INSCT MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA INITIATIVE

INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Niger Risk Assessment 2014



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report—developed from open-source information including congressional and federal reports, academic articles, news media accounts, and NGO papers—concerns Niger, a land-locked, sub-Saharan nation that is one of the poorest nations the world.

This predominantly Sunni Muslim country is largely reliant upon agriculture and subsistence farming, with the exploitation of uranium deposits representing the only substantive industry. Because of the harsh nature of the terrain and fluctuation in rainfall, food shortages are commonplace. Niger's population of 17 million is largely concentrated on the 12% of arable land in the southernmost portion of the country, as most of the desert north is uninhabitable.

Niger's government recently transitioned back to a democracy in 2011 after a military coup suspended the constitution and removed the former president

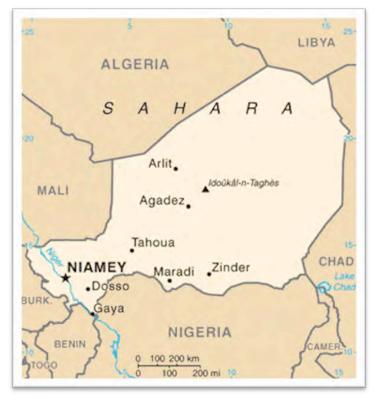


FIGURE 1: Map of Niger (CIA World Factbook).

from office. Heavily reliant upon foreign aid, a lack of financial resources restricts government capacity and security enforcement. Although Niger is surrounded by security threats to the north, south, and west, and despite its porous borders, it has not succumbed to large-scale violence. However, numerous endogenous and exogenous threats are present. Tasked with preventing violence, the military and police of Niger remain resource-challenged, but the US and other Western countries are committed to helping meet this challenge via capacity-building measures and direct involvement (such as a joint US and French UAV base).

Regarding extractive industries, the security of the uranium industry in Niger is critical to both Niger and France. France derives roughly one-fifth of its nuclear fuel from Nigerien mines, and Niger depends on the revenue derived from this valuable resource.

This risk assessment outlines the following topics:

- Security Threats, including terrorism and insurgency (the Tuareg Rebellion); the role lack of resources and capacity plays; the roles of former colonial power France and donor nation, the United States; and pressures caused by climate, demographics, and government corruption.
- ❖ Niger's Defense Structure, including its armed forces and the gendarmerie.
- **The Extractive Industry,** dominated by uranium mining, which has become a target of insurgents and terrorists.
- **Addendum:** Niger's Executive Structure.

SECURITY THREATS

Terrorism

Niger remains a staunch ally of the US and France in the fight against regional terror groups, and it continues to receive military training to combat these threats. Niger has seen relatively low violence in comparison to neighboring Mali and Nigeria, where Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram operate. However, the French intervention in Mali in 2013 largely disrupted AQIM, Ansar Dine, and Al-Murabitun, which caused many of these fighters to flood across the borders of Algeria and Niger to regroup.² Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou has shifted large amounts of resources and personnel to the borders in order to stem the flow of extremists across these poorly demarcated, lightly defended, and vast regions. In a recent speech, Issoufou reiterated his concern about Salafist Jihadists establishing bases in southern Libya and taking control of Nigerien territories.³

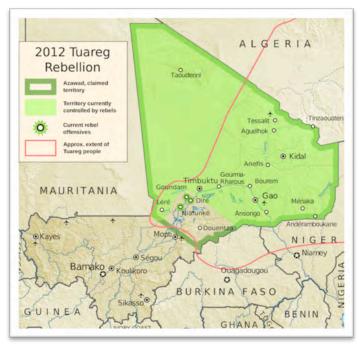


FIGURE 2: 2012 Tuareg Rebellion (Wikimedia Commons).

As French, US, and allied African forces continue to apply pressure to terrorist groups in Mali, Nigeria, and Algeria, Niger is likely to continue to see spillover, with inadequate personnel, funding, and capabilities restricting its border security operations. For example, there are signs that Boko Haram activity increased in southern Niger in 2014, as security forces arrested several militants in Zinder and Diffa who had bomb-making material and alleged intentions to attack local markets. In addition, Shari'a-based fundamentalism is gaining a foothold in southern Niger, as violence against Christians and support for Boko Haram—an organization that seeks to establish a pure Islamic Shari'a state and which is vehemently against "Westernstyle" education—increases in Zinder.⁴

Insurgency

Similar to Mali, ethnic and cultural divisions between Niger's population and the nomadic Tuareg have created unrest and numerous rebellions. In 2007, the Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ), a Tuareg-dominant insurgent group, led a rebellion in the Agadez region of Niger over grievances pertaining to marginalization,

¹ Eric Schmitt, "US Takes Training Role in Africa as Threats Grow and Budgets Shrink," March 5, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/05/world/africa/us-takes-training-role-in-africa-as-threats-grow-and-budgets-shrink.html?ref=world&_r=1

² International Crisis Group, "Niger: Another Weak Link in the Sahel," Sept. 19, 2013, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/niger/208-niger-another-weak-link-in-the-sahel-english.pdf

³ John Irish, "Niger's President Says Libya Risks Becoming Like Somalia," Reuters, Dec. 6, 2013, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/06/uk-niger-libya-idUKBRE9B50KT20131206

⁴ Sudarsan Raghaven, "Niger Struggles Against Islamist Militants (AQIM)," Aug. 17, 2012, http://zameer36.com/niger-struggles-against-islamist-militants-agim/.

deterioration of living conditions, and a failure of the government to adequately compensate them with income from the uranium mines.⁵

This Tuareg Rebellion differed from that of Mali in the sense that the Tuareg in Niger permeate the country and are not concentrated in a single region. In addition, the latest rebellion fragmented the Tuareg population, which diminished the possibly of secession and cohesion. Notably, Niger approached a peace agreement differently than Mali did—the government chose to integrate the Tuareg into the government structure and to pursue a multi-pronged peace approach rather than increase government security measures, an approach that caused division and strife in Niger's neighbor.⁶

After the fall of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi, Niger became a smuggling route for weapons and fighters. Large amounts of weapons and ammunition flowed south toward Mali in order to arm insurgent and jihadist forces. This ease of cross-border transportation highlights the security challenge that the porous borders of Niger represent. The Tuareg continue to be a conduit for other illicit trafficking, such as narcotics and humans. Although the bulk of narcotics trafficking occurs mainly in states west of Niger, the country is a

major source, transit, and destination country for women, men, and children who are trafficked for forced labor, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, or even organ removal.⁸ Even the heinous practice of slavery still presents a problem in much of the Tuareg population, who still hold to the traditional practice of hereditary slavery, despite its criminalization.⁹

The Role of the Economy in Security

In 2013, Niger introduced a five-pronged strategy to address the link between development and security. ¹⁰ Recognizing that economic development and security are inextricably bound, this strategy focuses on improving economic conditions in the hope that this approach will reduce future threats.

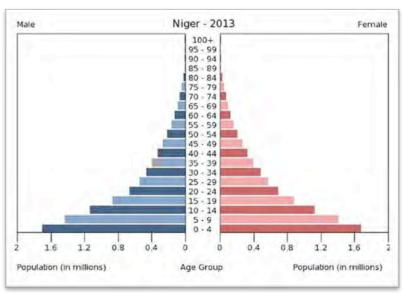


FIGURE 3: Niger's population pyramid, showing the classic shape associated with high birth and death rates (US Census Bureau International Database).

The economic conditions described below highlight the variables and problems that can lead to radicalization and insurgency.

⁵ Child-Sponsorship, "Tuareg Rebellion," http://www.child-sponsorship.com/tuareg_rebellion.html

⁶ IRIN, "Can Niger Offer Mali Lessons on the Tuareg?," April 11, 2013 http://www.irinnews.org/report/97823/can-niger-offer-mali-lessons-on-the-tuareg

BBC News Africa, "Niger's Army 'Blocks Libya to Mali Convoy," November 9, 2011 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15654572.

⁸ United Nations Human Rights, "Seeking Ways to Eliminate Human Trafficking in Niger," Sept. 26, 2012 http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/HumanTraffickingInNiger.aspx

⁹ IRIN, "Niger: Slavery – an Unbroken Chain," March 21, 2005 http://www.irinnews.org/report/53497/niger-slavery-an-unbroken-chain

¹⁰ International Peace Institute, "Republic of Niger Strategy for Development and Security in Sahel-Saharan Areas of the Country," April, 25, 2013 http://ipinst.org/news/general-announcement/377-republic-of-niger-strategy-for-development-and-security-in-sahel-saharan-areas-of-the-country.html

Demographics

Laudably, the Nigerien government does not want to see the 2012 Malian crisis replicated in Niger. Climate and demographic pressures make this policy a challenge, however. Similar to Mali, Niger has many of the conditions that breed insurgency. It is at the bottom of the Human Development Index, and the vast majority of the population lives off less than \$2 per day. Fluctuations in the price of uranium cause financial instability. Droughts and the continuous encroachment of the Sahara desert cause food shortages and subsequent crises for millions of Nigeriens.

Furthermore, both the birth and death rates are high in Niger, with 50% of its population younger than 15. Despite extremely high infant and maternal mortality rates, and a life expectancy of 55, the population of Niger continues to explode. The average Nigerien woman conceives around seven children. If the current pace of fertility continues, the population will quadruple by the year 2050. A significant increase in Niger's population will further strain the people and government, which will deepen the need for outside assistance due to continual food, water, and livestock shocks. In Mali, terror groups were able to make significant inroads thanks to the financial contributions and quasi-governmental structure they provided in the absence of the legitimate government. Allowing jihadists to operate in an area was a significant financial benefit to extremely poor Mali families. Where ethnicity and languages are similar, Salafist ideology can easily infiltrate a population, especially when the malefactors provide stable income, assistance, and social structure.

Climate, Terrain, & Food Insecurity

The Sahel desert represents a tough challenge for a government trying to sustain a population that is reliant upon agriculture and livestock. ¹² Adequate rainfall falls on approximately 12% of Niger's land area. Topsoil erosion continues to occur, reducing the amount of farmable land for a growing population each year. Subsistence farmers and pastoralists lack the capacity to resist external shocks—every few years droughts and famine reduce livestock populations and increase food insecurity. For instance, the lack of rainfall in 2013, in combination with a refugee crisis, caused further misery for many families still recovering from a similar crisis in 2012. ¹³ The government estimates that 11.7 million of its people are now food insecure. Other risk factors that are common in the Sahel region include inadequate healthcare, widespread illiteracy, and a substantial dependency ratio. ¹⁴

Corruption

Under President Issoufou, addressing widespread corruption has been a priority. ¹⁵ Corruption in the executive and legislative branches has been exacerbated by a lack of adequate administrative controls and a poorly financed and trained law enforcement structure. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index shows that Niger has improved significantly under the new administration, moving up 21 places to

¹¹Ryan M. Barnett, "Sahel Insurgency: The Nigerien Approach to Islamic Militancy," Consultancy Africa Intelligence, Jan. 6, 2014 http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1636:sahel-insurgency-nigerien-approach-to-islamic-militancy&catid=60:conflict-terrorism-discussion-papers<emid=265

¹² Malcolm Potts, Virginia Gidi, Martha Campbell & Sarah Zureick, "Niger: Too Little, Too Late," Guttmacher Institute, International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 37:2 (June 2011) http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3709511.html

¹³ Mercy Corps, "Food Crisis Looming: Hawa's Fight Against Hunger," March 26, 2014 http://www.mercycorps.org/articles/niger/food-crisis-looming-hawas-fight-against-hunger

The Guardian, "Niger Slavery: Background," Oct. 27, 2008 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/oct/27/humanrights1

¹⁵ US State Department, "2013 Investment Climate- Niger," April 2013 http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2013/204706.htm

113th out of 176 in 2012 and 7 more places to 106th in 2013. ¹⁶ The government has established additional anticorruption institutions to address all levels of corruption in the government. For example, declaration of revenues from extractive industries has come under more scrutiny, as has the declaration of the personal assets of government employees. In addition, several key officials from the previous administration were indicted for corruption in 2013.

US & French Commitment

The Pentagon has chosen to undertake a supporting role in West Africa, helping former colonial power France (Niger gained full independence in 1960) and local governments combat terrorists and increase capacity and security. The US and a host of European nations have strengthened training exercises in the country to provide hands-on training to Nigerien military personnel. Through the recently constructed drone base near Niamey, the US and France have increased efforts to provide aerial reconnaissance and to gather intelligence through unarmed UAV flights. President Issoufou himself has heralded the capabilities and necessity of drones to track the movements of insurgents across his vast territory.¹⁷

As increased pressure is applied to terror groups in areas of counter-insurgency operations, these groups inevitably will move to areas with less security. The French disrupted AQIM and likeminded movements in Mali in 2013; unfortunately, these groups reorganized, moving across the vast open territories of the Sahel and Sahara, sometimes facilitated by the Tuareg. In the south, members of Boko Haram easily slip across borders where shared ethnicity and language make differentiation difficult. Border security, personnel, and training are therefore strategic imperatives for a secure and prosperous Niger.

Attacks Against Strategic & Western Interests

Similarly, for Niger's burgeoning industrial sector, physical security is a high priority. French interests continue to be strategic areas for attack, as well as sources for kidnapping and ransom, by insurgent groups such as those affiliated with AQIM. The Amenas, Algeria gas attack by Mokhtar Belmokhtar's Signatories in Blood Brigade serves as a stark reminder of the nature of the region's jihadists and their abilities. Security is necessary not only to protect the assets on which the country so heavily depends (i.e., the uranium mines) but also to encourage future business. Terrorist attacks on industrial sites tend to discourage the type of foreign investment that Niger so desperately needs.

NIGER'S DEFENSE STRUCTURE

Ministry of Defense/Nigerien Military

The Nigerien military is a small force with limited capacity. As one of the poorest countries in the world—with an annual defense budget of roughly 1.6% to 1.9% of its GDP of approximately US\$6.5 billion—capacity and functionality are severely restricted. However, in recent years Nigerien forces have received significant international training and have gained substantive counterinsurgency experience. There have been several recent counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations for the Nigerien military to contend with. During

¹⁶ Transparency International, "Niger," accessed April 7, 2014 http://www.transparency.org/country#NER

¹⁷ Craig Whitlock, "Drone Base in Niger Gives US a Strategic Foothold in West Africa," Washington Post, March 21, 2013 http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/drone-base-in-niger-gives-us-a-strategic-foothold-in-west-africa/2013/03/21/700ee8d0-9170-11e2-9c4d-798c073d7ec8_story.html

¹⁸ Peter Tinti, "Niger: The Stable Sahelian State, for Now," Sept. 27, 2013 http://thinkafricapress.com/niger/stable-instability-sahelian-state-mali-example

the Malian crisis, Niger quickly sent 5,000 personnel to the border to prevent insurgents from crossing. A similar action was taken during the Libyan conflict to help prevent the passage of weapons and insurgents. Niger also is participating (with around 900 soldiers) in the UN-led coalition of forces (MINUSMA) providing stability in Mali. In fact, regional cooperation has become a strategic imperative for the government; Niger led the call for intervention to defeat terrorist groups in Mali, and now it is calling for similar cooperative efforts in southern Libya to prevent terror groups from setting up bases there. ²⁰

In another example of earnest conflict and postconflict operations, with regard to the most recent Tuareg Rebellion in Niger, the government has worked with former insurgents to reintegrate them into society and address their grievances.²² The government implemented a program to remove land mines from the Tuareg controlled areas via a partnership between security personnel and ex-fighters, and ex-fighters who gave up their weapons were paid a wage for their participation in the program.²³

However, as is the case in other countries in the region, the military of Niger since independence from France has been heavily involved in the political life of the country. Niger has experienced four military coups, with the most recent occurring in 2010 due to then-President Mamadou Tandja's attempt to change the constitution to remain in power. A military junta replaced the government, but elections were held and the military voluntarily relinquished power in 2011, allowing Mahamadou Issoufou to become president.

Forces Armees Nigeriennes (FAN)

The armed forces—or Forces Armees Nigeriennes (FAN)—are currently comprised of around 12,000 personnel.²⁴ The military is organized into eight defense zones, which roughly align with national

administrative boundaries. The FAN carries out the traditional missions of a national defense force. Units of the FAN are comprised of motorized and airborne infantry, logistics, artillery units, and armored companies. There are four armored reconnaissance squadrons, seven infantry companies, two airborne companies, one engineer company, one air defense company, and one counterterrorist company.²⁵ Nigerien officers are trained in Tondibia, near Niamey, in the national officers training school.²⁶ The selective conscription term is 24 months.

Niger's Military General Staff (Chefs d'État Majors)²¹

Defense Minister: Karidjo Mahamadou

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces: Brig. Gen. Seyni Garba

Chief of Staff of the Army: Col. Mahamadou Baraze
Chief of Staff of the Air Force: Col. Boulama Issa Zana

Boukarn

Commander of the Gendarmerie: Col. Mounkaila Issa

bid.

²⁰ Libya Herald, "Niger Calls for International Intervention in Libya South," Feb. 5, 2014 http://www.libyaherald.com/2014/02/05/niger-calls-for-international-intervention-in-libyan-south/#axzz2y1aM5UbN

²¹ Anton Kruger and Guy Martin, "Niger Armed Forces," DefenceWeb, Sept. 13, 2013

 $http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content\&view=article\&id=31880:niger-armed-forces\&catid=119:african-militaries\<emid=255$

²² IRIN, "Can Niger Offer Mali Lessons on the Tuareg?," April 11, 2013 http://www.irinnews.org/report/97823/can-niger-offer-mali-lessons-on-the-tuareg.

²³ IRIN, "Apply Niger Demining Lessons in Mali, Niger's Ex-Rebels Urge," Sept. 26, 2013 http://www.irinnews.org/report/98762/apply-niger-demining-lessons-in-mali-niger-apos-s-ex-rebels-urge

²⁴ Alan Bryden & Boubacar N'Diye, eds., "Security Sector Governance in Francophone West Africa: Realities and Opportunities," DCAF, 2011, http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Security-Sector-Governance-in-Francophone-West-Africa-Realities-and-Opportunities

²⁵Anton Kruger and Guy Martin, "Niger Armed Forces," DefenceWeb, Sept.13, 2013

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31880:niger-armed-forces&catid=119:african-militaries<emid=255

²⁶ S. Decalo & A. Idrissa, June 1, 2012. "Historical Dictionary of Niger."

Air Force

The air force of Niger lacks the capacity to conduct large-scale air operations against insurgent groups.²⁷ However, the US and France are continuing to provide funding and training to improve the capabilities of the Air Force. In 2013, France delivered three Gazelle helicopters and provided the \$58 million in funding for a new helicopter hangar at the Niger Air Force's Base Aerienne 101. In addition, in 2013, the US provided two Cessna 208B Grand Caravans and 10 Toyota trucks to assist with border security and cargo missions.²⁸

Niger's air force has relatively little materiel in terms of attack aircraft: two Mi-24 attack helicopters and two Su-25 attack



FIGURE 4: Nigerien soldiers from the 322nd Parachute Regiment (Wikimedia Commons).

aircraft. Other aircraft in the Niger air fleet include two Diamond DA 42 MPP surveillance aircraft, three Humbert Tetras light aircraft, a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, a Boeing 737-200, one Dornier 28, one Dornier 228, and two Mil Mi-17s. The Air Force is comprised of roughly 400 to 1,000 personnel. The National Squadron is headquartered in Niamey.²⁹

Gendarmerie Nationale

The Gendarmerie Nationale operates an independent command structure under the Ministry of Defense and is charged with the protection of the rural areas and borders of Niger. In addition, the unit acts serves in the military police role. The Gendarmerie Nationale numbers approximately 5,400 in total.

Ministry of the Interior

Currently, the National Police of Niger and the National Forces for Intervention and Security (FNIS) report to the General Directorate of National Police, which falls under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. The current head of this ministry is Massaudo Hassoumi.³²

²⁷Guy Martin, "Niger Air Force Gets New Helicopter Hangar," DefenceWeb, Oct. 22, 2013

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32343:niger-air-force-gets-new-helicopter-hangar&catid=35:Aerospace&Itemid=107

²⁸Guy Martin, "Niger Armed Forces Receive New Aircraft, Vehicles," DefenceWeb, July 24, 2013

http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31304:niger-armed-forces-receive-new-aircraft-vehicles&catid=35:Aerospace&Itemid=107

²⁹XairForces, "Niger," accessed April 7, 2014 http://xairforces.net/airforces.asp?id=206#.U0BZwtzaGzB

³⁰ US Department of State, "2013 Human Rights Report: Niger," Feb. 2, 2014 http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/af/220144.htm.

³¹ Alan Bryden & Boubacar N'Diye, op. cit.

³² CIA, "Chiefs of State and Cabinet Ministers of Foreign Governments: Niger," Sept. 24, 2013 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/print/NG.pdf

National Police

Previously under the Armed Forces, the National Police force³³ is estimated to have 8,500 total personnel.³⁴ Tasked with law enforcement in urban areas, its central mission now is a traditional one for a domestic force: to implement laws and regulations, protect persons and property, maintain order, and fight all forms of crime.

National Forces for Intervention and Security (FNIS)

The FNIS (equivalent to a National Guard) is responsible for domestic security and the protection of government buildings and high-level officials.³⁵ The FNIS is used by the administration as a reserve force to maintain law and order. The number of personnel is roughly 10,000.³⁶ A fully autonomous force, the FNIS is under the charge of a military officer.

THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY

Niger's economy centers on livestock, subsistence farming, and the exploitation of large uranium deposits. Agriculture is the dominant occupation for around 90% of the population, which contributes around 35% of Nigerien GDP. Industry represents around 14% of GDP, with services comprising the remainder.³⁷

Since the adoption of a new mining code in 2006, mining and exploration permits issued by the government have increased significantly. The mining industry in Niger is administered through the Ministry of Mines and Industrial Development, which is currently led by Omar Hamidou Tchiana. The Société du Patrimoine des Mines du Niger (SOPAMIN) manages the state's interests in mining companies and is in charge of conducting commercial transactions regarding the products of mining companies. 39

Uranium Industry

Niger is currently the world's fourth largest uranium-producing country, 40 with uranium comprising 70% of Niger's exports. 41

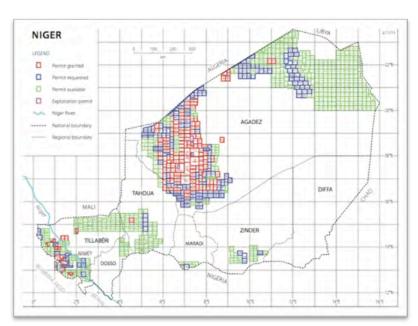


FIGURE 5: Niger's mines showing status of permits (Ministry of Mines & Industrial Development).

³³ Interpol, "La Direction Générale de la Police du Niger," accessed April 7, 2014 http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Africa/Niger

³⁴ Alan Bryden & Boubacar N'Diye, op. cit.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/208-niger-gdp-country-report.html#axzz2xw26DxEh

³⁸ CIA, "Chiefs of State and Cabinet Ministers of Foreign Governments: Niger," Sept. 24, 2013 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/print/NG.pdf

^{39 &}quot;SOPAMIN," accessed April 7, 2014 http://www.sopamin-sa.com

⁴⁰ http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Nuclear-Fuel-Cycle/Mining-of-Uranium/World-Uranium-Mining-Production/

Uranium is mined in the Agadez region near the towns of Arlit and Akokan, which lie on the western edge of the Aïr mountain range and on the southern border of the Sahara desert. Niger has two significant uranium mines that produce some of the highest quality uranium in Africa, and they are responsible for producing 7.5% of the world's world uranium output. Deposits were discovered shortly before Nigerien independence in 1960, with exploration and exploitation commencing shortly thereafter. AREVA, which has had a presence in Niger for more than 50 years, operates two mines through the mining companies of SOMAIR and COMINAK.

As a subsidiary of AREVA, 63.6% of SOMAIR is owned by the parent company AREVA and 36.4% by SOPAMIN, the Nigerien company responsible for Niger's mining interests. Ownership of COMINAK is 34% AREVA, 31% SOPAMIN, 25% OURD (the Overseas Uranium Resources Development Company Ltd., Japan), and 10% ENUSA (a state-owned Spanish company). AREVA is currently working to introduce IMOURAREN, a third mine south of Akokan. Production in this mine is set to begin in 2015, which is projected to make Niger the second-largest uranium-producing country in the world. Recently, however, relations between AREVA and the Nigerien government have come under strain over contract negotiations. Also, AREVA and Niger have come under international pressure to improve the safety of the mines as several NGOs have brought attention to radiation levels and worker safety. This issue in combination with

government attempts to reduce the amount of tax breaks and incentives that AREVA receives have contributed to the strained relationship and tough ongoing negotiations.⁴⁴

Securing the Uranium Industry: Terrorism & Kidnappings

The relationship and security interests between France and its former colony have become further intertwined as a result of the uranium discoveries. Three quarters of French electricity is produced by 58 nuclear reactors, which makes France more reliant on uranium than any other country. This reliance could increase further after the IMOURAREN mine becomes active. Currently, uranium from Niger provides roughly 18% of France's nuclear fuel. Thus, the security of the



FIGURE 6: The SOMAIR uranium mine, target of a 2013 suicide terrorist attack by the Movement for Unity and Jihad (World Nuclear News).

⁴¹ http://www.euractiv.com/development-policy/negotiations-niger-france-areva-news-532604

World Nuclear Association, "Uranium in Niger," March 2014 http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/country-profiles/countries-g-n/niger/

⁴³ AREVA, "AREVA's Facilities in Niger," April 7, 2014 http://niger.areva.com/EN/niger-198/areva-s-facilities-in-niger-cominak-somar-imouraren.html

⁴⁴ Daniel Flynn & Geert De Clercq, "Special Report: Areva and Niger's Uranium Fight," Reuters, Feb. 5, 2014 http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/05/usniger-areva-specialreport-idUSBREA140AA20140205

⁴⁵ Cordula Meyer, Uranium Mining in Niger: Tuareg Activist Takes on French Nuclear Company," Der Spiegel, April 2, 2010 http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/uranium-mining-in-niger-tuareg-activist-takes-on-french-nuclear-company-a-686774.html

⁴⁶Conway Waddington, "Uranium Mining Facilities in Niger Face Evolving Threat: The Changing Nature of Militant Islamist Activity in the Region Represents a Heightened Threat," Consultancy Africa Intelligence, Nov. 4, 2013

 $http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content\&view=article\&id=1592:uranium-mining-facilities-in-niger-face-evolving-threat-the-changing-nature-of-militant-islamist-activity-in-the-region-represents-a-heightened-threat\&catid=109:counter-proliferation\<emid=267$

existing mines and the ability to continue to extract additional reserves represents a strategic imperative for France.

During the height of French intervention in Mali in January 2013, French Special Forces were sent to AREVA's mines in Niger to provide protection. The Nigerien perspective, French assistance, both militarily and economically, is essential. On May 23, 2013, for instance, twin suicide attacks occurred at an army barracks in Agadez and at the SOMAIR uranium mine. Claimed by the Movement for Unity and Jihad (MUJWA), jihadists drove vehicles full of explosives into their targets that killed 21 soldiers at the barracks and one person at the mine, with dozens more wounded. The French company in Niger was targeted because of French intervention in Mali in 2013 and Niger's cooperation with the French in their counterterror and peacekeeping operations. In September 2010, four AREVA uranium mine employees were kidnapped from their homes by AQIM. Their release was granted in October 2013 after long negotiations and a supposed \$26 million ransom was paid. French AREVA workers, along with journalists, have represented prime targets for kidnapping, as terrorist groups such as AQIM, Ansar Dine, and Al-Murabitun use this mechanism as a significant funding source for their operations.

Other Extractives

Gold and oil constitute the other predominant extractive industries in Niger. The first commercial gold mine was opened in Samira in late 2004; however, gold production has remained modest. In 2011, through the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC), Niger officially became an oil producer with the opening of the first refinery in Zinder. The oil industry is paying closer attention to east Niger as several additional multinational corporations have begun exploration activity. In addition, CNPC was recently awarded a second oil permit as reserves were found to have been larger than expected. Oil production for Niger is expected to climb to 80,000 barrels per day as a result of the new developments.

Niger also has deposits of iron ore, coal, limestone, and phosphates.⁵⁴ In addition, there are deposits of other special use metals, such as lithium and cobalt, and base metals, such as copper, lead, and zinc. The Ministry of Mines is looking to leverage its mining history to attract further foreign investment in some of its other resources. For example, coal exploration has been encouraged, with a feasibility study undertaken for a charcoal briquette factory, and two new cement factories were developed in order to take advantage of local limestone and gypsum.⁵⁵ Logistical and security challenges, however, have affected production and output, and the requisite infrastructure (roads, railways, and power) for further development is lacking in many areas. These security and logistical challenges have been the primary factor for oil revenues falling short of predictions.

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⁴⁷ Tony Todd, "French Special Forces 'To Protect' Niger Uranium Mines," France 24, Jan., 25, 2013 http://www.france24.com/en/20130125-france-niger-uranium-areva-special-forces-mali-security-special-forces/

⁴⁸ BBC News, "Niger Suicide Bombers Target Areva Mine and Barracks," May 23, 2013 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22637084

⁴⁹ Adam Nossiter, "Suicide Bombings in Niger Kill Dozens in Dual Strikes," International New York Times May 23, 2013 http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/24/world/africa/niger-hit-by-two-suicide-attacks.html

⁵⁰ BBC News, "Freed French Hostages Return Amid Ransom Speculation," Oct. 30, 2013 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24739716.

⁵¹ Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, "Niger," April 7, 2014 http://eiti.org/Niger

⁵² MBendi, "Oil and Gas in Niger — Overview," April 7, 2014 http://www.mbendi.com/indy/oilg/af/ni/p0005.htm

⁵³ Reuters, "Niger Awards Second Oil Permit to CNPC, Plans Exports," Nov. 16, 2013 http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/16/niger-oil-idUSL5NOJ109420131116

⁵⁴ Omar Hamidou Tchiana, "Positioning Niger's Mining & Industrial Sector to Win," Republic of Niger, 2012 http://www.mineafrica.com/documents/B4%20-%20Niger.pdf

⁵⁵ Ibid.

ADDENDUM

Niger's Executive Structure

(As of September 24, 2013)⁵⁶

President: Mahamadou Issoufou

Prime Minister: Brigi Rafini

Minister of Energy & Petroleum: Foumakoye Gado

Minister of Communication: Yahouza Sadissou

Minister of Commerce: Alma Oumarou

Minister of Finance: Gilles Baillet

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mohamed Bazoum

Minister of the Interior: Massaudou Hassoumi

Minister of Justice: Marou Amadou

Minister of Mines & Industrial Development: Omar Hamidou Tchiana

Minister of National Defense: Karidjo Mahamadou

Minister of State in the Presidency of the Republic: Abouba Albade

Ambassador to the US: Maman S. Sidikou

Permanent Representative to the UN: Baboucar Boureima



FIGURE 7: Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou

⁵⁶ CIA, "Chiefs of State and Cabinet Ministers of Foreign Governments: Niger," Sept. 24, 2013 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/print/NG.pdf

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