

Developing

**18**

DEC

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Niger Alert: Unidentified individuals attack Niger-Benin oil pipeline, allegedly damaging section of pipeline near Gaya, Dosso Region on December 17

Current Situation

- Sources indicate that unidentified individuals attacked the Niger-Benin oil pipeline near Gaya, between Lido and Karakar, Gaya Department in the Dosso Region on December 17, allegedly causing damage to the pipeline.
- Videos circulating on social media indicated damages to the pipeline. As of writing, further details regarding the incident, including the extent of damage and the identity of the perpetrators, are unclear.



Source: [X/Twitter](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. This comes amid recurring security threats to the Niger-Benin oil pipeline, with sporadic attacks perpetrated by Agadez Region-based rebel groups and unidentified armed individuals targeting the pipeline along its vast route within Nigerien territory. Most recently, unidentified assailants attacked the oil pipeline near Dioundiou, Dioundiou Department, Dosso Region on [December 13](#), forcing a suspension of operations in the area. Rebel groups such as the Patriotic Liberation Front (FPL) and other armed factions from Agadez have previously claimed responsibility for similar attacks and issued warnings to the junta regarding further attacks to undermine the military-led transition government and demand restoration of civilian administration. Thus, while the identity of the perpetrators remains unclear, the rebels' involvement in the attack is highly likely. Although the rebels do not have an active presence in Dosso, they have been operating in nearby regions and such groups could have deployed smaller cells to conduct the attack as part of its wider campaign to threaten the junta by sabotaging the economically critical pipeline.
2. The December 13 attack took place over 120 km away from Gaya, nonetheless, it is plausible that the same group was involved in both the incidents while moving across the region, especially given the locations are connected by the RN3 and RN2 national roads. While the extent of damage to the pipeline is unclear, the videos indicate some damage and underscore the vulnerability of critical infrastructure amid persistent insecurity. This further reflects the security apparatus' limitations in effectively securing the 1,950 km-long pipeline spread over tough and vast terrain which are compounding the security forces' difficulties, despite recurring attacks. Additionally, the involvement of local criminals seeking to gain economic advantages by vandalizing the pipeline cannot be ruled out in the latest incidents. Militants who maintain some presence in the area could also have conducted the attack, given their persistent attempts to undermine security measures and target critical infrastructure.
3. The authorities have largely refrained from commenting on similar incidents thus far. This is likely intended to avoid domestic and international criticism of the junta's inability to secure the pipeline, especially given the involvement of external actors such as Benin and China in the pipeline project. These persistent security challenges are in line with the continued destabilization

of the security landscape, especially after the junta took over in the July 2023 coup which has been heightening concerns among the public and the international community. **FORECAST:** The authorities may bolster localized security efforts in the area to reiterate their commitment to protecting the asset and prevent continued attacks. However, such measures will likely have a limited impact on eliminating further threats. The prolonged insecurity could negatively affect the pipeline's operation which can result in significant economic repercussions going forward. Similar attacks targeting the pipeline perpetrated by rebels and other non-state actors could recur in Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi, and Zinder regions in the near term.

Recommendations

1. We advise against nonessential travel to Tillaberi, Tahoua, Dosso, Agadez, and Zinder regions due to the ongoing threat of armed attacks and precarious security conditions.
2. Travel to Niamey can continue while adhering to stringent security precautions regarding crime.