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Niamey, January 3 (RHC)--Security sources say at least 70 civilians have been killed in simultaneous attacks on two villages by suspected extremist militants in Niger, near the border zone with Mali. One of the security sources, who requested anonymity, said about 49 villagers were killed and 17 people wounded in the village of Tchombangou.

Around 30 other villagers were also killed in the village of Zaroumdareye, a second source, a senior official in Niger's interior ministry, said on condition of anonymity. Niger's government was not immediately available to comment.

The West African nation has previously suffered attacks by radical militants linked to al Qaeda and Daesh. Attacks near the western border with Mali and Burkina Faso, and the southeastern border with Nigeria, killed hundreds of people last year.

In December, terrorists from the Boko Haram group killed at least 27 people in an attack of "unprecedented savagery" in southeast Niger. Other people were wounded and some more reported missing in the assault in the village of Toumour in the Diffa region.

In November, Boko Haram terrorists killed at least 110 Nigerian civilians, including dozens of farm workers, and injured several others in the volatile northeastern state of Borno, according to the UN. Several women were also kidnapped in the raid.

Also in October, Boko Haram terrorists took the lives of at least 22 farmers working on their irrigation fields near Nigeria's Maiduguri in two separate incidents.

Boko Haram and the West Africa Province (ISWAP) branch of the Daesh terrorist group have increasingly targeted loggers, herders and fishermen in their violent campaign, accusing them of spying and passing information to the military and the local militia fighting them.

More than 30,000 people have been killed and nearly 3 million displaced in a decade of Boko Haram's violence in West Africa, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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