

NEWSLETTER #1

NIGERWOMEN GIRLS PEACE

October 03, 2023



A monthly newsletter to highlight the actions of women in Niger in the face of the crisis.

The impact of the crisis on women and girls as of today

The socio-political crisis in Niger has come at a time when the country was already facing a **multiple underdevelopment, security and climate crisis**. Before the crisis (2000), Niger's **gender inequality** index was 0.642 (raking 154 out of 162 countries). The level of **extreme poverty** stood at 41.8% in 2021, i.e. 10 million people, the majority of them women and girls. This **feminization of poverty** was fueled by several factors: 65% of **women aged 20-24 married before 18** in 2021; 29% (38.2% among women and 16.3% among men) overall **prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV)** in the course of life; **maternal mortality** at 520 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015 ; **school completion rates reflecting problematic access to and retention in school**, particularly in secondary school with 20.4% for boys and 14.4% for girls (18.5% overall) and in high school, 7.3% overall and 5.3% for girls. The current crisis and ECOWAS sanctions will further fragilize the situation of women and children, and of the population. **Achievements such as the quota law, which enabled more than 30% of women to be elected to parliament, have not been implemented** in recent CNSP appointments, raising the prospect of setbacks for the rights of women and girls. **A perception survey has been launched to further analyze the situation of women and girls** and will be used to produce a Gender alert; to date the survey has reached 13,069 people, including 3,722 women and girls.

The socio-political crisis in Niger following the coup d'état of July 26, 2023, came at a time when the country was already facing a serious security and climatic crisis affecting its 26 million inhabitants, 50.3% of whom are women. In this situation of instability and economic hardship, protecting civilians and ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most in Niger, particularly women and children, is of the utmost importance. Determined to be agents of change, peace and mediation, women and girls and their organizations have mobilized since the beginning of the crisis to defend their rights and gains in terms of gender and women's empowerment at all levels. This monthly newsletter informs the national and international community about the initiatives taken by women since the start of the crisis in Niger to safeguard and promote the rights of women and girls.



Feminine Dialogue: women are mobilizing to defend their rights.

From September 20 to 22, 2023, more than 30 women's organizations from Niger's 8 regions, more than 100 participants, came together under the banner of Movement for the Respect of Women's Rights in Niger (MRDFN) to organize a [Feminine Dialogue](#). They called on the Government and the National Council for the Security of the Homeland (CNSP) to **preserve their rights and those of their children** and reiterated their **commitment to making their contributions to the transition process and the management of public affairs**. They called on **ECOWAS and political, traditional, and religious authorities to continue to favor dialogue and mediation** to spare the population.



Women's Dialogue: Under the leadership of ONG FAD in synergy with more than 30 women's CSOs in Niger. 20-22 September 2023

Women and their organizations in the early hours of the crisis: the commitment of 'Saraounia'

Two weeks after the coup d'état and the introductions of ECOWAS/UEMOA sanctions, women in Niger mobilized for their rights through several initiatives, including: (i) [The Call to Action](#) of August 10, published by thirty women's organizations and the NGO Femmes, Action et Développement, all committed to defending the rights of women and children (ii) [Niger Women Leaders' declaration](#) published on August 11. While deploring the occurrence of a Coup d'Etat in the country, the majority of women called on political actors to prioritize the interests of the people. **Women also called on UEMOA, ECOWAS and the international community to lift the sanctions, advocate for the respect of women's rights.**



Declaration of women CSOs of Niger - Ms Kiari Falmata Sountalma (Member of the Nigerien Civil Society Women's Association)

The organizations of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN): women prepare and mobilize to defend their rights

The organizations of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) **have reaffirmed their support to the women of Niger and their commitment to advocating to West Africa's political, religious, and traditional authorities for the lifting of sanctions and the immediate implementation of measures to reduce the suffering of communities, of women and children**. Advocacy missions have been initiated with this objective, with the support of the FEMWISE network. Emna SOHLOBI from AWLN Tunisia is committed to supporting the campaign and initiatives for the promotion and protection of women and girls.



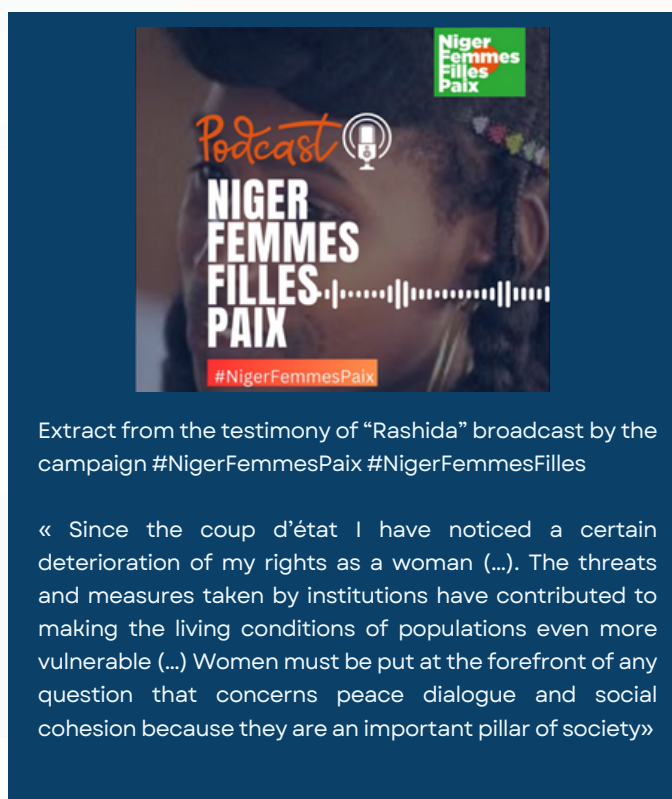
Virtual forum organized by the UN Women regional office on September 18, 2023 on the theme "Intensifying actions to strengthen the contributions of African women leaders to the promotion of sustainable peace and effective governance in the Sahel region".

Civil society organizations are encouraged to access funding to support women's advocacy.

The Women's Fund for Peace and Humanitarian action was presented to forty organizations on August 23. **Fourteen of them are in the process of formalizing advocacy projects on women's leadership and participation in decision-making bodies** to promote the establishment of lasting and inclusive peace.

Launch of the digital campaign « NigerWomenGirlsPeace »

Launched on September 4, this campaign amplifies the voices of women and girls and positions them as architects of peace and lasting change in Niger. They make their voices heard through podcasts, messages and videos on the likely negative impact of protracted crises on their rights. **Their call for safeguarding these rights, including the protection of women and girls against all forms of violence, and for action in favor of vulnerable groups**, underlines the urgency of the situation for civilians. The campaign has reached more than 18,000 people (4,000 accounts via Facebook and more than 14,000 message impressions via Twitter).



Extract from the testimony of "Rashida" broadcast by the campaign #NigerFemmesPaix #NigerFemmesFilles

« Since the coup d'état I have noticed a certain deterioration of my rights as a woman (...). The threats and measures taken by institutions have contributed to making the living conditions of populations even more vulnerable (...) Women must be put at the forefront of any question that concerns peace dialogue and social cohesion because they are an important pillar of society»

Gender Nexus: partners harmonize their interventions in favor of women and girls.

Learning from the impact of crises on women and children, more than 30 partners (CSOs and the United Nations) came together to **harmonize humanitarian and development interventions and seek synergies to maximize their impact**. The Gender in Humanitarian Action working group organized training on September 14 on the **centrality of protection in humanitarian action** which provided tools for 45 participants from different humanitarian clusters (5 United Nations agencies, 8 international NGOs, 6 national NGOs and 2 ministries) to consider gender as a central concept in their interventions.

Key messages from women in Niger

- **Women must be at the center of any mediation effort being pursued.** They must be meaningfully included and consulted so that the interests of women and girls are represented in line with the Women Peace and Security Agenda, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
- **The impact of economic and military sanctions on women and girls must be assessed before such sanctions are actioned.** When international and regional actors adopt sanctions, they should include exemptions to ensure women and girls continue to have access to programs and humanitarian assistance including education, healthcare such as reproductive, ante-natal and child health programs, services for GBV survivors, humanitarian assistance, and livelihood projects.
- **Women's full participation in political processes is a prerequisite for lasting peace and democracy.** Before the coup women's participation in parliament stood at 30.72%. With the national assembly and public institutions now dissolved, implementation of progressive provisions such as the quota law on women's representation in parliament is uncertain.
- **As we know from other crises, any increase in conflict, crisis and displacement will adversely affect women and children.** To date there are 4.3 million people in Niger in need of humanitarian assistance, the vast majority of whom are women and children. It is vital that humanitarian services and programming are based on a strong gender analysis that identifies these aspects and responds appropriately.
- **The cessation of funding for the programs of several development partners in Niger.** Most of these programs are around vital services for women and girls, such as education, health, and especially gender-based violence. It is the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, who suffer most when such services are halted. Alternative viable mechanisms for service delivery must be found to ensure continued access. There is a need for close monitoring of GBV in partnership with civil society.

The women, girls and their networks/organizations would like to thank all those who are working for their effective participation in lasting peace and security in Niger.

"Mouvement pour le Respect des Droits des Femmes du Niger (MRDFN) FAD; APAC-NIGER; AWLIN-NIGER; MRDFN; CONGAFEN; Fédération KASSAI; 2MINVEST; REFEP; Réseau des OSCs du Bassin de Lac Tchad; Association des Femmes Juristes du Niger; Associations des Jeunes Filles Leaders; SOS FEVVF; ONG TANADI; ONG DIMOL and all other committed organizations".