Security Assessment in North Africa

AT THE CROSSROADS OF SAHELIAN CONFLICTS

Insecurity, Terrorism, and Arms Trafficking in Niger

Savannah de Tessières

Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken

Global Affairs Canada
Affaires mondiales Canada

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

small arms survey

A publication of the Small Arms Survey/SANA project, with the support of the Netherlands Min. of Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, & the Swiss Federal Dept. of Foreign Affairs

Copyright

Published in Switzerland by the Small Arms Survey

First published in January 2018

Small Arms Survey
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
Maison de la Paix, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2E
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Series editor: Matt Johnson

Copy-edited by: Deborah Eade

Proofread by: Stephanie Huitson (readstephanie@ymail.com)

Typeset in Meta by Rick Jones (rick@studioexile.com)

Printed by Gonnet in France

ISBN 978-2-940548-48-4

Cover photo: Boko Haram members attack Bosso military camp, Bosso, Niger, 2016. Source: Still from the video about the Bosso attack (Jihadology, 2017)

About the author

Savannah de Tessières is a Senior Consultant for the Small Arms Survey and the UN and has worked for more than 12 years in the international security and arms fields, including extensive field research across Africa and the MENA region. Between 2011 and 2016, she was an arms expert on the UN Panel of Experts on Libya in charge of monitoring the UN Sanctions Regime, and served as the Panel's Coordinator 2015—16. She previously worked for the Small Arms Survey in Geneva, where she designed and led large-scale research projects into conflict analysis and arms proliferation across Africa. She holds master's degrees from La Sorbonne University in Paris and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. She has published numerous reports and articles on conflict analysis, security sector reform (SSR), international sanctions, arms trafficking, and armed actors, and is a regular speaker at conferences and seminars.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCAI) of Niger for its support, and particularly its president, General Youssoufa Mamadou Maiga.

The field research benefited greatly from the contribution of the CNCCAI team and from Mr Boukari Djiberou, the Permanent Secretary of the CNCCAI, in particular.

The author is grateful for the openness and cooperation of all representatives of security agencies who agreed to be interviewed, share data, and give access to the arms and ammunition they had seized. In particular, the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army and military region commanders of Agadez and Diffa, as well as the Gendarmerie Territoriale de Niamey and Gendarmerie légion commanders of Agadez and Diffa, representatives of the National Guard in Agadez, Diffa, and Niamey, and the Police Central Service for the fight against terrorism (SCLT).

The author would also like to thank Vincent Foucher, Yvan Guichaoua, and Claudio Gramizzi for their thorough reviews of the final draft of this report.

The author is grateful for the support of the Small Arms Survey, particularly Matt Johnson, Nicolas Florquin, and Farrah Hawana for their internal reviews, Olivia Denonville for the fact checking and Deborah Eade for copy-editing, and Stephanie Huitson for proofreading.

The SANA project

The Security Assessment in North Africa is a multi-year project of the Small Arms Survey to support those engaged in building a more secure environment in North Africa and the Sahel-Sahara region. The project produces timely, evidence-based research and analysis on the availability and circulation of small arms, the dynamics of emerging armed groups, and related insecurity. The research stresses the effects of the recent uprisings and armed conflicts in the region on community safety.

The Security Assessment in North Africa receives core funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. In addition, the project receives ongoing support from Global Affairs Canada and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has previously received grants from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the US State Department.

For more information, please visit www.smallarmssurvey.org/sana

Contents

List of boxes, figures, maps, tables, and photos **8**

Key findings **10**

Introduction **13**

Armed violence in Niger **17**

Terrorism 19

Threat from Niger's western borders: terrorist attacks in Niger from groups associated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State (IS) 26

Threat from the south: attacks from Boko Haram 28

Nigeriens in Sahelian terrorist groups 29

Towards a greater understanding of relationships among jihadist groups in the Sahel 31

Community conflicts 33

Armed robbery 34

North 34

South-east 37

South-west 38

Weapons trafficking in Niger **41**

North 44

Transfers from Libya to Mali 44

Weapons ownership in the north 46

Gold rush and weapons ownership 50

South-west 50

South-east 52

Materiel used by terrorist groups operating in Niger 54
Arms and ammunition used by Mali-based terrorist groups 54
Arms and ammunition used by Boko Haram 55

Armed response to insecurity **61**
Nigerien security forces 62
Regional security cooperation against terrorism threat 63
International security actors 64
Vigilante groups 67
Private security companies 68

Primary impacts of insecurity **69**
North 71
South-west 72
South-east 73

Conclusion **75**

Annexe **77**

List of abbreviations **98**

Endnotes **100**

Bibliography **106**

List of boxes, figures, maps, tables, and photos

Boxes

1 Turkish blank-firing handguns 46

2 Analysis of illicit ammunition for small arms and machine guns documented in Niger in 2016 and 2017 52

3 Stockpile management in Niger 59

4 Operation Barkhane 65

Figures

1 Armed attacks reported to the Gendarmerie in 2014–16, by légion 35

2 Number of people injured and killed during armed robberies in Niger in 2010–16, as reported to the Gendarmerie 35

Maps

1 Niger and surrounding region 20

2 Selected ammunition found in Niger and surrounding region 37

3 Travel recommendations by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs 70

Tables

1 Major terrorist attacks in Niger, January 2015–October 2017 22

2 Number of crimes in Niamey in 2015, by type of crime 38

3 Data collated by the CNCCAI on materiel seized by/handed over to the Nigerien authorities, 2011–March 2014[1] 42

4 Seizures of arms and ammunition by the Gendarmerie, January 2014–October 2016 43

5 Arms seized by the Nigerien Armed Forces, September 2015–October 2016 44
6 Materiel stolen from Camp Bosso 58

Photos

1 Converted Turkish blank-firing handguns seized by the Nigerien authorities in 2016 (produced between 2012 and 2014) 47
2 Assault rifles and general-purpose machine guns seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region in 2015 and 2016 48
3 Weapons seized from a private collector by Nigerien authorities in 2016 51
4 Example of arms and ammunition seized from bandits and herders by the Gendarmerie in the Zinder region, 2016 52
5 Sample of weapons seized from Boko Haram between 2015 and 2016 56
6 Technicals mounted with heavy machine guns 58
7 Assault rifles taken by Boko Haram during the Bosso Attack 59
8 Storage in northern Niger 60

Key findings

Terrorism[2]

- At the crossroads of the region's most violent conflicts, Niger has served as a primary transit point for armed criminal and terrorist groups operating in the various conflict theatres that surround it.
- Everything from people, weapons, and low-tech communications pass through Niger's borders, providing a rich source of intelligence that is critical to understanding the nature of cross-border relationships and networks of trafficking and terrorist groups.
- Niger presents a privileged arena in which to observe the array of terrorist dynamics across the Sahel, and to take action against them. The country has become a major partner in counter-terrorism strategies for regional and western powers.
- Relatively spared by the threat of terrorism until 2015, the increase in terrorist attacks in Niger since then, first by Boko Haram and then by AQIM-related groups or splinter cells, run in parallel with the enhanced engagement of the Nigerien authorities against terrorism in the region, including MNJTF, MINUSMA, and G5 Sahel efforts.
- While the north of the country is particularly affected by armed banditry, the south has suffered the bulk of terrorist attacks. In 2016, Boko Haram was responsible for perpetrating 80 per cent of the terrorist attacks carried out on Nigerien soil, but 2017 saw a surge in deadly attacks against security positions near the borders of Burkina Faso and Mali by AQIM- and IS-related groups based in Mali.
- Sahelian terrorist groups find Niger a fertile recruiting ground and exploit long-standing community divisions, which are in turn exacerbated by increasing insecurity.

Arms trafficking

- Niger has served as a key transit route for weapons heading to conflict zones in the region, but the deterioration of the country's security situation has resulted in an increase in the domestic demand for weapons, particularly for small arms and ammunition.
- Arms seized from terrorists or en route to terrorist groups in Niger over the past five years include explosives, small arms and light weapons (SALW) and associated ammunition (including MANPADS, mortar rounds, and machine guns). Vehicles were also seized.
- Terrorist groups operating in Niger, including those based in Mali and Nigeria, have been obtaining materiel from a variety of sources—including from national stockpiles in the region—following the collapse of state control over arsenals, as in Libya

or northern Mali, attacks against security positions, or diversion in countries such as Niger or Nigeria.

- Ammunition held by terrorist groups, other armed actors, and civilians is very similar, indicating common sources of illicit ammunition, including past rebellions and national stockpiles from Niger and neighbouring countries. However, it does vary between the regions: while chains of transfers in the north originate mainly from Libya and Mali, materiel in the south-east comes mainly from Chad and Nigeria.
- While Libya continues to be a source for illicit weapons in Niger, including converted blank-firing handguns, trafficking from Libya has declined significantly since 2014 due to the depletion of Qaddafi's SALW stockpiles, national demand reinvigorated in light of renewed conflict in Libya, and increased levels of surveillance and counteraction in Niger with the deployment of Operation Barkhane.

> The Sahel region is host to multiple conflicts with myriad armed actors, including terrorist groups that operate across borders, destabilizing the entire region.”

Introduction

The Sahel region is host to multiple conflicts with myriad armed actors, including terrorist groups that operate across borders, destabilizing the entire region. Niger is located at the heart of this chaos, wedged between Libya, Mali, and Nigeria, and has suffered an increasing threat of terrorism from these cross-border groups, which partly feed on the nation's internal security issues.

Internally, Niger has remained relatively stable since the last coup d'état in 2010, but the situation remains fragile since the root causes of past insurrections have been largely unaddressed and national and international observers remain particularly vigilant. The state has great difficulty in guaranteeing security in the country, which has a devastating impact on social and economic development and in turn reinforces tensions and fuels local conflicts. Armed banditry, trafficking of weapons and drugs, and violent community disputes are all symptomatic of this, and old tensions become locked into new insecurity dynamics such as terrorism, further complicating any future settlements.

Until recently, Niger was relatively spared by terrorist groups operating around it, but for the last three years the country has sustained an increasing number of attacks, mirroring its increased role in the fight against terrorism in the region. In 2015, Boko Haram started to make frequent attacks on Nigerien soil and, since mid-2016, the border areas with Mali and Burkina Faso have repeatedly been targeted, leaving many dead, injured, or displaced and severely disrupting the fragile social and economic balance.

Due to its geographical location at the crossroads of the region's most violent conflicts, and the weak control over its territory, Niger has served as a primary transit point for armed criminal and terrorist groups operating in the various conflict-affected areas around it. The detention of couriers carrying verbal messages, letters, flash drives, and cash, as well as weapons seizures and arrests of members of terrorist groups passing through Niger en route from Mali to Libya or Nigeria, for example, have helped the national and international community build its understanding of how these groups operate.

Though Niger still has a long way to go in tackling the underlying causes of violence, the country has significantly boosted its security capacity and become a key partner in the counter-terrorist campaigns of western nations, which are providing substantial support to the country's security sector. Niger presents a privileged arena in which to observe the array of terrorist dynamics across the Sahel, and to take action against them.

In addition to an analysis of the types of armed violence that prevail in Niger, including terrorism, communal conflict, and armed banditry, this Report examines arms trafficking in the country and the illicit possession of weapons by civilians, as well as by armed entities and terrorist groups. The Report also provides an overview of the responses to insecurity in Niger by the national authorities, their international partners, and non-state actors, and discusses the main impacts of insecurity on the country. Finally, the Report also includes an Annexe listing all illicit small-calibre ammunition documented by the Small Arms Survey in Niger in 2016 and 2017, the type of armed actors from which

it was seized, and information regarding where else in the Sahel it is also in use, shedding significant light on trends in the illicit movement of military materiel in the region.

The research phase was conducted between November 2016 and October 2017. The Report is based mainly on field research conducted in November 2016. The author interviewed a wide range of stakeholders in Agadez, Diffa, and Niamey, including representatives of the intelligence services, army, police, Gendarmerie, National Guard, the General Directorate for the Environment, Water and Forests, as well as civilian and traditional authorities, the National SALW Commission, human rights organizations, foreign diplomats, and NGO staff. Interviews were also conducted with a range of Nigerien civilian groups, including syndicates of transporters, gold diggers, and former rebels. Finally, the author was granted access to several national weapons storage facilities, as well as seizures of arms and ammunition made by the security services in the three areas visited.

“Although Niger does not suffer the same levels of insecurity as Libya, Mali, or Nigeria, the country has had to deal with a dynamic range of armed violence.”

Armed violence in Niger

Although Niger does not suffer the same levels of insecurity as Libya, Mali, or Nigeria, the country has had to deal with a dynamic range of armed violence. This section explores how the main current forms of armed violence, including terrorism, banditry, and inter- and intra-communal conflict, affect the north, south-east, and south-west of the country differently. It provides information on perpetrators, victims, and *modus operandi*. While the north of the country is particularly affected by armed banditry, the south has increasingly suffered from terrorist attacks by groups based in Mali and Nigeria.

Although this section identifies forms of armed violence individually, they are all intertwined and feed off each other: in certain areas of the country, for example, community conflicts encourage citizens to arm themselves further, which in turn generates greater levels of violence, deepens feuds, and creates fertile ground for terrorist groups to recruit. Between 2010 and 2015, there were an average of 736 violent deaths a year in Niger, including 440 homicides by firearms (Small Arms Survey, n.d.).

Since 2011, the collapse of the Libyan state, coupled with the rise in conflict and the entrenchment of armed groups in the Sahel region, has meant that Niger has increasingly fallen victim to armed cross-border threats, primarily terrorism.

The prospect of the rebellion in Mali spreading across the border into Niger was a significant concern for the central government in 2012 (Nigerien Armed Forces, 2012), but it did not happen. According to the Nigerien authorities, this was explained by the fact that most of the Tuareg combatants who fled Libya in 2011 to settle in Niger had been disarmed, whereas in Mali they were not disarmed and arrived in much greater numbers. Furthermore, since the last rebellion, the Nigerien central government has sought to co-opt key figures from the north in the country's political economy, and used this network to detect tensions and defuse them before they escalate (see Guichaoua and Pellerin, 2017, pp. 68–72).

More recently, in September 2016, the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Réhabilitation du Niger (MJRN) declared its intention to take up arms to secure the 'fundamental rights' of the Tubu, a population located across northern Niger, Chad, and southern Libya (Jeune Afrique/AFP, 2016a). Adam Tcheke Koudigan, the leader of the MJRN, was himself a veteran of the Tubu rebellion in the 1990s (Tubiana and Gramizzi, 2017, p. 94), reflecting the fact that past grievances remain unaddressed. However, little has been seen of the MJRN since the declaration and the initiative did not generate significant support from the Tubu community. The Nigerien authorities organized mediation efforts with the group[3] and maintain a watchful eye on developments in the Tubu community. While no single non-state armed group claims control of territory in Niger, a number of highly organized and armed trafficking networks operate in areas where state institutions and security provision are very limited.[4]

Niger is divided into eight regions (see Map 1), but, for the purposes of this analysis, we have divided the country in three: the northern region (Agadez), the south-west

(Tillaberi, Dosso, Tahoua, which includes the capital, Niamey), and the south-east (Maradi, Zinder, and Diffa), reflecting the Gendarmerie's légions respectively called Agadez, Niamey, and Zinder (Gendarmerie nationale, 2015).

Terrorism[5]

“Niger has been particularly threatened from its southern and western borders. Boko Haram was responsible for most of the terrorist attacks in Niger in 2015 and 2016.”

Until recently, Niger had served as a primary transit point for terrorist groups operating in neighbouring countries, as well as a source of funding and recruitment, leaving the country relatively untouched. Lately, however, these same groups have started to mount attacks against Niger itself in parallel with the country's increased engagement in the fight against terrorism. Niger deployed peacekeepers in Mali, joined both the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel Force to fight against Boko Haram (see p. 64), and has become a key partner for French and US military counter-terrorism efforts in the region.

Although the Nigerien authorities have significantly reinforced their security presence along the border areas (see p. 62), with the support of international partners, the territory is vast and very difficult to control effectively. In addition, the cross-border nature of these terrorist groups presents a major challenge for Niger since internal efforts are not always reciprocated by the authorities on the other side: the absence of any state control, particularly in northern Mali and in southern Libya, remains a huge obstacle to anti-terrorism initiatives.

Niger has been particularly threatened from its southern and western borders. Boko Haram was responsible for most of the terrorist attacks in Niger in 2015 and 2016 (80 per cent in 2016—see Table 1). While the second half of 2016 saw a reduction in the terrorist threat in the south, there was a notable increase in the Tillaberi and Tahoua regions bordering Mali, where many people were killed in attacks of security positions by groups coming from Mali.

Targets of terrorist attacks in Niger have included government and civilian entities, as well as foreign, particularly western, entities and nationals. Kidnappings of foreign nationals have also brought millions of dollars into the coffers of terrorist groups. In 2016, an estimated 280 people were killed by terrorists in Niger, 35 per cent of whom were security force personnel.[6]

Map 1 Niger and surrounding region

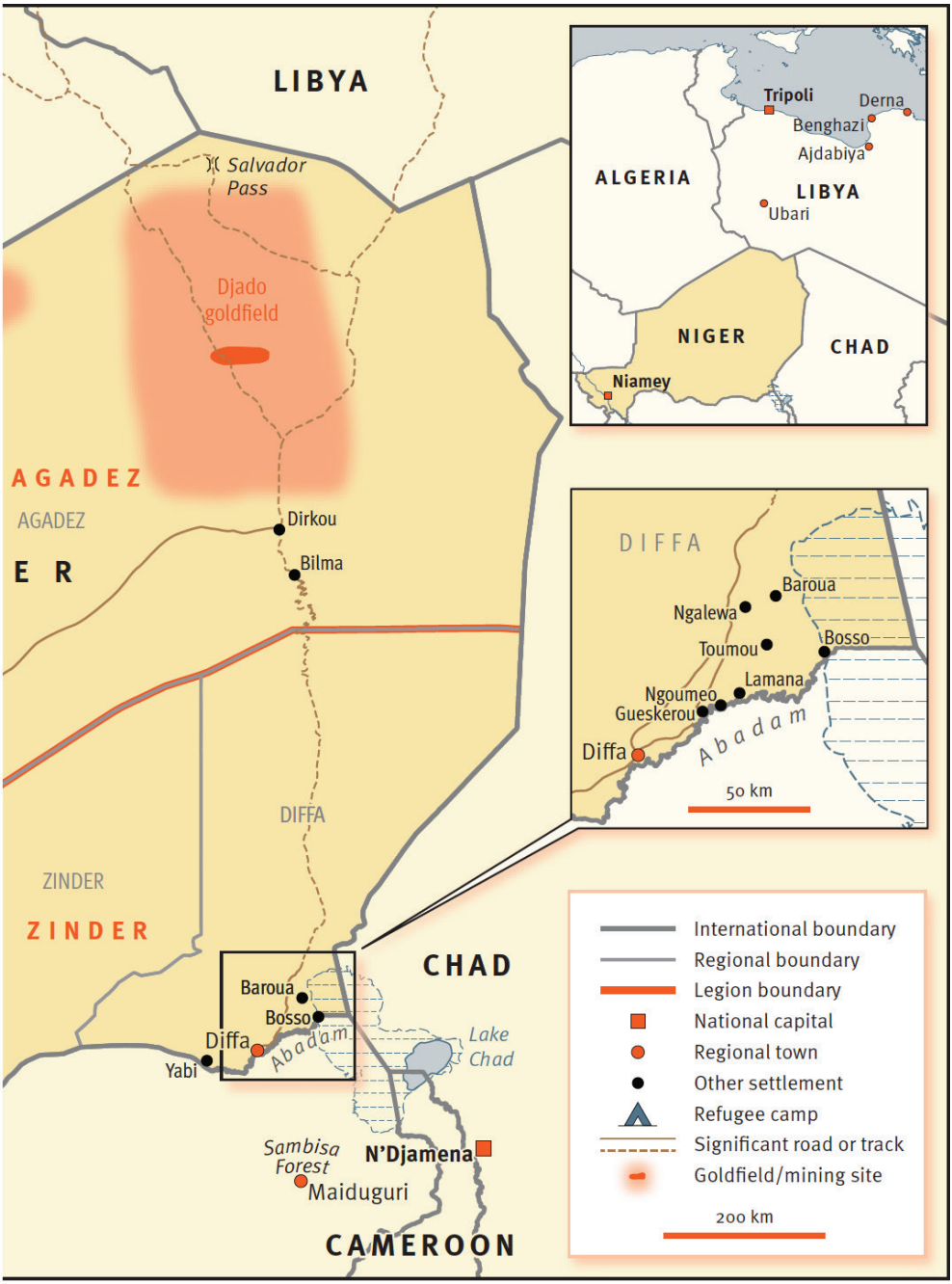

LIBYA
Salvador Pass
Djado goldfield
AGADEZ
AGADEZ
E R
Dirkou
Bilma
DIFFA
ZINDER
ZINDER
CHAD
Baroua
Bosso
Diffa
Yabi
Abadam
Lake Chad
Sambisa Forest
N'Djamena
Maiduguri
CAMEROON
Tripoli
Derna
Benghazi
Ajdabiya
ALGERIA
LIBYA
Ubari
NIGER
CHAD
Niamey
DIFFA
Baroua
Ngalewa
Toumou
Bosso
Lamana
Ngoumeo
Gueskérou
Diffa
Abadam
50 km
International boundary
Regional boundary
Legion boundary
National capital
Regional town
Other settlement
Refugee camp
Significant road or track
Goldfield/mining site
200 km

Table 1 Major terrorist attacks in Niger, January 2015–October 2017

Date	Location, region	Perpetrators	Event/casualties	Military materiel stolen	Source
6 February 2015	Bosso, Diffa	Boko Haram	1st reported important attack of Boko Haram on Nigerien territory		RFI, 2015a
20 February 2015	Karamga island, Lake Chad	Boko Haram	Attack on island • 7 soldiers killed, 4 injured • 1 civilian killed • 15 Boko Haram killed		Romandie/AFP, 2015
25 April 2015	Karamga, Lake Chad	Boko Haram	Military position • 46 soldiers killed • 28 civilians killed • 156 Boko Haram killed		Le Monde, 2015
17 June 2015	Lamana and Ngoumeo village, Diffa	Boko Haram	Attacks on villages • 38 civilians killed		OCHA, 2015
21 October 2015	Boulongori, Diffa	Boko Haram	Suicide attack on security position • 2 soldiers killed, 7 injured • 4 Boko Haram killed		RFI, 2015c
23 December 2015	Abadam, Diffa	Boko Haram	• 2 soldiers killed • 3 civilians killed		Nako and Massalaki, 2015
16 March 2016	Bankilare, Tillaberi		• 3 gendarmes killed • 2 injured	5 AK-type assault rifles, 13 magazines (325 rounds of 7.62 × 39 mm), 1 handgun (22 9 mm ammo), 1 motorcycle	Gendarmerie nationale, 2016c

17 March 2016	Bosso, Diffa	Boko Haram	5 suicide bombers attack a military camp and kill the commanding officer		RFI, 2016a; information confirmed during interview with Commanding Officer of Military Zone, Diffa, November 2016
31 May 2016	Yabi, Diffa	Boko Haram	Attack on villagers • 6 civilians killed • Several injured		RFI, 2016b
3 June 2016	Bosso, Diffa	Boko Haram	Attack on military camp • 32 FDS killed • 67 injured	Significant quantities of SALW and heavy arms and ammunition; vehicles	Interview with senior security officer, Diffa, November 2016
16 June 2016	Ngaguam, Diffa	Boko Haram	Attack on IDP camp • 7 gendarmes killed		RFI, 2016c
3 September 2016	Toumou village, Diffa	Boko Haram	Attack on villagers • 5 civilians killed		RFI, 2016d
8 September 2016	Bosso, Diffa	Boko Haram	IED attack • 2 members of security forces killed		Interview with senior security officer, Diffa, November 2016
11 September 2016	Refugee camp of Tabar-Barey, Tillaberi (near Malian border)		• 3 civilians killed		Studio Tamani, 2016; interview with senior security officer, Niamey, November 2016
12 September 2016	Bosso, Diffa	Boko Haram	Ambush • 5 members of security forces killed • 6 injured		Interview with senior security officer, Diffa, November 2016

Date	Location, region	Perpetrators	Event/casualties	Military materiel stolen	Source
6 October 2016	Malian refugee camp of Tezalit, Tahoua		• 22 national guards killed	Several vehicles, 5 hand-guns, 29 AK-type rifles, 2 general purpose machine guns, and 1 12.7 mm heavy machine gun	RFI, 2016e ; interview with senior security officer involved in the investigation, Niamey, November 2016
17 October 2016	Koutoukale prison, near border with Mali, Tillaberi	IS-GS claimed the attack			Alakhbar, 2016
8 November 2016	Bani Bangou, Tillaberi		Attack on National Guard position • 5 killed • 3 injured	2 pick-ups, 2 12.7 mm machine guns and ammunition	RFI, 2016h; interview with senior police officer, Niamey, November 2016
31 December 2016	Baroua, Diffa	Boko Haram	• 3 members of security forces killed • several injured		RFI, 2017a; France Diplomatie, 2017
21 January 2017	Geskerou, Diffa	Boko Haram	• 2 members of security forces killed • 7 injured		Niger Inter, 2017
22 February 2017	In-Tirzawan, Tillaberi	IS-GS claimed the attack	• 15 FDS killed • 19 injured		TamTam Info, 2017; Journal du Mali, 2017
6 March 2017	Tillaberi (near border with Mali and Burkina Faso)	Unidentified group (returned to Mali)	Attack on Gendarmerie post • 5 gendarmes killed		RFI, 2017c
10 April 2017	Geskerou, Diffa	Boko Haram	• 57 members of Boko Haram killed • 15 members of security forces and 2 civilians injured		Reuters, 2017a

11 May 2017	Ayorou, north of Tillaberi		Attack on the Gendarmerie post	Military materiel stolen including a 12.7 mm machine gun	Sahelien, 2017; email exchange with investigator, May 2017
27 May 2017	Tera, Tillaberi		Attack on a police station • 2 policemen and 1 civilian killed	Several rifles stolen	Sahelien, 2017
1 June 2017	Abala, Tillaberi	Group of 11 pick-ups with heavy machine guns coming from Malian border	Attack on Garde Nationale position • 6 members of security forces killed	2 vehicles stolen, storage looted including assault rifles, 12.7 mm machine guns, and ammunition	RFI, 2017e; email exchange with investigator, Niger, 2017
2 July 2017	Ngalewa, Diffa	Boko Haram	• 9 civilians killed • 24 women and 13 children kidnapped		RFI, 2017f
5 July 2017	Midal, near Malian border, Tahoua	JNIM claimed the attack	• 5 soldiers killed	4 technicals, assault rifles, heavy machine guns, ammunition, rockets	RFI, 2017g; MENASTREAM, 2017
4 October 2017	Tongo Tongo, near Malian border, Tillaberi	S-GS claimed the attack	Ambush • 4 Nigerien soldiers and • 4 American soldiers killed • 8 Nigerien soldiers injured, • 2 Americans injured		ANI, 2018
21 October 2017	Ayorou, north of Tillaberi		Attack on Gendarmerie post • 13 gendarmes killed • 5 injured	Military materiel and vehicles	Nigerien MoD, 2017; RFI, 2017i

Threat from Niger's western borders: terrorist attacks in Niger from groups associated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State (IS)

In the early 2000s, with the expansion of the zone of operations of the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC)[7] across the Sahel, the GSPC used Niger as a rear base and a refuge, but also conducted operations, including kidnappings of western citizens,[8] and attacks against security forces and military installations. Terrorist attacks have steadily risen since the group rebranded as AQIM in 2007.

The first suicide attacks in Niger took place on 23 May 2013, when two simultaneous attacks were carried out against a military camp and the French Areva uranium facility in the Agadez region, killing 24 people. The attacks were jointly claimed by the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) (QDe.134) and Al Moulathamoun (QDe.140) (Mokhtar Belmokhtar's (QDi.136) group), two breakaway factions of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (QDe.014), mainly active in Mali, which merged later that year to form a new group called Al Murabitun (QDe.141) (UNSC, 2014, p. 87).[9] While logistical support had been provided by Nigerien nationals, the attackers were not of Nigerien origin and used weapons and ammunition from various sources (see p. 54).[10]

Since 2016, there have been regular attacks by armed groups in the regions of Tahoua and Tillaberi, where OCHA counted 46 attacks between February 2016 and October 2017 (OCHA, 2017c). Several deadly attacks on Malian refugee camps and security posts along the border areas with Mali and Burkina Faso resulted in the death of a large number of security officers (see Table 1). On several occasions the attackers seized small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition, as well as uniforms and vehicles belonging to Nigerien forces (see Table 1). These vehicles were then used as a Trojan horse by terrorist groups in order to conduct new attacks against security positions, remaining relatively undetected until then (RFI, 2017e).

While the authorities identified these attacks as having been conducted by jihadist groups, it has been difficult to isolate precisely which groups were involved. Responsibility for some of these attacks was claimed by a group controlled by Adnane Abu Walid Al-Sahrawi who, since 2013, when he was with the MUJAO, had been planning to target Niger and its security forces and to kidnap western citizens.[11] When claiming responsibility for the double suicide attacks in 2013, as the spokesperson of MUJAO, Al-Sahrawi declared: 'We have attacked France and Niger for its cooperation with France in its war against Sharia law' (TamTam Info, 2013).

With the merger of MUJAO and Al Moulathamoun (as noted above), Al-Sahrawi became a member of Al Murabitun. In May 2015, Al-Sahrawi announced Al Murabitun's support for the Islamic State (IS), pledging bai'a (allegiance) to the group. A few days later,

however, Mokhtar Belmokhtar (the leader of the former Al Moulathamoun) rejected Al-Sahrawi's pledge. Instead, Belmokhtar confirmed Al Murabitun's loyalty to al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri (QDi.006) (France 24, 2015).

In September and October 2016, Al-Sahrawi and members of Al Murabitun who remained loyal to him claimed responsibility for their first attacks: an attack against security positions in Burkina Faso and another attack against Koutoukale Prison in Niger, which held several prominent jihadist leaders (see Table 1). While senior IS leadership did not at first appear much interested in Al-Sahrawi's earlier pledge of allegiance, the loss of territory in Libya and by Al-Sahrawi's rising visibility (Mémier, 2017, p. 28) apparently motivated a change of opinion. In October 2016, Amaq (the IS media agency) finally broadcast the group's acceptance of Al-Sahrawi's allegiance—17 months after he had announced it. In effect, the Amaq broadcast served as formal recognition of the Sahelian franchise under Al-Sahrawi's leadership (RFI, 2016f).

Despite Al-Sahrawi's affiliation with IS, his group—the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (IS-GS)—appears to have maintained close links with Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups. The current status of IS-GS is therefore unclear.[12] What is clear is that Niger continues to be a key target for Al-Sahrawi's group; IS-GS claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks near the Malian border, including in In-Tirzawan, Abala, Tongo Tongo and Ayorou (ANI, 2018) (see Table 1). As one Nigerien senior security officer explained: 'Attacks against security positions in October [2017] were designed as a show of force, to highlight the group's superiority over our national security forces, and warn off the G5 Sahel.'[13]

Possibly motivated by the intensification of Al-Sahrawi's operations, in March 2017, Iyad ag Ghali (QDi.316) announced the creation of a new jihadist entity. Called Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin ('The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims'; JNIM), the new group brough together elements of Ansar Dine,[14] Katibat Macina, Al Murabitun, and AQIM. JNIM's leader positioned himself under the authority of AQIM emir Droukdel and AQ leader Al-Zawahiri (Macé, 2017). JNIM conducted several deadly attacks against French and Malian troops in Mali. They also launched operations in Burkina Faso and Niger, where they mounted an attack against a Nigerien military post in July 2017, killing five and seizing a significant number of weapons and ammunition (see Table 1).

With the loss of territorial control by IS in Libya, many analysts feared that combatants would travel south, and potentially reach Niger. To date, however, this fear is unfounded: there has been no evidence of IS fighters settling in Niger.

In addition to attacks on its terroritory, the Nigerien government has also paid very heavily for their engagement in the Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali (MINUSMA), including 10 killed and many injured. In October 2014, nine Nigerien peacekeepers were killed in an ambush near Gao (UN News Center, 2014). In 2015, a Nigerien soldier was killed by a landmine (MaliActu, 2016).

Threat from the south: attacks from Boko Haram[15]

The border between the Diffa region, at the centre of the fight against Boko Haram in Niger, and Nigeria is largely symbolic since the ethnic groups are the same, with families often divided between the two countries, and Nigerian currency is accepted everywhere in the city of Diffa. Boko Haram initially used Niger as a rear base to source supplies, but has since 2015 conducted deadly attacks against security positions and civilians (see Table 1), resulting in significant displacement of the local population and the total economic and social destabilization of the region, which has been exacerbated further by the Nigerien government's response (see p. 73).

Since February 2015 and Boko Haram's first large-scale attack on Nigerien territory, the group has been attacking state and civilian assets. Between February 2015 and May 2017 Boko Haram killed at least 319 civilians (124 in 2015, 181 in 2016, and 14 in the first half of 2017),[16] injured 140 more in south-east Niger, and more than 17 people have been kidnapped or have disappeared (OCHA, 2016; 2017b).[17] In addition, Boko Haram reportedly killed more than 60 members of the Nigerien security forces in 2016.[18]

Attacks against civilians in Niger are mainly conducted to obtain supplies, kidnap individuals, and retaliate against people that Boko Haram thinks have collaborated with the authorities or the families of members who have fled the movement.

Boko Haram has launched violent attacks against the Nigerien security forces, the deadliest of which targeted the Bosso military camp in June 2016 (see p. 57). Numerous suicide attacks have also been conducted by men and women against military targets,[19] although these appear to have ceased in March 2016.[20] Overall, the group has been making fewer attacks since mid-2016 and Diffa city has not been targeted since early 2016. In the first half of 2017, 14 people were reported killed compared to 181 during 2016.[21] This decline may be explained by the weakening of the group and its split into two main factions which use violence differently.

In 2016, Boko Haram sustained significant losses of life and territory as a result of the MNJTF operations (see above).[22] Combined with this, major internal divisions further destabilized its position. Although Abubakar Shekau (QDi.322) had announced the group's allegiance to IS in 2015, in August 2016 the IS 'Naba' channel released a video of Abu Musab Barnawi (also known as Habib Yusuf), the son of the founder of Boko Haram, Mohamed Yusuf, referring to himself as the 'Governor' of IS West Africa Province (IS-WA; Site Intelligence Group, 2016). Shekau disputed this decision and the two factions have been competing and sometimes fighting for resources and members. Further complicating the process of mapping the organization, several pockets of combatants who identify as members of Boko Haram remain, but with no clear affiliation.

While Shekau and those loyal to him are for the most part located towards the Sambissa Forest, Barnawi's faction is positioned much closer to Niger on Lake Chad and along the

Komadugu, thereby presenting much more of an immediate threat to Niger (ICG, 2017b, p. 19). In terms of strategy, Barnawi's group seems to have moved away from suicide attacks and targeting Muslim civilians, instead prioritizing attacks on security forces (ICG, 2017b, p. 20), including the attack on the Bosso military camp referred to in Table 1 (see also p. 57).

Nigeriens in Sahelian terrorist groups

Nigerien nationals in Boko Haram

There is no reliable data on the precise number of combatants in Boko Haram[23] or the number of Nigerien nationals within its ranks. Security sources the author interviewed in Niger estimate that 'several hundred to several thousand' Nigeriens had joined the group, and highlighted that the support Boko Haram receives from some of the general population, many of whom are from the same families and tribes, makes mapping numbers in the group even more of a challenge.

Regardless, it is clear that a significant number of Nigerien nationals have joined Boko Haram since 2000: in the early 2000s, several young Nigeriens working and studying in Maiduguri were reportedly seduced by the preaching of Mohamed Yusuf, the group's founder, whose ideology was spread further into the Diffa region by small groups of followers (ICG, 2017b, p. 5).

Civilian and military sources in Diffa explained that, in the organization's early days, Boko Haram recruited from among several different groups in Niger, particularly the Buduma and the Kanuri. Money was a strong incentive for young men, particularly among poorer groups: 'They were promised cash, a motorbike and a weapon . . . you feel a bit like a bigshot', said a representative of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDDH).[24]

Some degree of cooperation is evident between certain parts of the population and Boko Haram, particularly in terms of sharing intelligence and food supplies. In the face of this challenge, the authorities adopted extreme measures to stem any flow of resources to Boko Haram, but in doing so severely affected access to resources by the broader population (see p. 73).

With the loss of territory and successful military operations against Boko Haram, the group now finds it increasingly difficult to recruit new members and a growing number have left it. In Chad, 400 former members surrendered in October 2016; however, while numbers in Niger are still low, they are also on the rise. In January 2017, Prime Minister Mohamed Bazoum announced that over a period of 10 days around 50 Boko Haram fighters had surrendered (AFP, 2017a). The Nigerien authorities introduced the idea of an amnesty for Boko Haram defectors, which would include a reintegration project—a proposal that met with notable apprehension by the general public (Cogné, 2017).

Leaving Boko Haram is no easy task: defectors and their families risk violent retaliation from the group, and the government's demobilization and reintegration efforts are at best still embryonic.

Large numbers of people have been arrested across the south of Niger, sometimes on the basis of hearsay, and neither the security forces nor the judiciary have the resources to follow procedures and investigate each case. As a result, jails are full and frustration is building. According to security sources, 'we have 1,275[26] people in jail related to Boko Haram, mostly informants, accomplices, and food deliverers; they're just small fry. There are also a lot of baseless denunciations (. . .) It is difficult because the prison cells are not made to host that many people and we don't have enough support to deal with each case'.[27] In March 2017, the authorities initiated a mass trial and were planning to process 1,300 detainees in batches of 250—350 within the next few months (RFI, 2017d). While this allows for rapid clearance of cases of individuals who have spent months in detention, it also raises serious questions about transparency and the right of everyone accused to a fair trial.

Finally, the government decided to issue an amnesty until 31 December 2017 and set up a camp to host and eventually reintegrate those who 'repent'. October 2017 saw the first group of 160 individuals of Nigerien, Nigerian, and Cameroonian origin put through this process (RFI, 2017h; Boisbouvier, 2017).

Nigerien nationals in Malian-based terrorist groups

Since the beginning of the Mali crisis, Nigerien nationals could also be found in several Mali-based terrorist groups, including AQIM, MUJAO, and Al Murabitun, and young Fulani in particular have been recruited by the likes of MUJAO and Al Murabitun.[28] Community tensions and frustrations, in addition to poverty and under-development, are exploited by jihadist groups:[29] 'young Peuls [Fulani] don't join MUJAO to fight jihad but to protect themselves against the Tuaregs with whom they are in conflict over resources. MUJAO and Al-Sahrawi know exactly how to exploit these inter-community conflicts'.[30] Al-Sahrawi himself, a former senior member of MUJAO and later of Al Murabitun, had recruited young Nigerien Fulani into the movement.[31]

In 2015, several young, ex-MUJAO Fulani were caught by the Nigerien security forces attempting to transport arms and ammunition into Niger. They claimed that they were fleeing their group.[32] According to an investigator working on the case, some of this materiel had been stolen from security officers during the attack on Ouallam Prison in 2014,[33] potentially shedding some light on the identity of its perpetrators.

Nigeriens have also joined other armed groups which, while not listed as terrorist entities themselves, have connections to such groups due to the fact that they operate in the same areas or because members of terrorist groups have switched their affiliations: for example, members of MUJAO have shifted to the Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA), whose ranks include many Nigeriens.[34]

Towards a greater understanding of relationships among jihadist groups in the Sahel

Mapping the interactions and levels of cooperation between terrorist groups in the Sahel remains a persistent challenge, particularly when groups have adopted low-tech means of communication that are harder to track and intercept. Nevertheless, given its strategic position at the crossroads of key areas of terrorist operations, everything from people, weapons (see pp. 54–60), and communications pass through Niger's borders, providing a rich source of information that is critical to understanding the nature of transborder relationships and networks of groups and their members.

Detention of couriers carrying verbal messages, letters, flash drives, and cash, as well as weapons seizures and arrests of members of terrorist groups passing through Nigerien territory en route from Mali to Libya, for instance, has helped build an understanding of the composition, objectives, and status of these groups and their internal divisions.

Cross-border cooperation among groups, particularly in terms of logistics, serves a shared political and strategic agenda or a temporary alliance of circumstance; there are also effective networks at lower levels since members of different groups come from the same area or tribe, or may previously have fought together in the same group before switching affiliation.

In June 2013, 22 members of terrorist groups escaped from the civilian prison in Niamey, leaving two guards dead and three injured (Le Monde/AFP, 2013). The investigation conducted by the authorities showed that, following the arrest of Sudanese members of MUJAO and their subsequent imprisonment in Niamey, these had contacted a compatriot within the ranks of AQIM based in Mali who had sent money to members of Boko Haram to purchase a handgun and ammunition (RFI, 2013) and who then brought them into the prison when they were visiting Boko Haram prisoners. According to a testimony of a former member of MUJAO, prison staff had been complicit in helping to procure the gun.[35]

Despite surveillance efforts in northern Niger, groups, including AQIM, Ansar Dine, and Al Murabitun, have continued to move through Niger, although using smaller convoys than before in order to avoid detection.[36] Examining the composition of terrorist convoys travelling between Libya and Mali also helps map the alliances between different groups, their geographical spread, and modus operandi.

An interesting illustration of this is the arrest in September 2014 of Abu Assem Al-Muhajir in La Passe de Salvador, the crossroads between Algeria, Libya, and Niger, on his way from Mali to meet with Mokhtar Belmokhtar in Ajdabiya, Libya (UNSC, 2016, p. 166). Abu Assem, a Sudanese national, described himself as the 'media officer' of Al Murabitun; he was responsible for several of the group's statements to the Agence Nouakchott d'Information (ANI) press agency (Muratet, 2014) and worked on a number of propaganda films.[37]

Abu Assem had originally travelled in 2012 from Sudan to Timbuktu in Mali to join AQIM, going via Chad and Diffa in Niger, and received logistical support between Diffa and Zinder from members of Boko Haram. He later joined Al Moulathamoun and then Al Murabitun. According to the statement he gave after his arrest, AQIM has trained some members of Boko Haram in northern Mali and the group even had an official liaison officer to maintain relations between the two groups. Statements taken from members of Boko Haram arrested in Niger on their way back from northern Mali carrying messages, arms, and cash further confirm this (UNSC, 2014, p. 35).

At the time, Abu Assem's arrest also confirmed the significance of Libya for Al Murabitun, the development of Mokhtar Belmokhtar's role, and the group's relationships with Libyan groups, particularly in Ajdabiya, Derna, Benghazi, and Ubari. The Al Murabitun convoy to Libya included eight other men, including a member of the MAA.

Monitoring arms trafficking can also be a useful means to map relationships between terrorist groups, relationships between terrorist groups and trafficking networks, and their sources of materiel. Analysis of arms and ammunition seized from terrorists indicates that they are procuring materiel from various sources, including materiel diverted from national stockpiles across the region (see pp. 54–60).

In October 2014, for instance, a convoy of six pick-up trucks transporting three tons of arms and ammunition from Libya to Mali was targeted by Operation Barkhane in northern Niger, very close to the border with Algeria and Mali.[38] Most of the passengers in the vehicles were members of the Ansar Dine group, controlled by Iyad ag Ghali (QDi.316), as well as one member of AQIM. Ahmad Al Faqi al-Mahdi, a prominent member of Ansar Dine, was arrested during this operation and transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in September 2015.[39] The weapons had been supplied by an Algerian national who was a member of the Tareq Ibn Ziad brigade, based in Ubari in Libya. The materiel had originally been purchased on behalf of the Algerian from a number of different armed groups in Libya by two Libyans from Benghazi. This network was providing materiel to both Ansar Dine and AQIM in Mali.[40] Some of the materiel was buried in caches along the Malian border and GPS coordinates were recorded for future use, as required. One of the drivers, a Malian citizen, although not formally part of any particular group, was heavily involved in trafficking cigarettes and drugs and provided a wide range of support to terrorist groups, including couriering vehicles and flash drives through Niger from Mali to Libya, charging EUR 10,000 per trip. This illustrates again how jihadist and criminals cooperate in the Sahel.

In January 2016, an individual was arrested in Illela, in the south of Niger, on his way to Nigeria with more than 500 rounds of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition destined for Boko Haram.[41] The author's inspection revealed that the nine types of ammunition identified in the batch are also in use by Malian defence forces and terrorist groups (see Annexe), indicating that the materiel probably came from Mali.

Community conflicts

While the national political context might change, long-standing community divisions remain and are exacerbated further by increased insecurity. Disputes over access to resources become more profound and violent when those resources are threatened and communities possess firearms,[42] as was seen in the south with the instability brought by Boko Haram and the counter-terrorism response (see p. 73). The forming of armed entities along community lines also deepens existing rivalries.

“Disputes over access to resources become more profound and violent when those resources are threatened and communities possess firearms.”

Episodes of community conflicts on the border between Mali and Niger can be particularly violent. These often involve disputes between herders and farmers, or between communities of herders themselves: Nigerien Fulani crossing the border into Mali with their herds have led to violent disputes with Tamasheks (Tuareg), for example. Tensions have been escalating steadily since the 1990s when Tuareg rebellions and the forming of Fulani militias resulted in the widespread possession of arms by the groups. According to the Fulani, the disputes have intensified further since the creation of the Mouvement National pour la Libération de l’Azawad (MNLA), which they say the Tamashek used as a means to threaten other groups, stealing their cattle and kidnapping individuals (MINUSMA, 2014). This served as a recruiting sergeant for terrorist groups (see p. 30): in 2012, a number of young Fulani joined the MUJAO as a way to challenge the territorial control and influence of the MNLA (Guichaoua, 2016).

In the south-east, the impact of Boko Haram’s activities and the authorities’ security response have significantly exacerbated tensions between communities. First, the significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has dramatically increased the pressure on natural resources. Second, most of the young Nigeriens who have joined Boko Haram are of Kanuri and Buduma origin, and other ethnic groups accuse these communities of supporting Boko Haram, prompting violent retaliations, particularly when members of the group have raped or kidnapped women (University of Diffa, 2016, p. 23). Some displaced communities do not even want to be housed in the same camps as Buduma people, and access to international aid is yet another acute source of tension between them.[43]

Finally, the hurried and forced displacement of populations from the Lake Chad Basin in 2015 resulted in entire villages leaving their livestock behind. Groups of armed men started to take advantage of this and steal animals. As a result, some communities

have formed their own armed forces to protect their livestock, often leading to violent armed clashes: between 2015 and 2016, 80 people were reported to have died, mainly from the Fulani and Buduma ethnic groups (University of Diffa, 2016, pp. 8, 22).

Armed robbery

Armed robbery remains one of the main causes of insecurity in Niger, particularly in the Agadez region (see Figure 1). This section uses quantitative data produced by the Gendarmerie, which has been collecting and publishing annual statistics on crime for several years. The data is collected by each légion[44] of the Gendarmerie and centralized in Niamey. While the data is not exhaustive, since the Gendarmerie operates mainly in rural areas and is unable to cover some of the more remote parts of the territory, it provides good levels of detail on attacks and enables the identification of interesting trends over time. This quantitative data analysis is complemented by qualitative information in order to provide a more complete picture of armed robberies in Niger.

According to the Gendarmerie's records, armed attacks in Niger fell between 2009 (270) and 2011 (160), but have since steadily increased to the 2009 level. However, while more than 100 people were killed and 190 injured throughout 2009, there has been a 30 per cent reduction in victims of attacks reported in 2016 (see Figure 2).

North

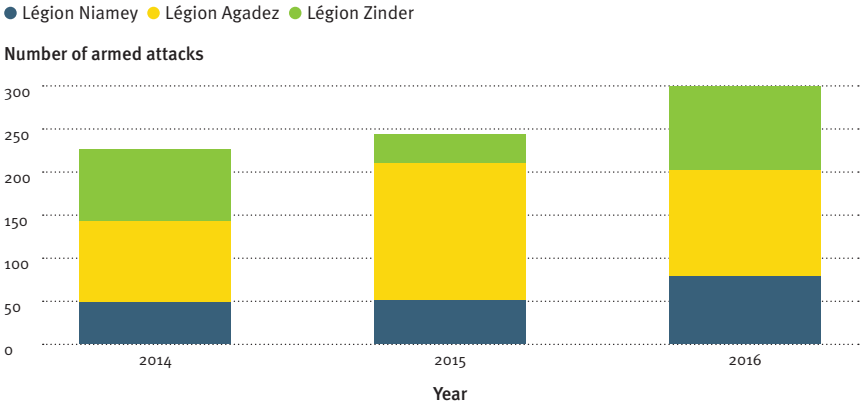
The largely desert Agadez region of Niger comprises more than 52 per cent of the country's territory, at close to 700,000 km^2. With a very low population density (only 3 per cent of the population lives in the region),[45] few urban areas, and little government presence, the Agadez region has long been neglected and experienced two main rebellions in the 1990s and the 2000s. '*Ici on ne peut rien contrôler*' ('we can't control anything here'), explained a senior security official in Agadez, reflecting the challenges facing the central government in controlling the area.

The limited formal economic livelihoods in the Agadez region, coupled with cross-border smuggling opportunities and the lack of any meaningful presence of the security sector, have created an environment conducive to high levels of trafficking and contraband, now including migrants and drugs into Libya, as well as vehicles and other goods back into Niger from Libya. Cross-border trafficking networks are controlled by wealthy and powerful businessmen who are also often involved in local politics.[46]

Armed robbery was one of the main security concerns expressed by those interviewed by the author in Agadez; as a result, most convoys and *transporteurs* (hauliers) are armed. 'Two days ago, at around 30 km from Dirkou, we stopped two vehicles transporting migrants driven by Libyan Tubus, both of whom had an AK rifle each and several

magazines of ammunition',[47] explained a representative of the National Guard. Drug traffickers are more heavily armed and generally carry machine guns, leading to bloody confrontations whenever security forces try to apprehend them.[48]

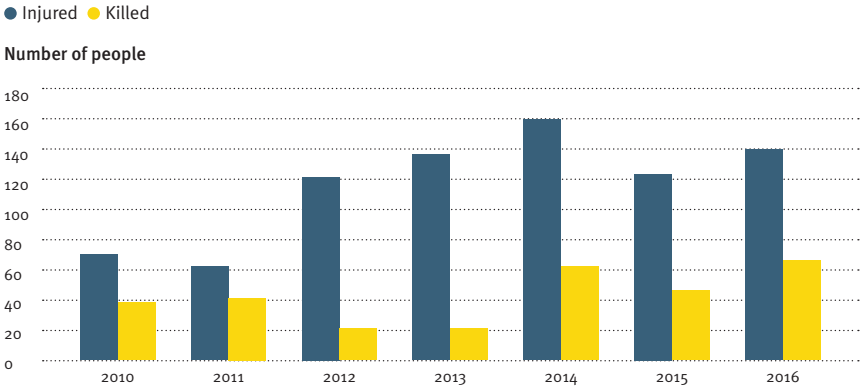
Figure 1 Armed attacks reported to the Gendarmerie in 2014–16, by légion*



* Data collection ceased in early October 2016. To compare annual data, the author extrapolated the data available from January to September 2016 to make projections for the remaining quarter (October–December 2016).

Source: Gendarmerie nationale (2015; 2016a; 2016c)

Figure 2 Number of people injured and killed during armed robberies in Niger in 2010–16, as reported to the Gendarmerie*



* Data collection ceased in early October 2016. To compare annual data, the author extrapolated the data available from January to September 2016 to make projections for the remaining quarter (October–December 2016).

Source: Gendarmerie nationale (2016a; 2016c)

The Agadez region witnessed a notable increase in armed banditry as a result of economic hardship brought on by rising levels of insecurity and instability in the northern part of Niger, and the failure to integrate former rebels into the armed forces in 2009 (Pellerin, 2017a, p. 7). This increase may also be explained by the potentially high rewards that bandits can make by attacking convoys transporting costly goods.

The gold rush that started in early 2014 generated further levels of violence because of the increased movements of cash and gold between the main gold-extraction sites and major towns.[49] This also attracted all sorts of traders and opportunists looking for a way to make some money servicing the needs of the thousands of people looking for gold in the middle of the desert, as well as groups of armed men converging at this regional crossroad, including deserters from the Chadian army.[50]

In 2014, 94 armed robberies were reported to the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region, 90 per cent of which involved the use of assault rifles. Sixteen people were killed and 61 injured, particularly on routes between Tchibarkaten and Arlit, Agadez and Dirkou, and Agadez and the Djado area (Gendarmerie nationale, 2015). A particularly violent year was 2015: 159 reported attacks with 30 people killed and 83 injured (Gendarmerie nationale, 2016a).

Between January and September 2016, 90 armed robberies were reported to the Gendarmerie in Agadez region which resulted in 11 people killed and 37 injured; 83 of the robberies were perpetrated at gun point: 93 per cent using an AK-type assault rifle, while the remainder involved five cases using handguns, and one using a craft weapon and another a hunting rifle. The vast majority of attacks took place on roads, the most dangerous routes being those linking the main towns to gold-mining areas such as Arlit-Tchibarkaten and Arlit-Tabarkat (close to the Algerian border) (Gendarmerie nationale, 2016c). According to security force sources, armed bandits have informants embedded in mining areas who tell them when convoys of interest are setting off.

The decision to close some of the gold-mining sites in March 2017 reportedly triggered a further increase of armed violence as some gold diggers became armed bandits.[51] Most attacks are perpetrated by groups of between two and five assailants moving around in pick-up trucks; motorbikes were used in 20 per cent of reported cases (Gendarmerie nationale, 2015; 2016c). According to information provided by military sources, and analysis of data relating to arrests and complaints made to the Gendarmerie, armed bandits are of various nationalities and ethnicities, making it difficult to identify a precise profile.

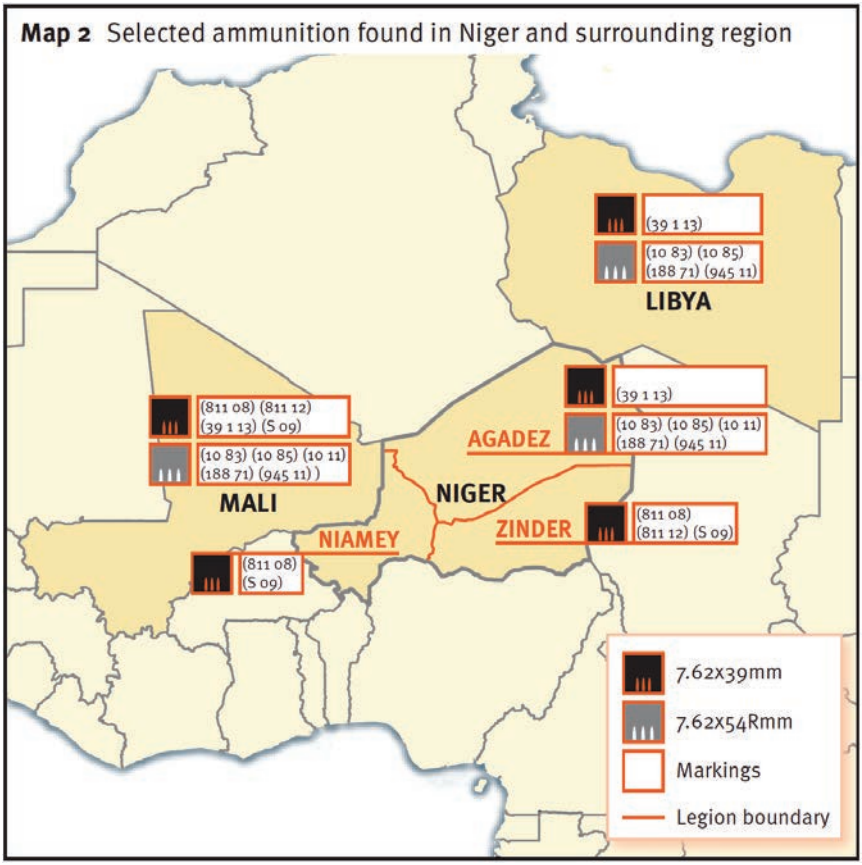
Moreover, not all cases of armed robbery are reported to the authorities: those reported to the Gendarmerie are likely to be of greater significance, because of either the level of violence involved or the value of the goods stolen. The commodities stolen during armed attacks reported between January and September 2016 included mainly cash, gold, vehicles, motorbikes, mobile and satellite telephones, and weapons and ammunition. During this nine-month period in the Agadez region, a total of 6.2 kg of gold, with a market value of over USD 200,000,[52] was reportedly taken, as well as more than XOF

1.6 billion (USD 2.65 million) in cash,[53] highlighting the significant flows of money moving around the north (Gendarmerie nationale; 2016c).

Finally, while there may be a high perceived level of insecurity in Agadez city, this is not borne out by actual levels of violent crime, which appear to be low:[54] settling of scores between trafficking networks are relatively infrequent[55] and the last terrorist attack took place in 2013.

South-east

The south-east comprises the regions of Maradi, Zinder, and Diffa, and accounts for 41 per cent of the population (see Map 2) (République du Niger, 2011, p. 21). Between



Source: Annexe

January and September 2016, 70 per cent of armed attacks (74) reported to the Gendarmerie in the south-east, the region covered by the Gendarmerie's Zinder légion, took place in the Maradi sub-region, 18 per cent in the Zinder sub-region, and 2 per cent in the Diffa area. The latter very low number may be explained by the military control of the zone where security forces are deployed to fight against Boko Haram, indicating that there may be an increased chance of armed robbers being caught, and that attacks are more likely to be reported to the military than to the Gendarmerie, and are therefore not included in the data. In terms of cash, the equivalent of USD 58,000 in XOF and NGN were stolen in the period, probably indicating that much less cash is flowing around in the south than in the north of the country. In this part of Niger, however, one of the main sources of income is livestock: more than half of armed attacks in the region concern the theft of animals (more than 800 head of cattle were reported stolen over the period), often resulting in gunshot-related injuries. In many cases, whole villages or Fulani *campements* (encampments) are attacked by other Fulani looking to bolster their own herds, or to sell livestock in Nigeria.[56]

South-west

The south-west includes the regions of Tillaberi, Dosso, and Tahoua, and is the most densely populated, where 47 per cent of the population is concentrated (7.4 million people) (République du Niger, 2011, p. 21). It includes the capital, Niamey.

Since 2012 and the beginning of the Malian crisis, the border area with Mali has experienced heightened insecurity, including banditry and armed robberies (IOM, 2016, p. 13). Most attacks by armed bandits take place on roads as well as in campements. The number of attacks rose slightly in 2016 (59) with XOF 9,275,500 (USD 15,400) reported stolen between January and September.[57] Cars, motorbikes, and cash are the most common reported thefts.

Table 2 Number of crimes in Niamey in 2015, by type of crime[58]

Type of crime	Number of crimes
Theft by breaking	107
Act of vandalism	19
Attack/armed attack	10
Infanticides	8
Car theft	1

Source: Police nationale (2015)

The area is also the entry point for drugs coming into Niger from Mali and is therefore key for trafficking networks. Traffickers are armed and score settling between networks can be particularly violent. At the end of 2016, three tons of cannabis had been stolen from one network in Abalak. In retaliation, several people have been kidnapped by the network and more retaliation is expected.[59]

The city of Niamey remains relatively untouched by armed banditry and crime rates remain quite low (see Table 2). Although there has not been a terrorist attack in the capital city since 2013, the threat of terrorism persists and the government has introduced increased security measures since the attack in November 2015 on a hotel in Bamako, the Malian capital, the January 2016 attacks on a restaurant and a hotel in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, and the attack of March 2016 in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire. ●

“Weapons circulating on the illicit market in Niger include a mixture of materiel left over from past rebellions, diversions from national stockpiles, and materiel smuggled in, generally by land and mainly from neighbouring Chad, Libya, Mali, and Nigeria.”

Weapons trafficking in Niger

This section examines both the ownership and circulation of illicit weapons and ammunition in the north, south-east, and south-west of the country. Based on data provided by security forces and inspections by the author of seized materiel, it analyses the types of materiel and their origins, including those used by terrorist groups operating in Niger. Seizures are made by the principal national security agencies, namely the Nigerien Armed Forces (FAN), Gendarmerie, National Guard, police, and customs, most of which maintain some data on them (de Tessières, 2017). A voluntary programme to surrender illicit weapons has also been underway for several years. The Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et de Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCAI) oversees this programme and maintains records of the weapons and ammunition handed over to the government (see Table 3).

Civilian possession of weapons in Niger appears to be far less widespread than in neighbouring countries such as Libya or Mali. However, many civilians have traditionally possessed hunting rifles and ownership of manufactured—as opposed to craft—weapons (mainly assault rifles) has been on the rise since the last rebellion in the early 2000s. According to the latest figures provided by the CNCCAI, only 2,000 people have a legally registered weapon in Niger,[60] which represents a small proportion of those who actually own weapons in the country.

Weapons circulating on the illicit market in Niger include a mixture of materiel left over from past rebellions, diversions from national stockpiles, and materiel smuggled in, generally by land and mainly from neighbouring Chad, Libya, Mali, and Nigeria. Niger has been a key transit route for weapons heading into conflict zones in the region; however, the deterioration of the security situation in the country has resulted in an increase in the domestic demand for weapons, particularly for small arms and ammunition. The army and Gendarmerie seize the most ammunition and weapons, mainly assault rifles, in

Table 3 Data collated by the CNCCAI on materiel seized by/handed over to the Nigerien authorities, 2011–March 2014[61]

Materiel	Agadez Area	Tahoua Area	Tillaberi Area	Zinder Area	Total
Arms (all calibres)	749	482	184	391	**1,806**
Rounds of ammunition (all calibres)	1,579	4,316	156	233	**6,284**
Magazines	43	0	43	233	**319**
Rockets	9	0	0	0	**9**
Mines	66	0	0	0	**66**
Hand grenades	8	0	2	1	**11**

Source: CNCCAI (2014)

Table 4 Seizures of arms and ammunition by the Gendarmerie, January 2014–October 2016

Year	Légion	Assault rifles[a]	Hunting and traditional rifles	Handguns[b]	Other arms[c]	Total arms	Ammunition[d]	Magazines
2014	Niamey	15	4	5	9	**33**	1,282	9
	Agadez	58	1	71	14	**144**	6,444	139
	Zinder	12	2	5	5	**24**	418	17
	Total	**85**	**7**	**81**	**28**	**201**	**8,144**	**165**
2015	Niamey	8	4	3	0	**15**	218	0
	Agadez	69	10	27	13	**119**	4,581	94
	Zinder	13	2	3	0	**18**	2,171	8
	Total	**90**	**16**	**33**	**13**	**152**	**6,970**	**102**
2016[e]	Niamey	4	1	1	2	**8**	216	4
	Agadez	59	2	7	10	**78**	4,961	104
	Zinder	20	0	1	2	**23**	343	23
	Total	**83**	**3**	**9**	**14**	**109**	**5,520**	**131**

Notes:

a. Of the assault rifles seized, 95% were AK-type rifles; the remaining 5% are FAL and G3.

b. The data includes a large number of converted blank-firing handguns.

c. This includes traditional firearms, MAS 36, light weapons (RPGs, general-purpose machine guns) and non-identifiable weapons.

d. Ammunition seized mainly includes 7.62 × 39 mm, as well as some 9 mm, blanks, 7.62 × 54R mm, 7.62 × 51 mm, 12.7 × 108 mm and ammunition for hunting rifles.

e. January–October 2016.

Source: Gendarmerie nationale (2015; 2016a; 2016b)

Table 5 Arms seized by the Nigerien Armed Forces, September 2015–October 2016

Arms	Agadez Area	Diffa Area	Dirkou Area	Total
RPG launchers	0	5	2	7
12.7 mm machine guns	0	3	0	3
General-purpose machine guns	8	3	0	11
AK-type rifles	35	38	51	124
FAL	4	0	4	8
M16	0	0	1	1
Sporting rifles	1	2	1	4
Handguns	0	0	29	29
Total	**48**	**51**	**88**	**187**

Source: Nigerien Armed Forces (2016)

the Agadez region in the north of the country. The possession of craft and hunting rifles appears to some extent to be tolerated by the authorities, which have seized very few of them despite their wide circulation (see Tables 3, 4, and 5).

North

Transfers from Libya to Mali

With the loss of Libyan government control over the enormous stockpiles in 2011, materiel started proliferating across the region the same year. Niger was one of the first to suffer the effects and, in 2011 and 2012, large convoys were intercepted in the north of the country on their way to Mali transporting mainly small arms, light weapons, and related ammunition (UNSC, 2012; 2013). Once it became clear that the Qaddafi regime was likely to fall, many of these convoys included Tuareg fighters, including of Malian origin, who had fought in the Libyan security apparatus and were now fleeing across the border to northern Mali, where the flow of fighters and military materiel precipitated the armed conflict. Though precise data is not available, the number of Tuareg fighters reported to have returned to Niger during the same period was smaller; and, according to security authorities, many of those who did return were disarmed on arrival as part of Operation Malibero (see p. 62), thereby averting any serious and lasting impact on the country's internal security.[62]

> “In 2014, Libya was identified as the primary source of materiel for terrorist groups in Mali.”

While trafficking activity through Niger declined in 2013 and 2014, largely as a result of Operations Serval and Barkhane (see Box 4), a number of convoys were still stopped or neutralized transporting materiel to armed groups in Mali such as AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar Dine; materiel included assault rifles, general-purpose machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mortar launchers, and related ammunition, as well as a small number of MANPADS (UNSC, 2015, pp. 133–34). Ammunition for heavy weapons systems was also seized, but without the systems themselves, and therefore probably intended for immediate use in IEDs or for further trafficking (UNSC, 2016, p. 43, 166–68). IED techniques first observed in Libya have since been used in Mali, indicating a transfer of knowledge between terrorist groups in the two countries (similarities included explosives, timers, and trigger mechanism used).[63]

In 2014, Libya was identified as the primary source of materiel for terrorist groups in Mali (UNSC, 2015, p. 133). These groups often sent members into Libya with shopping lists of materiel, though they also relied heavily on criminal trafficking networks to replenish their arsenals. In October 2014, for instance, the French-led Operation Barkhane neutralized three tons of materiel, small arms, and light weapons, including MANPADS, being transported by terrorist and criminal elements in a six-vehicle convoy in northern Niger.

The reinforcement of Nigerien military forces in the north of Niger and of Operation Barkhane (see Box 4), as well as the presence of US troops on Nigerien soil, has made it more difficult for traffickers to operate and forced them to change their ways of working. As a result, arms smuggling from Libya decreased from 2013: traffickers had to zigzag between Niger and Algeria, reduce the size of their convoys, and break them up into smaller consignments, often storing materiel in temporary caches in remote areas in the Air Mountains, Tanezrouft, or near the border with Mali until there was an opportunity to move it (UNSC, 2014, p. 36; 2015, p. 133).

Over the past three years, security efforts, coupled with the drying up of Qaddafi’s stockpiles, higher demand in Libya fuelled by a resurgence of conflicts across the country since mid-2014, and the tightening of the arms embargo on Libya, have resulted in a significant drop in the proliferation of weapons and ammunition out of Libya. A small number of convoys were stopped in 2015, including on 4 February when a six-vehicle convoy operated by members of the MNLA was stopped en route to Mali, transporting large quantities of arms and ammunition that had been loaded in Ubari, as well as EUR 539,000 in cash (UNSC, 2016, p. 166). The traffickers were eventually released. A year

later, in February 2016, a single vehicle driven by members of the MNLA was stopped in the north of the country transporting assault rifles, general-purpose machine guns, and EUR 132,000 in cash.[64]

Weapons ownership in the north

There is a high level of weapons ownership in the north of Niger where nomadic communities are traditionally armed, security provision is limited, and the level of armed banditry is the highest in the country (see Figure 1). Small arms and light weapons are

Box 1 Turkish blank-firing handguns

Produced in large quantities in Turkey, these handguns started flooding the civilian Libyan market after the revolution, when people wanted arms that were easier to conceal. The shortage of handguns in Libya and their prohibitive cost—generally USD 2,000–5,000 for a 9 × 19 mm handgun—created a new market for blank-firing handguns, which are usually sold for USD 100–200. This type of materiel has also been smuggled further afield from Libya to illicit markets in Egypt, Niger, and Tunisia (UNSC, 2015, Annex 21).

Shotguns, blank-firing weapons, and related ammunition arrive by boat from Turkey to various ports in Libya where blank-firing weapons are, for the most part, converted to enable them to fire lethal-purpose ammunition and are displayed in shop windows and markets. Converted blank-firing firearms do not perform as well as purpose-built firearms, and also present a risk to the user (King, 2015)

One of the most popular models on sale in Libya and Niger is the 'Makarov' (second and third from the left in Photo 1), which pushes the facsimile further. Other common models include the Blow F92 produced by Zira Silah Sanayi, the Aral 622K and Falcon models produced by Katay, and the Ekol models produced by Voltran Av Silahlan Ins.

This type of product is not subject to export licensing under Turkish law; however, in an attempt to prevent further transfers to Libya, the Turkish government has circulated guidelines to producers and retailers in Turkey to discourage them from selling this materiel to Libyan nationals (UNSC, 2016, p. 160). The authorities have also started working on technical ways to make conversions more difficult.[65] To date, however, transfers of these handguns to Libya and proliferation further afield continue: in January 2017, the Nigerien security forces made two seizures of 15 and 12 Turkish blank-firing handguns respectively, some of them converted, of various models produced between 2012 and 2016, from Ghanaian nationals in Abalak, who claimed they had been given the guns in Libya in exchange for petty manual labour tasks and were planning to sell them in Ghana (UNSC, 2017a, p. 186).[66]

In December 2017, a truck travelling from Libya was stopped in Agadez en route to Southeast Nigeria carrying 42 pump-action shotguns[67] and 200 rounds of Turkish-produced 9 mm blank ammunition (Ozkursan).[68]

used by criminals as well as by those people who are seeking to protect themselves or their convoys.

The army, Gendarmerie, and Garde Nationale confiscate weapons and ammunition on a regular basis, with a typical seizure involving an AK-type rifle and a handful of ammunition rounds.[69] Many seizures also include converted blank-firing handguns (see Box 1).

Larger seizures, including assault rifles, RPGs, and general-purpose machine guns, are usually connected to the arrest of bandits or drug traffickers.[70] During a visit to the Gendarmerie in Agadez, the author was presented with a batch of assault rifles and PK-type machine guns that had been seized in the region in 2016 (see Photo 2). The PK-type machine guns were produced in Sudan, the former USSR, and China, and the assault rifles included AK-type rifles produced by the former USSR, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Poland, and Romania—including two Polish-produced KbK-AKMS with Arabic markings on the rear sights that are likely to have come from Libya (CAR, 2016, p. 12)—and a small number

Photo 1 Converted Turkish blank-firing handguns seized by the Nigerien authorities in 2016 (produced between 2012 and 2014)

Source: de Tessières, Niger, November 2016

Photo 2 Assault rifles and general-purpose machine guns seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region in 2015 and 2016

Source: de Tessières, Agadez, November 2016

of G3K rifles produced in France under German licence. Since the fall of the Qaddafi regime in 2011, signature weapons from Libyan arsenals have also been seized by the security forces, including Russian-produced AK 103-2s and a Belgian-made FN 2000.[71]

Gold rush and weapons ownership

With the start of the gold rush in the north of the country in 2014, the circulation of weapons has increased in Niger in line with an increase in armed attacks (see p. 36), pushing gold diggers to arm themselves for their own protection (Pellerin, 2017a). Nigerien security forces have seized numerous assault rifles and handguns from individuals at gold sites.[72] While most of these weapons come into Niger from Libya, some also come from Chad.[73] AK-type rifles can be purchased at gold sites for USD 500—roughly equivalent to 18 grams of gold,[74] which is less expensive than in Agadez city where the risks associated with weapons trafficking are greater and the price therefore higher. One round of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition in the north would cost USD 0.40, compared to USD 0.80–1 in Agadez.[75]

In addition to arms and ammunition, gold digging has also generated a demand for the smuggling of explosives to Niger. In 2016, the authorities seized explosives, cord, and detonators produced by Maxam, a Spanish company.[76] These explosives were smuggled into the country from Ghana, where the company produces some of the core materiel and imports some of its products for the African market from Spain. Regional authorities are understandably concerned about the potential for this type of material to be used for criminal and terrorist activity.

South-west

According to records of seizures and the perceptions of those interviewed in the course of this research, weapons ownership appears less significant in the south of the country but also corresponds to the specific needs of individuals to ensure their own security and that of their livestock and land. A Fulani from Ouallam, who had been arrested in 2015 for illegally possessing an assault rifle and ammunition, explained:

> The majority of [cattle] breeders in the northern part of Ouallam are armed with assault rifles. I bought one to protect my cattle from Tuareg thieves. I went to Mali where it is very easy to find arms and ammunition and purchased an AK and ammunition in exchange for animals.[77]

The same year, the Nigerien authorities seized 20,000 12-gauge shotgun cartridges produced by CARMA in Mali from smugglers between Niamey and Burkina Faso (CAR,

2016, p. 20). Transfers of arms and ammunition from Mali to Niger continue today and feed the local market in the south-west of Niger.[78]

In addition to Mali, the Nigerien authorities have identified Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire as other sources of illicit materiel. Local diversions from Nigerien stockpiles have also contributed to feeding the black market. In 2015, a Tuareg man was arrested for purchasing batches of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition from a group of soldiers in the Tahoua region (for XOF 150/200 per round—USD 0.30/0.35).[79]

Finally, seizures of arms and ammunition in Niamey city over the past four years include mainly handguns, generally belonging to traders who have yet to apply for a licence;[80] in 2013, for instance, 35 such handguns were seized in Niamey.[81] According to the authorities, wealthy individuals in Niamey purchase weapons to protect themselves, but also for prestige. In 2016, a seizure of weapons from a wealthy collector in Niamey included an M16 A2 and several good quality hunting rifles (see Photo 3).

Photo 3 Weapons seized from a private collector by Nigerien authorities in 2016

Source: de Tessières (2017)

South-east

At the end of the 1990s, with the Tubu rebellion and the resulting security response, including the creation of vigilante groups, there was a notable increase in arms possession in the south of the country. Weapons spread across the whole region, including to the islands of Lake Chad, and armed banditry also increased significantly.[82]

Box 2 Analysis of illicit ammunition for small arms and machine guns documented in Niger in 2016 and 2017

During its inspections of materiel seized by the Nigerien security forces, the Small Arms Survey documented 104 different types of cartridges of ammunition for assault rifles (57 rounds of 7.62 × 39 mm and 8 rounds of 7.62 × 51 mm), general-purpose machine guns (35 rounds of 7.62 × 54R mm), and 12.7 mm machine guns (1 round) (see Annexe). The ammunition was documented under the control of the police, army, and Gendarmerie in Agadez and Dirkou in the north, and in Diffa and Niamey in the south.

Ammunition circulating in the south-east Diffa area, near the border with Nigeria and Chad, differs from that used in the north, suggesting very different sources of procurement depend-

Photo 4 (a and b) Example of arms and ammunition seized from bandits and herders by the Gendarmerie in the Zinder region, 2016

Source: de Tessières, Diffa, Niger, November 2016

ing on the region. Out of the 42 rounds of ammunition seized in Diffa (mostly 7.62 × 39 mm), only one was also found in the north. In the south, the author's inspection of three batches of ammunition seized in different locations in the Diffa region found a high number of similar rounds. The ammunition was seized from bandits and cattle herders, members of Boko Haram, and other unknown individuals. The similarities between the seized ammunition indicate that civilians and Boko Haram use the same sources of materiel, including ammunition diverted from Nigerian and Nigerien stockpiles.

Analysis of the ammunition documented in northern Niger (43 types of cartridges) identified 34 cartridges of 7.62 × 54R mm, indicating that PKM-type machine guns are in much wider circulation there, where armed banditry is more common and trafficking convoys may feel that an assault rifle is not sufficient to ensure their protection against aggressors who also carry machine guns.[83]

Of the 43 types of cartridges documented in northern Niger, 28 have also been documented in the hands of terrorist groups in Mali, as well as Malian security forces, including ammunition that was originally transferred to the Malian government. This suggests that materiel has moved from Mali to Niger. Eleven types were also documented in Libya, indicating that materiel is moving between each of these three countries (see Annexe).

Finally, further analysis indicates that the 104 varieties of cartridge of illicit ammunition documented in Niger in 2016 and 2017 were manufactured in more than 17 countries between the 1950s and 2014, including a very high volume (30%) of Chinese-produced ammunition. The nine most recently manufactured types of cartridges of ammunition (since 2009) were made in Algeria, Bulgaria, China, Nigeria, and Sudan.

Algerian ammunition produced by the Seriana plant has been documented across the whole of the Sahel in the hands of several non-state armed actors, including Boko Haram and terrorist groups in Mali. It has been difficult to trace the chain of transfers and the point of diversions remains unclear.

Bulgarian ammunition produced in 2011 was legally transferred to the Malian authorities in 2012 (UNSC, 2014, p. 88). It then reached non-state Malian actors, including terrorist groups, and then went on to Niger, where it was seized during a counter-terrorist operation.

Chinese ammunition is the most widely used by non-state actors. Chinese ammunition documented in Niger was also found in the hands of terrorist groups in Mali and armed groups in Libya.

Nigerian ammunition was probably diverted from the Nigerian Armed Forces (see below).

Sudanese ammunition produced by the state-owned Military Industry Corporation has been transferred to a wide range of African countries, fuelling conflicts in Libya and Mali and beyond, to Côte d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic. Cartridges documented in Niger were produced in 2013 and were first documented in Libya—where Sudan has been transferring materiel directly to militias—and also in the hands of Malian terrorist groups. Sudan had also transferred Chinese ammunition from its national stockpiles to Libya, contributing to the proliferation of Chinese ammunition to non-state armed actors in the Sahel (Anders, 2015; CAR, 2015; UNSC, 2016, p. 35).

The Nigerien authorities have seized small quantities of arms and ammunition in the region, mainly assault rifles, generally from bandits or cattle and goat herders. According to security forces, the weapons are a mixture of those that have been floating about in the area since the rebellions of the 1990s and materiel smuggled in from Nigeria and Chad.

The author was able to observe arms and ammunition seized by the Gendarmerie in 2016 in three different cases involving bandits, cattle thieves, and armed herders. The rifles in Photo 4b include one bolt-action rifle and three AK-type assault rifles produced in China and the former USSR. The author also obtained access to ammunition seized by the army from bandits in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016. Analysis of the 28 types of ammunition[84] seized by the Gendarmerie and army in the two-year period indicates a wide range of 12 producing countries, although 30 per cent was from China alone. Several rounds of the Chinese-made ammunition were produced in the last 10 years and are used by the Nigerien security forces, strongly indicating that diversions have occurred. Another 30 per cent was produced in the Sahel and northern Africa, namely Burkina Faso, Egypt, Nigeria, and Sudan (see Annexe).

Materiel used by terrorist groups operating in Niger

Terrorist groups operating in Niger, including groups based in Mali and Nigeria, have been obtaining materiel from a variety of sources, including from national stockpiles in the region, either following the collapse of state control over arsenals as in northern Mali or Libya, or from theft or diversion in countries such as Nigeria or Niger itself.

Arms and ammunition used by Mali-based terrorist groups

The arsenals of Malian armed groups are mostly drawn from Malian national stockpiles looted in 2012, and Libyan national stockpiles looted during the civil war (see above), as well as other more minor sources.

In May 2013, the double attack against a military camp in Agadez and the Areva uranium facility killed 24 people and injured another 24 (UNSC, 2014, p. 87). The attacks were carried out by nationals of various countries in the region and were jointly claimed by MUJAO and Al Moulathamoun. In addition to the large quantities of explosives used, the terrorists had strapped 60 mm mortar bombs to their waists to be used as body-borne IEDs, and carried assault rifles and 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition. One of the assault rifles, an AK 103-2, was identified as originally being from Libyan stockpiles and had been taken out of the country in violation of the UN arms embargo. Further analysis identified 26 types of ammunition from eight different countries (UNSC, 2014, Annex IX). Of the 26, 17 have been documented in the hands of armed groups in Mali, indicating

that the provenance of the materiel was probably Mali.[85] Some of this ammunition had been transferred by China and Bulgaria to the Malian government before the 2012 crisis and must have been part of the national stockpiles looted in the north of Mali in 2012. The provenance of the materiel was also confirmed by Nigerien authorities: the terrorists had arrived in the country from Mali one week before the attacks.[86]

Types of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition used by terrorist groups in Mali are very similar to those used by non-terrorist criminal groups, and armed actors more generally. In 2013, for example, a group of Fulani herders arrested for theft in Banibangou in south-western Niger were in possession of two assault rifles and a quantity of different types of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition, much of which had been used in the aforementioned terrorist attacks.[87]

Ammunition from Nigerien stockpiles has been documented in Mali over the past few years,[88] indicating that there have been diversions from Niger to Mali. While several cases of diversions of government materiel by corrupt officers have been reported,[89] a number of attacks on security positions in Niger by groups coming from Mali have also resulted in the theft of handguns, assault rifles, general-purpose machine guns, heavy machine guns, ammunition, and vehicles (see Table 1).

Arms and ammunition used by Boko Haram

Seizures by the Nigerien forces from members of Boko Haram provide critical information on the materiel the group is using. Diversions documented as having been orchestrated by the group further inform our understanding of the type of materiel Boko Haram is currently using as well as its needs.

Materiel seized from Boko Haram members in Niger or by Nigerien troops during military operations is supposed to be held in a central location within the military zone in Diffa, but observations found no systematic or effective management procedures in place. Materiel seized from Diffa is held by mobile units or taken by foreign troops, such as Chadian soldiers, for their own use. The army also reintegrates the material it believes has been diverted from its stockpiles directly back into its arsenals.

The author had access to a sample of what the Nigerien army had seized from members of Boko Haram between 2015 and 2016, including 10 weapons systems and more than 100 rounds of ammunition of various calibres (see Photo 5). Weapons systems included Chinese type 56 and type 56-1 assault rifles, several different Russian AK-type rifles, Chinese type 80 machine guns, and Bulgarian and Chinese RPG launchers.

Analysis of rounds of 7.62 × 39 mm ammunition documented in Diffa indicates that Boko Haram obtains materiel from different sources, including national stockpiles from the countries where it operates. Among the cartridges documented, the most recent were manufactured in Algeria, China, and Nigeria since 2012. Some of the Chinese ammunition was originally sold to the Nigerien authorities and the Nigerian ammunition

Photo 5 Sample of weapons seized from Boko Haram between 2015 and 2016

Source: de Tessières, Diffa, November 2016

was produced by DICON's Nigerian Ordnance Factory,[90] which was established to produce materiel for the Nigerian Armed Forces.

The group is known to have obtained materiel from Nigerian and Nigerien arsenals, through corrupt officers but primarily through attacks on security positions. As in Nigeria,[91] some Nigerien officers have been accused of selling materiel from national stockpiles to members of Boko Haram. In 2013, for example, a senior security officer in the Diffa region stole and sold on a number of newly acquired Chinese-produced type 56-1 assault rifles after having chiselled away the serial number. With promises of a share of the profits, the officer recruited three officers from other forces who supplied him with rifles and ammunition. The officers were prosecuted and the crime was judged as a terrorist act.[92]

In 2015, a single 'package' of ammunition was discovered in the house of a member of Boko Haram during an operation in Damassak, a town on the other side of the Nigerian border that had fallen in and out of control by Boko Haram in the same year. The package contained ammunition from Nigerien state arsenals and had reportedly been sent to the individual by a Nigerien military officer, who is currently on trial.[93]

In February 2017, a Chadian Tubu was arrested between Agadez and Zinder in the possession of 369 7.62 × 39 mm rounds of ammunition. He was allegedly transporting them from Libya to Boko Haram in Nigeria (UNSC, 2017a, p. 189).[94]

Attack on Bosso military camp

Not all Boko Haram members have a weapon, some are only armed with old bolt-action rifles or craft weapons, and ammunition is in short supply. The group is therefore constantly looking to procure small arms, light weapons, and particularly ammunition.[95] On 3 June 2016, Boko Haram attacked the military base of Bosso, located in the Diffa region, and the site of a number of depots containing a large amount of logistical and military materiel. Thirty-two members of the security forces were killed during the attack. A video released by the *Wilayat Gharb Afriqiyah* shows a close lieutenant of Barnawi talking to the fighters as they prepare for the attack, the strike itself, and the capture of significant quantities of military materiel.[96]

In the early hours of the morning, more than 10 pick-up vehicles and motorbikes, transporting more than 100 combatants, surrounded the camp and attacked it using craft rockets, assault rifles, light machine guns, and RPG-7 pattern rocket launchers, as well as vehicles mounted with light weapons. The Nigerien troops were taken totally by surprise and were overwhelmed.

While it is difficult to assess exactly what materiel Boko Haram was able to take, analysis of the video indicates that they took materiel with which they were already familiar, ranging from small arms to heavy-calibre ammunition, most of which appears to have been produced in China (see Table 6).[97]

Table 6 Materiel stolen from Camp Bosso

Weapons systems	Ammunition
50 to 60 assault rifles and sub-machine guns incl. type 56, type 56-2, 1 FAL, 4 HK-MP5 A2	More than 1 million rounds for small arms and machine guns (7.62 × 39 mm, 7.62 × 54R mm, 14.5 × 108 mm).
10 Dragonov-type rifles (incl. type 85)	50+ PG rockets
20 light machine guns (incl. type 80, type 81, and MG3)	10 crates of 8–12 60 mm mortar bombs
10 heavy machine guns	60 crates containing 122 mm shells
10 RPG type launchers (incl. type 69)	20 crates of 107 mm type 63 rockets
1 QLZ-87 and 1 LG3 grenade launchers	
4 60 mm mortar launchers	
2 122 mm type 85 howitzers	
1 type 63 107 mm multiple rocket launchers	
1 92A type APC	
6 vehicles mounted with light weapons	

Source: Elaboration based on a video (Jihadology, 2017)

Photo 6 Technicals mounted with heavy machine guns

Source: Still from the video about the Bosso attack (Jihadology, 2017)

Photo 7 Assault rifles taken by Boko Haram during the Bosso Attack

Source: still from the video about the Bosso attack (Jihadology, 2017)

Box 3 Stockpile management in Niger

In view of diversions and the fear of unplanned explosions, there have been efforts to better manage and secure armaments, although the author's visits to several armouries in Niamey, Agadez, and Diffa indicate that there is still much work to be done (see Photo 8). Notably, seized materiel is held in the same area as service weapons. Ammunition, and in some cases land mines, are stored next to weapons, and makeshift storage is sometimes set up in officers' offices or the toilets.

Armourers explained that they need more space, as well as better organizational structures and ways to record and track materiel; it is clear that a considerable amount of additional support is required to enable them to perform their roles efficiently.[98]

While international best practice encourages the destruction of illicitly held weapons, most forces directly absorb seized weapons and ammunition into national stockpiles. While some units keep track of what has been 'absorbed', others do not. It is therefore difficult to keep track of arms seized (de Tessières, 2017).

Several bilateral actors and NGOs, including Handicap International, have put in place physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) initiatives to support the Nigerien authorities. The authorities have set up an inter-ministerial PSSM committee to work on this.

In terms of national stockpiles, a national register is critically lacking and each force manages its own records, which are generally incomplete and not up to date. Although Niger possesses several marking machines, no progress has yet been made; however, the CNCCAI is establishing a national register and pushing ahead with the marking process.

Photo 8 Storage in northern Niger

Source: de Tessières, November 2016

In terms of heavy equipment, the Nigerien forces destroyed the armoured personnel carrier (APC),[99] and security forces believe that other items, such as the howitzers and multiple rocket launchers, may have been abandoned on the way as Boko Haram generally prefers light, mobile, and easily maintained materiel.[100]

> “Approaches to dealing with insecurity in Niger generally involve the military and security forces and initiatives to address the root causes of violence, and terrorism in particular, remain limited.”

Armed response to insecurity

Approaches to dealing with insecurity in Niger generally involve the military and security forces and initiatives to address the root causes of violence, and terrorism in particular, remain limited. International partners have played a key role in protecting Niger's internal security and the Nigerien military have had some notable success, albeit in limited areas of operations. In areas where communities feel particularly under threat, they have formed vigilante groups, exacerbating the risk of provoking feuds with other groups.

A number of non-military projects, funded mainly by international donors, have also sought to address some of the social and economic issues that contribute to tensions and insecurity. For instance, the *Haute Autorité pour la Consolidation de la Paix*, an organization relatively unique to Niger, was created in the 1990s as a way to promote social peace through a range of development programmes, including an early-warning system about rising tensions; and mediation initiatives, such as the *Caravanes de la Paix* (peace caravans), which criss-cross northern Niger, engaging with citizens (Guichaoua and Pellerin, 2017).

This section further explores the variety of security responses by state and non-state actors to violence and terrorism in Niger.

Nigerien security forces

Security expenditure in Niger, including on the security and defence forces, has risen dramatically over the last ten years. While XOF 47 billion (USD 78 million) was spent on security in 2009,[101] that figure had risen to XOF 207.55 billion (USD 345 million) in 2016—an almost five-fold increase in just seven years. In 2016, this represents 11.48 per cent of the total state budget and third highest priority in the national budget, just behind general administration and education (Nigerien Ministry of Finance, 2016, p. 16).

The Nigerien security forces are currently running four military operations in Niger,[102] all of them aimed at addressing threats from outside the country.

Operation Zarmaganda: Named after a region in western Niger, this operation involves troops deployed in Tillaberi to contain threats to security emanating from Mali. It was replaced by **Operation Dongo** ('lightning') in June 2017 (AFP, 2017b).

Operation Djado: Focusing on insecurity in the Djado Plateau where gold-mining activities, which displaced thousands of people in the region, have been banned since March 2017. This operation superseded Operation Malibero, launched in 2011 to contain security threats emanating from Libya as a result of the country's revolution and ensuing conflicts.

Operation Chara: Meaning 'sweeping' in Hausa, this operation involves troops deployed in the north of Tahoua. It was suspended after the attack on the Bosso military camp in June 2016 (see p. 57) to redeploy personnel to the south-east; however, with the

latest wave of terrorist attacks on Niger's borders with Mali and Burkina Faso, the operation is being reinstated.

Operation N'ga: Meaning 'shield', this operation was deployed in the south of Niger at the end of 2014 to combat Boko Haram. Niger subsequently joined the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), becoming its 'fourth sector' with its regional command post in Diffa (ISS, 2016, p. 3).

Security forces explained to the author that the north of the country is not a priority for the administration in Niamey, which is focusing on reinforcing efforts in the south in the fight against Boko Haram and the threats along the border with Mali and Burkina Faso. The authorities have decided to redeploy military personnel to the Malian border and restart Operation Chara in close coordination with Operation Zarmaganda.[103] After the ambush on Nigerien security forces in Ouallam on 22 February 2017, which left 15 soldiers dead and 19 injured, and was claimed by the Islamic State in the Sahel, France announced that it would send 80 Special Forces commandos to support the Nigeriens (RFI, 2017b; see Box 4).

"While regional cooperation is key in tackling cross-border threats, it has been limited to date mainly due to the lack of capacity and resources, but also a lack of political will and a divergence of security and political agendas."

Regional security cooperation against terrorism threat

While regional cooperation is key in tackling cross-border threats, it has been limited to date mainly due to the lack of capacity and resources, but also a lack of political will and a divergence of security and political agendas. Currently, external financial and strategic support appears crucial to the realization of cross-border military operations in the Sahel. For instance, apart from the MNJTF, most ongoing efforts in joint collaboration by the security forces in the Sahel region are driven by Operation Barkhane, which works with each of them and organizes cross-border operations, encouraging forces to work together and exchange intelligence (Faivre, 2017).

In terms of regional cooperation, several initiatives have had mixed results. The most ambitious of these, the Operational Joint General Staff (CEMOC), was created in 2010 and includes Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Based in Tamanrasset, in the Algerian desert, it was meant to serve as a platform to organize joint counter-terrorism operations. Today, however, it remains just an empty shell.

Finally, security forces across the country bemoan the lack of cooperation by the general public in supporting the fight against insecurity, including reporting crimes or terrorist activities.[104] Despite the existence of some degree of collaboration between members of the general public and criminal or terrorist networks, this primarily reflects a combination of a lack of confidence in the ability of the security forces to protect the population, and a fear of abuse; as the the Minister of Defence put it: 'when an army does not protect, people tend to avoid exposing themselves. The day our army succeeds in protecting its people, the population will cooperate'.[105]

Established in 2014 to fight Boko Haram, the MNJTF became operational in 2015 after the election of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari. It comprises forces from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. While Boko Haram was losing ground in 2016, it is difficult to assess the MNJTF's actual operational resources and performance due to a lack of accurate data (ISS, 2016, p. 11). It has been reported that, in the first five months of 2016, the MNJTF freed almost 5,000 hostages, 'neutralized' 675 suspected members of Boko Haram, arrested 566 others, and dismantled more than 30 training camps and IED manufacturing facilities (ISS, 2016, p. 12). Until 2014, parts of the Nigerien security apparatus were reluctant to engage in open fighting with Boko Haram, which was mainly using Niger as a rear base: for them, this was a Nigerian problem and they did not want to give the group a reason to target Niger. With the increased regional and international pressure to act and the sharp expansion of Boko Haram's territorial control in Nigeria in 2014, however, the Nigerien authorities finally decided to change their strategy (ICG, 2017b, pp. 8–9).

In January 2017, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger decided to pool resources and establish a combined security force to fight terrorism and cross-border organized crime in the Liptako-Gourma region (Xinhua, 2017). This decision raises questions about both their operational capacities and how this force relates to the G5 Sahel's initiative, which was presented a few weeks later.

During a presidential summit in February 2017, the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) declared their intention to create a regional force, similar to the MNJTF. France has strongly supported the initiative, which it regards as a key way to eventually disengage its troops from the region, and proposed a resolution to the UN Security Council on the matter. However, following the reluctance of the UK and the US to follow suit, the resolution adopted in June 2017 is weak: though it welcomes the deployment of such a force, it does not give it a UN mandate and therefore no assurance of funding (Etienne, 2017; UNSC, 2017c).

International security actors

Niger has become a key partner to western nations in their fight against terrorism in the Sahel, given the increasing interest in the activities of global terrorist networks in the

Box 4 Operation Barkhane

Operation Barkhane was launched on 1 August 2014 to serve as France's chief counter-terrorism effort in the Sahel. It succeeded Operation Serval, which was launched in January 2013 and focused on insurgents in northern Mali. Barkhane regionalized French military involvement in the Sahel and covers Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[106] Niger is a key component of Barkhane: the force has a presence in Madama, Diffa, and Tillaberi, while the Niamey Deployable Air Base (BAP) houses at least three Medium Altitude Long-Endurance (MAPS) MQ-9 Reaper UAVs, one Atlantique-2 patrol craft, and several Mirage 2000 fighter aircrafts tasked with patrolling in the region of Gao (Lagneau, 2016; 2017a; 2017c).[107]

- **Madama**: The Madama base, officially opened on 23 October 2014 (Larcher, 2015), includes at least 200 French soldiers and several helicopters (Berghezan, 2016). Located in a former French colonial fort, Madama sits at a strategic location allowing forces stationed there to monitor the Niger–Libya border from Toummo Pass east to the tripartite border of Algeria, Mali, and Niger. Madama is officially a temporary forward post, and is intended to block the movement of jihadist groups between Libya and Mali.[108] From this base, the Barkhane force has launched both helicopter operations and joint patrols with the Nigerien Armed Forces in the northern part of the country. These operations resulted in the seizure of 'logistical plots' (fuel, food, etc.). There is no evidence that the items seized belonged to jihadist groups, however, and traffickers have used similar plots.[109] Several operations, using air support, resulted in the arrest of key members of jihadist groups (see pp. 31–32). Most of the land-based operations proved to be unrelated to the jihadist threat.[110] As a result, since 2014, Operation Barkhane has conducted no major operations against jihadist targets within Niger.
- **Diffa**: In Diffa, Barkhane has a Liaison and Operational Support Detachment (DLAO). This detachment was established in 2015 after the outbreak of military operations against Boko Haram by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in northern Nigeria. Operation Barkhane also has a Coordination and Liaison Unit (CCL) in Diffa for the coordination of intelligence with the states involved in the MNJTF.[111] This DLAO regularly patrols with the FAN.[112]
- **Tillaberi**: Barkhane's presence in Tillaberi is its most recent deployment in Nigerien territory. The French DLAO stationed there is tasked with countering the growing jihadist threat in the Tillaberi and Tahoua regions. The mission was inaugurated in the aftermath of the 22 February attack in Tilwa (Tillaberi—see Table 1).[113] The DLAO in Tillaberi conducts joint patrols in the region alongside the FAN and comprises elements of special forces (Lagneau, 2017a).

The French military presence in Niger has drawn criticism in Niger (Berghezan, 2016).[114] Many have questioned Operation Barkhane's goals, which are considered to be unclear. French military officials are aware of this criticism. One French official noted that the criticism was in part because of the decision to have a 'weak footprint' in Niger, reducing exposure to criticism of neo-colonialism, and because of the military imperative to maintain 'operational security', which in turn prevents communication about what the force is doing.[115]

That lack of communication opens the door to many rumours, of which two are widespread:

- Support of Tubus: This rumour claims that Operation Barkhane preferentially supports the Tubu community. The rumour relies on many supposed 'facts', including the alleged medical evacuation to Ndjamena by Operation Barkhane of Tubu fighters wounded by fighting with Tuaregs in Ubari, Libya.[116] The rumour appeared at the height of the fighting in Ubari (in 2015) and was never officially denied by Operation Barkhane personnel. This alleged support even led to an interview in the newspaper *Le Monde* with the President of the Supreme Council of the Libyan Tuaregs, Hussein El-Koni (Bobin, 2015).[117]
- French gold miners: This rumour concerns the alleged presence of French geologists and gold miners at the Madama forward base, who are supposed to be in Madama to exploit the gold fields of Djado, Niger. The rumour has not been officially denied.[118]

These rumours undermine Barkhane's local reputation and weaken the 'legitimacy' of its presence. For example, an Agadez-based Nigerien reporter has repeatedly and unsuccessfully sought permission from the French authorities to visit the Madama base.[119] The reporter's request was denied for 'operational safety reasons', despite the fact that some international reporters have visited it. Rather than providing reassurance, the lack of communication has convinced many in and around Agadez that Operation Barkhane 'has things to hide'.[120] Indeed, it may be said that where rumours fuel radicalization, whether social or religious, this lack of communication is counterproductive and may even undermine one of Operation Barkhane's core objectives: the fight against jihadism.

Beyond criticisms levelled at Operation Barkhane's presence in northern Niger, there is also widespread criticism of foreign military forces (Berghezan, 2016). The French military presence in Tillaberi is a particular point of contention, notably because the attacks are continuing although the forces stationed there are supposed to prevent them. Politicians, the FAN, and security forces question the usefulness of the presence of foreign troops, 'flouting' Niger's national sovereignty without even restoring its security.[121] For example, a Nigerien soldier who was questioned about the French presence deplored the virtually daily surveillance flights over Niger, noting that the intelligence gathered was never shared with the FAN.[122]

If the usefulness of Barkhane is increasingly questioned in Niger, its successes may be more difficult to determine. Without the presence of Operation Barkhane's troops and other assets (especially aerial surveillance), it is reasonable to assume that the number of jihadist-related attacks in Niger would be greater, especially in light of the limited capabilities of the FAN. At the more political level, Operation Barkhane may also offer guarantees to the regime of President Issoufou, dampening the enthusiasm of political opponents to intensify their opposition. Some believe that Operation Barkhane acts as a deterrent to a coup d'état in Niger, a country where military coups have shaped political history since its independence. Similarly, there seems to be some doubt that Operation Barkhane acts as a bulwark against the possibility of rebellion attempted by Tuareg or Tubu groups.[123]

Source: Mathieu Pellerin (2017b)

region and the threat they pose to their own interests and citizens. French and US troops have established military bases in the north of the country from where they are operating against jihadist movements; they have also deployed some troops in the south and west of the country to support the Nigeriens on their other fronts. In October 2016, Germany announced the construction of a military air base in Niger in support of MINUSMA (Jeune Afrique/AFP, 2016b). In addition, the Belgian and Canadian military are providing training to the Nigerien security forces (Brewster, 2017; Belgian MoD, 2017). In August 2017, Russia announced the development of military counter-terrorism cooperation with Niger, adding a new security player to the Nigerien theatre of operations (Africa Times, 2017).

Vigilante groups

Vigilante groups have always played an informal role in policing in Niger, often filling gaps for the formal authorities, particularly in times of greater insecurity in various parts of the country. While not officially endorsed by the authorities, they have been accepted[124] by them and, on occasion, been provided with logistical support.

During the 1990s, for instance, businessmen from the south of the country would call on Nigerian vigilantes to deal with petty crime. While they are reported to have had some success, they were also accused of beating up and even killing alleged thieves (Göpfert, 2012, p. 57). This ad hoc meting out of justice by vigilante groups is one of the obvious downsides, coupled with the fact these armed groups are often organized along tribal lines, which further threatens to stir up community tensions and to challenge the authority of the state.

Over the past four years, the civilian population of Niger has suffered a great deal at the hands of Boko Haram, which has attacked many villages particularly in areas where there are no national forces present.[125] Communities have therefore been forced to make arrangements to protect themselves, creating *comités de vigilance* (vigilance committees), whose members are appointed by the village chief who generally shares the list of names with the authorities.[126]

Some local groups have succeeded in preventing attacks by Boko Haram[127] but many have also fallen victim to the group.[128] The vast majority of these local groups are armed with blunt weapons;[129] however, some (including Fulani and Arab groups) are reportedly armed with assault rifles, and many already carry weapons to protect their herds (ICG, 2017a).

Vigilante groups in Nigeria have played a major role in the fight against Boko Haram, but in Niger their role is much more limited. While the authorities had initially supported these groups, their policy changed rapidly when it became clear how difficult they were to control: 'we had supported them a little, but it did not work. There were

settlings of scores, extortion and such like. They created more problems than solutions', said one government representative in Diffa.[130] More substantially, Niger's history has been profoundly marked by revolts and insurgencies, and despite the need to involve the population in order to win the war against Boko Haram, the authorities remain reluctant to support the development of community and tribal-based armed groups (ICG, 2017a, p. 3).

Rather than supporting these groups, the authorities therefore decided to use them as informants;[131] according to one commander in Diffa, 'They have helped the security forces arrest many people'.[132] However, the use of information provided by vigilante groups to identify Boko Haram members has been heavily criticized by the CNDDH, which explained that there have been many false accusations.[133] In light of this, the authorities need to be cautious about how they use these groups and seek to establish greater control over them with a view to working towards their eventual disbandment (ICG, 2017b, p. iv).

Private security companies

In 2012, 40 private security companies (PSCs) were registered with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in Niamey, most of which were set up by former police or military officers for foreign clients, including NGOs and diplomatic representations (Göpfert, 2012, p. 56).[134] This figure has almost quadrupled in the last five years, with 149[135] security and personnel-guarding companies now registered with the MOI, including Nigerien companies such as GED and the Société Nigérienne de Sécurité (SNS), both of which employ more than 1,500 people (Göpfert, 2012, p. 56; Jeune Afrique, 2016). PSCs are not permitted to carry firearms but may carry non-lethal security equipment.

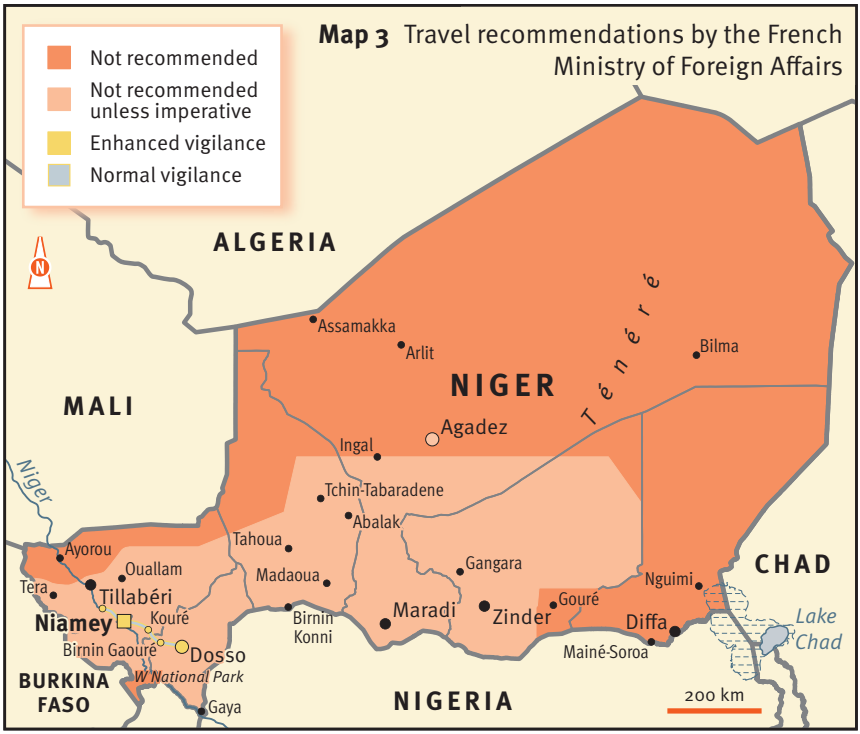
> “The UN considers Niger to be a dangerous country, and most western governments, including the French and the British, recommend against all travel in most of the country . . . and against all but essential travel in the south.”

Primary impacts of insecurity

Niger ranks 187 out 188 countries in the UN Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016, p. 225). Despite having substantial oil reserves and uranium deposits (AFDB, n.d.), the country's economic development has been severely impeded by political instability, climatic fragility—which affects the two other core drivers of the economy, namely subsistence farming and livestock—and insecurity.

Insecurity, particularly the threat of terrorism and risk of kidnapping, has had a significant impact on international investment and tourism. Overall, the UN considers Niger to be a dangerous country, and most western governments, including the French and the British, recommend against all travel in most of the country (in darker orange) and against all but essential travel in the south (in lighter orange; see Map 3).[136]

The weakness of formal security provision in certain parts of the country means that groups can act with relative impunity, with illicit activity such as smuggling propping up the thriving local economy and enabling some degree of stability to take root in these areas, particularly in the Agadez region (see next section).



Map 3 Travel recommendations by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Source: France Diplomatie (n.d.)

The military response to terrorism and the humanitarian crisis caused by insecurity, particularly in the south of the country, has had a significant financial impact, consuming an increasing proportion of the national budget, to the detriment of social and economic development, including education. The defence budget has increased considerably over the past ten years (see p. 62) while the country continues to face significant economic challenges linked to the difficulty of extracting natural resources because of insecurity and the collapse of the global price of oil and uranium. As one Niamey-based diplomat said: 'Niger has two wars to win: the war against terrorism and the war of finance'.[137]

North

Insecurity resulting from the northern rebellions at the end of the 20th century killed off one of the country's main sources of revenue: tourism. The growing terrorist threat and armed banditry have exacerbated this trend; paradoxically, however, the lack of control in the north has enabled an environment conducive to illegal activities to flourish, generating considerable revenue, particularly for those individuals and armed groups involved in trafficking and smuggling of goods such as cigarettes, drugs, weapons, and people. Given their connections to local Niamey-based businessmen and politicians, these networks are able to act with almost total impunity.[138] Over the last five years, the city of Agadez has witnessed a boom, with greater numbers of banks being set up, palatial houses being built, and luxury 4×4 vehicles on the streets.

While illegal trafficking can lead to violent tension, such as over the control of territory, roads, and networks in northern Mali or southern Libya for instance, revenues from smuggling activity in northern Niger have contributed to establishing some degree of stability in the region. In an area with limited resources and opportunities for formal employment, trafficking of goods and gold prospection bring in much-needed cash.[139] Furthermore, these activities provide a welcome occupation for youth and former rebels who have not been reintegrated and who have an excellent knowledge of the terrain and how to handle weapons (Guichaoua and Pellerin, 2017, pp. 84–85). Some members of the security forces also benefit from illicit trafficking by extracting bribes or 'unofficial taxation',[140] and families and tribes have also set up checkpoints to levy taxes from smugglers passing through their territory.

With the adoption and implementation of a new law outlawing migrant-trafficking in 2015 (République du Niger, 2015), several local officials expressed their concern about the loss of a key source of revenue. Without this, they argued, some youth may be inclined towards armed banditry or become vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist networks: 'This clamp-down is only going to increase insecurity', said one civilian official

in Agadez.[141] Furthermore, the introduction of this law has meant the price of passage charged by transporters of migrants has increased significantly due to the greater risks associated with taking alternative routes where accidents are more likely, and passengers are often left stranded in the middle of the desert.

Being at the crossroads of migration routes from East and West Africa to Europe, migrant trafficking generates enormous amounts of money: at the end of 2016, a typical journey from Agadez in Niger to Ubari in Libya could cost between XOF 150,000 and 200,000 (USD 250–350). Migrants are generally transported in pick-up trucks, which can carry up to 40 people; a single transfer can therefore bring in up to USD 14,000, excluding any logistical expenses. Cash obtained from migrants travelling from Niger is used by traffickers to buy goods in Libya, including vehicles, to sell upon their return.[142]

Gold prospection has been booming since 2014, attracting many nationals and others from across the region. The remoteness of the sites and absence of any administration have allowed the activity to develop uncontrollably, and markets and shops have been set up, including those selling weapons for personal protection.[143] The forced evacuation of certain gold-mining sites in the north in March 2017, coupled with a reduction in the 'migrant smuggling business', stemmed the flow of two significant sources of income. Many national and international observers in the region fear a further rise in armed crime in the absence of viable economic alternatives.[144]

Armed robberies outside Agadez are frequent and have a significant impact on trade and the local economy. On certain roads, such as between Agadez and Dirkou, for example, the authorities have organized secure convoys once a week; however, transporters complain that they do not cover a broad enough range of routes, are too infrequent, very slow, and inadequately armed.[145]

In April 2017, the Algerian authorities decided to close their border with Niger for security reasons, shutting down an important trade route and source of economic development for northern Niger.

South-west

The economic situation in the border area with Mali has been affected by the large number of refugees arriving in Niger from Mali, as well as by the recent spike in terrorist attacks by groups coming from Mali and Burkina Faso (see Table 1).[146] The Nigerien authorities formally declared a state of emergency in the regions of Tahoua and Tillaberi in March 2017, which severely affected the local economy given the restrictions it imposed: security measures include shutting down 16 markets, the banning of cars and motorbikes in certain areas at night, and the total ban on vehicles entering some parts of the cities (OCHA, 2017a).

In the capital, while the situation remains relatively stable, the private security industry has boomed over the past ten years, creating jobs but also contributing to the perceived sense of insecurity.

South-east

In areas where Boko Haram operates in the south of the country, both insecurity and security responses to the threat have had a significant impact on social and economic development.

> "... to protect the population and cut off the sources of food and logistical support for Boko Haram, the Nigerien authorities have adopted a set of measures similar to an 'economic embargo'."

As a result of terrorism and the war against it, the Diffa region now hosts more than 127,000 IDPs and 106,000 refugees (OCHA, 2017b). Diffa is a rich area in terms of farming, breeding of livestock, and fishing, but people who were once financially autonomous have been forced to leave their land and are now dependent on aid. This is also having a detrimental impact on education, which has been gravely disrupted; more than 30 schools remain closed in the Diffa area (OCHA, 2017b). In addition, due to the deteriorating situation in Nigeria, 15,000 Nigerien emigrants have returned from Nigeria where they were making a living and sending remittances to their communities.[147]

In order to protect the population and cut off the sources of food and logistical support for Boko Haram, the Nigerien authorities have adopted a set of measures similar to an 'economic embargo' (ICG, 2017b), which also greatly affect the local population. Many people have been forced to abandon their villages and the main livelihood activities around the Komadugu River, such as fishing and growing peppers, have been banned. Some of the main markets have been shut down and a curfew imposed from 7 p.m. for vehicles and 9 p.m. for pedestrians until 6 a.m. the following day.[148] The border with Nigeria has also been closed, which further limits the usually substantial trade between the two countries, and the use of motorbikes, which Boko Haram often deploy when mounting attacks but which are also a major means of transport in the area, has been forbidden. The large number of IDPs and refugees is putting further pressure on a zone already facing a significant economic slowdown, which is stirring increased inter-communal tensions (see p. 33).

In addition to larger, more strategic attacks, Boko Haram has kidnapped and attacked civilians to steal food, medicine, and other goods. It has also targeted rich local businessmen, forcing some to cease their activities and leave the area.[149]

Moreover, international firms, including several Chinese companies that were building infrastructure, have left Niger, removing an important source of employment. At the same time, however, the refugee crisis has brought into the Diffa area dozens of international NGOs and UN agencies, which employ local people and rent housing and office space, to some extent stimulating the economy.

> “Hard security responses to what are complex and often inter-connected insecurity dynamics in Niger are not sufficient to address the social and economic issues that contribute to insecurity.”

Conclusion

Niger is currently in the process of further stepping up its regional counter-terrorism efforts through its participation in the establishment of the G5 Force, which launched its first operation at the end of October 2017 in the border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger (Reuters, 2017b). However, in addition to multiple national political and security agendas, funding for the Force has still not been fully secured, further threatening the viability of its operational capacity and long-term sustainability.

At the same time, jihadist groups operating from Mali have been conducting an increasing number of attacks on Nigerien soil. The deadly 4 October 2017 attack that killed Nigerien and US soldiers during a counter-terrorism operation drew attention to the expanding support of western military forces in combating threats in the southern part of the border area between Mali and Niger: in the immediate aftermath, Niger publicly declared having authorized the US military to use armed drones to conduct attacks against jihadist targets (BBC, 2017).

In addition to military operations, addressing long-standing community conflicts, including through the improvement of security provision across the entire country, would play a crucial role in countering the increasing influence of terrorist groups, and disrupting the fertile recruiting ground that these conflicts generate. It is also essential to prevent civilians and communities from arming themselves and establishing their own security structures, as well as to avoid exacerbating inter- and intra-communal violence and armed banditry.

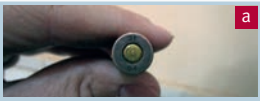
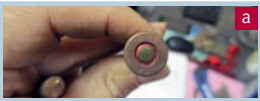
Hard security responses to what are complex and often inter-connected insecurity dynamics in Niger are, however, not sufficient to address the social and economic issues that contribute to insecurity. As demonstrated by the security and economic measures adopted along the country's borders with Mali and Nigeria to counter terrorism, they are even often detrimental to local economic development and social cohesion, further exacerbating the dire humanitarian situation in the Sahel region. ●

Annexe. Illicit small calibre ammunition documented in Niger in 2016 and 2017*

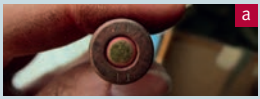
Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×39mm	2006	Bulgaria	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	2011	Bulgaria	CT case, April (2016)
7.62×39mm	2005	Russia	Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1974	USSR	Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1996	?	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1981	Poland	CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016) CT case, April 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1992	Poland	1. Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2001?	Poland?	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	2006	Poland	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016. (2016)
7.62×39mm	1950	USSR	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1973	USSR	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1974	USSR	1. Seized from BH, in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016)

Also documented in	Markings	Picture (source noted on photo)
	10 06	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b] Mali (Bulgaria (confirmed export to Mali)[c]	10 11	 a
Libya, Tripoli (2012) Côte d'Ivoire (2014) Malian TAG (2015)[b]	17 05	 a
	17 74	 a
	2 96	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	21 81	 a
	21 92	 a
Malian TAG (2014)[b]	21 01	
	21 06	 a
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	270 50	 a
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	270 73	 a
	270 74	 a

Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×39mm	1950	USSR	CT case (2016).
7.62×39mm	1971	China	Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1993	China	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1994	China	CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1997	China	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	2004	Romania	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1972	Poland	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	No date	China	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1950	USSR	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1974	USSR	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1974	USSR	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016) 3. Seized in Dirkou Military Zone (2017)d
7.62×39mm	1974	China	CT case, April 2016 (2016)

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
	3 50	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	31 71	
Mali (2016)	31 93	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	31 94	 a
	31 97	 a
	324 04	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	343 72	 a
Libya, Tripoli (2011, 2012, 2013) Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	352	 a
	539 50	 a
Libya, Tripoli (2012) Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	539 74	 a
Libya (2013) Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	60 74	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	61 74	 a

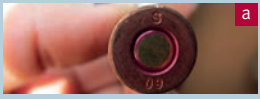
Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×39mm	1992	China	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized in Diffa region by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders (2016)
7.62×39mm	1993	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×39mm	1997	China	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2008	China	1. CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016) 2. CT case, April 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1971	China	1. CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016) 2. CT case, April 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1971	China	1. CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016) 2. CT case, April 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2011	China	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1973	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×39mm	1987	USSR	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1988	USSR	CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1989	USSR	1. CT case (2016) 2. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1970	China	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
	61 92	 a
	61 93	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	61 97	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	61 08	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	661 71	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	71 71	 a
	71 11	 a
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	711 73	 e
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	711 87	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	711 88	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	711 89	 a
Mali (blank version; 2015)[b]	811 70	 a

Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×39mm	2008	China	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016) 3. Seized by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders in the Diffa region (2016) 4. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2009	China	1. Seized in Diffa region by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders (2016) 2. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2012	China	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1983	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×39mm		Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×39mm	1976	China	CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1996	Sudan	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	2003	Sudan	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	2013	Sudan	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×39mm	1995	Iran	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	1989	Czechoslovakia	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Nigerien army Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	811 08	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	811 09	 a
Nigerien army Malian TAG (2017)[b]	811 12	 a
Libya, Tripoli (2012) Malian TAG (2013)[b]	83	 e
	883	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	9121 76	 a
	SUD 39 96	 a
	39 03 ?	 a
Malian TAG (2015)[b] Libya, Sebha, (2015)[f]	39 1 13	 e
	7.62×39 95	 a
	bxn 89	 e

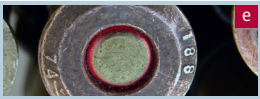
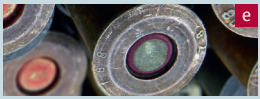
Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×39mm	1981	Yugoslavia	CT case (2016)
7.62×39mm	1982	Serbia	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. Seized in Diffa region by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders (2016)
7.62×39mm	2005	Serbia	Seized in Diffa region by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders (2016)
7.62×39mm	?	Ukraine	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	2014	Nigeria	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	NA		Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)
7.62×39mm	2009	Algeria	1. Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016) 2. CT case; seized in Ilela, January 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm		Russia	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1984	Egypt	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×39mm	1978	Egypt	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1961	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×51mm	1971	Belgium	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	ППУ 1981	 a
Libyan armed group (2013) Malian TAG (2013)[b]	ППУ 1982	 a
	ППУ 2005	 a
Malian TAG (2014)[b]	ЛПЗ 7,62×39	 a
	OFN 14 7.62	 a
Malian AQIM group Malian TAG (2016)[b]	БПЗ 7,62×39	
Nigerien military (Agadez, 2016) Malian TAG and other groups (2015)[b]	S 09	 a
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	WOLF 7,62×39	 a
	٧٨ ٢٧ ج م ع	 a
	ج م ع _ ٢٧_٧٨	
	61 06	 e
Malian TAG (2015)[b] Côte d'Ivoire (2014)	FN 71	 a

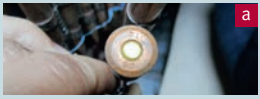
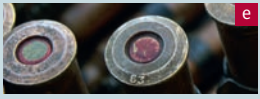
Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×51mm	1978	Belgium	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1963	USA	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1996	Sudan	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1997	Sudan	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1970	USA	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×51mm	1993	Nigeria	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×54mmR	1971	Bulgaria	Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016)
7.62×54mmR	1983	Bulgaria	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1985	Bulgaria	1. Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016) 2. Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2011	Bulgaria	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1970	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1971	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Libya, Tripoli (2012) Malian TAG (2013)[b]	FN 78	 a
	RA 63	 a
	SUD 51 96	 a
	SUD 51 97	 a
	WCC 70	 a
	AFN 93 7.62	 a
	10 71	 a
Malian TAG (2015)[b] Libya, Sebha (2013)	10 83	 e
Malian TAG (2013)[b] Libya (2015)[g]	10 85	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	10 11	 e
	188 70	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b] Libya, Misrata (2012)	188 71	 e

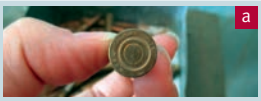
Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×54mmR	1974	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1978	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1981	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1988	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1979	Hungary	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1973	Romania	Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016)
7.62×54mmR	1975	Romania	Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016)
7.62×54mmR	1976	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1977	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1978	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1979	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR		China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Malian other groups (2014) Libya (2013)	188 74	
Malian TAG (2015)[b] Libya, Misrata (2012)	188 78	
Malian TAG (2014)[b] Libya, Misrata (2012)	188 81	
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	188 88	
	21 79	
	22 73	
Libya, Tripoli (2012) Malian TAG (2015)[b]	22 75	
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	22 76	
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	22 77	
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	22 78	
Libya (2015)	22 79	
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	352	

Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×54mmR	1977	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1978	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1987	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1988	USSR	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1990	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1990	China	1. Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016) 2. Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1980	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1983	Romania	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2006	China	1. Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016) 2. Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2007	China	1. Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016) 2. Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2008	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2011	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Malian TAG (2016)[b]	60 77	 e
Malian TAG (2013)[b]	60 78	 e
Malian TAG (2013)[b]	60 87	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	60 88	 e
	61 90	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2014)[b]	71 90	 a
Mali (2015)	80	 e
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	83	 e
Malian TAG and other groups (2013)[b]	945 06	 a
Malian TAG (2013)[b]	945 07	 a
	945 08	 e
Malian TAG (2015)[b] Libya, Sebha (2015)[f]	945 11	 e

Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
7.62×54mmR	2012	China	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1971	Czechoslovakia	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	2005	Serbia	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×54mmR	1977	Egypt	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1978	Egypt	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.62×54mmR	1979	Egypt	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
7.5×54mm	1978	France	Seized by the Gendarmerie in the Agadez region (2016)
7.62×54mmR?	1978	Burkina Faso (Haute Volta)	Seized by the army in the Diffa region between 2014 and 2016 (2016)
7.62×54mmR		Burkina Faso (Haute Volta)	Seized in Diffa region by Gendarmerie in 2016 from bandits or cattle herders (2016)
9×22mm (blank)		Turkey	Seized from Ghanaian nationals (transporting cartridges from Libya to Ghana) in Abalak, January 2017 (2017)[d]
9×22mm (blank)		Turkey	Seized from Ghanaian nationals (transporting cartridges from Libya to Ghana) in Abalak, January 2017 (2017)[d]
12.7×99mm	1982	Belgium	Seized from BH in the Diffa region (2016)

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
Libya, Sebha (2015)[f]	945 12	 e
Malian TAG (2013)[b]	bxn 71	 e
	ППУ 2005	 a
	ج م ع ٧.٦٢ ٠١ ٧٧	 e
	ج م ع ٧.٦٢ ٠١ ٧٨	 e
Malian TAG (2015)[b]	ج م ع ٧.٦٢ ٠١ ٧٩	 e
	SF 78 7,5	 a
	CV 78 ?62N	 a
	SIVAM 7.5	 a
Libya, 2014	OZK_P.A._9mm	 h
	unmarked[i]	 h
Libyan armed groups	F.N.B 82 .50	 a

Calibre	Year of production	Producing state	Documented in Niger (year of documentation)
23×152mm		Bulgaria	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
23×152mm		Bulgaria	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]
23×152mm		Russia	Seized in the Dirkou Military Zone (2017)[d]

Acronyms

BH Boko Haram

TAG Terrorist Armed Groups

CT Counterterrorism

*** Note on the Annexe**

Unless specified otherwise, the ammunition listed in the Annexe was documented by the author for the Small Arms Survey in November 2016. Ammunition observed in Niamey (on 24 February 2017) and Dirkou (on 2 and 3 March 2017) was documented during a joint Small Arms Survey and Conflict Armament Research mission.

a Source: Savannah de Tessieres, 2017

b Holger Anders, senior researcher on arms trafficking.

c See UNSC, 2014, p.8.

d Claudio Gramizzi, Conflict Armament Research/Small Arms Survey.

e Source: Claudio Gramizzi, for Conflict Armament Research/Small Arms Survey, Dirkou, March 2017.

f Conflict Armament Research in UNSC, 2014, p. 8.

g Conflict Armament Research.

h Source: Claudio Gramizzi, for Conflict Armament Research/Small Arms Survey, Niamey, February 2017

i These rounds were seized inside of their original packaging, a carton box marked 'PAX' and bearing the mention 'design by "Yavaşçalar".

Also documented in	Markings	Picture
	10 83*	 e
	184 81 M	 e
	606 BC-72	 e

List of abbreviations

APC	Armoured personnel carrier
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CEMOC	Operational Joint General Staff
CNCCAI	Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites
CNDDH	National Human Rights Commission
DGDSE	Direction générale de la documentation et de la sécurité extérieure
FAN	Nigerien Armed Forces (Forces armées nigériennes)
FDS	Nigerien Defence and Security Forces (Forces de défense et de sécurité)
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IED	Improvised explosive device
IS	Islamic State (and its predecessor groups)
IS-GS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahel
IS-WA	Islamic State West Africa Province
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims)
MAA	Mouvement Arabe pour l'Azawad
MANPADS	Man-portable air defence system
MENA	Middle East and North Africa

MINUSMA	Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali
MJRN	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Réhabilitation du Niger
MNJ	Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA	Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
PSC	Private security company
PSSM	Physical security and stockpile management
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SSR	Security sector reform
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Endnotes

1 The precise methodology and sources of data collected by the CNCCAI are unclear. Information includes data provided by the Gendarmerie as well as materiel handed in voluntarily by civilians.
2 In this Report, the terms 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' mainly refer to groups and individuals listed as terrorist by the UN as well as their actions (UNSC, n.d.). Where responsibility for certain attacks of a terrorist nature, for instance against security positions, has not been clearly identified, we rely on how the act in question is defined by the national authorities.
3 Information provided by a confidential source, 2017.
4 Interview with international security source, 2016.
5 As noted above, this Report uses the terms 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' mainly refer to groups and individuals listed as terrorist by the UN or where defined as such by national authorities (UNSC, n.d.; see also note 1).
6 The estimate is based on OCHA's data for the civilians killed by Boko Haram (OCHA, 2017d). According to interviews with security officials and press articles reporting single attacks, more than 60 members of the security forces died in the south; in areas near the borders with Mali and Burkina Faso, according to interviews and press articles, 33 people died in terrorist attacks, including three civilians (see Table 1).
7 Salafist Group for Call and Combat, the precursor to AQIM.
8 One year after the formation of AQIM, in 2008, the group kidnapped two Canadian officials in Niger who were eventually released. In 2009, the group failed an attempt to kidnap US officials in Tahoua. In 2010, a French aid worker was kidnapped and later killed. The same year, four French employees of Areva were abducted and released three years later (Remy, 2013). In 2011, two French citizens were kidnapped in Niamey and killed during a rescue attempt (Thurston, 2011).
9 QDi/QDe are the references used in the United Nations Security Council's IS and AQ Sanctions List, which includes all individuals (QDi) and entities (QDe) under sanctions (UNSC, n.d.).
10 Interview with investigator, Niamey, 2016.
11 Transcript of interrogation of member of MUJAO arrested in Niger, 2014.
12 Exchange with international armed groups analyst based in Mali, May 2017.
13 Email exchange with a Nigerien senior security officer, October 2017.
14 Consistent with previous research conducted by the Small Arms Survey, this Report refers to the group as 'Ansar Dine'. The UN uses the spelling 'Ansar Eddine' (UNSC, n.d.), though they are one and the same.

15 In 2015, the leader of Jama'atu ahlis sunna lidda'awati wal-jihad (QDe.138), also known as Boko Haram, pledged allegiance to ISIS and the group was subsequently rebranded as the Islamic State of West Africa; currently, however, the group is in a state of turmoil with internal divisions, loss of capacity, and changes in strategy. To what extent some of the group are operating as IS franchise remains unclear (the UN still lists the group as Boko Haram). For ease of reference, and as Nigerien and international security sources continue to call it, this Report refers to the group as 'Boko Haram'.
16 Between January and May 2017, 31 attacks by Boko Haram were identified by OCHA (OCHA, 2017b).
17 Email exchange with an OCHA representative.
18 Analysis of media reports, January–December 2016. This estimate was confirmed by a security source in Niamey.
19 Interview with Military Zone Commander, Diffa, November 2016.
20 Security officers believe that the group's capacities have been reduced, that Boko Haram's experts in improvised explosive devices (IEDs) may have been killed or fled, although suicide attacks have continued in Cameroon and Nigeria. The last suicide attack around Bosso 'involved a young lady who was seen walking around talking on the phone. When the soldiers spotted her, she did not even try to surrender and just blew herself up without taking any victims.' Military source, Diffa, November 2016.
21 OCHA (2017b); email exchange with OCHA representative.
22 Interview with Military Zone Commander, Diffa, November 2016.
23 The latest UNSC report pursuant to UN Resolution 2253 concerning IS, AQ, and associated entities mentions 5,000 combatants in total (UNSC, 2017b, p. 16). Note that the UN refers to 'Islamic State' (IS) by the acronym 'ISIL' or 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant'.
24 Interview with a representative of the CNDDH, Diffa, November 2016.
25 Interview with security officers and representative of CNDDH, Diffa, November 2016.
26 Early 2017, the number of Boko Haram-related inmates reached 1,700 (ICG, 2017b, p. 12).
27 Interview with investigator, November 2016.
28 Interviews with investigator, Niamey, 2015–16; transcripts of interrogations of members of MUJAO and MAA in Niger and Mali, 2014 and 2015.
29 Interview with a representative of the Direction générale de la documentation et de la sécurité extérieure (DGDSE), Niamey, November 2016.
30 Interview with a police investigator, November 2016.
31 Interviews with representatives of DGDSE and anti-terrorist unit, Niamey, November 2016.
32 Confidential document, Niger, 2016.
33 Interview with investigator, Niamey, 2016.
34 Confidential documents, Niger, 2016.
35 Confidential document, Niger, 2016.
36 Interview with representative of DGDSE, Niamey, November 2016.
37 He said that he was on his way to Libya to put together videos on the attack of In Amenas and the life of Abu Bakr al Nasr, killed by the French military six months earlier. Confidential document, 2014.
38 See UNSC (2016, p. 166). Interview with security source, Niger, 2016.
39 Interview with security source, Niger, 2016. Al Faqi was charged by the ICC 'for having intentionally committed in Timbuktu between around 30 June 2012 and around 11 July 2012 the war crime of attacking buildings dedicated to religion and historic monuments, pursuant to,

and prohibited by, article 8(2)(e)(iv) of the Rome Statute' (ICC, 2016). Al Faqi was the head of the *Hisbah*, or 'morality brigade', in Timbuktu during its occupation by AQIM and Ansar Dine.

40 In March 2017, Iyad ag Ghali announced the merger of AQIM, Al Murabitun, and Ansar Dine into Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM; UNSC, 2017c).

41 Interview with security officer, Niamey, November 2016.

42 Deadly inter-community conflicts do not always involve firearms. In November 2016, in Bangui, Tahoua region, 18 people were killed during a clash between cattle herders and farmers in which no firearms were used (ActuNiger, 2016; interview with security officer, Niamey, November 2016).

43 Interview with civilian authorities, Diffa, November 2016.

44 As stated earlier, the Gendarmerie divides the territory of Niger into three 'légions': Agadez, Niamey, and Zinder.

45 République du Niger (2011).

46 Interview with police investigator, Niamey, 2016 and with international security source, Niamey, 2016.

47 Interview with representative of Garde Nationale, Agadez, November 2016.

48 Interviews with representatives of several security forces, Agadez, November 2016.

49 For more information on the gold rush, see Pellerin (2017a); Grégoire and Gagnol (2017); Tubiana and Gramizzi (2017, pp. 79–80).

50 Following a request from the Chadian authorities, the Nigerien military arrested a number of Chadian deserters and took them back to the border, where they handed them over to the Chadian authorities. Interview with senior military officer, Niamey, November 2016.

51 Exchange of the Small Arms Survey with Military Command, Dirkou, March 2017.

52 Gold costs between XOF 20,000 and 22,000 (USD 38–40) per gram in the north of Niger. Interview with gold miner, Agadez, November 2016.

53 Two attacks accounted for 80 per cent of this sum (Gendarmerie nationale, 2016c).

54 Interviews with representatives of the military, police, and National Guard, Agadez, November 2016.

55 Disputes between trafficking networks may sometimes become violent. In November 2016, for instance, an ex-rebel involved in trafficking was shot at in Agadez while he was in his car. Interview with security officer, Niamey, 2016; RFI (2016g).

56 Gendarmerie nationale (2016c).

57 The estimate is incomplete as several reported cases mention 'important sums stolen' without specifying the amounts (Gendarmerie nationale, 2016c).

58 The police are in charge of dealing with crime in urban areas.

59 Interview with representative of the Ministry of Justice, Niamey, November 2016.

60 Email exchange with CNCCAI, 2017.

61 The precise methodology and sources of data collected by the CNCCAI are not clear. Information includes data provided by the Gendarmerie as well as materiel handed in voluntarily by civilians.

62 Interviews with senior military officers, Niger, November 2016.

63 Interview with specialized international security source, 2016.

64 Interview with a senior security source, Niamey, November 2016.

65 Confidential source, 2016.

66 Interview with security officer, Niamey, November 2016.

67 The pictures of the seizure do not allow for a clear identification of the producer of the shotguns.

68 See Tanimoune, 2017. The information was confirmed by a senior security officer, Niger, 2017.

69 Gendarmerie nationale (2016a); Saisies effectuées par les FAN dans la zone Nord-Niger, 2015–2016 (Nigerien MoD, 2016).
70 'Saisies effectuées par les FAN dans la zone Nord-Niger en 2015' (Nigerien MoD, 2016).
71 Author's inspection of materiel seized by the military in the north (Agadez), November 2016.
72 Saisies effectuées par les FAN dans la zone Nord-Niger, 2015-2016 (Nigerien MoD, 2016).
73 Interview with head of Gendarmerie, Military Zone Commander, and a gold digger, Agadez, November 2016.
74 See Pellerin (2017a, p. 8); interview with a former member of the Mouvement des Nigeriens pour la Justice (MNJ—a former Tuareg rebel movement) and with a gold digger, Agadez, November 2016.
75 Interview with an ex-member of MNJ and with a gold digger, Agadez, November 2016.
76 Interview with senior security officer, Niamey, November 2016.
77 Interview with a cattle breeder, confidential source, Niger, 2015.
78 Interview with a senior security officer, Niamey, November 2016.
79 Interview with police investigator, Niamey, November 2016.
80 In Niger, civilians can possess certain arms, including handguns and hunting rifles, if they obtain the right authorizations, including licences to import a gun, to detain it, and to carry it. These are delivered by the Ministry of Interior after a morality check.
81 Interview with member of *brigade fluviale* (River Brigade) responsible for managing these seizures, Niamey, November 2016.
82 Interview with a colonel of the Nigerien army based in the region for several years, Diffa, November 2016.
83 The small quantity of 7.62 × 39 mm rounds of ammunition documented in the northern region can be partly explained by the fact that forces need ammunition and use them directly for their own assault rifles. Interviews with representatives of security forces, Agadez, November 2016.
84 Two types of 7.5 × 54 mm, one type of 7.62 × 54R mm, seven types of 7.62 × 51 mm and 18 types of 7.62 × 39 mm.
85 Confidential source.
86 Confidential document.
87 Confidential document.
88 Author interview with Nigerien security officers, Niamey, November 2016; information provided by JMAC, MINUSMA, 2016.
89 In 2014, a soldier from Niamey was arrested for selling XOF 3m (approximately USD 5,000) worth of weapons from national stockpiles to AQIM. The case is currently before the Court of Appeal. Interview with senior security officer, Niamey, November 2016.
90 See DICON (2017).
91 See, for example, Faul (2016).
92 Interview with senior security officer, Niamey, November 2016.
93 Interview with two security officers, Niamey, November 2016.
94 This allegation was confirmed to the author by a confidential source in November 2016.
95 Interview with Zone Commander, and with a representative of the National Guard, Diffa, November 2016.
96 The video was provided to the author by the Nigerien authorities. See also Jihadology (2017).
97 Over the past 10 years, China has become a major supplier of military materiel for the Nigerien government (and for many other African countries). Materiel is cheaper than western production and arms contracts are often 'secondary contracts' to important oil or infrastructure contracts.

98 Interview with armourers from the police, Gendarmerie, customs, and the Garde nationale in Niamey, Agadez, and Diffa, November 2016.
99 Interview with a representative of the Office of the Chief of Staff of the army, Niamey, November 2016.
100 Confidential security source, November 2016.
101 Written communication with academic expert on Niger, November 2017.
102 Interviews with senior military officers, Niamey, November 2016.
103 Interview with senior military officers, Niamey, November 2016.
104 Interviews with senior security officers in Agadez, Diffa and Niamey, November 2016.
105 Interview with the Nigerien Ministry of Defense in Bobin 2017.
106 The 'Sabre force' is based in Burkina Faso and is part of the French special forces chain of command.
107 See, for example, the 'Dague operation' carried out by French air forces on 28 May 2017 in the Douentza circle and the 'Bayard operations' on 29 April 2017 (Lagneau, 2017b; 2017c).
108 Interview with a French officer from Barkhane, Paris, January 2016.
109 For instance, during the helicopter operation on 7 April 2015. See Lagneau (2015).
110 This statement is based on the absence of arrest during most of these operations. Interview with a Nigerien officer, Niamey, June 2017.
111 Interview with several representatives of security forces, Niamey, June 2017.
112 Such a joint patrol was conducted in July 2017 in Diffa.
113 The most recent attack in the region was on 21 October 2017 (see Table 1).
114 The United States, Germany, and Italy also maintain some military forces in Niger.
115 Interview with a French military officer involved in Operation Barkhane, Paris, January 2016.
116 Interview with several members of the Tuareg community based in Agadez and Ubari, Agadez, January 2016
117 According to Hussein El Koni, 'le peuple touareg accuse la France de soutenir les Toubous, ces forces extérieures qui nous attaquent' (Bobin, 2015).
118 Interviews with several sources including regional authorities from Agadez, Agadez, January 2016.
119 Interview with a reporter from Agadez, Agadez, January 2016.
120 Interview with several members of Nigerien civil society and former Tuareg rebels, Niamey, 2016–17 and Agadez, January 2016.
121 Of a sample of 20 soldiers interviewed, 17 were unfavourable to the presence of French troops in Tillaberi. For more details on the reasons for this hostility, see Berghezan (2016).
122 The soldier also complained about the lack of French air strikes during overflights after attacks on the western front. Author interview with a Nigerien officer, Niamey, June 2017.
123 Interview with a former fighter of the MNJ, Agadez, January 2016.
124 Prime Minister Bazoum had a meeting with the heads of *comités de vigilance* of the Department of Torodi in May 2017 (Renaissance Tv, 2017).
125 See for example RFI (2015a).
126 Interviews with a representative of the Governorate and a representative of the CNDDH, Diffa, November 2016.
127 Interview with a representative of the Governorate, Diffa, November 2016.
128 See for example RFI (2016d).
129 Interview with a security force commander, Diffa, November 2016; interview with a representative of the Governorate, Diffa, November 2016.

130 Interview with a representative of the Governorate, Diffa, November 2016. Incidents with Nigerian vigilantes on Nigerien territory pushed the authorities to ban civilians from carrying weapons and set up roadblocks (ICG, 2017a, p. 9).
131 Interview with a security force commander, Diffa, November 2016.
132 Interview with a representative of the Governorate, Diffa, November 2016.
133 Interview with member of the CNDDH, Diffa, November 2016.
134 Interview with a diplomatic source, Niamey, November 2016.
135 Note: it is not clear how many of these are actually operational. Email exchange with Nigerien researcher working on the private security sector, January 2017.
136 See France Diplomatie (n.d.) and United Kingdom (n.d.).
137 Interview with a diplomatic source, Niamey, November 2016.
138 Interview with judiciary source, Niamey, November 2016; Grégoire (2015, p. 5).
139 Interviews with civilian authorities, Agadez, November 2016.
140 Interview with gold prospector, Agadez, November 2016; interview with senior member of the military, Agadez, November 2016.
141 Interview with a representative of the regional council, 2016.
142 Exchange with IOM representative, Niamey, November 2016.
143 Interview with gold prospector, Agadez, November 2016.
144 Interviews of Small Arms Survey with observers in Agadez, Bilma, and Dirkou, March 2017.
145 Interview with representatives of the National Syndicate of Transporters, Agadez, November 2016.
146 According to OCHA (2017a), there were 34 attacks by armed groups between February 2016 and May 2017 in the regions of Tahoua and Tillaberi.
147 Interview with representative of the Governorate, Diffa, November 2016.
148 This was reduced in 2017 to 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. for pedestrians (OCHA, 2017b).
149 Interview with representative of local Governorate, Diffa, November 2016.

Bibliography

ActuNiger. 2016. 'Drame de Bangui: 18 morts et 43 blessés selon le ministère de l'intérieur.' 2 November.

AFDB (African Development Bank Group). n.d. 'Niger Economic Outlook.' Consulted October 2017.

AFP (Agence France Presse). 2017a. 'Niger: nouvelle reddition de combattants de Boko Haram.' 5 January.

—. 2017b. 'Niger: nouvelle opération contre les "terroristes" venus du Mali.' 17 June.

Africa Times. 2017. 'TASS Report: Russia Plans Military Cooperation Deal with Niger.' 11 August.

Alakhbar. 2016. 'Niger: l'Etat Islamique revendique l'attaque contre la prison de Koutoukalé.' 18 October.

Algérie Patriotique. 2017. 'Sella: "L'Algérie a fermé ses frontières pour préserver la sécurité et la stabilité".' 28 April.

Anders, Holger. 2015. 'Expanding Arsenals: Insurgent Arms in Northern Mali.' In Small Arms Survey. *Small Arms Survey 2015: Weapons and the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ANI (Agence Nouakchott d'Information). 2018. '(Islamic State) claimed responsibility for attacks targeting US and French forces in Niger and Mali'. (In Arabic). 12 January.

BBC. 2017. 'Le Niger autorise les USA à armer leurs drones.' 5 November.

Belgian MoD (Ministry of Defence). 2017. 'La Défense présente ses opérations 2017.' 17 January.

Berghezan, Georges. 2016. 'Militaires occidentaux au Niger: présence contestée, utilité à démontrer.' Note d'analyse. 7 November. Brussels: Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité (GRIP).

Bobin, Frédéric. 2015. 'Selon les Touaregs libyens, la France joue un "rôle trouble" au Sahel.' Le Monde. 16 September.

—. 2017. 'Niger: "Nos armées n'ont pas encore convaincu" dans la lutte contre les djihadistes.' Le Monde. 16 September.

Boisbouvier, Christophe. 2017. 'Mohamed Bazoum: la plupart des repentis de Boko Haram sont sincères.' 19 October.

Brewster, Murray. 2017. 'Canada's Special Forces Hand Over Niger Training Mission to Quebec-based troops.' CBC News. 9 March.

CAR (Conflict Armament Research). 2015. 'Non-state Armed Groups in the Central African Republic.' January.

—. 2016. 'Investigating Cross-Border Weapon Transfers in the Sahel.' November.
CNCCAI (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et de Contrôle des Armes Illicites). 2014. 'Bilan d'activités 2011–2014.' Unpublished document. 10 March.
Cogné, Gaël. 2017. 'Dans l'est du Niger, un programme d'amnistie qui divise.' Libération. 8 February.
de Tessières, Savannah. 2017. *Measuring Illicit Arms Flows in Niger*. Briefing Paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. (Also available in French.)
DICON (Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria). 2017. 'Brief History.'
Etienne, Margaux. 2017. Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'Ouest. Note d'analyse. 11 July. Brussels: GRIP.
Faivre, Agnès. 2017. 'Lutte contre le terrorisme: le Sahel se lève.' 11 February.
Faul, Michelle. 2016. 'Nigerian Military: Some Officers Selling Arms to Boko Haram.' Associated Press. 4 September.
France Diplomatie. n.d. 'Niger'. Consulted October 2017.
—. 2017. 'Niger—Attaque terroriste.' 1 January.
France 24. 2015. 'Sahel: un chef d'Al-Mourabitoune prête allégeance à l'organisation de l'État islamique.' 15 May.
Gendarmerie nationale. 2015. Rapport annuel des statistiques de la Gendarmerie nationale—année 2014.
—. 2016a. Rapport annuel des statistiques de la Gendarmerie nationale—année 2015.
—. 2016b. 'Situation saisies armes et munitions année 2016 (janvier à octobre).' Unpublished document.
—. 2016c. 'Etat mensuel des attaques à main armée par Légion (janvier à septembre 2016).' Unpublished document.
Göpfert, Mirco. 2012. 'Security in Niamey: an Anthropological Perspective on Policing and an Act of Terrorism in Niger.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 50, No. 1, pp. 53–74.
Grégoire, Emmanuel. 2015. 'Dangers extérieurs, dangers intérieurs: le Niger face au radicalisme islamique.' Echogeo. April.
— and Laurent Gagnol. 2017. 'Ruées vers l'or au Sahara: l'orpaillage dans le désert du Ténéré et le Massif de l'Aïr.' Echogeo. May.
Guichaoua, Yvan. 2016. 'Mali-Niger: une frontière entre conflits communautaires, rébellion et jihad.' Le Monde. 20 June.
— and Matthieu Pellerin. 2017. Faire la paix et construire l'Etat: les relations entre pouvoir et périphéries sahéliennes au Niger et au Mali. Paris: Institut de recherche stratégique de l'École militaire.
ICC (International Criminal Court). 2016. Decision on the Confirmation of the Charges Against Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi. ICC-01/12-01/15 of 24 March.
ICG (International Crisis Group). 2017a. Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram.
—. 2017b. 'Le Niger face à Boko Haram: au-delà de la contre-insurrection.' Report No. 245/Africa. 27 February.
IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2016. Communautés transfrontalières au Sahel, enjeux économiques et défis sécuritaires. Niamey: IOM.
ISS (Institute for Security Studies). 2016. Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. No. 19. September.

Jihadology. 2017. 'New Video Message from The Islamic State: "The Raid of Niger: Coverage of the Liberation of the Nigerien Military Training Camp in the Bosso Area – Wilāyat Gharb Ifrīqīyyah".' 6 July.
Jeune Afrique. 2016. 'Entrepreunariat: Yacine Hassane Diallo, l'expert de la sécurité.' 22 September.
Jeune Afrique/AFP. 2016a. 'Niger: un nouveau groupe rebelle menace de prendre les armes.' 8 September.
—. 2016b. 'Niger: l'Allemagne va construire une base militaire en appui à la MINUSMA au Mali.' 5 October.
Journal du Mali. 2017. 'Niger: L'état islamique au Sahel revendique l'attaque contre l'armée nigérienne.' 23 February.
King, Benjamin. 2015. *From Replica to Real: An Introduction to Firearms Conversions*. Issue Brief No. 10. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. February.
Lagneau, Laurent. 2015. 'La Force Barkhane a mené une opération aéroportée dans le nord du Niger.' 16 Avril.
—. 2016. 'Plus de 12.000 heures de vol au compteur des trois drones Reaper de l'armée de l'Air. 4 Opex360.com. 8 December.
—. 2017a. 'La France renforce son soutien militaire au Niger.' Opex360.com. 26 February.
— . 2017b. 'Les forces françaises ont neutralisé une vingtaine de jihadistes au Mali.' Opex360.com. 1 May.
—. 2017c. 'Les forces françaises ont mis hors de combat une vingtaine de jihadistes lors de l'opération Dague.' Opex360.com. 2 June.
Larcher, Laurent. 2015. 'Madama, poste avancé de l'armée française au Niger.' La Croix. 4 January.
Le Monde. 2013. 'Les quatre otages enlevés au Niger libérés.' 29 October.
— . 2015. 'Niger: au moins 74 morts dans une attaque menée par Boko Haram.' 29 April.
—. 2017. 'Le Niger frappé par une attaque ''terroriste''.' 5 October.
Le Monde/AFP. 2013. 'Niger: deux gardiens de prison tués par des terroristes à Niamey.' 2 June.
Macé, Célian. 2017. 'Cette vidéo est censée situer le Sahel sur la carte du jihad global.' Libération. 5 March.
MaliActu. 2016. 'Mali: Les pertes de la MINUSMA en chiffres: Chronologie d'une mission meurtrière.' 2 June.
Mémier, Marc. 2017. 'AQMI et Al-Murabitoun: Le Djihad sahélien réunifié?' Etudes de l'IFRI. Janvier.
MENASTREAM. 2017. '#Niger-#BREAKING: #JNIM claims July 5 attack against NE army in #Midal, killing several, 4 technicals + arms seized & destroying barracks'. Twitter. 9 July.
Morgan, Wesley. 2017. 'Top U.S. general cites ISIS affiliates in Niger attack.' Politico. 23 October.
MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali). 2014. 'Violent tribal clash ivo TAMALELT in MALI–NIGER border zone on 26 July.' 31 July.
Muratet, Christine. 2014. 'Mali: qui sont les nouveaux chefs des katibas jihadistes?' 14 May.
Nako, Madjiasra and Abdoulaye Massalaki. 2015. 'Suspected Boko Haram Fighters Launch Four Strikes on Lake Chad Area.' 23 December.
Nigerien Armed Forces. 2012. 'Security Brief.'
—. 2016. 'Situation des armes saisies.' Unpublished document. 15 November.
Nigerien MoD (Ministry of Defence). 2016. 'Situation des armes saisies.' 15 November.
—. 2017. 'Communiqué du Ministère de la défense.' 21 October.
Nigerien Ministry of Finance. 2016. 'Le budget citoyen du Niger: 1ère rectification de la loi des finances pour l'année budgétaire 2016.' Direction générale du budget. Juillet.

Niger Inter. 2017. 'Diffa: deux soldats tués et sept blessés dans une attaque de Boko Haram dans la commune de Gueskerou.' 21 January.
OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). 2015. 'OCHA Niger Flash Update No 1—Gueskerou—Diffa, 19 June 2015.' 19 June.
—. 2016. 'Diffa: victimes civiles liées aux attaques de Boko Haram—6 février 2015 au 30 septembre 2016.'
—. 2017a. 'Niger: aperçu sur la situation humanitaire et sécuritaire dans les régions de Tahoua et Tillabery.' May 2017.
—. 2017b. 'Chronologie des événements en 2017 (au 6 juin 2017).'
—. 2017c. 'Niger: aperçu sur la situation humanitaire et sécuritaire dans les régions de Tahoua et Tillabery.' 20 October.
—. 2017d. Niger-Diffa: Key facts and figures (December 2016).
Pellerin, Mathieu. 2017a. *Beyond the 'Wild West', The Gold Rush in Northern Niger*. SANA Briefing Paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.
—. 2017b. *Operation Barkhane*. Unpublished background paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.
Police nationale. 2014. 'Les statistiques de constatations semestrielles 2014.' Unpublished document.
—. 2015. 'Les statistiques de constatations semestrielles 2015.' Unpublished document.
Renaissance Tv. 2017. 'Réunion d'échanges avec les responsables des comités des vigilances du département de Torodi.' Google+. Posted 27 May.
République du Niger. 2011. 'Le Niger en chiffres 2011.' November. Institut national de la statistique.
—. 2015. Loi 2015-36 du 26 mai 2015 relative au trafic illicite de migrants.
Reuters. 2017a. 'Niger forces kill 57 members of Boko Haram: defense ministry.' 10 April.
—. 2017b. 'G5 Sahel launches military operation in African scrublands.' 2 November.
RFI (Radio France Internationale). 2013. 'Niger: l'attaque de Niamey a été menée par des islamistes de Boko Haram.' 1 June.
—. 2015a. 'Niger: Boko Haram attaque les villes frontalières de Bosso et Diffa.' 6 February.
—. 2015b. 'Niger: attaques meurtrières de Boko Haram dans des villages isolés.' 19 June.
—. 2015c. 'Niger: attaque attribuée à Boko Haram dans la zone de Diffa.' 21 October.
—. 2016a. 'Niger: hommage au chef d'escadron tué à Bosso par des kamikazes.' 19 March.
—. 2016b. 'Niger: nouvelle attaque meurtrière de Boko Haram dans la région de Diffa.' 3 June.
—. 2016c. 'Attaques de camps de déplacés par Boko Haram: grande inquiétude des humanitaires.' 18 June.
—. 2016d. 'Niger: cinq morts dans une attaque de Boko Haram a l'est du pays.' 4 September.
—. 2016e. 'Niger: l'armée victime d'une attaque jihadiste meurtrière à Tazalit.' 7 October.
—. 2016f. 'Mali: le groupe Etat islamique officialise sa présence au Sahel.' 31 October.
—. 2016g. 'Niger: réunion d'urgence pour évoquer l'insécurité dans le nord du pays.' 1 November.
—. 2016h. 'Attaque de Bani Bangou au Niger: une démonstration de force du groupe EI?' 9 November.
—. 2017a. 'Niger: Boko Haram attaque une position de l'armée sur les bords du lac Tchad.' 1 January.
—. 2017b. 'Niger: attaque meurtrière contre des gendarmes dans la région de Tillabéri.' 6 March.
—. 2017c. 'Attaque meurtrière contre l'armée nigérienne près de la frontière malienne.' 1 June.
—. 2017d. 'Niger: une attaque attribuée à Boko Haram dans la région de Diffa.' 3 July.
—. 2017e. 'Niger: la coalition terroriste d'Iyad Ag Ghali revendique l'attaque de Midal.' 10 July.
—. 2017f. 'Boko Haram: premières condamnations dans le procès de masse au Niger.' 10 March.

—. 2017g. 'Niger: la France va déployer un groupe d'appui opérationnel dans la région de Tillaberi.' 26 February.
—. 2017h. 'Niger: les autorités travaillent à la réinsertion des repentis de Boko Haram.' 18 October.
—.2017i. 'Niger: nouvelle attaque terroriste contre le camp de la gendarmerie d'Ayorou.' 21 October.
Romandie/AFP. 2015. 'Attaque de Boko Haram au Niger: 7 soldats nigériens et 15 islamistes tués.' 21 February.
Sahelien. 2017. 'Niger: trois morts dans l'attaque d'un poste de police dans la région de Tillabéri.' 30 May.
Site Intelligence Group. 2016. 'IS' Al-Naba newspaper Interviews West Africa "Governor" Abu Musab Al-Barnawi.' 3 August.
Small Arms Survey. n.d. Interactive maps and charts of armed violence indicators.
Studio Tamani. 2016. 'Attaque contre un camp de réfugiés maliens au Niger.' 8 October.
TamTam Info. 2013. 'Double attentat au Niger: le groupe djihadiste Mujao revendique les attaques.' 23 May.
—. 2017. 'Un deuil national de 72 heures décrété au Niger.' 27 February.
Tanimoune, Ibrahim. 2017. '#Niger La police d'Agadez viens d'appréhender un camion venant de la Libye pour le Nigeria avec une cargaison de 42 armes + 200 munitions. Bravo'. 17 December.
Thurston, Alex. 2011. 'AQIM, Kidnapping, and Murder: A Brief History.' The Christian Science Monitor. 19 January.
Tubiana Jérôme, and Claudio Gramizzi. 2017. *Tubu Trouble: State and Statelessness in the Chad–Sudan–Libya Triangle*. Working Paper. Small Arms Survey and Conflict Armament Research.
—. Forthcoming. *Lost in TransNation: Tubu and Other Armed Groups and Smugglers on Libya's Southern Borders*. Report. Small Arms Survey and Conflict Armament Research.
UN News Center. 2014. 'Mali: neuf casques bleus nigériens tués dans une attaque près de Gao.' 3 October.
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2016. *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*. New York: UNDP.
United Kingdom. n.d. 'Niger'. Consulted October 2017.
University of Diffa. 2016. Mission technique d'investigation dans un contexte de mésentente naissante entre les différentes communautés vivant dans le lit du lac Tchad et le long de la Komadougou Yobe. Diffa: University of Diffa, Peace and Development Section.
UNSC (United Nations Security Council). n.d. Sanctions List Materials.
—. 2012. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2012/163 of 20 March.
—. 2013. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2013/99* of 9 March.
—. 2014. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2014/106 of 19 February.
—. 2015. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2015/128 of 23 February.
—. 2016. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2016/209 of 9 March.
—. 2017a. Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Libya Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2017/466 of 1 June.

—. 2017b. Nineteenth Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team Submitted Pursuant to Resolution 2253 (2015) Concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities. S/2017/35 of 13 January.
—. 2017c. Resolution 2359 (2017). S/RES/2359 of 21 June.
US Department of Defense. 2017. 'Africom Announces Death of the 4th Service Member in Niger Attack.' 6 October.
Xinhua. 2017. 'Lutte contre le terrorisme: le Niger, le Burkina Faso et le Mali décident de créer une force mixte de sécurité.' 24 January.