



“Constitutional referendum in Niger: Political stakes and impacts on the preservation of the democratic framework”

**Synthesis report of the day of reflection organized by
Alternative Citizen Spaces**

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Warning

This report is a synthesis of the communications and statements uttered by the lecturers and the participants during the Day of reflection organized by the association Alternative Citizen Spaces on May 31, 2009 on the theme : “Constitutional referendum in Niger : Political stakes and impacts on the preservation of the democratic framework.” The opinions which were expressed do not necessarily reflect the official view and position of Alternative Citizen Spaces on the topic.

This report tries to give an account of the major ideas expressed during this collective reflection. Some participants will certainly find that it does not give an account of all the ideas developed at this session; others will find that their reflections were not often reported through their own words. So, we beg their understanding.

By publishing this report, Alternative Citizen Spaces aims to contribute to a better understanding of the stakes of the political crisis unfolding in Niger ; as it is obvious that the intellectual enlightenment has, in our opinion, to precede the political or citizen action in order to avoid the wanderings and tergiversations.

We also expect that the elements of analysis given by this document will notably guide the political and social actors, thoughtful of the democratic future and the social progress in our country, to make the relevant decisions for a collective action to build a genuine democracy in Niger and in Africa.

A.T. Moussa Tchangari
Secretary General
Alternative Citizen Spaces

The context and justification

After decades of one political party system and military dictatorship, Niger entered fully an era of multiparty democracy in 1991 with the holding of the Sovereign National Conference. This big evolution was characterized by the advent of political multi party system, the organization of free, fair and transparent elections, the constitutional guarantee of the freedom and democratic rights, the emergence of plural civil society and the liberalization of the media.

If it is true that a lot of progress have been made in a few years, no one could deny that the democratic path of our country had been one of the most tumultuous of the sub-region. From 1991 to 2009, Niger was hit by three (3) waves of armed rebellion in the North and East, two (2) military coups d'état in 1996 and 1999 and many soldier mutinies. In the face of all the painful situations, the citizens of Niger have shown an exemplary determination to defend the foundations of democracy and social peace.

Today, with the project of the President of the Republic to hold to power, through the organization of a constitutional referendum, the risk is enormous to see Niger being among the least democratic African countries as it is obvious that the project of the Chief of State is clearly in line with the restoration of authoritarianism that not only aims at hindering the political alternation, but also to jeopardize fundamentally all the results of democratic struggles. In particular, the risk is enormous on the one hand to see the power in place to restrict dangerously the public freedom; and on the other hand to experience the interruption of the democratic process in a general climate detrimental to peace and security.

If it is true that the people of Niger have demonstrated their capacity to resist the desires of authoritarian restoration as it was the case after the coup d'état of 1996, we have to consider that the present world context calls on us to be rather cautious. The world economic crisis seems to bring about a risk of authoritarian restoration everywhere in the world aimed at counteracting the popular mobilizations consecutive to the anti social measures envisaged by the defenders of capitalism. The present economic crisis as all the previous crises can open a new authoritarian period; and as we can see it, the hints to this gloomy perspective are already perceptible in Africa.

In fact, it is striking to notice that the spectrum of military coups d'état comes to surface in many countries of the African continent whereas in others, the organization of rigged elections due to the refusal of political alternation ends up in tragedy. The situation is so worrying that even in the countries where these avatars are not perceived, democracy declines in its more reducing form; that is, without any economic, social or cultural content in line with the deep and legitimate aspirations of people to welfare and social justice.

Considering the way the political situation is presently being shaped in Niger, the association Alternative Citizen Spaces decided to take the initiative of a Day of reflection to get together some people from various horizons (university teachers, politicians, leaders of the civil society organizations, etc). That initiative is an invitation for a deep analysis of this situation bearing serious threats to the democratic framework built with the price of multiple sacrifices.

Introduction to the debate

In his opening speech to the Day of reflection, Mr. Moussa Tchangari, Secretary General of the association of Alternative Citizen Spaces, first thanked all the participants in the session

which is held in a peculiar national context. This context is characterized by the upcoming of a political crisis which many actors did not expect at all, and this is despite numerous signs announcing it, notably the public demonstrations and the media campaign orchestrated for some months in favor of an initiative aimed at allowing the President of the Republic to stay in power beyond his constitutional term in office that will end on December 22, 2009.

If a few weeks ago, it was still possible to take lightly the campaign in favor of “Tazarcé”, today no one doubts that our democratic process is confronted to a major challenge, declared the Secretary general of Alternative Citizen Spaces. He affirmed that from now on it is clear that the President of the Republic insists on staying in power beyond his term if the sovereign people adhere to his project of constitutional reform.

Focusing on the speech of the Chief of State to the nation, the Secretary General of Alternative Citizen Spaces pointed out that this speech had at least the merit to be clear as President Tandja clearly affirmed that he intends to stay in power despite the opposite opinion of the Constitutional court to organize a referendum on a new constitution. The decision of the President of the Republic is made: a constitutional referendum will soon be organized and the new constitution will be of presidential type with a key period of three years of transition to allow him to complete his building projects.

If it is true that the project of the constitution for the 6th republic that the Chief of State wishes to have is not yet made public so that the social and political actors be able to know its content and debate on it, it is at least clear that Niger is leading towards the restoration of a strong presidential regime that will concentrate all the powers in the hands of the President of the Republic. The supporters of President Tandja affirm that the new constitution will give an important place to young people and women; but we do not know up to now what it concretely contains.

The Secretary General of Alternative Citizen Spaces pointed out that we should not expect that the new constitution opens some perspectives for democratic progress, but it would launch a new authoritarian period in the country. The project of President Tandja is not only to stay in power after the end of his term in office, but it would rather be the restoration of dictatorship in the country.

By initiating this Day of reflection, the Secretary General pointed out that Alternative wanted to bring its contribution to a deep analysis of the situation. Specifically, the Day of reflection aims to: (i) find out some elements that allow a complete and deep analysis of the stakes and challenges related to the project of constitutional referendum envisaged by the President of the Republic; (ii) identify some ways for actions and citizen initiatives in line with the perspectives of preservation of peace and democracy in Niger; (iii) contribute to a better understanding and enlightenment of people on the stakes and challenges to which Niger is confronted in the reinforcement of the vigilance of citizens in the face of the dangers to which the present situation can lead.

Thematic axis 1: “Analysis of the world context of economic crisis and its consequences on the democratic framework in Africa”, presented by Dr. Ibro Abdou, Economist, Director of ISEP.

After the opening speech of the Secretary General of Alternative Citizen Spaces, the work of the Day of reflection started with the presentation of the Economist Ibro Abdou, who talked to the participants on the theme: *“Analysis of the world context of economic crisis and its consequences on the democratic framework in Africa.”* In his introduction to this

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presentation, the moderator of the panel, Mr. Moussa Tchangari, pointed out that the importance of this topic focuses on three essential elements : (i) the extent of the world economic crisis shows a risk of aggravation of the social situation in the entire African continent ; (ii) the social troubles consecutive to the implementation of drastic policies that can bring about a toughness of the powers in place in many countries; (iii) the authoritarian temptation already perceptible that might have the backing of dominant powers following the multiplication of social conflicts.

Mr. Ibro Abdou started his presentation after this brief introduction by underlining that the present global crisis is similar to that of 1929 as far as the mechanisms of its upcoming and its consequences are concerned; but it remains that the extent of the present crisis which is also a lot of more related to overproduction than financial speculation is more important than the previous one. Today as yesterday, the financial factor has been not the cause of the crisis, but the factor that triggered it. The system transferred its center of gravity from the sphere of production towards the financial sphere. In fact, the volume of financial transactions is 2000 trillion dollars whereas the productive basis (the world GNP) is 44 trillion dollars only, he pointed out to illustrate the situation. These transactions were mostly destined to cover the operations directly demanded by the production and internal and international trade. For this case, the economist affirms that *“the disengagement in financial deposit could not last eternally whereas the productive basis was increasing at a low rate.”*

According to the lecturer, it is suitable to point out that behind the financial bankruptcy there was a crisis of the real economy as this bankruptcy can asphyxiate the growth of the productive basis itself. The economist thinks that the solutions brought to the financial crisis (putting huge sums of money to bail out the black debts on the back of people) can only result in a crisis of the real economy. It means a relative stagnation of the production that can bring about a decrease in the incomes of workers, an increase in unemployment, an increasing precariousness and an aggravation of poverty in the countries in the South.

The economist affirms that this situation must be characterized not as a recession, but as a big depression; and behind this depression there is a real structural and systemic crisis of capitalism, he warned. He added that the major dimension of this systemic crisis concerns the access to the natural resources of the planet which have become considerably rarer than a century ago and from which the majority of the populations of the countries in the South are totally excluded. The lecturer reported that Samir designed three scenarios that can result from this crisis: (i) a scenario of immediate chaos; (ii) a scenario of chaos in the future; and (iii) a scenario of change of system. The management of each of these scenarios demands, according to Dr. Ibro Abdou, a strong and responsible State; but a strong State in sense not only of an authoritarian State, but a State based on responsibility and anticipation.

Talking about the solutions proposed to the crisis by the governments, Mr. Ibro Abdou indicated that all the measures they have taken consisted in protecting the big capital to the detriment of popular masses. These measures are not different from the ones taken in the framework of the New Deal in the United States following the crisis in 1929. Supporting that it was not the New Deal, but it was the war that got the United States out of that crisis. The lecturer thinks that still today the risk to see the dominant powers to resort to war as a means to get out of the economic crisis is big. He affirmed that Capitalism could only manage the crisis through a general war before adding that the question was to know whether the peoples would leave the capital to envisage such a gloomy perspective. In all cases, he warned, *“any absence of popular reaction in order to have deep transformations is a chance more given to the solution of general war to reduce the crisis.”*

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Considering the extent of the present global crisis, the lecturer affirmed that we could not escape from the temptation to establish a link between this crisis and the democratic backwardness observed on the continent and that shows a crisis of liberal democracy. The global crisis threatens seriously the economic and social results obtained with difficulty these recent years. There is no doubt that the United States will take some drastic measures to force their citizens to pay for the bills. The African populations who are the sufferers of all the pains of policies designed by the institutions of Bretton Woods should again undergo the counter shock of the American stock exchange.

The lecturer thinks that the dramatic consequences that will result (stoppage of recruitment, reductions of incomes, high costs of goods in the North, etc.) can lead the States to repress brutally the movements of social protest so called avoiding the chaos. Thus, this crisis constitutes a serious threat to the development of political democracy; but it can also be the opportunity of change whose result may be the passage from liberal democracy and to the popular democracy. Strengthened by this, Mr. Ibro pleaded in favor of an intensification of resistances through the anti systemic movement to stop the authoritarian dangers and opposes a firm no to the politics that want to make the poor pay for the crisis.

If it is obvious that the present global crisis can open some gloomy perspectives for people notably in the domain of democratic development, the lecturer makes a nuance in his statements by pointing out that it may also constitute an important opportunity to launch again the debate on a new type of democracy in the countries in the South. The present crisis also gives an opportunity to envisage a national, popular, democratic and self centered democratic development in a perspective of disconnection.

Taking the example of the famous African economist Samir Amin, Mr. Ibro Adamou thinks that the veritable alternative to the present crisis passes through reversing the exclusive power of capitalist oligopolies and their nationalization in a perspective of democratic management. But with the example of the economist Samir Amin, he supports that *“this is not possible provided that the social struggles, still fragmented and on the defensive altogether succeed in crystallizing themselves in a coherent political alternative.”*

The lecturer also thinks that this alternative supposes on the one hand a fundamental reverse of ultra liberalism and the international economic relations based on the supremacy of the countries in the North. On the other hand, a general mobilization in favor of an awakening of the theory and of the practice of democracy associated with social progress and the respect of the sovereignty of people and not disassociated from them. In any case, the lecturer thinks that the present crisis brings back to the center of the debate the problematic of the type of democracy (liberal, popular, etc).

The debates launched after this precious contribution came up with the following major points:

- At the beginning of this crisis, some people predicted that it would have less impact on the African countries; but today we notice that it will have some consequences in short, medium and long term on these countries. The impact of the crisis will be very negative on African exportations, notably on petroleum exporting countries with the fall of prices and volumes causing important losses of turnovers. In another way, the flux of aid risk being negatively affected because of the new budgetary constraints of the donor countries. The persistence of this crisis means the aggravation of famine, poverty and infant mortality. The outburst of this crisis in the West completely damages the policies imposed by the financial international institutions. **“It is not only the legitimacy of the neoliberal paradigm that is in question, but the immediate future of capitalism.”**

- This global crisis that hits at the heart of the capitalist system can open some happy perspectives for African countries. **Africa can take the opportunity of this crisis to become the actor of its own development by implementing a model of development which is better relevant to its history and aspirations of its populations.** The crisis offers to the African progressive forces a chance of pulling the continent out of the logic of submission to the international financial institutions by committing themselves resolutely in the combat for a democratic model that places the access of all to the fundamental rights at the center of its concerns. This crisis also offers a new opportunity to make emerge the alternatives defended by the social movements; and this necessitates the construction of bridges between the citizen movements at the scale of the whole continent.
- Despite the extent of the social disaster brought about by the neoliberal policies, most of the African leaders do not seem at all to envisage the development of the continent in a way different from the one drawn by the dominant powers. The African leaders, in fact, continue desperately and pitifully to believe that public aid to development and direct foreign investments would flow massively one day to give them the means to build diverse infrastructures and overcome hunger, diseases and illiteracy. The New Partnership for the African Development (NEPAD) which was created in 2001 by a cartel of Chiefs of State in favor of the dogma of neo liberalism was the expression of this naive vision of development resulting from a deeper integration to globalization.
- If it is distressing to notice that no strong voice still rises in the sphere of the African leaders to denounce the world order drawn as such by the dominant powers, we cannot avoid rejoicing to see an endlessly increasing number of women and men feel in a conscious or confused way, the need to change the order of things imposed as such. This feeling is expressed through some actions of resistance and struggle, some riots or revolts, or simply dissatisfaction and a sabotage of everything that contributes to maintaining the status quo. On the entire continent, some social groups well organized and conscientious of the necessity of reversing the present order and also consequently their capacity to contribute to it, by struggling to transform the resistances and the daily struggling into a reaction against the dominant system.
- Through different types of daily actions, these social groups do not content themselves to only deplore the social disaster brought about by the neoliberal policies; they also try to initiate some innovating experiences of development and invention of new forms of democracy. On the basis of enormous technological means offered by the dominant system, these groups are today less and less isolated from one another and patiently learn to create some networks within which they disseminate some experiences and ideas that reinforce the sentiment that it is possible to change things. This situation is a clear indicator that a real organizational potential is on the point of being made in the African societies, but it also rises at the same time and in a brutal way, the question of knowing how to channel and utilize this potential to make the aspirations of people reach a qualitative change.
- Today, with regards to the extent of the world economic crisis, the risk is big to see the African leaders trying to restore some dictatorial regimes; and this way, with the principal objective to block any desire of protest by the organizations of civil society

against the drastic measures that they would be bound to take. The authoritarian temptation will be even stronger among most of the African leaders who do not envisage coming out of this crisis only by policies contrary to the interests of masses and susceptible to lead to social troubles. The project of President Tandja seems to a certain extent to be in line with this optic; as the strong State that he proposes to build is a real liberticidal State and not a State of strong rights, capable to manage the national resources to the exclusive benefit of its citizens. Some speakers think that this project is in line with the optic of the reconstruction of the State which does not necessarily involve a continuation of neocolonial relations as it seems to come out of the politics of diversification of mining partners by the President.

Thematic axis 2: “Crisis of the neocolonial model and authoritarian restoration in Niger,” presented by Mr. Maman Sani Adamou, Secretary General of the Revolutionary Organization for New Democracy (ORDN Tarmamuwa)

During his presentation, Mr. Maman Sani Adamou focused particularly on the crisis of the neocolonial model and the rampant phenomenon of authoritarian restoration unfolding in Niger. The presentation of the lecturer put emphasis on two essential aspects: a retrospective of the socio political changes that happened in Niger since the independence of the country; and a prospective centered on the big outlines of some missions that we wish a genuine democratic State should fulfill. By choosing this approach, the lecturer wanted to show on the one hand that the project of President Tandja in line with the continuation of the neocolonial system inaugurated in 1958; and on the other hand, to draw the attention on the simplistic character of the thesis put forward by some analysts who present this project as an adventure of an individual taken hostage by his clan.

According to the lecturer, the project of President of the Republic aims only to close definitely the parenthesis opened by the National Sovereign Conference of 1991 in the normal process of the neocolonial model. He affirmed that this project's objective is mainly to reproduce the model of management of power initiated by the military junta of CMS after the overthrowing of the authorities of the first Republic in 1974. This is why it is important in his opinion to analyze in light on the one hand of the demand of securing the model of predation put in place by the bureaucratic and comprador bourgeoisie in power, and on the other hand the necessity to reassure the different fractions of this class and the grand capital concerning the viability of the enterprise and its compatibility with their specific interests.

On the basis of this analysis, the lecturer pointed out that it was not a matter of chance if the project of President Tandja started mainly with the restoration of the presidential regime, the reinforcement of the place of traditional chiefs, a strong attention on the forces of defense and security, the cult of personality, etc. He pointed to that *“these elements show us that we are far from the scenario of the simple adventure of an isolated, thirsty of power individual or hostage of his clan and determined to fight alone all the political class of the country.”* Continuing his analysis, Mr. Maman Sani Adamou, supported that the project “Tazarcé” feeds itself with the weaknesses, the incoherence and the inconsequence manifested by the pro-democratic forces among which an important part failed to include their action into the system, seeing no perspectives outside neo liberalism, its economic reforms and other criteria of convergence.

Talking about the political crisis in Niger in an international angle, the lecturer explained that the project of restoration of the old order feeds itself with the present conjecture marked

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by the world economic crisis. The measures of boosting the economy decided by the industrialized States in order to socialize the losses by bailing out banks and big companies will necessitate the contribution of the countries in the South through notably some measures of budgetary austerity, the reduction of the value of their natural resources and the imposition of non favorable terms of exchange. He indicated that *“The conditions of boosting the economy do not go along well with the existence, in the south hemisphere, of democratic regimes capable of affirming the priority of the needs of their people and to defend their sovereignty on their own natural resources”* The temptation of authoritarian restoration as the one unfolding in Niger can have a favorable echo from the dominant powers.

Before drawing a conclusion, Mr. Mamam Sani Adamou expressed his opinion on the group against Tazarcé created around the parliamentary opposition. The political parties, members of this group have, according to the lecturer, for common denominator with the Tandja regime the hard core of his anti-social and neo liberal policy. The protest of these parties take place in the system and the model of democracy that they defend seem to limit itself to the principles of alternation and the organization of free and transparent elections. It is about a democracy for the forces of market, the big companies and the classes that serve them as a relay at the national level. The popular aspirations are not taken into account by any of the two groups, neither the president's group who tries to hold on power definitely, nor the group of its opponents whose only political project is to take his place.

Considering this situation, Mr. Maman Sani wished to see the creation of a democratic pole that would constitute a genuine alternation to the predatory model in place in most African countries. He pleaded for the emergence of another pole of contestation against the authoritarian restoration by following an approach based on the satisfaction of the needs of popular masses and a conception of democracy that makes the access of all to the basic rights the main principle.

The debate that followed that brilliant presentation came up with the major ideas below:

- During the debates, the speakers were almost unanimous to recognize that the present crisis is one of the most serious that Niger has faced in recent years. This political crisis that happened because of the President of the Republic's willingness to stay in power by all means after the end of his term in office came in the most difficult world context, characterized by notably an economic recession of large scale in which the risk to see the desires of authoritarian restoration intensify. The dominant power may even give their support or accommodate themselves with the police type of regimes anywhere their strategic interests are at stake. **So, it seems indispensable that the democratic forces of Niger understand that they should not expect a strong external support in the struggle against the project of President Tandja.**
- From the opinion of many participants in the Day of reflection, the advent of Tazarcé is not surprising as such because the authoritarian restoration has been unfolding in Niger for a long time. This was manifested at the onset of democracy with the multiple temptations to jeopardize the successes of the popular masses among which the most significant was the coup d'état of 1996. **The project of authoritarian restoration partially originates in the malfunctioning of our democracy and the disappointment of the populations vis-à-vis the political parties and the social forces.** The struggle to root democracy is finished, according to some participants by the victory of the power in place over the social and political forces; and this defeat is at the origin of the stability from which the regime of President Tandja benefited to

implement his anti social policies (privatization of public enterprises, bargaining of social services, liberalization of commerce, etc), greeted by the institutions of Bretton Woods.

- During the recent years, the pillage of public resources, notably international aid and the revenues from mining has intensified more than ever. The good illustration of this situation was verified by the results of the audit by the European Union in 2001 and the scandal of the catalytic funds of the Ministry of Education (MEBA). **The other striking example of the pillage of public resources was set by the parliamentarians of Niger who gave themselves some huge advantages in flagrant violation of the dispositions of the constitution.** In another way, poverty has become widespread among the biggest majority of the populations of Niger who are obliged to use the most important part of their income to satisfy their needs in food. The only positive result of the regime in place is the “Special Program” of the President of the Republic, which curiously most of the political forces of the country including those opposed to his project unanimously, accepted its global result. Thus, they elude the fact that the policies led by the government of Tandja have considerably deteriorated the situation of households in Niger. This shows that **the main political parties of Niger have no political project of change for the benefit of the populations.**
- According to many speakers at the conference, the political parties of Niger, including those of the opposition have an obvious responsibility in the present situation as they praised President Tandja and often observed a total silence on some serious cases with the hope to see him leave power without any resistance. After vigorously denouncing the bad management of public affairs during the first term in office of the President, the parliamentary opposition of Niger has opted these last three years for a politics of collaboration with the regime in place. The only tangible result obtained by the opposition through this option was the overthrow of Prime Minister Hama Amadou in a vote of confidence. Today, the opposition seems to have acknowledged that its strategy only contributed to help President Tandja to get rid of a cumbersome ally capable to hinder his project to stay in power.
- Considering the recent political history of Niger, some speakers pointed out that it would be naive to believe that all the opponents to the project of President Tandja are favorable to democracy. Most of the political parties, opposed today to this project are only against extending the presidential term in office because they share with President Tandja the deep desire to basically jeopardize democracy perceived by them as a system not adapted to the realities of our countries. Taking this into account, it is good to make a difference between the opposition to the constitutional referendum from the opposition to the project of authoritarian restoration. With such a differentiation, the risk is big for the democratic forces to mislead themselves in their strategic choices and tactics in the face of the regime in place. **So, it is important to keep in mind that some opponents to the constitutional referendum may content themselves with a strategic choice aimed at creating the conditions of making the country ungovernable with the objective of opening a way for military intervention in the political arena.** Similarly to the supporters of President Tandja, these people can perfectly accommodate themselves with an authoritarian military

regime that will come to destroy the genuine democratic forces and open wide the perspectives of a pillage of the country's resources.

- If the legitimacy of the struggle of the political parties and that of the civil society against the project of authoritarian restoration of President Tandja is not subject to any contestation, it remains that the adhesion of the poor populations to the struggle would not be obtained by a simple talk about the demand to respect the dispositions of the Constitution of August 9, 1999. **The political and social forces will not be able to mobilize the popular layers without putting their daily concerns at the center of the struggle.** This means that they have to show that the principal stake of their struggle is not only the defense of the sacrosanct principle of political alternation, but also the improvement of the poor populations' living conditions through some adequate policies largely inspired by the aim of giving a direct effect to the economic, social and cultural rights proclaimed by the national and international judiciary instruments.
- The civil society should bring its little grain of salt by actively participating in the renovation of the political action. The organizations of the civil society can, in fact, build a bridge with the political parties that share the same objectives. They can not only contribute to give birth to a vision of togetherness for the future of the country, but also help to solve some of the divergences in order to block the way to the destroyers of democracy. This supposes naturally that the organizations of the civil society should be capable by themselves to overcome the cleavages opposing them one another. Taking into account the present atomization of the civil society, **one of the big challenges of the moment is to make the social forces that were defeated after the historic movement of March 2005 to have their capacities of action and mobilization.**
- The success or failure of the democratic experiences that are unfolding now will depend on the capacity of the political and social actors to overcome many challenges. The first is to anchor democracy in the collective conscience through education activities and training of citizens on the fundamental rights and freedom. The second challenge consists in convincing the citizens that democracy can radically contribute to change their living and working conditions. The third challenge is related to the rooting and perpetuation of democracy that is done through **the construction of a State of right centered on the satisfaction of essential needs in the domains of food, health, education and the access to clean water.**

Thematic axis 3: Constitutional reform or Bonapartist coup d'état?
presented by Dr. Oumarou Narey, a Teacher-researcher at the School of law and economic sciences - Abdou Moumouni University - Niamey.

In the optic of the analysis on the comparative approach of Souley Adjé, who first explained the analogy of the political situation in Niger by relating it to the bonapartist model of France in the 1850s; Dr. Oumarou Narey had during his presentation logically established a parallel between this political situation in Niger and the one that prevailed in France under the second Empire when Louis Napoleon Bonaparte decided to elaborate and submit to the French

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people a constitution in line with his own objective. That happened during the night of 1st to 2nd December 1851 with the publication by the French President of a decree declaring the dissolution of the National Assembly and the State Council and re-establishing the universal vote that the parliament jeopardized through the law of May 31, 1850.

The lecturer reported that in the same condition, the French population was summoned from December 14-21, 1851 to entrust the constituent power to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte so that he elaborates a constitution respecting the principles of the proclamation of December 2nd. That proceeding by the French President can be considered according to Dr. Narey as an authoritarian mode of writing a constitution; and this in opposition to the democratic mode that gets the people participate in all the steps of writing the Constitution through the Constituent Assembly which has no sovereignty.

After this point of history, Dr. Narey pointed out that the situation of France under the second Empire can be similar to the one unfolding in Niger where the President of the Republic tries to impose a new Constitution to the people. He stated that *“the writing of the constitutional text should, in a democratic society, be done by respecting the democratic rules of the elaboration of a constitution.”* The President of the Republic should not, according to the lecturer, write the constitutional text alone and he should not assume or make himself acknowledge the right to write the constitutional text. He declared that *“If he is thoughtful to register his proceeding in the framework of republican legality, he should accept the democratic rules of the elaboration of a new constitution and share the role of the constitutional writing.”* The procedure to follow, explained Dr. Narey is *“to call a constituent ad hoc assembly to specially entrust him this mission”* in the image of the convention of Philadelphia where an assembly that does not fulfill the legislative power elaborated the federal constitution of the United States in 1787.

According to the lecturer, the proceeding of President Tandja is not unfortunately in accordance with the framework of republican legality because he has chosen to appoint five people to write a project of constitution in line with his anti constitutional ambitions. Talking about the question of the referendum, the lecturer indicated that this *“vote through which the citizens are asked to answer by yes or no to a text “* is different from the plebiscite where the text submitted is in fact a pretext to ask the people to manifest their trust and allegiance to one man supposed to incarnate it. On the basis of this affirmation, the lecturer pointed out that the new Constitution envisaged by the President of the Republic can be considered a given charter. This situation reminds, according to the lecturer, of the epic of King Louis XVIII of France giving himself in 1814 a charter on these subjects. It means that the sovereignty no longer belongs to the people, but to he who gives himself a constitution even when their consent is required through a referendum.

Considering the quality and the orientation of the dominant speech, the socio-political expert, Souley Adjé completely revolted against the judiciary explanation that feeds the present debate on the extension of the term in office of President Tandja qualifying it of *“naive, dogmatic and rarely luminous.”* He reminded people that President Tandja is not in his first major violation of the constitution because just between 2000 and 2004, he made 34 major violations regarding the oath, the principle of a republican army, the respect of the decision of the constitutional court and the censorship in the public media. .

Notably, on the basis of this information, the lecturer said that what is presently happening in Niger is nothing other than the *“extension or the perfection of some of the anti constitutional acts”* and consequently there is no need to continue to talk about the legal dispositions whereas the President is openly in the path of a demonstration of force. Before turning his reflection to the Bonapartist model from which, according to him, this takes its

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origin, Dr. Souley Adjé previously presented the environment of the advent to power of Tandja in 1999, the personality of the new President and the stakes proper to the military elite.

On the one hand the quasi indifference of the people rather careful of political stability of the country in the face of the development of anti constitutional acts as Tandja had a plebiscite for a second term in office; and on the other hand the credulous posture of the opposition during that period have probably inspired the leading elite for who it would not exist any redhibitory obstacles to the authoritarian restoration. On the basis of this statement, the socio- political expert pointed out that President Tandja, companion of the dictator Seyni Kountché during the hard years *“has remained strongly imbued of the art and way, forcibly authoritarian way of that person who led the country.”* The biggest mistake would be losing sight that the Chief of State could benefit in his enterprise of the support from an important fraction of the army of Niger because the former colonel is often perceived within the military elite as the one who is *“susceptible to bring his experience in order to conquer again the hegemony in the management of the country mostly in an international context where pure and hard militarism is out of date.”* This is also true at a moment when the international justice is working hard to catch all the actors of forfeits and assassinations wherever they are in case a complaint is filed.

On this point, the lecturer indicated that *“the quasi epidermal mistrust of the military elite vis-à-vis some civilian challengers considered versatile and quarrelsome increases the probability of looking for a solution in which Tandja will constitute the key person.”* In a situation where the principle of democratic alternation is suddenly put in jeopardy by the Chief of State in person and gradually an authoritarian proceeding is underway., Dr. Souley Adjé believed that it was useful to go back in the political history, notably that of France to look for a precedent. The political experience, this country had in the 1850s seemed typical of the situation in Niger. First elected French President through universal vote by 74 % of the vote in 1848, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had at the end of his non renewable term in office of four years and in the face of the hostility of the National Assembly orchestrated a veritable coup d'état in order to stay in power.

So, it is through the Bonapartist model, according to him that he just explained the socio-political dynamics that is unfolding in Niger as this model calls for a strong power and a universal vote, the same ingredients used by Tandja in his project of constitutional reform. This is similar in many instances to the coup d'état perpetrated in December 1852 by the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte with the help of the army. The lecturer warned that the military *“elite has certainly a role to play in the success of such an enterprise by putting itself in a position of making the king and gradually more institutionalize itself to the point of being able to lead by proxy as in Algeria.”*

To conclude his presentation, the lecturer indicated that the “persistence of President Tandja to organize the referendum in spite of the general protest can hide some more important schemes than a simple permission to complete the big building projects.” The truth, according to Dr. Souley Adjé, is a vast enterprise of authoritarian restoration which risks, if nothing is done, burying the democratic experience. The risks related to this political situation are numerous thinks the lecturer when he talked among others, about the risk of *“moving the political debate on the perverse and dangerous field of ethno-centrism considering the insufficiency of responsibility ethics of some political leaders, civic and community actors short of rational arguments.”* In all cases, warned Dr. Souley Adjé, *“the genuine combat is least the one that which is underway on the field of right than the one in the field of political and citizen mobilization.”*

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After these two presentations, the following major ideas came up from the enriching debates:

- The constitutional reform envisaged by President Tandja seems to be perfectly similar to the one undertaken in France by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in 1851 as everything brings us to think that the Chief of State of Niger will also use the same authoritarian procedures to stay in power beyond his second legal term in office. The speakers at the debates are unanimous to condemn this enterprise contrary to the spirit and letter of the Constitution of August 9, 1999 that the President of the Republic took an oath to respect and make others respect in any circumstances. This condemnation mainly focuses on the opinion given by the Constitutional Court to the request of a group of national deputies. On the basis of this opinion, some speakers thought that President Tandja should normally abandon his project or try to negotiate with the political and social forces.
- If most of the participants in the Day of reflection are opposed to a change of constitution due to the fact that the only objective is to allow the President of the Republic to stay in power, others pointed out that a constitutional reform is not condemnable as such. Those supporting this point of view think that it is not the initiative of constitutional reform that brought about the protest by the civil society and the political class, but the objective behind it because this reform would never provoke such a strong hostility within the public opinion, that is on the side of the civil society, if the main objective was to open new perspectives for a real democratic progress in the country. On this point, some speakers said that it was not for them a way to defend by any means the Constitution of August 9, 1999 as an non overriding horizon, but it was rather a refusal of democratic backwardness envisaged by the President of the Republic through a constitution that allows him to stay in power as an “absolute king.”
- Since the official announcement of the President’s intention to propose a new constitution, the political parties seem to have chosen to lead a struggle mainly on the domain of legal right whereas it seemed obvious that **the Chief of State and his supporters who are aware that it does not exist any legal possibility to make their project successful rely mostly on the logic of relation of forces**. This idea made some speakers wonder whether the political parties of Niger risk once more being led astray the same way as they made the biggest mistake of minimizing for a long time the scope of the popular manifestations in favor of the extension of the President’s term in office. Until recently, the leaders of the political parties of Niger did not want to take seriously these popular manifestations despite many warnings from the independent media, the private newspapers in particular, which constantly expressed serious worries with regard to the multiplication of manifestations largely covered by the national television.
- If it is true that the responsibility of the present crisis lies largely on the President of the Republic, we do not have to neglect that this responsibility is partially imputable to the political class derived from the democratic struggles of the 1990s. Some speakers pointed out that this political class has not only encouraged the return to power of the former only party, but also opened the way to the present project of authoritarian restoration by occasionally feeding the propaganda of the power in place. **From 2005**

to today, the leaders of political parties of Niger including those of the opposition have largely given comfort to the image of the “exceptional man” and of “great builder” that the public media made of the President Tandja.

On this point, most of the participants in the Day of reflection above all talked about the silence of the parliamentary opposition, which, after stigmatizing the bad management of public affairs and the propaganda around the Special Program of the President of the Republic finally opted to be in the logic of collaboration and tacit support. This situation not only disoriented more than one observers of the political arena, but also gave comfort to the posture of the Chief of State with his own majority. The political parties of Niger have also committed the serious mistake by accepting the postponement sine die of the local elections and the extension of the term in office of the elected counselors. Thus, they confirmed their little interest in local democracy and the process of decentralization put in place after the local elections of 2004.

- With regard to this logic of confrontation in which the power in place deepens itself, many speakers think that the political situation may deteriorate very rapidly in Niger. Some of them even think **that the present political crisis may open the way to a return of the army to the public arena**, contrary to a strong widespread illusion within the public opinion, the era of military coups d'état is not yet totally finished in Africa. In recent years, Africa has known some coups d'état that overthrew some regimes derived from elections (Mauritania, Madagascar, Guinea). Due to this fact, nothing allows us to believe that the army of Niger, that is known to be the artisan for the return to power of the former only party, could wisely observe the present situation in Niger. The opinion of some people is that **the intervention of the army in the present crisis may not take the form of a military coup d'état, but it would rather be an implicit support to the project of authoritarian restoration of President Tandja** which we seem to forget that one of his most spectacular decisions was to give a green card to the army to dismantle the armed rebellion in the North of the country.
- During the debate, it clearly appeared that one of the most serious mistakes committed by the political class was to give his support to the warlike logic of the President of the Republic in the management of the conflict in the North of the country. **The political class of Niger lost sight that by giving its support to the Chief of State, he was also giving him de facto the opportunity to launch his project of authoritarian restoration** and reinforcing him in his role of the only master on board with the ability to decide alone on the political development of events. The North of the country has de facto become a military zone where, in favor of the state of war, public freedoms are subject to serious restrictions. This particularly grave situation has been going on for almost two years and it is only recently that President Tandja decided to go toward a dialogue. On this point, we have to indicate that many speakers have found curious the coincidence of three major events in recent months: (i) the opening of dialogue with the armed rebellion; (ii) the signing of agreement between AREVA and the government of Niger; (iii) the official announcement of the intention of the President to remain in power following the visit of President Sarkozy.

- Anyway, it seems obvious that **the project of authoritarian restoration is inseparable from the economic perspectives related to the intensification of some mining activities in our country.** The earning of the mining funds seems to be the main stake of Tazarcé. With these funds, the regime in place thinks he has from now on the means not only to subtract itself from external pressures, but also recreate the conditions for the return of the old order. It is striking that the political authorities of Niger have never been less thoughtful of the respect of fundamental rights, notably the civil and political liberties only in favor of the present conjuncture favorable to the exploitation of resources in the sub soil. **The bureaucratic and comprador bourgeoisie of Niger who already thinks that the coming years will be fruitful for him, could find through the project of President Tandja the means to set his political hegemony.** The other conservative forces of the society of Niger, notably the traditional chiefs, could also see through this unique historic project in which they find the happiness of their power that the democratic process has eroded.

Thematic axis 4 : The civil society of Niger facing the challenges of authoritarian restoration, presented by Madam Mounkaila Aichatou, doctoral student in philosophy, member of the Association for the struggle against Corruption in Niger

After a brief historic recall of the democratization process in Niger, the lecturer got interested in the national political news dominated by the declarations in favor of the extension of the term in office of President Tandja and the organization of a referendum for a sixth Republic. According to the lecturer, the civil society of Niger should not remain inactive in the face of the present political situation as it risks leading to the authoritarian restoration whose major features are:

- (i) the open willingness of the President of the Republic to carry out a change of constitution whereas even the Constitutional Court vested by a group of parliamentarians on the matter gave an opinion on May 25, 2009 in which it “ *reminded that the President of the Republic would not proceed to change the constitution without violating his oath.* ”;

- (ii) the refusal of alternation clearly expressed by the President of the Republic who insists by all means to hold to power beyond his legal term in office set in the Constitution by changing the constitution with the option of a presidential regime which, according to the government spokesperson, “ *better takes into account our African conception of the chief* ”;

- (iii) the invention of an artificial popular willingness and a public opinion that have for consequence “ *the encouragement of the people to hate its constitution whereas the President of the Republic should respect and make others respect this constitution* ”;

- (iv) the monopolization and instrumentation of the public media which are used daily to sing the praises of the President of the Republic and the “legitimacy” of the continuation of his building project sites that are open here and there by the laying of the first stones.

Besides these four major features, the lecturer also pointed out the infringement of the institutions of the Republic with notably the dissolution of the National Assembly because the existence of this institution, “ *which organizes the debate on the political choices made by the power* ”, is a necessary condition of democracy. On the same point, the lecturer also indicated that the judiciary power whose essential role is to guarantee the good functioning of the institutions by ensuring the respect of the Constitution by the legislative does not benefit from

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all the considerations that it deserves. The refusal of the President to take into account the opinion of the Constitutional Court constitutes, according to her, a perfect illustration of this lack of consideration vis-à-vis the judiciary power.

From these various examples, the lecturer concluded that *“democracy in Niger is about to degenerate”* and *“it should be the duty of the civil society to oppose this country’s descent towards an authoritarian regime.”* According to Madam Mounkaila Aichatou, the civil society of Niger *“should first take courage and become firm and show neutrality and integrity, by staying faithful to the principles by which it defines itself.”* Then, it should *“resist corruption, blackmail and intimidation; and finally commits itself efficiently in the sensitization of the public opinion and the emergence of citizen conscience by multiplying and decentralizing the debates until it broadcast them on the private media that have a limited coverage.”*

With regard to the importance of the challenge, the lecturer thinks that it is imperative that *“the actors of the civil society further organize themselves into a forum to make their activities more visible and aggressive.”* Without making confusion with the gender, the actors of the civil society also have, according to Madam Mounkaila Aichatou, to get together with the political parties with *“the purpose of finding some efficient and effective means susceptible to enable the safeguard of the democratic successes.”* The lecturer pointed out that the convergence with the political parties is justified by three fundamental reasons: the first comes from the fact that the civil society and the political parties share the same objective, which is the safeguard of democratic successes; the second reason is the fact that by getting together they can join their financial and human efforts to organize some campaigns of mobilization and sensitization of citizens; and the third reason is consecutive to the extent of the challenges to overcome and the necessity for the two groups to reinforce their strategies to obtain some results.

According to Madam Mounkaila Aichatou, *“the solidarity with the political parties, in a context where the civil society does not express itself through only one voice and does not behave as a coherent speaker in the face of the State, becomes imperative”, but she added that “all the two groups should define on the onset the basic terms and principles of this solidarity by giving it a content..”* The lecturer welcomed as a good example the creation of the Front for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) by the political parties, the trade unions and the organizations of the civil society opposed to the project of referendum of President Tandja. This framework of struggle against the authoritarian project of the Chief of State *“deserves to be reinforced and supported by the civil society of Niger,”* affirmed the lecturer..

During the debates that followed this presentation, the participants in the Day of reflection proposed the major ideas below:

- In recent years, a strong social movement, an expression of popular tiredness and the fruit of a long maturation, was created in Niger thanks to the efforts of the organizations of the civil society. This social movement, which draws its origin from the rich tradition of democratic struggles of the 1990s, became particular through the diversity of the actors involved and the forms of struggle adopted. The movement of March 2005 brought about a genuine shock wave in the entire country; and still today, one wonders about the meaning and the scope of this citizen mobilization that arose the enthusiasm of all the progressive people and democrats in Africa and worldwide and on which a lot of hope is placed. By rising against the fiscal measures contained in the rectifying financial laws, the organizations of the civil society mobilized thousands of men and women to fight against the drastic fiscal measures envisaged by the power in

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place. In the face of the extent of the mobilization, the authorities of Niger had to give up some of the disputed measures, notably the implementation of VAT on some essential products.

- If it is true that the movement of 2005 had a real success as far as the mobilization was concerned, it is important to point out the fact that it also showed a real line of fracture within the civil society. The main actors of this movement, the Coalition Equity/Quality against the high cost of living in particular and the Democratic Coordination of the Civil Society of Niger(CDSCN) did not reach an agreement either on the way to lead the actions of mobilization nor on the terms of negotiations with the authorities in place. The agreement signed in April 2005 between the authorities and the Coalition Equity/Quality came to aggravate the opposition within the civil society of Niger that has never succeeded since then to come together to undertake an action in unity. This situation brought about a considerable weakness of the civil society in the face of the power in place which today draws a profit in the framework of its project of authoritarian restoration.
- Presently, the opinions diverge within the civil society of Niger on the project of the President of the Republic to remain in power through a constitutional referendum. **If some actors denounce this project as a clear temptation to restore the old order, others do not hesitate to support it for various reasons.** To certain extent, the divergences within the civil society around this project remind us of those that marked the conduct of the social movement of 2005 because it is striking to notice that the most determined partisans of the referendum for the 6th Republic are recruited mostly among those who strongly defended the agreement of April 2005. These divergences also remind us of the ones that happened within the same civil society concerning the armed conflict in the North of the country and the scandal related to the allowances taken by the parliamentarians on the basis of deliberations.
- With regard to many facts, it is undeniable that one part of the civil society of Niger has contributed consciously to the project of authoritarian restoration by the President of the Republic. First, by squandering the capital of credibility gained by the civil society in favor of the movement of March 2005 through the signing of a less satisfactory agreement with the authorities in place. Then, by actively supporting the warlike attitude of the power in place in relation to the armed rebellion in the North of the country. Finally, by enrolling itself in the crusade against the parliamentarians whose logical result was only be the dissolution of this institution. Certainly, a lot of actors had the excuse to have played this game without often measuring all the consequences, but all makes us believe that some leaders of the civil society organizations participated lucidly in the enterprise of the authoritarian restoration. The present behavior of these leaders who openly support the project of the Republic clearly shows the accuracy of this analysis.
- Today, both the partisans of the constitutional referendum for the 6th Republic and the political parties opposed to this initiative call upon the actors of the civil society of Niger, but none of the two groups seem to give a glimpse of the role of the actors of the civil society other than that of auxiliaries bringing a support to their initiatives. **The actors of the civil society are therefore facing a choice which consists, on the one**

hand in backing without condition a project of constitutional reform whose purpose is to allow the President to stay in power, and on the other hand in participating in the actions of popular mobilization whose declared objective is to defend the Constitution of 1999 or more exactly the dispositions related to the limitations of terms in office. In reality, this means choosing between backwardness proposed by the Chief of State and his partisans and maintaining the status quo defended by some opposition parties and those of the majority. **The perspective of a democratic progress is not even on the agenda of the debates because the two groups seem to entirely agree to reject any initiative aimed at making any progress.**

- If many participants accept that the actors of the civil society have the duty to join the political parties, others have expressed serious reserves regarding the pertinence of this option because an alignment on the positions of political parties, either on the side of the partisans or the opponents to the initiative of the President of the Republic might seriously damage the credibility of the civil society. This is even bigger that the principal stake of the present political crisis seems, for the two groups, to exclusively turn around the question of alternation in power whereas for many actors of the civil society the principal stake in this crisis largely outweighs the question of alternation and above all leads to the more global problematic of the democratic model. On this point, **it seems totally excluded by most of the actors to support the project of President Tandja which will definitely result in a democratic regression in Niger. We have to point out that many actors consider that any alliance with the political parties opposed to this project will win in credibility by focusing on a clear consensus on the scope of the democratic model to be promoted in the framework of the struggle that is beginning.** Finally, it is on this conclusion that the civil society according to some people can preserve its credibility and avoid appearing as a backup force for political parties who, as recent history has shown, have often contributed to make the bed for authoritarian restoration in Niger.
- According to many participants in the Day of reflection, it is important to consider the extent of this political crisis opened by the project of the Chief of State to stay in power because the success of this project will damage in an incommensurable way all the democratic results including public liberties that constitute the main foundation on which is based the action of the civil society. The defenders of this position think that the alliance between the political parties and the organizations of the civil society is an unavoidable demand related before anything to the imperative of survival. This alliance will principally consist in joining the means of actions and pressure to stop the authoritarian impulse of the power in place by keeping in mind that even **if the motivations of the actors in presence are openly different or even contradictory, the dispersion of efforts would profit to the power in place.**
- If it is indispensable that the actors of the civil society show leniency towards the political parties as some participants have expressed the wish during the Day of reflection, it is also good that the latter understand that the struggle against the project of President Tandja has to integrate the concerns of both male and female citizens. This means that the political parties and the organizations of the civil society should discuss and agree beforehand on the limits of a new democratic project to oppose to the project

of authoritarian restoration envisaged by the Chief of State. The organizations of the civil society have, according to the opinion of some people, to make the concrete concerns of the citizens prevail in the discussions. They have to insist in particular on the fact that **the struggle for democracy would not be limited to the defense of the principle of political alternation even though this principle is of undeniable importance for them, too.**

- Taking into account the weather forecast which is rather pessimistic, some speakers have insisted on the risk of seeing the present political crisis exacerbated by a severe food crisis. The competent services definitely agree to affirm that the countries of the Sahel risk knowing a difficult situation as far as food is concerned. If these forecasts are confirmed, we have to worry that the social situation of households in Niger will deteriorate in a durable way; above all the public powers are presently busy with the organization of the referendum for the 6th Republic rather than the preparation for the agro pastoral campaign. The perspectives of international sanctions against the State of Niger may contribute to aggravate this situation even further and it is time the civil society of Niger already rings the bell of alert so that the worst be avoided for the rural populations.

General conclusion

At the end of the fruitful debates on the Day of reflection, it clearly came out that the project of President Tandja to organize a constitutional referendum for a 6th Republic is an initiative which bears some serious threats for the preservation of the democratic framework. The speakers all agreed to point out the necessity to intensify the struggle for the defense of democracy without forgetting to clarify the preliminary limits of the democratic model that is to be promoted in the country. If most of the speakers accept that the present model constitutes a significant progress compared to the police type State before 1991, some of them did not miss the opportunity to talk about a weak democracy mainly centered on the interests of the dominant classes than on the real aspirations of popular masses without assistance..

The principal stake of the present struggle should not hide the appropriately social dimension of the aspirations of popular masses in most part of the two decades of democratization; the civilian political challengers seem to be interested in their careers and their benefits than the real improvement of the living conditions of people. The quasi absence of social significant transformation politically operated or through the parliament during all this period only contributed to gradually deepen the gap between the civilian candidates and the underprivileged social layers who quickly became the easy preys of political bargaining of the Tandja regime in quest for an authoritarian restoration since 1995.

It is also urgent to put forward the redefinition of a new democratic setting more in line with the major determinants of national development that are notably health, education, employment and purchasing power. The quality and the perpetuation of a democratic structure will depend on the satisfaction of these priorities through the implementation of bold economic and social policies and of democratic governance at all the levels of the State and that of the private sector.

List of participants

Name and surname	Occupation
1-Albert Chaibou	Journalist
2-Ali Idrissa	Civil society, Deputy Director Dounia, ROTAB
3-Almoustapha Moumouni	Civil society, Responsable SWISSAID Niger
4-Mme Amina Tiémogo	Trade unionist, Deputy SG, CDTN
5-Dr Badié Hima	Civil society, Vice President ANDDH
6-Pr. Djibo Hamani	Historian, Teacher researcher, UAM,
7-Dr Elback Adam	Philosopher, Teacher researcher, UAM
8-Mahamadou Dandah	Former Minister
9-Mamane Sani Adamou	Teacher, political leader
10-Moussa Tchangari	Journalist, Civil society, Alternative EC
11-Sabo Saidou	Former parliamentarian
12-Souley Adji	Socio-political expert, teacher researcher, AEC
13-Me Souley Oumarou	Lawyer
14-Ibrahim Yacouba	Trade unionist, SNAD, RNDD
15-Adamou Imirane Maiga	Trade unionist, SYNAJECS, Citizen Convergence
16-Mme Bagna Aissata Fall	Civil society, NLC
17-Dr Ibro Abdou	Economist, Teacher researcher, Director ISEP
18-Dr Omar Narey	Jurist, Teacher researcher, UAM
19-Dr Gandou Zakara	Jurist, Teacher researcher, UAM
20-Dada Magaji	Former national parliamentarian
21-Mme Fatouma Zara Sabo	Civil society, president CONGAFEN
22-Weila Ilguilass	Civil society, President Timidria
23-Inoussa Saouna	Civil society, SOS-Tabagisme (Tobacco addiction)
24-Diallo Boubacar	Journalist, President ANEPI
25-Dr Maikorema Zakari	Historian, Teacher researcher, UAM
26-Mamane Sani Alassane	Civil society, SNV Niger
27-Aminou Lawali	Civil society, Coordinator SOS-Civism
28-Mme Mariama Chipkaou	Trade unionist, President REFEN, CDTN
29-Dr Tidjani Alou	Political expert, Teacher researcher, UAM
30-Mme Mounkaila Aichatou Seyni	Doctoral student in philosophy, Member of ANLC
31-Adamou Garba	Leader RSV-NI'IMA
32-Hamadou Boulama Tchernon	Journalist, in charge of projects AEC
33-Hassan Boukar	Journalist, in charge of projects AEC
34-Diori Ibrahim	Responsible of Youth AEC
35-Mamoudou Hassane	Civil society, MOORIBEN
36-Mahaman Lawan Gaya	Former minister
37-Moussa Seydou	Civil society, ONG Annouri
38-Hubaux Samuel	Doctoral student, Belgium
39-Abdou Yahouza	Civil society, AEC
40-Oumarou Lalo Keita	Journalist, Human rights commissioner
41-Mahamadou Yahaya	Civil society, AREN
42-Kaka Doka	Civil society, former student leader
43-Laouali Abdo	Trade unionist, CDTN

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44-Yaou Ibrahim	Civil society, SOS-Civism
45-Moutari Issoufou	Radio Anfani
46-Hamadataher Harouna	Civil society, ANDDH
47-Ibrahim Inabouta	Civil society
48-Garba Abdoulahi	Student UAM
49-Souleymane Maazou	Journalist, Alternative
50-Hamidou Balkissa	Responsible of project, AEC
51-Moussa Dankoma	Student UAM
52-Chaibou Boubacar	Journalist, Alternative
53-Moumouni Adamou	Researcher, LASDEL
54-Chatou Mahamadou	Journalist, Director radio Alternative
55-Abdou Mijinguini	Linguist, Researcher
56-Moumouni Idé	Civil society
57-Almansour Galidoum	Civil society, Timidria
58-Souley Magé	Journalist, radio Alternative
59-Etienne du Vachat	Civil society, OXFAM-Novib
60-Abdourahmane Idrissa	Civil society
61-Habibou Ibrahim	Civil society, Timidria
62-Iktan Alhousseini	Civil society, Timidria
63-Ibrahim Souleymane	Pupil, Civil society