

# A Line in the Sand

Roadmap for sustainable migration  
management in Agadez

**Fransje Molenaar**  
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**CRU Report**



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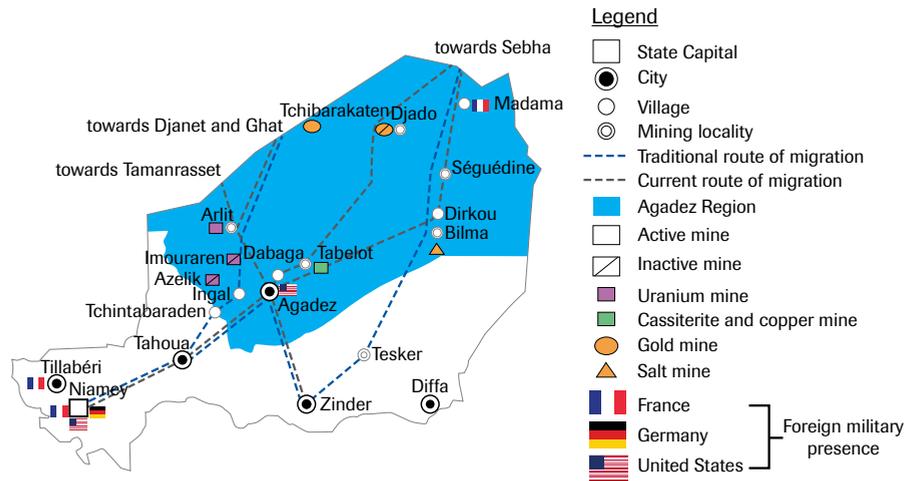
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# Abstract

This synthesis report presents the main findings of a research project on the effect of migration and migration-mitigating measures on economic opportunities and local governance in Agadez. Using data obtained through a large-n survey, focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the report provides an overview of the migration policies currently being implemented in the region and investigates their (adverse) effects on the local economy, the legitimacy of state authorities and insecurity. It uses these insights to provide tangible policy recommendations that enable security and rule of law policies, including those related to social and economic reconstruction, to address these potential adverse effects. A common thread running through the recommendations is that Agadez has deposits of economic, social and institutional capital that can be leveraged as part of a more holistic and bottom-up approach to migration management that treats the issue of migration as one among multiple challenges facing the region.



**Figure 1** Map of Niger

# Executive summary

In late 2016, the Sahel desert country of Niger made headlines when it became one of the European Union (EU)'s prime partners in the fight against irregular migration.<sup>1</sup> The implementation of strong repressive measures – embodied by the arrest of migrant smugglers and the confiscation of pick-up trucks used to transport migrants across the desert – resulted in a substantial decrease in the monitored migration flows passing through Agadez to Algeria and Libya. Given that the migration economy had become an important economic driver in the region – not only providing additional income but also sponsoring demand for products and services in other sectors as well – the questions are whether enough economic alternatives have been created to cushion the fall and whether these developments affected the legitimacy of local authorities and security in the region.

In answer to the first, we find that rapid implementation of programmes sponsoring alternative economic opportunities was still lacking and that the funding of these programmes paled in comparison with that invested in securitised migration management. These programmes have therefore not offset the adverse economic effects that migration policies have had on the region, which range from direct losses of income and increases in unemployment, to the tailing off of a demand for food, water and services, to increased transaction costs. It comes as little surprise that more than two-thirds of the survey respondents believe that the Agadez community has not benefitted from migration-mitigating measures. A similar proportion, however, believe that it has benefitted from the presence of migrants. To counter these dynamics, the report provides tangible policy recommendations that allow for the rapid promotion of income-generating activities and businesses, for investments in an enabling business environment and for the design of conflict-sensitive private-sector development policies.

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1 Irregular migration is defined here as migration undertaken by persons 'who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country.' Malakooti, A. 2015. *Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean*, Paris, Altai Consulting and IOM. Irregular migration flows are integrated by 'temporary and reversible movements' [circular migration], 'long-term migration', and 'forced migration [refugees].' Guilmoto, C.Z., and Sandron F. 2003. *Migration et développement*, Paris, La Documentation Française. The majority of migrants in Agadez are regular West African migrants traveling freely under the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) protocol. Nevertheless, the debates surrounding the implementation of the 2015 law has framed these migrants as irregular migrants. Legally speaking, migration becomes irregular only when ECOWAS citizens cross the border with Libya and Algeria without valid travel documents.

In addition, the report shows that the Agadez community has become increasingly frustrated with local political authorities who are seen to work to the advantage of the EU rather than their own population. This is a troubling development because our survey results show that state authorities are not awarded much trust to begin with – especially when compared with traditional and religious authorities such as community elders, imams, or the sultan. Recognising the need to take action, local authorities recently backed a plan to provide seed funding for small economic projects for Agadez inhabitants who used to work in the migration industry – the so-called Reconversion Plan. The plan, still in its inception phase, initially resulted in some discontent because not enough funding was available to fund all submitted proposals. A quick win to bolster the legitimacy of local authorities would be to support them in securing enough funding for the entire Reconversion Plan. In addition, the report highlights several local initiatives that could be supported because they provide opportunities for development or to strengthen the legitimacy of state institutions: a) reaching out to local consultative mechanisms to plan interventions in the region; b) investing in decentralisation and service delivery; c) reaching out to communal partners to disperse information on the specifics of international (migration) policies; and d) investing in the development of a conflict-sensitive and sustainable Reconversion Plan.

Last, it has been suggested that potential grievances sprouting from economic duress, such as what the Agadez region is currently witnessing, may create severe conflict risks and contribute to new rebellions or the spread of violent extremism. The study finds that Agadez is relatively stable – for now – but that the region is experiencing an increase in insecurity on various levels. Migrants are increasingly subject to more clandestine and more expensive journeys that are also more prone to human rights violations and hardship. Insecurity also extends to the Agadez population, given that many armed young men have taken to banditry to meet their direct economic needs because other ways of earning a living have become unavailable to them. To date, the survey results show that the combination of increased economic hardship, socioeconomic grievances and rising insecurity has not resulted in the emergence of full-blown inter-group conflict cleavages. Nevertheless, the risk factors outlined suggest that care should be taken to move towards a conflict-sensitive approach to migration management in the region. To this end, the policy recommendations suggest ways in which to invest in communal and migrant security, to invest in bottom-up conflict management and to design migration interventions so that they contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism.

One general conclusion is that EU investments to manage migration in the region have not improved the economic status of those who live in Agadez. This is unfortunate given that, despite its many hardships, Agadez also has deposits of economic, social and institutional capital that could be leveraged as part of a more holistic and bottom-up approach to development, migration management and security in the region. Such an approach would require the international community to widen its view and abandon

the tunnel vision focused on stopping migration and to move to a more holistic and conflict-sensitive approach in which migration is addressed as one among many societal processes, such as development, institution building, stabilisation efforts and preventing or countering violent extremism. Only this way will migration policies become truly sustainable in the long term.

# List of abbreviations

ANFICT	Agence Nationale de Financement des Collectivités Territoriales [National Agency for Local Authority Funding]
CFA	Communauté Financière d'Afrique [Financial Community of Africa]
COCORAT	Commission Consultative Régionale de l'Administration Territoriale [Regional Consultative Committee of the Territorial Administration]
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
EPGA	Economie Politique et Gouvernance Autonome
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund for Africa
HACP	Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix [High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace]
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PAEIRA	Plan d'Actions à Impact Economique Rapide à Agadez [Plan with rapid economic impact in Agadez]
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
XOF	International Organization for Standardisation denomination for XOF currency

# Introduction

Migration has historically been a source of income for the Agadez region of Niger, long at the intersection of caravan and trade routes.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in recent years, Agadez has become an infamous transit point for trans-Saharan mixed migration flows. According to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Trafficking Matrix (DTM), 333.891 migrants travelled through Agadez to Algeria and Libya in 2016 alone.<sup>3</sup> The influx of people and capital fuelled a flourishing migration economy, encompassing a wide range of licit and illicit actors, networks, and economic activities related to the transportation of people through the region and across borders. Economic opportunities tied to the migration industry offered jobs and income in a region where many economic alternatives had disappeared over the course of the previous decade.<sup>4</sup> This additional income, in turn, translated into a demand for products and services in other sectors, resulting in investment in and economic growth of the local economy more broadly. It has even been suggested that the economic benefits offered by the migration industry thereby form an effective antidote to stem the radicalisation rampant in the Sahel.<sup>5</sup>

In late 2016, the implementation of the 2015 Law Against the Illicit Smuggling of Migrants resulted in substantial changes in the migration economy.<sup>6</sup> The arrest of more than 282 drivers and ghetto operators (the people in charge of the walled compounds of private residences where migrants are lodged during their stay in Agadez), combined with the confiscation of at least 169 pick-up trucks used to transport migrants through

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2 Commune Urbaine d'Agadez. 2016. 'Rapport de la Table-ronde sur la problématique de la migration dans la commune urbaine d'Agadez,' Octobre, 23.

3 International Organization for Migration. 2016. 'Statistical Report, Niger Flow Monitoring Points (FMP),' December.

4 Such economic opportunities were visible in the transportation, hotel, call shops and banking sector.

5 Molenaar, F. 2016. 'Irregular migration and human smuggling networks in Niger,' CRU Report, The Hague, Clingendael.

6 République du Niger. 'Loi 2015-36 Relative au Trafic Illicite de Migrants' (Law Against the Illicit Smuggling of Migrants) (hereinafter 'the 2015 law').

the desert,<sup>7</sup> resulted in an estimated 75 percent decrease in the northbound migration flows monitored by the IOM in the first half of 2017.<sup>8</sup> Questions regarding the effects of closing down a major source of income for the economy and population of an already volatile region remain largely unanswered. In addition, it has been suggested that potential grievances sprouting from such economic duress may create severe conflict risks – even setting in motion a new rebellion or contributing to the spread of violent extremism from neighbouring Chad, Mali, Libya and Algeria to Niger. The extent to which such dynamics are currently at work in Agadez is unclear.

This synthesis report is part of a larger research effort to provide insights into the effect of migration and migration-mitigating measures on economic opportunities and local governance in Agadez. The two applied companion reports, titled [Migration and Markets in Agadez: Economic alternatives to the migration industry](#) and [Local governance opportunities for sustainable migration management in Agadez](#), provide a more detailed analysis of the region's economic opportunities and local governance and can be consulted for background information and more extensive recommendations that apply to each of these themes. This report summarises the study's main findings.<sup>9</sup> The following sections provide an overview of the migration-mitigating measures implemented in the region and investigate their (adverse) effects on the local economy, the legitimacy of state authorities and insecurity in the region. This permits tangible policy recommendations that enable security and rule of law policies, including those related to social and economic reconstruction, to capitalise on or mitigate these effects. A common thread running through the recommendations is that Agadez has deposits of economic, social and institutional capital that can be leveraged as part of a more holistic and bottom-up approach to development that treats the issue of migration as one among multiple challenges facing the region.

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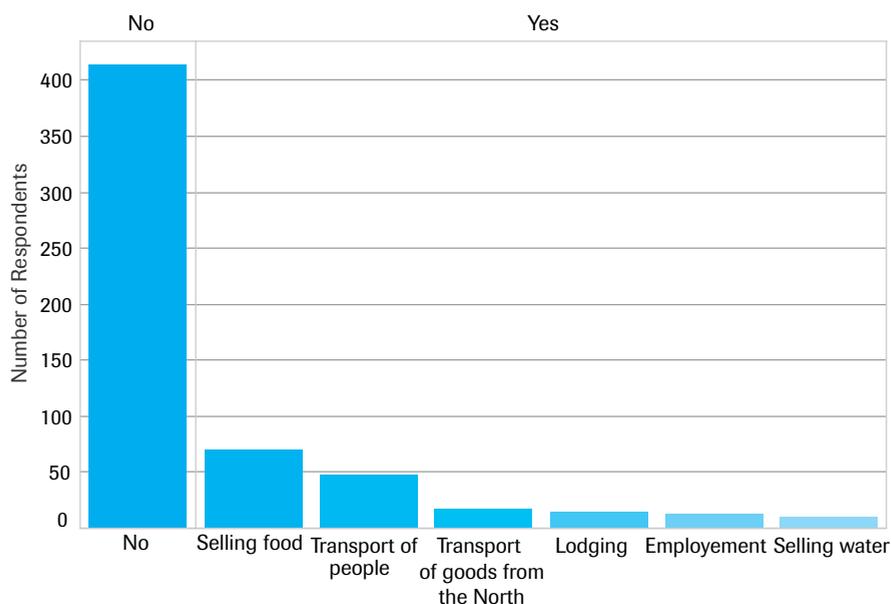
7 In addition, at least nine gendarmes were arrested for migration-linked corruption. Data are available for the period from July to mid-October 2016 and for January to August 2017. Actual numbers may therefore be higher because no data are available for mid-October to December 2016. See: European Commission. 2016. 'Second Progress Report: First Deliverables on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration,' December, Brussels. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/second-progress-report-1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v11.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/second-progress-report-1_en_act_part1_v11.pdf) (Accessed September 2017); European Commission. 2017. 'Fifth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration,' September, Brussels. [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/31673/Fifth%20Progress%20Report%20on%20the%20Partnership%20Framework%20with%20third%20countries%20under%20the%20European%20Agenda%20on%20Migration](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/31673/Fifth%20Progress%20Report%20on%20the%20Partnership%20Framework%20with%20third%20countries%20under%20the%20European%20Agenda%20on%20Migration) (Accessed September 2017).

8 International Organization for Migration. 2017. 'Rapport sur les points de suivi des flux de population – Niger,' May. Given that the migration industry has gone underground, this figure does not take into account migrants that now travel on the clandestine routes circumventing Agadez.

9 We invite the reader to further explore the data using this study's interactive [data dashboard](#).

# 1 Irregular migration and migration-mitigating measures

The Nigerien territory – which covers 1,267,000 km<sup>2</sup> and borders Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad – is a strategic location within the trans-Saharan migration corridor. Conservative estimates suggest that since 2000 some 100,000 northbound migrants have transited Niger each year, and that 2016 saw the peak of 333,891 migrants.<sup>10</sup> The steady increase in migrants, driven by the fall of Qaddafi and the opening of the Libyan route to Europe, has resulted in a flourishing domestic industry that facilitates migration flows. Indeed, survey data reveal that the facilitation of migration contributes to the household income of at least one-third of our respondents.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 2 Economic contribution of migration to household income**

10 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2008. *Interview with Mr. Guy-Michel Bolouvi*. Paris; Benattia, T., et al. 2015. *Irregular Migration Between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean*. Paris, Altai Consulting; International Organization for Migration, 2016, *op. cit.*

11 See appendix 1 for a discussion of the research methodology.

Migration from, to and through Niger is an age-old phenomenon that can be properly understood only with a view to the tightly interwoven geographic, cultural and economic patchwork that makes up the larger Sahel and Sahara region. Postcolonial borders in countries such as Mali, Niger, Libya, Chad and Sudan cut through clans and ethnic groups.<sup>12</sup> Ethnic and kinship networks across the region contributed to the development of migration and trade networks that provided important economic opportunities.<sup>13</sup> To deal with the region's climatic challenges, such as variations in rainfall, cyclical drought and growing desertification, the pastoral and sedentary communities in the Sahara and Sahel developed various coping strategies. Internal and crossborder migration and trade between communities across the region dampened the harshest shocks to people's livelihoods.<sup>14</sup> Mobility continues to mark the Agadez economy today. Indeed, when asked after the three most important sources of income for their household and their community, most respondents picked mobility-based industries such as commerce, herding, transport of people and transport of goods.<sup>15</sup>

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12 In Niger, these groups constituted a minority in the newly created state and a disadvantaged political and economic minority at that because of their location on the desert's fringes. The newly independent government generally paid little attention to the social and economic development of the north and the communities residing there.

13 Initially developed around long-distance trade, these networks increasingly turned to the smuggle of subsidized goods from north Africa and of illicit commodities such as counterfeit cigarettes and goods, arms and drugs as well. Sandor, A. 2016. '4x4s,' in: *Making Things International: Catalysts and Reactions*, eds. Salter, M., Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 338–356; Brachet, J. 2012. 'Movements of People and Goods: Local Impacts and Dynamics of Migration to and through the Central Sahara,' in: *Saharan Frontiers: Space and Mobility in Northwest Africa*, eds. Scheele, J. and McDougall, J., Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

14 Tinti, P. and Reitano, T. 2016. *Migrant, Refugee, Smuggler, Saviour*, London, Hurst, 149; Brachet, J., *op. cit.* This was the case in particular for Niger, which 'long depended on neighbouring economies as a source of employment,' as a result of which 'all of its neighbours house significant populations from the Nigerien diaspora.' Tinti, P. and Reitano, T. *id.*, 155.

15 Taxi drivers constituted a different answer category.



Two developments in 2016 changed the face of the Agadez economy. First, the Nigerien government issued formal mining permits to Chinese, Nigerien and Sudanese companies in January 2016 and subsequently cleared the Djado informal mining sites. Exploitation of these sites had spurred an important process of economic growth since 2014, creating a demand for products and services as diverse as staple agricultural commodities and water, transport and protection services to cover the long road to the mining sites and back, as well as mining equipment, vehicles and weapons.<sup>16</sup> Second, since late August 2016, the Nigerien government has implemented the 2015 law criminalising smugglers transporting migrants from Agadez to Algeria and Libya. In particular, this policy has focused on the arrest of smugglers, the closure of 'ghettos' and the confiscation of the trucks used to transport migrants across the desert. This has led to reports that it has become much more difficult for migrants and smugglers to leave Agadez and to pass through the northern transit towns of Arlit and Séguédine, not only towards Libya or Algeria but also from Libya and Algeria back towards Agadez city.<sup>17</sup>

The Nigerien state's effective implementation of the 2015 law has surprised friend and foe alike. Experts predicted that Nigerien public officials lacked both the will and institutional capacity to wage war on human smuggling, but authorities in the Agadez region seem to have embraced the implementation of the 2015 law as the only right thing to do.<sup>18</sup> Several local authorities, however, believe that the law is being implemented in too selective a manner and that it violates the right to free movement for West African citizens within the entire Agadez region codified under the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) protocol.<sup>19</sup> In practice, pick-up trucks filled with migrants are apprehended as they leave the city of Agadez despite the fact that the border is located some 800 kilometres to the north. This does not contribute to a vision of Western-supported rule of law in the region.

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16 Pellerin, M. 2017. 'Beyond the "Wild West." The Gold Rush in Northern Niger,' Briefing Paper, Small Arms Survey, Geneva.

17 Personal interviews with smugglers 1, 2, 3. 2017. Agde, Niger, July.

18 Molenaar, F. and El Kamouni-Jansen F. 2017. 'Turning the Tide. The politics of irregular migration in the Sahel and Libya,' CRU Report, The Hague, Clingendael, [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/turning\\_the\\_tide.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/turning_the_tide.pdf) (accessed September 2017); Tinti, P. and Westcott, T. 2016. 'The Niger-Libya corridor. Smugglers' perspectives,' Institute for Security Studies. There is frustration, however, over the fact that migration is implemented only in Agadez.

19 Personal interview with member of municipal authorities 1 and representatives of the Regional Council 4 and 5. Diallo, M.I. 2017. 'Agadez: Des élus locaux expriment leur ras-le-bol,' *Niger Diaspora*, 27 March.

### Box 1 ECOWAS freedom of movement<sup>20</sup>

In 1979 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the 'Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment.' The Protocol sanctioned the rights of ECOWAS citizens to enter, reside and establish economic activities in the territory of member states. Paving the way for regional mobility, the Protocol outlined a three-phased approach: the abolition of visas, and consequent granting of the right of residency, and the right of establishment. To date, only phase one has been fully enacted. In 2000 ECOWAS introduced a passport that exempts citizens from intraregional visa. Under the Protocol, vehicles are enabled to enter and reside in a member state for up to ninety and fifteen days respectively to facilitate the private and commercial movement of persons.

Recent DTM reports show a 75 percent decrease in the northbound migration flows monitored by the IOM, which dropped from 116,347 (February–May 2016) to 30,218 (January–May 2017).<sup>21</sup> The arrest of more than 282 drivers and ghetto operators, combined with the confiscation of at least 169 pick-up trucks used to transport migrants through the desert contributed to this development.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, former smugglers indicate that the risk of getting arrested got so high that they preferred to leave the industry.<sup>23</sup> In a recent European Commission report on the European Agenda on Migration, Niger is therefore presented as 'emblematic of what can be achieved with a transit country through the Partnership Framework.'<sup>24</sup>

The EU played a vital role in bringing this decrease in monitored migration flows about. The EU and its Member States funded and facilitated the implementation of a short-term action plan to counter migrant smugglers' networks in the region of Agadez, which relied on the legal provisions codified in the 2015 law.<sup>25</sup> Over the course of 2016, the

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20 Adejrou, A., Boulton, A. and Levin, M. 2010. 'Promoting integration through mobility: Free movement under ECOWAS,' Research Paper No. 150, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

21 International Organization for Migration, 2017 (May), *op. cit.* This figure does not take into account migrants that now travel on the clandestine routes circumventing Agadez.

22 See *supra* note 7.

23 Focus group discussions with former smugglers and interview head Commission Prestateurs. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

24 European Commission. 2017. 'Fourth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration,' June, Strasbourg.

25 Added to the existing Ordinance on the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and the 2010 Ordinance on Combating Trafficking in Persons (2010-86), the 2015 law increases prison sentences and monetary fines for human smugglers and allows for the seizure of their vehicles.

EU also supported the elaboration of a more long-term National Strategy to Counter Irregular Migration.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the mandate of the Civilian Common Security and Defence Policy mission EUCAP Sahel has been enlarged since May 2015 to support Nigerien security institutions and forces (police, gendarmerie, National Guard and armed forces) to reinforce the rule of law and Nigerien capacities to tackle irregular migration. A EUCAP antenna has been open in Agadez since April 2016 to train domestic security forces to deter human smuggling.<sup>27</sup>

These EU-supported efforts reflect the EU's larger migration agenda, which – as we argue elsewhere – has a strong emphasis on security measures such as anti-smuggling operations and border control.<sup>28</sup> The EU itself nevertheless recognises that the recent success in the fight against migrant smuggling has created the need to “support viable economic alternatives for the population of the Agadez region, to offset decreased revenues from illegal activities.”<sup>29</sup> Financial room to fund such efforts is available within the EU Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF). To date, the EUTF has invested in two large projects that support viable economic alternatives in the region: one agricultural effort implemented by the French Development Agency and another effort targeting the socioeconomic inclusion of youth implemented by the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency. Given that both projects were scheduled to start their operations late 2016 and are still in the process of setting up shop in Agadez, their impact will take some time to become visible in the region.<sup>30</sup>

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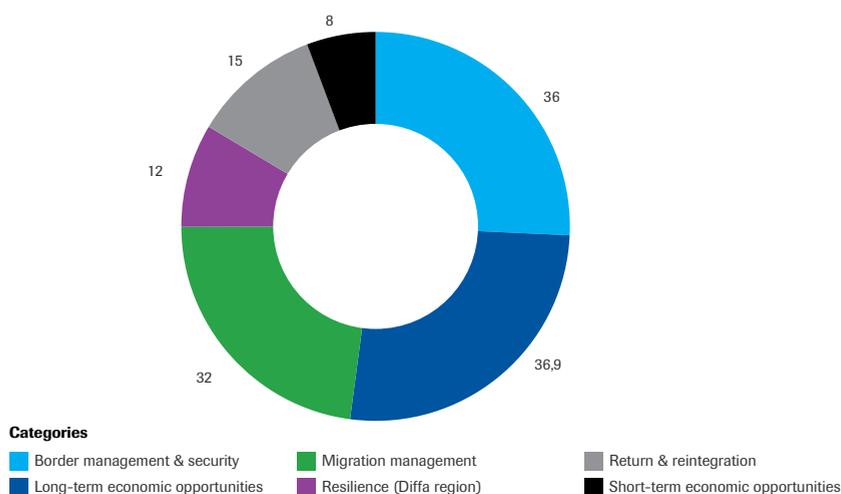
26 Through the Migration EU eXpertise Initiative (MIEUX) implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). This strategy responds to irregular migration through a focus on border management, 2) prevention, 3) investigation, prosecution and protection and 4) return and reintegration.

27 European Commission, 2016, *op. cit.*

28 Molenaar, F. and El Kamouni-Jansen F., *op. cit.*

29 European Commission. 2017. *op. cit.*

30 European External Action Service. 2017. ‘Signature d’une convention avec la HACP, et lancement de divers programmes de soutien à la région d’Agadez, dans le cadre du Fonds Fiduciaire d’urgence,’ January, [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/19168/signature-dune-convention-avec-la-hacp-et-lancement-de-divers-programmes-de-soutien-la-region\\_fr](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tunisia/19168/signature-dune-convention-avec-la-hacp-et-lancement-de-divers-programmes-de-soutien-la-region_fr) (accessed September 2017).



**Figure 5 Distribution of EUTF funding (in millions)**

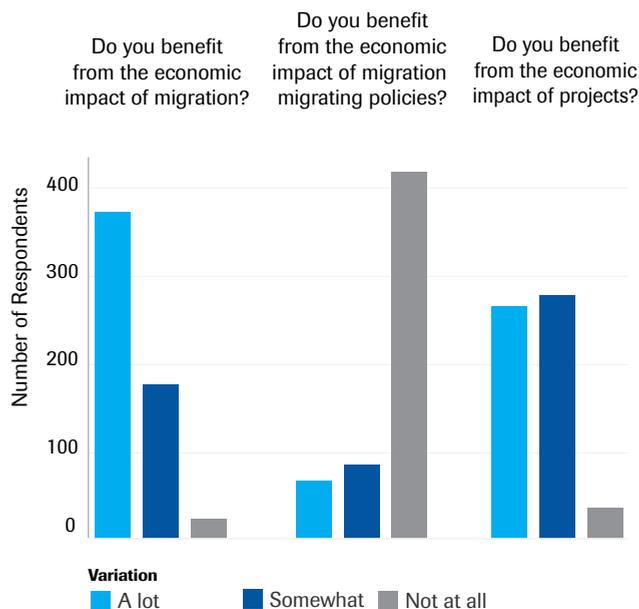
To ensure the materialisation of more immediate economic alternatives, the EUTF also funds the *Plan d'Actions à Impact Economique Rapide à Agadez (Action Plan for Rapid Economic Impact in Agadez – PAIERA)* with €8 million. Two beneficiaries of this funding are the Nigerien NGO Karkara and the Italian NGO CISP (International Committee for the Development of Peoples), which have both set up economic programmes in Agadez.<sup>31</sup> The funding available to address the direct economic effects of migration policies constitutes 5.7 percent of the funding available under the EUTF and pales in comparison to the amount of money spent on measures promoting migration management and policing actions.<sup>32</sup> These latter measures furthermore benefit from funding under EUCAP Sahel mission and regional project funding.<sup>33</sup>

31 European Commission, 2016. 'Document d'action du Fonds fiduciaire de l'UE Identification - Plan d'Actions à Impact Economique Rapide à Agadez (PAIERA),' December, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/action-document-tunisie-action-fiche-20161216\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/action-document-tunisie-action-fiche-20161216_fr.pdf) (accessed September 2017). NGO Karkara runs the *Projet d'Appui à la Stabilité Socio-économique dans la Région d'Agadez (PASSERAZ – Project to Support the Socioeconomic Stability in the Region of Agadez)* and the CISP runs the *Projet d'intégration économique et sociale des jeunes, Emploi pour le Patrimoine d'Agadez (EPPA –Project to Support the Socioeconomic Integration of Youth, Employment for the Heritage of Agadez)*.

32 GIZ's 'sustainable management of the consequences of migration flows' programme constitutes a bottom-up effort that supported the creation of communal observatory committees throughout the Agadez region to articulate direct development needs. Personal interview with GIZ program director. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

33 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. 2017. 'Antwoorden van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, mede namens de staatssecretaris van Veiligheid & Justitie en de Minister voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, op vragen van de leden Van Dijk en Karabulut (SP) over migratie via Niger' [Responses from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, partly on behalf of the State Secretary of Security & Justice and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, to questions from the members of Van Dijk en Karabulut (SP) about migration via Niger], September.

Given the limited funding available to invest in rapid economic alternatives for the migration industry, combined with the fact that many of the longer-term socioeconomic development projects are characterised by long start-up phases that entail multiple evaluation studies and require even more time for their effects to materialize, it is no surprise that more than two-thirds of the survey respondents (71 percent) see anti-smuggling measures as harmful to the Agadez community.



**Figure 6 Economic benefits of migration, migration-mitigating and development policies**

This finding is particularly striking in light of another, that nearly two-thirds (65 percent) believe that the Agadez community benefits considerably from migration’s economic dividends and that only 44 percent say the same about international development programmes.<sup>34</sup> One NGO member working in Agadez confirmed that – at the moment – the international development community itself is the primary beneficiary of the development money made available to Agadez.<sup>35</sup> More broadly, the sentiment throughout the qualitative interviews was that the implementation of migration policies has not been accompanied by the creation of real economic alternatives for the region.

34 The survey results reveal that only 15 percent of respondents would appeal to the services of local and international NGOs for help, more than 35 percent of the interviewers not seeing any scope for these actors in supporting them.

35 Personal interview with implementing partner. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

To date, the majority of migration-related interventions in the Agadez region have thus focused on dismantling the migration industry without putting short-term substantial economic alternatives into place. As the remainder of this report documents, this situation has resulted in a further decline of economic opportunities in a context already characterized by low levels of state authority legitimacy as well as insecurity concerns. The report offers concrete recommendations to address these issues and to ensure that Niger's collaboration in addressing irregular migration results in tangible benefits for the communities now hit hard by the EU's migration agenda.

## 2 Adverse economic effects

While several of the region's key economic sectors (tourism, artisan handicrafts and uranium mining) went in decline over the past decade, a boom in the migration and gold industry provided a windfall for the Agadez region. The migration industry offered direct jobs for more than 6,000 people and indirect incomes to reportedly more than half of all the households in Agadez.<sup>36</sup> Yet, migration flows have begun to move around rather than through the city in 2017 after the 2015 law criminalizing the smuggling of migrants from Agadez to Algeria and Libya was implemented. Given that surface gold deposits are running low and goldmining sites have also been closed, economic opportunities in the region have become increasingly slim.

The adverse economic effects of migration-mitigating measures are not just limited to human smugglers – although drivers and ghetto operators are the main targets of police arrests. Another economic fall-out is visible also for the bus companies that transported migrants from the capital to Agadez, which had to let 75 percent of their staff go due to shrinking demand.<sup>37</sup> Demand driven by both migrants' and smugglers' consumption has dropped off, which has hurt the sale of food and water as well as the demand for services such as motorcycle taxis, bus transport and money transfers.<sup>38</sup> Unemployment is on the increase because young people working at the lower tiers of the migration value chain are leaving the business in response to the increased risk associated to the facilitation of migration. Additionally, many people employed in the informal economy who previously benefitted from the consumption of migrants have lost income.

Commerce and other value chains relying on imported inputs such as cement, steel and wood from neighbouring countries, namely, Nigeria, are also seeing increasing difficulty as transaction costs and, by extension, prices rise. Workshop owners from the industrial area in Agadez report that checkpoints at the entrance of Agadez have become more burdensome for their suppliers over recent months, and that both waiting time and facilitation fees are on the rise. Faced with lower local purchasing power, craftsmen have little room to reflect the increased transaction costs in their product pricing; their profit margins have reached a low point. In addition, and given growing insecurity across Niger's northern border, business and technology transfer from Libyan businesses has also slowed. Further down the route, in waypoints such as Dirkou and Séguédine,

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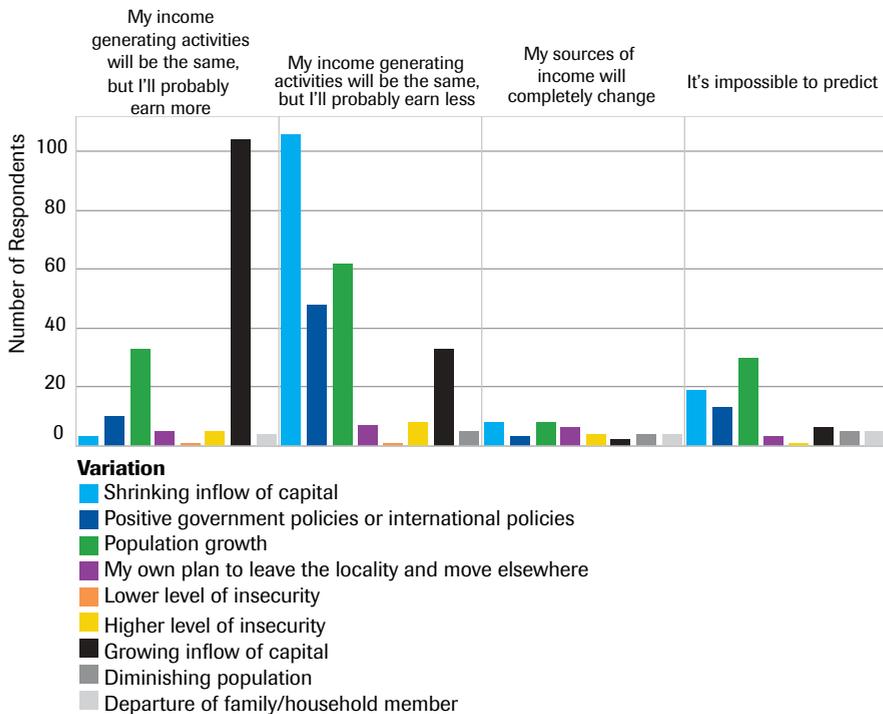
36 According to estimates gathered from experts during field work in Agadez.

37 Personal interview with Rimbo representative. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

38 Focus group discussions with women entrepreneurs, motorcyclists and youth. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

economic effects are likely to be even larger, considering that new routes circumvent these localities.<sup>39</sup>

Risks and costs are further heightened by an increase in banditry along the transport routes (discussed in more detail in the following section), leading to additional payments, confiscation of goods and equipment and even kidnappings.<sup>40</sup> Corruption being rampant and migration law being used as pretence to extort even higher amounts of bribes, cash is increasingly extracted from the productive economy. Amidst these developments, a majority of survey respondents (48 percent) indicate that they expect to earn less in the near future. Only 28 percent expect to increase their income. When asked why they expect to earn less, respondents say that less money is flowing into the city, that population growth is expected to take its toll on earnings and that negative state or international policies will likely affect their livelihoods.



**Figure 7** Expectations of future earnings

39 Personal interview with a journalist from Radio Sahara. 2017. Agadez, Niger, June; personal interview with smuggler 1, 2, 3. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

40 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2016. 'Shattered dreams: Returning migrants in Agadez tell their stories,' June, <http://www.unocha.org/story/shattered-dreams-returning-migrants-agadez-tell-their-stories> (accessed September 2017).

This is not to say that no growth sectors are visible. The market for private protection is experiencing increasing demand and benefits from the availability of skilled labour and equipment of drivers who used to work in the migration industry.<sup>41</sup> Another sector doing well is hospitality, which is increasingly catering to NGO personnel and journalists visiting the area on migration-related assignments. Other livelihood opportunities are visible in agriculture and pastoralism, the artisanal handicrafts and jewellery sector, small trade, uranium and goldmining, and road construction. In regard to opportunities for women in particular, Agadez female entrepreneurs dominate several sectors, such as traditional handicraft production (except for jewellery). In addition, they run successful cooperatives in agricultural processing and they identified market potential in henna treatment services and carpet making.<sup>42</sup>

Three sets of recommendations pertain to leveraging the region's existing potential. First, it is key to promote the creation of income-generating activities and businesses in the short term. Concrete measures include conducting a participatory market assessment, supporting the ongoing business plan competition, deploying road construction and maintenance, and ensuring that international actors commit to sourcing locally. Second, working towards an enabling business environment in the longer term is essential. Key elements in this area include developing entrepreneurial thinking in the region, removing obstacles preventing access to markets, promoting greater transparency and accountability among the larger companies, investing in infrastructure, and potentially exempting Agadez city from the '*zone rouge*' travel warning. Third, it is essential to design support measures in a conflict-sensitive way. That is, any engagements in the area should avoid targeting actors involved in the migration economy exclusively, should manage local perceptions as well as outputs of the engagement, and should avoid creating distortions in existing markets.

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41 Nonetheless, many new employees in the business view this work as a stepping stone to other, better paying jobs, such as goldmining or returning to migration-related work. Personal interview with private security company. 2017. Agadez, Niger, June.

42 The latter activities have the advantage of being compatible with other productive (farming) and reproductive tasks women are expected to perform.

**Box 2 Policy recommendations to sponsor economic opportunities<sup>43</sup>**

1. Promote the creation of income-generating activities and businesses
  - a. Invest in participatory market assessments
  - b. Ensure success of on-going business plan competition
  - c. Use road construction and maintenance for immediate short-term employment
  - d. Ensure that EUCAP Sahel and international development agencies source locally
2. Invest in an enabling business environment
  - a. Inject entrepreneurial thinking through the identification of role models
  - b. Remove obstacles to market access
  - c. Promote greater transparency and accountability through large companies
  - d. Invest in infrastructure
  - e. Consider exempting Agadez City from the negative travel warning to attract foreign investment
3. Ensure conflict sensitivity
  - a. Avoid exclusive targeting of smugglers in development projects
  - b. Pay attention to process and perception, not just to outputs and facts
  - c. Avoid any form of market distortion

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43 See this study's companion report [Migration and Markets in Agadez: Economic alternatives to the migration industry](#) for a more detailed exploration of these recommendations

### 3 Legitimacy of state authorities

As outlined, the reduction of monitored migration flows from Agadez to Libya and Algeria has contributed to the limitation of economic opportunities. This study has explored the extent to which local authorities have been able to soften the fall for the population and to which the potential grievances sprouting from this economic duress have affected the legitimacy of state and international institutions. The report finds that implementation of the 2015 law has pitted the local population of Agadez against local state authorities. People feel that the authorities have shut down the migration industry without ensuring alternative economic opportunities. People are also discontent because they had expected the international community to deliver these opportunities, which have not materialised substantially to date. Meanwhile, misinformation about the possibilities and limitations of international development projects adds fuel to the fire.<sup>44</sup>

These developments are troubling because, as the survey results show, local state authorities are not especially trusted to begin with – especially in comparison to traditional or religious authority figures such as imams, community elders or the sultan. Absolute trust rates range from 31 percent for locally elected politicians and 35 percent for public officials to 70 percent for community elders and 77 percent for imams. When asked who they would go to for support, about half of the respondents replied that they would certainly approach community elders, traditional chiefs and the imam. Only a minority said that they would approach public officials (17 percent) and locally elected authorities (15 percent).

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<sup>44</sup> Personal interviews with a journalist from Radio Nomade; smuggler 1, member of Municipal authorities 1, member of the Regional Council, women entrepreneurs, focus group discussion with youth representatives, and focus group discussion with two groups of former smugglers. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

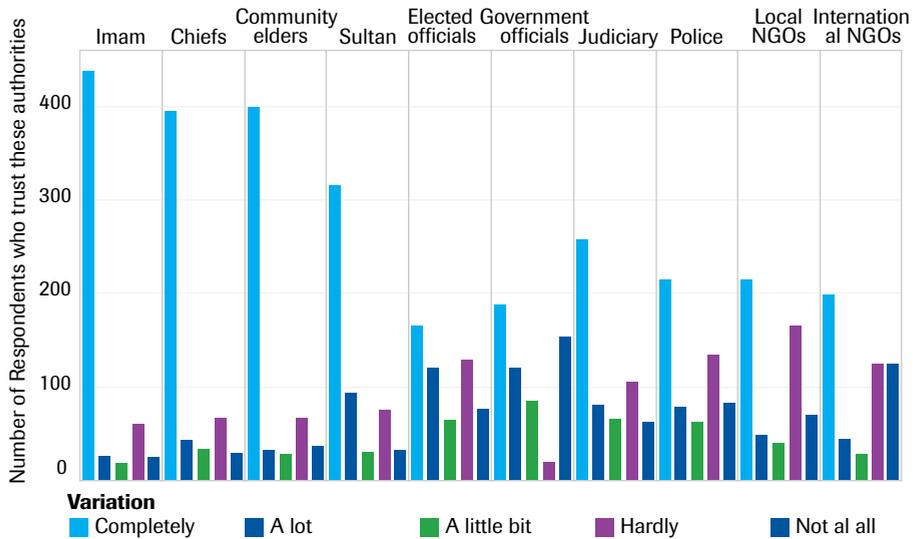


Figure 8 Trust in authority figures

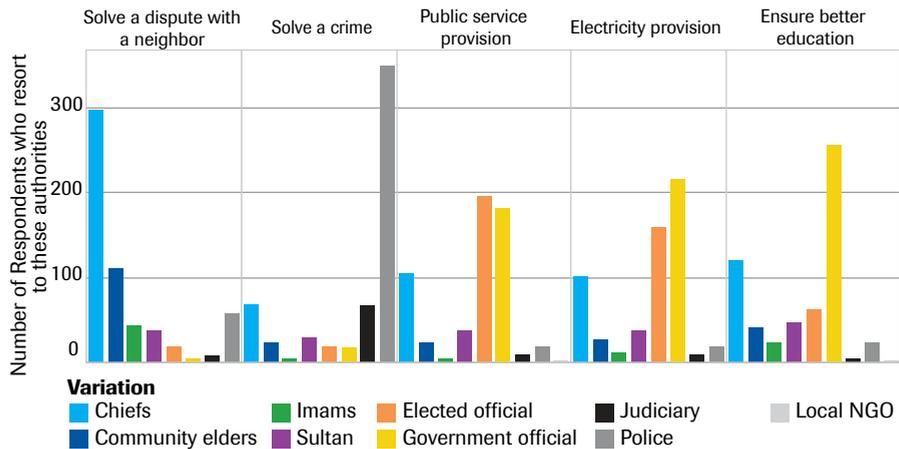


Figure 9 Function of authority figures

One factor that may have contributed to this situation is that the population makes a clear distinction in allocating functions to authorities. Although traditional authorities are deemed more appropriate for conflict resolution, state authorities are seen as responsible for the delivery of services such as electricity and education. What is problematic with this allocation is that the decentralisation process that began in the early 1990s is not yet complete – making it difficult for local authorities in particular to

effectively deliver services. In recent years, the migration industry has put additional pressure on service provision as hundreds of thousands of migrants travelled through the region.<sup>45</sup> In conjunction with such constraints on local governance, the implementation of migration policies led the population to question whether locally elected authorities could meet their needs in a meaningful way.

### Box 3 Decentralisation

On paper, the decentralisation process consists of the central government transferring a wide array of functions to local governments (*collectivités locales*), such as development, education, transportation, healthcare, management of land and the public domain, and the imposition and allocation of taxes to benefit municipal funds.<sup>46</sup> In practice, the process has met with several obstacles. In its 2016–2020 Regional Development Plan (PDR), for example, the Regional Council notes that the effective transfer of competencies and resources from the state to the local level has met with severe delays.<sup>47</sup> According to the Council's analysis, this is due to a shortage of qualified personnel in the majority of municipalities, the poor management of local budgets as well as a lack of mobilisation of resources at the local, regional and national level.<sup>48</sup>

Local authorities are very much aware that their constituents want them to take action to address the negative impact of the implementation of the 2015 law in Agadez. In recent months, they therefore embraced a Reconversion Plan that offers former migration facilitators seed funding to set up alternative economic endeavours. Because funding was available for a pilot project only, however, the implementation of the Reconversion Plan has contributed to frustration and feelings of injustice amongst the applicants that were not allotted any money.<sup>49</sup> An important way forward would be to investigate how

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45 These migrants also provided local revenues, however, in the form of visitors' taxes.

46 République du Niger. 2015. 'Brochure d'information sur la décentralisation au Niger,' 30-32 ; République du Niger. 2010. 'Ordonnance N° 2010-54 portant Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales de la République du Niger.'

47 It is telling, for example, that the competencies of health care and education were not effectively transferred to the local level until the 2016 adoption of a presidential decree. See République du Niger. 2016. 'Décret 2016-075 portant transfert des compétences et des ressources de l'état aux communes dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la santé, de l'hydraulique et de l'environnement.'

48 Regional Development Plan. For a similar analysis, see: International Monetary Fund African Department. 2013. *Niger: Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

49 Hadan, I. 2017. 'Agadez: La colère des acteurs de la migration,' *NigerDiaspora*, 28 August; online interview with NGO Tamakrast. August 2017.

this bottom-up initiative could be connected to broader programmes of private-sector development that ensure that investments result in the creation of new, viable economic sectors.

More generally, the legitimacy of the Agadez authorities could be boosted through policies that reinvigorate the quality and accountability of institutions across service-delivery areas. The Regional Council's Regional Development Plan contains a comprehensive list of priorities to be addressed over the next five years.<sup>50</sup> The international community could put its weight behind its implementation to ensure that the grievances related to the implementation of the 2015 law are offset by more effective local service provision.

#### **Box 4 Policy recommendations to increase legitimacy of state authorities<sup>51</sup>**

1. Use local consultative mechanisms to plan interventions in the region
  - a. The Cadre de Concertation on migration forms an entry point on migration issues
  - b. The Commission consultative régionale de l'administration territoriale (COCORAT) forms an entry point for broader development and decentralization issues
  - c. The communal observatory committees gather information on how local communities have been affected by migration and propose measures to address the situation
2. Invest in decentralization and service delivery
  - a. Train local governance actors in good governance and accounting practices
  - b. Push for implementation of the Agence nationale de financement des collectivités territoriales (ANFICT) and the direct transfer of competences and resources
  - c. Invest in greater transparency in the transfer of corporate contributions from the central state to the local level

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50 These include the construction of new infrastructure (streets, hospitals, schools), the enhancement of production and commercialisation of local goods (livestock, agricultural products, craftsmanship products), environment protection and improvement of local governance. In its plan, the council foresees a greater role for itself in peace consolidation. Authorities therefore aim to address the increasing rates of unemployment and to mitigate migration fluxes through the region.

51 See this study's companion report [Local governance opportunities for sustainable migration management in Agadez](#) for a more detailed exploration of these recommendations.

3. Work with key partners to inform local population on international (migration) policies
  - a. Leverage the traditional information function of customary authorities
  - b. Make use of the – very influential – radio stations
  
4. Invest in the development of a conflict-sensitive and sustainable Reconversion Plan
  - a. Apply lessons from the World Bank and Chamber of Commerce's new business plan competition
  - b. Apply lessons from DDR literature to avoid stigmatisation of smugglers and to address emerging tensions between direct and indirect beneficiaries
  - c. Make sure the plan is sufficiently funded to make a difference

## 4 Insecurity in and around Agadez<sup>52</sup>

Next to legitimacy concerns, the potentially counterproductive nature of security-driven responses for human rights violations and for preventing or countering violent extremism deserves further attention. The UNDP notes that ‘initiatives that focus exclusively on state capacity-building run the risk of perpetuating malign power structures, which are overt drivers of violent extremism measures in Africa’ and that ‘[g]oing forward, it is essential to long-term outcomes that international commitments to human rights and rule of law, citizens’ participation and protection, and accountability of state security forces be actively upheld by all.’<sup>53</sup> The majority of respondents noted that implementation of the 2015 law has resulted in greater insecurity for migrants, Agadez residents, and the Agadez region more generally. A more sustainable take on migration management would support the Nigerien state’s capacity to address these security concerns. The following sections discuss each of these insecurity dimensions in more detail.

*Migrants* are the first – and most obvious – victims of increased levels of insecurity. Both their stay in Agadez and their journeys through the desert have become more clandestine, more expensive and more prone to human rights violations and hardship. Living conditions in the so-called ghettos – where migrants live during their stay in Agadez – appear to have deteriorated. The ghettos are described as unsanitary and unsafe, overpopulated and lacking in food and healthcare. Respondents with intimate knowledge of these ghettos revealed that the practice of holding migrants hostage in exchange for a ransom has moved down from Libya into Agadez.<sup>54</sup> To circumvent security forces, human smugglers have resorted to less-travelled routes. In practice, this has resulted in more vehicles breaking down and more migrants being abandoned in

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52 *Ibid.*

53 United Nations Development Programme. 2017. ‘Journey to Extremism in Africa,’ in: *Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*, 6.

54 Personal interview with a journalist from Radio Alternative and Catholic Church in Agadez. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

the desert.<sup>55</sup> The IOM reported no less than 1,091 abandoned migrants in the first eight months of 2017.<sup>56</sup>

Insecurity also extends to the *Agadez population* because many armed young men have taken to banditry to meet their immediate economic needs.<sup>57</sup> Banditry and *braquages* (robberies) are age-old phenomena in the Agadez region, related to the inter-ethnic disputes of the caravan era and the more recent dissatisfaction of former rebels with the state's limited offering of possibilities for military integration and regional economic development.<sup>58</sup> Despite the historic prevalence of banditry, respondents noted that this practice has become much more salient of late and blamed the simultaneous closure of Djado gold mining sites and the crackdown on the migration industry.<sup>59</sup> These events have left many young men unemployed – young men with access to guns and means of transport.<sup>60</sup>

Security concerns of the *larger Agadez region* are related to two periods of separatist uprising, between 1990 and 1995 and again between 2007 and 2009. In addition, the region lies next to Mali, Chad and Libya, which are unstable. Given the increase in economic grievances related to the implementation of migration-mitigating measures, as well as the findings of a recent study that “several structural dynamics that are influencing trajectories of radicalisation at the macro level are present in the Agadez region”,<sup>61</sup> it seems reasonable to assert that migration policies cannot be implemented sustainably without looking into how these measures affect the responsiveness of the

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55 *Ibid.*

56 International Organization for Migration. 2017. 'IOM Niger: Search and Rescue Missions. Migrant Resource and Response Mechanisms,' August; also see: Penney, J. 2017. 'Why More Migrants Are Dying in the Sahara,' *New York Times*, 22 August; Aljazeera. 2017. 'Dozens abandoned in Niger desert feared dead,' 27 June; Guilbert, K. 2017. 'Niger Smugglers Take Migrants On Deadlier Saharan Routes - UN,' *AllAfrica*, 8 August.

57 Banditry and attacks on the main roads around Agadez have increased in the past months according to key respondents from the region. Personal interviews with with representatives of Rimbo Transport Voyageurs and STM Transport. 2017. Agadez, Niger, June. Personal interviews with former rebel and smuggler, HACP, chief of women, and smuggler 1. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July. Also see Hadan, I. 2007. 'Agadez: Recrudescence des attaques sur les axes routiers,' *NigerDiaspora*, June.

58 Much, T. 2017. 'Teda drivers on the road between Agadez and Assheggur: Taking over an ancient Tuareg Caravan Route,' in: *The Making of the African Road*, eds. Beck, K., Klaeger, C. and Stasik, M., Leiden, Brill, 220–240.

59 Personal interviews with with representatives of Rimbo Transport Voyageurs and STM Transport. 2017. Agadez, Niger, June. Personal interview with former rebel and smuggler, HACP and with the chief of women. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July; Hadan, I. 2017. 'Agadez: Recrudescence des attaques sur les axes routiers,' *Niger Diaspora*, June.

60 Personal interview with former rebel and smuggler and with HACP. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

61 McCullough, A., Schomerus, M. and Harouna, A. 2017. 'Understanding trajectories of radicalisation in Niger,' London, Overseas Development Institute.

state to address civilian grievances, potential dynamics of radicalisation and economic development. This study investigated which conflict dynamics require further attention.

### **Box 5 Legitimacy of the Nigerien security forces**

The Nigerien security forces (police, gendarmerie, National Guard and armed forces) are a special category that requires further discussion. Figure 8 above showed relatively few respondents (38 percent) awarded the police with complete trust.<sup>62</sup> Police forces were also deemed relatively unhelpful in time of need, with only 28 percent of respondents indicating that they would absolutely turn to the police for support (see figure 9 above).<sup>63</sup> These findings are relevant in light of the fact that police actions constitute one of the main visible aspects of migration policies in Agadez. Implementation of this law has resulted in the arrest of over 282 drivers and ghetto operators combined with the confiscation of at least 169 pick-up trucks used to transport migrants through the desert.<sup>64</sup>

According to Agadez authorities, these actions have resulted in a 'certain degradation of the relationship between the security forces and the population, particularly with the actors involved in the migration industry.'<sup>65</sup> Beyond a sense of frustration over the loss of income, sentiments of injustice abound. In our interviews with former smugglers, respondents expressed the feeling that they were caught unawares by the unannounced implementation of the 2015 law.<sup>66</sup> Next to the policing actions themselves, Agadez authorities identify the corruption of 'certain members of the security forces' as an additional factor that harms the legitimacy of the security forces in general, and their image of impartiality and authority in particular.<sup>67</sup>

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62 The judiciary end up somewhere in the middle, with a complete trust rate of 46 percent.

63 Thirty percent of respondents would absolutely turn to the judiciary for support.

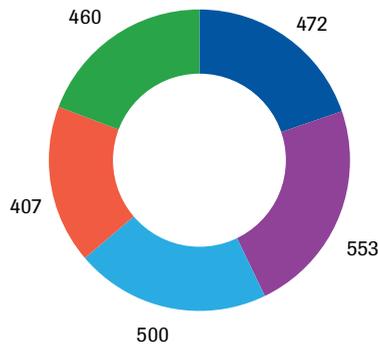
64 In addition, at least nine gendarmes arrested for migration-linked corruption. Data are available for the period July to mid-October 2016 and for January to August 2017. Actual numbers may therefore be higher as no data are available for the period mid-October to December 2016. See: European Commission. 2016. 'Second Progress Report: First Deliverables on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration,' December, Brussels. European Commission. 2017. 'Fifth Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration,' September, Brussels.

65 Commune d'Agadez, *op. cit.*, 8.

66 Personal interview with smuggler 1; focus group discussions with former smugglers 1 and 2. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July.

67 Commune d'Agadez, *op.cit.*, 8.

According to conclusions of a round table meeting including all relevant Agadez authorities, the way in which migration policies are currently being implemented in Agadez does not contribute to an image of responsible state security-actor conduct and that increased insecurity may be on the rise. Care should be taken to investigate whether current capacity-building programmes – such as the one implemented by EUCAP Sahel – could be used to address this concern. This is particularly relevant given that UNDP research notes that repressive government actions constitute an important transformative trigger pushing individuals from the at-risk category to joining an armed group. State security-actor conduct may thereby become a prominent accelerator of recruitment.<sup>68</sup>

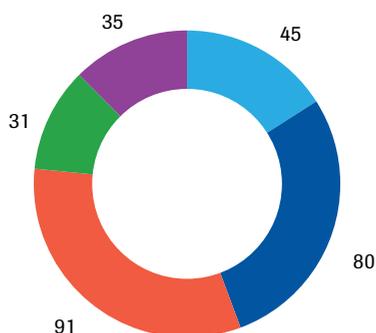


**Variation**

- Contacted the media, like calling to a radio program or writing a letter to a newspaper
- Refused to pay a tax or fee
- Contacted a government official to ask for help or make a complaint
- Joined others in the community to request action from public officials
- Participated in a demonstration or protest march

**Figure 10** Number of respondents who never engaged in activities to express dissatisfaction

68 UNDP, *op.cit.*, 5.



**Variation**

- Contacted a government official to ask for help or make a complaint
- Contacted the media, like calling to a radio program or writing a letter to a newspaper
- Joined others in the community to request action from public officials
- Participated in a demonstration or protest march
- Refused to pay a tax or fee

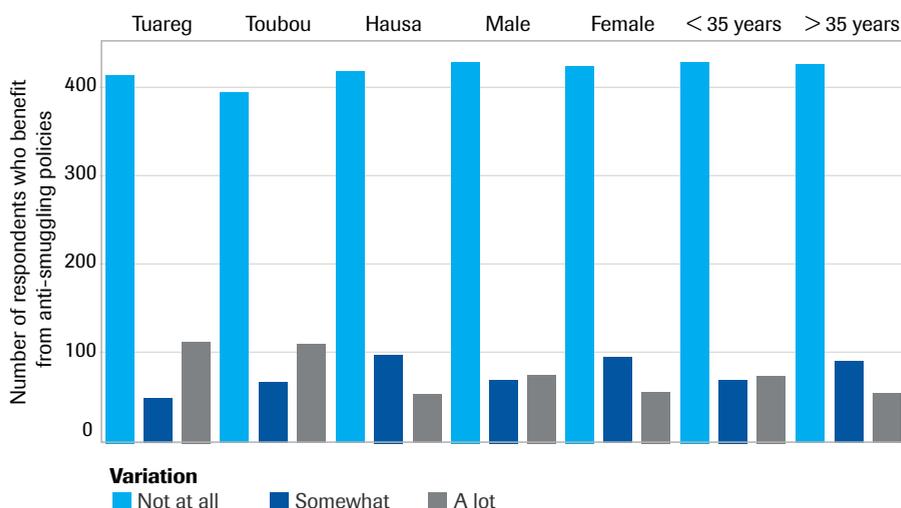
**Figure 11** Number of respondents who would like to engage in activities to express dissatisfaction

The survey data show that Agadez is relatively stable at the micro-level, though some change may be under way as well. Most respondents indicated that Agadez is not experiencing major social conflicts (95 percent claimed no conflict in the last five years) and that they have never joined any public protest to express dissatisfaction (an average of 80 percent). When asked about future intentions to protest, however, 47 percent indicated that they would be interested in at least one of the cited channels to funnel their dissatisfaction. Recent protest events in Agadez city support this claim.<sup>69</sup> Other dynamics indicate some concern for the long term. Family dynamics appear to be changing: respondents noted that it has become more difficult for men to get or stay married.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the survey data portray a younger generation that has less trust in its traditional leadership than older generations – raising the question of to whom these youngsters will turn to channel their discontent.

69 In this sense, one may think of protests against the closure of informal stalls resulting from an Agadez beautification project, protests against the confiscation of smugglers’ pick-up trucks and protests against the implementation of the Reconversion Plan. These protests are discussed in detail in the two companion reports on local governance and opportunities for private-sector development in Agadez.

70 Personal interview with a journalist from Radio Nomade. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July. Since 2015, a law allows for divorce on such grounds. It should be noted that Tuareg men may take up to four wives if their income suffices.

To investigate the potential for future group-based grievances and conflict, the survey also analysed whether different gender, age and ethnic groups benefitted differently from migration and contemporary migration policies. Although more respondents perceived the Toubou and Tuareg to benefit significantly more from migration's economic dividends than other ethnic groups,<sup>71</sup> anti-smuggling measures were perceived to harm all gender, age and ethnic groups equally. Interview data are less congruent, however. While some respondents note that the implementation of the 2015 migration law has created a sense of solidarity between these two groups by banding the Toubou and Tuareg together as targets of repressive measures,<sup>72</sup> other respondents argue that the Toubou feel that they are singled out more than other ethnic groups, which may lead them to rebel.<sup>73</sup> These findings address a concern of some respondents that the potential spillover of violence from Libya might be near, especially in connection with the Toubou ethnic group, who control the migration route to Libya.<sup>74</sup>



**Figure 12 Beneficiaries of anti-smuggling policies**

71 In addition, more respondents perceived men to benefit from migration's economic dividends than women and more respondents perceived young people to benefit than older people.

72 Personal interview with a journalist from Radio Nomade, a representative of the Regional Council 3, chief of women and a Tuareg leader. 2017. Agadez, Niger, July. The survey data show that 70.3 percent of Toubou respondents engage in economic activities related to migration (versus 29.5 percent for all the survey respondents). Toubou respondents identify restrictive government policies and police actions as more important reasons for the experienced decrease in their household's means of existence over the last five years than other ethnic groups do. We invite the reader to further explore the data using this study's interactive [data dashboard](#).

73 Personal interview with a GIZ staff member, a journalist from Radio Sahara and a Chamber of Commerce representative. 2017. Agadez, Niger, June.

74 *Ibid.*

### **Box 6 Northern ethnic groups with transnational ties<sup>75</sup>**

The Tuareg make up 10 percent of the Nigerien population and are concentrated in the sparsely populated and impoverished northern region of the country surrounding Arlit and Agadez. Their ties extend to neighbouring countries such as Libya, Algeria and Mali. The Toubou make up a mere 0.4 percent and live primarily in desert areas in northeastern Niger. Their ethnic ties extend to Libya, Chad and Sudan. The Arab population, mostly of Libyan descent, makes up 0.3 percent of the population. In the city of Agadez, they gravitate towards the neighbourhood of Dagamanet.

The ethnic groups have reached an informal understanding over the division of territory and spoils in the Agadez region. The Toubou control the Libyan axis of the migration and spoils trade and the transportation routes to the Djado gold mines. The Tuareg control the Algerian axis and routes to the Tchinchaden gold mines. When conflict ensues on these routes, it is usually between individual smugglers. The Arabs are well known for cross-border trade of agro-food products from Libya and Algeria as well as for their involvement in drug trafficking. Given their increasing economic power, the Arabs have expanded their commercial operations by investing in transportation, hydrocarbons, construction and public works.

The 2007-2009 rebellion resulted in the incorporation of many Tuareg leaders in the state. At the national level, the current prime minister is a Tuareg. At the local level, both the President of the Regional Council and the mayor of Agadez are Tuaregs as well. Several wealthy Arabs have established important political connections through financial contributions and high-level political appointments. The Toubou are less politically connected.

The regional authorities themselves indicate that they fear the spread of insecurity to Agadez. In 2014, the Regional Council set up a peace committee to prevent conflict between Toubou and Tuareg groups from spilling over from Libya into Agadez. This committee brings together all relevant ethnic leaders to discuss and mediate potential conflicts in a consensual manner. The mere existence of the committee speaks to the continuous need local authorities feel to monitor and mediate potential conflict dynamics. A member of the Council also noted that he is unsure how long the

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75 The main ethnicities in Niger are Hausa (53.0 percent), Zarma-Sonrai (21.2 percent), Tuareg (10.4 percent), Fula (9.9 percent), Kanuri Manga (4.4 percent), Toubou (0.4 percent), Arab (0.3 percent), Gourma (0.3 percent) and other (0.2 percent). Institut National de la Statistique. 2012. 'Structure de la Population,' Niamey.

committee will be able to mediate conflicts effectively, given that local authorities are unable to provide economic alternatives to substitute smuggling and have thereby lost some of their legitimacy – especially among the Toubou.<sup>76</sup> Given that the international spotlight has been turned on Agadez, it seems an opportune time to move away from efforts aimed at criminalising young men and to start thinking about ways in which to invest in sustainable development and the increased effectiveness of local service delivery to address local grievances.<sup>77</sup>

### **Box 7 Recommendations to address insecurity concerns**

1. Invest in communal and migrant security
  - a. Expand EUCAP Sahel training programs to cover these issues
  - b. Make migrant rescue measures part of implementation of migration mitigating policies
  - c. Work with customary authorities to identify migrant human rights violations
2. Invest in bottom-up conflict management
  - a. Use proven track-record of Peace Committee to manage inter-ethnic conflict
  - b. Expand Peace Committee's work to identify grievances and potential for interventions
3. Design migration interventions to be PVE/CVE sensitive
  - a. Recognise that migration policies have the potential to drive violent extremism
  - b. Identify adverse effects of migration policies for local communities and address them
  - c. Adopt a holistic take on migration management amidst larger stability concerns

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76 Online interview with Responsible for Regional Development in Agadez. August 2017.

77 The Agadez authorities would welcome such as shift as they note that, given that the 2015 law was implemented without many migration actors understanding that their conduct was illegal, a way forward would be to release people now held in jail and to invest more in information campaigns and in finding economic alternatives to smuggling. Commune d'Agadez. 2016. 'Rapport de la table-ronde sur la problématique de la migration dans la commune urbaine d'Agadez,' Octobre.

# Conclusion

After the collapse of tourism in the wake of terrorist attacks and kidnappings in the region, and the recent closure of the uranium and gold mines in north Niger, EU efforts to address irregular migration are the latest structural adjustment for Agadez's inhabitants. Although the population displays remarkable resilience in the face of an ever-changing context, frustration, injustice, despair, and general hopelessness are palpable on Agadez streets. Migration policies that do not take the larger context into account thus threaten to undermine one of their own objectives, to invest in development to address the root causes of migration. To date, the massive investment of international development funding in migration policies has not improved the economic status of the population.

As argued elsewhere, stopping migration has become the goal of current development policies.<sup>78</sup> Future migration policies need to be mindful of Agadez's geographic location amidst instability and of the increased economic grievances related to migration-mitigating measures.<sup>79</sup> Migration policies cannot be implemented sustainably unless policy makers understand and take into account how proposed measures affect the responsiveness of the state and the potential dynamics of radicalisation and economic development. It is time to move to a more holistic and conflict-sensitive vision of migration management in which migration is seen as one of many societal processes. Only then will migration policies become truly sustainable in the long term.

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78 Molenaar, F. and El Kamouni-Jansen F. 2017. *op. cit.*

79 This concern is expressed by the Agadez state authorities as well. See Commune d'Agadez, *id.*, 9.

# Appendix – Research methodology

The report builds on a combination of survey data, focus groups, key informants, and interview data. The first explorative stage of the research (May 2017) consisted of gathering secondary socioeconomic and conflict data on the Agadez region through a survey of a random sample of 597 respondents (Agadez population = 118,244,  $z = 1.96$ ,  $ME = 0.04$ ). Randomisation was ensured through the random selection of 14 Agadez neighbourhoods (see map). In each of these neighbourhoods, researchers used the method of randomly selecting households and individual respondents within these households as commonly applied by the Afrobarometer. The distribution of survey respondents approximates the gender and ethnic distribution in the region. Nevertheless, and in lieu of recent census data, we remain very careful with the extrapolation of our sample findings to the entire Agadez population in our discussion of the survey data.



**Figure 13** Map of the neighbourhoods of Agadez where the survey took place

The survey gathered information about the respondents' relevant demographic characteristics, the (sub)sector or industry in which they work, experienced changes in access to livelihoods (such as assets or skills, activities, employment opportunities), experienced changes in access to governance (such as access to security provision, justice, conflict mediation, and interest representation), and experienced changes in the number and types of inter-group conflicts. Although a majority of questions provided the respondent with the 'Don't know' and 'Refuse to answer' choices, our two-tailed test showed no statistical significance of these two answer categories. In our discussion of the survey results, we therefore exclude all 'Don't know' and 'Refuse to answer' entries.

During the second research stage (June-July 2017), EPGA and Clingendael conducted 60 key informant interviews with state authorities, elected authorities (Regional Council, mayor, Municipal Council), traditional authorities (sultan, chef de quartier, chef de femme), Touareg elites, Toubou elites, local and international NGOs, religious leaders, news media, members of the private sector, and chambers of commerce.<sup>80</sup> In addition, we conducted eight focus group discussions with migrants (two focus groups), (former) migration facilitators (two focus groups), young entrepreneurs (two focus groups), and female artisans and producers (two focus groups). The key informant interviews and focus group discussions allowed for the further exploration of the effects of the migration industry and migration-mitigating measures on Agadez. In addition, these interviews allowed for the identification of potential economic growth sectors and of bottom-up initiatives that could be supported to support the stability and economic development of Agadez.

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80 We have anonymised the respondents throughout the reports given the delicate nature of the topic under study.

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