

Nigeria says joint US strikes kill 175 ISIL fighters in country's northeast

Nigerian Army lauds joint US operation as part of ongoing military campaign to 'hunt down and kill terrorists anywhere'.



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Nigerian military prepares to cordon the area where a man was killed by suspected rebel fighters during an attack around the Polo area of Maiduguri, Nigeria, in 2019 [File: Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters]



By Al Jazeera Staff and Reuters

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Nigerian forces working with the United States claim to have killed 175 ISIL (ISIS) fighters in a series of joint strikes in the country's northeast in recent days.

The Nigerian Defence Headquarters said on Tuesday that operations conducted with the US military's Africa Command (AFRICOM) destroyed checkpoints, weapons caches, logistics hubs, military equipment and financing networks used by ISIL and the ISIL affiliate in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which has led a years-long struggle in the region.

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“As of 19 May 2026, assessments indicate that 175 ISIS terrorists have been eliminated from the battlefield,” Nigerian Defence Headquarters spokesperson Major-General Samaila Uba said in a statement.

“The joint strikes have further reinforced what the Armed Forces of Nigeria have consistently done over the years – hunt down and kill terrorists anywhere they are in

Nigeria,” Uba said.

The announcement comes after AFRICOM said it had [carried out attacks](#) on Sunday in coordination with the Nigerian government. It also follows Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu reporting that Abu Bilal al-Minuki, described as [ISIL's second-in-command](#) and also known as Abu-Mainok, was killed along with “several of his lieutenants” in a joint Nigeria-US strike.

The Nigerian Army said al-Minuki oversaw key ISIL operations in the Sahel and West African region.

After the announcement of al-Minuki's death, Tinubu thanked US President Donald Trump in a post on social media for his “leadership and unwavering support”.

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“I commend the personnel involved on both sides for their professionalism and courage, and I look forward to more decisive strikes against all terrorist enclaves across the nation,” Tinubu said.

The Nigerian military on Tuesday also reported the killing of another senior fighter, Abd-al Wahhab, who it said was responsible for coordinating attack planning and propaganda for ISWAP, as well as two senior ISWAP members, identified as Abu Musa al-Mangawi and Abu al-Muthanna al-Muhajir.

Since suffering major setbacks in the Middle East, ISIL has pivoted towards Africa, which accounted for 86 percent of the group’s global activity in the first three months of 2026, according to crisis monitoring group Armed Conflict Location & Event Data.



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The US announced it had [sent troops to Nigeria](#) in February, in what was deemed a mostly advisory and training role, but the joint operations reported in recent days appear to signal a more active US involvement in the country.