

Following a dramatic military coup that started Wednesday in Niger's capital Niamey, when the presidential guards held the country's president, General Abdourahmane Tchiani finally declared himself as the new leader of Niger.

Also known as Omar Tchiani, the general staged a takeover as he took to the state television as the country's new leader following a military coup that sparked international condemnation.

This shatters Niger's first peaceful and democratic transition since independence in 1960.

President Mohamed Bazoum is thought to be in good health, and still held captive by his own guards.

In this breaking news story that is being updated, Tchiani calls for cooperation with military juntas in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso

Speaking on state TV, Tchiani criticized the Nigerien government's lack of cooperation with the military juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso in combating Islamist insurgency in the Sahel region.

Both of those countries recently severed military ties with France and the West and now depend on Russia — chiefly through the Wagner mercenary group — for state security.

In the Nigerien, some pro-coup demonstrators could be seen waving Russian flags and denouncing French influence.