

Lake Chad Basin Weekly Security Update 25 December 2023-7 January 2024



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Hello and welcome to the thirty-fifth edition of the Lake Chad Basin Weekly Security Update.

This Update covers the last week of 2023 and the first week of 2024. This happened by accident and was only a result of a tighter personal schedule. For now, the briefs should be sent every week but when there is going to be a delay, it will most likely be mentioned. Also, since this is a double-length (or perhaps, as you all will see below, more than double), the full post will not appear in your inboxes. To read the Update in its entirety, please click the “View in browser” link above the headline.

The final week of 2023 in the Lake Chad region unfolded in a manner consistent with recent months. However, a significant shift occurred at the onset of the new year. On January 4, an ISIS spokesman declared the initiation of a global campaign of attacks, purportedly in support of the people of the Gaza Strip. This campaign specifically directed militants and supporters to target Christians and Jews. Given the substantial Christian population in the Lake Chad region, this directive has led to a marked increase in attacks on civilians, especially around Chibok and the Cameroonian side of Lake Chad. Notably, these assaults began on New Year’s Day, a full four days before the official announcement of the campaign, and a week following Christmas—a period when such attacks were anticipated but largely did not occur. These developments suggest that while ISWAP is certainly capable of targeting Christian civilians and causing significant casualties, such actions are predominantly undertaken at the behest of ISIS's central leadership. Consequently, any increase in attacks observed in Q4 should not necessarily be interpreted as a deliberate, autonomous strategy by ISWAP. The duration of this campaign remains uncertain, typically lasting from one to two weeks, implying that the current surge in violence could potentially conclude imminently.