

Mali crisis: Chad's Idriss Deby announces troop pullout
BBC News
15 April 2013

Chad, one of the largest supplier of troops battling Islamists in Mali, has started to pull them out, President Idriss Deby has said.

"The Chadian army does not have the skills to fight a shadowy, guerrilla-style war that is taking place in northern Mali," he said.

Three Chadian soldiers were killed in a suicide attack in Mali on Friday.

Soldiers from Chad, France and other African countries have ousted Islamist militants from northern Mali's towns.

But fighting continues in some remote parts of the Sahara Desert.

Chad's 2,000 troops were seen as playing a crucial role in the fighting because of their experience in desert warfare.

About 30 have been killed - more than any other nationality, reports the Reuters news agency.

Three of them died in a suicide attack in Kidal on Friday.

Mr Deby told French media that Chad's soldiers had "accomplished their mission".

"We have already withdrawn a mechanised battalion," he said.

But he said Chad would contribute to a proposed 11,000-strong UN peacekeeping force in Mali.

France has also started to withdraw some of its 4,000 soldiers and hopes to have just 1,000 in the country by the end of the year.

France led the intervention in January, saying the al-Qaeda-linked militants were threatened to march on the capital, Bamako.

© BBC News, 2013