

COUP ATTEMPT IN NIGER 11 AUG, 06:49

# African Union supports ECOWAS decision to launch military operation in Niger

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Nigerian military  
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PRETORIA, August 11. /TASS/. African Union Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat has supported the decision of the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) to launch a military operation in Niger, according to the statement published on the website of the African Union.

Mahamat expressed concern about the situation in Niger and called for the "immediate release" of President Mohamed Bazoum, his family and members of the government, saying that the conditions of their detention "poor."

Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara earlier said on his return from the summit in Abuja on August 10 that the ECOWAS leaders had agreed to launch a military operation in Niger "as soon as possible." The AFP news agency quoted him as saying that the chiefs of staff would hold several more meetings to finalize details. Ouattara emphasized that Cote d'Ivoire would contribute a battalion of 850 and 1,100 men for the operation, and that Benin, Nigeria and other countries would participate, too. The Associated Press agency reported the same day that leaders of the military in Niger had allegedly told acting US Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland that they intended to kill the country's ousted president, Mohamed Bazoum, should neighboring states launch a military intervention in an attempt to reinstate him.

In late July, a group of military officers from Niger's Presidential Guard mutinied and announced the removal of President Bazoum. The National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland, led by the guard's commander, Abdourahmane Tchiani, was formed to govern the country. Bazoum remains in custody at his residence.

#### **TAGS**