

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

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**January 2021**

Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041

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From the Editors

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Dear readers,

Happy New Year! We are hoping you are staying safe and keeping hope with these trying times. This letter is an eclectic mix as is becoming our habit. We do want to draw your attention to our member engagement possibilities and encourage you to get back to us with ideas and suggestions. Please let us know how we're doing and what you would like to see in these newsletters.

*Ismaghil Ag Moussa & Amy Wilson*

## **Member engagement and new possibilities**

Friends of Niger represents a treasure trove of skills, abilities, dedication and love for Niger. The mission of the Friends of Niger has always included a focus on engaging and connecting folks with a connection to Niger. We are hoping to take this up a notch with new options to engage you.

FON Mission:

- 1. Connecting and engaging people who have connections to Niger, including diaspora Nigeriens, and people who have worked or are working in Niger.*
- 2. Supporting and promoting development and humanitarian activities in Niger*
- 3. Advocating with Americans and educating Americans for the benefit of Niger & Nigeriens*

We received lots of interest and ideas from you in recent surveys about more things we could do to build on the first mission area--engagement. Keeping up with current events and the conversion to all things online has offered us more tools to move ahead with member engagement. Here are some of the options we are discussing to engage you and inspire your participation.

**Social Get-togethers** - A number of people are interested in convening get-togethers. We hope to hold a zoom session with those folks via Zoom soon to see what ideas come to the fore.

Regional gatherings? Period of service groupings? Local language happy hours? Or ??

**Non-Profit Networking** – We'd like to convene non-profits like us who are mostly US-based and are working in Niger to share notes and look for ways to support each other. Please help us add

to our knowledge base! A partial list of groups we know of is on our website:

<http://www.friendsofniger.org/features/others-in-niger/>

**Panel Discussion: gathering/expanding of the minds.** We are planning to dip our toe in the water with an online session for our members. Perhaps you have some ideas for a theme, topics or panel speakers of interest to our members?

**Please share any and all ideas with us:** [camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com) Better yet, maybe you would like to join us in the planning of this effort! Please contact us!

**Update your contact info and grant us permission to share you contacts with others.**

As a member of National Peace Corps Association we can't share your information with others if you don't give us permission. Please take a minute to give us that permission: either send an email saying "YES please share my contact with group members", or better yet, go to our website and update your contact and service info at <http://friendsofniger.org/pdf/MembershipFormFillable.pdf>

**Join & follow us on Facebook:** [\(Friends of Niger\) FON](#)

The newly constituted group serves as a forum to connect those who have lived and worked in Niger to share information about Niger and current events affecting Niger. We welcome your participation and only draw the line at prohibiting political or religious propaganda. JOIN US!

### LET'S PLAY JEOPARDY!!

Category:	Notable Niger RPCVs
Clue:	This Oregonian recently appeared on Jeopardy!
Correct Response:	<b>Who is Jill Tucker (2009-2010)?</b>

### Friends of Niger Flood Response

*Friends of Niger worked through member contacts to identify 5 groups looking for assistance with flood relief work, allocating \$1700 to each group. Here is another report of results.*

#### **Malaria prevention and treatment in Mont Bagzane Integrated Health Centre – Agadez region.**

This project was facilitated by Myriam Kaplan-Pasternak, new board member and health/nutrition volunteer in Guidimouni, Niger from 1983-85. Through her contacts with ADESS- Association pour le Développement de l'Éducation et la Sauvegarde de la Santé the request for flood relief was funded to provide support to 32 villages in the remote region. Thanks to generous FON donors we sent \$1700 and an additional \$1,000 from DG Educational Services made possible the purchase of medicine and mosquito nets in Agadez and their distribution in the Mont Bagzane plateau region.

The funding provided medicine specifically to treat mild to moderate cases of malaria in three medical facilities with the goal of reducing the number of patients needing to be evacuated for treatment.

Additionally 750 mosquito nets were purchased and given to 600 families to protect 1500 individuals – as typically 3 people sleep under 1 net.

At the end of the season they reported that they were able to treat 208 people for Malaria. And only one person had a severe case of malaria that required evacuation to hospital in Agadez, a very rough 6 hour drive.





The people of BAGZAM greatly appreciated the assistance and hope that members of FON will come to visit someday.

## Presidential Elections in Niger

*Summarized by Ismaghil*

*Salam Aleykum, Bonjour, Ina koinan ku, Mata Anran Kani, Wayiwan,*

On 27 December 2020, Niger voted in presidential and legislative elections that could see the West African country's first democratic transition of power since independence in 1960. None of the candidates were able to have the majority votes to win. Therefore, a second vote is scheduled in February between Bazoum Mohamed who was the former head of Niger's interior and foreign ministries, and former President Mahaman Ousmane. Bazoum has promised to build boarding schools for girls to encourage them to stay in school longer, which he said would help reduce child marriage in a country with many teenage pregnancies (We'll see, fingers crossed sometimes candidates don't keep their promises).

Some 7.4 million Nigeriens were registered to vote to elect legislators and the successor to President Mahamadou Issoufou who has served two terms. He's stepping down, allowing the first peaceful transfer of power between two elected presidents since Niger became independent from France in 1960. Niger has seen four coups since independence in 1960.

More than 6,800 observers from various organizations (National and International) are deployed around the country to supervise the elections. A peaceful transfer would be significant not only in Niger but also in Africa, where leaders recently have held on for disputed third terms in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Uganda, etc.

### Elections results:

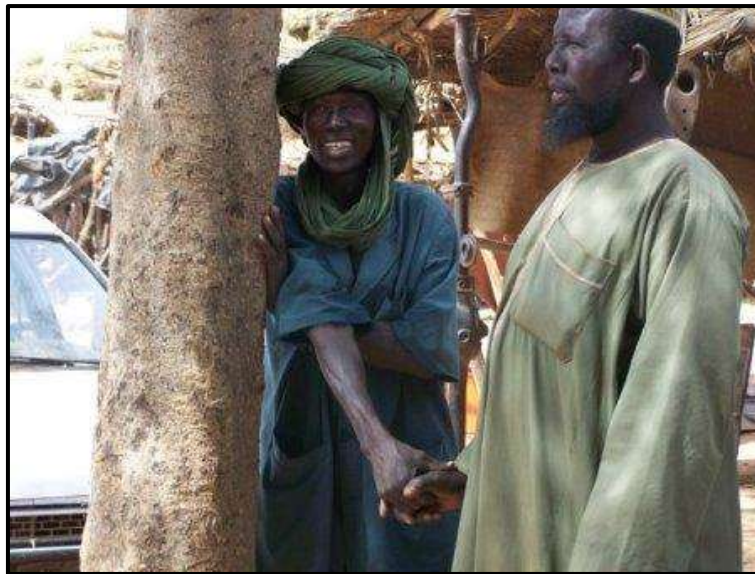
Mohammed Bazoum, of the ruling party, came first with 39.33 percent of the vote. Mahamane Ousmane, placed second with 16.99 percent of votes. Former Prime Minister Seini Oumarou was 3rd, Albadé Abouba, 4th, obtaining 8.95% and 7.07% of the votes, ahead of former Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yacouba, 5th with 5.38% of the votes respectively. Another candidate and also former president Salou Djibo, came in 6th with 2.99% of the vote. Voter turnout was pegged at 69.67%, with 5.2 million voters out of 7.4 million registered voters for a population of 23 million.

The two candidates are seeking alliances before the second round on February 21st.

Read more:

- USAID Report: Elections in the Republic of Niger  
[https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes\\_faqs\\_elections\\_in\\_niger\\_2020\\_general\\_elections\\_december\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_faqs_elections_in_niger_2020_general_elections_december_2020.pdf)

- Elections in Niger: casting ballots or casting doubts  
<https://www.navantigroup.com/news-1/2020/12/18/elections-in-niger-casting-ballots-or-casting-doubts>
- l'ONU exhorte les forces de sécurité à protéger les civils lors du vote  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/elections-au-niger-l-onu-exhorte-les-forces-de-s-curit-prot-ger-les-civils-lors-du-vote>
- A quatre jours du scrutin, la course à la mobilisation des électeurs  
<https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20201224-%C3%A9lections-au-niger-%C3%A0-quatre-jours-du-scrutin-la-course-%C3%A0-la-mobilisation-des-%C3%A9lecteurs>
- Niger holds historic elections despite jihadist violence  
<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20201227-niger-holds-historic-elections-despite-jihadist-violence>



## **Passing of Niger's Ambassador to the United States**

*United States Department of State (Washington, DC), By Cale Brown, Principal Deputy Spokesperson*  
We are deeply saddened by the passing on December 16 of His Excellency Abdallah Wafy, Ambassador of Niger to the United States, and offer our sincere condolences to his family and all those who worked with him. Ambassador Wafy was a valued partner and friend who worked tirelessly over the years in Washington, New York, and Niamey, to strengthen the relationship between our two countries.

Ambassador Wafy's long career in law enforcement and diplomacy reflected his strong commitment to public service. During his service with United Nations Peacekeeping missions and as Niger's Ambassador to the United Nations and later to the United States, Ambassador Wafy advanced peace and security for both Niger and the wider region. Through his leadership and skillful diplomacy, he increased understanding of the diversity of the countries of the Sahel and helped forge deeper bonds between Niger and the United States.

The Department of State honors Ambassador Wafy's leadership and service.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202012220230.html>

Read more about his career at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdallah\\_Wafy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdallah_Wafy)



## Former Niger President Mamadou Tandja Dies At Age 82

By VOA News. November 25, 2020



The West African nation of Niger is observing three days of national mourning following the death of former President Mamadou Tandja at the age of 82. The government said Tuesday Tandja died in the capital, Niamey, but no cause of death was given. Tandja was twice elected president of Niger starting 1999 to 2010 before he was overthrown in a coup for attempting to change the constitution to hold on to power. His ouster paved the way for Issoufou Mahamadou to become president in the 2011 election.

## Passing of Irma Poots 64-66

We note the passing of Irma Poots, who was affectionately called "Poots" by her Peace Corps cohort in the Zinder region. She was a public health volunteer serving from 64-66 in the Niger III group. Please read a tribute and enjoyable ode to volunteer service by Linda Schulman on our website:

<http://www.friendsofniger.org/tribute-to-irma-poots/>

## News, Music & Culture

- **Niger village attacks: Death toll rises to 100**  
Niger's prime minister says 100 people are now known to have been killed in attacks by suspected jihadists on two villages.  
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/04/africa/niger-village-attack-100-dead-intl/index.html>
- **Coronavirus in Africa tracker**  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-4a11d568-2716-41cf-a15e-7d15079548bc>
- Public service announcements for COVID: by actor Nourou Wallam  
**Hausa version:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaKKb-xyovg&fbclid=IwAR3vzNate1EKvF4MYQuhhCxjwNjcdTEK0C\\_JhI5vrZmXOGjTJBz06XVT8eU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaKKb-xyovg&fbclid=IwAR3vzNate1EKvF4MYQuhhCxjwNjcdTEK0C_JhI5vrZmXOGjTJBz06XVT8eU)  
**Zarma version:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Gmej-Hof9A>
- **Getting COVID-19 vaccines to West and Central Africa;** How UNICEF is harnessing decades of expertise to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to the region.  
<https://www.unicef.org/supply/stories/getting-covid-19-vaccines-west-and-central-africa/>
- NPCA has an online cache of **articles by Returned Volunteers**. Those specific to Niger can be found here: <https://peacecorpsworldwide.org/tag/niger/>
- **Africa Today Podcast**  
News and analysis from the BBC's Focus on Africa. The Africa Today podcast is published from Monday to Friday. It contains the day's top African stories.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrtyw/episodes/downloads>
- **Personal History, My Great-Grandfather, the Nigerian Slave-Trader.** By Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani July 15, 2018 <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/personal-history/my-great-grandfather-the-nigerian-slave-trader/>

- It's time to put an end to supremacy language in international development**  
 It's time to put an end to supremacy language in international development The words we use in NGOs and aid agencies draw imaginary lines between 'us' and 'them,' stifling our imagination. Every industry has its own jargon and code-words that make up a 'universe of discourse' to guide behavior - a common set of terms and symbols designed to share experiences, enable collaboration and create new worlds. The foreign aid industry is no different, but why do those of us who work in it continue to rely on a discourse that reeks of colonialism, militarism and capitalism?  
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/its-time-to-put-an-end-to-supremacy-language-in-international-development/>
- PBS spotlight on a Nigerienne student --** When Amina Abdoulaye came to study in the U.S. from the West African nation of Niger, she had a big goal, become a computer scientist, a Ph.D., no less. Only problem? . . . .  
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-the-pandemic-is-propelling-demand-for-short-term-college-degrees>
- Managing for Resilience: Framing an integrated landscape approach for overcoming chronic and acute food insecurity** (academic paper) by Louise Buck, EcoAgriculture Partners , Cornell University, and Ian D. Bailey, Cornell University.  
 To strengthen food security and livelihoods, programs must help vulnerable communities build socially and ecologically resilient landscapes. Landscape-scale management of socio-ecological systems offers a promising strategy for this task.  
<https://ecoagriculture.org/publication/managing-for-resilience/>

**YOUR DONATIONS FUEL THIS WORK**

You may make a donation at any time. To donate now, you can either go to [www.friendsofniger.org/donate/donate-via-paypal/](http://www.friendsofniger.org/donate/donate-via-paypal/) to use PayPal, or write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to: Friends of Niger PO Box 452 Haverford, PA 19041. Thank you very much.

For more about Friends of Niger:

- Join & follow us on Facebook: [\(Friends of Niger\) FON](#)
- Our website: <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Submit news topics and articles: [camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:camelexpressnewsletter@gmail.com)
- Contact President John Baird, [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)



**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way.”**

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