



Militancy/Terrorism

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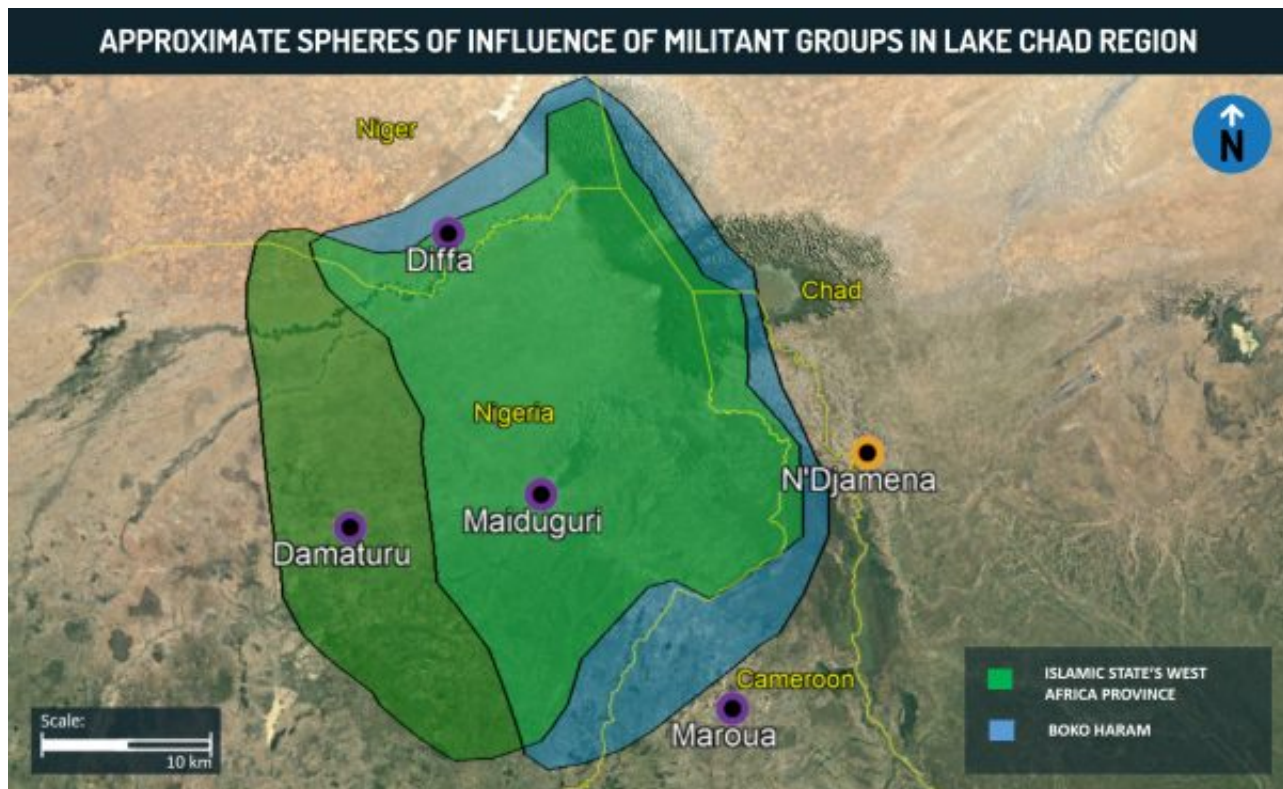
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Lake Chad SITUATION UPDATE: ISWAP attack Kanamma, headquarters of Yunusari LGA in Nigeria's Yobe State on April 29, after capturing nearby Geidam

Executive Summary

- The Islamic State's West Africa Province reported occupation of Geidam, Geidam Local Government Area (LGA), Yobe State, from April 23-27 is extremely significant given the extended occupation of the LGA headquarters. ISWAP also attacked Kanamma, headquarters of neighboring Yunusari LGA on April 29, indicating attempts to establish a new stronghold in Northern Yobe State.
- The modus operandi of the attacks which included distributing propaganda material, destroying telecommunication infrastructure, raiding government and humanitarian offices, and targeting schools indicate attempts to exert a more permanent authority over the population and bolster ISWAP's force strength.
- Reports from April 29 indicate that Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau ordered the execution of prominent group leaders over internal disputes. The leadership change could possibly alienate a section of the group's followers, but given Shekau's assertive leadership, it is unlikely to significantly impact the group's capabilities or operations.



Please be advised

In the Lake Chad Basin region, the following notable incidents have been reported:

Nigeria

Map #	State	LGA	Locale	Date	Brief Description
1.	Yobe	Geida m	Geidam	April 23-25	Militants capture district headquarters, dislodge security forces after two days of fighting; militant presence maintained for at least five days
2.	Yobe	Yunusa Kanamma ri		April 29	ISWAP releases photoset on May 4 claiming attack LGA headquarters; on May 1, IS-affiliated media claimed ISWAP seized Kamanga, Diffa Region, just across the joint border, likely referring to attack on Kanamma
3.	Borno	Kaga	Mainok	April 25	ISWAP claimed attack, militants use MRAPs seized from military to ambush military convoy, attack base. 33 soldiers allegedly killed by militants as well as NAF aircraft which mistakenly bombed troops
4.	Borno	Ngala	Wulgo	April 26	Security forces successfully repelled attacks by militants
5.	Borno	Kala-Balge	Rann	May 1	Military, Air Force successfully repel ISWAP attacks
6.	Borno	Mafa	Ajiri	May 2	15 CJTF, five soldiers, 10 civilians killed as militants reportedly dislodge soldiers from location

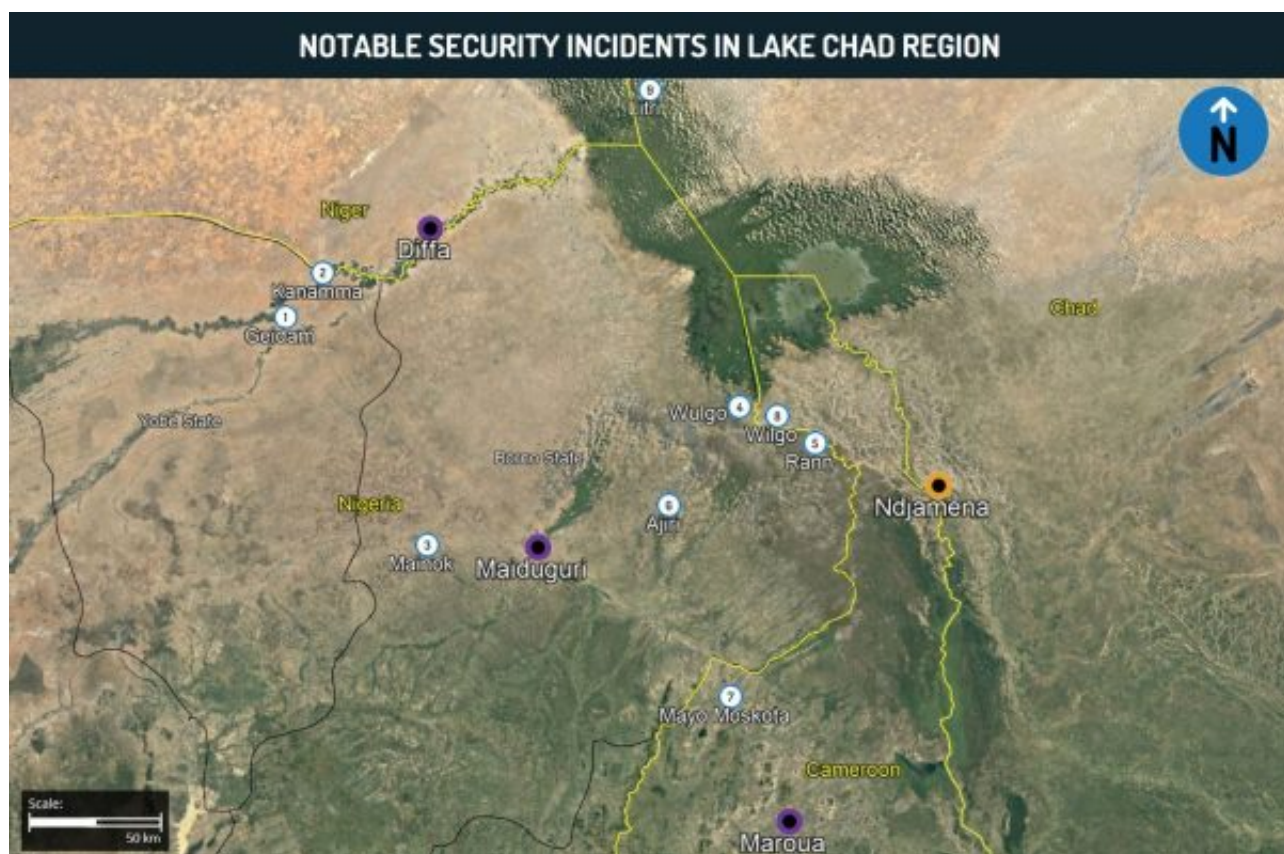
base, raid village

Cameroon

Map #	Region	Department	Locale	Date	Brief Description
7.	Extreme North	Mayo Tsanaga	Mayo Moskota	April 20-21	Heavily armed gunmen in uniform seize 300 cattle from Fulani village; animals later recovered by military
8.	Extreme North	Logone-et-Chari	Wilgo	April 28	Two militants killed as security forces repelled militant attack, seize equipment

Chad

Map #	Region	Department	Locale	Date	Brief Description
9.	Lac	Mamdi	Litri	April 27	12 soldiers, 40 militants killed in ISWAP claimed attack



Notable Developments

- Reports from April 27 indicate that local populations were returning to Geidam following the

militant's alleged withdrawal from the town. Yobe State Governor also requested a special military intervention in the area. However, contradictory sources from April 30 indicate that militants were still in control over the Geidam Local Government Area (LGA) through occupying positions in outlying areas and controlling farming activities.

- Reports from May 3 indicate that the Nigerian Air Force stated that they were still investigating alleged mistaken airstrikes on Nigerian troops on Mainok, Borno State on April 25, further claiming that the public will be updated on findings.
- The military on April 30 renamed its counter-militancy operation from Lafiya Dole to Hadin Kai, to reflect a new approach involving increasing cohesion and integration among the armed forces' branches in security operations against militant groups.
- Reports from April 29 indicate that Boko Haram's head Abubakar Shekau ordered the execution of four prominent group leaders, including his chief assistant Alaji Modu Kakakauma as well as war commander Abu Fatima who has been replaced by a commander known as Abu Muhammad.

Assessments & Forecast

1. The Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) statement on [April 25](#) claiming to have taken control of Geidam, Yobe State, and its claimed attack on Kanamma, the headquarters of neighboring Yunusari LGA on April 29, align with ISWAP's observed strategy to attack LGA headquarters which host a significant presence of humanitarian organizations and military forces. This strategy was already underscored during ISWAP attacks on Dikwa, Marte and Damasak, all in Borno State, from February through April. In this context, ISWAP's attack on Rann, the headquarters of Kala-Balge LGA, Borno State, though repelled, also follows the same pattern.
2. The attacks on Geidam and Kanamma resulted in the destruction of telecommunication infrastructure, government offices and humanitarian facilities. The militants also distributed propaganda material, preached jihadist sermons, and targeted teachers and schools. This highlights the militant's focus on entrenching their rule over the state authorities. The alleged insistence on not harming Muslims further reinforces the assessment indicating an attempt to not alienate a majority segment of the local populace, which would serve to enable militants to increasingly exert a sense of permanent authority over populations. Such an approach was also likely intended to serve the militants' recruitment efforts. Furthermore, the occupation of farms is notable as it suggests the intention to occupy the area for an extended period while ensuring financial benefits and possibly also securing means to supply food for the population under the group's control.
3. As of writing, the exact situation regarding ISWAP's control over Geidam remains unclear and the group may still be holding territories in the LGA's rural areas. However, even if the reported withdrawal of the group on April 27 is correct, ISWAP's control for at least five days differs from previous attacks, where they reportedly withdrew within 24-48 hours, indicating a possible shift towards establishing a certain degree of territorial control over populations. ISWAP operations around Geidam and Kanamma may also reflect an attempt to expand westwards and establish positions in northern Yobe State to complement the group's stronghold in northern Borno State. Thereby, it is likely that ISWAP is using the porous Nigeria-Niger border and the Yobe River to move its personnel and equipment from northern Borno State to support operations in northern Yobe State. Additionally, it is plausible that ISWAP launched attacks in northern Yobe State as it sought to gain knowledge of the local terrain ahead of the coming rainy season, considering that inclement weather conditions limit the military's ability to launch significant operations.
4. **FORECAST:** While the Nigerian military did not launch any immediate counter-offensive to dislodge militants in northern Yobe State, this does not preclude the possibility that such operations may take place in the coming days and weeks. However, given the militants' growing entrenchment, possibly further bolstered by recruitment efforts during their temporary capture of Geidam and Kanamma, military operations are unlikely to lead to a significant withdrawal of ISWAP positions. Moreover, ISWAP's entrenchment is likely to delay and disrupt humanitarian services in the area, which will further force the locals into cooperating with the militants.
5. Meanwhile, in their April 25 attack in Mainok, Borno State, ISWAP militants used Mine-Resistant

Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles seized from the military, and in the Kanamma attack, they used police 4X4 vehicles. This highlights ISWAP's easy access to military equipment and vehicles, and the group's deliberate use of those to exacerbate operational challenges for the military to identify militants and to direct air support to target militants during attacks. This was notably demonstrated when the airstrikes that were meant to repel the militants in Mainok mistakenly hit soldiers, as the pilots were likely unable to distinguish between militant and military positions.

FORECAST: As ISWAP claimed to have seized additional vehicles, weapons and equipment during its recent attacks, the group is poised to continue using the camouflage of military gear. In this context, given that counter-militancy operations include a dominant role for air support, operational challenges associated with airstrikes are likely to persist. Furthermore, the government's rebranding of counter-militancy operations in the northeast is unlikely to increase military capacity or enhance counter-militancy capabilities.

6. Separately, while unconfirmed, the leadership shuffle within Boko Haram and the alleged execution of ousted leaders are notable given the circumstances involving a reported internal dispute, indicating Abubakar Shekau's disposition to eliminate perceived threats to his leadership from within the group's ranks. **FORECAST:** That said, the leadership change could possibly alienate loyalists of the executed commanders, which could lead to Boko Haram elements choosing to act independently impacting the internal cohesion of the group temporarily. However, Shekau is also known to rule assertively and maintains a strong following of loyalists within the group, and to this point, the leadership changes are unlikely to significantly impact Boko Haram's strength, capabilities or operations going forward.

Recommendations

We advise to avoid all travel to areas of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad within the Lake Chad Region given the extreme risk of militancy.