

NIGER

Toubou

Activity: 1994-2020

General notes

- The Toubou are nomadic peoples inhabiting the Tibesti Mountains that are centred in the Sahara of northern Chad and reach into Libya and north-eastern Niger. In Niger, they constitute a small minority group, inhabiting the remote eastern areas of the country and make up around 0.3% of the population (Minority Rights Group International). There are active Toubou movements in all of these aforementioned states. This is significant vis-à-vis categorizing the group as irredentist or not; for example the Toubou in Northern Chad are not irredentist as they do not wish to be retrieved by Libya (Hale & Siroky 2022).
- The name of the group is also occasionally written as ‘Tubu’, as well as ‘Teda’ (Hudson Institute 2014).

Movement start and end dates

- According to the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, two separate Toubou armed movements emerged in the 1990s which both demanded autonomy for ethnic Toubous in eastern Niger (Massalatchi 2008). In 1994 the FDR (Front Démocratique du Renouveau), also calling itself Front Démocratique Révolutionnaire, was formed, initially demanding a federal structure to be set up in Niger according to UCDP/PRIO. Idrissa and Decalo (2012) and Carment (2012), on the other hand, describe the Toubou as a secessionist movement that wants reunification with its kin in Chad, Libya and Sudan. The FDR signed a ceasefire agreement in 1998.
- In 1997, another rebel group emerged - FARS (Forces armées révolutionnaires du Sahara) – who also pursued autonomy for the Toubou. In April 2008, FARS announced that it had joined forces with the Touareg-led insurgency Niger Justice Movement (MNJ) (Massalatchi 2008; 39). According to Roth (2015:236), FARS remained active by 2015.
- In May 2018, it was reported that FARS was still active, under the leadership of its “long-standing leader” (Open Migration 2018). However, in July 2019, it was reported that Barka Wardougou, the leader of FARS, had died in Dubai (VOA Afrique 2019). Adam Tcheke Koudigan has since claimed to be the successor of Wardougou – who is also a member and spokesperson for the MJRN (Africa News 2016).
- In 2016, the Movement for Justice and the Rehabilitation of Niger (MJRN) was formed (VOA Afrique 2016), a political and military organization based in Niger that has made claims for increased rights for the Toubou people. It is not clear whether this includes SD as defined here. In 2019, the group partly disarmed but some members joined the fight against the Libyan National Army (Jeune Afrique 2016; VOA Afrique 2019; Africa News 2019). Adam Tcheke Koudigan, the group’s leader, did not surrender and was not part of the disarmament agreement (VOA Afrique 2019).
- Overall, information on the Toubou in Niger is scarce, but we found several pieces of evidence suggesting an active self-determination movement that started in 1994. While most rebels appears to have laid down their arms (Agence Nigerienne de Presse 2022), the movement appears to be ongoing as of 2020, though the evidence is not fully clear. [start date: 1994; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There were two main organizations involved in the movement, the FDR and the FARS. According to the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, they both aimed at the establishment of an

autonomous zone in eastern Niger that stretches from Diado in the north and Zinder in the south to the Chadian border in the east.

- Idrissa and Decalo (2012) and Carment (2012), on the other hand, describe the Toubou as a secessionist movement that wants reunification with its kin in Chad, Libya and Sudan. Carment (2012), examining the situation of the Toubou in neighbouring Libya, suggests that claims for secession constitute a bargaining strategy to extract concessions from the centre. In light of their small population, their geographic dispersion, their low concentration in large urban centres and the resulting low mobilization capacity to effectively mobilize for secession, such claims do not seem credible. Nevertheless, the claim for union with the ethnic kin in Chad, Libya, and Sudan appears to be the dominant SD claim. We code this as an independence claim as the Toubou want to form their own, independent state together with Toubou from other countries rather than merge with an already-existing state. [1994-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 1994; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

- The Toubou are sometimes identified as “irredentist”. However, that is because they want to form an independent state with their ethnic kin in neighboring states. No Toubou group controls a neighboring state, and the Toubou’s goal is notably not to merge with another existing state (Horowitz 1992: 124). [no irredentist claims]

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Toubou does not have an official status but consists of areas around the Tibesti Mountains. These mountains are located in the Sahara in northern Chad and expand into Libya and northeastern Niger. We code this claim based on Roth (2015: 230), but only include those areas within Niger, in keeping with SDM’s coding rules on cross-border claims.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- In 1995 the FDR called for far-reaching autonomy for a vast region in eastern Niger. Later that year, the first clashes with Niger’s security forces occurred and resulted in 34 deaths (UCDP/PRIO). Fighting continued in 1996 and 1997, but did not reach the 25 deaths threshold. FDR signed a cease-fire agreement with the government in 1998 (UCDP/PRIO).
- In 1997, a new rebel group, FARS (Forces armées révolutionnaires du Sahara) was established and started fighting the government of Niger. Their goal was the same as the FDR’s. The fighting did not reach the 25-deaths threshold according to UCDP/PRIO. The conflict was terminated by the signing of a ceasefire agreement in November 1997. The accord was successfully upheld until September 2001, when there was renewed fighting between Nigerien troops and FARS fighters (did not cross 25 battle-related death threshold of UCDP/PRIO).
- In 1998 FDR was responsible for the death of 15 people but this was violence on civilians (BBC 1998).

- In early April 2008, Reuters reported that Toubou tribesmen claimed to have killed seven government soldiers; while the organized Toubou Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (FARS) said it had captured six more soldiers (Massalatchi 2008).
- In 2006 FARS was responsible for an attack on a group of tourists, including taking two tourists hostages (BBC 2006).
- We found no evidence for separatist violence above the threshold after 1995, and so code NVIOLSD from 1996 onwards. [1994: NVIOLSD; 1995: LVIOLSD; 1996-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Niger became a colony within French West Africa in 1922. When the colonial rulers put in place a tax system that taxed the trade of Toubous and Tuareg, the two groups resisted violently. Their efforts were met with scorched-earth tactics that killed and expelled many Tuareg and Toubou (Minority Rights Group International).
- The French colonial rule left in place a highly centralized system of governance “that conflicted with the Tuareg and the Toubou ways of life” (Suso 2010: 34). Not only were they excluded from access to central power but they were also forced to give up their nomadic way of life and adopt a sedentary agriculture community.
- We found no concession or restriction in the ten years before the start date. In particular, the democratization process in the early 1990s did not bring about a change in the level of autonomy of the Toubous.

Concessions and restrictions

- Some of the Tuareg groups accepted a peace deal in 1995 but FARS rejected it (Massalatchi 2008). A ceasefire agreement was then signed between the Forces armées révolutionnaires du Sahara (FARS) and the Nigerien regime in November 1997 (Government of the Republic of Niger and the Union of Forces of the Armed Resistance (FPLS, MUR, FAR) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Sahara 1997). The agreement contained an amnesty for rebel fighters, an exchange of prisoners and the integration of the rebel fighters into the national armed forces. The agreement was upheld until September 2001, when renewed fighting broke out. However, since none of the above measures increases the level of autonomy, this event is not reflected in the coding (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia).
- In 1998, there was another cease-fire agreement between the Nigerien government and the Front démocratique du renouveau (FDR) which contained similar measures as the agreement with FARS. Apart from providing for a ceasefire, the accord contained a general amnesty, repatriation and the integration of the FDR forces into the regular armed forces. Again, since none of these measures implies an increase in the level of autonomy, this event is not reflected in the coding (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia).
- In 2010, the Pastoral Code was adopted, which outlines the rights of pastoralists including the Toubou. The code acknowledges pastoralists’ priority use rights in their pastoral homelands and bans the privatization of pasture land (Bonnet et al. 2018). We do not code a concession because we could not find clear evidence to suggest that land rights increased as a result of this.

Regional autonomy

- As mentioned above, Niger inherited highly centralized government structures from French colonial rule, making any form of devolution of power improbable. The absence of regional power for the Toubou is confirmed by the Ethnic Power Relations Dataset (Cederman et al. 2010), which codes them as powerless both with regard to central power and regional autonomy.

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Toubou
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Toubou
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	43605000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [1994-1999: powerless; 2000-2009: junior partner; 2010-2011: powerless; 2012-2016: junior partner; 2017-2020: powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.005]

Regional concentration

- Information on the Toubou settlement is scarce. They constitute a small minority in Niger. According to Minority Rights Group International they are predominantly found in the Kaouar and Djado areas and “control the salt pans, acting as intermediaries between the Kanuri population of the oases and the Tuareg overlords.” According to a 2020 report by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), the Toubou live around Tesker (Zinder), N’guigmi (Diffa) and along the border with Libya (Bilma). We code them as regionally concentrated since we could not find evidence of another group making up a majority in the Toubou regional base. GeoEPR also codes them as regionally concentrated (though GeoEPR applies a lower threshold). [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- According to EPR there are kin groups in neighboring Chad (>100,000) and Libya (<100,000). [kin in neighboring country]

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Tuaregs

Activity: 1988-2010

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- In 1985 the Popular Front for the Liberation of Niger was set up in Libya, mostly by ethnic Tuaregs (University of Central Arkansas). However, it is not clear whether this organization immediately advocated separatist goals. The first unambiguous evidence for separatist activity is in 1988 (Marshall & Gurr 2003), so we code 1988 as the start date.
- There are two main phases of the movement (Minahan 1996, 2002; MAR; UCDP/PRIO; University of Central Arkansas). The first main phase took place between 1990 and 1995 (Bekoe 2012). Claims were focused broadly on political and economic marginalization and included claims for internal autonomy (Beoke 2012).
 - o In 1990, the Tuareg struggle “became more radical” but was not organized yet into a coherent group. This changed in October 1991 when the Organization of the Sovereign National Conference (CNS) and the Liberation Front of Air and Azawad (FLAA) were established, fighting for “integral federalism” (Salliot 2010: 34).
 - o In May 1992, a series of meetings between the government and FLAA resulted in a joint communique committing both parties “to the creation of a favourable climate for effective negotiations” and a 15-day cease fire – with Algeria and France as mediators. No solution was found and the movement continued.
 - o In September 1992, it was reported that FLAA members kidnapped a soldier and attacked civilians – with the military threatening to execute 110 Tuareg civilians if the rebels did not free 40 police and army hostages (MAR).
 - o In July 1993, FLAA members splintered to form the Front for the Liberation of Tamoust [Front de Libération Témoust] (FAT).
 - o In September 1993, a Tuareg splinter group, the Tamoust Liberation Front (FLT) was formed and was reportedly negotiating with the government.
 - o In January 1994, the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Sahara (FPLS) was established, and was reported to be working closely with FLAA, FLT and ARLN (the Revolutionary Army of the Liberation of Northern Niger – date of establishment unknown).
 - o In February 1994, the remnants of FLAA folded into the Coordination of Armed Resistance (CRA), a group also including members of FPLS and FLT. There is no evidence that FLAA continued its activities after 1994.
 - o Other groups formed between 1990 and 1995 include the Armée Révolutionnaire de Nord-Niger (The Revolutionary Army of North Niger) and the Mouvement Révolutionnaire de Libération du Nord-Niger (Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of North Niger) (Bekoe 2012).
- In March 1996 the transitional government recognized the CRA. In November 1996 ORA and CRA broke up, and a new organization emerged, the Union of Forces of the Armed Resistance (UFRA).
- In June 1998, it was reported that the “last group of Tuareg rebels” was disarmed when UFRA combatants handed their military equipment to the military authorities (Minorities at Risk Project 2004). The next clear evidence for movement activity we found is in 2007; still, it is not sufficiently clear whether all organized claims for autonomy ceded in 1998. We code the movement as ongoing throughout 1999-2006 based on the ten-years of inactivity rule.

- The second main phase of the Touareg movement took place between 2007 and 2009 (Bekoe 2012).
 - o While the second phase is significantly more radical in its demands and claims, it still largely constitutes a movement focused on greater autonomy and, in particular, involved claims to natural resources, such as uranium, that found in the Tuareg region of Agadez (Bekoe 2012).
 - o The second main phase is characterized by groups such as the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice – MNJ). The MNJ was a Tuareg-led armed group that was formed in 2007, and was made up of former FLAA rebels and Tuareg soldiers that had deserted the Niger army following their integration in 1995 (Bekoe 2012).
 - o Bekoe mentions another group, the Restoration Forces Front [FFR] (Front des Forces de Rédressement) led by former member FLAA member Rhissa ag Boula (Bekoe 2012). MNJ called for decentralization of political power and autonomy (Stephen 2017; UCDP).
 - o After December 2009 when MNJ expressed its support for the military transition government and the coup, and in 2010 surrendered its weapons (Lecocq and Georg Klute 2019; UCDP).
 - o FFR, on the other hand, refused the peace process claiming that “all that glitters is not gold!” and rejecting the idea of an amnesty for its combatants on the basis that it is those trying to grant its members amnesty that “should worry about his own fate regarding the various violations of the Fundamental Law” (Redressment 2009). Still, we do not find evidence of FFR activity after September 2010.
 - o According to Lecocq and Georg Klute (2019: 40), there has been little focus on the Tuareg problem in Niger.
- We find no clear evidence of separatist mobilization after 2010 and therefore code 2010 as the end date. [start date: 1988; end date: 2010]

Dominant claim

- According to Minorities at Risk, regional autonomy has always been the goal of Tuaregs in Niger. The claims of MNJ focus on greater autonomy (BBC 2007). Regional autonomy was also listed as the goals of the three main organizations representing the Tuareg claim for self-determination in Niger: The Popular Front for the Liberation of Niger (Taylor 2014: 11), the *Coordination of the Armed Resistance* (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia), and the Niger Movement for Justice (BBC 2007). [1988-2010: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- While it is possible more radical claims were made, we could not find clear evidence. [no independence claims]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Tuareg in Niger is “Azawad”, a loosely defined region that stretches from the Aïr mountains to the Niger river, which is mostly inhabited by Tuaregs. This region came to be seen as the Tuareg homeland to be separated from Niger (Lecoq & Klute 2013). It appears that the region itself was never clearly defined by the movement itself, so we flag this

claim as ambiguous and code it based on the group's settlement area within Niger according to Roth (2015: 230).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- UCDP/PRIO codes several relevant armed conflicts in the 1990s. First, a territorial conflict over Air and Azawad in 1994. Second, an armed conflict over government in 1991-1992 involving the Front de Libération de l'Aïr et l'Azaouad [Liberation Front of Air and Azawad] (FLAA). The FLAA's primary goal was "the implementation of a federal system in Niger", which qualifies as a separatist motive. Finally, UCDP/PRIO codes another armed conflict over government involving UFRA (Union des Forces de la résistance armée), another Tuareg group, in 1997. UCDP/PRIO suggested that UFRA's goals are not entirely clear, but that "its constituent factions had previously demanded the creation of an autonomous Touareg administrative entity".
 - o In 1993, UCDP/PRIO records six battle-related deaths, suggesting sustained fighting though at much reduced scale compared to 1991 (40) and 1992 (29). The MAR rebellion score is 5 in 1993 and therefore also suggests sustained fighting.
 - o In 1995/1996, UCDP/PRIO records 2/3 battle-related deaths, suggesting sustained fighting though at much reduced scale compared to 1994 (50) and 1997 (62).
- Note: the MAR rebellion score is five or four in 1988-1991 (indicating "small-scale" or "intermediate" guerilla activity) and Marschall & Gurr (2003) also suggest that armed conflict began in 1988. Qualitative evidence from the University of Central Arkansas conflict database suggests that "In an attempt to free Tuareg prisoners, Tuareg militants attacked a government police station in Tchén-Tabaradene on May 6-7, 1990, resulting in the deaths of 25 militants and six government policemen. In response, some 650 or more Tuaregs were killed by government troops over the next few weeks in the towns of Tchén-Tabaradene, Gharo, and In-Gall." The same sources notes only 3 deaths before 1990.
- On this basis, we code LVIOLSD in 1990-1997.
- In 2007, Tuareg rebels formed the Niger Movement for Justice (Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice, MNJ). A core goal of the group was the proper implementation of the 1995 peace agreement (see below) and, in particular, decentralization of the government. UCDP/PRIO reports >25 deaths in 2007-2008. In 2009, Libya mediated negotiations between representatives of the Nigerien government and the MNJ in Tripoli. The MNJ agreed to a cessation of military hostilities on May 15, 2009 (University of Central Arkansas).
- While UCDP/PRIO suggests that all but the 1995 episode were conflicts over government, the coding notes make clear in all cases that the rebels' main goal was autonomy. Therefore, we do not code the armed conflicts as over mixed motives. [1988-1989: NVIOLSD; 1990-1997: LVIOLSD; 1998-2006: NVIOLSD; 2007-2008: LVIOLSD; 2009-2010: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- During the Arab invasion of North Africa in the seventh and eighth century, the Tuaregs fled into the southern desert, where they formed large confederations. In the eleventh century, the Tuaregs migrated further south to the desert's southern edge, where they erected several Tuareg states. These states and their major cities became wealthy centers of Muslim culture and learning. After periods of control by the empires of Songhai, Ghana, and Mali and later the Moroccans, several smaller Tuareg states established and recovered control over the trans-Saharan trade routes (Minahan 2002: 1924).
- In the late eighteenth century, six Tuareg empires controlled a large empire in the southern Sahara. From there, Tuareg warriors raided settled black African tribes for slaves, thereby "laying

the foundations for the poor relations that exist between the two populations to this day” (Minorities at Risk).

- The Tuareg resisted French colonization fiercely but their land was eventually divided among several French colonies (Niger was colonized in 1922) and the confederations lost their powers. However, Tuareg rebellion continued in response to colonial rule, forced labor, conscription as soldiers, and dispossession of grazing lands. In 1923, the French colonial regime formed an alliance with Tuareg leaders and granted them “extensive autonomy in their own territories” (Minahan 2002: 1925).
- The southern black tribes, which quickly adopted French culture and education, started to dominate the colonial administration. The Tuareg became increasingly marginalized and dispossessed and, fearing domination by their former slaves, demanded an autonomous status in northern French West Africa in 1959. Their demand was ignored, Niger gained independence in 1960 and the Tuareg territory fragmented and situated in multiple states (Minahan 2002: 1925; Minorities at Risk).
- Tuareg marginalization and discrimination aggravated in post-colonial Niger, where they were “physically, politically, economically, and socially isolated from the new country’s centers of power in the south” (Minorities at Risk). To make things worse, severe droughts and famine devastated the Tuareg’s lands in the 1970s and made them move to refugee camps or to slums in the bigger cities (Minahan 2002: 1925). The Tuareg language Tamasheq was prohibited in the early years of independence (Minorities at Risk).
- In May 1985, while Niger was experiencing a drought, Tuareg “nomads seeking food supplies for their encampments [were...] reportedly driven away by [...] security forces” resulting in clashes and fatalities on both sides (Salliot 2010: 34). This was a precursor to the organized Tuareg movement.

Concessions and restrictions

- Peace talks between the government and Tuareg groups started in 1994 and a ceasefire was signed in November. Further negotiations led to a comprehensive agreement mediated by France, Algeria, and Burkina Faso that was signed in April 1995. The agreement provided for the “incorporation of Tuaregs into the security forces and civil service, an amnesty for fighters from both sides of the conflict, and a law to speed up decentralization so as to ensure the development of all regions of the country” (Minorities at Risk). However, only little progress has been made on implementing the agreement. In 1999, representatives of 14 Tuareg groups signed a declaration criticizing the delay of the implementation of the agreement.
- The Tuareg rebellion in 2007-2009 can to some extent also be explained by the government failing to honor the 1995 agreement. Decentralization was indeed slow and according to Westerfield (2012: 19), “true decentralization in Niger did not begin until 2004”. This is also confirmed by the World Bank decentralization score of 1.0 out of 4.0 and “nominal to no decentralization” in 2003 (Westerfield 2012: 20). In 2009, the Nigerien government began to negotiate with the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ), which led to a disarmament agreement between rebels and the government and conciliatory measures to implement the 1995 agreement from the Niger government (Minority Rights Group International). In 2011, the World Bank decentralization score rose to 2.8, indicating slow but significant process with the implementation of the 1995 agreement. Given the lack of significant steps towards implementation before 2009, we code an autonomy concession only in 2009. Since 2011, Niger has had a northern Tuareg Prime Minister. Minority Rights Group International sees it as a sign that “decentralization has given Tuaregs access to positions in local administrations” (Minority Rights Group International). [2009: autonomy concession]

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Tuaregs
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Tuareg
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	43606000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [1988-1990: powerless; 1991-1993: discriminated; 1994-1996: junior partner; 1997-1999: powerless; 2000-2004: junior partner; 2005-2010: powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.08]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 1922), the Tuaregs make up 80% of the population in the region of Azawad, which also includes northern Niger. It is thus very likely that the Tuaregs form a majority in the Nigerien part of Azawad. Further evidence is provided by Minorities at Risk, which states that the Tuaregs in Niger “are concentrated in the northern half of the country in the Agadez region”. EPR also codes the Tuareg as concentrated, but applies a lower threshold than we use here. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- EPR codes the Tuaregs in Mali and Libya and Berbers in Morocco, Algeria, and Libya as kin of the Tuaregs in Niger. MAR codes the Tuareg in Mali and Burkina Faso as kin. [kin in neighboring country]

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