



# Republic of Niger

## Risk Assessment Report



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## Executive Summary





The history of Niger has been characterized by intermittent ethnic conflicts due to the marginalization of its ethnic minorities. Combined with rampant underdevelopment, poverty, and socio-political marginalization, the ethnic dimension has contributed to the outbreak of violent conflict that has surfaced during the post-independence transitional period.<sup>1</sup> Demographic stress and lagging human development are of a critical nature in Niger and the republic remains a top the Failed States Index, over the last four years<sup>2</sup>. These realities, together with continued criticism of the lack of government implementation of the specifics of the peace process by the Nigerien Movement for Justice (MNJ) increases the current possibility for the re-emergence of ethnic violence. Refugee flows from Mali, instances of terrorist aggression, and increased kidnapping in recent years/months has destabilized Niger's immediate neighbourhood, directly threatening its national security. Niger can be labelled as semi-stable, yet inherently fragile politically, economically, and socially. It has made positive steps forward by implementing a new security strategy in cooperation with the U.S. and France to secure its borders, and President Issoufou has committed to develop the northern regions and reduce ethnic marginalisation, in order to foster political stability and legitimacy. Although conflict is a definite possibility due to this strategy and commitments to a variety of reforms, this report sees Niger as remaining stable in the immediate short-term.


## Background History




Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the Republic of Niger has been plagued with recurrent political instability and slow economic development.<sup>3</sup> First ruled under a single-party system which then transitioned into military-rule through a coup d'état in 1974, it wasn't until 1989 that political liberalization and reform began to slowly be implemented in this Sahel state.<sup>4</sup> In conjunction with these, an ethnic rebellion of the Tuareg peoples occurred in 1990 due to long-term marginalization and neglect.<sup>5</sup> Civilian rule was re-established in 1991, a new constitution was then created, and Mahamane Ousmane was elected by an electoral majority, marking a democratic turning point in Niger's short but conflict riddled history.<sup>6</sup> The Tuareg unrest was resolved through the signing of a peace accord in 1995 with an accompanied promise to accommodate and recognize minority needs/issues.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately political paralysis ensued in 1996, precipitating a military overthrow and the demise of the 3<sup>rd</sup> republic.<sup>8</sup>

For the remainder of Niger's recent history, whenever a political crisis or deadlock has ensued military intervention has followed, seeing the military intervene again in 1999 and 2010<sup>9</sup>. The 2010 coup ousted sitting President Mamadou Tandja, who although being immensely popular initially, he had attempted to manipulate the constitution to allow him to remain in power beyond the two-term limit. The military was thus compelled to intervene, ousting Tandja, enacting constitutional changes, and rescheduling elections for a return to civilian rule in January 2011. Renewed hostilities occurred in relation to the Tuareg in 2007, primarily because the promises made in 1995 had not been fulfilled or fully implemented.<sup>10</sup> A better accommodation of the Tuareg has been achieved since the 2010 constitution and nation-wide democratic reforms and principles have been incrementally pursued and implemented. In addition to these democratic and ethnic phenomenon, a relatively new source of instability for the republic has been the presence, activity, and growth of Islamic extremism into and from within the area.<sup>11</sup> This is evidenced in the increase in instances of armed aggression and violence by extremists, with the most recent string of attacks occurring in 2013, partly due to the forced migration of extreme Islamist forces from Mali and Libya, into Niger.<sup>12</sup> This is also partially due to the greater role Niger has taken on in the last decade to combat terrorism regionally, alongside the United States, France, and other regional powers.

## Primary Stakeholders

Actor	Impact	Effects
<b>Government of Niger</b> 	Positive	(+) Current P. Issoufou ran on a "Renaissance" platform of democratic responsibility, reform and assurances that constitutional guarantees of freedom would be upheld. <sup>13</sup> (+) Both 2010 Constitution and current P. Issoufou implemented inclusive strategies to reduce ethnic marginalization and the government expressed its will to tackle the development problem in Northern Niger. (+) To overcome its vulnerable reality (fragile state in a turbulent region) the government has implemented a security strategy in cooperation with the U.S. and France to secure its borders and combat terrorism. <sup>14</sup> (+) The government showed mature foresight in the disarming of returning Tuareg rebels from Libya in 2011-2012, which arguably mitigated the chances of a parallel Tuareg uprising as that in Mali. <sup>15</sup> (-) There are still frequent allegations of corruption especially in the judiciary and the allocation of mining contracts. (-) The political coalition failed as the Niger Democratic Movement (MODEN) announced its withdrawal in August <sup>16</sup> .
<b>Nigerien Military</b>	Positive	(+) Despite orchestrating a coup d'état against the Tandja government in 2009, this latest in a long series of coups in Niger's history was in the defence of democracy and the Nigerien constitution; not a democratic regress. <sup>17</sup>
<b>Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ)</b> 	Mixed	(+) Currently there is no open hostility between this predominantly Tuareg pressure group and the sitting government since the signing of a peace agreement in 2009. (+) Although linguistically and culturally very similar to the Tuareg in Mali, the Tuareg people are more accurately seen as confederations of various tribes and clans who hold similarities, thus the risk of rebellion spreading to the Nigerien Tuareg from their brethren in Mali was minimal and controlled. <sup>18</sup> (-) Ex-combatants are still waiting for the promised socioeconomic reinsertion implemented by the 2009 peace process and MNJ spokesman Wagaya expressed great dissatisfaction about this failure <sup>19</sup> . (-) Reports have surfaced that government repression of Tuareg during the most recent rebellion was extremely harsh and unprosecuted, leaving lingering resentment and the possibility of retribution. <sup>20</sup> (-) The semi-nomadic way of life of the Tuareg remains under threat and thus their willingness to comply with peace demands is significantly dependent on the state of environmental degradation and stress which is highly volatile. <sup>21</sup>
<b>Jihadist/Islamist Groups: AQIM, MUJAO, Signed in Blood Battalion ...</b> 	Negative	(-) The Northern regions of Niger have become a smuggling corridor of licit and illicit goods, which funds the operations of various non-state groups like radical Islamic and jihadi groups. <sup>22</sup> (-) The sparsely populated and vast desert terrain of N. Niger, which is poorly patrolled by government forces is an ideal location or haven for such groups to organize, train, and hideout. (-) Twin attacks on a mining facility & army barracks in May 2013 confirm that Niger is now a definite terrorist target <sup>23</sup> (-) On top of orchestrating attacks and smuggling these extremist groups have pursued a robust kidnapping campaign of foreign nationals. This impedes optimal economic development in the region, reducing tourism, foreign investment, and the expansion of vital industries such as oil/gas extraction and mining. <sup>24</sup>
<b>United States of America</b> 	Positive	(+) Niger has become an essential ally of the US in the Sahara-Sahel and Africa in general in their fight to stem the spread of Islamic extremism and terrorist activity while promoting the development of African Nations – Niger is an important component of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCI), successor of the Pan-Sahel Initiative. <sup>25</sup> (+) In Jan. 2013 the US and Nigerien governments finalized a Status-of-Forces-Agreement (SOFA) allowing for the operation and stationing of a US Drone base in Niger, in an effort to map and inhibit terrorist activity in the region. <sup>26</sup> (-) Close ties with the US makes Niger a target for all the superpowers' enemies in the region. Also reports have stated

		that US involvement in the region has done more harm than good in the last decade and a half, generating instability and instigating 'a self-fulfilling prophecy' of terrorist activity in a region which has long been religiously moderate. <sup>27</sup>
Secondary Stakeholders		
Actor	Impact	Effects
<b>Regional Neighbours (Mali, Nigeria, Libya and Mauritania)</b> 	Negative	(-)Mali: The crisis in Mali led to a vast inflow of refugees in Niger and the porous borders fosters instability. (-) Libya: Successive years of civil war, unrest, and instability have led to refugees and an increased extremist presence in Northern Niger. (-)Nigeria: Despite being an essential regional ally, its inability to contain its internal conflict has put added stress on the Nigerien republic. (+) Mauritania signed a bilateral agreement with Niger in order to stem the proliferation of terrorism and instability in the region. <sup>28</sup>
<b>France (AREVA)</b> 	Positive	(+) Being a former colony of France, connections remain tightly interwoven with Paris; implicit security agreements and a willingness to intervene in <i>la francophonie</i> has been a continued policy of France. <sup>29</sup> (+) Niger is strategic and important to France as it is the main supplier of uranium for France's extensive nuclear program, seeing French troops dispatched to protect the Areva mining sites during the unrest in Mali. <sup>30</sup> (-) The uneven revenue-structure between Niger and Areva plus instances of environmental damage have led to growing discontent and criticism.
<b>China</b> 	Neutral	(+) China has played an important role in Niger's economic growth and development, assisting in the expansion of infrastructure, the development of the oil industry, the forgiveness of debt, and finally as a privileged trade partner, both as a locale for exports and a source of cheap imports. <sup>31</sup> (-) China's African policy is completely business-oriented; refusing to involve itself in issues of environmental degradation, violation of human rights, and mal-practice on the part of African leaders and governments, allowing for the perpetuation and longevity of conflict in numerous cases. <sup>32</sup>
<b>ECOWAS</b> 	Neutral	(+) This regional body is dedicated to improving the economic and political viability and competitiveness of the West African region in the global market; this regional body has allowed for the creation and expansion of a variety of regional initiatives and social programs which all nations have benefited from. <sup>33</sup> (-) This organizations inability to agree and act decisively in the case of Mali, revealed the institutional immaturity of this organization and its ability to function as a proper regional mechanism. <sup>34</sup>
<b>Boko Haram</b> 	Negative	(-) This group's activities have resulted in increased refugee flows over the southern Nigerien border from Northern Nigeria, adding to an already stressed social infrastructure. <sup>35</sup> (-) An instable Niger is in the interests of Boko Haram who have supposed ties with various extremist groups who operate throughout Niger and who are no friends of allies of the Nigerian government in Abuja.
Risk Assessment Indicators   CIFP Global Rank Scale: 1 = low, 12=Extremely high		
Extremely High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk
Low Risk		
History of Armed Conflicts		
CIFP Average Score 2006: 2.0   Volatile   Deteriorating		
<p><b>Stabilizing factors - Armed conflict:</b> The last armed conflict occurred in 2007 between the government and MNJ and was ended in a peace process in 2009. Since then, no battle-related deaths were recorded and there has been no recurrence of minor conflict<sup>36</sup>, however Niger saw the emergence of terrorist attacks in the recent years and several people have been kidnapped in the Northwest region of Niger since 2010 by groups such as AQIM<sup>37, 38</sup>.</p> <p><b>Refugees produced:</b> According to UNHCR data, Niger has a low number of refugees produced in 2012 and this number has been relatively stable since 2002.<sup>39</sup></p> <p><b>Destabilizing factors - Refugees hosted:</b> Since the outbreak of war in Mali, there has been a recent affluence of more than 50,000 refugees in Eastern Niger. Some more 10,000 also come from Nigeria.<sup>40</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Despite the end of internal armed conflict since 2009, the MNJ has re-united in order to foster negotiations as they are unsatisfied with the ongoing peace process.<sup>41</sup> Together with the important surge in refugees from Mali and Nigeria over the past two years, this increases instability and undermines national security. This unstable situation could be of higher concern with regards to the state low capacity to respond to these issues and handle the situation in case of a crisis. However the recent cooperation on security stability with the United States and France increases Niger's capacities, although to this day those remain weak.<sup>42</sup></p>		
Governance and Political Instability		
CIFP Average Score 2006: 7.07   Volatile   Improving		
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors - Level of Democracy:</b> The Polity IV index of democracy for 2011 was 3, which constitutes an increase of 6 points since 2010. The military junta that ousted president Tandja in 2010 indeed restored a democratic civilian rule in 2011 and helped complete Niger's democratic transition<sup>43</sup>. New President Issoufou fostered political inclusivity by appointing opponents to high positions and providing seats to minorities at the National Assembly<sup>44</sup>. Executive constraints have also been implemented in the 2010 constitution as there are substantial limitations on executive authority.<sup>45</sup></p> <p><b>Civil and Political Rights:</b> After the 2010 coup, former prime minister Amadou returned from exile, former legislators were released from jail and there was a decrease in harassment of opposition politicians.<sup>46</sup> Restrictions on freedom are however frequently reported such as censorship and bias in the judiciary.<sup>47</sup></p> <p><b>Press Freedom:</b> Despite continuing control of media licensing, there have been several improvements on press freedom since the creation of an independent media regulatory body, and the government's intention to improve transparency and public's access to information.<sup>48</sup></p> <p><b>Destabilizing factors - Regime Durability:</b> The most recent regime change occurred in 2011 which indicates a low durability. Even though the past decade has been characterized by a stable civilian government (Tandja been the first president in Niger to survive two mandates), this is not representative of overall recent history of Niger while many coups occurred since its independence. Indeed, Niger's polity score is affected by its regulation of Chief executive recruitment which is transitional. Changes often occur through forceful seizures of power which reveals that procedures for transferring power have not yet been institutionalized.<sup>49</sup></p> <p><b>Corruption:</b> According to the World Bank Datasets, Niger has a corruption score of -0.65 which is relatively high. However it has improved since 2006 (-0.85)<sup>50</sup> and the government has put greater efforts to control corruption but it remains a problem, especially in the judiciary. In July 2011, the President was the target of an assassination attempt thought to be motivated by his crackdowns on corruption.<sup>51</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> There is an overall improvement since the removal of former president Tandja. Constitutional guarantees of freedom are upheld and major problems are tackled by the new government. However despite the return to civilian rule, most changes in chief executive occurred through seizures of power in the past. This culture of instability makes coups and crisis still likely to occur, which are fostered by the continuation discrimination of minorities.</p>		

<b>Militarization</b>	<b>CIFP Average Score 2006: 2.6   Relatively stable</b>	
<p><b>Stabilizing/Destabilizing factors - Military expenditures:</b> Since 2002, military expenditures and armed forces have remained stable until 2012. Even when the military junta was in power, expenditures haven't increased significantly<sup>52</sup>. However The recent crisis in Mali and rise of Niger' security concerns led to an increase in those expenditures<sup>53</sup>. In October 2012, as part of its security strategy, Niger has launched a US\$2.5 billion plan to secure and develop its northern region where Tuaregs live. It has been cooperating with France and the US to upgrade its military hardware and training.<sup>54</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> The recent increase of military expenditures as part of Niger's security strategy in the Sahel, even if it aim to stabilize the region, could lead to reallocation of resources at the expense of already weak social sectors and even foster instability in regions where ethnicities are marginalized.</p>		
<b>Population Heterogeneity</b>	<b>CIFP Average Score 2006: 6.0   Relatively stable</b>	
<p><b>Stabilizing factors - Ethnic Diversity:</b> Niger is a multi-ethnic nation whose divisions are mainly linguistically delineated. The Hausa are the largest ethnic group comprising 55%, the Djerma-Songhai make-up 21%, Tuareg 9 %, Peul/Fulani 9%, and Kanouri 5%.<sup>55</sup> Arabs, Toubou, and Gourmantche make up an additional less than 1%.<sup>56</sup> Ethnic relations have been strained in the past, yet due to recent political accommodation and legal enshrinement of rights, relations have stabilized while diversity remains high.</p> <p><b>Religious Diversity:</b> The dominant religion in Niger is Islam. 92-94% of the population is Muslim, 6-7% is Animist, while less than 1% is Christian.<sup>57</sup> 95% of the Muslim population are Sunni adherents, while only 5% adhere to the Shia doctrine.<sup>58</sup> Religious tensions are minimal at worst.</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> It has been less than 5 years since the last Tuareg revolt (2007-9) and Niger is both religiously and ethnically quite diverse, yet this report sees the chance of ethnic rebellion as quite minimal. Recent influxes of refugees from Libya, Mali, and Nigeria may upset the ethnic/religious percentages and the growth of fundamental/extremist adherence is to be cautioned, overall Niger is ethnically and religiously quite stable with little animosity currently.</p>		
<b>Demographic Stress</b>	<b>CIFP Average Score 2006: 6.17   Deteriorating</b>	
<p><b>Stabilizing factors - Urban population:</b> Niger's urban population is very low (2006 CIFP score 1) with only 16.9% of the total population but increased to 18.12% for 2012<sup>59</sup>.</p> <p><b>Destabilizing factors -Total population:</b> Moderately high in 2006 (CIFP Score 6) with 13.7 million people, the total population of Niger has become a high concern as it increased substantially to reach 17.2 million people in 2012<sup>60</sup>.</p> <p><b>Population growth:</b> Niger's growth rate was considered extremely high in 2006 (CIFP Score 10) and has continued to rise, to reach 3.84% in 2012<sup>61</sup>.</p> <p><b>Population density:</b> Niger's population density remains very low although it experienced an increase since its 2006 level (CIFP Score 1), going from 10.8 to 13.04% in 2011<sup>62</sup>.</p> <p><b>Urban population growth:</b> The growth of the urban population keeps increasing going from 4.74% in 2006 to 5.24% in 2012<sup>63</sup>, worsening the extremely high 2006 CIFP score of 10.</p> <p><b>Youth bulge:</b> Extremely high on the CIFP index 2006 (score 9), the percentage of youth has increased slightly from 49.2 to 49.99% between 2006 and 2012<sup>64</sup>.</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> According to the Failed States Index 2013, Niger is the second highest in term of danger due to demographic stress<sup>65</sup>. With the highest birth rate in the world (46.84 births/1000 population)<sup>66</sup> and the current population growth rate, the population of Niger is expected to double every 20 years<sup>67</sup>. The high population growth and the youth bulge combined with the structural food scarcity increases the potential for violence. At the current rate, the demographic pressure could undermine all the economic and human development improvement.</p>		
<b>Economic Performance</b>	<b>CIFP Average Score 2006: 7.18   Volatile   Improving</b>	
<p><b>Stabilizing factors - GDP growth rate:</b> Niger's GDP growth has shown strong improvement between 2006 and 2012, but remains very volatile, reaching its lowest at -0.9% in 2009 and its peak at 11.2% in 2012<sup>68</sup>. The GDP per capita improved slightly, but remains volatile and extremely low at 664.85 current international \$ (PPP) in 2012<sup>69</sup>.</p> <p><b>Inflation:</b> Moderate in 2006 (CIFP score 4.2), inflation remains extremely volatile. It decreased in 2012 to 0.46% after a peak at 11.3% in 2008<sup>70</sup>.</p> <p><b>Foreign direct investment:</b> Practically inexistent in 2006 (CIFP score 7.8) FDI soared since 2006, increasing from 1.1 to 16.84% in 2011<sup>71</sup>.</p> <p><b>Trade openness</b> improved substantially, increasing from 45.9% in 2006 to 76.6% in 2012<sup>72</sup>.</p> <p><b>Inequalities:</b> the Gini coefficient improved significantly, from 43.89 in 2005 to 34.55 in 2008<sup>73</sup>.</p> <p><b>Destabilizing factors - Exchange rate:</b> Niger has a high and volatile exchange rate (2006 CIFP score 9.6). After some improvement, it rose back to 510.53 XOF/US\$ in 2012<sup>74</sup>.</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Niger's economy shows important signs of improvement in 2012. This is due to a good harvest and a favorable climate<sup>75</sup> as well as a 154% growth of the extractive industries (mainly from oil production by the Chinese CNPC and the high expectation on uranium and gold)<sup>76</sup>. Niger is expected to become a net exporter of oil and the world's second producer of uranium by 2015<sup>77</sup>. The Nigerien government has recently started numerous reforms to diversify the economy, improve agricultural development and food safety and sustainability, as well as to ensure a more equitable distribution of the revenues from the extractive industries<sup>78</sup>. Nevertheless, 40% of the GDP<sup>79</sup> and 80% of the population still depend on agriculture, a sector particularly vulnerable to environmental shock, which is partly responsible for the important volatility of the Nigerien economy<sup>80</sup>. Most of the improvements, therefore, depend on a medium to long-term period of stability to implement the recent reforms, which could be compromised by shocks. Growth could also be compromised by the insecurity, Areva having already been targeted by rebels and extremist groups<sup>81</sup>.</p>		
<b>Human Development</b>	<b>CIFP Average Score 2006: 9.21   Improving</b>	
<p><b>Stabilizing factors - Access to improved water:</b> Slight increase of access between 2006 (46.8%) and 2011 (50.3%) but the improvement since 1990 fairly strong and Niger's 2011<sup>82</sup> level is already above its MDG's target<sup>83</sup>. 100% of the urban population had access to improved water in 2010, for only 39% of the rural population<sup>84</sup>.</p> <p><b>Access to sanitation:</b> Niger's access to sanitation remains extremely low. It increased marginally from 8.8% in 2006 to 9.6% in 2011<sup>85</sup>. The difference of access between rural and urban Niger is substantial with 4 and 34% respectively in 2010<sup>86</sup>.</p> <p><b>Life expectancy:</b> Extremely low in 2006 (CIFP Score 9.6), life expectancy has increased slightly from 52.3 to 54.7 years (2011)<sup>87</sup>.</p> <p><b>Infant mortality rate:</b> Niger has an extremely high infant mortality rate according to the 2006 CIFP score of 12 with 79.2 deaths per 1000 live births. This rate has decreased to 62.8 in 2012<sup>88</sup>.</p> <p><b>Maternal mortality rate:</b> Niger has a high maternal mortality rate, with 590 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010<sup>89</sup>.</p> <p><b>HIV/AIDS:</b> Compared to the rest of Africa, Niger has a fairly low HIV/AIDS rate with 0.8% in 2012. Since 2006, this rate decreased slightly (0.1%)<sup>90</sup>.</p> <p><b>Primary school enrollment:</b> Extremely low in 2006 (CIFP score 10), it increased substantially from 43.2 to 64.9%<sup>91</sup>, but remains far for its MDG target<sup>92</sup>.</p> <p><b>Destabilizing factors - Child labour:</b> Niger has an extremely high child labour with 47.1% of the children aged 7-14 in 2006<sup>93</sup>.</p> <p><b>Secondary school enrollment:</b> After improving between 2007 and 2011, the secondary school enrollment fell slightly in 2012 to 11.4%<sup>94</sup>.</p>		

**Assessment:** Niger is ranking 186<sup>th</sup> on the Human Development Index. With the world's lowest score of 0.304, it is far lower than the regional sub-Saharan average (0.475)<sup>95</sup>. Over 60% of Niger's population lives below the poverty line of 1US\$/day, 85% below the 2US\$/day line<sup>96</sup>. Niger is unlikely to reach most of the MDG by 2015. The chronic poverty and lack of education remains critical and is a major factor of instability, the recent progress could deteriorate quickly due to shocks. Nevertheless, thanks to national and international development programs, almost all human development indicators improved since 2006.

**Environmental Stress** CIFP Average Score 2006: 6.67 | Volatile | Deteriorating

**Stabilizing Factors – Water Access & Rainfall:** A marginal improvement in rural access to water resources has occurred,<sup>97</sup> which is vital because over 80 percent of the Nigerien population are rural inhabitants.<sup>98</sup> Despite experiencing a severe drought in 2010, which affected countries throughout the Sahel, there has been a substantial recovery in the amount of rainfall over the last 20 years, from historic lows in the 1970s and 80s.<sup>99</sup>

**Destabilizing Factors – Rate of Deforestation:** 1-0.9% of Niger is woodland/forest.<sup>100</sup> This is constantly declining at a rapid rate, for a number of reasons. **Strained Land Use:** 11.8% of Niger is Arable land; per capita hectares are on a steady decline.<sup>101</sup> 34.6% of Niger is agricultural land, rarely lying fallow.<sup>102</sup> Only 0.2 % of Niger's agricultural land is irrigated.<sup>103</sup> Cereal yields are volatile and due to the rural nature of the population, agriculture yields are depended on.<sup>104</sup>

**Freshwater Resources:** Approximately 4 billion cubic meters of renewable freshwater reserves, with an average of 2.4 (bcm) of annual withdrawals, access remain issue.<sup>105</sup> Important sources of freshwater are shared with multiple neighbours, increasingly the potentiality of conflict (Lake Chad and the Niger River). Overall declining reserves, lack of irrigation network, and increasing temperatures mean droughts will cyclically occur.

**Severe Weather:** Climate fluctuations and patterns are highly volatile seeing the region suffer from drought one year and then be bombarded by massive flooding the next. Mean temperatures are also on the rise which puts additional stress on rural communities and the agricultural sector.<sup>106</sup>

**Assessment –** Environmental Stress is one of the most volatile and deteriorating indicators for Niger. Improvement in access and programs to combat desertification and deforestation are prevalent but this has not effectively combatted the rate of deterioration. Deforestation continues to compound at a rapid rate due to the population's dependence on wood as the primary energy source for households. Weather fluctuations continue to impede reliable agricultural production and economic growth. Renewable fresh water resources are small and continue to decline, and although it is meeting current demand, with the population ever increasing the carrying capacity this will soon reach a crisis level or ceiling.

**International Linkages** CIFP Average Score 2006: 6.30 | Slightly Volatile | Marginal Improvement

**Destabilizing Factors – International Disputes:** Niger has a number of border disputes with its neighbours.<sup>107</sup> These are relatively peaceful and minor in nature, which are slowly being resolved, such as the dispute with Burkina Faso which was settled through the ICJ in 2010.<sup>108</sup>

**Regional/International Instability:** Inhabiting a very instable and turbulent area of the globe in combination with poor border security, means that Niger is susceptible to the internal conflicts of its neighbours. Specifically the republic has been affected by the recent conflicts in Libya and Mali in the last couple years and the ongoing fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria continually spills over Niger's southern border.

**Stabilizing Factors – UN Organizations:** Niger is an active and growing member of a number of UN organizations, most recently joining the UN World Tourism Organization and having Agadez become a UNESCO world heritage site.<sup>109</sup> It is also an active member in UN peacekeeping operations in its immediate neighbourhood, participating in operations in Liberia, the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, and most recently Mali.<sup>110</sup>

**Military/Security Alliances:** An Implicit military/security agreement between France and Niger exists,<sup>111</sup> but more recently Niger has become an essential and formal ally of the United States, being both a member of the TSCTP and signing a status of forces agreement in 2013.<sup>112</sup> Niger also recently signed a bilateral security agreement with Mauritania, in an effort to stem the spread of radical Islam and impede the activity of terrorist organizations.<sup>113</sup>

**Economic/Multipurpose Organizations:** As a reflection of its growing international maturity and growing developmental status, Niger is a member of a variety of economic and multipurpose international organizations.<sup>114</sup> Specifically it is a member of the regional West Africa economic community ECOWAS, the African Union, and the WTO.<sup>115</sup>

**Assessment –** Overall the positive international linkages outweigh the negative in Niger. The variety of organizations Niger is a member to along with its UN involvement is a reflection of its growing international maturity and developmental status. Niger has made impressive gains in taking a more active role in its regional security through its bilateral relations and is working to resolve any outstanding border disputes. Mainly it is plagued most by the instability of the region, which offsets the effects of the positive linkages, allowing for only a marginal improvement in our assessment of this indicator currently.

**Possible scenarios for the next 6 to 12 months**

Best case scenario	Worst case scenario	Most-likely scenario
Niger's new security strategy in combination with the efforts of the United States and other regional governments leads to the stabilization of ongoing conflicts, reducing the overall flow of refugees. The implemented security measures and reinforced military presence along the borders prevent subsequent terrorist attacks. The MNJ remains peaceful and cooperative as reforms move forward and the provisions of the peace process are carried out. President Issoufou commits his government to unify Niger by re-enforcing inclusive measures leading the MODEN to re-integrate the coalition, which results in a better implementation of policies and increased political legitimacy. Furthermore, the economy recovers due to business confidence in regional stability. Niger experiences a bountiful harvest and is free of natural disasters such as flooding and drought.	Regional instability leads to an increase of refugees from Mali, Nigeria and Libya which destabilizes Niger and stresses its functional capacity. This is in relation to the republic's ability to ensure overall security and prevent hunger. These stresses in combination with successive terror attack by MUJAO and AQIM, force the government to divert precious resources away from human and economic development, to the security sector. This leads to a neglect of promised reforms to reduce the social and economic inequalities of the Tuareg, undermining the implementation of the official peace process, radicalizing the MNJ to violent revolt. A prolonged drought and poor harvest magnify the burden of the government and escalates civil unrest. This insecure environment leads to a flight of foreign investment and to the suspension of resource-extractive industry activity. The need for foreign intervention is imminent.	Most Likely: Despite implementing a new security program and collaborating with the United States, terrorist attacks against governmental and mining venues increases. Northern Mali stabilizes yet refugees continue to flee Boko Haram induced unrest in Northern Nigeria and Libya destabilizes further, continuing Niger's refugee burden. Despite heightened political instability and an inability to broker a return to a broad coalition, the government of President Issoufou remains in power and the MNJ remains committed to the peace process, despite growing discontent. Extensive flooding during the rainy season inhibits optimal agricultural production and leads to an increase in IDPs. The Nigerien economy will continue to expand, albeit at a slower rate due to increased security costs and flooding. Tensions between France and the United States heighten over disagreements of Niger's new security role and allegiances in the Sahara-Sahel.

- <sup>1</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program – Niger. “UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: Uppsala University. 2013. [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=118&regionSelect=1-Northern\\_Africa#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=118&regionSelect=1-Northern_Africa#) (20/09/13).
- <sup>2</sup> 2013 Failed States Interactive Map. Foreign Policy. 24 June 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/06/24/2013\\_failed\\_states\\_interactive\\_map](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/06/24/2013_failed_states_interactive_map) (02/10/13)
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