

Weekly Intelligence Brief

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Ukraine Recaptures Territory After Russia Loses Starlink

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On 12 FEB, the Armed Forces of Ukraine conducted a counteroffensive in the Ukrainian oblasts of Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk, resulting in Ukraine's largest gains in a single offensive in two and a half years. Ukrainian forces recaptured an estimated 71 square miles of territory, including 11 villages. The gains made by Ukraine, beginning in mid-February, have reversed weeks of Russian advances made in southeastern Ukraine since last year. Kyiv officials have stated that the gains have set back plans for a Russian offensive in the summer, targeting the key cities of

Zaporizhzhia City in the Zaporizhzhia Oblast and Kramatorsk in the Donetsk Oblast.

Ukraine's recent offensive followed SpaceX's decision on 02 FEB to blacklist unregistered, gray-market obtained Starlink terminals in occupied-Ukraine, effectively disrupting Russian forces' satellite military communications. Now, only whitelisted terminals, approved by the Ukrainian government, can work within Ukraine. Russia's heavy reliance on Starlink following the blockage has resulted in major disruptions in its frontline communications, its short-to mid-range drone strikes, and overall coordination, creating openings for Ukrainian assaults. Russian forces have

since tested alternatives to Starlink, with limited success, such as a balloon-based high altitude 5G terminal. Yuri Fedorenko, commander of Ukraine's 429th Unmanned Systems Brigade, estimates that it will likely take Russia six months to find a suitable replacement.

We can assess with high confidence that Russian forces will continue to face short-term communication challenges without access to Starlink, leaving them vulnerable to Ukrainian attacks. We can also assess with moderate confidence that it is unlikely that Russia will find an effective alternative to Starlink for its military operations in the short-term.

Religiously Motivated Violence Against Civilians in Nigeria

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On 10 FEB, armed militants, including groups affiliated with Fulani networks and jihadists, attacked the Mchia village in Chanchanji Ward, Nigeria, killing at least ten civilians and destroying several homes.

These attacks are part of a broader pattern of violence, and in the past several months, more than 100 civilians have been killed, and 90,000 have been displaced across Southern Taraba State. Militants strike in the early morning hours, shooting civilians in their beds, and then burn homes, churches, and stored crops, exacerbating

both housing and food insecurity. Although attacks against Christian communities are most prominent, some militant attacks indiscriminately target citizens who do not submit to extremist rule, regardless of the victims' religion.

At the heart of the insurgency are two large jihadist groups: Boko Haram and ISWAP, the Islamic State – West Africa Province. These militant networks extend over Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, facilitating recruitment, funding, and the flow of weapons. Additionally, the Fulani are a large and diverse ethnic group throughout West Africa, and some members have developed into organized militant groups.

We assess with moderate confidence that jihadist groups, such as Boko Haram and ISWAP, as well as their affiliated militant groups, will continue to carry out religiously and politically motivated attacks against civilians as part of their larger strategy to extend ideological influence and establish governance based on a strict interpretation of Sharia law.



Colorado River Water Allocation Reductions Face Deadline

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The United States (U.S.) Bureau of Reclamation is set to intervene and impose federally mandated allocation reductions as seven U.S. states fail to agree on water cuts, posing long-term risks to agricultural exports and industrial production.

The 14 FEB deadline, once identified as a crucial negotiating milestone for consensus on water management, has passed without an agreement. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is preparing to impose its own "Record of Decision" by 01 OCT. The "Record of Decision" is the final decision

document that concludes an environmental review process and specifies the actions the Bureau of Reclamation will take. The impasse is defined by a fundamental disagreement over water allocation between the Upper Basin states, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico, and those in the Lower Basin: California, Arizona, and Nevada.

In addition to U.S. states, Mexico's agricultural sector is also greatly affected. Roughly 80% of the Colorado River water delivered to Mexico irrigates the Mexicali Valley, a major supplier of winter produce to the United Kingdom (U.K.) and North America. Reduced water volumes

could mean less acreage for crops, leading to supply chain gaps and volatile pricing.

We can assess with high confidence that it is likely the missed water deadlines will continue to create complications for industrial production and agriculture, but agreements will eventually be made to achieve sustainability.



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