainly driven by oil exports, a favorable agricultural season and the lifting of sanctions. Economic activity is expected to remain dynamic next year, with growth reaching 7.9%.”

Output strength

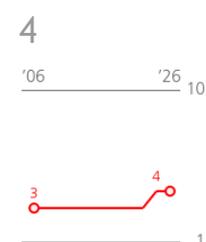


12 | Sustainability

It is difficult to overstate Niger’s environmental challenges. High population growth rates are placing additional pressure on already limited natural resources, highlighting the importance of environmental protection measures. Flooding during the summer months has worsened, threatening the livelihoods and homes of a growing number of citizens. In 2022, 2023 and 2024, flooding and other environmental disasters worsened further. Sandstorms have also become frequent extreme events, adversely affecting agriculture, livestock, water resources, public health and human life.

The government is aware of these challenges and is working to address them through green solutions and environmental projects with both multilateral and bilateral donors. Under the Nigeriens Nourishing Nigeriens (3N) initiative, which seeks to combat hunger and poverty while increasing the resilience of farmers and herders to climate change, Niger has committed to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, which include an environmental component. Various Nigerien governments have enacted legislation and decrees to protect forests and water. However, while environmental coordination has received increasing attention, current regulatory measures remain insufficient. Efforts to maintain security in jihadi-affected areas have diverted significant attention and resources from confronting climate change issues.

Environmental policy



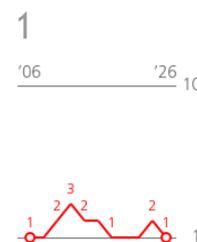
Law no. 98-56 (Framework Law on Environmental Management) establishes the general legal framework and fundamental principles of environmental management in the country. A National Environment Fund has been established to finance the National Environmental Policy. This fund will be used to support programs to combat desertification, including reforestation, fighting bush fires, improving farming techniques and the use of energy sources other than firewood, and promoting the use of renewable energies and clean technologies.

According to the UNDP, Niger has committed to conditional CO2 mitigation targets for the agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors of 14.60% by 2025 and 22.75% by 2030 as compared to business-as-usual trend lines, and introduced unconditional contributions of 4.50% and 12.57% by 2025 and 2030 respectively for these sectors.

Niger also introduced an unconditional pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions in its energy sector by 11.20% by 2025 and 10.60% by 2030 relative to business as usual, as well as reductions conditional on support of 48% and 45% for the same target years.

The government is committed to improving education as well as research and development opportunities. However, the implementation of policy agendas in these areas suffers from inefficiencies, a lack of capacity and, at times, a lack of political will. As a result, Niger is at the bottom of the U.N. Education Index. In 2021 and 2022, the government respectively spent 3.8% and 4% of its budget on education, which was encouraging and in line with efforts to achieve the SDGs. There is no data for R&D expenditure. In 2022, the country's overall literacy rate was 22.1%, but there are significant differences between individual regions, with literacy rates in Niamey exceeding those in the rest of the country. Given the worsening security conditions and the overthrow of the Bazoum administration by the military, there is every reason to believe that the situation of the educational system has worsened in recent months.

Education policy /
R&D



Governance

I. Level of Difficulty

Niger faces monumental structural constraints. Large sections of the population live in extreme poverty or poverty. Despite frequent initiatives and demands to diversify the economy, Niger's well-being remains largely dependent on agriculture and raw materials – uranium and oil – with the former sector relying on rainfall and the latter on world market prices. The workforce lacks specialization, and most workers are employed in the informal sector. Many talented Nigeriens migrate to other African countries or Western nations. The population is doubling in size every 20 years due to Niger's annual population growth rate of 3.7%. In recent months, the junta has tightened the controls on foreign mining companies and foreign NGOs, with potentially negative consequences for the economy. Because of several existing structural challenges – those in place prior to the coup – it is difficult to say whether these constraints have grown or remained the same. Food insecurity and malnutrition are the most severe, urgent and recurring challenges.

There is one doctor for every 90,000 inhabitants, a statistic that provides insight into the dismal health infrastructure. There are no functioning railways, and outside the main cities, roads are mostly unpaved. Some infrastructural projects, such as renovations of certain mines, have been undertaken, but these projects have been driven by the need to export goods.

Natural disasters, such as flooding, have become more common and more severe. The country faces the combined effects of rapid population growth and climate change. During the dry season, an unknown number of elderly people die in their homes due to high temperatures and unsuitable building materials such as aluminum roofs. According to reports by national and international NGOs, that number is rising each year. Every July and September, floods destroy hundreds of buildings in urban areas and leave thousands of Nigeriens homeless. According to the Red Cross (Report from 2021), floods and droughts affect the well-being of the entire country.

Landlocked between Mali, Libya, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, Niger is severely affected by the security situation in Mali, Burkina Faso, Libya and Nigeria. Incursions by jihadi Salafi terrorist groups and their attacks on Niger's territory have had a detrimental impact on the country's infrastructure. There is very little the junta has done – or could have done – about any of these issues since claiming power in July 2023.

Structural
constraints

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Numerous civil society organizations operate in the country. However, their foundations are weak, and in many cases individual associations operate under the umbrellas of larger associations. The activities of civil society organizations are primarily limited to the comparatively populated and urban areas, although professional and youth organizations also exist in rural areas.

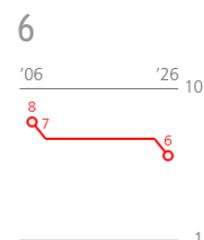
The authoritarian tendencies of the Issoufou and Bazoum administrations weakened the institutional foundation of civil rights and pro-democracy groups in Niamey and other major cities. The military coup of July 2023 further undermined these critical pro-democratic groups. The fact that many Nigeriens in Niamey became outspoken supporters of the junta did not help these developments. Civil society organizations sometimes manage to rally Nigerien citizens around universal goals such as “democracy” or “anti-corruption.” However, they are deeply divided when it comes to concrete policies and policy priorities, limiting their influence on policymaking or their ability to mobilize citizens for a specific goal. Islamic leaders and groups should be considered among the strongest and most influential civil society actors.

In Afrobarometer surveys conducted in 2022, 82% of the population said they trusted other citizens, 71% said they trusted people from other ethnic groups and 90% said they trusted their neighbors. Therefore, it seems fair to say there is a considerable amount of social capital in the country.

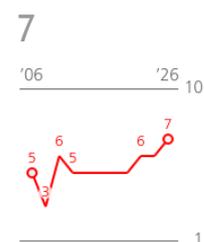
Since 2013, the division of the country into government and opposition supporters has escalated dramatically. The coup by the head of the presidential guard, Gen. Tiani, was at least in part inspired and encouraged by former President Issoufou. The fact that Issoufou was allegedly involved in the unconstitutional removal of his hand-picked successor demonstrates that alliances are short-lived and cannot be relied upon. This has been the master narrative of Nigerien party politics for the last 30 years.

There are also other important cleavages: the division between old and young, between wealthy and poor (individually and also along regional and ethnic lines), and between those who want a return to democratic civilian rule and those advocating for the military to reform the state before allowing a political transition. After the coup, Nigeriens are now also divided about the future foreign policy orientation of their country. What makes all of these matters considerably more complicated is that they are playing out in an environment in which violence is omnipresent. Since 2015, Niger has been the subject of jihadi Salafi attacks, specifically from Boko Haram, along the border with Nigeria in the Diffa region. Beginning in 2018, various other jihadi Salafi organizations, particularly the Islamic State in the Sahel group, have also engaged in terrorist attacks along the border with Mali and Burkina Faso. Consequently, Niger has become a victim of conflicts that have spilled over from neighboring countries. Since July 2023, the threat posed by jihadi Salafi groups has worsened after reaching a plateau in 2022. The withdrawal of most Western military troops has probably weakened Niger’s ability to ensure even a minimal degree of order, as cooperation with Russia cannot compensate for the absence of Western military personnel.

Civil society traditions



Conflict intensity



Various governments have successfully undermined or co-opted potentially violent challengers to state authority. Prominent examples include the Tuareg rebels in the early 1990s and conservative Islamist clerics in the late 1990s and early 2000s. After the 2023 coup, a small segment of the Tuareg demanded that the junta allow deposed President Bazoum to return to power. There is thus at least the potential for the Tuareg conflict to be rekindled.

As the country is 99% Muslim, there are no significant religious cleavages, although tensions between Sufi and Salafi clerics exist. However, these societal tensions do not translate into political tensions. At the elite level, Nigerien politics center on personalities who might have a strong regional following but also draw on support elsewhere. All civilian political elites refrain from violence. This does not apply to the military, which has once again emerged as a political actor.

II. Governance Performance

14 | Steering Capability

The CNSP has set new and seemingly contradictory strategic priorities: Its stated goals are to ensure order and stability, to recreate the foundations of the state, and to diversify Niger's foreign partners to the disadvantage of the West. It has implemented several of these new priorities, but it is too early to predict whether the CNSP will be capable of pursuing them in the long run. Significant challenges include a shortage of funds, the tendency to pursue an isolationist policy toward the West, deeply ingrained structural challenges and a worsening security situation.

The various post-1993 administrations, including the military-led governments, have also set priorities but frequently postponed implementation due to other short-term goals such as securing access to executive power. For example, they have prioritized the development of human capital, the improvement of governance and the structural transformation of the economy. Additionally, the government has adhered to the SDG goals and the UN's Agenda 2030, and strongly supported the policy priorities outlined in the AU's Agenda 2063. Since 2010, the influx of aid money has led to corruption and inefficiency within the state's bureaucracy. According to Afrobarometer's most recent survey data (2022), roughly half the population believed that corruption had worsened under the government then in power. While some previous governments have successfully reduced the incidence of extreme poverty, there has been little significant improvement in the living conditions of ordinary citizens.

Question
Score

Prioritization

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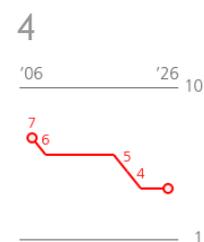
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Since the return of multiparty democracy in 1993, all governments have failed to deliver on their developmental promises. This does not mean they should not be considered drivers of change and reform, as seen under Mamadou Tandja (1999 – 2010), who prioritized rural areas. However, Niger today faces many of the same socioeconomic issues as in 1993, in 1974 following the military coup by Seyni Kountché, or even in 1960 after gaining its independence from France. These failures are due to several factors, even though the budget has expanded: a disjuncture between wealthy political elites and the wider population; an inefficient bureaucracy with significant numbers of “ghost workers”; the failure of the administrative elite to prioritize key policy changes over maintaining the status quo; Western donors who have provided Niger with growing amounts of development aid in order to stabilize a key ally in the war against terrorism in the Sahel; a general lack of education among large sections of society; a dysfunctional educational system; and population growth, the rate of which is the highest globally. Overall, there is a lack of reliable data showing how policies are implemented. The fact that the Nigerien government does not provide the public with detailed information about its budget also does not help. It is too early to judge the implementation efforts of the CNSP, but since most policy steering challenges are deeply entrenched structural issues, it is hard to imagine that the current government will be more effective than its predecessors.

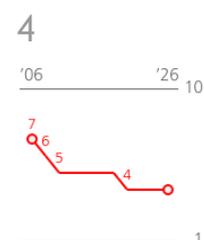
Niger’s economy is not well diversified, and is highly dependent on factors beyond the government or business sector’s control, such as weather conditions and global market prices. Nigerien governments often blame their predecessors for failing to make meaningful improvements in the population’s living conditions. The CNSP is no exception, although it derives popular support from promises to outperform previous civilian governments in terms of innovation, flexibility and overall performance.

It is important to note that Niger has been engaged in violent military confrontations with jihadi Salafi groups since 2015. This poses an enormous security challenge, and over time the Nigerien security forces have learned to make good use of foreign military resources. However, the conflict also demands significant administrative attention and effort, resulting in a lack of flexibility and innovation in other policies.

Implementation



Policy learning



15 | Resource Efficiency

Niger does not efficiently utilize its human capital or other resources. This failure has been a major factor behind the recurring military interventions since the return of multiparty democracy in 1993.

Recruitment is based on personal proximity to higher-ranking officials, and sometimes on merit. The importance of personal connections increases for higher-level administrative positions. Dismissals and appointments of high-ranking civil servants tend to be politically motivated. Competitive recruitment is rare, with only occasional exceptions.

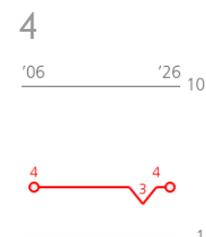
Previous Nigerien governments did not provide a detailed annual budget or any other specific information about their expenses, personnel or use of assets. For its part, the CNSP has also failed to do so thus far. Therefore, it is practically impossible to assess the extent to which the state employs administrative personnel or utilizes its budget resources. The war against Boko Haram and the Islamic State group in the Sahel has also affected state resources, but no conclusive determination can be made.

Numerous administrations have placed decentralization on their reform agendas, but this is poorly implemented in most parts of the country.

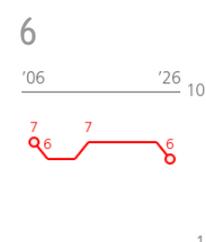
There have been several recent efforts to reform the state administration and improve its effectiveness. Since 2017, the public finance administration (Direction Générale des Opérations Financières et des Réformes) has worked to increase the speed of its operations. The government has set a goal of establishing a citizen-friendly bureaucracy. Currently, there is no reliable information available about the progress of this reform. Delays in public salary disbursements occur frequently, and the public health sector is particularly affected by this issue.

Niger lacks sufficient manpower and administrative capacity to balance trade-offs between policy goals. The logic behind public sector recruitment – neo-patrimonial and/or clientelist – further hinders effective coordination. In response to security threats posed by jihadi Salafi groups and climate challenges, such as extensive flooding and desertification, there have been several attempts to improve policy coherence. The government has also tried to coordinate ministries involved in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts remain ad hoc and are not institutionalized. The sudden military takeover and appointment of a new administration led by Gen. Tiani have done little to improve the situation. Given the new administration's total focus on security and its break with well-established international and regional foreign policy traditions, coordination efforts have likely decreased.

Efficient use of assets



Policy coordination



Outside the main cities, the responsibilities of different ministries and layers of government are not communicated to the broader public or the administrators in charge of those units. The overall coordination mechanism can best be described as a mixture of patriarchal, centralized and personalist mechanisms.

Niger publishes audit findings, but the government fails to provide citizens with sufficient information about budgetary spending. In 2011, the Issoufou administration created the Haute Autorité de Lutte contre la Corruption et Infractions Assimilées (HALCIA). HALCIA's purpose is to identify corrupt practices within the state bureaucracy and work toward shifting public attitudes on corruption. HALCIA collaborates with various civic associations but currently lacks the momentum it had a decade ago. The presidency finances HALCIA. To access information about corruption, Nigeriens are dependent on civic associations or findings from the court of auditors. Some of these associations include the Réseau des organisations pour la transparence et l'analyse budgétaire (ROTAB), Tournons La Page Niger (TLP-Niger) and Le réseau nigérien anti-corruption (RENAC). In 2021, Niger passed a law designed to protect the court of auditors from external influences. In its annual reports for 2020 and 2021, the court identified irregularities in several state-run companies, municipal administrations and state institutions.

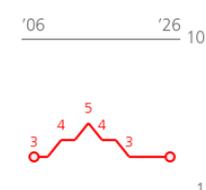
All of these previous efforts must be seen as insufficient, as Niger remains one of the most corrupt countries globally. The CNSP has established a body to focus on recovering stolen public property and funds, as well as increasing personnel for anti-corruption investigations and prosecutions. Composed of judges, army and police officers and representatives of civil society, the process of selecting these members lacked transparency, and accomplishments have been very limited so far. Furthermore, it is not clear at this stage whether the anti-corruption regulations discussed under Bazoum will be implemented or whether the transitional commission and court will have an impact on the final outcome. On many occasions, the new body has served as a mechanism to intimidate former civilian politicians and civil servants and thus undermine any potential opposition to the new regime. On the other hand, it is simply too early to judge whether these new mechanisms will carry out their tasks in an efficient and transparent manner.

16 | Consensus-Building

The military takeover of July 2023 has reintroduced the military, or sections of it, as a political player and decision-maker. Although civilian politicians generally agreed on basic goals such as democracy and a free market economy, the military has put forward a very different political agenda for the country. Under the junta's rule, democracy is not a priority and Niger's foreign policy has been aligned with the foreign policies of Mali and Burkina Faso. Given Tiani's silence regarding his concrete political plans for the future, it does not appear that the conflict will be

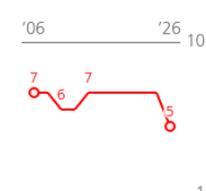
Anti-corruption policy

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Consensus on goals

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resolved anytime soon. In February 2025 a national commission suggested a renewable political transition toward a democratic regime, lasting at least five years. This has done little to assuage fears that Tiani intends to stay in power indefinitely.

Citizens, civilian politicians and military elites agree on the desirability of a free market economy. The junta-led government does not intend to pursue a specific ideological economic blueprint. There is little or no disagreement regarding the desirability of a free market economy.

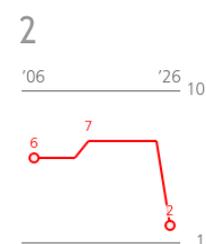
The failed military coup of March 2021 served as a powerful warning that a minority within the armed forces were still inclined to take power, and capable of doing so. The military takeover of July 2023 confirmed this. The absence of large-scale protests against the coup agents – in stark contrast to previous episodes of military rule – demonstrates that political reformers have little control over anti-democratic actors. Moreover, large segments of civil society have endorsed the military junta, with many expressing their overt opposition to a return to civilian rule.

Although Tiani is seen as unpopular within the military at large, there is little reason to assume a more democratic challenger will emerge any time soon.

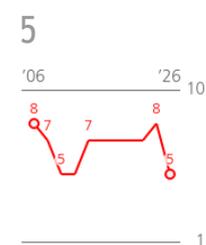
Fundamentalist Islamic clerics, who both defy state authority and reject modern values, are another important collective veto player. However, there is no indication that fundamentalist clerics are in a position to decisively challenge democratic institutions and state authority. Although the political class as a whole has accepted election outcomes, individual leaders' powerful self-interest still has the potential to override democratic principles.

There has been a consistent increase in polarization between the governments of Issoufou and Bazoum and the opposition parties since around 2013. The leaders of the CNSP coup claim they were reacting to this polarization, but in fact, they are participants in it. The coup was driven at least partly by the escalating rivalry between Issoufou and his successor, Bazoum, with coup leader Tiani widely suspected to be acting on behalf of former President Issoufou. One and a half years after the military coup, it is clear that the new government has no interest in accommodating opposition voices or returning the country to civilian leadership any time soon. It is unclear whether the vast popular mobilization in favor of the military was an epiphenomenon fueled by the ECOWAS threat to intervene in the country or a sign of the construction of a broad national consensus across cleavages.

Anti-democratic actors



Cleavage / conflict management



Previous civilian governments frequently consulted with civil society; however, they set their political agendas independently or in consultation with Western donors. The same applies to policy formulation. There was little to no information about how decisions were made or who the powerful decision-makers are outside the cabinet. The same is true for the CNSP, although there is considerably less or no consultation with civil society organizations seeking a return to civilian rule. As the Nigerien junta emulates the practices of the juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso, many organizations are practicing self-censorship for fear of crackdowns.

Traditional and religious leaders play a more prominent role here than civic associations. Niger has participated in the voluntary review mechanisms of the SDGs, but the findings are largely inconsequential. There is little to no oversight of policy output. As a result, there is no effective or notable performance monitoring.

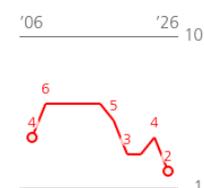
There have been attempts to recognize the need to address historical acts of injustice. Prominent examples include the North-South divide, the relationship between the state and its citizens, the vulnerability of ethnic minorities and interreligious relations.

Various governments have established numerous deliberative councils intended to contribute to national cohesion and reconciliation. One such institution is the High Authority of Peace Consolidation, which implements projects in conflict zones aimed at promoting peace and addressing the needs of marginalized populations. However, it is impossible to evaluate these projects, as there are no regular reports available on their activities. In the past, the mediator of the republic successfully built bridges between the government and the opposition but has so far been unable to mitigate some of the tension between them. The Tuareg have been among the main victims of past injustices – in particular, the treatment of Tuareg civilians by the Nigerien state and the economic neglect of the north since independence from France in 1960 – and the government has attempted to address these issues through co-optation and the institutionalization of the Journée nationale de la concorde and the Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix.

The CNSP has made no efforts to initiate reconciliation. It does not engage in debates about reconciliation as it prioritizes the current security situation over any other issue.

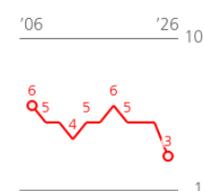
Public consultation

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Reconciliation

3



17 | International Cooperation

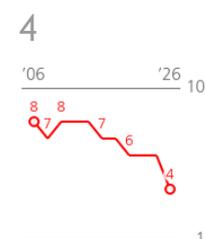
The CNSP does not have clearly defined aims. It has stated that its main priority is security and the reevaluation and diversification of Niger's international partners. It remains unclear what that means for democratization and future international cooperation. Thus far, this has meant curtailing cooperation with long-standing Western partners, Niger's departure from ECOWAS and the growing presence of a (still small) number of Russian military trainers. Niger is now a member of the Alliance of Sahel States (French: Alliance des États du Sahel, AES). The AES is a confederation formed by Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. It was established in July 2024 as a mutual defense pact. There is no road map specifying next steps. The anti-Western and anti-ECOWAS foreign policy is a clear break from the past. The same applies to Niamey's embrace of Russia as a new military cooperation partner. Russia's involvement in Niger is significantly lower than in Mali or the Central African Republic. Reference to Russia, however, plays an important role in the formulation of Tiani's nationalist-populist rhetoric. Although Russian military trainers are present in Niger and are providing military advice to the Nigerien army, their presence is limited, as is Russia's commercial interest in the country.

Until the 2023 coup, Niger was a highly valued member of Western alliances in the Sahel and the broader region. Seen as an anchor of stability in a notoriously fragile area, the Issoufou and Bazoum administrations received extensive Western aid and military support. The coup changed all that. The country's new foreign policy orientation stands in stark contrast to positions taken by all post-independence governments, including former military administrations.

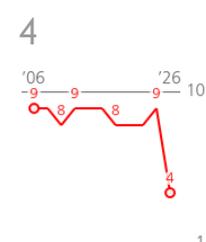
Niger has signed all relevant international and regional treaties. However, even in the past, there were serious concerns regarding the implementation of treaties that promote gender equality, educational equality and labor standards. The implementation of these treaties will remain elusive under the CNSP. In international organizations such as the United Nations, Niger has previously been known for its efforts to work toward peace and reconciliation. Under the CNSP, the country is likely to become an ally of authoritarian nations such as Russia, China or Iran.

Until July 2023, various administrations were engaged in creating cooperative international relations. Under the CNSP, Niamey has followed the examples of Mali and Burkina Faso. Together with the juntas in Bamako and Ouagadougou, it has left ECOWAS and become an integral part of the Alliance of Sahel States. In addition, its historically close relationship with Benin and Nigeria has suffered enormous tension, resulting in the temporary closure of the border with Benin during the summer of 2024. Therefore, Niger now cooperates selectively with individual neighboring states. Its new relationship with Russia will likely mean that Niamey will become reluctant to accept rules set by regional and international organizations.

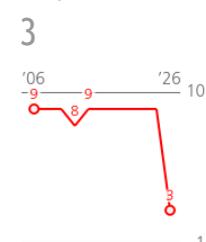
Effective use of support



Credibility



Regional cooperation



Strategic Outlook

Niger's future appears grim and highly uncertain. Given the manifold security challenges in the Sahel region, instability will remain a constant feature of Nigerien politics.

The military coup of July 2023 represents a major political setback. The almost complete lack of broader public protest against the new military rulers stands in stark contrast to the post-coup periods in 1996, 1999 and 2010. Constitutional multiparty democracy currently lacks a viable base of support in Niger. This is a new development and is partly the result of the failure of various civilian administrations to deliver basic public goods despite a massive influx of Western development funding over the last decade. At the close of the review period, one and a half years after being overthrown, former President Bazoum remained in detention. His fate, and the political fate of all major political actors of Niger's seventh republic (2011 – 2023), remains highly uncertain. It is likely the CNSP-led administration will selectively target former politicians and high-ranking administrators through the newly created anti-corruption court.

Western powers interested in advancing democratic reforms should collaborate with the media – many of whom self-censor out of fear – as well as the suspended political parties and human rights associations. The Nigerien junta intends to emulate the current Malian government's approach to governance. However, in contrast to Malian civil society, Nigerien civil society is divided over the current political dispensation. Gen. Tiani is not well liked within the Nigerien military and lacks broader societal support. Further, the international community should push for a timetable leading to competitive elections and the drafting of a new constitution. At the same time, Western democracy promoters need to be careful not to be too visible. Throughout the Sahel, junta-led governments justify their repressive approach toward potential regime opponents by invoking the issues of national sovereignty and anti-colonialism. The political leverage for Western powers therefore is highly restricted.

Economically, the situation looks even worse. Niger's hasty departure from ECOWAS, its irresponsible trade war with Benin and its anti-French/EU stance will damage its political standing internationally. With many European governments cutting back on foreign aid due to the political situation in Niamey and with the Trump administration's de facto eradication of USAID, it is unclear how the government will make up for the loss of outside funding. Neither Russia nor China nor Iran will provide similar levels of aid. The IMF has resumed its cooperation and support with Niger, but at a lower level than before. Since the overthrow of the Bazoum administration, the security situation has not collapsed but it has worsened, further weakening Niger's already fragile economic position. Niamey hopes to expand its oil exports.