

Niger

Country name	Niger
State title	Republic of Niger ¹
Official language	Hausa (<i>hau</i>) ²
Country name in official language	(Ie) Niger
State title in official language	République du Niger
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	<i>Not applicable</i>
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	NE/NER
Capital	Niamey

Introduction

Niger is a landlocked country in the Sahel region of West Africa. It is named after the river Niger, which flows through the western part of the country, reflecting both the geographic and cultural significance of the river, which has shaped the nation's history, trade routes, and settlement patterns.

Niger acquired full independence from France in 1960.

Geographical names policy

Geographical names are for the most part found in a French style and should be taken as found on official Niger-produced sources, where possible. Maps produced by France's Institut national de l'information géographique et forestière (IGN) (previously Institut géographique national) may be used in the absence of Niger-produced sources. All diacritical marks (see page 2 for details), apostrophes and hyphens should be retained.

The difficulties of representing the many different African languages which have influenced the geographical names of the country have inhibited a consistent approach to spellings on many sources.

¹ The state title is sometimes given as 'Republic of the Niger', which is the accurate translation from French. Nevertheless, HMG usually reflects the form without the definite article.

² Language codes given in this Factfile are ISO-639 codes.

Languages

Following independence from France in 1960, French (*fra*) became the official language of Niger. It continues to be widely used as the language of education and government and functions as a *lingua franca* in a multi-ethnic country. However, as of 2025, its official status was removed, and it has become a ‘working language’. As the most widely spoken of the national languages, spoken by 14,500,000 people in Niger,³ Hausa (*hau*) has become the country’s only official language.

Niger has 10 recognised national languages, as set down in ‘Law No. 2001-037 of 31 December 2001 laying down the terms and conditions for the promotion and development of national languages’⁴. The provisions of the law mean that national languages are authorised for institutional use and are to be protected and promoted. The national languages⁵ are: Arabic (*ara*), Buduma (*bdm*), Fulah (*ful*)⁶, Gourmanchéma (*gux*)⁷, Hausa (*hau*), Kanuri (*kau*), Zarma (*dje*)⁸, Tamahaq (*thv*)⁹, Tasawaq (*twq*) and Tedaga (*tuq*)¹⁰.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings¹¹):

Hausa contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script¹²:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ɓ	0181	ɓ	0253
Ɗ	018A	ɗ	0257
Ƙ	0198	ƙ	0199
Ƙ̄	0052+0303	ƙ̄	0072+0303
Ƴ	01B3	ƴ	01B4

³ <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/hau>

⁴ ‘Loi n° 2001-037 du 31 décembre 2001 fixant les modalités de promotion et de développement des langues nationales’: <http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/niger-loi-2001-037-LNG.htm>

⁵ <http://www.gouv.ne/index.php/le-niger/presentation>

⁶ Also known as Fulani, Fula, Fulfulde, Pulaar, Pular or Peul.

⁷ Also known as Gourmanché, Goulmacema, Gourma, Gourmantche, Gulimancema, Gulmancema or Gurma.

⁸ Also known as Djerma, Dyabarma, Dyarma, Dyerma, Adzerma, Zabarma, Zarbarma, Zarma, Zarmaci or Zerma, it is one of the Songhay languages, and so sometimes called Sonay-zarma or Zarma-sonrhaï.

⁹ Also known as Tamasheq, Tamacheq, Tamajaq or Touareg

¹⁰ Also known as Tebu, Toubou or Tubu

¹¹ See www.unicode.org

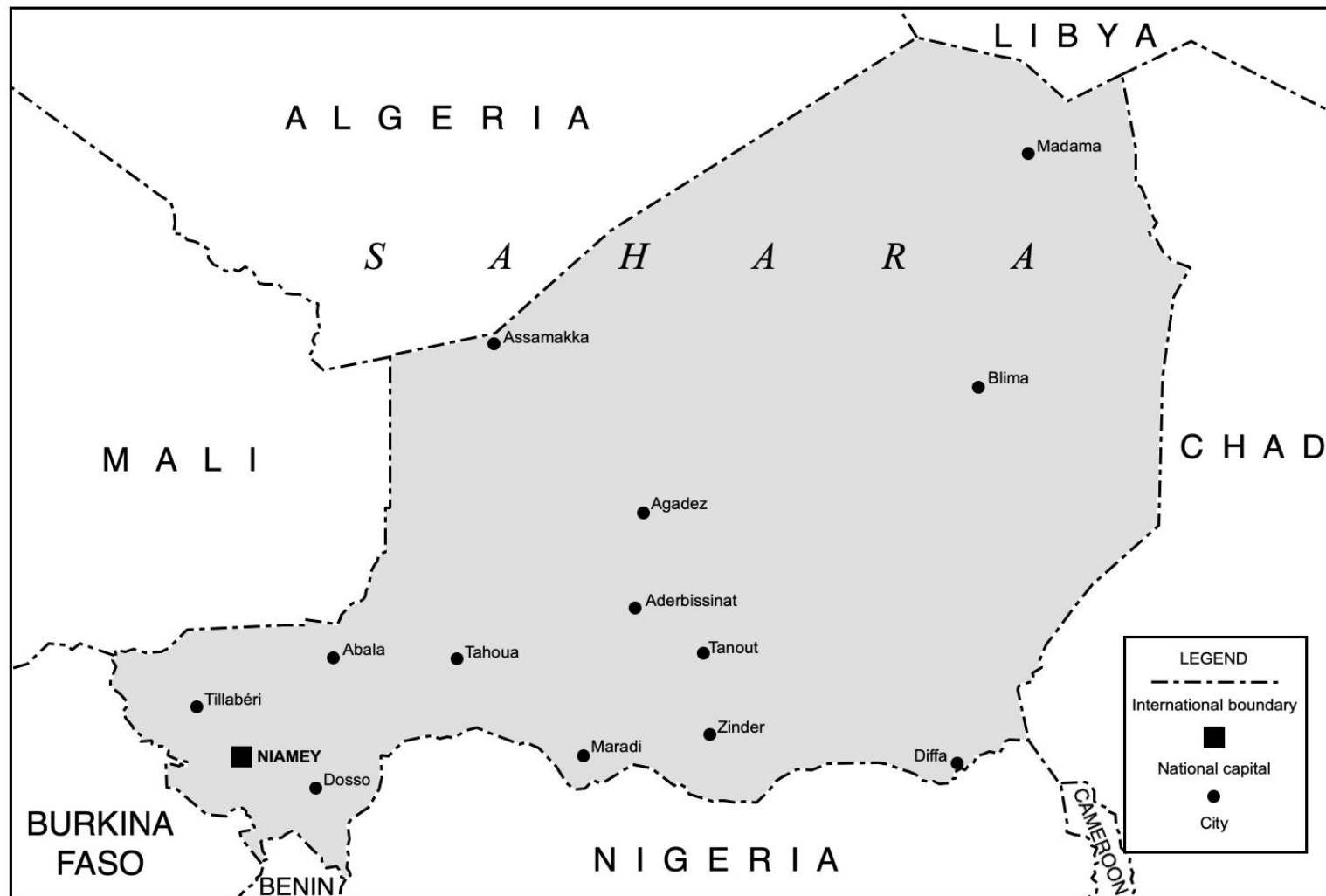
¹² Characters can be manually input into Microsoft word documents by typing in these character codes and then holding down the ALT key and pressing /x/. The code will change to the required character. The letter can be copied and pasted into other programmes if required. Alternatively, the ‘Insert – Symbol’ command can be used; the code can be entered into the ‘Character code’ box which will show the corresponding letter. A GeoNames Soft-Copy Keyboard can be downloaded from the NGA website and used to enter the required letter-diacritic combinations for a particular region: http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/gns_services.html.

French contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
È	00C8	è	00E8
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ï	00CF	ï	00EF
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Ù	00D9	ù	00F9
Û	00DB	û	00FB
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Ÿ ¹³	0178	ÿ	00FF

¹³ Rarely encountered.

Map of Niger



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

At first-order administrative level (ADM1), Niger is divided into 7 regions (French: région) and one urban community (French: communauté urbaine) (the capital, Niamey). The regions are further subdivided into departments (French: département), at second-order (ADM2) level. Details of the ADM1s of Niger are listed below.

1. Agadez (19° 45' 00" N, 010° 15' 00" E)

Long form name	Région d'Agadez
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-1
Centre	Agadez (16° 58' 24" N, 007° 59' 28" E)
Variant Name(s)	Agadès

Subdivided into 6 départements

2. Diffa (16° 00' 00" N, 013° 30' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Diffa
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-2
Centre	Diffa (13° 18' 55" N, 012° 36' 41" E)
Variant Name(s)	Difa

Subdivided into 6 départements

3. Dosso (13° 30' 00" N, 003° 30' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Dosso
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-3
Centre	Dosso (13° 02' 56" N, 003° 11' 37" E)

Subdivided into 8 départements

4. Maradi (14° 15' 00" N, 007° 15' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Maradi
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-4
Centre	Maradi (13° 30' 00" N, 007° 06' 06" E)

Subdivided into 9 départements

5. Niamey (13° 31' 17" N, 002° 06' 19" E)

Long form name	Communauté Urbaine de Niamey ¹⁴
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-8
Centre	Niamey (13° 31' 00" N, 002° 07' 00" E)
Variant Name(s)	Région de Niamey; CUN; Urban Community of Niamey; Urban Commune of Niamey; Ville de Niamey; Niamey Capital District

Subdivided into 5 arrondissements

¹⁴ As a first-order administrative division (ADM1), Niamey is variously seen described as a region (French: région) or urban community (French: communauté urbaine). It is a communauté urbaine, which has the same first-order status as the regions.

6. Tahoua (16° 00' 00" N, 005° 30' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Tahoua
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-5
Centre	Tahoua (14° 53' 20" N, 005° 16' 09" E)

Subdivided into 13 départements

7. Tillabéri (14° 20' 00" N, 002° 05' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Tillabéri
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-6
Centre	Tillabéri (14° 12' 26" N, 001° 27' 15" E)
Variant Name(s)	Tillabéry; Tillabery

Subdivided into 13 départements

8. Zinder (15° 00' 00" N, 010° 30' 00" E)

Long form name	Région de Zinder
ISO 3166-2 code	NE-7
Centre	Zinder (13° 48' 18" N, 008° 59' 18" E)
Variant Name(s)	Sinder

Subdivided into 11 départements

Useful references

- Administrative divisions: <http://www.decentralisation-niger.org/index.php/regions/subdivisions>
- BBC Country Profile (no longer updated): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13943662>
- CIA World Factbook – Niger: [Niger - The World Factbook](#)
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/niger>
- Government of Niger: <http://www.gouv.ne/>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/>
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- Languages of Niger: <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/NE/languages>
- Niger Institut Nationale de la Statistique: www.stat-niger.org
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): [Geographic Names Server](#)

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