

The Impact of ECOWAS Response to the 2023 Coup D'etat In Niger Republic **By**

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of ECOWAS's response to the 2023 coup d'etat in the Republic of Niger. It delved deeper into the implications of the coup for Niger's political future, its socio-economic conditions, and its potential impacts on international relations, especially with neighbouring countries and international powers with vested interests in the region. The study used qualitative analysis of secondary data and adopted Liberal Institutionalism Theory as a framework for analysis. However, the complexities of the Economic Community of West African States' intervention in Niger highlighted both positive impacts on political stability and significant challenges. The study found that while ECOWAS has been successful in influencing stability, internal divisions among member states impede a united front. The suspension of the Republic of Niger from decision-making bodies aims to deter future unconstitutional power seizures, but the ineffectiveness of sanctions reveals the limitations of enforcement mechanisms. The limited impact on the political transition in Niger underscores the need for a more robust approach, possibly through the deployment of a peacekeeping force to support democratic principles. The study recommended, among others, that the Economic Community of West African States must adopt a proactive and holistic strategy to address the Niger crisis, emphasising dialogue, cooperation, and a firm commitment to upholding peace, security, and democratic governance in the region and strengthening internal cohesion within ECOWAS is essential to present a united front in whatever interventions that may be necessary.

Keywords: Coup D'Etat, ECOWAS, Niger, Humanitarian and Intervention

Introduction

Political instability is principally characterised by volatility, violence, and social unrest, driven by corruption, weak bureaucratic institutions, and a lack of consensus among political actors or the leadership of a sovereign state. A military coup in an African country typically involves the armed forces seizing control of the government, often by force. This leads to instability, human rights abuses, and economic disruption. Recent instances include Mali in 2020 and 2021, when the Malian military overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and, later, interim President Bah N'Daw. In 2021, rebel groups and the military clashed after the death of President Idris Deby, and in Burkina Faso in 2022 (African Studies Review, 2020). The military seized power, ousting Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who had himself led a coup in January 2022.

Causes of coups can include ethnic and regional tensions, economic instability, poor governance, and military dissatisfaction, and their consequences can be severe for the people,

including international sanctions, economic instability, humanitarian crises, and political repression.

West African states have suffered from numerous waves of instability stemming from frequent disruptions to their political systems, driven by a combination of factors, including governance deficits, security challenges, and the influence of external actors (Asadu, 2024). Specifically, inadequate governance, including corruption and a lack of respect for the rule of law, coupled with the inability to address security threats like violent extremism, terrorism, and banditry, creates a fertile ground for political instability or outright military intervention. In addition, the presence of foreign influence, particularly from former colonial powers and other international actors, can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to political instability (Asadu, 2024).

On July 26, 2023, the Republic of Niger experienced a significant upheaval when General Abdourahamane Tchiani orchestrated a military coup. This event marks a critical juncture in the political landscape of Niger, a country that has faced intermittent cycles of military and democratic rule since its independence in 1960. The coup, which resulted in the ousting of the democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum, raises questions not only about the stability of governance in Niger but also reflects broader regional dynamics in West Africa. The junta cited rising insecurity, economic hardship, and foreign interference, particularly from France, as reasons for the takeover. General Abdourahamane's seizure of power is seen as a response to public dissatisfaction with the current administration's ability to address these pressing issues (*BBC, 2023*).

Prior to the coup, Niger had shown significant progress under democratically elected Presidents Mahamadou Issoufou and Mohamed Bazoum. Key achievements included: a 53% decline in fatality rates linked to militant Islamist group attacks in 2023 compared to 2022; a 64% increase in military expenditures under Bazoum, reaching \$309 million in 2023; and encouraging defections from violent extremist groups through disarmament and deradicalisation programmes. Economic growth, with a projected 7% growth in 2023 and 12.5% in 2024 and per capita income expansion by 26% under Issoufou and Bazoum's leadership (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024). However, analysts cite rising living costs, perceptions of government incompetence, and Bazoum's plans to replace the head of the presidential guard as possible triggers for the Coup (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2024).

The coup was widely condemned by international organisations and countries, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which imposed sanctions and threatened military intervention if the junta did not reinstate Bazoum. The African Union suspended Niger from the bloc and called for a return to constitutional order. The United Nations condemned the coup and called for the release of President Bazoum. Western countries like France and the United States withheld financial and development aid to Niger and suspended security cooperation agreements (*BBC, 2023*).

ECOWAS played a significant role in responding to the coup, with actions including freezing assets and imposing travel restrictions on military personnel involved in the coup. ECOWAS warned the junta that no option, including the use of force, was off the table if Bazoum was not reinstated, and ECOWAS mediators met with the junta, leading to General Abdourahamane Tchiani's promise to return Niger to civilian rule within three years (Buchan & Tsagourias, 2023).

Research Objectives

- i. Assess the impact of the Economic Community of West African States' actions on the political transition in Niger.
- ii. Examine the broader implications of the Nigerien crisis for the Economic Community of West African States' role in promoting regional stability and democratic governance in West Africa.

Conceptual Clarifications

Crisis

A crisis is often linked to the concept of psychological stress and used to suggest a frightening or fraught experience. In general, a crisis is a situation in a "complex system" in which the system functions poorly (it still operates but does not break down), and an immediate decision is necessary to prevent further disintegration. However, the causes of the dysfunction are not immediately identified (so many and unknown that it is impossible to take a rational, informed decision to reverse the situation). By "complex system", we mean something like a family, economy, or society; simple systems do not enter crisis. We can speak about a crisis of moral values, an economic or political crisis, but not a motor crisis (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short and Coombs, 2017).

Apart from natural crises that are inherently unpredictable (volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, etc.), most of the crises that we face are created by man. Hence, the requirements for their being 'unexpected' depend on man failing to note the onset of crisis conditions. Some of our inability to recognise crises before they become dangerous stems from denial and other psychological responses that provide succour and protection for our emotions (Mitroff, 2005). A different set of reasons for failing to notice the onset of a crisis is that we allow ourselves to be 'tricked' into believing we are doing something for the wrong reasons. In other words, we are doing the wrong things for the right reasons. For example, we might believe that we are addressing the threats of climate change by engaging in economic trading activities that have no real impact on the climate.

Crisis Management

There is far more agreement on what crisis management involves; however, there are still two major camps. Some definitions describe crisis management as a comprehensive approach that follows a cycle from preparedness and prevention through response, recovery, and learning (Drennan & McConnell, 2017). These authors, however, did not often pay sufficient attention to the concept of crisis leadership. Indeed, most crisis management books written by business consultants do not even address crisis leadership, let alone acknowledge it as a distinct function or process. This omission has created confusion and misunderstanding in the lay population. Acceptance of the above definition of crisis leadership severely curtails the breadth of crisis management, as the following definitions show: "crisis management begins with the recognition of a prodromal event, a symptom of an oncoming crisis" (Fink, 2002); "crisis management is primarily reactive." It addresses crises only after they have happened" (Mitroff, 2014).

Crisis management is the process by which an organisation responds to a disruptive, unexpected event that threatens to harm the organisation or its stakeholders (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, Coombs, and Timothy 2017). The study of crisis management originated with large-scale industrial and environmental disasters in the 1980s. It is considered to be the most important process in public relations. Three elements are common to a crisis: (a) a threat to the organisation, (b) the element of surprise, and (c) a short decision time (Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer 1998).

Theoretical Framework: Liberal Institutionalism Theory

Liberal Institutionalism (or Institutional Liberalism or Neoliberalism) is a theory of International Relations that holds that international cooperation between states is feasible and sustainable and that such cooperation can reduce conflict and competition. Neoliberalism is a revised version of Liberalism. Alongside neorealism, Liberal Institutionalism is one of the two most influential contemporary approaches to international relations (Robert, 1994).

Liberal institutionalism highlights the role of international institutions and regimes in facilitating state cooperation (Robert & Keohane, 1985). Furthermore, Liberal institutionalism is a prominent theory in International Relations that emphasises the role of international institutions in shaping world politics. The theory asserts that institutions, such as intergovernmental organisations and multinational treaties, play a crucial role in reducing conflict and promoting cooperation among states.

Key concepts of liberal institutionalism include the belief that international institutions help to facilitate communication and build trust among states. By providing a forum for dialogue and negotiation, institutions can help to resolve disputes and prevent misunderstandings that may lead to conflict. Additionally, liberal institutionalists argue that institutions can create norms and rules that guide state behaviour, thereby promoting stability and predictability in international relations. One of the original insights of liberal institutionalism is that institutions can serve as mechanisms for cooperation even in an anarchic international system. While realist theories often focus on the competitive nature of state interactions, liberal institutionalism posits that states can benefit from cooperation through institutions that incentivise compliance and cooperation.

By adopting this theory, it shows that the Liberal Institutionalism Theory can provide valuable insights into the Economic Community of West African States' response to the Niger Republic Crisis. As a theoretical framework, Liberal Institutionalism emphasises the importance of international institutions, such as the Economic Community of West African States, in promoting cooperation and managing conflicts. By examining how the Economic Community of West African States intervened in the Niger Republic Crisis, we can analyse the effectiveness of liberal institutional mechanisms in resolving regional conflicts.

One key concept of liberal institutionalism is that institutions facilitate cooperation among states by providing forums for dialogue and negotiation. In the case of the Economic Community of West African States and the Niger Republic Crisis, the regional organisation played a crucial role in mediating the conflict and promoting dialogue among the parties. The Economic Community of West African States provided a platform for negotiations and facilitated diplomatic efforts to address the root causes of the crisis.

Niger Political Instability

Historically, Niger has been plagued by political instability, with previous coups in 1974 and 2010 illustrating the fragility of its democratic institutions. The most recent coup, however, occurred against the backdrop of escalating tensions over governance, resource distribution, and security challenges, particularly those posed by militant groups in the Sahel region (*Jon, Mirjam, and Klaas, 2003*).

The coup marked Niger's fifth since independence in 1960 and came after a period of relative democratic stability under Bazoum and his predecessor, Mahamadou Issoufou.

Post-Colonial (1960 – 1974):-For its first 14 years as an independent state, Niger was run by a single-party civilian regime under the Presidency of Hamani Diori (*Jon, Mirjam, and Klaas, 2003*).

First Military Regime (1974 – 1991). The coup was masterminded by Col. Seyni Kountche and a military group known as the *Conseil Militaire Supreme*, with Kountche going on to rule the country until he died in 1987 (*Cartwright, 2019*).

National Conference and Third Republic (1991–1996):-The National Sovereign Conference of 1991 brought about multi-party democracy. From July 29 to November 3, 1991, a national conference was held that brought together all sectors of society to make recommendations on the country's future direction (*Walter, 1995*).

Second and third Military Regimes (1996– 1999): The governmental paralysis prompted the military to intervene; in January 1996, Col. Ibrahim Bare Mainassara led a coup that deposed President Ousmane and ended the Third Republic (*Decalo & Idrissa, 2012*).

Fourth Military Regime (2009– 2010).- In 2009, President Tandja Mamadou decided to organise a constitutional referendum seeking to extend his presidency, which was opposed by other political parties, and went against the decision of the Constitutional Court, which had ruled that the referendum would be unconstitutional (*Walter, 1995*).

Seventh Republic (2010– 2023). Following the adoption of a constitution in 2010 and presidential elections a year later, Mahamadou Issoufou was elected as the first president of the Seventh Republic; he was then re-elected in 2016.

Fifth Military Regime (2023 to present): Late July 2023, a military coup overthrew President Bazoum, bringing an end to the Seventh Republic and the government of Prime Minister Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou (*BBC, 2023*). In July, General Abdourahamane Tchiani was proclaimed as the *de facto* head of state of the country. Former finance minister Ali Lamine Zeine was declared the new Prime Minister of Niger (*Lawal, 2023*).

ECOWAS Intervention Niger 2023 Coup

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional organisation established in 1975 to promote economic integration and cooperation among its 15 member states. One of its core principles is maintaining peace and security, including upholding democratic governance. The Economic Community of West African States has a history of intervening in member states facing political turmoil, often through diplomatic pressure and, in some cases, military intervention (*Okafor, 2023*).

In July 2023, the democratically elected President of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, was overthrown in a coup. ECOWAS responded swiftly, condemning the coup and demanding a return to constitutional order. The initial stance included threats of military intervention to restore the elected government (*Cooney, 2023*). The coup in Niger marked a worrying trend in West Africa. It followed a series of coups in Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, raising concerns about a regional democratic backsliding. The Niger coup also presented a unique challenge for the Economic Community of West African States (*Jeune, 2023*).

The Economic Community of West African States responded swiftly to the Nigerien coup. They condemned the military takeover, demanded the release of deposed President Bazoum, and threatened sanctions, including potential military intervention. However, their actions were met with resistance. The coup leaders in Niger, along with those in Mali and Burkina Faso,

formed a new alliance, raising the spectre of a regional conflict (Al Jazeera, 2023). Unlike previous interventions, ECOWAS faced a potential regional counter-offensive and internal dissent regarding forceful action. In the buildup, rolling blackouts were reported across cities in Niger, which the state electricity company Nigelec blamed on Nigeria cutting off supplies, in addition to the initial closure of Nigerian borders with Niger, and the World Bank suspended disbursements to Niger until further notice (Al Jazeera, 2023).

Regional Responses and Strategies: ECOWAS' Role in Addressing the Root Cause of the Nigerien Crisis and Enhancing Regional Stability

The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS could have significant security and geopolitical implications for the region and ECOWAS territory as a whole. The various areas of concern are highlighted.

Border Security: - The potential withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS poses significant challenges to West African border security (Hwang, 2024). Joint initiatives established by ECOWAS to enhance border security, such as joint patrols and information-sharing mechanisms, may weaken, potentially exposing neighbouring countries, such as Nigeria, to security vulnerabilities (Adogamhe, 2024). Without ECOWAS coordination, the effectiveness of joint initiatives aimed at border security could be compromised, exacerbating existing security challenges in the region (Adogamhe, 2024).

Counterterrorism Efforts: - The departure of Niger and Mali from ECOWAS could disrupt coordinated counterterrorism efforts (Amnesty International, 2024). Both countries have been integral parts of joint intelligence-sharing and military cooperation efforts, essential in addressing threats posed by extremist organisations such as Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Okafor, 2023). Nigeria may face challenges in maintaining the same level of effectiveness in its counterterrorism efforts without the cooperation of these countries (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

Diplomatic Relations: - The absence of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS may strain diplomatic relations within the region (Osaghae, 2023). ECOWAS serves as a crucial platform for diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution among its member states (Darkwa, 2017). Nigeria, as a key player in regional diplomacy, may face challenges in mediating conflicts and fostering cooperation among West African nations in their absence.

Economic stability: The potential exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States could have significant implications for regional economic stability (World Bank, 2023). The Economic Community of West African States plays a vital role in promoting economic integration, trade, and investment among its member states (World Bank, 2023). The disruption of cross-border trade agreements and economic initiatives resulting from their departure could hinder regional economic progress, particularly affecting Nigeria as the largest economy in West Africa (African Development Bank Group, 2023).

Nigeria's Regional Leadership Role: - The departure of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS poses challenges to Nigeria's regional leadership role within the organisation. Nigeria has historically been a key influencer in regional decision-making and conflict-resolution efforts within ECOWAS (Osaghae, 2023). Their absence may necessitate Nigeria to reassess its role and take on additional responsibilities in maintaining regional stability.

Security Vacuum: - The potential exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS could exacerbate security challenges in the Sahel region (Akanji, 2024). ECOWAS plays a crucial role in coordinating collective regional efforts to address security issues, including terrorism and insurgency (Akanji, 2024). The absence of a unified regional approach within ECOWAS may exacerbate instability in the Sahel, potentially spilling over into Nigeria's security landscape.

Impact on Peacekeeping Efforts: - The departure of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic could strain ECOWAS' capacity to deploy effective peacekeeping forces in conflict-prone areas across West Africa (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2024). These countries have historically contributed troops and resources to ECOWAS peacekeeping missions, bolstering the organisation's ability to respond to security challenges. Nigeria may face increased challenges in maintaining regional peace and security without its collaborative efforts.

Regional cooperation: The potential exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic challenges the overall agenda of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 2023). The Economic Community of West African States has long served as a symbol of unity in West Africa, fostering collaboration on various fronts, including economic development and peacekeeping. Their departure undermines the organisation's ability to address challenges collectively and diminishes its effectiveness as a regional institution.

Humanitarian Concerns: - Disruptions in regional cooperation resulting from the potential departure of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger Republic could impede coordinated responses to humanitarian crises (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023). These countries actively participate in regional humanitarian efforts, contributing to collective responses to crises affecting the region (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023). The absence of their collaborative efforts within ECOWAS may hinder coordinated responses to humanitarian concerns, affecting the well-being of populations in these countries and beyond.

Impact on Regional Institutions: - The potential absence of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS could weaken the effectiveness of ECOWAS institutions, which rely on the active participation of all member states to function optimally. These countries play essential roles in various ECOWAS institutions addressing conflict resolution, economic development, and regional integration (Osaghae, 2023). Nigeria may need to reassess its engagement with regional institutions in response to these potential changes.

Economic Implications: - The potential exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS could disrupt economic ties and regional trade, posing challenges to Nigeria's economic interests in the sub-region (African Development Bank Group, 2023). ECOWAS protocols on free movement and trade serve as critical mechanisms for facilitating the movement of goods and people across member states, thereby fostering economic cooperation and integration.

Cultural Implications: - The potential departure of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger Republic from ECOWAS carries substantial cultural implications for Nigeria and the broader West African region. ECOWAS has long served as a platform for celebrating and preserving the rich cultural diversity found across member states. The departure of these countries threatens to diminish

cultural exchanges and disrupt the vibrant cultural interactions that contribute to regional cohesion.

Diplomatic Fallout: African Union, Western Nations Condemn Niger 2023 Coup

African Union

The African Union Peace and Security Council issues an ultimatum to the soldiers to "immediately and unconditionally return to their barracks and restore constitutional democracy" within 15 days. In August 2023, the AU Peace and Security Council convened to discuss the situation and potential actions. The AU later suspended Niger's membership in the bloc with immediate effect (Asadu, 2024).

United Nations

The United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the coup and expressed support for ECOWAS and the AU. UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutierrez later expressed hope for a peaceful solution to the crisis. The UN also worked with ECOWAS and the AU to send a joint delegation to Niger for peace talks (Buchan & Tsagourias, 2023).

France

France strongly condemned the coup and warned that attacks on its nationals, military personnel, diplomats, and interests would lead to an immediate response. France supported ECOWAS's efforts to restore constitutional order in Niger. It is considered that the military agreement between France and Niger remains in effect, despite the junta's withdrawal from it. France eventually withdrew its troops from Niger by December 2023 (Akanji, 2024).

United States

The United States suspended specific foreign assistance programmes benefiting the government of Niger, excluding humanitarian and food assistance. The US also supported ECOWAS's efforts to restore constitutional order and warned the junta to ensure the safety of President Bazoum and his family. The US later withdrew its troops from Niger, completing the withdrawal by 2024 (Adogamhe, 2024).

Nigeria

As the chair of ECOWAS at the time, Nigeria played a key role in the regional organisation's response to the coup. Nigeria supported ECOWAS's ultimatum and sanctions against Niger, and President Bola Tinubu urged caution and diplomacy in resolving the crisis. Nigeria also participated in ECOWAS's standby force, which was activated to restore constitutional order in Niger.

Way Forward: Niger Faces Tougher Way Forward

The way forward for Niger remains uncertain, with ongoing debates about the role of ECOWAS, the African Union, and other international actors in restoring constitutional order. ECOWAS has played a crucial role in facilitating dialogue between the coup leaders in Niger and the international community. By mediating talks and advocating a peaceful resolution, ECOWAS has demonstrated its commitment to upholding democratic norms in the region. However, the effectiveness of these dialogue efforts has been hampered by the military junta's reluctance to engage meaningfully and implement agreed-upon measures to restore constitutional order. Presently, the situation in Niger continues to evolve, with ongoing humanitarian and economic challenges, as well as security concerns and insurgent attacks.

General Abdourahamane Tchiani, Niger's junta leader, has adopted a firm stance on diplomatic negotiations and new partnerships as a way forward for the country. Presently, General Tchiani's government has rejected pressure from the ECOWAS to restore democratic rule, instead opting for a more extended transition period. The junta has sought support from Russia, formed a new alliance with Mali and Burkina Faso, and received diplomatic and security backing from Moscow. Also, Niger's military government has called on US military units to pull out of the country. Signalling a shift away from Western partnerships.

On new partnership, General Tchiani's government is currently pivoting towards Russia, potentially hosting Africa Coups personnel, despite concerns about Russia's counterterrorism effectiveness, Mali and Burkina-Faso alliance, the three military-led governments have signed a new pact, solidifying their cooperation and distancing themselves from traditional regional and Western allies also, Niger presently has established full diplomatic relations with Iran, potentially seeking alternative trade partners for its uranium exports, undermining its implications on the regional instability, security and economic uncertainty.

Nonetheless, hope is raining for ECOWAS in its role in the regional peace and development; strengthening internal cohesion within ECOWAS member states is essential to present a united front in interventions, minimising the risk of escalated conflicts and the need for military action. Improved coordination and consensus-building mechanisms can enhance the effectiveness of ECOWAS interventions in crisis management. Reevaluating the effectiveness of sanctions as a deterrent for unconstitutional power seizures in Niger is crucial. ECOWAS should explore alternative enforcement mechanisms and consider targeted measures that directly impact those responsible for undermining democratic processes.

Implementing a more holistic strategy that prioritises dialogue, cooperation, and a firm commitment to peace, security, and democratic governance is imperative to address the Niger crisis comprehensively. This approach should involve engaging all relevant stakeholders and prioritising long-term stability over short-term gains. Undertaking a thorough recalibration of ECOWAS' intervention strategies in Niger is necessary to overcome the current limitations and promote lasting stability in West Africa. This process should involve learning from past experiences, incorporating feedback from key stakeholders, and adapting approaches to meet the evolving challenges facing the region.

Discussion of Findings

The study's significant finding is that the Economic Community of West African States' decision to suspend the Niger Republic from its decision-making bodies demonstrated principles and deterred future unconstitutional seizures of power in the region. Moreover, the lack of strong enforcement mechanisms has limited the effectiveness of these sanctions in achieving the desired outcome of restoring constitutional order in Niger. However, the effectiveness of dialogue efforts has been hampered by the military junta's reluctance to engage meaningfully and implement agreed-upon measures to restore constitutional order.

The findings revealed that the crisis in Niger has significant implications for regional stability, security, and development. The outcome will depend on the ability of the Economic Community of West African States and other international actors to promote a peaceful resolution and support a return to constitutional order.

Conclusion

The complexities of the Economic Community of West African States' intervention in Niger highlight both positive impacts on political stability and significant challenges. While the

Economic Community of West African States has been thriving in influencing stability, internal divisions among member states impede a united front, risking escalation and potentially necessitating military intervention. The suspension of the Republic of Niger from decision-making bodies aims to deter future unconstitutional power seizures, but the ineffectiveness of sanctions reveals the limitations of enforcement mechanisms. The limited impact on the political transition in Niger underscores the need for a more robust approach, possibly through the deployment of a peacekeeping force to support democratic principles. Moving forward, the Economic Community of West African States must adopt a proactive and holistic strategy to address the Niger crisis, emphasising dialogue, cooperation, and a firm commitment to upholding peace, security, and democratic governance in the region. This analysis calls for a reevaluation of the Economic Community of West African States' interventions and a recalibration of strategies to effectively navigate the challenges and promote lasting stability in West Africa.

Recommendations

Strengthening internal cohesion within the Economic Community of West African States member states is essential to present a united front in interventions, minimising the risk of escalated conflicts and the need for military action. Improved coordination and consensus-building mechanisms can enhance the effectiveness of the Economic Community of West African States interventions in crisis management.

Reevaluating the effectiveness of sanctions as a deterrent for unconstitutional power seizures in Niger is crucial. The Economic Community of West African States should explore alternative enforcement mechanisms and consider targeted measures that directly impact those responsible for undermining democratic processes.

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