



USAID | **NIGER**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DEMOCRACY, RIGHTS, GOVERNANCE & CONFLICT

NIGER FACT SHEET

The 2020-2021 local and national elections were the third time since 2011 that citizens democratically elected new leaders, and the first time that power passed peacefully via elections from one civilian president to the next. However, Niger is facing widespread insecurity and is confronting persistent threats from violent extremist (VE) groups, including Al-Qaida-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) in the tri-border area of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, and Boko Haram in the south-eastern Diffa region. Weak governance, and lack of services, economic opportunities, and justice increase community-based conflicts and increase vulnerability to VE recruitment. Women, youth and marginalized populations are often disproportionately affected.

OUR WORK

Since Niger's return to democratic rule in 2011, the United States has supported efforts to improve participatory democratic governance, increase transparency, fight corruption, expand civil liberties, and build Nigeriens' resilience to violent extremism. In addition to supporting democratic values, practices, and institutions, USAID is helping the Nigerien government to provide quality public services, answer citizens' needs and concerns, and improve access to justice and human rights protection. It is also supporting civil society efforts to accelerate the pace of ongoing reforms, reduce conflicts in their communities and advance Women, Peace, Security initiatives.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Ahead of the 2020-2021 local, parliamentary and presidential elections, USAID supported preparations for a peaceful democratic transition, including political consensus on a revised electoral code and procedures, capacity building of political parties, voter registration and education, and prevention of electoral violence. It is supporting implementation of post elections strategic priorities, capacity building for the national election commission and increased awareness among political parties, civil society organizations and citizens on electoral reforms and the need for peaceful and inclusive elections.

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS ARE MORE TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE, AND RESPONSIVE TO CITIZEN NEEDS

To improve people's and communities' ability to enact change and demand more responsive governance, USAID supports citizen mobilization, advocacy, and dialogue with the government. This includes support for transfer of planning, resource allocation, and management responsibilities to the local government levels to better reach citizens. To ensure that policies and reforms are inclusive and reflect the needs of all Nigeriens, USAID supports non-governmental actors to better communicate their priorities. It is also assisting local governments to be more resilient, improve service delivery and better manage natural resources through participatory development planning. USAID is expanding women's participation in local decision-making and gender-responsive service delivery.

RESPECT FOR JUSTICE, FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

USAID is helping the people of Niger to know their rights and have better access to justice. This includes engagement with traditional conflict mediation mechanisms and the formal justice system, to allow citizens and communities to peacefully resolve conflicts, settle long-standing disputes or address human rights violations. Especially in areas prone to violent extremism, this is critical to slow the spread of radicalism and violent conflicts.

COLLABORATION TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

With a view to improving the security of communities in areas affected by conflict, USAID brings together community leaders, government and security forces, and citizens to increase their skills to peacefully communicate and address ongoing sources of tension. At the national level, USAID assisted the Nigerien government in developing its first national strategy for countering violent extremism and developing solutions to improve security and reduce conflicts. To reduce the risk of Nigerien youth being recruited by violent extremist groups, USAID is working with the government to increase youth participation in the country's political and economic life and ensure access to justice in conflict zones.

OUR GOALS

- Ensure more consensual, transparent and inclusive elections and political processes.
- Boost government transparency and responsiveness to citizen needs.
- Improve capacity of citizens and non-governmental actors to take collective action.
- Strengthen civic participation, specifically of youth, women and girls, in governance.
- Increase citizens' access to justice, and respect for human rights.
- Address drivers of violent extremism and support community peace building.

Select List of USAID Democracy, Rights, Governance, and Conflict-Related Programming in Niger

Niger Access to Justice and Human Rights “Adalci,” Freedom House, Search for Common Ground, American Bar Association (ABA ROLI), PACT

September 2020 – September 2024, \$14,999,636

The *Adalci* project, which means “fairness” in the Hausa language, was designed to reduce people’s vulnerability to violent extremism. It is bolstering pathways to justice with the goal of reducing vulnerability to violent extremism (VE) by strengthening tools to address core grievances that drive extremism in Niger. Objectives include 1) improved capacity of customary and other local conflict mediation mechanisms in VE-prone target areas to address grievances and resolve disputes; 2) Populations in VE-prone areas are empowered to navigate and access the formal justice system to resolve their disputes or assert their rights; and 3) Government of Niger and civil society organizations (CSOs) have increased capacity to address VE-related human rights violations committed by both state and non-state actors. Geographic areas of activities include Diffa (Diffa, Nguigmi, Toumour, and Gueskerou), Tillabéri (Sakouara, Abala, Damana and Simiri) and Tahoua (Tebaram and Takanamat) regions.

Niger Electoral Support Activity to Promote a Peaceful Democratic Transition through Free, Transparent and Inclusive Elections (NESA), Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) Global Elections and Political Transitions, National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

September 2018 – November 2022, \$4,000,000

NESA supported dialogue between political leaders and civic activists on Niger’s electoral framework ahead of the 2020-2021 elections, increasing awareness among political parties, civil society organizations and citizens on electoral reforms and the need for peaceful and inclusive elections. The activity also supported Niger’s independent electoral commission (CENI) and relevant Government of Niger institutions to conduct free and inclusive elections, and to effectively communicate election processes to the Nigerien people. In the post electoral period NESA is working to solidify electoral reforms through addressing technical and administrative weaknesses of CENI, and increasing capacity for first-time elected officials and civic actors to engage in more effective citizen-centered legislative and political processes.

On Est Ensemble “We are Together” Youth-Led Community Cohesion, Search for Common Ground, *March 2020 – January 2023, \$2,360,000*

On Est Ensemble is strengthening youth’s resilience to violent extremism and promoting long-term stability in the region by enabling youth engagement in local decision-making processes and increasing incentives for youth economic engagement. *On Est Ensemble* is built on the premise that youth, including young women, have the potential to be positive forces that drive community and regional stability. The project is building the capacities of youth and key community stakeholders to positively engage their peers around shared interests through innovative conflict prevention and mitigation efforts and will connect grassroots efforts to build bridges between identity lines and formal youth structures at the local and regional level. It is also increasing youth financial literacy and social entrepreneurship capacities and highlighting the impact of youth-led income-generating efforts on peace and stability in Tillabéri. It is building the capacity of over 150 youth in conflict transformation and social communication and bringing young people representing the diverse local communities together for “youth innovation camps,” to build trust between the group members, design community action plans, and publicize

positive examples of youth innovation. Geographic areas of activities include Ayorou, Abala, Banibangou, Bankilaré, Sanam, Kollo and Say in the Tillabéri region.

Resilient Governance in Niger (RGN) “Jagoranci,” Counterpart International,
March 2021 - March 2026, \$19,799,587

RGN is strengthening performance of local, state, and non-state institutions at the local government (commune) level through interventions to improve performance as defined by the stakeholders themselves, building local ownership, accountability, and improved incentives for change. RGN’s objectives are: 1) Communal authorities, traditional leaders, and regional representatives of the Government of Niger (GON) understand their respective local governance roles and responsibilities, and engage in more effective intergovernmental communications and collaboration to address community needs, especially those of women, youth, and other marginalized populations; 2) Communal governments more accountably plan, manage and execute budgets, ensure provision of basic services, and mobilize financial and human resources in support of locally-determined development priorities; and 3) Citizens and local civil actors know their rights, have greater agency to engage in communal governance processes, and actively exercise these rights through institutionalized and ad-hoc mechanisms. RGN is supporting municipalities that are also receiving support under USAID’s Resilience Food Security Assistance (RFSA) projects in Maradi (Guidan Roumdji, Chadakori, Guidan sori, et Goura Gouri) and Zinder (Dungass, Goushi, Dogo Dogo, Bandé, DamaKaram Takaya, Dantchio, Guidimundi, Kwaya, Magaria, Malawa, Mazamni, Sassoumbroum, Wacha, Guidiguiri) regions, as well as in Tillabéri (Say, Kouré et Kollo). Activities include flexible funding mechanisms to facilitate adaptation to a fluid environment, test new innovations, scale up emerging best practices, and respond to crises.

Sahel Human Voice in Governance Activity (SHIGA), Financial Services Volunteers Corps (FSVC), *July 2019 – June 2022, \$7,000,000*

SHIGA’s goal is for Niger’s civil society to engage the government more effectively, and for key government institutions to be more effective in their mandates and meet the needs of citizens. Main objectives include 1) Civil society organizations (CSOs) more actively and effectively hold the government accountable and build demand for targeted policy reforms and improved government implementation; 2) Targeted government institutions are more accountable to citizens, and more effective and transparent in their operations; and 3) Constructive engagement spaces between citizens, civil society and the state to identify and implement targeted priority reforms are created and/or strengthened. This includes intensive capacity-building and mentoring of target groups of CSOs working on key themes. SHIGA currently has activities in Niamey, Zinder and Maradi.

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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