

The Legacy of Idriss Deby

By [Jerry Gordon](#) with [Lt Gen. Abakar M. Abdallah](#) (May 2021)



Marshal Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad

On April 19, 2021, there were two victories in Chad. The Chadian army under the command of President Idriss Déby Itno [destroyed](#) an invasion by a rebel force column of the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) from its base in the mountains of southern Libya. Simultaneously, the formidable long term Chadian leader scored a second victory- his sixth Presidential re-election on a near unanimous vote. Videos showed captured FACT rebels and destroyed vehicles surrounded by cheering Chadian soldiers.

Those victories were fleeting given an announcement the following day that Déby had succumbed to wounds after being allegedly shot during a visit to front-line troops. The sorrowful TV announcement of the 68-year old Déby's passing was [made](#) the following day on April 20, 2021 by Army spokesperson General Azem Bermandao Agouna for the Transitional Military Council (TMC):



Members of Transitional Military Council document by Chad Television on April 20, 2021

“The president of the republic, head of state, supreme chief of the army Marshal Idriss Déby Itno just drew his last breath while defending the nation’s integrity on the battlefield,” Agouna, wearing a red beret and army fatigues, said surrounded by generals.

Included in the announcement was a letter signed by the 15 military officers, members of the TMC headed by his 37-year-old son, General Mahamat “Kaka” Idriss Déby as Interim President until elections for a successor to his late father are held. The younger Gen. Déby was previously in command of operations in neighboring Mali contending with Jihadist threats.

According to an *Al Jazeera* [report](#), the TMC announcement also laid out the changes in governance.

Here is what the army announced about the post-Idriss Déby era:

- The dissolution of the government and the national assembly
- General Mahamat “Kaka” to head 18-month transitional council

- Instead of the current constitution, a transitional charter to be put in place by the head of the council.
- Fourteen-day national mourning period
- Closure of land and air borders
- Nationwide curfew imposed from 6pm to 5am
- New republican institutions to be put in place to facilitate the transition with the organization of free, fair democratic and transparent elections.

“The National Council of Transition reassures the Chadian people that all measures have been taken to guarantee peace, security and the republican order,” Agouna said.

The announcement objective was to ensure continuity of leadership of Chad’s combat – tested Army as the leading edge of the 5-G Force supported by France and the US to prevent an Islamist takeover of the strategic Sahel region of Africa. The realities are that Chad maybe on the edge of a period of instability and uncertainty following the 30 – year reign of former strongman President Idriss Déby.

Family Feuds, Opposition Criticisms and Divisions in the Military

Prior to the TMC issuing its declarations, there were [reports](#) of a “scuffle” over succession at the Presidential Palace between Mahamat “Kaka” Idriss Déby and his step – brother Zakaria, appointed by his late father as Ambassador to the UAE in 2017. However, those reports appeared to be rumors launched by the oppositions.

Additionally, the announcements by the Chadian Army TMC set off a wave of accusations of a military “coup” by parliamentary opposition in the capitol of N’Djamena. Under the constitution, the speaker of the legislative assembly would succeed if the President died until national elections occurred within 3 months. The *BBC* [reported](#) a dissident Chadian General Abderamane Dicko former rebel leader and leader of

military opposed to Mahamat Idriss Déby's Appointment who denounced the TMC's appointment of him as "a grouping of a few friends" and has called for "the quick formation of a broad, inclusive consultation before the country sinks into chaos".



President Macron of France with Interim President Mahamat Idriss "Kaka" Déby at the State Funeral for his late father President Idriss Déby, N'Djamena, Chad, April 23, 2021
(Source: Reuters)

Concerns for Stability in Chad and continuing French Support expressed at State Funeral.

Obi Anyadike in *The New Humanitarian* article, "Death of Déby leaves big worries in Chad and beyond " noted the question of continuing French support for Chad:

The sudden death of Chadian leader Idriss Déby after more than 30 years in power is a seismic event domestically, but it also has major security implications for the Sahelian region, where Déby was seen as the [politically unpopular](#) military intervention hinges on regional forces carrying a larger share of the burden – and