



A region pillaged, a people sacrificed!

**AREVA** shall not make the law in **NIGER**



For 40 years the French corporation Areva, a global leader in the civilian nuclear sector, has extracted almost 40% of its uranium from northern Niger, a country that is still ranked today among the three poorest on the planet.

In 2007, Areva lost its monopoly and the State of Niger began receiving permit requests from North American, Australian, Asian and South African companies. Even though Azelik, the location of a large future exploitation site, was awarded to the Chinese via the Sino-U company (CNUC), Areva recently obtained the right to explore the enormous Imouraren site which could make **Niger the second largest producer of uranium in the world.**

The 40 years of mining exploitation by Cogema/Areva, in Arlit and Akokan, have had the following significant consequences :

- The **despoiling of agricultural lands and pasturing** areas around the two sites in the Agadez region.
- Enormous profits for Areva **without any benefits to the communities:** a true “win-lose” partnership!
- The **destruction of flora and fauna** around the mine sites.
- **Air contaminated** by radioactive dusts and gases.
- **Radioactive contamination** of the **water** resources.
- The **depletion of groundwater supplies** – in one case of up to two thirds of the groundwater reserves. Dry-pumping activities have also caused irreversible drainage at another groundwater source over the 40 years of uranium extraction activities.
- **Innumerable additional pollution incidents**, often due to peripheral activities related to the mining operation.

The strong demand for energy from emerging countries has considerably favored the new interest in nuclear, an energy described as “clean,” which in turn has prompted a dramatic rise in the price of uranium ore. One undesirable outcome has been that the Niger government, as of 2007, has announced that production will be tripled in the coming years.

At least 139 research and exploitation permits have been sold in less than a year and numerous additional permits will soon be granted. **These permits, which allow exploration over most of the Agadez territories (more than 85,000 square kilometers) have been granted without any transparency or prior public discourse.**



To date, the Niger authorities have refused to discuss these decisions with the indigenous populations – mostly Touareg – this despite the recent emergence of a new rebel movement that flatly condemns this situation.

While forbidding any act of resistance, the Niger government – tacitly supported by the French state through its “subsidiary” Areva – is organizing a major discrimination campaign with the clear objective of **emptying the region of its inhabitants** in order to facilitate the success of its commercial deals.

Full powers have been given to the Niger army and a state of emergency has been declared in the Agadez region. This has resulted in: Targeted executions and arbitrary arrests. Destruction of the means of subsistence of the nomads (killing of livestock, agricultural activities rendered impossible, restricted access to supplies and so on.). Displacement of populations. Prohibition of non-governmental organizations and the muzzling of the press.

At the moment when the concept of sustainable development, embraced so frequently by the West, is more than ever becoming a reality, it would be desirable if the large industrial corporations of the North, who unceasingly promote the benefits of “clean” energy, would have the decency to recognize that nuclear energy is not as clean as it claims to be.

Sustainable development should be considered in the context of its global impact and not only in terms of the final product. It is absolutely hypocritical for us, in the West, to sell ourselves an energy we claim has no negative impacts or consequences when, far from us there are communities living under precarious conditions whose people must suffer and die as a result of contamination of their environment and the destruction of their homelands.

# AREVA shall not make the law in NIGER

Aware of the unfolding catastrophe in Niger, the coalition – *Areva Shall not make the law in Niger* – is leading a campaign aimed at forcing Areva, France, the European Union and the international community to face up to their responsibilities.

**It is essential to denounce the disastrous consequences of our energy choices at home and high time to support those who are paying the price in their communities.**

The coalition, a network for solidarity and action, supports – via its refugee representatives in France – the affected populations in their **struggle for recognition of their rights, their dignity and their fundamental freedoms.**

The coalition denounces the complicity of the international community and particularly of France which, in collusion with President Tandja:

- Is silent about the reality in Niger and the gravity of the conflict.
- Condone the irresponsible and disrespectful conduct of the mining companies.
- Starves and kills in the name of competition and profit.



**An entire population is being driven from their land, deprived of their traditional activities and of their water resources and threatened with elimination for the sake of geo-strategic stakes and global politics.**

## Demands

**We call upon the French government, the European Union and international authorities to :**

- Put pressure on the Niger authorities until they respect the basic tenets of human rights and especially the unbreakable human rights codes.

**We urgently call upon the French government, the Niger government, the European Union and international authorities to :**

- Recognize the urgency of the humanitarian crisis associated with mining exploitation.
- Make every effort to bring help to the populations that are victims of the conflict (the displaced, refugees, detainees).

**We urgently demand the government of Niger and the Niger People's Justice Movement to call a cease fire and instead to commit to voluntary actions that will bring about a return to a lasting and equitably negotiated peace.**

**We demand that all parties involved immediately:**

- Apply and respect, without reservations, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples prior to any mining project.
- Apply the international rules regarding radioprotection.
- Apply the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (ITIE) which Niger endorsed in March 2005.
- Clean up the contamination at the already exploited sites making use of independent expertise. After 40 years of mining, **a moratorium** should be instituted, renewable for three to five years, prior to any new mining project and which must be guaranteed by international authorities in order to ensure that:
  - Mining wastes (residues, sediments and rocks) and contaminated scrap metals have been properly stockpiled and stored in a manner that will ensure their long-term isolation;
  - The landscape is restored to its original condition and that there must be no secret dumping as happened in France near Saclay and the Massif Central;
  - All the mine workers and ex-mine workers as well as the people who have lived close to the mining operations receive a complete medical exam, a retrospective evaluation of their dose exposures and enrollment in a program that monitors their long-term health, to be carried out by competent and independent medical practitioners.
  - The groundwater supply is of a high quality ecologically, chemically etc.
- Regarding new mining permits, it must be ensured, in advance, that conflicts of interest will not continue between mineworkers and the company medical services. As in France, taxes are to be paid in advance and entrusted to a specialized and independent administration to be used for restoration of all mining sites once extraction ends and for the sound, fair and openly collaborative management of water resources.

**The Coalition:** %Attac – Beyond Nuclear - Cedetim – CNT – Collectif Tchinguéhen – LCR – Les Verts – Réseau Sortir du Nucléaire – Sud Energie/Solidaires – Survie – Via Campesina

For more information: In English: [www.beyondnuclear.org](http://www.beyondnuclear.org) - In French: <http://areva.niger.free.fr>