C/2024/4218

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The unlawful detention of President Mohamed Bazoum in Niger

European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2023 on the unlawful detention of President Mohamed Bazoum in Niger (2023/2980(RSP))

(C/2024/4218)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rule 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the democratically elected President of Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, was illegally arrested, together with his wife and son, on 26 July 2023 following a military coup led by General Abdourahamane Tchiani; whereas the military junta dissolved the elected government;

B. whereas President Bazoum and his family have been imprisoned in his residence in unfavourable conditions ever since, without sufficient food or electricity and limited access to medical care;

C. whereas the unlawful imprisonment of President Bazoum and his family is aimed at pressuring him to resign; whereas the junta has announced that it will prosecute President Bazoum for 'high treason' and 'undermining state security', offences which may carry the death penalty;

D. whereas this is the sixth coup in West Africa since 2020; whereas Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso have entered into a mutual defence pact that binds the signatories to assist each other in the event of an attack;

E. whereas the junta has arbitrarily arrested ministers, officials and civilians and cracked down on critical media and peaceful dissent;

F. whereas the junta has refused ECOWAS mediation efforts; whereas there is no credible political transition process in sight;

G. whereas the security situation has deteriorated and jihadist attacks have increased further since the coup and the junta's decision to demand the departure of French troops cooperating in the fight against armed groups; whereas the EU has suspended most of its development and military cooperation with Niger;

H. whereas the humanitarian situation is dire, with 4,3 million people in need of humanitarian aid;

1. Strongly condemns the military coup of 26 July 2023; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of President Bazoum and his family, and all those arbitrarily detained, and for the charges against him to be dropped;

2. Demands the immediate reinstatement of democratically elected Mohamed Bazoum as President of Niger and the immediate restoration of constitutional order;

3. Urges the junta to uphold human rights and guarantee freedom of expression and media freedom;

4. Calls on the Council to implement sanctions against the leaders of the Nigerien junta and welcomes the suspension of budget support and security cooperation, while humanitarian assistance continues; welcomes ECOWAS's decision to impose economic and financial sanctions;

5. Expresses its full support for ECOWAS's efforts to find a political solution through mediation;

6. Is deeply concerned by the security, human rights and humanitarian situation in Niger and the region; deplores the fact that the coup has greatly jeopardised democratic, security and economic progress in Niger;

7. Is concerned about the potential use of the mutual defence pact;

8. Emphasises that terrorism throughout the Sahel undermines democratic consolidation and the rule of law; is concerned about Russia's attempts to increase its presence in Sahel to the detriment of regional stability and democracy;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the VP / HR, ECOWAS and the African Union.