



Militancy/Terrorism

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Lake Chad SITUATION UPDATE: 16 soldiers, 50 militants killed in attack on military post in Baroua, Diffa Region, Niger on August 24

Executive Summary

- On August 24, a militant attack targeting a military post in Baroua, Niger's Diffa Region resulted in the death of 16 soldiers and 50 militants is noteworthy due to the significant death tolls and illustrates the continued ability of militants to create insecurity despite the authorities' initiative to display opposite and encourage the return of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) to Baroua.
- Cameroonian President Paul Biya's order to mobilize former militias to help counter-militancy operations in Cameroon's Extreme North Region may help mitigate militant attacks but will further complicate the security landscape.
- The social stigma associated with the reintegration of surrendering militants and associated individuals is likely to complicate the process in addition to other challenges likely to be faced by authorities in implementing the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program.

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.	Borno	Nganzai	Gajiram	August 22	Four militants killed as security forces repel militant attack on

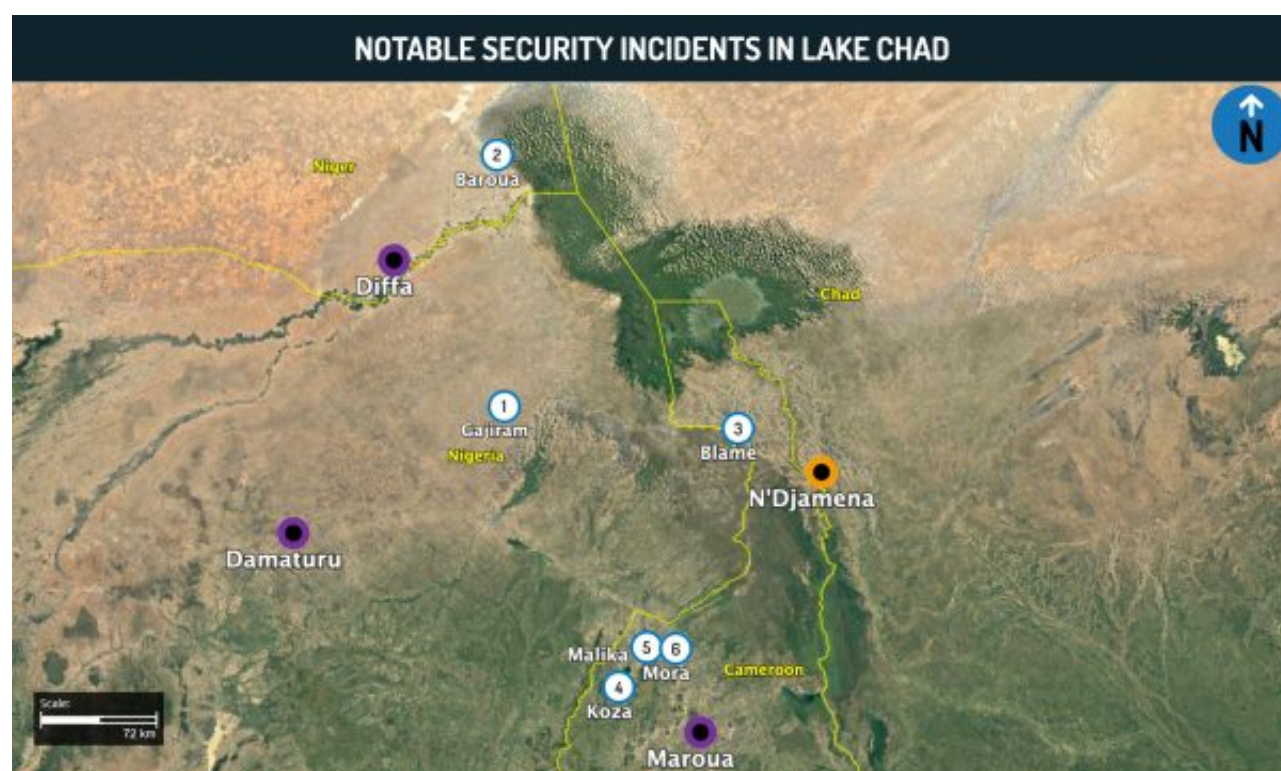
Niger

Map #	Region	Department	Locale	Date	Brief Description
2.	Diffa	N'guigmi	Baroua	August 24	16 soldiers, 50 militants killed

as security force
repel militant
attack

Cameroon

Map #	Region	Department	Locale	Date	Brief Description
3.	Extreme-North	Logone-et-Chari	Blame	August 15	ISWAP claims attack, one soldier killed in militant attack
4.	Extreme-North	Mayo-Tsanaga	Koza	August 20	Two civilians killed, houses burnt down, cattle seized by suspected militants
5.	Extreme-north	Mayo-Sava	Malika	August 23	Two killed, one wounded in militant raid on village, one militant killed in security operation
6.	Extreme-North	Mayo-Sava	Mora	August 23	Two killed in militant raid



Notable Developments

- Reports from August 14 indicate that community and religious leaders of Nigeria's Borno State expressed concerns over the surrender of alleged thousands of militants and their families.
- Reports from August 15 indicate that Cameroonian President Paul Biya ordered the deployment of a delegation including high-ranking military operatives to mobilize local militias. The delegation was sent to Mora, located in the Extreme-North Region's Mayo-Sava Department. The militias are reportedly tasked to defend localities, as well as 'educate' locals to reject militants' teachings.
- A notice released by Nigeria's Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum on social media on August 16 indicates that consultations with government and military officials were held to address the alleged large number of surrenders of militants across the state. Zulum reportedly stated that consultations with local community leaders will also take place.
- Reports from August 22 indicate that approximately 750 militants coming from the Lake Chad shores are reportedly going through Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs in Meri, Cameroon.

Assessments & Forecast

Militant attack on military post in Baroua, Niger's Diffa Region to hamper government's efforts to encourage IDPs to return

1. The August 24 attack is notable given the relatively large death toll incurred both within the ranks of the security forces and the militants. However, it is possible that the authorities exaggerated the number of militants killed to project an image of superiority but the fact that the attack was successfully repelled denotes the Defense and Security Forces' (FDS) operational capabilities. While the identity of the perpetrators remains unknown as of writing, both the Boko Haram's Bakura faction and the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) are known to operate on Lake Chad shores along the Nigeria-Niger-Chad border area, which suggests that either one of these groups may have conducted the attack.
2. It is noteworthy that 6,000 residents had returned to Baroua in June as part of a newly-launched reintegration program led by Nigerien authorities, which aims at reintegrating 26,000 internally displaced peoples (IDPs) from the location displaced since militant attacks in 2015. The return of the villagers after six years denotes an entrenched threat perception regarding militant presence, and the IDPs' lack of willingness to return without institutional support. **FORECAST:** In this context, while the attack did not target civilians, locals are nonetheless likely to perceive this attack as an illustration of FDS' inability to mitigate the rampant insecurity in the area. To that end, it is poised to significantly hamper the government's efforts to continue the IDPs return to their villages with several returnees choosing to go back to IDP camps. The government may launch a large-scale security operation in the immediate term to demonstrate its capabilities, and maintain the locals' trust.

Cameroon President Biya's announcement to remobilize former militias to assist in counter-militancy efforts to further complicate security landscape

1. Amid the relative general increase in militancy-related activities in Cameroon's Extreme North Region, President Paul Biya's announcement to remobilize former militias, particularly in the Mayo-Sava Department is noteworthy. This underscores the authorities' awareness regarding the threat of a potential increase in militancy in the Extreme North Region due to recent changes in the

militancy's dynamics with ISWAP attempting to strengthen its well-known operational presence in the Logone-et-Chari Department in the region's northern areas and expand beyond it. After ISWAP took over Boko Haram territories in Nigeria in areas bordering Cameroon's Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga Departments, increased the potential of ISWAP cross-border attacks. **FORECAST:** While the mobilization of vigilantes and militias might prove effective to defend local communities against militant attacks, it is likely to further deteriorate the security landscape amid the general absence of government oversight of the functions of such entities. Regardless, militant attacks are likely to continue to persist in the Extreme North region in the near term.

Social stigma to complicate reintegration efforts of recent waves of surrendering militants, associates that are expected to burden the government's DDR program capacities

1. In a continuation of the recent weeks-long trend, militants, along with their family members, and civilians formerly living in militants-held territory considered surrendering as a more viable option in the Lake Chad Region, particularly Nigeria. While there could be several reasons for these waves of surrender, it is possible that particularly the surrendering civilians are likely from former Boko Haram territories and were potentially given the opportunity to move away when ISWAP took over these areas. It is possible that ISWAP allowed the civilians the choice to leave to relieve pressure on the group's ability to maintain these newly acquired territories by retaining civilians willing to accept ISWAP's ideology and authority. Regardless of the motivations, these waves of surrendering militants and associated-civilians are likely to burden Nigeria's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program capacity and facilities.
2. One of the many challenges that the authorities will face will be the reintegration of former militants or militancy-associated individuals into the society. There exists heightened social stigma and lack of acceptance regarding militancy and its association within the Lake Chad communities, who have faced significant struggles due to the more than a decade long insurgency. Governor Zulum's demonstrated wariness of the need for a unified position within the military, government, and local communities regarding the continued surrenders underscores his threat perception over the potential social rejection of the surrendering. This could potentially discourage additional surrenders as well as fuel social tensions and even violence. Former militants often struggle to find employment and maintain decent living conditions due to the social stigma. While the authorities employ measures to prepare the communities, such failure to reintegrate into the society amid the authorities potentially limited ability to provide financial support may encourage the surrendered individuals to willingly return to ISWAP held territories.

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.