

United Nations Nations Unies

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17 August 2023

Excellency,

With reference to your letter to the Secretary-General dated 31 July, transmitting the decision of the Authority of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) taken at the 51st Extraordinary Summit of the Mediation and Security Council at the Heads of State level on Niger, I would like to bring to your attention the unintended adverse impact of some of ECOWAS's sanctions on the humanitarian operations conducted by UN Agencies and non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations Humanitarian Response Plans, Refugee Response Plans, other United Nations humanitarian appeals, or OCHA-coordinated humanitarian "clusters".

Several have reached out to me sharing accounts of major logistical impediments and warning about foreseeable additional obstacles related to some of the measures adopted by ECOWAS – including in terms of procurement, transportation, and banking services.

I therefore appeal to ECOWAS and its member States to ensure that the sanction measures integrate the necessary standing exemptions for the humanitarian operations of these various actors in Niger. In particular, the exemptions would need to:

- i. ensure that the safe, timely and unimpeded movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel into and out of Niger, by air and by land, will not be impacted by the sanctions.
- ii. guarantee the safety of humanitarian flights.
- iii. clarify that all commercial and financial transactions necessary to support the continuation of humanitarian operations in Niger remain permitted and proactively communicate this decision to financial institutions, relevant authorities and entities in the private sector.
- iv. maintain the provision of utility services as necessary to support humanitarian operations.
- v. exclude from asset freezes all transactions needed to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance and activities necessary to address basic human needs of the population, including the processing or payment of funds, other financial assets, or economic resources, or the provision of goods and services to targeted actors or institutions under their control as part of legitimate humanitarian activities.

His Excellency
Mr. Omar Alieu Touray
President of the Economic Community of West African States Commission
Abuja

- vi. ensure that humanitarian organizations and their personnel involved in such transactions do not incur any legal risk for their activities strictly related to the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population of Niger.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that the population of Niger who has been directly affected by the crisis can receive the necessary humanitarian assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Griffiths'.

Martin Griffiths
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Emergency Relief Coordinator