

THE PBF IN NIGER



UN Photo/WFP/Phil Behan

Peacebuilding Challenges

In 2010, a political coup opened the way for transition in Niger, culminating with the April 2011 democratic election of President Mahamadou Issoufou. But in 2013, the country was still confronted with several threats and challenges. Conflict in Mali threatened to spill over into the country, while the Libya conflict and instability caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria challenged national stability.

The country itself experienced rebellions by groups from the North claiming increased political and socio-economic participation in the country's affairs. While those rebellions were successfully mitigated by the authorities, the spread of violent extremism in neighboring countries poses new challenges. Niger has also become one of the main transition roads for migration to Europe, causing increased human trafficking and abuse cases. With deteriorating living conditions in crisis countries, migrants often are at risk of being

exposed to radicalization and recruitments on their path to Libya and Europe.

PBF Intervention

Since 2013, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has supported the Government of Niger in the implementation of its Sahelo-Saharan strategy. The strategy intends to tackle root causes of instability, including poverty, exclusion and inter-community conflicts around access to natural resources. PBF programs are therefore focused on socio-economic empowerment of youth and women at risk of conflict, mainly in border regions with Mali, Nigeria and Libya.

While the development of village committees contributed to the peaceful management of conflicts around access to natural resources, PBF projects also set up dialogue structures between the population and the defense and security forces to strengthen collaboration and build trust.

PBF INVESTMENTS IN NIGER:



TOTAL ALLOCATION:

\$ 18 MILLION
invested since 2013

CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

\$ 15.5 MILLION

FOCUSING ON:

-  Security Sector Reform
-  National Reconciliation

PARTNERS:

UNDP, UNHABITAT, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIDO, OHCHR, ACORD

Moreover, PBF also supported youth and women participation in the last elections in 2016 to foster political inclusion of marginalized groups.

More recently, PBF financed a risky and innovative project in December 2017 to support socio-economic reintegration of former Boko Haram combatants alongside victims in the Diffa region.

PBF Impact

Even though access to certain project areas is difficult, especially where Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda affiliate groups are active, projects have shown positive results. Over 2,660 young Nigeriens have benefited from socio-economic integration programs, allowing 1,642 of them to set up their own business. Thanks to these projects, 79% of the beneficiaries chose to settle in their home towns instead of migrating, while areas targeted by the projects have seen a significant reduction of community violence.

In the target areas, 70% of the population now consider that the relationship between the population and the defense and security forces has improved, contributing to a reduction of violent clashes in these areas.

As the Mayor of Tchitabaraden notes, *“The project came at the right moment to help us with a situation for which we had no solution. Through its different activities, the project allowed us to provide youth with activities and income-generating opportunities. This initiative encouraged young people to stay but it also gave them hope. It really helped ease the social atmosphere and decreased the risks of radicalization and involvement in illicit activities.”*

With respect to the Boko Haram project, a partnership with the Ministry of Interior includes the construction of facilities for 180 ex-combatants in Goudoumaria camp as the first activity of the project.

Working across Borders

The Liptako-Gourma area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso is at the crossroads of illicit trafficking and breeds instability that spills over the three countries. Recognizing that those challenges can only be addressed with a cross-border approach, the PBF and its partners are implementing a project that spans across the three countries. The cross-border project in Liptako-Gourma (USD \$3 million overall, \$1 million

for Niger) aims at tackling drivers of conflict in the region, particularly through socio-economic integration of youth at risk of radicalization, peaceful resolution of natural resources conflicts and trust-building between the population and defense and security forces.

Promoting Cohesion

To guarantee a strong national ownership, all PBF projects are overseen by an inclusive Joint Steering Committee, chaired by the national Haute Autorité de Consolidation de la Paix (HACP). The PBF also ensured community monitoring, closely involving grass-root organizations and CSOs in the implementation and oversight of programs.

Catalytic Effect

PBF intervention has been both politically and financially catalytic for Niger. From the political point of view, it allowed the HACP to scale up their activities in key border regions, significantly contributing to the implementation of the Sahelo-Saharan strategy. Moreover, PBF projects allowed for the set-up of a coordination framework, chaired by the HACP, to respond to the Boko Haram threat.

From the financial point of view, PBF projects mobilized USD \$125,000 from Peace Nexus and USD \$6,593,600 from the Danish Government to support the HACP in implementing youth and women's empowerment projects, as well as projects to improve the collaboration between the Security and Defense Forces and local police.

About the PBF

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The PBF may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated \$772 million to 41 recipient countries. Since inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 Business Plan. The PBF works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to political opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.

