

STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY

Region: Somalia-Nigeria-Democratic Republic of the Congo-Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso

Date: 18 April 2026

Scope: Security | Diplomacy | Defence

Classification: Client Confidential

SOMALIA

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud met with China's Special Envoy Hu Changchun in Mogadishu, reaffirming their strategic partnership focused on security, trade, and the blue economy. Mohamud also met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Istanbul and Antalya to discuss bilateral relations, trade, energy cooperation, and sovereignty issues. Furthermore, during a meeting with Massad Boulos, the US Senior Advisor for Africa, at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Mohamud drew attention to the deficiencies of sanctions within the international system and emphasized his country's democratization and institutionalization efforts. Israel's recognition of Somaliland as an independent state and its appointment of an ambassador were described by the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Minister Ali Mohammad Omar as a direct violation of Somalia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international law. Meanwhile, the Somali Future Council and Puntland officials stated that the country had entered a constitutional vacuum following the expiration of the parliament's mandate on April 14, 2026, urging the President to reach an inclusive electoral agreement. In contrast, Galmudug officials announced they had begun preparations for elections based on a one-person, one-vote system.

Somali National Army Commander, Brigadier General Ibrahim Mohamed Mahmoud, reported that national forces have made significant progress against Al-Shabaab. Ground Forces Commander General Sahal Abdullahi Omar inspected the frontlines in Sabiid, Anoole, and Mubaarak. It was announced that a large quantity of weapons was seized and numerous militants were neutralized in a joint operation by AUSSOM and the national army in Lower Shabelle. The Ministry of Defence stated that 27 Al-Shabaab militants were neutralized with international air support in the Jilib, Xagar, and Afmadow regions, while 54 militants were neutralized in six airstrikes conducted across the Tardho, Ugunji, Daynuunaay, and Qumbi areas. Jubaland and Somali forces also carried out large-scale joint operations in the Afmadow district of Lower Juba.

AFRICOM announced that it conducted airstrikes against Al-Shabaab near Mido and Qalay on April 9 and 13, as well as against ISIS-Somalia targets in the Golis Mountains, southeast of Bosaso, on April 6-7.

Puntland forces reportedly captured an ISIS-Somalia militant and recovered stolen livestock in the Yalho area.

On the Daray-Madoobe road, ISIS-Somalia militants abducted two shepherds along with their herds. In the same region, it was reported that armed elements killed a mother and her daughter and stole their livestock, prompting Puntland forces to launch a subsequent security operation.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

President Félix Tshisekedi attended the Antalya Diplomacy Forum and met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. During the ninth round of negotiations between the government and the AFC/M23, which began in Montreux, Switzerland, the third protocol of the Doha framework agreement focusing on humanitarian access and judicial protection could not be signed. While the parties agreed on the release of 311 AFC/M23 and 166 government-affiliated prisoners within 10 days, two memorandums of understanding were signed regarding the handover of 2,000 to 3,000 FARDC soldiers to the government and the deployment of the expanded Joint Ceasefire Verification Mechanism (MCVE+) to the field to include AFC/M23 representatives. US Deputy Representative to the United Nations Tammy Bruce stated that Rwanda escalated the crisis by violating the Washington Agreements. She called for the immediate withdrawal of Rwandan forces and for Kinshasa to neutralize the FDLR.

It was announced that 140 civilians held hostage by ISCAP were rescued in a joint military operation conducted by the Congolese and Ugandan armies in Mambasa, Ituri province.

The AFC/M23 initiated a large-scale blockade in the town of Minova in the Kalehe territory of South Kivu, imposing a curfew and conducting house searches. The group claimed that the army had launched coordinated attacks on Chambombo, Kumadepo, and Bulengero. While it was reported that government forces repelled an AFC/M23 attack in Masisi, the AFC/M23 claimed that following the signing of the new ceasefire monitoring mechanism, the army bombed Kalehe, Masisi, Minembwe, Kalingi, and Rugezi using drones, condemning this as a threat to the negotiations. The United Nations, ACLED, and Human Rights Watch reported a significant increase in airstrikes conducted by army drones in the mountainous regions of South Kivu. Clashes between the AFC/M23, FARDC, and Wazalendo in Masisi led to the depopulation of at least seven villages and large-scale displacement. Local media reported that Wazalendo attacked the M23 in Walikale, and that clashes occurred between the army and AFC/M23 in Minembwe, as well as between the FDLR and AFC/M23 in Rutshuru. Human Rights Watch stated that the army and armed groups were obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid and making it difficult for civilians to flee conflict zones.

NIGERIA

MINTEL WORLD

Conflict and energy consultancy

Nigerian Minister of Defence Christopher Gwabin Musa met with his counterpart Yaşar Güler in Antalya. The Defence Minister stated that bilateral relations have made significant progress over the years and described Türkiye as being "like family." Türkiye delivered humanitarian aid to civilians at the Malkohi Camp near Yola in Adamawa State. Meanwhile, Nigerian airlines warned that they would suspend all flight operations starting April 20 unless aviation fuel prices are reduced, stating that prices had been artificially inflated by fuel marketers.

The Attorney General's Office announced the conviction of approximately 400 Boko Haram and ISWAP suspects following trials in Abuja, which are part of a series of mass trials that began in 2017. An internal memo from the Customs Service dated April 13 indicated that security forces had been put on high alert due to a potential planned attack targeting public infrastructure in Abuja and Niger State. The Nigerian Army announced that at least 11 civilians were rescued and numerous suspects were arrested during coordinated operations. Simultaneously, it was reported that medical supplies were seized, hostages were rescued, and attempted attacks were thwarted in Nguru, Yobe State. Army sources confirmed the death of Brigadier General Oseni Braimah—which they had previously denied—stating he was killed by ISWAP in the Benisheikh attack, and noted that his funeral had taken place.

A Nigerian Air Force airstrike tracking terrorists in the Jili axis of Borno State reportedly killed between 50 and 200 civilians. The army, however, announced that numerous terrorists were neutralized in intelligence-led airstrikes in Gubio, within the same region, and shared footage of the operation. However, it appears that civilians were also targeted in these strikes. Colonel I.A. Mohammed and six soldiers, who were advancing as reinforcements to an attack in Monguno, Borno State, were killed in an ISWAP improvised explosive device (IED) attack. While ISWAP claimed responsibility for this ambush, it was reported that army troops subsequently destroyed civilian infrastructure in the Chali 2 community for allegedly failing to warn them about the attack in advance, and that drones were also used in the incident.

ISWAP claimed responsibility for an attack in southern Borno where a civilian was killed and 20 houses along with a church were burned, as well as an attempted attack on a checkpoint near Kasachia village in Yobe State; they also announced the execution of two people in Borno on witchcraft charges. Boko Haram launched an attack on the town of Safilunna in Borgu, Niger State. The army reportedly repelled attacks on Benisheikh in Borno and Tara village in Sokoto. Armed groups killed at least 18 civilians in Bunkasau village in the Bukkuyum area of Zamfara State, while two women were reportedly abducted during a night raid on Wanzamai village in the Tsafe area. In Yantala village, Kebbi State, three security guards were killed, and the village head was reportedly taken hostage. Attacks on civilians in the Isin and Ifelodun areas of Kwara State reportedly resulted in injuries, kidnappings, and the theft of livestock.

BURKINA FASO

The government, through the Minister of Territorial Administration Émile Zerbo, officially dissolved and banned 118 associations operating across the country.

MINTEL WORLD

Conflict and energy consultancy

The army reported that more than 100 militants were neutralized in the Soum region, alongside operations conducted in the Liptako, Nakambé, and Boucle du Mouhoun regions between April 1 and 13, 2026. During operations carried out by BIR (Rapid Intervention Battalion) units in Aribanda, numerous motorcycles and supplies were seized, and footage was released showing the deaths of dozens of JNIM militants.

JNIM claimed that during attacks carried out across various regions throughout the week, it seized control of VDP (Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland) posts in Dedougou and Tio, as well as military positions in Ouinga and Ouahigouya. Claimed to have killed 18 soldiers in attacks in Ouinga, Tio, and Pensa, and 16 soldiers in attacks on military outposts in Bissiga and Namssiguia, while also capturing weapons and ammunition. Furthermore, claimed that it targeted soldiers in the suburbs of Titao, killed five VDP members in attacks in Bindo and Koulpelogo, and assassinated a VDP member on the outskirts of Solle.

MALI

The Malian army announced that it neutralized numerous terrorists and seized weapons and ammunition during air and ground operations conducted 45 kilometers northwest of Didiéni and northeast of Sandare in the Koulikoro region.

It was reported that JNIM executed a civilian they had abducted in Kirchamba, Timbuktu region, in December 2025 over allegations that the individual intended to join the army. JNIM claimed to have carried out improvised explosive device (IED) attacks on an army patrol between Diondori and Tenenkou, an army vehicle in Diondori, and an Army-Africa Corps vehicle near Timbuktu. In the Aguelhok area of Kidal, injuries were reported following an explosive attack by armed groups targeting a civilian truck. Additionally, the ISSP claimed to have attacked a position held by the pro-government Tuareg group MSA east of Ménaka, resulting in the death of one fighter.

NIGER

Fourteen new cooperation agreements aimed at strengthening the strategic partnership were signed during the Joint Cooperation Commission meeting in Niamey, co-chaired by Foreign Minister Bakary Yaou Sangaré and his Moroccan counterpart, Nasser Bourita.

MINTEL WORLD

Conflict and energy consultancy

JNIM released footage of an improvised explosive device (IED) attack targeting a military convoy carrying soldiers between Samir and Balkab in the Tillabéri region. ISSP claimed to have killed three soldiers in an ambush in Dosso, and stated that five police officers were killed in an attack on a police checkpoint near Diffa.