



**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# **DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGER**

**Human rights violations since 26 July 2023  
and how you can help fight against them**

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First published in 2025

by Amnesty International Ltd  
Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW, UK

**Index: AFR 43/9138/2025**

**Original language: English**

[amnesty.org](http://amnesty.org)

*Cover illustration: A mobilisation in Niamey, Niger.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Since the military coup on 26 July 2023, Niger has been plunged into a deep human rights crisis. Political opposition has been silenced, journalists have been arrested, and civil society organizations have been dismantled. The National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) has used arbitrary detentions, legal repression, and violence to consolidate its power.

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the current human rights situation in Niger, key cases of violations, and the international response. It includes illustrations, timelines, and testimonies to share more accessibly the findings of Amnesty International report “**NIGER: THREATENED AND BROUGHT TO HEEL**”.

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AT A GLANCE

Category	Key issues
Repression of political opposition	Arbitrary detentions, suspension of political parties' activities
Violations of Press Freedom	Media suspensions, journalist arrests, prison sentence for diffamation
Violations of Freedom of Assembly	Violent crackdowns on demonstrations
Legal Repression	Use of military courts, anti-terror laws targeting activists
Crackdown on Civil Society	NGO shutdowns, enforced disappearances

An illustration on the right side of the page. On the left, a soldier in a green uniform with a rifle slung over his shoulder looks towards the right. On the right, a group of people, including men and women, are shown in a faded, grey tone. They appear to be standing in a line or a group, with some looking down or away. The background is dark grey.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

**HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND CIVIC SPACE  
ARE UNDER  
PRESSURE SINCE  
THE 26 JULY 2023  
COUP**

# 1 ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND ABUSES IN DETENTION

## THE ARBITRARY DETENTION OF FORMER PRESIDENT BAZOUM

Former President Mohamed Bazoum and his wife remain detained under harsh conditions. Despite regional court ruling ordering their release, they remain detained, and the military regime has moved to strip Bazoum of his presidential immunity.

In January 2024, their son Salem Mohamed Bazoum was finally freed in a deal brokered by Togo, and his exit out of the country facilitated by Togolese Minister of Foreign Affairs. According to one lawyer, this was done expeditiously.

## THE ARBITRARY DETENTION OF FORMER CABINET MINISTERS

Following the July 2023 coup in Niger, seven former cabinet ministers, including Ibrahim Yacouba, were arrested and detained on charges of “threatening state security.” Yacouba, a former Energy minister, was arrested in January 2024 upon returning to Niger, despite assurances of no charges. Detained in Ouallam prison, he faced accusations of participating

in ECOWAS summits, which were later dismissed, yet his requests for provisional release were repeatedly denied. Amnesty International condemns his detention as arbitrary and politically motivated, calling for his immediate release. As of January 2025, Yacouba and three other former ministers remain detained, despite a court order for their release in July 2024.

## THE ILLEGAL DETENTION OF BEN HAMAYE AND 24 OTHERS

In October 2023, Ben Hamaye, a former advisor and intelligence official under Bazoum, accused of attempting to break him out of detention, was arrested with 24 others including civilians (students).

He was held at the DGDSE (Directorate-General on Documentation and External Security) for several days before being transferred to the gendarmerie in Niamey.

A lawyer representing thirteen of the co-accused in this case described the violent nature of their arrests:

“[My clients] had nothing to do with Abderrahmane [Ben Hamaye]. They were living in a villa rented by President Bazoum in Niamey to accommodate his relatives from the [native] village. Among these residents were civilians and soldiers. The civilians were close relatives of President Bazoum, and among the military were two members of Bazoum’s close security personnel, who were waiting for reassignment after being dismissed following the 26 July coup. They came to live in the house after being removed from their posts at the presidential palace. It was while they were there that the military arrived on 18 October. They were beaten, handcuffed, hooded, insulted, and paraded on national TV. Afterwards, they were sent to the DGDSE.”

National television later broadcast images showing Abderrahmane Ben Hamaye, his lower body covered in blood, with his hands seemingly tied behind his back. According to the General Prosecutor, Ben Hamaye violently resisted arrest and even fired at security agents, seriously wounding one of them. This claim was made during a televised address to inform the public about the case.

Authorities further stated that money and mobile phones were seized from Ben Hamaye’s residence and used as evidence. The General Prosecutor also accused him and several members of the National Guard of providing intelligence to a foreign power.

While Amnesty International cannot verify the charges against the accused, it is clear that their rights were violated, particularly regarding their treatment and detention conditions.

Once in custody at the DGDSE, detainees were subjected to inhumane treatment and held incommunicado, according to their lawyer:

“They suffered degrading and inhuman treatment. Their detention conditions were awful and brutal. All these people had disappeared from the judicial investigation units provided for in the Code of Criminal Procedure. There was no trace, no record of them. We couldn’t find them. It was afterwards that we heard through hearsay that they were held at the DGDSE.”

From 19 October to 2 November 2023, Ben Hamaye and other 24 co-accused were held at the DGDSE premises, which are not legally recognized detention centers under Niger’s Code of Criminal Procedure.

They were interrogated by security agents. While being detained, medical care or legal representation were refused. One lawyer described their struggle to obtain access:

“I requested access to my clients in a letter for which I did not receive a reply. I sent it to the Minister of Defence. I asked him twice but never heard back.”

## 2 ATTACKS AGAINST JOURNALISTIC FREEDOMS

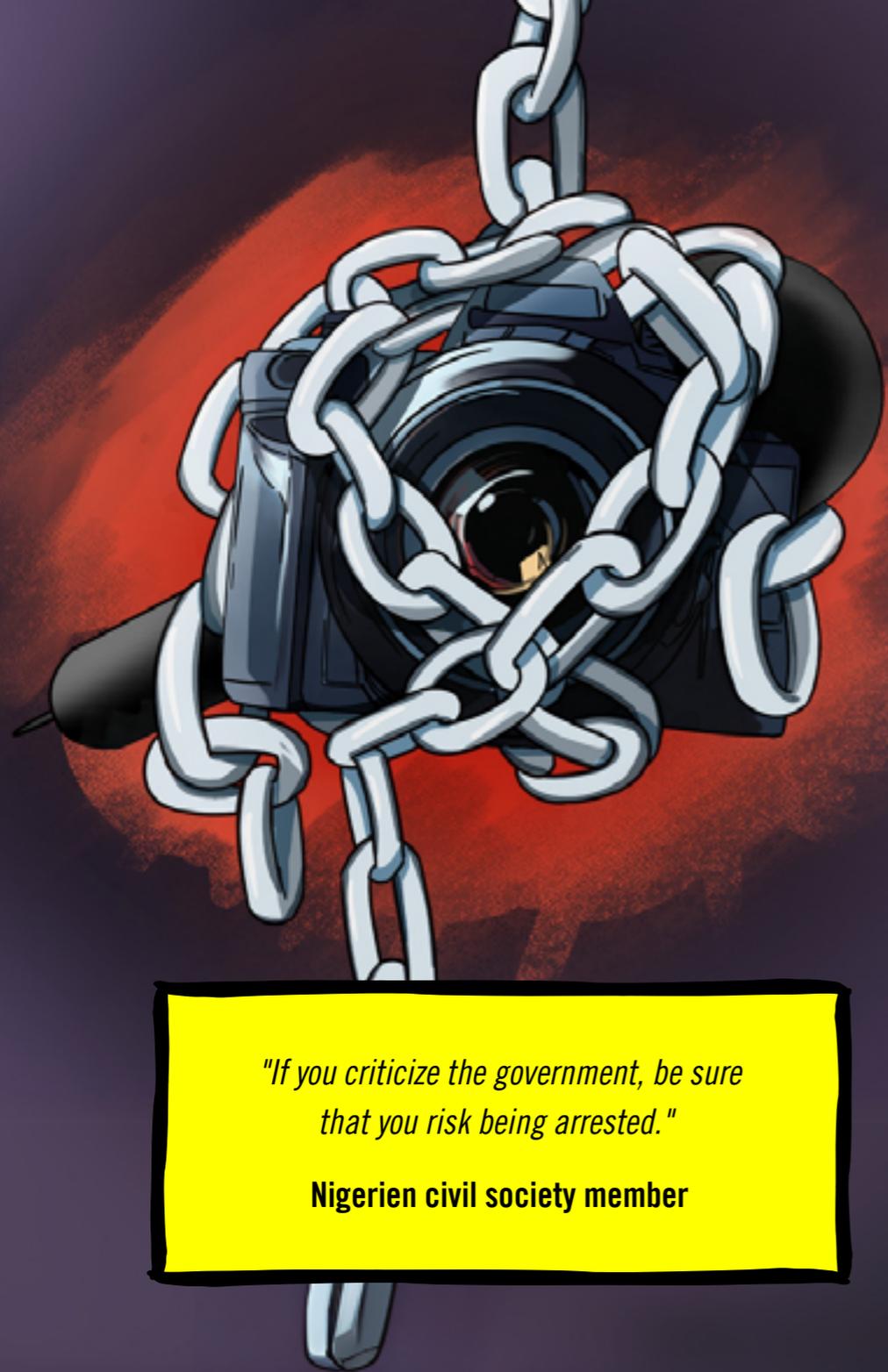
Since 26 July 2023, the authorities have imposed increasing restrictions on media. In August 2023, Radio France International (RFI) and France 24 were suspended for airing criticism of the CNSP. Journalists in Niger reported facing threats from the CNSP and its supporters. In December 2024, the BBC was also suspended for three months.

The Maison de la Presse [Press House], a coalition of 32 media organizations, was divided after the coup, with some supporting the authorities. The authorities suspended its General Assembly, followed by the

dissolution of its board in January 2024.

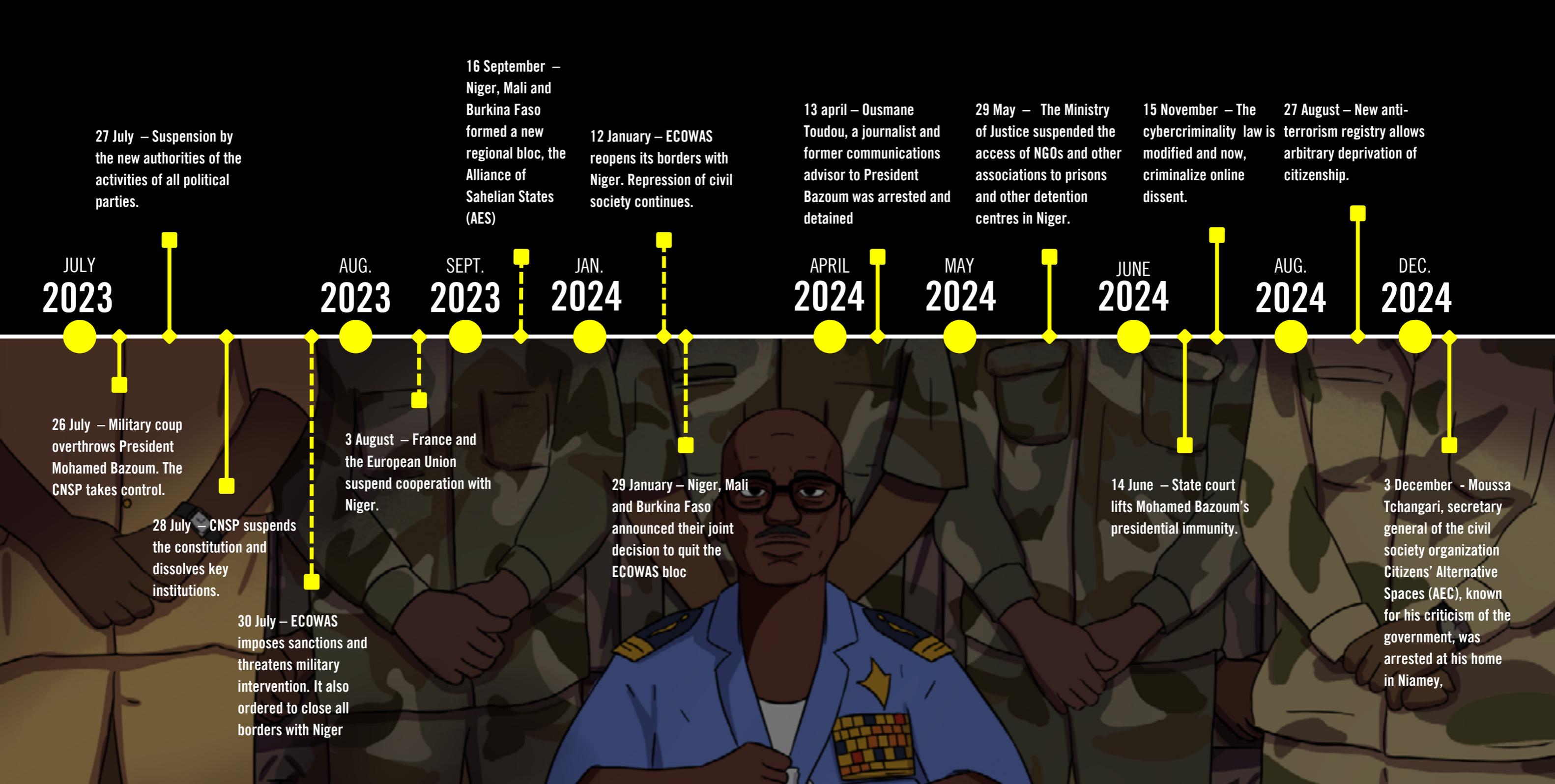
In April 2024, journalists Ousmane Toudou and Soumana Maiga were arrested. Toudou faced charges of “treason,” while Maiga was accused of “threatening national defense.” Maiga was released in July 2024, but Toudou remains detained pending trial.

This crackdown has led to widespread self-censorship among journalists and civil society.



*"If you criticize the government, be sure that you risk being arrested."*

**Nigerien civil society member**



JULY  
2023

27 July – Suspension by the new authorities of the activities of all political parties.

26 July – Military coup overthrows President Mohamed Bazoum. The CNSP takes control.

28 July – CNSP suspends the constitution and dissolves key institutions.

30 July – ECOWAS imposes sanctions and threatens military intervention. It also ordered to close all borders with Niger

AUG.  
2023

3 August – France and the European Union suspend cooperation with Niger.

SEPT.  
2023

16 September – Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso formed a new regional bloc, the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES)

JAN.  
2024

12 January – ECOWAS reopens its borders with Niger. Repression of civil society continues.

29 January – Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso announced their joint decision to quit the ECOWAS bloc

APRIL  
2024

13 April – Ousmane Toudou, a journalist and former communications advisor to President Bazoum was arrested and detained

MAY  
2024

29 May – The Ministry of Justice suspended the access of NGOs and other associations to prisons and other detention centres in Niger.

JUNE  
2024

14 June – State court lifts Mohamed Bazoum's presidential immunity.

15 November – The cybercriminality law is modified and now, criminalize online dissent.

AUG.  
2024

27 August – New anti-terrorism registry allows arbitrary deprivation of citizenship.

DEC.  
2024

3 December – Moussa Tchangari, secretary general of the civil society organization Citizens' Alternative Spaces (AEC), known for his criticism of the government, was arrested at his home in Niamey,

# 3 CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER ATTACK

## THE ARBITRARY DETENTION OF HADIZA\*

In 2023, political activist Hadiza was abducted and detained for five days at the DGDSE over social media posts about Niger's new authorities. Four unidentified men took her from her workplace, hooded her, and brought her to an unknown location. There, she was stripped, searched, and placed in a filthy cell with no washroom.

Interrogators accused her of working for politicians, insulted her, and denied her access to medical care.

\*Hadiza is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the activist whose story is told here.

Her family was kept in the dark, and she remained missing until she was transferred to police custody. Charged with "producing data that could disturb public order," she received a six-month suspended sentence and a \$480 fine.

Her detention left lasting trauma, for her, and her father who suffered a health crisis. Amnesty International condemns her enforced disappearance and calls for accountability for those responsible.

## THE ARBITRARY DETENTION OF SAMIRA SABOU

On 30 September 2023, journalist and human rights defender Samira Sabou was forcibly taken from her mother's home in Niamey by masked men without a warrant. Witnesses said they claimed to be gendarmes, later returning to seize her phone.

For a week, she was held incommunicado in an undisclosed location, interrogated about her work, diplomatic contacts, and finances. Though not physically harmed, she lost all sense of time. Prior to her arrest, she had faced online harassment, including death threats.

On 7 October, she was transferred to the Niamey Police Criminal Investigations Unit and charged under the Cybercrime Law for "producing and distributing data likely to disturb public order." She was released on 11 October, but the charges remain pending, with no trial scheduled.

Amnesty International condemns her enforced disappearance and calls for the charges to be dropped and those responsible to be held accountable.



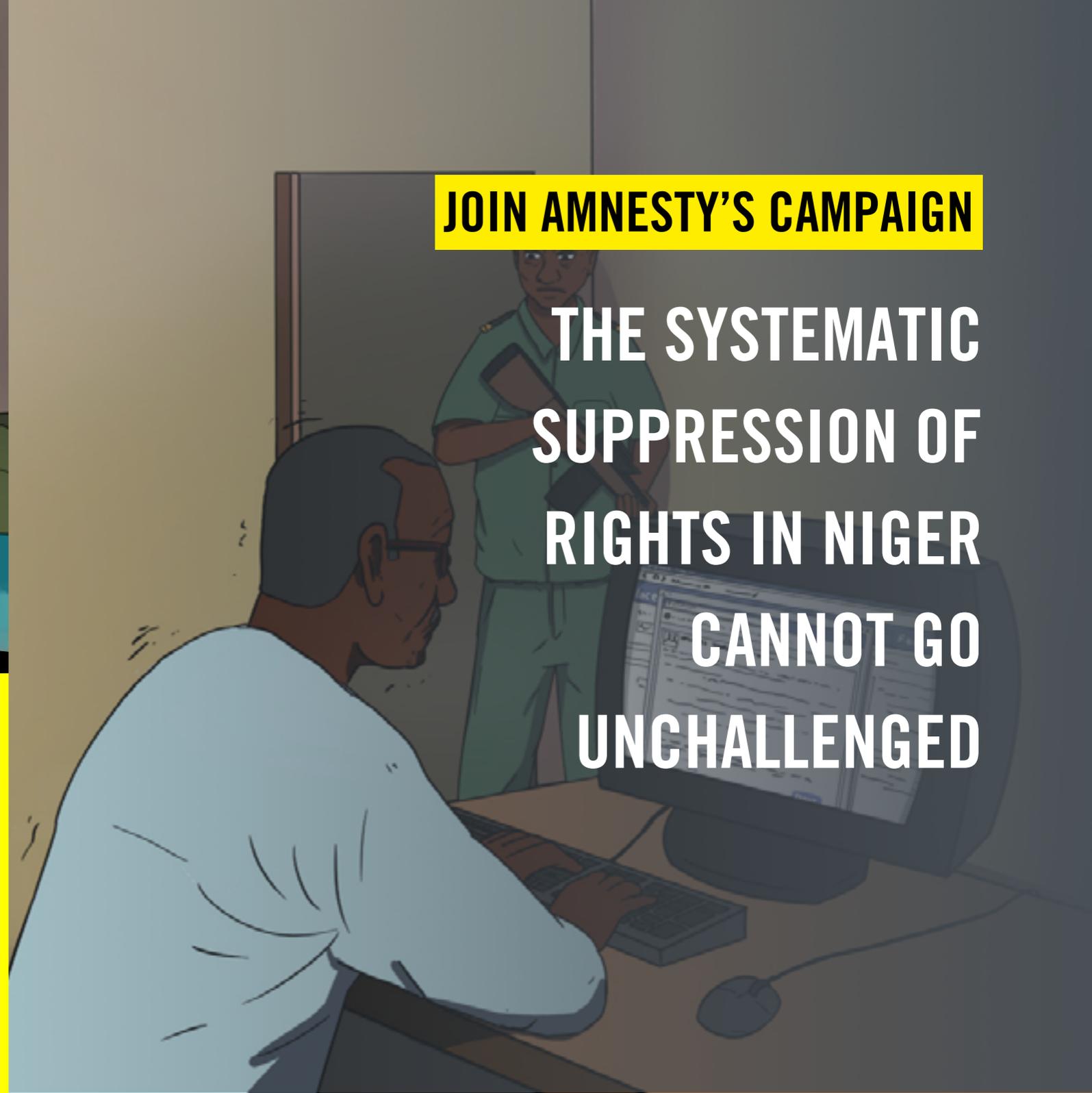
*"For lunch they gave me two small bags of Solani [a local brand of milk], a handful of rice and water. There was nothing to eat at night. In this cell, the smell of my urine began to bother me [as there were no washrooms and I was forced to urinate in a bucket], as well as the smell of paint. All the time they didn't let me wash or change my clothes [...] When I was at the DGDSE, I would cry at night because it was all dark, and I did not know where I was, why I was there, and I was so tired. Days were passing and I was increasingly tired. "*

**Hadiza\***



*"We were at her mother's house when agents claiming to be gendarmes came to her. They showed us their professional ID cards but had no warrants and were masked, nonetheless. They insisted that Samira follow them into their car since they wanted to interview her. They forcibly took her in but 10 minutes later, they came back to her mother's home to retrieve her cell phone."*

**A relative of Samira Sabou**



**JOIN AMNESTY'S CAMPAIGN**

**THE SYSTEMATIC  
SUPPRESSION OF  
RIGHTS IN NIGER  
CANNOT GO  
UNCHALLENGED**

# OBJECTIVES

The people of Niger need urgent support from all of us. The systematic suppression of rights cannot go unchallenged. This campaign calls on governments, human rights organizations, and individuals worldwide to take action against unlawful detentions, press restrictions, and the criminalization of dissent. Together, we can push for justice, accountability, and the restoration of fundamental freedoms in Niger.



Our collective voices can demand:

- ✓ The immediate release of people arbitrarily detained
- ✓ The lifting of restrictions on press and civil liberties
- ✓ An end to illegal detentions including enforced disappearances
- ✓ The repeal of repressive laws used to silence dissent

Now is the time to stand with the people of Niger and ensure their voices are heard.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP



**Spread Awareness:** Share campaign materials on social media using #HumanRights4NigerNow.



**Sign Petitions:** Demand the release of people who are arbitrarily detained and press freedom restoration.



**Contact Policymakers:** Urge governments, ECOWAS, the African Union, and the UN to take action.



**Read our story page today and find out more about Amnesty's report, its findings, and the campaign**

# JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Human rights must not be a casualty of political instability.

**Stand with the people of Niger.**



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