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Chad Says Nearly 40 Killed in Janjaweed Raids

Nearly 40 people were killed in clashes between Chad's security forces and Arab raiders on horseback who attacked two eastern villages, burning homes and mutilating their victims, the government said on Tuesday. It said the attackers, who struck at the weekend, gouged out and carried off the eyes of eight government soldiers they killed and disembowelled one of 15 Chadian civilians also slain. Five Sudanese refugees from a nearby U.N.-run refugee camp were also killed during the raids on the villages of Aradibe and Habile, which escalated into clashes with the Chadian army on December 16 and 17, the government added. "The two villages were partially burned down," Communications Minister Hourmadji Moussa Doumgor said in a statement, adding that nine of the attackers were killed and four taken prisoner. He identified the raiders as Janjaweed, a term which loosely signifies "devils on horseback" in Arabic. It is used to designate Arab militiamen who have killed and raped civilians and plundered villages on both sides of Chad's eastern border with Sudan's conflict-torn Darfur region. Foreign humanitarian workers said the attacks took place close to a refugee camp, Goz Amer, run by the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR. Civilians displaced by the fighting sought refuge in the camp, which mostly houses Sudanese refugees from Darfur.

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