

# *French Forces Kill More than 20 People on Mali-Burkina Faso Border*

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Bamako, May 3 (RHC)-- France has killed more than 20 people who were hiding in a forest near the border between the West African countries of Mali and Burkina Faso, its regional force said in a statement. French forces said they acted assuming those killed were terrorists yet were not able to identify the militant group.

Troops from Operation Barkhane, a French military operation that targets Jihadist groups operating in the Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert, launched the operation over the weekend, in an area south-west of the city of Gao.

Set up in 2014, the operation comprises around 4,000 soldiers who are deployed across five countries -- Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. In Niger, the force operates four Mirage 2000 fighter jets and five Reaper drones for gathering intelligence.

But four years after President Francois Hollande sent military troops to Mali, violence is still a daily reality in the region, as evidenced the series of attacks that shook Bamako, Uagadugu in Burkina Faso and Grand Bassam in Ivory Coast between 2015 and 2016.

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