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Chad Troops Chase Rebels Into Sudan

Troops from Chad entered Sudan's Darfur region in pursuit of Chadian rebels Friday as the U.N. and humanitarian aid groups prepared to pull some workers out of a key border town, fearing an imminent battle. The incursion threatened a new escalation of violence in the Darfur region of western Sudan, which borders Chad. Sudanese army and police barricaded the town of El Geneina, near the border, to prevent any attack by Chadian forces, a U.N. official said. There were concerns Janjaweed militia were moving toward the town to reinforce Sudanese government troops. Janjaweed fighters have been accused of burning villages and massacring civilians in Darfur. The Chadian military fought Chadian rebels in Darfur's Tendelti area, about 12 miles northwest of El Geneina, the U.N. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press. Chad's Communications Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor met with Sudan's ambassador Friday and demanded Khartoum hand over the rebels. But Doumgor said that Chad's incursion was not an act of war against Sudan. "Chad has not declared war to Sudan and has no intention of doing so," the government statement quoted Doumgor as saying. The governments of Chad and Sudan trade accusations that each is supporting the other's rebels--and each side denies the charges.

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