Armed Conflict

31
MAY
13:01 UTC

Chad & CAR Alert: CAR Armed Forces (FACA) clash with Chadian military at Sourou military post, Bitoye sub-department, Logone-Occidental Region in Chad on May 30

Please be advised

- In a statement released on May 30, the Chadian Minister for Foreign Affairs claimed that CAR Armed Forces (FACA) troops entered Chadian territory on May 30 and attacked the Sourou military post in Bitoye sub-department, Monts de Lam department, Logone-Occidental Region, near the border with CAR.
- The statement claims that the FACA elements killed one Chadian soldier and abducted five before killing them in Mbang, Ouham-Pende Prefecture in CAR.
- The statement also claims that it holds the CAR government entirely responsible for committing a ‘serious war crime’, and undermining bilateral security efforts.
- Local sources from May 30 indicate that the perpetrators were Russian mercenaries present in CAR in support of the FACA against Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) rebels.



Assessments & Forecast

1. The killing of six Chadian soldiers on Chadian territory is notable given the relative rarity of clashes between FACA and Chadian security forces. While the Chadian authorities have claimed that FACA was responsible for the attack, given the frequently reported movement of Russian mercenaries along with FACA troops in security operations, it is possible that the Russians may have been involved. In this context, it is possible that the Chadian Minister for Foreign affairs chose to overlook possible Russian responsibility to avoid tensions with Russia.
2. Regardless, this incident highlights the extremely porous nature of the border between Chad and CAR. While the motivations for the incident remain unclear, it is possible that FACA had entered Chadian territory in pursuit of rebels given that armed rebel groups from CAR are known to have sought refuge in Chad. FACA may have then exchanged gunfire with the Chadian security forces after being confronted.
3. Given the relatively stable relations between the two countries and their own internal security concerns, it is unlikely that either Chad or CAR possess the means or the motivation to actively engage in border clashes. As such, while the Minister for Foreign Affairs' rhetoric in response to the attack is likely to increase tensions, Chad and CAR will ultimately seek dialogue to resolve the dispute. Nonetheless, Chad may increase its military presence along the border to avoid future incursions. This will then increase the likelihood of sporadic clashes between Chadian security forces and CAR rebel groups or FACA over the coming months.

Recommendations

1. Travel to N'Djamena may continue while adhering to stringent security measures regarding crime and civil unrest.
2. Travel to Bangui should be restricted to essential purposes only given the volatile security situation, while avoiding all travel to Bangui's PK5 area.
3. Avoid all travel to outlying areas along the Chad-CAR border given the latest heightened tensions and rebel presence.