

Niger  
Archbishop MacDonald  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

### General Disposition

Niger became independent from France on August 3rd, 1960. After being adopted into the UN anonymously in 1960, Niger continues to be one of the UN's target nations for economic and social aid. Niger's government does allow for other countries in the UN to provide peacekeeping and economic assistance. Niger maintains formal diplomatic relations with the United States, China, Nigeria, France, Mali, South Korea, and Canada, while maintaining friendly relations with the West, Islamic and West African countries. Niger also played a major role as a part of the African Union in mobilizing against the terrorist group Boko Haram, as well as assisting Mali with peace negotiation in the North through the United Nations Stabilization Mission. Niger has also previously sat on the UN General Assembly and Drug Convention.

### Gender Issues in the Fight Against Terrorism

Due to Niger's landlocked position between Mali, Nigeria and Libya, the country remains highly vulnerable to terrorist groups such as, the al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram. As of 2015, Niger ranked with a Gender Inequality Index indicating that 70% of human development has been lost due to high maternal mortality rates, poor education and low numbers of women in parliament and the workforce. Furthermore, Lisette Quesnel, a gender based violence advisor with Oxfam in Niger, conducted a survey of women in Zinder, an eastern region of Niger, in 2006. It found that 70% of women interviewed found their fathers, brothers and husbands beating, raping and humiliating them, commonplace. Such mindsets greatly set back Niger's development in sustainability and peacekeeping, and they are a preemptive measure against terrorism. Studies done by Dr. Katherine Brown in Religion and Theology at the University of Birmingham, found that one reason women become terrorists is in pursuit of glory to do something to "help" people, as women do not receive these opportunities readily. Another is for the forgiveness of the sin of being a woman, as believed by some religions. It could be repented by carrying out acts of suicide bombings in the name of that religion. Financial security for their family is often promised as it is difficult for women to secure a stable job in Niger. Terrorist organizations also exploit female terrorists because they often go unnoticed by security and typically gain 8 times more publicity after suicide bombings than men. All of which traces back to the fundamental problem that women are seen with a gender role associated with pacifism and maternal love, and yet, are not given the same opportunities as men in parliament, education, health care and the workforce.

*“ Boko Haram's suicide attacks and sexual exploitation of women remained a primary concern*

*for Niger. The terror-trafficking nexus in northern Mali remained the main source of instability in the Sahel, adding the Sahel G-5 joint force needed the backing of the United Nations Security Council in order to become fully operational.”*

- Mr. Ibrahim Yacoubou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Niger

These words represent Niger’s major goals for future development. Resolutions proposed by the delegate of Niger will center around sustainable development in Niger and surrounding countries to act as a preemptive measure against terrorism, by providing social, economic and political participation to vulnerable populations, giving a meaningful alternative to violence. New developmental strategies and reformed peacekeeping methods applied in Niger and the Sahel region will lead to greater gender equality and women empowerment, with the ultimate outcome of a peaceful nation.

### Re-evaluating the Definition of Narcotics

In 1988, Niger was a party to the UN Drug Convention, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and to the UN Convention against Corruption. However, Niger has had no formal involvement as a participant in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, or the sub-commissions on Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies and on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East since then. Drug control in the West African and Sahel regions are still major talking points at these sessions, as, according to the World Drug Report, West and Central Africa play a major transit center for illicit drugs, due to its location between Latin America and Europe. Niger has also ratified the UN Single 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs, with encouragement from the Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS). The UN continues to support Niger in producing a comprehensive response to strengthening the justice system in the Sahel region. Niger, as part of ECOWAS has adopted the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking, and Organized Crime in West Africa, with the aim to establish or strengthen,

*“specialized anti-drug trafficking/transnational organized crime law enforcement units/agencies and national forensic capabilities, with a view to investigating and prosecuting organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking and other related crimes.”*

Presently, Niger’s legislation has been amended to align with all the UN’s international definitions and scheduling of narcotics. The Government of Niger, in terms of their policy, does not encourage or facilitate money laundering from illegal drug transactions, production or distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances. Resolutions proposed by the delegate of Niger will be characterized with a no tolerance policy towards illegal drugs, and a limited view on medical drugs. Proposed policies will most likely stay in the area of predefined UN schedules,

while hyper-focusing the legal aspects, due to the availability of cheap narcotics in Niger and widespread illegal drug trafficking that are a priority for the nation. Presented here are specific aspects of drug control in relation to Niger, a more in depth comprehension of the specific schedules of drugs and their effects is outlined in other personal research notes.

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