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The war in Sudan spilled over into Chad, and Maiduguri in Nigeria faced simultaneous attacks from Boko Haram and ISWAP.







Benin: JNIM sustains its offensive in the north

On 4 and 7 March, [Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin \(JNIM\)](#) launched large-scale attacks on Beninese military positions in Kofouno and at the former Pendjari Lodge in Alibori and Atacora departments. The attacks targeted military camps in the natural reserves of Park W and Pendjari, resulting in the destruction of infrastructure and the capture of weapons and military equipment, including an M113 armored personnel carrier. Authorities reported that the military killed 21 militants, while JNIM claimed to have killed 11 soldiers in the two attacks. These latest attacks follow a series of incidents throughout February, including an ambush on a military patrol, attacks on police and customs stations, a Chinese-run construction site, and a school in northern Benin.

JNIM's campaign in Benin is part of a [regionwide offensive](#) launched in early February after the [defection of a senior JNIM commander](#), Sadou Samahouna, to the group's jihadist rival, Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), and follows a months-long lull in JNIM operations in Benin after a series of attacks along the [Benin-Nigeria border](#) between June and November 2025. The campaign appears aimed at strengthening cohesion and preventing further defections within JNIM's ranks across key areas of operation. The operations also seem targeted at countering accusations by the defecting commander that JNIM was negotiating truces with Benin and Ivory Coast.

Mozambique: Military admits to killing 13 fishers off Cabo Delgado

Speaking at a public meeting on 25 March in Mocímboa da Praia, Mozambican military commanders admitted responsibility for killing at least 13 fishers on 15 March.¹ That day, soldiers on a Defense Armed Forces of Mozambique (FADM) vessel opened fire on six boats that had sailed south from Mocímboa da Praia to fish in waters close to Macomia district.² Just 10 days before, FADM soldiers [fired on a fishing boat](#) in the same area, but with no reported fatalities.

The 15 March event was the latest in a series of shootings at sea. Since January 2024, soldiers of FADM's navy have killed at least 85 fishers in 10 separate incidents off the coast of Mocímboa da Praia and Macomia districts. In the five years from 2019 to 2023, FADM targeted fishers just five times, resulting in the deaths of 13 people. The military is keen to restrict movement by traditional fishing boats, as it suspects them of moving supplies and fighters for Islamic State Mozambique, which has maintained a presence along the coast since at least 2023. Despite the killings, fishers continue to take to the sea. Opportunities ashore are few, and many consider the risk to be necessary.

See ACLED's [Mozambique Conflict Monitor](#) for more.

Niger: ISSP intensifies pressure on the military and security forces in several regions

[ISSP](#) intensified its violent campaign in Niger, carrying out nine attacks against military and security forces and killing at least 35 personnel, according to the most conservative estimates. ISSP launched a series of attacks on military positions in the cities of Tillabéri and Tahoua and in the town of Ayorou, and carried out deadly ambushes in the rural communes of Sanam, Dioundiou, and Allela, where the militants killed personnel, burned vehicles, and captured weapons.

The attacks in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions reflect the persistently high levels of violence in western Niger, where Tillabéri was the [deadliest region](#) in the central Sahel in 2025. At the same time, attacks on positions in [population centers](#) illustrate a broader trend of pressure mounting on major cities and towns in the central Sahel region. For example, an assault on Tahoua airport and nearby military facilities on 8 March mirrors the late January attack on Niamey airport, although relatively limited Islamic State claims following the attack, along with the absence of visual evidence when compared to the Niamey airport attack, suggest a less successful outcome.

In the wake of successive attacks, Niger announced the establishment of "Domol Leydi," translated as protectors of the homeland, which are state-backed territorial self-defense groups composed of armed volunteers intended to support the country's military.³

Nigeria: Suicide bombings threaten the Borno state capital of Maiduguri

On 16 March, three suspected Boko Haram (JAS) suicide bombers detonated explosive devices in Maiduguri at the post office, the Monday market, and at the gate of the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, reportedly killing 23 people. The triple attack in March marked the fifth suicide attack already in 2026. The last four months have been particularly lethal, as 68 people were reportedly killed in Maiduguri compared to none in the four months prior. While suicide bombings have been a relatively commonly used tactic of Islamist groups in Nigeria in the past, they have been rare in recent years, averaging five per year since 2020.

On the same day as the Boko Haram suicide attack, militants from Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) attacked other areas of Maiduguri, where they clashed with military and allied armed groups on the outskirts of the city. The simultaneous attacks against Maiduguri raised suspicions of increased collaboration between Boko Haram and ISWAP, despite ongoing competition between the groups.⁴ Boko Haram and ISWAP militants regularly engage in clashes, including seven clashes so far in 2026, showing a more conflictual than cooperative relationship.

Somalia: Al-Shabaab intensifies operations targeting civilians in southern and central regions

In March, al-Shabaab launched a coordinated campaign targeting civilians across southern and central Somalia, resulting in the deaths of at least 47 people. The uptick in events targeting civilians coincides with Ramadan. Many of these attacks were targeted assassinations, including of six civilians in a public square in Kunyo Barrow village in the Middle Juba region on 7 March. Al-Shabaab claims that among the civilians killed were people involved in espionage activities for the Somali security forces and their allied international partners.⁵

Beyond these high-profile attacks, the group is reinforcing its long-term grip on the country's economic and logistical arteries. Specifically, al-Shabaab has increased its presence along strategic supply routes that link the Middle Juba and Lower Shabelle regions by mobilizing additional armed units and establishing mobile checkpoints for patrols to control the movement of goods and people. These moves have better enabled them to extort money from passengers and commercial vehicles and target civilians linked with local administrations and those they claimed were not fasting during Ramadan.

Sudan and Chad: The Sudan conflict spills over to Chad's Tine town

On 18 March, a Sudanese armed group, believed to be the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), carried out a drone strike on the Chadian border town of Tine, killing at least 17 civilians. The town is located northwest of Sudan's North Darfur state. Chad's president, Mahamat Idriss Deby, condemned the attack and ordered the national army to respond to any assaults involving Sudanese armed groups. The following day, Chadian security forces conducted a house-to-house search to confiscate weapons and military vehicles. They also tightened border controls by banning vehicles from crossing the border.⁶ While this is not the first such attack in this town, it happened against a backdrop of increasing violence in the area in 2026. ACLED records nine events since December 2025, with the first being a drone strike carried out by the RSF against the Chadian military in the bordering areas near Tine-Djagaraba in Tine Military Camp on 26 December 2025.

Fighting between the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and its ally, the Darfur Joint Forces, from [21 to 23 February in Sudan's twin town of Tina in North Darfur](#), led to the closing of the border between Chad and Sudan. This fighting and the border closure continued into March. On 16 March, the RSF clashed with the SAF, which was backed by the Darfur Joint Forces, the Sudanese Popular Resistance, and several Chadian National Army soldiers in Tina. Between 17 and 20 civilians were reportedly killed, and at least 66 civilians were wounded in Tine by stray bullets. The fighting is part of a wider mobilization by the RSF to gain full control of North Darfur that began in February. On 16 March, the RSF also seized another border town, Karnoi, after clashes with the SAF and the Darfur Joint Forces, underscoring the region's volatility, even after the RSF's capture of El Fasher in October 2025.

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