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Military Coup In Niger - President Detained, All Institutions Suspended

Why In The News?

- Soldiers Claimed To Have Overthrown The Niger Government On Thursday Following An Apparent Coup In The Fragile State, After Members Of The **Presidential Guard Detained President Mohamed Bazoum**.
- Disgruntled Members Of The Elite Presidential **Guard Sealed Off Access To The President's Residence And Offices** In The Capital Niamey On Wednesday, And After Talks Broke Down **"Refused To Release The President,"** A Presidential Source Said.



What Do We Know?

- **"We, The Defence And Security Forces... Have Decided To Put An End To The Regime"** Of President Bazoum, Said Colonel-Major Amadou Abdramane. They Said, **"All Institutions" In The Country Would Be Suspended, Borders Were Closed, And A Curfew Had Been Imposed "Until Further Notice"**.
- The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) And The African Union Both Decried What They Called An **"Attempted Coup D'état"**. The Head Of ECOWAS Said **Benin President Patrice Talon** Was Heading To Niger In A **Mediation Bid**, After The Latest Bout Of Turbulence To Hit The Region.

- President Talon Was Expected To Arrive In Niamey Thursday To Speak With Both Sides **To Resolve The Crisis**, After A Meeting In Abuja Wednesday With **Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu**.
- One Of A Dwindling Group Of Pro-Western Leaders In The Sahel, **Bazoum Was Elected In 2021**, Taking The Helm Of A Country Burdened By Poverty And A History Of Chronic Instability.



International Responses

- **UN Chief Antonio Guterres** Was Able To Talk To The Niger President On Wednesday Afternoon, His Spokesman Said, And "Expressed His Full Support And Solidarity". The **United States** Has Demanded Bazoum's Release, Saying It Was "Deeply Concerned".
- The **European Union** Said It "Associates Itself" With The ECOWAS Statement And Attacked "Any Attempt To Destabilize Democracy And Threaten The Stability" Of Niger.
- **France** - Niger's Former Colonial Power And Neighbouring **Algeria** Also Issued Condemnations, As Did The World Bank Which Said It "Strongly Condemns Any Attempt To Seize Power By Force" Or "Destabilize" Niger.

Any Earlier Instances Of Coup?

- The Landlocked State Has **Experienced Four Coups** Since Independence From France In 1960, And Numerous Other Attempts. Bazoum, A Former Interior Minister, Was Right-hand Man To Former President Mahamadou Issoufou, Who Voluntarily Stepped Down After Two Terms.

- Their Handover In April 2021, After Elections Won By Bazoum In A Two-Round Contest Against Former President Mahamane Ousmane, Marked **Niger's First Peaceful Transition Of Power Since Independence**. But Reminders Of The Troubled Past Have Never Been Far Away.

Issues Of Poverty And Jihadism

- **Niger Is Two-Thirds Desert And Frequently Ranks At The Bottom Of The UN's Human Development Index**, A Benchmark Of Prosperity. It Has A Surging **Population Of 22.4 Million**, Driven By A Birthrate Averaging Seven Children Per Woman.
- **Niger Is Struggling With Two Jihadist Campaigns** - One In The Southwest, Which Swept In From Mali In 2015, And The Other In The Southeast, Involving Jihadists From Northeastern Nigeria.
- Hundreds Of Thousands Of People Have Fled to Their Homes, Stoked A **Humanitarian Crisis And Further Straining The Economy**. The Poorly Equipped Military Is Receiving Training And Logistical Support From The United States And France, Which Have Bases There.



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