

Chad: Extremism & Terrorism

On April 20, 2021, President Idriss Deby—Chad’s president for more than 30 years—died due to injuries sustained in battle fighting against the Libya-based Islamist rebel group, Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), in northern Chad. Deby, who was declared the winner of the presidential election the day prior, often joined soldiers on the battlefield. On April 11, 2021, hundreds of FACT forces launched an incursion into the north of Chad to protest the April 11th presidential election. The group attacked a border post at Zouarke. However, no casualties were reported. Following the Zouarke ambush, Deby joined Chadian soldiers to repel FACT forces from advancing on N’Djamena. On April 17, two FACT convoys clashed with government forces on the way to N’Djamena, killing five Chadian soldiers and injuring 36 others. Among those injured was Deby. Deby’s son, Mahamat Kaka, was named interim president by a transitional council of military officers on April 20. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [France 24](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg](#))

On February 15, 2021, leaders of the G5 Sahel—Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—attended a two-day summit in N’Djamena. At the summit, Deby announced that more than 1,200 troops would be deployed to combat extremist groups on the Sahel border zone between Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Deby urged the international community to increase its funds for development to prevent the continued rise of terrorism and reasons for radicalization in Chad. Chad’s increase in deployment comes a month after French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that France may “adjust” its military commitment in the Sahel following attacks that increased the number of French combat deaths to 50 in Mali. (Sources: [Arab News](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Overview

Chad has been subject to multiple armed conflicts since its independence from France in 1965. Following independence, political control of the country went to the prosperous cotton-producing majority-Christian south, leading to revolts among the northern Chadian tribes against the southerners in 1966. The cycle of civil conflict between the two regions has been continuous—albeit, with unstable moments of peace from 1990 until 2004—but has been aggravated by the neighboring civil war in Sudan. In the past decade, extremist groups—which sourced many of their early weaponry from ammunitions circulating in the country from Chad’s previous conflicts—have begun to make a mark on domestic security. Accordingly, the number of confrontations between insurgents and Chadian soldiers tripled from 2018 and 2019 alone. There were seven armed confrontations in 2018, with the figure jumping to 21 in the following year. Additionally, in 2019, civilian communities were targeted by Boko Haram and its ISIS-affiliated splinter Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) insurgents at least 15 times, leading to dozens of casualties and abductions. (Sources: [U.S. Department of Justice](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Global Policy Forum](#), [Africa Center](#))

Since early 2015, the primary terrorist threat in Chad has been Boko Haram and ISWAP. The extremist groups—which operate throughout the Lake Chad region—have killed hundreds, led to the fleeing of 20,000 Chadians, left over 200,000 Chadians internally displaced, and has caused immense challenges to regional stability as they launch attacks in the neighboring countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. Initially, Boko Haram’s presence was limited on the Chadian side of the lake. Following the increase of attacks by Boko Haram throughout Nigeria, the Chadian Armed Forces were given the right to mobilize against the extremist outfit by Nigeria on January 16, 2015. Violence peaked in 2015 with suicide bombings in the capital N’Djamena and multiple attacks on villages that were partly in reaction to the intervention by Chadian forces in neighboring states, but never reached the levels of attack that were seen in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. Although attacks in Chad began to diminish in 2016—despite the creation of ISWAP in August of that year—Boko Haram has since adapted its strategy and as of 2020 began to intensify their attacks against Chad and Cameroon. (Sources: [International Crisis Group](#), [Refugees International](#), [Cairn International](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [United Nations](#))

In 2016, Boko Haram split into two rival factions—one loyal to Boko Haram leader [Abubakar Shekau](#), and the other to ISIS-appointed leader Abu Musab al-Barnawi. Upon the creation of the rival insurgencies, ISWAP took control over the Lake Chad Basin area, which lies primarily within Chad. Although still a threat in Chad, Boko Haram now targets and controls land in central and southern Borno State as well as the Sambisa Forest, both in Nigeria. The Lake Chad area—which is a magnet for migrants from all over the Sahel who seek opportunities in agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing—has led to conflict regarding control of resources. Furthermore, the Chadian Army’s heavy security response imposes restrictions on the movement of the traditionally mobile population that is heavily dependent on cross-border trade. As the insurgencies continue to grow, local self-defense militias have been created and have provided additional protection for communities against the jihadist groups. Given the geographic diversity of the lake, Boko Haram and other extremists have sought refuge among the many islands in the area to evade detection from military forces. (Sources: [Economist](#), [Committee on Armed Services](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Combatting Terrorism Center](#))

Only in recent years have national authorities coordinated longer-term counter-extremism strategies for the area. Although national action remains focused on military intervention, some operations have been carried out to prevent Boko Haram’s influence on the civilian level. Launched in 2017, Operation Rawan Kada, was the first phase of a civilian-focused military offensive by armies in the region. The offensive focused on implementing

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stabilization programs, restoring state authority in areas affected by Boko Haram, and assisting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees to return to their homes. Accordingly, Chad has yet to establish the appropriate legal responses to try and punish Boko Haram and ISWAP members who have been captured on Chadian soil. Allegedly, extremists have been imprisoned for long periods without trial, and the Chadian government and has been accused of corrupt and inhumane behavior towards detainees. (Sources: [International Crisis Group](#), [Just Security](#), [African Union](#))

Radicalization and Foreign Fighters

Recruitment

From the outset of Boko Haram's founding, nationals from Chad, Niger, and Cameroon have traveled to Nigeria to join the jihadist group. Partly due to small loans offered to recruits, Boko Haram also exploited the cultural, ethnic, and religious ties that Chad, Niger, and Cameroon shared with northern Nigeria. According to the United Nations, extremist groups have sought to recruit young people by leveraging several factors such as geographic proximity to conflict, economic vulnerability, social or political marginalization, permissive family and social networks, and exposure to violent extremist propaganda. Geographic proximity to violent extremist groups is also a significant risk factor for voluntary and forced recruitment into terrorist groups. Given the number of ambushes and kidnappings carried out by Boko Haram, youth in particular have been prone to joining vigilante groups in response to deteriorating safety conditions within their communities. However, some of these self-defense groups have begun to align with violent extremists given the military's lack of response to stemming terrorist violence. Additionally, former Boko Haram fighters in Chad stated that lack of hope and income opportunities persuaded them to join the insurgency. Given the Chadian government's minimal rollout of social amenities or safety nets for vulnerable youth, the promise of food and shelter has tempted young fighters to join extremist ranks. (Sources: [United Nations](#), [Humanitarian Practice Network](#), [Youth4Peace](#))

Boko Haram

[Boko Haram](#) is a Nigeria-based terror group that seeks to rid the country of Western and secular institutions and to resuscitate the Kanem-Bornu caliphate that once ruled over modern-day Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. The group was founded by a Salafist cleric named Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. Yusuf opened the Ibn Taymiyyah Masjid mosque in Maiduguri and developed a significant following among disaffected youth in the area. Many of these followers went on to become Boko Haram militants. The extremist group, which allegedly procured the majority of its initial weapons from Chad—due to a surplus of weapons that have circulated in the country following several civil wars since 1965—has also exploited the cultural, ethnic, and religious ties that Chad, Niger, and Cameroon share with northern Nigeria. Along with extensive cross-border smuggling of weapons and supplies, Boko Haram has recruited fighters from neighboring countries to fill its ranks. (Sources: [Brookings](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Oxford Research Encyclopedias](#), [BBC News](#), [Humanitarian Practice Network](#), [International Crisis Group](#))

In 2009, Yusuf was killed by Nigerian security forces and [Abubakar Shekau](#) became the leader of Boko Haram. Under Shekau's leadership, Boko Haram has grown more militant and has developed a reputation for mass violence. In addition to targeting Christians and Catholics, who represent approximately 23 and 20 percent respectively, of the Chadian population, Boko Haram routinely targets Muslim civilians outside of the group. (Sources: [Combating Terrorism Center](#), [Brookings](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#), [Strategic Studies Institute](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

In August 2016—nearly a year and a half after Boko Haram pledged allegiance to ISIS under Shekau—the Nigerian terror group split into two warring factions—one loyal to Shekau, and the other to ISIS-appointed leader Abu Musab al-Barnawi. The split followed ISIS's announcement of Barnawi's appointment on August 2. (Sources: [Economist](#), [Committee on Armed Services](#))

Boko Haram carried out an influx of violence in Chad from 2015 to 2016. In that time frame, a group of militants operating under Ibrahim Bakura, actively raided communities around the Lake Chad area until they established themselves under the leadership of Shekau. Once integrated into Shekau's network, the coalition of insurgents began to target Kaiga-Kindjiria Sous-Prefecture—an area bordering Niger and Nigeria—as well as military outposts in Nigeria and Cameroon. However, the Chadian army was able to contain Boko Haram for a period from 2017 until 2018, but insecurity in the region gradually increased in 2019, with over 21 armed confrontations transpiring between the Chadian army and insurgents. Following the March 23, 2020 ambush on the military outpost in Bohoma, in which hundreds of Boko Haram militants killed at least 92 Chadian soldiers, Chadian security forces now believe the jihadist group is gaining ground in its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities in Chad. (Source: [Africa Center](#))

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Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

Boko Haram split into two groups when ISIS appointed Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the head of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in August 2016. Al-Barnawi's group, which left Boko Haram's headquarters in the Sambisa Forest and relocated to Lake Chad, managed to gain the support of the majority of the jihadist fighters. Although Shekau did not win the endorsement of ISIS, he refused to relinquish his authority and has continued to lead a group of followers under the banner of Boko Haram. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#), [International Crisis Group](#))

Since the split, the attacks carried out by each faction are difficult to differentiate. One difference, however, is that ISWAP controls territory in the Lake Chad Basin area in northern Borno State in Nigeria whereas Shekau's faction controls land in central and southern Borno State, including Boko Haram's historical territorial stronghold of the Sambisa Forest. According to a map produced by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in February 2018, ISWAP territory extends more than 100 miles into the northeastern Nigerian states of Borno and Yobe. However, ISWAP's territory is vulnerable to attacks from the Nigerian air force, and troops from Lake Chad countries who often target the insurgents' hideouts. (Source: [Combatting Terrorism Center](#), [Reuters](#))

Additionally, ISWAP has exerted influence throughout the borderland communities of Lake Chad. ISWAP generates income from taxing and collecting fees from remote communities in exchange for a range of services to further secure loyalty from the public. ISWAP—which has ties in the region to the group formerly known as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) which operated between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso—has positioned itself as a more reliable form of security for civilians against Boko Haram than the Chadian government and its security services. Additionally, the group provides local civilians with basic government services and military protection from other insurgencies. (Sources: [Institute for Security Studies](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

With ISIS losing territory in the Middle East, the Lake Chad region has recently seen an influx of foreign fighters joining the ranks of Boko Haram and ISWAP via Iraq and Syria. According to a CNN report, approximately 1,500 foreign fighters have joined Boko Haram and around 3,500 have joined ISWAP. Analysts estimate that ISWAP has 3,000-5,000 fighters, about double Boko Haram's strength. (Sources: [The Punch](#), [CNN](#))

Contrary to Boko Haram, ISWAP's leaders are low-profile and do not regularly appear in videos or claim responsibility for attacks, presumably to evade detection from international forces. ISWAP reportedly receives military guidance from ISIS as the group has allegedly sought out advice on how to produce AK-47 ammunition and how to armor-plate IEDs that they attach to vehicles. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [International Crisis Group](#))

On February 23, 2020, the United Nations Security Council listed ISWAP on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. (Source: [United Nations Security Council](#))

Union of Resistance Forces

The Union of Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance or UFR) is a rebel coalition based in Libya. The group—which was formed in 2009 and attempted to overthrow President Idriss Deby—sought to reach N'Djamena once again in 2019 to topple Deby's regime to set up a "transitional government uniting all of the country's forces." The rebel group is headed by Timan Erdimi, the president's nephew, and composed mainly of Zaghawa fighters from Deby's own ethnic community. From February 3-6 of 2019, under the request of N'Djamena, planes from Opération Barkhane—a French counterterrorism effort based in N'Djamena that sought to target Islamist extremists in Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger—carried out a number of strikes against the rebel group in the north east of the country. Following the air campaign, on February 9, the Chadian army claimed that more than 250 terrorists, including four leaders, had been captured, and that more than 40 vehicles and hundreds of weapons were seized. The rebels oppose Deby's presidency, who had been in office since 1990 and was approved by parliament to potentially stay in office until 2033. (Sources: [International Crisis Group](#), [BBC News](#), [Oxford Research Group](#))

Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD)

The Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) is a rebel group with recruits primarily from the Gorane ethnic group, a nomadic tribe from northern Chad. UFDD was allegedly established in 2006 to unify all major Chadian rebel groups in an effort to oust Deby as president as well as accrue concessions from the government from Chad's oil wealth. In 2008, the UFDD sought to launch a coup in N'Djamena, but were overtaken by the army and French forces. The group was reportedly supported by Sudan until Chad and Sudan signed an agreement to expel rebel groups from their shared borders in 2010. The rebel group, which boasted around 2,000 to 3,000 troops at its height, was primarily active in southeastern Chad. UFDD reportedly fell to obscurity sometime in 2015, but on March 11, 2019, four hundred UFDD fighters surrendered their

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weapons to Chadian security forces. (Sources: [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#), [Defense Post](#))

Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT)

Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) is a Libya-based rebel group that was established in April 2016 following a violent split from another Chadian rebel group, the formerly Sudan-backed UFDD. FACT is run by Mahdi Ali Mahamat, who is from the Dazagada ethnic group in central Chad. The group sought to overthrow Deby for election fraud in 2016 and 2021. FACT allegedly has over 700 fighters and about 100 vehicles. On April 11, 2021, hundreds of FACT forces launched an incursion into the north of Chad to protest the April 11th presidential election. The group attacked a border post at Zouarke. However, no casualties were reported. Following the Zouarke ambush, Deby joined Chadian soldiers to repel FACT forces from advancing on N'Djamena. On April 17, two FACT convoys clashed with government forces on the way to N'Djamena, killing five soldiers and injuring 36 others. Among those injured was Deby, who often joined Chadian troops in battle against rebels. On April 20, 2021, a day after Deby was declared the winner of the presidential election, Deby died from his injuries. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg](#))

Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents

Bohoma Attack

On March 23, 2020, Boko Haram militants ambushed an island army base in the Bohoma Peninsula. The seven-hour assault, which killed more than 92 Chadian soldiers and wounded dozens of others, was the deadliest by the extremist group in Chad. Given the Chadian Army's reputation as a superior regional force, the ambush demonstrated the increased combat and intelligence capacities of Boko Haram. In response to the attack, the governments of Chad, Niger, and Nigeria announced a joint bombing and clearance operation called Boma's Wrath to rid the Lake Chad region of Boko Haram and ISWAP. According to the Chadian Army in April 2020, over 1,000 Boko Haram fighters were killed in the operation. However, given Deby's frustration over Chad's supposed shouldering of the burden of the campaign against Boko Haram, the Chadian president threatened to pull Chad's forces out of bases in Niger and Nigeria by April 22. (Sources: [Africa Center](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

Baga Sola Coordinated Suicide Bombings

On October 10, 2015, female suicide bombers detonated explosives in a market in Baga Sola, a western village close to Nigeria, during peak business hours. The attack included three separate suicide bombings that killed at least 16 people. That same day, a second group of suicide bombers carried out two bombings that killed at least 22 at a nearby refugee camp. The suicide bombers were allegedly Boko Haram militants. Baga Sola was allegedly targeted as it is home to more than 3,000 refugees who have fled Boko Haram in Nigeria. (Source: [Guardian](#))

- **April 17, 2021:** Two FACT convoys advance towards N'Djamena, clashing with government forces along the way. The clashes kill five soldiers, injuring 36 others as well as Deby, who joined Chadian forces in repelling the rebel group. Deby dies of his injuries on April 20, with his son General Mahamat Idriss Deby, being named interim president the same day. Source: [Bloomberg](#)
- **April 11, 2021:** Hundreds of FACT forces launch an incursion into the north of Chad to protest the April 11th presidential election. The group attacks a border post at Zouarke. Casualties are not reported, but the rebel group advances further south towards the capital. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **November 25, 2020:** Boko Haram militants detonate an improvised explosive device attached to a boat carrying soldiers near Ngouboua, Chad. The attack kills four soldiers and wounds dozens of others. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 21, 2020:** Boko Haram militants open fire on Chadian soldiers who were patrolling islets on the Chad-Nigeria border. The attack kills at least six and wounds 12 others. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **July 9, 2020:** A vehicle carrying Chadian soldiers strikes a landmine planted by jihadists in Kalam, western Chad. The explosion kills at least eight and wounds at least 11. It is suspected that the device was laid by ISWAP. Source: [Barron's](#)
- **April 9, 2020:** The Chadian army claims it has killed at least 1,000 fighters in an operation against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region since March 31 following the launch of Operation Boma's Wrath—an operation launched after the March 23 attack on the Chadian army base in Bohoma which killed at least 92 soldiers. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **March 23, 2020:** Boko Haram militants attack an island army base in Bohoma, Chad. The attack kills over 100 Chadian troops and injures dozens of others. The seven-hour attack was the deadliest attack by Boko Haram forces in Chad. Sources: [Deutsche Welle](#), [Africa Center](#)

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- **January 20, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive in Kaiga-Kindjiria, western Chad. The attack kills at least nine and injures two others. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but Boko Haram is suspected. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **December 22, 2019:** Boko Haram militants attack fishermen on an island on Lake Chad. The attack kills at least 50 people and injures an unreported number of others. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **August 14, 2019:** A suicide bomber blows herself up in a compound near the home of a traditional chief in western Chad. At least six people are killed and five are wounded. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **April 18, 2019:** Boko Haram militants attack the Multinational Joint Task Force in northeastern Nigeria (MNJTF). At least two Chadian soldiers attached to the MNJTF and 52 Boko Haram members are killed in the assault. Source: [Defense Post](#)
 - **March 22, 2019:** Militants storm the town of Dangdala, near Lake Chad. They kill at least 23 Chadian soldiers. Chadian soldiers are part of a U.S.-trained West African task force deployed to counter Boko Haram. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **February 9, 2019:** Chad's military, with assistance from French warplanes, claims to attack and capture more than 250 members of the UFR. The rebels oppose Deby's presidency, who has been in office since 1990 and was approved by parliament to potentially stay in office until 2033. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **September 29, 2018:** Boko Haram launches two attacks in Moussarom and Ngueleya, near Lake Chad. The attack kills at least six before the assailants are repelled by Chadian forces. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **July 22, 2018:** Boko Haram militants ambush a village near Chad's border with Niger. The attack kills at least 18 and results in the kidnapping of at least 10 women. Following the ambush, at least 3,000 villagers are forced to leave their homes as instructed by Lake Chad governor, Mohammed Aba Salah, as a "precautionary measure." Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **June 24, 2017:** Boko Haram militants launch an attack in Lake Chad, with Chadian forces quickly responding to the scene. The attack kills at least eight soldiers and wounds another 18. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 6, 2015:** Three female bombers blow themselves up in Koulfoua island, Lake Chad. The attack kills at least 15 and injures more than 130. Security officials suspect Boko Haram to be responsible for the attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **October 10, 2015:** Five suicide bombers belonging to Boko Haram kill at least 36 Nigerians at a refugee camp in Baga Sola. Sources: [France 24](#), [United Nations](#)
 - **August 17, 2015:** A Chadian judicial source announces Chad will hold 10 Boko Haram suspects on trial for "murder using explosives, illegal possession of weapons of war and criminal conspiracy." Source: [Yahoo News](#)
 - **July 10, 2015:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive at a market in N'Djamena. The attack kills at least 15. Boko Haram claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Office of the Director of National Intelligence](#)
 - **June 15, 2015:** Boko Haram suicide bombers detonate explosives at the police headquarters and training academy in N'Djamena. The attack kills 23 and wounds over 100 others. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **March 9, 2015:** Military forces from Chad and Niger advance into Nigeria as part of a joint military campaign against Boko Haram. Cameroonian Defense Minister Edgard Alain Mebe Ngo'o said that Nigerian and Chadian troops would fight Boko Haram troops from Niger, and that Cameroon would stop Boko Haram militants from escaping across the borders. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 2, 2015:** Chadian troops retake control of the northeastern Nigerian town of Dikwa, which Boko Haram had occupied for weeks. Boko Haram kills hundreds of civilians before retreating. Source: [Associated Press](#)

Domestic Counter-Extremism

Operation Boma's Wrath

On April 2, 2020, the governments of Niger, Nigeria, and Chad announced a joint bombing and clearance operation to rid the Lake Chad region of Boko Haram and ISWAP. Operation Boma's Wrath was spearheaded by Chad in coordination with Niger and Nigeria. The operation was a response to a Boko Haram attack on a Chadian military base in Bohoma that killed at least 92 soldiers and injured dozens of others on March 23. On April 4, the Chadian army destroyed five bases belonging to Boko Haram in Niger and Nigeria. It is unreported exactly where and how many terrorists were killed in the operation. Despite the Chadian Army's claim that over 1,000 Boko Haram militants were eliminated in Operation Boma's Wrath, on April 10, President Idriss Deby stated that Chadian troops would no longer participate in military operations outside the country's borders. According to Deby, Chad shouldered the majority of the burden of the regional campaign against Boko Haram. Given Deby's frustration over the region's inconsistent military support, he threatened to withdraw all forces out of bases in Niger and Nigeria by April 22. (Sources: [Telegraph](#), [The Punch](#), [Voice of America](#), [Anadolu Agency](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

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Although it is unconfirmed whether Chadian troops withdrew from Niger and Nigeria, on February 15, 2021, leaders of the G5 Sahel—Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—attended a two-day summit in N'Djamena. At the summit, Deby announced that more than 1,200 troops would be deployed to combat extremist groups on the Sahel border zone between Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Additionally, Deby urged the international community to increase its funds for development to prevent the continued rise of terrorism and reasons for radicalization in Chad. Chad's increase in deployment comes a month after French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that France may "adjust" its military commitment in the Sahel following attacks that increased the number of French combat deaths to 50 in Mali. (Sources: [Arab News](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

French Military Operations

In July 2014, France launched Opération Barkhane, a counterterrorism effort headquartered in Chad. The operation was a broader continuation of Opération Serval which French forces launched in January 2013—and allegedly completed in 2014—to respond to increased attacks from AQIM in Algeria, Libya, Mali, and Niger. Opération Barkhane's main objective is counterterrorism, according to France's defense minister. Opération Barkhane, based in the Chadian capital N'Djamena, has the authority to cross borders as it targets Islamist extremism in Mali, Chad, and Niger. Opération Barkhane created regional military bases in north Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Accompanying the French soldiers are six fighter jets, 20 helicopters, and three drones. (Sources: [Oxford Research Group](#), [Le Figaro](#), [Le Ministère de la Défense](#), [France 24](#))

In January 2020, France hosted a meeting with the leaders of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad to address increased jihadist activity in Africa's Sahel region. The leaders pledged to increase their military campaigns against jihadists. As of January 2021, France had more than 5,000 troops in Africa. At least 47 French troops have been killed in anti-terrorism operations in Africa since 2013. As of February 2021, Macron announced that an immediate reduction of French troops in the region is not to be expected, although the military system does expect some modifications in the Sahel. (Sources: [France 24](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Defense Post](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#))

Law Enforcement and Border Security

In 2019, the Chadian National Police coordinated with the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program to select a group of law enforcement and military officers from multiple agencies to form a new counter terrorism investigation unit. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Border security remains difficult as Chad is surrounded by porous borders, particularly along Lake Chad. The Gendarmes, Army, Customs, and the National and Nomadic Guard (GNNT), share responsibility for border protection. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, none of the forces have adequate resources to effectively deter the movement and infiltration of extremists and other criminal activity from entering the country. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Legislation

During the height of extremist violence in 2015, Chad implemented more stringent anti-terrorism measures to better monitor and counteract the growing threat of attacks. Among the new measures included the banning of full veils in public places, bans on public demonstrations, and restrictions on internet access. The measures were implemented following five suicide bombings in a village near Lake Chad that killed at least 36 people in early October 2015. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Just Security](#))

The government of Chad updated its Penal Code in April 2017, which saw the increase of sentences to life imprisonment for terrorist offenses. According to the U.S. State Department, the laws were criticized as being too severe as minimal evidence was required to prosecute individuals accused of terrorism. Furthermore, law enforcement leadership and other agencies were accused of arbitrary and unlawful killings given the lack of coordination and communication among bureau lines. It was not until April 2020 that Chad's government once again amended the country's anti-terror laws to remove the death penalty for terrorism-related charges. The action was taken following the death of 44 alleged members of Boko Haram while in pre-trial detention in N'Djamena. According to media sources, their deaths incited domestic and international criticism after autopsies on four dead prisoners revealed that they had been poisoned. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Just Security](#), [Guardian](#))

Countering Violent Extremism

Moderate religious leaders are at the forefront of improving Chadian youth resilience to radicalization. Accordingly, Chadian religious leaders promote trainings on interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, nonmilitary tools to prevent the spread of violent

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extremism—such as a radio program that spreads messages of peace and tolerance—have helped to reduce perceptions that religious and political violence were justified. These peace and tolerance radio stations in Chad have been shown to increase support for Western efforts in the fight against terrorism. (Source: [United Nations](#))

In 2019, the Chadian High Council for Islamic Affairs also participated in cultural exchanges with the United States to reinforce themes of tolerance, inclusion, and women’s empowerment at various private, public, and media events through the country. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

International Counter-Extremism

Military Endeavors

Chad has contributed more than 1,425 soldiers, the third largest contributor, to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in response to extremist violence. Additionally, the Chadian army has also sent over 600 soldiers to conduct security operations on the border with Sudan. Since 2010, the Chadian-Sudanese border force—which is comprised of over 3,000 men—has been deployed along the border of the two countries to repel rebel groups and cross-border attacks. In December 2019, the two governments enhanced the role played by the joint border force by emphasizing the exchange of information and intelligence between the security services of the two countries, while also enhancing the monitoring of irregular immigration and arms smuggling. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Dabanga](#), [Dabanga](#), [Sudan Tribune](#))

Multinational Joint Task Force

Chad supports peacekeeping forces throughout the region as it plays a pivotal role in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a N’Djamena-headquartered counterterrorism effort. The task force, which was launched in 2015, consists of Lake Chad basin countries that seek to eliminate Boko Haram from the area. However, the five-nation regional force—which also includes Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin—has faced a variety of problems such as inconsistent commitment to the force, funding problems, and disorganized planning. In support of the MNJTF, 1,200 Chadians traveled to Nigeria to combat Boko Haram. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Ministere De L’Europe Et Des Affaires Etrangeres](#))

Each country’s national army can also conduct their own anti-Boko Haram operations outside of the purview of the MNJTF. More than 2,600 Chadian service members are deployed to joint border security operations as part of the MNJTF and the G-5 Sahel—an intergovernmental cooperation framework that includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. However, Chadian forces, which are considered some of the strongest in the Sahel region, have shown frustration with the MNJTF due to continued losses and lack of foreign financial support. Despite inconsistent military contributions within the task force, operations have proven beneficial in countering Boko Haram. On April 5, 2020, the military forces of Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, bombed a camp in the Tumbun Fulani area in Borno State, Nigeria, that was a hideout for Boko Haram and ISWAP forces. The governments did not confirm the number of casualties, but claimed that scores of terrorists were killed and that many structures in the camp were destroyed. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Ministere De L’Europe Et Des Affaires Etrangeres](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#), [The Punch](#))

Operation Gama Aiki and Rawan Kada

The MNJTF has launched a number of operations to tackle insurgencies. The first operation, Gama Aiki, was carried out from June to September of 2016. Operation Gama Aiki, in which Chadian soldiers were deployed to Niger, was a response to an attack in Bosso, Niger. The June 2 attack saw Boko Haram ambush and kill over 32 soldiers. Following the completion of Operation Gama Aiki, the MNJTF launched Operation Rawa Kada in 2017. The offensive focused on implementing stabilization programs, restoring state authority in areas affected by Boko Haram, and assisting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees to return to their homes. Rawan Kada concluded in mid-2017 after the MNJTF claimed its objectives had been achieved. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Just Security](#), [African Union](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#))

Combating Terrorist Financing

Chad is a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa Groupe d’Action contre le blanchiment d’Argent en Afrique Centrale (GABAC), a body of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa. GABAC seeks to combat money laundering and terrorist



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financing, assess the compliance of its members against the Financial Action Task Force's standards, provide technical assistance to its members states, and facilitate international cooperation. Other member countries include Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Financial Action Task Force](#))