

BACKGROUND

The threat of terrorism and violent extremism have worsened in recent decades, become increasingly pronounced in the Central Sahel region of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The security challenges inherent in the sub-regional context, resulting from the increase in asymmetric threats and their various forms of manifestation as well as the outbreak of social tensions, have resulted in the advent of transitional regimes in the three countries of the Central Sahel and the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in 2023.

Niger became a GCERF partner country* in 2021. To date, GCERF has invested USD 3 million in the country, with active grant worth USD 1 million currently supporting one local civil society organisations (CSOs), NGO Garkua and NGO MOJEDEC.

GCERF pioneers a unique model of investment designed to promote a whole-of-society approach and ensure the sustainability of our programmes. Under this model, in each partner country, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee called the Country Support Mechanism (CSM).

GCERF in Niger is working with the government, through the country support mechanism, and bilateral and multilateral donors to ensure a coordinated approach to prevention. GCERF works with the Nigerien government to support the implementation of its national action plan and invests in local organisations that design and run programmes contributing to stability and resilience.

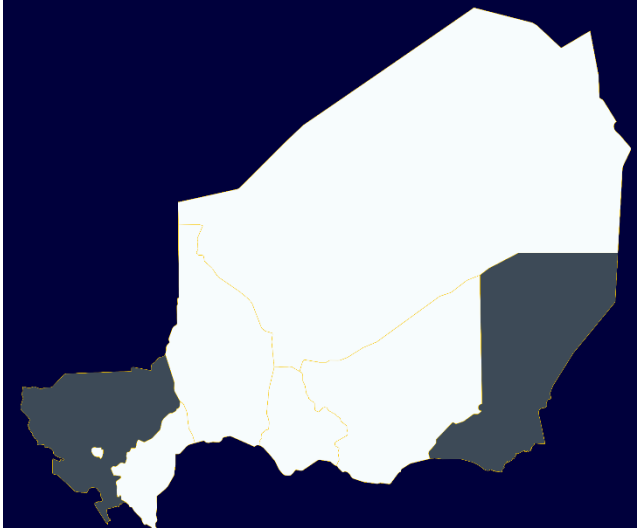
GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN NIGER

GCERF intervention in Niger is part of the wider Sahel strategy that engages with intergovernmental bodies to promote regional cooperation in the nexus of development and security. Our programming in the region covers Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, and our engagement directly bolsters the implementation of National Action Plans of the five countries working in partnership with local, national, regional, and global partners.

GCERF's strategy for engagement in the Sahel region is built around two strategic objectives:

1. To contribute to improvements in the social ecology to create conditions conducive to prevention and resilience-building.
2. To facilitate community-led rehabilitation, disengagement, and (re)integration, including people disengaging from criminal, non-state armed, and violent extremist groups.

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.



WHERE

- Tillabéri (region)
- Diffa (region)

WHO

- Unemployed men and women and early school dropouts (15–25 years old)
- Local authorities
- Customary and religious leaders
- Repentants (including their families)
- Local peace committees
- Departmental Security Councils
- Community-based Radio Stations
- Internal Displaced Persons

CURRENT GRANTS



IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: NGO GARKUA		Promote the disengagement of young people from extremist groups Integrate repentant people into public services or into the socio-economic environment of their home communities, with the support of public authorities Supporting the socio-economic reintegration of the families (women and children) of repentant offenders	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Tillaberi Region, Hamdalaya and Goudoumaria Camps		USD 999,999	February 2023 – June 2025

IMPLEMENTED BY		PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
Principal Recipient: GeoAnalytics Center Local Knowledge Partner (LKP)		Capacity building for GCERF partners Third-party monitoring Country programme evaluation Knowledge management Meta-evaluation of the Sahel regional portfolio	
AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION		\$ GRANT AMOUNT	PERIOD OF THE GRANT
Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, and Chad The LKP is located in Niamey.		USD 650,000	June 2023 – June 2025

STORY OF CHANGE

FROM EXTREMIST COMBATANT TO PEACE AMBASSADOR

Salifou Garba (pseudonym) is a young man in the thirties from the Ouallam department in the Tillabéri region. He is one of the 157 beneficiaries of the “Support Project for the Socio-Economic Integration of Repentees through Services of Public Interest (PAISRSIP)” funded by GCERF and implemented by the NGO Garkua in Niger since February 2023. Before integrating the programme, he had been for three years an active member of an extremist group called “Noustratoul Islamiya” led by Abou Hanifa in the tri-border area (Mali-Burkina-Niger).

He joined this group for ideological reasons and participated in many terrorist attacks against military forces. *“After a moment, I realised that I was mistaken, the group wasn’t defending the ideology I joined for, life was very tough in the bush marked by fears of being captured/killed at any time. Causing sadness and sorrow to other people was also a burden. I deeply regret my choice of joining them”,* he said.

Then, following the call for surrender issued by the national authorities in 2022, Mr Garba, along with some of his comrades, decided to surrender and repent. After being screened and profiled by the justice, he was granted exemption from judiciary prosecution.

As part of the programme, he participated in de-radicalisation and socio-cultural activities, benefited from psychological health assessment and mental support, and so on. He also participated in vocational training sessions and received kits to start his chosen IGA (selling and repairing mobile phones).

Married to two wives with one child and settled in Niamey, Mr Garba is seen as a model of successful social reintegration for ex-combatants of non-state armed groups living in symbiosis in his new communities.

After attending the workshop, he saw potential not only in himself but also in his peers and felt an urgent need to bridge the gap between potential and reality in his community.

As a first step, Salifou gathered a group of friends to share what he had learned, using his own story as a testament to the power of positive engagement. The small group soon grew, and their meetings became a regular feature in Witu town, attracting the attention of both community leaders and local youth.

“My life radically improved since leaving the extremist groups. I am very grateful to you. I am trying to be a better person, an ambassador of peace”

Salifou Garba, ex-combattant



Salifou Garba who receives these IGA kits

KEY RESULTS

Cumulative from 2021 to March 2025

3,070

Community members trained in conflict resolution or mediation mechanisms to resolve grievances that make them vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups

2,970

Individuals at risk of radicalisation and ex-combatants received livelihood support, strengthening their resilience against the financial incentives used by violent extremist groups to recruit

1,220

Community members engaged through interfaith, intercommunity, intergenerational dialogues to foster solidarity and reject false narratives often used by violent extremist groups

240

Former combatants and survivors of violent extremism received counselling and psychosocial support to help them recover and reintegrate into society

GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthen trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.