

Enhancing Security Sector Accountability in Niger



Context

Due to its landlocked location at the heart of the Sahel, the Republic of Niger serves as a strategic fulcrum for peace in a regional context marked by insecurity. Increasing cross-border attacks by transnational violent extremist groups at the borders with Burkina Faso and Mali (Tillabery and Tahoua regions) and with Nigeria (Diffa region) have forced Niger's government to redirect resources from its ambitious development agenda to the defence and security forces (DSF).

The decade-long evolution towards greater democracy has established the consolidation of good governance in Niger as a strategic necessity for stability in the Sahel. In this context, preventing and countering violent extremism, fighting corruption, and strengthening effectiveness and accountability of the security sector were set as political priorities by Mohamed Bazoum's government.

In recent years, the national Renaissance Development Programmes led to the adoption of several security sector public policies and strategies. As a sign of political commitment, the Centre for National Strategic and Security Studies (CNESS)

was commissioned to oversee the development of Niger's National Security Policy.

Thanks to strong national leadership and important international support, state security institutions' accountability was enhanced through the implementation of stronger internal and external oversight mechanisms. Today, a wide range of state and non-state actors contribute to overseeing security provision, including the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces and the National Gendarmerie (IGAGN) and the General Inspectorate of Security Services (IGSS), as well as the National Assembly, the Mediator of the Republic, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), the High Authority for the Fight against Corruption and Related Offences (HALCIA), civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media.

Whilst the state maintains good institutional, political, and social stability, significant challenges remain to achieve greater human security and socio-economic development. DCAF is proud to support its Nigerien partners and in increasing the accountability of their security sector.



DCAF in Niger

DCAF is a foundation under Swiss law and a member state-based organisation which seeks to enable lasting peace and sustainable development by contributing to improved security for states and its people.

The Republic of Niger is a member of DCAF's Foundation Council, in which our Sub-Saharan Division (SSAD) has been engaged since 2014 to help reshape the institutional framework for democratic oversight of the security sector. Since 2017, we have been implementing a large-scale

national programme, funded by Germany, aimed at improving security for the state and its population, within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Since 2019, DCAF is also implementing a regional project **Enhancing Security Sector Governance (SSG) in the Sahel**, funded by Denmark and Norway, with cross-cutting activities in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. DCAF receives a core contribution from the Swiss Confederation. A permanent DCAF office was established in Niamey in 2019.

VISION	An accountable and effective Nigerien security sector based on the Rule of Law provides human and national security and creates an environment conducive to sustainable peace and development.			
MISSION	To assist Nigerien partners & international actors supporting them to improve the accountability of their security sector through nationally owned, inclusive, and participatory reforms based on international norms & good practices (rule of law, human rights, gender equality).			
OBJECTIVES	In Niger, DCAF aims to:	Contribute to the creation of a political, strategic and legal framework conducive to enhanced control and oversight of the security sector.	Increase confidence and trust by the population in governmental institutions.	Improve accountability, effectiveness and professionalism of security institutions.
STRATEGY	DCAF's engagement contributes to strengthening democratic processes, by:	Promoting the strengthening of a political, strategic and legal framework aligned with regional good practices and good governance principles.	Ensuring its institutions are subject to oversight by the civil society, independent institutions, and the legislative and executive powers.	Accompanying security sector institutions towards greater compliance with the principles of good governance with internal procedures, codes of conduct, and human rights principles.

Approach and activities

To achieve our three objectives, the following measures are implemented, in line with DCAF's fields of intervention:



Providing technical expertise to nationally led SSG/R processes.



Building capacity for state and non-state actors.



Publishing research and knowledge products.



Promoting internationally recommended good governance practices.



Advising on security sector-related legal & policy questions.

› OBJECTIVE 1:

Contribute to the creation of a legal and strategic framework conducive to enhanced control and oversight of the security sector.

› APPROACH:

Promoting the strengthening of a political, strategic and legal framework aligned with regional good practices and good governance principles.

› ACTIVITIES:

- » Research, revision and compilation of the legal framework that defines the roles and responsibilities of security and defence forces.
- » Make the security and defence legal framework accessible to the public, defence forces and key security sector governance actors.
- » Support the drafting and revision of laws related to the security and defence sector.
- » Provide the CNESS with knowledge and methodology to integrate international and regional standards of security governance into the National Security Policy (non-discrimination, respect for human rights, gender equality).
- » Provide members of the National Assembly's Defence and Security Committee (CDS) with enhanced capacity on laws and policies to ensure full respect of the principles of security sector governance (human rights, gender equality, parliamentary oversight of security institutions).

› OBJECTIVE 2:

Increase confidence and trust by the population in governmental institutions.

› APPROACH:

Ensuring its institutions are subject to oversight by the civil society, independent institutions, and the legislative and executive powers.

› ACTIVITIES:

- » Sensitize and strengthen the capacity of CSOs and the media on the roles and responsibilities of the SDF and on external oversight.
- » Support government institutions (Mediator of the Republic, HACP,...) in the implementation of dialogue fora and information sharing with SDF and communities on local security and accountability mechanisms.
- » Strengthen security institutions' communication techniques to enhance transparency towards local communities and authorities.

› OBJECTIVE 3:

Improve accountability, effectiveness and professionalism of security institutions.

› APPROACH:

Accompanying security sector institutions towards greater compliance with the principles of good governance with internal procedures, codes of conduct, and human rights principles.

› ACTIVITIES:

- » Provide capacity building to the IGAGN and the IGSS on risk management and internal control.
- » Support the development of methodological tools and manuals are developed to standardize IGAGN and IGSS' procedures and reporting methodology.
- » Provide the National Gendarmerie with knowledge to initiate reforms to modernize training with constant awareness of international human rights principles and norms
- » Support the National Police Academy in the implementation of a competency-based approach and on training on police integrity and the fight against sexual harassment
- » Enhance state's institutions skills and capacity in terms of resource management.



Key achievements

DCAF's intervention in Niger have laid the essential groundwork to enable national stakeholders to contribute and implement SSG/R that is holistic, coherent, and inclusive. To date, key milestones reached are as follows:

From 2019 to 2020, DCAF supported the research, revision and compilation of the security sector legal framework. Today, all legal texts and regulations are publicly available to the public, DSF and security sector governance actors on a dedicated website. A year after its release, more than 1700 visitors had accessed the website. Building on this achievement, DCAF and national partners have engaged in a similar initiative focusing on the defence sector legal framework, aiming to provide a new tool to support the work of internal and external oversight actors.

Since 2017, DCAF has been providing support to the National Assembly's Defence and Security Committee (DSC). To ensure the sustainability of achieved outcomes after the 2020 general elections, DCAF successfully supported knowledge and lessons learned transfer between former and new members of the Committee. As a result, DCAF and the DSC were able to conduct a self-assessment which resulted in the development and adoption of a five-year action plan (2021-2025) with key parliamentary oversight priorities.

As part of its mandate to resolve tensions between the administration and the population, the Mediator of the Republic of Niger was supported by DCAF to produce a mapping of the complaint mechanisms in the event of abuse or misconduct by DSF. This document is available to all citizens who are either afraid or unaware of the legal instruments that exist and through which they can bring the violation of their rights to the attention of a public authority.

DCAF - Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance is committed to making people more secure through accountable and effective security and justice. We help national and international entities to deliver security that respects human rights, upholds the rule of law, and is democratically controlled, by:



Helping to improve the way national security sectors are governed



Guiding the development of sound, sustainable security governance policies



Promoting locally owned reforms that are inclusive, participatory, and gender responsive

DCAF's engagement consists of:



Providing technical expertise to nationally led SSG/R processes



Capacity building for state and non-state actors



Publishing research and knowledge products



Promoting internationally recommended good governance practices



Advising on security sector-related legal and policy questions

DCAF

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