

Monday, 27 July 2009

Honourable Mr. Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger,

It is out of great concern for Niger and its citizens, that we, National Chapters of Transparency International (TI), the civil society organisation leading the global fight against corruption, address you the present letter.

The recent political crisis in Niger regarding the process of constitutional reform is a matter of deep concern for us, as well as for national and international advocates of democracy and the rule of law.

Your efforts to hold a national referendum on changing the current Nigerien Constitution in order to seek re-election for a third consecutive term have been ruled unconstitutional and in violation of your oath by the Constitutional Court of your country. In addition, your pursuit lacks Parliamentary support and has been heavily criticized by Nigerien opposition parties, civil society organisations and important trade unions.

Your manner of addressing this internal resistance – by seizing emergency powers, dissolving the Parliament and the Constitutional Court and planning a national referendum to take place on August 4, 2009 – has notably alarmed the office of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as many governments worldwide.

Honourable Mr. Mamadou Tandja, President of the Republic of Niger,

We, National Chapters of Transparency International, join this group in condemning any such actions that may undermine the rule of law, lead to the abuse of political power for private gain and threaten the health of democratic institutions in your country.

An independent and honest judiciary, which safeguards the democratic principles and values put forward in your Constitution, is indispensable to a functioning democracy and social stability. Furthermore, free, independent and transparent elections are fundamental to combating political corruption and upholding your electorate's most basic civic rights and freedoms. In the present state of affairs, the citizens of your country can no longer rely on either of these democratic strongholds.

With these concerns in mind, we urge you to take urgent steps to address the political crisis in your country through lawful, democratic means.

We therefore ask that you no longer endorse the proposal for an extension of the Presidential mandate and, additionally, to support the National Electoral Commission in organising the general elections later this year in a free, fair and transparent manner.

We, National Chapters of Transparency International, further urge you to act in agreement with your country's constitutional order, guaranteeing the safety of Nigerian democratic institutions and creating space for the participation of civil society in political processes.

Only such commitments can assure citizens of your country, and the democratic world at large, that Niger will continue down the road of good governance and respect for the rule of law paved over the past ten years.

Yours sincerely,

The TI National Chapters in:

Azerbaijan	Albania	Australia
Bangladesh	Belgium	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Cameroun	Colombia	Croatia
Czech Republic	Dominican Republic	France
Georgia	Germany	Ghana
Greece	Guinea	Haiti
Hungary	Indonesia	Ireland
Israel	Italy	Kenya
Kosovo	Macedonia	Madagascar
Moldova	Mongolia	Montenegro
Nepal	Pakistan	Palestine
Philippines	Romania	Serbia
Sierra Leone	Slovenia	South Korea
Sri Lanka	Switzerland	Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda	United Kingdom	United States of America
Vanuatu	Zambia	Zimbabwe