

Mass rally in Niamey backs Niger's military leaders as ECOWAS-led intervention looms

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Rally in Niamey on August 6 in support of Niger's coup leaders and against foreign

intervention.

Approximately 30,000 people gathered in Niger's capital of Niamey on August 6, as the country faced a looming threat of military intervention led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regional bloc. However, as the deadline set by ECOWAS expired on Sunday, the regional bloc held an emergency virtual meeting with the African Union to discuss the situation in Niger.

The bloc did not publicly comment on the expiration of its ultimatum but did on August 7 issue a [brief statement](#), announcing that the chair of ECOWAS, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, had convened a second Extraordinary Summit of the Authority, which would take place in Abuja on August 10, to discuss "the political situation and recent developments in Niger."

The bloc had first convened an Extraordinary Summit in Abuja on July 30, following which it had [warned](#) Niger's military leaders, or the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) that it would take "all measures necessary," including the use of force, if ousted president Mohamed Bazoum was not reinstated by August 6.



Coup d'État au [#Niger](#) : meeting de soutien aux putschistes, ce dimanche dans le stade de Niamey. [#Bazoum](#) [#NigerCoup](#) pic.twitter.com/RsB4wP55Vs

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Plans for a possible military intervention were finalized in a three-day meeting of the ECOWAS defense chiefs of staff which concluded in the Nigerian capital of Abuja on August 4.

However, lawmakers in Nigeria, the country believed to lead the invasion, [rejected](#) a

proposal by President Bola Tinubu to deploy troops on August 5. ECOWAS members Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire have declared their intentions to deploy troops.

Meanwhile, Niger's other regional neighbors, Chad and Algeria (which is not a member of ECOWAS), have rejected military action, with Algerian president Abdelmadjid Tebboune [reiterating](#) over the weekend that "threats of military intervention in Niger are a direct threat to Algeria," and warning against any action that would "inflame the entire Sahel region."

Meanwhile, on Sunday, people poured into the General Seyni Kountche stadium in Niamey, the latest in a series of mass actions against imperialism and foreign intervention held in the country over the past week.

Importantly, hundreds of people also took to the streets in the city of Arlit, where the French company Orano (the successor of the colonial, state-owned mining company Areva) has been mining uranium for decades, and a clear representation of the neocolonial extraction that France has continued to impose on countries such as Niger.



A protester in Arlit carries a placard with the words “Shame on ECOWAS”. Photo: @AhmadouAtafa/Twitter

The CNSP has warned that any “aggression or attempted aggression” against Niger will be met with an immediate response by the country’s defense forces. On August 6, the CNSP announced that it was closing down Niger’s airspace citing a threat of intervention. In a separate statement, the military leaders added that there had been a “pre-deployment” of forces in two unnamed Central African countries in preparation for an intervention, warning that any state involved would be deemed “co-belligerent”.

Following a visit by a CNSP delegation to Mali and Burkina Faso over the weekend, both countries are dispatching a [joint delegation](#) to Niamey on August 7, to express their solidarity. The military leadership in both neighboring countries came to power in popular coups in 2022 amid anti-imperialist and anti-French unrest and has since also expelled French troops from their borders.

Mali and Burkina Faso have declared that they will treat any attack on Niger as a declaration of war on their respective countries and will mobilize their forces accordingly. On August 6, a [demonstration](#) was also held in Burkina Faso's capital of Ouagadougou in support of the people of Niger.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)

