



## Niger Ends Military Relationship With US, Says US Presence No Longer Justified

### Description

**US : Niger announced on Saturday that it was suspending military cooperation with the US and that the US presence in the country was no longer justified, signaling Washington will have to withdraw its troops.**

Col. Maj. Amadou Abdramane, spokesman for the military-led government that's been in power since last year's coup, made the announcement after a US delegation visited Niger. He said the US officials did not show respect for Niger's sovereignty.

"Niger regrets the intention of the American delegation to deny the sovereign Nigerien people the right to choose their partners and types of partnerships capable of truly helping them fight against terrorism," Abdramane said.

The US has a major drone base in Niger, known as Air Base 201, which it uses as a hub for operations in West Africa. Before former President Mahamoud Bazoum was taken out of power last July, the US had about 1,100 troops in Niger. As of December, the US has 648 troops stationed in the country.

The US formally declared the ouster of Bazoum a coup, which requires the suspension of aid, but was looking for ways to cooperate with the junta to maintain its military presence.

However, there are signs the US was preparing for the possibility of getting kicked out. The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this year that the US was in talks with other West African states to base drones on their territory, including Benin, the Ivory Coast, and Ghana.

Niger's post-coup government, known as the National [Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland](#) (CNSP), expelled France, Niger's former colonial ruler, shortly after taking power. France completed its withdrawal of about 1,500 troops in December.

Both France and the US expressed support for a military intervention led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reinstate Bazoum. But ECOWAS backed down on its threat, and last month, the bloc lifted harsh sanctions it [imposed](#) on Niger in the wake of the coup.

**by Dave DeCamp**

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