

Military officers depose Niger's president

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Niamey, July 28 (RHC)-- In Niger, military officers announced Wednesday they had overthrown President Mohamed Bazoum, imposing a curfew and shutting down borders in the West African nation.

Colonel Major Amadou Abdramane addressed Niger on national television late Wednesday, flanked by other military members. Abdramane announced: "All the institutions of the Seventh Republic are suspended. The secretaries general of the ministries will take care of day-to-day business. The defense

and security forces are managing the situation. All external partners are asked not to interfere.”

President Mohamed Bazoum vowed on social media today to fight his ouster. Meanwhile, protesters took to the streets of the capital Niamey. One protester said: “We are here to defend democracy. We are here to defend the republic. We are here to show our commitment to the rule of law and to say no to any attempt to seize power by force or arms. ... Democracy must prevail. The ballot boxes have prevailed, and President Bazoum has been elected for five years. The people are on their feet.”

Washington immediately called for Bazoum’s release as the United Nations and other powers condemned the apparent coup. Niger is a key ally for Europe and the U.S., which has two drone bases and some 800 troops in the country, where it has been engaged in “counterterrorism” training since 2002.

Violence by armed groups has since surged throughout the region, killing civilians and displacing millions of people. It’s not clear if those behind the coup in Niger were trained by the U.S. military, which has trained officers behind recent coups in neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali and other West African nations.

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