STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE DAILY

Region: Somalia-Democratic Republic of the Congo-Nigeria-Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger-Benin
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Scope: Security |Diplomacy | Defence
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Executive Assessment

The security environment in the Sahel and Central Africa continues to be characterized by high-intensity asymmetric conflict. Claims by JNIM and ISWAP of coordinated attacks across Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria indicate that transnational jihadist networks retain operational capacity and continue to expand their activities across borders. Attacks targeting military positions in Benin particularly highlight the ongoing spillover of Sahel-based militant threats into coastal West African states.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the reported handover of more than 5,000 FARDC personnel by AFC/M23 to the ICRC represents a potential de-escalatory step, although continued military activity in North Kivu suggests that active hostilities remain ongoing.

In Somalia, the formal signing of the new constitution marks a significant step toward political institutionalization, while in Niger, the results of large-scale counterterrorism operations indicate that security forces are maintaining sustained operational pressure against militant groups. Overall, the developments suggest that conflict dynamics across the Sahel and Central Africa are likely to persist in the near term.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- The AFC/M23 announced that it has handed over more than 5,000 members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), captured on various fronts, to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). These personnel are expected to be repatriated to Kinshasa under ICRC supervision.
- The FARDC reported that it targeted an AFC/M23 position in the Masisi region of North Kivu province.

SOMALIA

- President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud officially signed the new Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia into law following its adoption by a joint session of both houses of the Federal Parliament. He announced that the government would immediately begin its implementation.

NIGER

- The Nigerien Defense and Security Forces (DSF) announced that 265 terrorists and mercenaries were neutralized and 132 suspects were arrested during integrated air-ground operations across Niger in February. The operations also resulted in the seizure of 47 vehicles, 152 motorcycles, 79 weapons, over 50,000 rounds of ammunition, 42 radios, and a large quantity of explosives.
- Suspected ISSP (Sahel) militants launched an attack on an airbase housing drone hangars in the city of Tahoua. Following a visit by the Governor of Tahoua, it was reported that several attackers were neutralized and five suspects were arrested.

BENIN

- JNIM claimed to have attacked a military barracks in the Kofouno region, killing six soldiers and seizing RPGs, a drone, and a large amount of ammunition.
- JNIM also claimed to have captured two army positions near the border with Burkina Faso.

BURKINA FASO

- JNIM claimed to have seized a VDP (Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland) outpost in Dedougou.
- JNIM claimed to have attacked three VDP outposts in Zogore, Yabonsgo, and Gourba, reporting that 11 VDP members were killed and various rifles and ammunition were seized.
- JNIM claimed to have seized rifles and equipment following attacks on military outposts in Pissila and Boko.

MALI

- JNIM claimed that an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) attack outside the city of Aguelhok killed two Africa Corps mercenaries, wounded several others, and destroyed an MRAP vehicle.

- JNIM claimed to have targeted a joint Army-Africa Corps vehicle with an IED in the area between Sevare and Konna.
- JNIM claimed to have conducted an ambush against an Army-Africa Corps patrol southwest of Nampala.

NIGERIA

- ISWAP claimed to have launched simultaneous attacks on army bases in Marte, Mainok, Konduga, and Jakana in Borno State, asserting that numerous soldiers were killed and vehicles and ammunition were seized.
- ISWAP also claimed to have targeted the Benisheikh and Kauri camps, as well as a military point in Dalori, with mortar fire on the same night.
- Days after simultaneous assaults ISWAP launched another wave of coordinated attacks on army positions and camps in Goniri, Beni Sheik, Kukawa, and Sambisa. The attack in Sambisa was reportedly repelled by security forces, resulting in the death of two militants, while the assault in Goniri was thwarted with the support of the air force.