"Madam, You Are Mistaken, You Are Not Nigerian": Reactions To Women In Aid Contexts

Tracking Aid Narratives on Social Media: Recent Observations from the Sahel
18 December 2025

This briefing by Insecurity Insight analyses public social media activity from 08-14 December 2025, assessing observed narratives based on 14 months of systematic social media monitoring in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Understanding how aid actors are portrayed online is increasingly critical, as social media narratives shape community perceptions, operational access, and staff safety. By tracking emerging and entrenched narratives, this briefing offers indications on sentiments to support organisations strengthening community acceptance in a rapidly shifting aid environment.

Past editions: The AES Must Continue Its Fight (01-07 Dec), Let's Say No to Gender-Based Violence (17-30 Nov), These Aren't Journalists (10-16 Nov), Without Women, Peace Is Incomplete (27 Oct-09 Nov), I Don't Think He's A Civilian (20-26 Oct), The Country Is Now Governed (13-19 Oct), We Must Kill Them (06-12 Oct), Without Transparency (29 Sept-05 Oct), It Is A Disgrace (15-28 Sept), Keep Eyes on Agadez (01-14 Sept), All

Key Takeaways

Niger: Public Reactions to Women in Aid Context - Local NGO Coordinator and UN Prize Winner

This section compares online reactions to two posts featuring women connected to the aid and development space in Niger. While both posts concern women whose work intersects with development, they differ sharply in visibility, framing, and proximity to audiences. These posts serve as a reminder that public sentiment toward aid-related content is shaped by multiple factors beyond the aid sector. Reactions are influenced by gendered and racialised ideas, as well as by how information is framed, who shares it, and how close the individual appears to the audience.

1. **LNGO Coordinator**
   Between 08-12 December 2025, four posts about a Local NGO operating in Niger and active across education, art, health and environmental projects. One post, which featured an interview with the LNGO's coordinator, attracted the majority of the comments expressing largely **positive sentiment**, with **98 comments** praising the Coordinator. **64 comments** remained neutral, while **14 comments** expressed negative views toward the Coordinator, particularly focused on personal characteristics, such as the coordinator's skin tone and language, rather than the NGO's initiatives.

- **Cultural Appreciation and Local Identity**: Many users expressed admiration for the Coordinator's use of local languages, highlighting how this enhanced the connection with the community.

  "Masha'Allah! Your words make sense, especially since you preserve our local languages despite the environment." ("Masha'Allah ! Tes propos ont un sens surtout tu as gardé nos langues locales malgré le milieu")

  "**God willing, our wells will be successful despite the crisis; generosity must always be present. Thank you so much to the donors! 🥰😍🤩**" ("Inch'Allah ça va reussir nos forages

malgré la crise , la generosité doit rester de tous les temps. Merci beaucoup aux donateurs 🥰😍🤩")

- **Appearance and Authenticity**: Despite the positive comments, a number of negative comments focused on the appearance of the Coordinator, questioning her Nigerien identity due to her physical features and accent. These comments reflected a more divisive undercurrent, highlighting ongoing concerns regarding national identity and the perception of those who do not conform to stereotypical physical traits of the majority.

  "Her skin fooled me, didn't it? 😂 I thought she was French, but she's not Nigerian, isn't she? 😂 Thank you so much" ("Ça peau ma trompé hein 😂, je pensé que c'était une française alors que Irlabizé no hein 😂.Vraiment merci beaucoup")

2. **UN Prize Winner**
   On 11th of December, 2025 a post by a social media influencer, with approximately 300K followers on Facebook, shared that a Nigerian architect had received a UN World Champion award. This post generated 99 comments, 98 of the comments were neutral toward aid, but were positive toward the woman receiving the prize . A small number of comments connected her recognition to her relationship with key political figures.

- **National Pride and Global Recognition:** The majority of the comments focused on **national pride**, with users expressing admiration for the award recipient, emphasizing her as a symbol of Nigerien excellence on the international stage with users , stating, **"it's Niger who wins"** ("C'est le Niger qui gagne") and **"Masha'Allah, a pride for our country."** ("Masha'Allah, une fierté pour notre pays.")The broader sentiment reflected that her UN award was earned through her work and contributions to the field of architecture, and not as a result of her personal political connection.

  "She has proven herself, her merit is pure" ("Elle a fait ses preuves, son mérite est pur.")

What This Tells Us

- Placing these two posts side by side highlights that it is never a single factor that shapes reactions to aid related content on social media. The LNGO Coordinator's visibility in a local aid setting triggered scrutiny of her identity, appearance, and language, revealing how women are at times more exposed to gendered, racial, and identity-based judgement. By contrast, the UN Prize Winner's recognition promoted by a facebook influencer triggered primarily congratulatory comments.

Malian Red Cross at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

On the 11th and 12th December 2025 two posts on the **official Malian Red Cross Facebook page** highlighted the organization's involvement at the United Nations General Assembly. The posts focused on the Malian Red Cross' leadership and its role in promoting humanitarian principles at the global level. These posts generated **21 comments**, all of which were **positive** towards the Malian Red Cross, with an estimated reach of around 1,800 people.

Narratives

- **Pride in Leadership and support for Humanitarian work**: Some comments praised the leadership of the Malian Red Cross. There was a strong sense of appreciation for the organization's role in advocating for humanitarian principles at the UNGA.

"You all said we are really proud of you. Thank you very much." ("Vous avez tous dit que nous étions vraiment fiers de vous. Merci beaucoup.")

- **Appreciation of the Speech**: the majority of the comments expressed appreciation for the **message shared** during the speech, acknowledging the impact of the Red Cross' advocacy and its emphasis on humanitarian action.

  "Bravo to the National Secretary General of the Malian Red Cross!" ("Bravo le secrétaire général Nationale de la croix rouge Malienne We are proud of you ,Mr Maiga")

What this tells us

The **positive comments** reflect public support for the Malian Red Cross. Despite the limited engagement, only 21 comments out of an estimated reach of 1,800, this shows a supportive but limited audience. The structure of the posts, which emphasized the organization's global role and humanitarian advocacy, likely contributed to the positive sentiment highlighting the importance of locally embraced aid work.

Expression of patriotism towards member states of the Alliance of States of the Sahel (AES) under under aid related social media posts

"Vive le Mali" , "Vive le Niger" and "Vive le Burkina Faso" are increasingly frequently left as comments under posts about aid related content. Other comments such as "**Masha Allah, a national pride**" ("Masha Allah, une fierté nationale") from Niger, and **"Long live Burkina Faso 🇧🇫 homeland or death, we will prevail."** ("Vive le Burkina Faso 🇧🇫 la patrie ou la mort nous vaincrons.") from Burkina Faso. This rise in nationalist expressions, closely aligned with the AES narrative, is increasingly shaping how aid-related activities are perceived, with aid actors more viewed through a sovereignty lens and local ownership of assistance becoming a central expectation across the region.

Patterns of Aid Narratives on Social Media Continued

Between 08-14 December 2025, online conversations about aid across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger showed a notable increase. A total of **267 public posts** were identified, generating **670 comments**, reflecting an approximate **82%** increase compared with the **368 comments** recorded between **01-07 December**. This increase could be attributed to the LNGO post, which generated 193 comments, and the announcement of the UN award to a Nigerian architect, which produced 99 comments.

In total, **23** negative comments were identified between 08-14 December, **43.48% targeted UN agencies and 4.3% targeted INGOs**, and **52.17%** targeted **LNGOs.** This marks a significant shift from previous weeks, when LNGOs rarely received any negative comments. It should be noted that the majority of negative comments directed at LNGOs targeted the woman coordinator personally and did not mention the organisation itself.

The distribution of engagement by organisation type :

- **UN agencies:40.45%**
- **INGOs: 10.60%**
- **LNGOs: 48.9%**

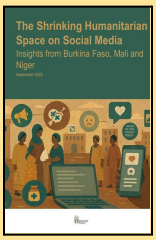
As in earlier periods, these findings should be read with caution. Technical issues affecting geolocation may still lead to under-detection of posts from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. These findings are based solely on publicly accessible content and may not reflect discussions on private or encrypted platforms.

Other resources

Armed drones are an escalating threat in humanitarian settings, with their use expected to grow. Once rare, they are now a defining feature in modern conflicts. Adapting to the growing threat of drones means rethinking security risk measures in high-risk contexts. This practical guide brings together current best practice and is available in **Burmese**, **English**, **French** and **Spanish**. Individual resources:

- Outside When a Drone is Spotted: **Arabic**; **Burmese**; **English**; **French**; **Spanish**
- Inside a Building During a Drone Attack: **Arabic**; **Burmese**; **English**; **French**; **Spanish**
- Responding to Drone Attacks on Aid Work : **Burmese**; **English**; **French**; **Spanish**
- Traveling in High-Risk Areas: **Burmese**; **English**; **French**; **Spanish**

Adapted for the protection of health services based on case studies on Myanmar in **English** and **Burmese**.



Public online narratives are reshaping the operating environment of the aid sector in the Sahel. *The Shrinking Humanitarian Space on Social Media in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger* focuses on the risks and harms posed by harmful public narratives that frame aid as illegitimate, politicised or foreign controlled. These narratives are steadily shrinking the humanitarian space. As online and offline threats increasingly converge, the report argues that safeguarding digital legitimacy is no longer optional - it is essential to the continuation of principled, neutral, and effective humanitarian action. In **English** and **French**.

Public digital narratives about humanitarian operations shape access, safety, and legitimacy for aid agencies and their partners in Myanmar. *Learning from Social Media Narratives in Myanmar* **explores** the implications of online narratives for communication strategies, policy decisions, and accountability to aid beneficiaries in one of the world's most restrictive and polarised digital environments. Drawing on seven months of public social media monitoring, the report highlights how narratives around aid delivery, health care, displacement, and access blockades intersect with conflict dynamics. The findings are designed to offer contextualised, actionable insights for humanitarian actors seeking to safeguard the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality while navigating Myanmar's contested information space.

Data Use and Privacy Disclaimer

This report includes analysis of publicly available social media content collected from open platforms. All data has been anonymised to remove or obscure identifying details, and no content from closed groups was used. The analysis was conducted in the public interest and in line with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), under a legitimate interest basis. The purpose of this analysis is to support humanitarian dialogue, inform policy, protect aid workers and those they help, and contribute to public interest research. This document is published by Insecurity Insight - a Humanitarian to Humanitarian (H2H) organisation committed to the Humanitarian Principles. We welcome questions and feedback. Share what you're observing both on the ground and online. Your insights help us keep the analysis accurate and up-to-date. Email: **info@insecurityinsight.org**. Join our efforts to protect humanitarian space. Subscribe to our **Social Media Monitoring** mailing list. Find more resources at the **Social Media Monitoring** website. **Help support our work by sharing this resource. Please copy and paste this link: https://bit.ly/08-14Dec2025SMMBrief**

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