

Niger coup leader names himself head of transitional gov't



Abdourahmane Tchiani, head of Niger's presidential guard, has named himself head of a transitional government in the West African country, two days after his unit overthrew

democratically-elected President Mohamed Bazoum.

He made the announcement on Friday on state-run television, saying he was the "president of the

National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland," Al Jazeera wrote.

The 62-year-old general also said the intervention had been necessary to avoid "the gradual and

inevitable demise" of the country. He said while Bazoum had sought to convince people that "all is going well... the harsh reality (is) a pile of dead, displaced, humiliation, and

General Tchiani, Niger's new strongman, speaks on national television in Niamey, Niger, on July 28, 2023.

AFP

frustration".

"The security approach today has not brought security to the country despite heavy sacrifices," Tchiani said.

There was no mention of a timeline for return to civilian leadership.

Tchiani, who was drafted to lead the elite unit in 2015, is from Niger's western region of Tillaberi, a main recruitment area for the army. He remains a close ally of former President Mahamadou Issoufou – the politician who led the country until 2021.

The general reportedly led the resistance to a thwarted coup attempt in March 2021, when a military unit tried to seize the presidential palace days before Bazoum, who had just been elected, was due to be sworn in.

On Wednesday, Tchiani's unit detained Bazoum in the presidential palace in the capital, Niamey,

provoking a flurry of condemnation from leaders within Africa and beyond. It remains unclear where Bazoum is or if he is still being detained.

Colonel Amadou Abdramane, spokesperson of the group which took power, said on state TV on Friday that the constitution had been suspended and all institutions of state dissolved.

Abdrmane said Niger's borders are closed, and a nationwide curfew has been declared. The soldiers warned against any foreign intervention, adding that they will respect Bazoum's well-being.

Hours later, a defiant Bazoum said the country's "hard-won gains" in establishing democracy would be protected.

"All Nigeriens who love democracy and freedom would want this," he said early on Thursday on the social platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

The coup is the fifth successful one in the landlocked country since it gained independence from France

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian, Chinese delegates attend N Korea parade



AFP

AP – North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was joined Thursday by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chinese ruling party official Li Hongzhong as he displayed his most powerful nuclear-capable missiles in a military parade.

North Korea's invitation of Russian and Chinese delegates was a rare diplomatic opening since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. North Korean state media also highlighted a message sent by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who thanked Kim for "firmly supporting" his war efforts in Ukraine.

Typo leaks US military emails to Russian ally

AFP – Britain's Defence Ministry said Friday it had launched a probe after officials unwittingly sent emails reportedly containing classified information to Russian ally Mali due to mistyping an address ending with the West African country's .ml domain, rather than the US military's similar .mil address. The majority of messages contained trivial information, such as holiday staffing schedules for officials, but others had detailed descriptions of British research into hypersonic missiles, The Times newspaper noted.

Israeli air chief warns of security threat



REUTERS

REUTERS – The Israel Air Force Chief Major-General Tomer Bar said on Friday that the regime's enemies might exploit a political crisis triggered by an overhaul of the judiciary, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied would undermine its democracy. As the crisis escalated following Monday's vote, Israel's Ynet news said Netanyahu received at least four letters from Military Intelligence warning of serious security ramifications arising from the judicial overhaul.

Putin woos African leaders with promises

Russian President Vladimir Putin courted leaders from Africa at a summit on Friday, hailing the continent's growing role in global affairs and offering to expand political and business ties.

Addressing the two-day Russia-Africa summit, Putin said Moscow will closely analyze a peace proposal for Ukraine that African leaders have sought to pursue, AP reported.

"This is an acute issue, and we aren't evading its consideration," Putin said, emphasizing that Russia is treating the African initiative with respect and "looking at it attentively". He encouraged the African leaders to talk to Ukraine, which has refused to engage in talks until Russian

troops pull back.

"I believe it's necessary to also talk to the other side, although we are grateful to our African friends for their attention to the issue," Putin said.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said African leaders were looking forward to engaging further with Putin later Friday on their peace proposal.

Ramaphosa, who leads sub-Saharan Africa's most developed country, also spoke out against the exploitation of the continent, saying that "we must stop those countries that count their wealth and their assets in terms of the minerals that reside in African soil."

Putin in his speech reaf-

firmed his pledge that Russia will maintain steady supplies of grain and other agricultural products to the continent after its withdrawal from a deal allowing grain shipments from Ukraine. Moscow's withdrawal from the Black Sea agreement has fueled concerns of a global food crisis.

"Russia will always be a responsible international supplier of agricultural products and will continue to support the countries and region in need by offering free grain and other supplies," the Russian leader said.

He declared at the summit's opening Thursday that Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, Eritrea, and Central African

Republic each will receive 25,000 to 50,000 tons of Russian grain in the next three to four months.

In comparison, the UN World Food Program shipped 725,000 tons of grain to several countries including Somalia under the Black Sea deal.

The Russia-Africa summit marks a renewed Kremlin effort to bolster ties with a continent of 1.3 billion people that is increasingly assertive on the global stage. Africa's 54 nations make up the largest voting bloc at the United Nations and have been more divided than any other region on General Assembly resolutions criticizing Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Putin said Russia plans to expand trade and eco-



economic ties with Africa and continue efforts to relieve their debt burden by writing off another \$90 million of their debts.

Putin noted that Moscow also stands ready to bolster defense ties with African countries by helping train their military and expanding supplies of military equipment, some of them on a no-cost basis.

Russian President Vladimir Putin (r) and Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi shake hands during a family photo opportunity during the Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday, July 28, 2023.

ALEXEI DANICHEV/SPUTNIK

Trump accused of having security video deleted

Donald Trump ordered employees at his Florida resort to delete security videos as he was under investigation for retaining classified documents, US prosecutors said on Thursday as they broadened the case against the former president and charged a second member of his staff with helping to hide documents.

US Special Counsel Jack Smith filed three new criminal counts against Trump, bringing the total to 40, and charged a maintenance worker at Trump's Mar-a-Lago re-

sort, Carlos De Oliveira, with conspiracy to obstruct justice, according to Reuters.

De Oliveira, 56, told another worker at the resort where Trump lives that "the boss" wanted security videos of the property in Florida deleted after the Justice Department subpoenaed them.

Prosecutors also charged De Oliveira with lying to the FBI during a voluntary interview, falsely claiming he had no involvement in moving boxes of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. "Never saw nothing," De



Oliveira told the agents, according to the indictment. De Oliveira's lawyer did

not immediately respond to a request for comment. The charges were made public hours after Trump

said his attorneys met with the Justice Department officials investigating his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, in a sign that another set of criminal charges could come soon.

"This is nothing more than a continued desperate and

flailing attempt by the Biden Crime Family and their Department of Justice to harass President Trump and those around him," Trump's campaign said in a statement.

Trump pleaded not guilty in Miami last month to federal charges of unlawfully retaining classified government documents after leaving office in 2021 and obstructing justice. Prosecutors accused him of risking some of the most sensitive US national security secrets.

Trump is the first former US president to face criminal charges and has already been indicted twice this year.