



EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS



OCTOBER 1, 2019–DECEMBER 31, 2019

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In January 2013, legislation was enacted creating the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. This legislation, which amended the Inspector General Act, requires the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide quarterly reports to Congress on active overseas contingency operations.

The DoD Inspector General (IG) was designated as the Lead IG for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The DoS IG is the Associate IG for these two operations. The USAID IG also participates in oversight of the operations.

The Offices of Inspector General of the DoD, DoS, and USAID are referred to in this report as the Lead IG agencies. Other partner agencies also contribute to oversight of these two operations.

The Lead IG agencies collectively carry out their statutory missions to:

- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of the operations.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the Federal Government in support of the operations through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and evaluations.
- Report quarterly to Congress and the public on the operations and activities of the Lead IG agencies.

METHODOLOGY

To produce this quarterly report, the Lead IG agencies submit requests for information to the DoD, DoS, and USAID about these two counterterrorism operations and related programs. The Lead IG agencies also gather data and information from open sources, including congressional testimony, policy research organizations, press conferences, think tanks, and media reports.

The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of formal audits, inspections, or evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the data and information provided by the agencies. For further details on the methodology for this report, see Appendix B.

CLASSIFIED APPENDIX

This report also includes an appendix containing classified information about the U.S. mission to degrade al Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-affiliated terrorists in specific regions of Africa. The Lead IG provides the classified appendix separately to relevant agencies and congressional committees.

On the Cover

Djiboutian soldier renders his first salute during the change of command in Djibouti. (U.S. Air Force photo); a Nigerian soldier moves toward a simulated attacker in Niamey, Niger. (U.S. Air Force photo); Djiboutian soldiers stand in formation. (U.S. Air Force photo)

FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit the Lead Inspector General quarterly report to the U.S. Congress on the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

This is the sixth Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report on these operations. The previous four quarterly reports were classified. Beginning this quarter, the Lead IG is issuing a public, unclassified report with a classified appendix.

This report's Quarter in Review section provides information on major developments related to these operations, the status of violent extremist organizations, diplomatic and political developments, and humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the conflict and natural disasters in the region.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG Offices of the Inspector General and our partner oversight agencies during the period from October 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

Working in close collaboration, we remain committed to providing comprehensive oversight and timely reporting on these contingency operations.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn A. Fine".

Glenn A. Fine
Principal Deputy Inspector General
Performing the Duties
of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steve A. Linick".

Steve A. Linick
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ann Calvaresi Barr".

Ann Calvaresi Barr
Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International
Development

MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL



Glenn A. Fine

I am pleased to present this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) report on the status of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The purpose of these operations is to degrade al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs), in designated regions of Africa.

This is the sixth Lead IG quarterly report on these operations, but the first unclassified report; the previous four reports were classified. The Inspector General Act requires the Lead Inspector General to issue public quarterly reports on overseas contingency operations. The DoD classified the two operations in Africa upon their designation as overseas contingency operations in February 2018. Since then, however, the DoD has released a large amount of information publicly about its counterterrorism operations in Africa. We are therefore now able to issue a public report, with unclassified information, along with a classified appendix.

The DoD is now reviewing the deployment of U.S. military personnel and resources to Africa as the DoD shifts focus to countering threats from Russia and China. However, at this time, no final decisions have been made regarding resources for counterterrorism operations in Africa.

As discussed in this report, the terrorist threat in Africa remains persistent and, in many places, is growing. For example, the DIA reported to the DoD OIG that in East Africa, its assessment that the threat posed by al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia in East Africa remains “high,” despite continued U.S. airstrikes and training of Somali security forces. This quarter, al Shabaab killed at least 90 people in a truck bombing in Mogadishu on December 28. A week later, al Shabaab killed three U.S. personnel in an attack on Manda Bay Airfield in Kenya.

In addition, as noted in this report, al Shabaab is seeking to export terrorism beyond the region, and potentially to the United States. For example, General Townsend, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), stated in congressional testimony that VEOs in Africa “seek to strike at the U.S. in the region” and that some “aspire to strike the U.S. homeland.”

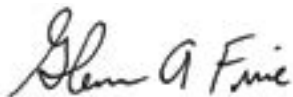
In West Africa, the U.S. military relies on French and African partner forces to execute most counterterrorism operations. VEOs continue to target civilians and military personnel there, and their attacks are intensifying. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it has shifted its strategy from “degrading” these VEOs to “containing” them. USAFRICOM also reported to the DoD OIG that the threats from these VEOs, if not contained, “have the potential to spread through the region and impact Western interests.”

In North Africa, VEOs were less active during the quarter, but they retain significant capabilities. In addition, the DIA reported to the DoD OIG that al Qaeda's local affiliate in North Africa is helping finance the operations of its counterpart in West Africa. The DoD told the DoD OIG that it continues to apply counterterrorism pressure in Libya to prevent the resurgence of VEOs there.

In November, I visited USAFRICOM headquarters and U.S. military facilities in East Africa with staff from the Department of State and USAID Offices of Inspector General. During the trip, DoD officials told us how China and Russia are presenting growing security challenges on the continent. China, in particular, is expanding its presence throughout Africa, both economically and militarily, and starting to surpass the United States in terms of economic aid, information, and military assistance in many countries in Africa.

USAFRICOM has also identified extreme weather as an "emergent challenge" to Africa's security. For example, thousands of Somalis were displaced this quarter by floods. Displacement, food insecurity, and destruction of livelihoods due to natural events can create conditions that foster the growth of violent extremism.


Finally, my colleagues and I remain committed to providing quarterly reports on activities related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, in both classified and unclassified reports. We thank the dedicated employees of each Lead IG agency who conduct this important work, both in the United States and abroad.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Glenn A. Fine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glenn A. Fine

Principal Deputy Inspector General
Performing the Duties of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense





A Djiboutian soldier renders his first salute during the change of command in Djibouti. (U.S. Air Force photo)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents information related to two counterterrorism operations in the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) area of responsibility: the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The purpose of these operations is to degrade al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other terrorist groups, in designated regions of Africa.

The Secretary of Defense designated the two operations as overseas contingency operations in February 2018. At the time of the designation, both operations were pre-existing counterterrorism operations. The Secretary of Defense removed the overseas contingency operation designation for both operations in May 2019, but the two operations continue to receive overseas contingency operation funding.

The Lead IG has issued classified reports on the two operations since the fourth quarter of FY 2018. This quarter, the Lead IG agencies determined that it was appropriate to report publicly on the operations, given the abundant public information about U.S. counterterrorism operations in Africa. Under the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG has a mandate to issue a public report on Overseas Contingency Operations.



U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper speaks during a press conference at the Pentagon. (DoD photo)

EAST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

Under the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, the United States seeks to degrade al Shabaab, ISIS-Somalia, and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) so that they cannot threaten U.S. interests.¹

USAFRICOM: Al Shabaab is a “Ruthless” Threat

Al Shabaab intensified its threats to U.S. forces and interests during the quarter. Al Shabaab launched near-daily attacks on Somali targets—including busy intersections, hotels, and military installations—seeking to destabilize the Somali government and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeping troops.²

Just before and after the quarter, al Shabaab also attacked U.S. forces in East Africa. On September 30, 2019, al Shabaab militants attacked the Baledogle Military Airfield in Somalia, which hosts U.S. forces. The attack did not result in any U.S. casualties. On January 5, 2020, al Shabaab attacked Manda Bay Airfield in Kenya, killing one U.S. Army soldier and two DoD contractors.³

Speaking after the Manda Bay attack, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of USAFRICOM, described al Shabaab as “ruthless” and said the group “must be dealt with



before the network expands its reach to other places, to include their stated desire to strike U.S. citizens in the U.S. homeland.”⁴ In testimony before the Senate on January 30, 2020, General Townsend said that of all the VEOs in Africa, “al Shabaab is most dangerous to U.S. interests today.”⁵

Al Shabaab militants also continued to exploit Somalia’s porous border with Kenya to launch attacks and conduct illegal trade. However, according to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), cross-border attacks into Kenya as of October 2019 decreased by 71 percent compared to the same period in 2018.⁶

Somali, AMISOM Forces Make Limited Progress Against al Shabaab

As part of its counterterrorism mission in East Africa, the U.S. military conducts airstrikes against al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia, and also provides advise, assist, and accompany support to Somali forces and partner nations of the AMISOM mission.⁷ During the quarter, USAFRICOM conducted 9 strikes, killing 11 terrorists.⁸

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that the Somali National Army (SNA) experienced limited success against al Shabaab. The SNA continued to hold four forward operating bases in the Lower Shabelle, about 100km west of Mogadishu, and successfully repelled multiple al Shabaab attacks.⁹ The SNA also tried to seize and hold villages that were previously controlled by al Shabaab, but the

SNA has not been successful without international support.¹⁰ USAID reported that the absence of capable hold forces meant that USAID implementers could not provide programs in those areas.¹¹

According to USAFRICOM, AMISOM continued to contribute to establishing security in Somalia. AMISOM troops supported Operation Badbaado, an operation that seeks to protect the area surrounding Mogadishu from al Shabaab militants.¹²

Climate Events Contribute to Instability in Somalia

In Somalia, more frequent and longer droughts and floods have been a major factor in the displacement of more than 2.6 million people. USAID told the USAID OIG that its implementers have adjusted their operations in response to recent flooding. However, USAID said, development projects, not humanitarian assistance, are needed to address the long-term infrastructure and governance challenges of flooding in Somalia.¹³ USAID said it is currently developing its Country Development Coordination Strategy for Somalia, which will elevate resilience as an area of focus.¹⁴

USAID report over the past few years, both USAID and implementers have moved from operating in Kenya to Somalia.¹⁵ However, the USAID mission in Somalia remains small, and USAID staff are unable to leave the compound at Mogadishu International Airport.¹⁶ USAID uses third-party monitors to oversee USAID’s \$418.9 million humanitarian response and \$62 million development programming in Somalia.¹⁷

NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

In North Africa, the United States seeks to degrade ISIS-Libya, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and other VEOs so that they cannot threaten U.S. interests. In West Africa, the United States supports partner forces, including French and African forces, as they seek to contain VEOs in the region, including ISIS affiliates Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and Boko Haram.¹⁸

Russian Presence in Libya Grows, Challenges U.S. Counterterrorism Operations

This quarter in Libya, a U.S. surveillance drone monitoring violent extremist activity was shot down over Tripoli. USAFRICOM said that Russian paramilitary forces who are fighting alongside the Libyan National Army (LNA) in that country's civil war were likely responsible for the incident.¹⁹

The U.S. military conducts counterterrorism operations from outside Libya in coordination with the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA).²⁰

Russian mercenary forces known as the Wagner Group increased their presence in Libya this quarter by deploying an additional 600 to 1,200 mercenaries to support the LNA and Russian objectives in North Africa.²¹ General Townsend said in January 2020 that Russia seeks to “demonstrate itself as an alternative partner to the West” and sees an opportunity to position itself along NATO's southern flank.²²

ISIS-Libya remained “degraded” during the quarter, according to the DIA.²³ However, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper told reporters in November 2019 that there is an ongoing need for lethal operations to keep ISIS-Libya in a degraded state.²⁴ USAFRICOM also stated that the growing Russian military presence in Libya threatens future U.S. military partnerships and counterterrorism cooperation by impeding U.S. access to Libya.²⁵



NOVEMBER 1

ISIS in the Greater Sahara attacks a Malian military outpost, killing 54 Malian soldiers

NOVEMBER 8

USAFRICOM announces it has begun intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations out of Air Base 201 in Niger

NOVEMBER 21

U.S. drone shot down over Tripoli. USAFRICOM blames Russian forces

NOVEMBER 25

Two French helicopters pursuing jihadists crash, killing 13 French soldiers

DECEMBER 7

Al Shabaab kills 10 passengers on a bus in Kenya

NOV

DEC

Violence and Instability Grows in West Africa

VEO violence in West Africa grew rapidly over the past 2 years; in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Western Niger, VEO violence increased by 250 percent since 2018.²⁶ USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG this quarter that VEOs in West Africa are “not degraded nor contained to the Sahel and Lake Chad region.”²⁷ USAFRICOM also told the DoD OIG this quarter it switched from a “degrade” strategy to a “containment” strategy.²⁸



In West Africa, violent extremists killed at least 230 soldiers in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali during the quarter in a targeted terrorist campaign against military troops and installations, according to a media report.²⁹ USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that these threats, if not contained, “have the potential to spread through the region and impact Western interests.”³⁰

The UN envoy to West Africa stated that the region has experienced “a devastating surge” in terrorist violence against civilians. The envoy told the UN Security Council in January 2020 that more than 4,000 civilian and military deaths were reported in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in 2019 compared to 770 in 2016. The envoy attributed much of the violence to West Africa becoming a geographic focus of ISIS and al Qaeda groups collaborating to undermine fragile countries.³¹

USAID reported that deteriorating security and the increased number of internally displaced persons in West Africa has caused humanitarian organizations in Mali to temporarily suspend programming and force changes in the way programs are designed.³² Additionally in West Africa, USAID program implementers working to address the humanitarian needs in northeastern Nigeria continue to struggle with the Nigerian government’s interference.³³

U.S. Air Force soldiers confer at the Nigerien Air Base 201, Agadez, Niger. (U.S. Air Force photo)

DECEMBER 10

Al Shabaab attacks the SYL Hotel in Mogadishu

DECEMBER 12

ISIS ambushes Nigerien military base, killing at least 70 soldiers

DECEMBER 26

ISIS-West Africa executes 11 people in Nigeria as “message to Christians”

DECEMBER 28

Al Shabaab truck bomb in central Mogadishu kills at least 90 people

JANUARY 5

Al Shabaab attacks Manda Bay Airfield in Kenya, killing 3 U.S. personnel

JAN

LEAD IG OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

The Lead IG and partner agencies conducted oversight work through audits, inspections, and evaluations; investigations; and hotline activities from October 1 through December 31, 2019.

AUDITS, INSPECTIONS, AND EVALUATIONS

This quarter, Lead IG and partner agencies completed 7 reports related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations. The reports were related to embassy inspections, financial accountability in humanitarian assistance programs throughout Africa, and the Air Force's management of medical equipment at Air Force bases in Niger.

Table 1:

Oversight Reports Issued this Quarter

Report	Release Date
DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
<i>Inspection of Embassy Nouakchott, Mauritania</i> ISP-I-20-04	November 20, 2019
<i>Inspection of Embassy N'Djamena, Chad</i> ISP-I-20-02	November 7, 2019
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
<i>Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018</i> 4-624-20-022-R	December 27, 2019
<i>Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development in Multiple Countries Under Multiple Agreements, January 1 to December 31, 2017</i> 4-624-20-020-R	December 9, 2019
<i>Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Health Initiative for Safety and Stability in Africa Under Agreement AID- 620-A-14-00007, January 1 to December 31, 2018</i> 4-620-20-019-R	November 6, 2019
<i>Financial Closeout Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in Multiple Countries Under Integrated Partnership Assistance Agreement 623-AA-09-001-00-EA, Implementation Letters 10 and 11, January 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018</i> 4-623-20-001-N	October 24, 2019
AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY	
<i>Medical Equipment Management, 435th Air Expeditionary Wing, Ramstein Air Base, Germany</i> F2020-0002-REE000	October 3, 2019

During this quarter, the Lead IG agencies and their oversight partners had 14 ongoing and 15 planned oversight projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations.

INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

The investigative components of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies continued to conduct investigative activity related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations during the quarter.

During this quarter, the investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies initiated 6 new investigations and coordinated on 24 open investigations. The open investigations involve grant and procurement fraud, corruption, theft, computer intrusions, and human trafficking allegations.

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. During the quarter, the DoD OIG investigator referred two cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations.





A U.S. Air Force officer talks to children at a village near Camp Simba, Kenya. (U.S. Air Force photo)

THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

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THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

The United States deploys forces to the African continent to conduct counterterrorism operations and to advise, assist, and accompany security forces of partner nations as they execute counterterrorism operations.¹ General Stephen Townsend, Commander of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), stated in recent congressional testimony that “violent extremist networks are expanding in Africa at a rapid pace.” Most of these violent extremist organizations (VEOs), General Townsend said, “seek to strike at the U.S. in the region;” some “aspire to strike the U.S. homeland.”²

U.S. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, USAFRICOM commander, meets with Marines from Europe and Africa in Boblingen, Germany. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

About the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations

This report presents information related to two counterterrorism operations in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility: the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The purpose of these operations is to degrade al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other VEOs groups, in designated regions of Africa.

The Secretary of Defense designated the two operations as overseas contingency operations in February 2018. At the time of the designation, both operations were pre-existing counterterrorism operations and the locations of the operations were classified due to sensitivities of some of the partner countries. The Secretary of Defense removed the overseas contingency operation designation for both operations in May 2019, but the two operations continue to receive Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funding.

The Lead IG has issued quarterly status reports on the two operations since the fourth quarter of FY 2018. The Lead IG issued these first five reports as classified reports because of the classification of certain information related to the operations.

However, this quarter, the Lead IG agencies determined that it was appropriate to publish an unclassified report on the operations. Under the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG is required to issue a quarterly public status report on overseas contingency operations. Moreover, the DoD and the U.S. Government have regularly released public information about U.S. counterterrorism operations in Africa.

For example, the White House described U.S. counterterrorism efforts in East, North, and West Africa in a December 2019 report to Congress.

- **East Africa:** U.S. forces in Africa continue to counter ISIS and al Shabaab in Somalia. U.S. military activity includes airstrikes and advise, assist, and accompany missions with partner forces from Somalia and other African countries.³
- **North Africa:** U.S. forces conduct airstrikes against ISIS terrorists in Libya.⁴
- **West Africa:** In the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel region (an area that includes Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali, and Burkina Faso, among other countries), U.S. military personnel provide support to African- and European-led counterterrorism operations, including advise, assist, and accompany missions. U.S. forces also conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in this region.⁵

USAFRICOM also included information about counterterrorism operations in Africa in its 2019 Posture Statement to Congress. The USAFRICOM Campaign Plan cited in the Posture Statement is organized according to six lines of effort (LOEs), three of which—LOEs 3, 4, and 5—refer directly to U.S. military activities, including counterterrorism activities, in the East, North, and West regions of Africa.⁶ (See Table 2)

Table 2.

USAFRICOM Posture Statement Lines of Effort

Line of Effort		USAFRICOM Activities
LOE 1	Strengthen Partner Networks	Establish new partnerships with countries and organizations, strengthen existing relationships through enhanced communication and synchronization, and counter the activities of external actors such as China and Russia. This approach focuses on maintaining the United States as the preferred security partner in Africa.
LOE 2	Enhance Partner Capacity	Build African partner capability focused on defense institution building, countering illicit trafficking, maritime security, counter-improvised explosive devices (IED) efforts, humanitarian assistance, infectious disease control, and counter VEO efforts.
LOE 3	Develop Security in Somalia	The approach centers on security cooperation, engagements, and exercises, as well as Advise, Assist, and Accompany authorities, to strengthen the Somali Security Forces.
LOE 4	Contain Instability in Libya	Use military tools to advance diplomacy, conduct operations to degrade VEOs, improve the security architecture of the Libyan Government of National Accord, and, once a political reconciliation is achieved, strengthen the national security forces of a recognized Libyan government.
LOE 5	Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region	Conduct engagements, exercises, and limited operations, and provide appropriate security assistance to increase partners' willingness and capabilities in counter-VEO efforts.
LOE 6	Set the Theater	Ensure that USAFRICOM has the authorities, capabilities, footprint, agreements, and understandings in place to maintain access and accomplish USAFRICOM's missions.

Source: USAFRICOM, Posture Statement, 2/7/2019.



The Challenge of “Degrading” VEOs

As noted above, the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation seek to “degrade” designated terrorist groups in Africa. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that a “degrade” mission seeks to reduce VEO effectiveness so that it cannot project power.⁷ The USAFRICOM Posture Statement also outlines an expectation that partner nations will be able to assume a greater responsibility for counterterrorism operations in the future. Specifically, the Posture Statement describes a desired end state in which “threats from VEOs and transnational criminal organizations are reduced to a level manageable by internal security forces.”⁸

The USAFRICOM Campaign Plan states that it considers a VEO degraded if it meets several conditions, including the VEO’s “command and control is disrupted,” it “cannot conduct effective operations,” and it “cannot conduct effective information operations.”⁹ USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it uses these “intermediate objectives” to measure progress towards its overall goal of degrading VEOs.¹⁰

However, the challenge inherent to the “degrade” strategy is that many partner forces in Africa will likely require assistance and advising for a long period of time before they can fully address VEO threats on their own. In addition, terrorist threats in Africa are numerous and dynamic, often requiring U.S. forces and their allies to step in and execute immediate responses to threats across an expansive geography.

Furthermore, a “degrade” strategy requires U.S. and partner forces to apply consistent counterterrorism pressure on VEOs to prevent their resurgence, an approach that Secretary of Defense Esper described as “mowing the lawn.”¹¹ This need for ongoing operations, coupled with the often slow development of partner forces, could require ongoing commitment of U.S. military resources.

The 819th Expeditionary Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer team stands in formation at the construction site of a new hangar at Nigerien Air Base 201, Niger. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Resource Competition Challenges USAFRICOM Mission

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that it has limited resources to deploy for multiple operations across its large area of responsibility. These limited resources include personnel, services to support those personnel (including medical evacuation), and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG in response to a question about current challenges facing the command, said that “there is resourcing competition within [USAFRICOM],” citing the possibility that some resources may be shifted from Somalia to address threats in Libya.¹²

There are approximately 6,000 U.S. military personnel deployed to Africa.¹³ This number includes approximately 800 personnel in West Africa and 500 special operations forces in Somalia.¹⁴

The largest U.S. base in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility is Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, which hosts approximately 3,000 U.S. personnel.¹⁵ U.S. personnel also operate from cooperative security locations in partner countries, including Air Base 201 in Niger, which achieved initial operating capability this quarter.¹⁶

DoD Reviewing Focus and Footprint in Africa

During the quarter, the DoD began the Defense Wide Review process of all combatant commands worldwide—including a “Blank Slate Review” of USAFRICOM—to align DoD resources with objectives of the 2018 National Defense Strategy.¹⁷ The 2018 National Defense Strategy shifted the focus of U.S. forces from counterterrorism to threats possibly by Russia and China (what is often referred to as “great power competition” or “global power competition”).¹⁸ Senior DoD officials have stated publicly that one option under consideration was a reduction in troops in West Africa.¹⁹ Secretary of Defense Esper said in mid-January that no decision about U.S. force levels in Africa had been made.²⁰

The Blank Slate Review of USAFRICOM is a follow-on effort to the November 2018 “Force Optimization” plan that seeks to create a resource-sustainable approach for USAFRICOM’s campaign to counter violent extremism.²¹ As a part of the Force Optimization effort, the DoD announced plans to reduce U.S. personnel in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility by 10 percent over the next several years.²²

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo announced in November that the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS seeks to focus more on Africa. “West Africa and the Sahel would be a preferred area of focus for the coalition outside the ISIS core space” of Iraq and Syria, Secretary Pompeo said.²³

USAFRICOM Increases Focus on China and Russia

The 2018 National Defense Strategy stated that “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.”²⁴ During the quarter, General Townsend completed his initial assessment of USAFRICOM’s operations and identified the “increasing focus on the transition to great power competition” as a key challenge for the command.²⁵ USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that “Africa has emerged as an important competitive space in great power competition.”²⁶

In East Africa, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) reported to the DoD OIG that China exports defense materials to African states, including small arms, combat aircraft, infantry vehicles, and unmanned aerial vehicles.²⁷ The DIA said that China has supplemented state-to-state arms sales by offering military and technical training to East African militaries. China has also conducted joint military exercises with at least two East African nations, Djibouti and Tanzania.²⁸

In West Africa, China focuses on strengthening political and economic ties. USAFRICOM and the DIA told the DoD OIG that these activities “do not pose direct threats to U.S. access or influence in West Africa.”²⁹ However, USAFRICOM and the DIA assessed that China’s expanding telecommunications presence in the region, including construction of Safe/Smart City systems in major West African cities, could increase the risk of Chinese surveillance against Western and host nation personnel and interests. Actions that could contribute to this dynamic could include Chinese construction of a military base in West Africa and efforts to leverage debt forgiveness for political or security concessions.

USAFRICOM and the DIA told the DoD OIG that Russia is most active in North Africa, where it seeks to “demonstrate itself as an alternative partner to the West” and sees an opportunity to position itself along NATO’s southern flank.³⁰

Expenditures Related to Africa CT Operations Unclear

While no longer designated as overseas contingency operations, the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations continue to receive OCO funding. OCO is a category of funding that supplements base funding for the DoD. In FY 2020, Congress appropriated \$71.3 billion for overseas contingency operations.³¹ The FY 2020 budget justification document outlines the portion of these funds that will support the two largest overseas contingency operations: Operation Freedom’s Sentinel in Afghanistan and Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria. The budget justification lists smaller counterterrorism operations, including the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, as part of the broader category of “in-theater support,” with no further details about how much will be spent on each individual operation or for other “in-theater support” purposes.³²

Since the start of Lead IG reporting on the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, the DoD OIG has sought budget and spending data specifically about the two operations. To date, the DoD OIG has not received this data and is unable to provide an estimate of the cost of these operations.

The DoD Comptroller told the DoD OIG that it does not have a mechanism to track expenditures for smaller counterterrorism operations that receive OCO funding.³³ USAFRICOM also told the DoD OIG that it does not have visibility on expenditures for the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, noting that counterterrorism is funded through “multiple lines of accounting, some of which are outside of the DoD.”³⁴

EAST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

In East Africa, the terrorist threat is the greatest in Somalia. Al Shabaab, an al Qaeda-aligned terrorist group that has been active in Somalia and neighboring countries since 2006, maintains influence in many areas of the country.¹ ISIS-Somalia, a local affiliate of the international terrorist group, is active mainly in Somalia's Puntland region.²

U.S. forces seek to degrade al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia through airstrikes and advising regional forces, including the Somali security forces (SSF) and African troops deployed as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). U.S. forces are also deployed to Kenya and Djibouti to support counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations in East Africa and around the Horn of Africa.³

USAFRICOM stated in its campaign plan that it seeks to degrade al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia, as detailed in Table 3. Al Shabaab's attacks during the quarter, as well as the Manda Bay attack in January 2020, demonstrate that al Shabaab remains a potent threat. This quarter, al Shabaab demonstrated its ability to conduct high-profile attacks, recruit fighters, and finance ongoing operations. Moreover, the group appears to be a growing threat to U.S. personnel and interests in the region.

Table 3:

Counterterrorism in East Africa: Measures of Success

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

"[No later than FY 2021] al Shabaab, ISIS-Somalia, and other designated priority VEOs in East Africa are degraded such that they cannot cause significant harm to U.S. interests or prevent the transition of security from AMISOM to the SSF."

This Means that al Shabaab, ISIS-Somalia, and other VEOs are unable to:

- Conduct effective operations
- Conduct attacks against U.S. personnel or property
- Conduct large-scale attacks against AMISOM, SSF, or other international partner forces in Somalia or neighboring countries
- Support external operations outside of Somalia
- Recruit, train, and retain personnel
- Maintain safe havens
- Move across regional borders or operational boundaries to conduct operations
- Acquire, develop, proliferate, or employ WMDs
- Conduct effective information operations

Source: USAFRICOM, U.S. Africa Campaign Plan, 5/1/2019.

STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

Al Shabaab Attacks Kenyan Base; Kills 3 U.S. Personnel

On January 5, just after the end of the quarter, al Shabaab attacked Manda Bay Airfield in Kenya, killing three U.S. personnel—one U.S. military service member and two DoD contractors.⁴ This was the largest number of U.S. military fatalities in Africa since a 2017 ambush in Niger killed four U.S. soldiers.⁵

USAFRICOM declined to provide additional details about the attack to the DoD OIG, citing an ongoing investigation of the incident.

However, U.S. military officials told media outlets that the al Shabaab attackers breached a poorly maintained fence surrounding the base and destroyed two planes, two U.S. helicopters, and multiple U.S. military vehicles during the assault.⁶ USAFRICOM also announced that in response to the attack, it sent the East Africa Response Force to Manda Bay to boost U.S. security forces.⁷ USAFRICOM told a media outlet that the response force usually consists of 50 to 100 service members, but did not disclose specific numbers due to operational security.⁸

Just before the quarter began, on September 30, 2019, al Shabaab attacked the Baledogle Military Airfield in Somalia, which hosts U.S. forces.⁹ There were no casualties as a result of that attack.¹⁰

Al Shabaab Continues to Attack Civilian and Military Targets

During the quarter, al Shabaab launched increasingly lethal attacks in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. On December 10, al Shabaab fighters attacked the SYL Hotel in Mogadishu, killing three civilians and two Somali soldiers. The hotel, which is close to the presidential palace, is popular with Somali lawmakers and security officials. This was the group's third attack on the hotel since 2017. Unlike previous attacks against the hotel, al Shabaab fighters did not use a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED); instead, they posed as police officers and then attacked with small arms and grenades.¹¹

On December 28, an al Shabaab truck bombing at a busy checkpoint in Mogadishu killed at least 90 people.¹² This was not al Shabaab's deadliest attack—a 2017 al Shabaab truck bombing in Mogadishu killed more than 500 people—but its timing just after the SYL Hotel attack and a week before the Manda Bay attack signaled an escalation in al Shabaab's operations.¹³

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab remains focused on countering movement of AMISOM and Somali forces. According to USAFRICOM, al Shabaab attacks during the quarter reflected tactics used in previous quarters, including ambushes, hit-and-run attacks, improvised explosive device (IED) operations, and targeted killings. USAFRICOM and the DoD OIG reported that al Shabaab is likely directing resources to counter Somali National Army (SNA) operations aimed at clearing several cities south of Mogadishu in the Lower Shabelle Region.¹⁴



SNA soldiers demonstrate their skills. (AMISOM photo)



Al Shabaab Attacks at the Somalia-Kenya Border Decline

USAFRICOM also reported to the DoD OIG that al Shabaab regularly targets security forces along Kenya's porous border with Somalia.¹⁵ The DIA reported that the overall number of al Shabaab attacks in the border region has decreased over the past 2 years.¹⁶ According to the DIA, as of early October, al Shabaab cross-border attacks into Kenya had decreased by 71 percent compared to the same period in 2018.¹⁷

While attacks along the Somalia-Kenya border decreased, al Shabaab continued to carry out attacks in Kenya. The DIA reported that on October 12, al Shabaab killed 10 Kenyan soldiers in northeast Kenya.¹⁸ On December 7, al Shabaab killed 10 passengers onboard a bus in Kenya.¹⁹

Status of VEOs in East Africa

According to the USAFRICOM Campaign Plan, the U.S. military seeks to “degrade” VEOs in East Africa by FY 2021 to the point where they cannot harm U.S. interests.²⁰ The DIA told the DoD OIG that the terrorist threat from al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia against Somali government officials, international forces, and key infrastructure remains “high.”²¹

The USAFRICOM Commander, General Stephen Townsend, stated publicly in January 2020 that al Shabaab “must be dealt with before the network expands its reach to other places, to include their stated desire to strike U.S. citizens in the U.S. homeland.”²² In testimony before the Senate on January 30, 2020, General Townsend said that of all the VEOs in Africa, “al Shabaab is most dangerous to U.S. interests today.”²³

AL SHABAAB: CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING HIGH-PROFILE ATTACKS

Al Shabaab is mostly concentrated in southern Somalia, but also maintains a small presence in Somalia's northeast Puntland region. USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that there has been no change to al Shabaab's areas of influence and control since the previous quarter.²⁴

The DIA assessed in December 2019 that al Shabaab remained capable of conducting high-profile, mass casualty attacks, as demonstrated by VBIED attacks against civilian and military targets throughout southern Somalia.²⁵

The DIA assessed that al Shabaab poses a low threat to the U.S. homeland. However, al Shabaab has demonstrated its intent to attack the U.S. homeland and overseas interests. The DIA stated that the group's emir, Ahmed Diriye, has called for violence against the United States and U.S. interests abroad. In a recent video, al Shabaab's emir called for priority targeting of Americans after the September 30 attack on Baledogle Airfield.²⁶

USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that al Shabaab has consistently worked toward two main objectives: 1) to drive foreigners (including AMISOM and foreign governments) out of Somalia, and 2) to establish a caliphate in Somalia, which includes ousting the current government. According to USAFRICOM, al Shabaab's animosity toward the West and alignment with al Qaeda ideology have also driven the group to conduct attacks against areas frequented by Westerners.²⁷

The DIA assessed that, as of December, al Shabaab's strategic goals had not changed. In addition to al Shabaab's primary adversaries, the group continues to be in direct conflict with ISIS-Somalia, likely stemming from competition for revenue streams and al Shabaab defections to ISIS.²⁸

USAFRICOM and the DIA assessed that al Shabaab still adheres to and receives ideological guidance from al Qaeda's core leadership, even though al Shabaab is financially self-sufficient. Following the September attack on the Baledogle Military Airfield, al Shabaab and other al Qaeda groups released near-simultaneous messages praising the attack, suggesting the two groups coordinated their media messages.²⁹

Further information on al Shabaab's capabilities is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

A Somali soldier maintains a watchful eye during a security patrol in Wanla Weyn, Somalia. (U.S. Navy photo)



AL SHABAAB USES TAXATION, JUSTICE TO ENFORCE ITS RULE

The DIA told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab gathers revenue through taxation at checkpoints on roads it controls, agricultural taxation, business extortion, and forced *zakat* (religious donations). In the past year, al Shabaab instituted a tax on goods entering Somalia through the Port of Mogadishu, threatening shipping agents to obtain access to ship manifests, according to press reporting.³⁰

The DIA described al Shabaab's revenue generation as "a relatively corruption-free and efficient" taxation system.³¹ The DIA reported that al Shabaab's taxation along roads is organized—with set payments and receipts—and that al Shabaab keeps roads relatively safe, in contrast with government checkpoints, which are "rife with predation and repeated extortion."³² USAFRICOM reported that al Shabaab distributed fliers in Mogadishu ordering residents to pay taxes on different building categories. USAFRICOM estimated al Shabaab generates \$10 to \$20 million annually from these activities.³³

According to USAFRICOM and the DIA, al Shabaab provides rudimentary governmental services in areas it controls by administering rule of law through Sharia courts; operating Sharia institutes and schools; consulting with clan leaders; and providing money, services, and food to the local population. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab offers services to populations distrustful of or excluded from the political process and offers a modicum of security in areas under its influence. Despite al Shabaab's sometimes harsh justice, USAFRICOM said, some Somalis seek out al Shabaab courts, knowing that they deliver a relatively swift verdict and enforce a resolution.³⁴

In addition, independent analysts have described how al Shabaab extracts illegal revenue from other sources, including piracy, kidnapping, extortion, and a highly profitable charcoal export trade.³⁵ Al Shabaab also smuggles contraband sugar into Kenya, bringing in tens of millions of dollars annually, and Kenyan forces have been accused of being complicit in this operation.³⁶

Further discussion of al Shabaab's taxation methods is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

AL SHABAAB CONTINUES TO RECRUIT FIGHTERS

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that al Shabaab has between 5,000 and 7,000 fighters, but said that this is a low-confidence assessment.³⁷ The DIA assessed that the group could have as many as 10,000 members, reflecting no change from its assessment the previous quarter.³⁸

The DIA told the DoD OIG that as of December 2019, there had been no change in al Shabaab's recruiting practices. Al Shabaab uses many methods to fill its ranks, including forced recruitment, overseas recruitment through the Somali diaspora community, and by leaning on relationships with sympathetic clan leaders for support.³⁹ USAFRICOM reported that in recent years, al Shabaab has built and operated schools in Somalia aimed at socializing children to al Shabaab's al Qaeda-aligned ideology, likely as a means to enable recruitment.⁴⁰ According to the DIA, al Shabaab also runs its own news channel, through which it attempts to recruit foreign fighters.⁴¹



The DIA reported that on October 12, al Shabaab killed 10 Kenyan soldiers in northeast Kenya. On December 7, al Shabaab killed 10 passengers onboard a bus in Kenya.



New State Police recruits stand in formation during a military ceremony in Mogadishu. (AMISOM photo)

During the quarter, al Shabaab focused on gaining recruits from other East African countries. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that Kenyans and Tanzanians were among the group's top recruits outside Somalia; in addition, Ugandan, Ethiopian, and Djiboutian nationals also joined al Shabaab. A small number of Middle Eastern and North African fighters are members of al Shabaab, as well as several U.S. citizens.⁴²

Further discussion of al Shabaab's recruitment is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

ISIS-SOMALIA: SMALL BUT RESILIENT

The DIA reported that there were no significant changes to ISIS-Somalia's size, leadership, external support, or recruiting during the quarter. The DIA reported that as of December 2019, ISIS-Somalia consisted of 100 to 300 fighters and operated primarily in the remote mountains of the Bari area of the semiautonomous Puntland region, northeast of Mogadishu.⁴³

Compared to al Shabaab, ISIS-Somalia is much less active operationally. USAFRICOM reported that ISIS-Somalia did not conduct operations outside of Somalia.⁴⁴ The DIA reported that during the quarter, ISIS-Somalia continued to target Somali government and security forces, Puntland security forces, and AMISOM forces through targeted assassinations using small arms and IEDs.⁴⁵ On November 11, ISIS-Somalia members claimed to have assassinated a tax collector in Bosasso.⁴⁶

Additional information on ISIS-Somalia is contained in the classified appendix of this report.

Countering al Shabaab in the Digital Domain

Al Shabaab uses traditional and digital media to disseminate its propaganda in Somalia and abroad. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that this quarter, al Shabaab increased the frequency and number of propaganda products released in the digital domain. USAFRICOM reported that these digital products “are somewhat more refined than previous attempts, but still lack the ‘finished’ look evident in more sophisticated extremist groups.” USAFRICOM noted that some of al Shabaab’s digital products are new, while others are simply a reboot of previously released propaganda. USAFRICOM reported that al Shabaab’s messaging attempts to show relevance, legitimize actions and activities, and bolster morale and recruiting efforts.⁴⁷

Al Shabaab’s response to the September 30 Baledogle Military Airfield attack is an example of the group’s messaging techniques and contents. Following the failed attack, al Shabaab claimed its attackers killed more than 100 U.S. troops, exaggerating the effectiveness of the attack. In fact, the attack did not result in any U.S. fatalities. The group’s post-attack propaganda included an hour-long video featuring al Shabaab emir Ahmed Diriye, who called for more attacks against Americans.

USAFRICOM assessed that al Shabaab’s digital propaganda was “not effective.” USAFRICOM said that al Shabaab is struggling to find resonance among more mainstream social media users in Somalia despite having dedicated social media platforms. Al Shabaab’s social media products are largely ignored by the Somali social media audience and fail to gain followers outside of the group’s most dedicated “fringe” audience, USAFRICOM reported.⁴⁸

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that when al Shabaab releases a digital product, USAFRICOM analyzes the product and its effectiveness using two measures: “trending” (present on more than one platform) and “resonance” (interactions such as likes, shares, and user comments). USAFRICOM reported that if the propaganda is not resonating or trending, it will continue to monitor the product for approximately 72 hours. If there has been no significant increase in the product’s following, USAFRICOM categorizes it as ineffective.⁴⁹



In addition to monitoring al Shabaab products, USAFRICOM conducts its own counter-messaging efforts. USAFRICOM said that it conducts systematic, deliberate engagements with consistent themes and messages across all of its digital platforms.⁵⁰ If an al Shabaab propaganda product is trending and resonating, USAFRICOM will immediately engage in counter-propaganda messaging operations. USAFRICOM reported at the end of the quarter that its social media followers are increasing at a rate of approximately 700 new followers per week.⁵¹

USAFRICOM assessed that its counter-VEO posts on social media resonate with its target audience. Compared to al Shabaab accounts, USAFRICOM accounts interact with the target audience (through likes, shares, or comments) at a rate of 10 to 1. USAFRICOM reported that the target audience's behavior of not interacting, viewing, or discussing al Shabaab propaganda, coupled with sustained interactions with USAFRICOM's social media accounts, "are both notable impact indicators of successful USAFRICOM messaging activities."⁵²



Al Shabaab uses a diverse collection of digital media to amplify its message, including Facebook and YouTube.⁵³ While USAFRICOM reports success in building its social media following, it is likely not responding to all al Shabaab posts, or responding quickly enough. In addition, USAFRICOM's digital counter-messaging efforts have a limited effect on al Shabaab's use of traditional social networks, including local public gatherings and religious schools, to spread propaganda and recruit.⁵⁴

USAID reported that it manages a website and Twitter handle in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu Public Affairs section. These accounts focus on positive messaging about development and humanitarian assistance stories. USAID reported that it also organizes large media events in coordination with the embassy's Public Affairs Officer that are shared through social media and local TV and radio stations.⁵⁵

AMISOM Continues Mission in Somalia

AMISOM is a UN-approved peacekeeping mission in Somalia that is operated by the African Union. AMISOM includes 20,000 troops from Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. AMISOM has operated in Somalia since 2007 and has plans to reduce its presence. USAFRICOM said that it works with the Somali government to create an environment in which AMISOM can hand over security responsibilities to Somali security forces.⁵⁶

AMISOM's mandate is to pursue the following strategic objectives:

- Enable the gradual handing over of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces contingent on abilities of the Somali security forces and political and security progress in Somalia;
- Reduce the threat posed by al Shabaab and other armed opposition groups; and
- Assist the Somali security forces to provide security for the political process at all levels, as well as stabilization, reconciliation, and peace building in Somalia.

AMISOM is in the process of withdrawing its forces from Somalia. Initial troop drawdown began in 2017; 1,000 troops withdrew in 2019.⁵⁷ USAFRICOM reported that there was no AMISOM troop reduction during the quarter.⁵⁸ The next phase of the troop withdrawal is planned for February 2020, with a possible full withdrawal scheduled for 2021.⁵⁹

USAFRICOM reported that there is currently no data available to assess the impact of the 1,000-soldier reduction of AMISOM forces in 2019. However, USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that future reductions will likely place pressure on the SNA, which will be required to refit existing forces and generate new forces to keep pace with future operations in the Lower and Middle Shabelle region of Somalia.⁶⁰

Limited Progress Toward Operation Badbaado's Goals

Operation Badbaado, a combined SNA/AMISOM operation, seeks to liberate areas south of Mogadishu from al Shabaab.⁶¹ USAFRICOM reported limited progress during the quarter in meeting Operation Badbaado's three goals.

The first goal is to develop the SNA's long-term institutional capacity.⁶² USAFRICOM reported that during the quarter three new generals were appointed to key positions in the SNA, including Land Commander and Chief of Staff.⁶³

The second goal is to create a security cocoon around Mogadishu.⁶⁴ USAFRICOM reported that there was no significant progress toward this goal during the quarter. Offensive operations to increase Mogadishu security have been on hold because of flooded roads and limited freedom of movement during the rainy season.⁶⁵

The third goal is to degrade al Shabaab.⁶⁶ USAFRICOM reported that there was limited impact on degrading al Shabaab outside of Mogadishu due to slow police force generation and lack of stabilization activities, including local governance, within seized towns in the Lower Shabelle region. USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that surveys of the local

Somali populace have shown increased sympathy for the Somali government and the SNA over al Shabaab since the beginning of Operation Badbaado in Spring 2019. However, al Shabaab still retains freedom of movement in the Lower Shabelle, as evidenced by the organization's continued VBIED attacks in Mogadishu. USAFRICOM reported that al Shabaab retains effective command and control, as evidenced by the Fall 2019 synchronized attacks against separate SNA forward operating bases in the Lower Shabelle.⁶⁷

CAPACITY BUILDING

USAFRICOM, along with regional and international partners, conducts military operations to disrupt, degrade, and neutralize VEOs that present a transnational threat. According to USAFRICOM, these operations set conditions for continued partnerships with African partner nations to help them build the capacity they need to secure the region.⁶⁸ USAFRICOM reported that the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Turkey also provide training and financial support to the SNA.⁶⁹

SNA: Capable of Seizing, but Not Holding, Terrain

The DIA reported to the DoD OIG that the SNA, with international support, succeeded in retaking control of large parts of Somalia and key infrastructure from al Shabaab in 2019. However, the SNA has not demonstrated the capacity to hold seized terrain without international support.⁷⁰ USAID told the USAID OIG that the absence of capable hold forces means that USAID implementers cannot provide programs in those areas.⁷¹

Despite the lack of capable hold forces, U.S. Government agencies reported that the SNA had some success in holding terrain during the quarter. USAFRICOM reported that the SNA continued to hold four forward operating bases in the Lower Shabelle, about 100km west of Mogadishu, and successfully repelled multiple al Shabaab attacks.⁷²

Further discussion of the SNA is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Training of Danab Brigade Continues

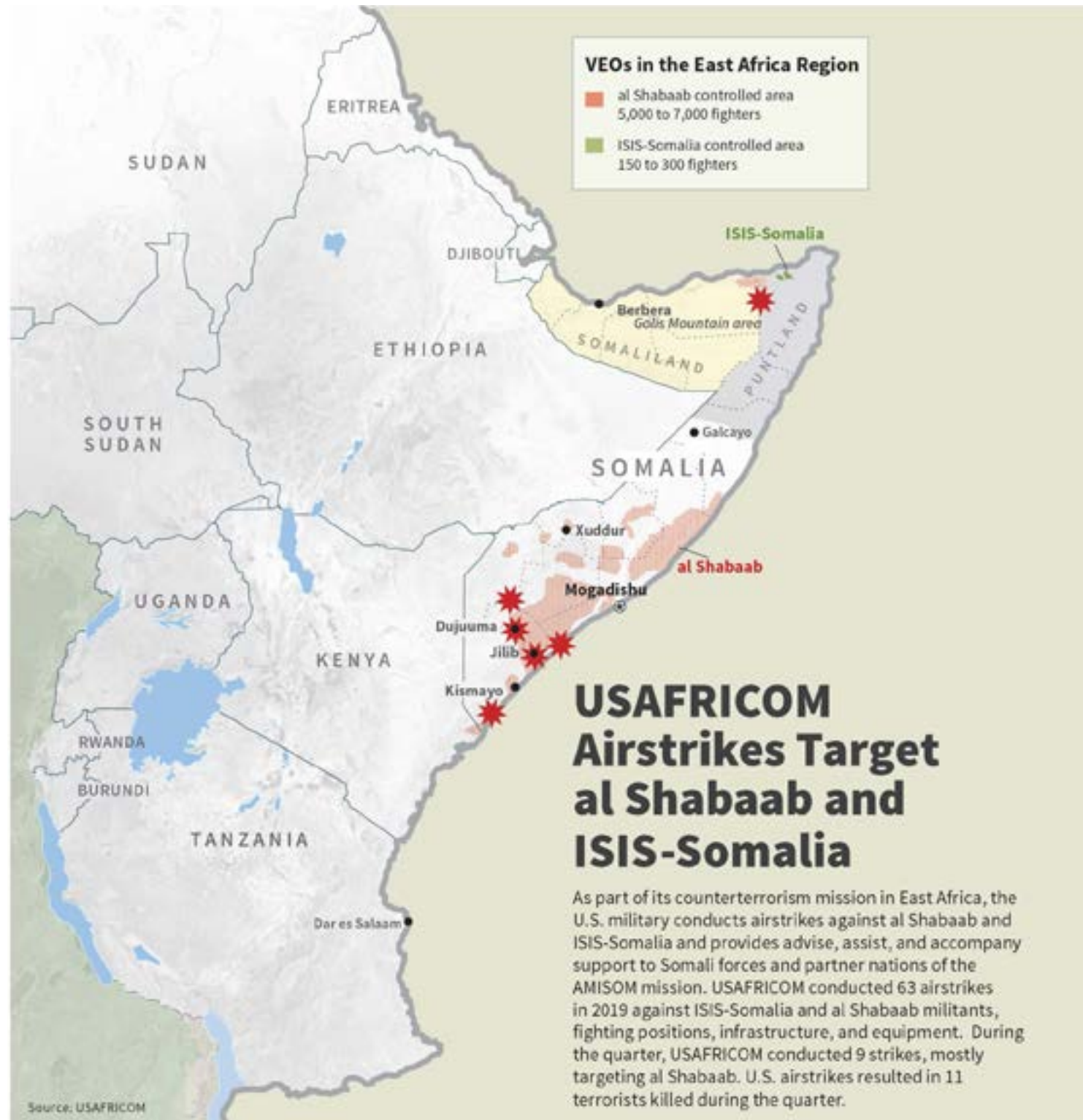
During the quarter, the DoD and the DoS continued efforts to develop the Danab Advanced Infantry Brigade. The Danab Brigade is intended to be a specialized Somali commando force that can liberate Somali territory held by al Shabaab forces. Once fully established, the Danab Brigade is expected to comprise 3,000 forces, across six SNA sectors. The unit's headquarters will be at Baledogle Airfield.⁷³

The DoS, through a contractor, Bancroft Global Development, is responsible for recruitment and basic training of the Danab Brigade.⁷⁴ The DoD is responsible for unit-level training, which includes instruction on advanced warfighting techniques and effective unit-level operations.

Further details about Danab Brigade training during the quarter are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Figure 1.

U.S. Airstrikes in Somalia, October 2019–December 2019



✶ Airstrike locations and assessments

Oct 25: Golis Mountains
Assessment: 3 ISIS-Somalia fighters KIA
Nov 12: Jilib
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter KIA
Nov 19: Qunyo Barrow
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter KIA
Nov 30: Jilib
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter WIA
Dec 9: Saakow
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter KIA
Dec 16: Dujuma
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter KIA
Dec 29: Qunyo Barrow
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter (KIA)
Dec 29: Caliyoow Barrow
Assessment: 2 al Shabaab fighters KIA
Dec 29: Qunyo Barrow
Assessment: 1 al Shabaab fighter KIA

Source: USAFRICOM

Air Strikes

Confirmed air strikes including drone strikes



People Killed

Total people killed in confirmed airstrikes (lowest reported estimates)



Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism

The EU Mission and SNA Training

The European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM) seeks to strengthen the SNA. EUTM partners with Somali authorities to build a professional national military that is accountable to the Somali government. This support is part of the EU's comprehensive engagement in Somalia, which seeks to support stabilization and respond to Somali needs.⁷⁵

USAFRICOM reported that this quarter, the EUTM graduated one SNA company from its training program and began training another. The Turkish Army graduated one battalion and began training another battalion.⁷⁶

USAFRICOM also reported that two Turkish-trained SNA battalions do not have weapons to conduct operations due to a contracting problem. The problem will result in a 6-month lag between training completion and weapons arriving. According to USAFRICOM, the Somali government has been unable to provide weapons for these battalions in the interim.⁷⁷

DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

ASWJ Reaches Power-Sharing Deal with Somali Government

USAFRICOM reported that Ahlu Sunna Wahl Jama (ASWJ) and the Somali government publicly agreed on December 12 to provide ASWJ with 20 of the 89 seats in the Galmudug state parliament.⁷⁸ ASWJ is a moderate Sufi armed group that has fought against al Shabaab in Galmudug and has successfully established security in that part of Somalia. ASWJ previously entered into a power-sharing agreement with Galmudug state officials in 2017, which led other opposition parties in the state to set up another state capital.⁷⁹

The power-sharing agreement between ASWJ and the Somali government follows efforts by Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre to reconcile Galmudug's various clans in preparation for state elections and efforts to integrate ASWJ into the SNA. The DoD reported to the DoD OIG that U.S. Ambassador to Somalia Don Yamamoto supported negotiations behind the scenes, serving as a witness to agreed positions and enabling both sides to overcome significant mistrust.⁸⁰

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Security Restrictions Undermine Oversight of USAID Projects in Somalia

USAID reported that it has spent \$418.9 million of FY 2019-2020 funds for humanitarian response in Somalia. Approximately 5.2 million people in Somalia require humanitarian assistance, USAID said.⁸¹

However, USAID told the USAID OIG that it still struggles with security restrictions in Somalia. Over the past few years, both USAID and implementers have moved from operating in Nairobi to Somalia.⁸² USAID has been allocated space for six people at the U.S. Government compound at Mogadishu International Airport.⁸³

USAID said that the permanent presence of the Mission Director in Mogadishu allows for greater coordination with Somali government officials. However, the restricted ability of USAID staff to leave the compound for security reasons impedes USAID's engagement. Many Somalis cannot access the airport compound, so most USAID engagements are with senior Somali government officials and business and civil society leaders, not the segments of society that USAID's programs aim to support.⁸⁴ By contrast, DoD personnel are able to leave the compound for meetings. USAID reported that while DoD personnel have shared the outcomes of those meetings, the meetings have been defense-focused.⁸⁵

USAID told the USAID OIG that instead of monitoring and evaluating programs itself, it uses independent consultants and third-party monitoring organizations. Consultants for the USAID stabilization programs in Somalia—USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives and the Mission's Transition Initiatives for Stabilization—can travel outside of the compound, meet with implementers and beneficiaries, and monitor programming.⁸⁶ However, USAID reported that at the planned conclusion of an Office of the Transition Initiatives program in May 2020, only one consultant will remain who can leave the compound.⁸⁷

USAID reported that it has two third-party monitor contracts to verify the results of USAID programs, one for humanitarian assistance, and one for development and stabilization programs. USAID reported that the humanitarian assistance third-party monitor provides qualitative and quantitative monitoring reports, which covered more than 325 sites since 2017. The monitor can also issue "flash reports" to USAID, which elevate time-sensitive issues.⁸⁸

For example, according to its most recent report, the third-party monitor visited 29 sites of USAID-funded humanitarian assistance programs in Somalia. Activity indicators include ensuring complaint and feedback mechanisms, timeliness of activity implementation, and implementation challenges. According to this report, the monitor found that 81 percent of the sites had formal complaint and feedback mechanisms, with 63 percent of





East Africans farm the land. (USAID photo)

the beneficiaries being aware of the mechanism. Output indicators include the number of beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers, as well as measures of infrastructure, such as roads, latrines, water tanks, and health centers.⁸⁹

Outcome indicators include beneficiaries engaging in coping strategies and severe acute malnutrition levels and results. The most frequently used coping strategies for the food insecurity were borrowing food or relying on help from a friend or relative and reducing the number of meals eaten in a day.⁹⁰

USAID told the USAID OIG that third-party monitors are not meant to be a substitute for direct USAID oversight, because USAID site visits would facilitate engagement with beneficiaries and better understanding of the local context. USAID reported that it would prefer a mix of USAID site visits with third-party monitoring, if the security situation allows for site visits in the future.⁹¹

USAID Adjusts Operations in Response to Floods

Heavy rains that began in October 2019 have caused significant flooding in Somalia, according to the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System Network. USAID reported to the USAID OIG that USAID's implementers in Somalia have adjusted operations in response to recent flooding. Implementers for the USAID Office of Food for Peace leveraged the Rapid Response Activity mechanism in their awards, which allows implementers to respond to new, acute shocks. USAID authorized four implementers to use approximately \$772,000 in Rapid Response Activity funding to provide cash

transfers that improve access to food for households affected by the flooding. USAID is also funding the provision of safe drinking water and hygiene awareness campaigns in order to mitigate water-borne diseases.⁹²

USAID told the USAID OIG that while most implementers for the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance have been able to help people impacted by the flooding in Somalia within their current agreements, some implementers have formally realigned their program budgets to better respond.

According to USAID, USAID's humanitarian assistance in Somalia is focused on emergency needs. However, USAID said that it also incorporates resilience activities, as feasible.⁹³ For instance, USAID is supporting community early warning systems and reinforcing weak riverbanks.⁹⁴ Implementers requested suspending current resilience activities during the floods, with the intention of resuming activities following the flooding.⁹⁵ USAID's work in resilience is evolving as USAID is establishing a new Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, which will "strengthen the link between resilience...and USAID's humanitarian and stabilization efforts."⁹⁶

Figure 2.
Instability in East Africa



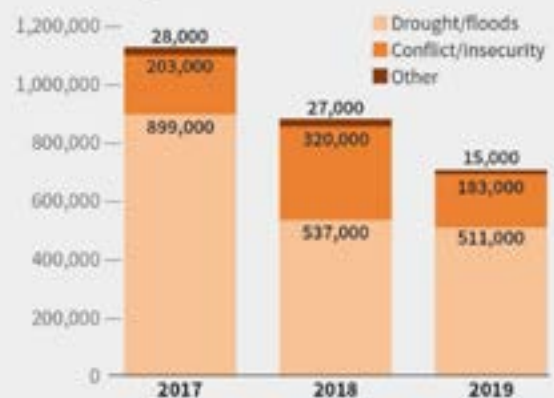
Climate Change and Instability in East Africa

In February 2019, General Thomas Waldhauser, then the commander of USAFRICOM, described “environmental change” and its effect on security in Africa as an “emerging challenge” for the command.

The United Nations reported that climate change contributes to insecurity by causing displacement, food insecurity, and other forms of destabilization that can lead to conflict. Drought and floods remain a leading cause of displacement in East Africa, even as overall levels of displacement continued to decrease in 2019.

Source: Protection and Return Monitoring Network, USAFRICOM

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in East Africa, 2017-2019





An internally displaced person (IDP) camp in Abuwaq, Somalia, where droughts and floods have been a major factor in the displacement of millions of people. (WFP/ Kevin Ouma photo)

USAID told the USAID OIG that development projects, not humanitarian assistance, are needed to address the long-term infrastructure and governance challenges of flooding in Somalia.⁹⁷ Since 2011, \$4.5 billion has been spent on humanitarian assistance, instead of long-term resilience activities.⁹⁸ At a strategic level, the USAID Mission in Somalia is in the process of developing its Country Development Coordination Strategy, which will elevate USAID's focus on resilience. USAID reported it expects that the strategy will build resilience by targeting the same or similar populations in a geographic area with deliberately designed programs that harmonize funding streams.⁹⁹

USAID, DoD Coordination in Africa

USAID has embedded personnel at USAFRICOM and U.S. Special Operations Command.¹⁰⁰ Within USAFRICOM, the USAID Senior Development Advisor reports directly to the USAFRICOM Commander, while most other combatant commands that have USAID staff posted are within the office, that manages interagency coordination.¹⁰¹ Additionally, USAID provides trainings and briefings to military personnel deploying to Somalia.¹⁰²

In addition, USAID coordinates with other U.S. Government agencies through several mechanisms, including working groups and Mission Civil-Military Coordinators (MC2s). The MC2s are USAID staff members who are tasked with strengthening effective engagement with the DoD to meet mutual objectives. USAID also works with the DoD combatant commands to host MC2 workshops, building an understanding of their role with military colleagues.¹⁰³ USAID reported that it continues to coordinate with the DoD for the deconfliction of humanitarian and development organizations in Somalia.¹⁰⁴

USAID reported to the USAID OIG that the Somalia working group discussions are focused on improving future military operations and stabilization activities. Furthermore, the stabilization annex to the Somalia integrated country strategy includes specific metrics for USAID, DoS, and DoD, and it is USAID's intent to review those metrics every 6 months to reevaluate geographic and program considerations.¹⁰⁵

USAID reported to the USAID OIG that interagency coordination is sometimes hindered by USAID limitations around classified materials. Specifically, USAID humanitarian staff are less active on classified systems, meaning that urgent classified messages are sometimes missed. Furthermore, USAID humanitarian offices are not always able to attend relevant meetings, because of the classification level or a lack of staff with the necessary clearance level in Abuja and Washington, D.C.¹⁰⁶

NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION

The North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation relates to U.S. activities against violent extremist organizations in two regions of Africa: North Africa (primarily Libya) and West Africa (primarily countries in the Lake Chad region and the Sahel).

In Libya, U.S. forces conduct lethal counterterrorism operations against al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS-Libya.

According to USAFRICOM's 2019 Posture Statement, the command has three objectives for Libya: 1) degrading terrorist groups that pose threats to U.S. and Western interests and destabilize Libya and its neighbors; 2) prevent widespread civil conflict that threatens security and stability; and 3) support a political reconciliation process by providing security for diplomatic engagements.¹

Counterterrorism operations in North Africa fall under Line of Effort 4 in the USAFRICOM campaign plan. One intermediate objective of this Line of Effort, listed in Table 4 below, outlines measures of success for counterterrorism operations in North Africa.² Other USAFRICOM activities outside this Line of Effort may also support counterterrorism operations in North Africa.

ISIS-Libya and AQIM did not conduct any major attacks in North Africa during the quarter. However, the DoD said that it needs to maintain pressure on ISIS-Libya to prevent its resurgence.³ The DIA also reported that AQIM still has fighters and generates revenue to support its affiliate in West Africa.⁴

Table 4:

Counterterrorism in North Africa: Measures of Success

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

"By FY 21, ISIS, AQIM, and other designated priority VEOs in Libya and the Maghreb are degraded and cannot cause significant harm to U.S. Interests

USAFRICOM will achieve this objective according to the following timeline:

- Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, VEOs are denied uncontested cross-border movement;
- FY 2020 freedom of movement and ability to communicate by VEO leadership is reduced;
- FY 2021 VEO training sites are minimized;
- FY 2021 VEO facilitation sites are minimized;
- FY 2022 VEO attacks against security forces are reduced;
- FY 2022 foreign fighter flows are prevented;
- FY 2023 VEOs in the Maghreb are unable to attack outside of Libya;
- FY 2023 VEO ability to leverage illicit trafficking networks is minimized;
- FY 2023 ISIS-Libya communications and propaganda are reduced;
- FY 2024 VEOs are incapable of sustaining attacks against Libyan security forces and securing contested terrain.

Source: USAFRICOM, U.S. Africa Campaign Plan, 5/1/2019; DoD USAFRICOM LOE 4 and J8, response to DoD OIG request for information, 12/26/2019.





A Nigerien soldier moves toward a simulated attacker for a training exercise in Niamey, Niger. (U.S. Air Force photo)

In West Africa, the U.S. military does not have direct action authority to conduct unilateral counterterrorism operations. Instead, the U.S. military provides security assistance to partner nations as they work to counter VEOs in the region. This includes support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, an African-led and French-assisted force that consists of approximately 4,500 troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The U.S. military also supports Multinational Joint Task Force, which is composed of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. According to the USAFRICOM Posture Statement, USAFRICOM and USAID work with the Multinational Joint Task Force to deliver humanitarian support to West African nations.⁵ U.S. forces also conduct limited counterterrorism operations as a part of their support to partner nations in West Africa.⁶

Counterterrorism operations and related partner nation support in West Africa fall under Line of Effort 5 in the USAFRICOM campaign plan. The Line of Effort includes three intermediate objectives related to supporting partners in countering VEOs, as listed in Table 4. The campaign plan lists several measures of success for each intermediate objective, including that partners are able to conduct operations against VEOs, deny them freedom of movement, and can collaborate to conduct counter-VEO operations.⁷

According to USAFRICOM, security in West Africa continued to deteriorate during the quarter. VEOs attacked partner forces, inflicting many casualties. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that “VEOs in West Africa are not degraded nor contained to the Sahel and Lake Chad region.”⁸ USAFRICOM also told the DoD OIG this quarter that it had switched from a “degrade” strategy to a one of “containment.”⁹



Table 5:
Counterterrorism in West Africa: Measures of Success

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

“G-5 Sahel Partners have the security capacity and capability to contain ISIS-GS, JNIM, and other VEOs in the Western Sahel.”

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

“[Lake Chad Region] partners have the security capacity and capability to contain ISIS-WA, Boko Haram, and other VEOs in the region.”

INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE:

“[No later than] FY 23, security institutions of campaign partners in the [Lake Chad Region] and Western Sahel region are in the process of sustainable reforms to secure their sovereign interests and defeat VEOs while complying with rule of law.”

Source: USAFRICOM, U.S. Africa Campaign Plan, 5/1/2019.



UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres meets with Khalifa Haftar (right) during a visit to Libya. (UN photo)

STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

U.S. Drone Shot Down Over Libya

On November 21, an unarmed U.S. surveillance drone that was monitoring violent extremist activity in Libya was shot down near Tripoli. General Townsend testified that Russian mercenaries supporting the Libyan National Army (LNA), or at least Russian air defense systems operated by the LNA with the help of Russian mercenaries, were responsible for the incident.¹⁰ General Townsend also said that it is possible the U.S. drone was mistaken for an aircraft operated by pro-Government National Accord (GNA) forces conducting operations in the civil conflict.¹¹ The U.S. military conducts counterterrorism operations in Libya in coordination with the GNA.¹²

The day before the destruction of the U.S. drone, an unarmed Italian Reaper drone was also shot down in the same region. The LNA claimed responsibility for that incident, according to a media report.¹³ Italy, which is aligned with the GNA in the civil conflict, uses drones as part of its military's Operation Mare Sicuro in Libya, which monitors illegal migration and terrorism activities.¹⁴

Following the downing of the U.S. drone, LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar, a dual citizen of the United States and Libya, announced a "no-fly zone" over Tripoli and surrounding areas, according to a media report.¹⁵ The GNA called the no-fly declaration a violation of international law.¹⁶

Further discussion of how the incident and the subsequent no-fly zone affected USAFRICOM's counterterrorism operations in North Africa is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Russian Mercenaries Increase Presence in Libya

During the quarter, Russian mercenaries affiliated with the Wagner Group, a private military company, increased their numbers and activity in Libya. Wagner Group forces have operated in Libya since August 2019, in support of LNA forces. According to media reports, an estimated 800 to 1,400 Wagner Group mercenaries operated in Libya during the quarter, a significant increase from the approximately 200 fighters that were reported operating in Libya in September 2019.¹⁷

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that Russia uses the Wagner Group and other private military companies to provide military training and support to North African nations as an alternative to Western partners.¹⁸ General Townsend testified in April 2019 that the Wagner Group is closely tied to the Russian government, stating "they train right alongside the Russian armed forces."¹⁹ The growing Russian military presence in Libya, USAFRICOM said, "could inhibit U.S. military partnerships and [counterterrorism] cooperation."²⁰

USAFRICOM reported that Russian military activity in North Africa presents two significant challenges to the United States and its partners. First, Russian military cooperation undermines the ability of the United States and its partners to enhance or maintain military relationships with North African nations. Second, Russia could inhibit freedom of movement in the southern Mediterranean Sea.²¹

A December 2019 UN Security Council report stated that in addition to Russian mercenary forces, 1,000 Sudanese fighters are deployed to Libya in support of the LNA, while Chad has an estimated 700 combatants in Libya aligned with the GNA.²²

On January 5, 2020, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the deployment of an unspecified number of Turkish troops to Libya following a request for military assistance from the GNA. The request was in response to a rising LNA threat that is backed by the Russian mercenaries and other nations foreign to Libya.²³

More information on how mercenary forces in Libya affects the U.S. counterterrorism mission is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Lack of Access in Libya Undermines Counterterrorism Efforts

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it maintains the ability to conduct counterterrorism operations in Libya, but that the ongoing civil conflict creates challenges, because neither the GNA forces nor the LNA forces are directly focused on counterterrorism operations.²⁴

During this quarter, USAFRICOM continued to conduct its aerial counterterrorism operations in Libya from locations outside the country, but did not have any forces on the ground.²⁵ A small number of U.S. troops withdrew from Libya in April 2019 due to what USAFRICOM characterized as an “unpredictable security environment” created by the LNA’s attempted military coup.²⁶ USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that one condition for returning ground forces to Libya is a ceasefire between the LNA and GNA that ensures that neither group accidentally targets U.S. forces.²⁷

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that although U.S. drone strikes during the previous quarter inflicted significant damage to ISIS-Libya, “it is difficult to conduct fully effective operations without personnel on the ground.”²⁸ USAFRICOM added that it is difficult to monitor who is flying in Libyan airspace or where terrorists are operating on the ground.²⁹

According to media reports, in addition to U.S. and Italian drones operating over Libya, the UAE operates Chinese drones in support of the LNA, while Turkey operates drones in support of the GNA, according to media reports.³⁰

More on U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Libya is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Status of VEOs in North Africa

USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that ISIS-Libya and AQIM did not conduct any major attacks in North Africa during the quarter.³¹

However, as noted above, USAFRICOM considers multiple factors when assessing whether a VEO is “degraded,” including whether it can finance external operations and the strength of its command and control.³² The DIA told the DoD OIG that AQIM still has fighters and generates revenue to support its affiliate in West Africa. The DoD also reported that it needs to maintain pressure on ISIS-Libya to prevent its resurgence.³³

ISIS-LIBYA: STRUGGLING TO RESUME OPERATIONS

USAFRICOM reported that this quarter in North Africa, ISIS-Libya struggled to resume operations following 4 U.S. drone strikes in September 2019 that killed 43 combatants, roughly 33 percent of the group's manpower, including 2 leaders.³⁴ USAFRICOM estimated to the DoD OIG that there were about 100 ISIS-Libya fighters in Libya as of the end of the quarter.³⁵ At its peak in 2015, ISIS-Libya had an estimated 5,000 fighters and controlled more than 125 miles of coastline, according to a news report.³⁶

The DIA told the DoD OIG that it expects ISIS-Libya to remain in a “degraded” state for the next few months. While ISIS-Libya's ultimate objective is to control territory as part of ISIS's broader caliphate, the DIA assessed the group is in a rebuilding phase, with a near-term goal of resuming attacks against government and security targets in Libya.³⁷

Prior to the September drone strikes, USAFRICOM had not taken direct action against ISIS-Libya in nearly a year. Secretary of Defense Esper told reporters in November 2019 that there was nothing unusual about ISIS-Libya activity at the time of the strikes and that U.S. forces continued lethal operations in order to prevent a resurgence of terrorist violence.³⁸

AQIM: SUPPORTING WEST AFRICAN AFFILIATE

AQIM remained a diminished threat in North Africa as it prioritizes support efforts to al Qaeda affiliates in West Africa. USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that AQIM did not conduct any attacks this quarter in North Africa. AQIM also suffered a setback on October 20, 2019, when Tunisian security forces killed a senior leader of AQIM's branch in that country.³⁹ The DIA estimated that AQIM had as many as 500 fighters in North Africa as of the end of the quarter.⁴⁰

AQIM continues to support Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), an al Qaeda affiliate in West Africa.⁴¹ According to the DIA, AQIM uses North Africa as a support zone for JNIM operations in Mali and the Sahel. The DIA added that AQIM operates transnational financial networks to move and share funds between its members in the Sahel.⁴²

More on the state of threats posed by AQIM and ISIS-Libya is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

West African Security Forces Overmatched In Attacks

VEOs in West Africa launched a growing number of offensive attacks against military facilities and troops during this quarter, often resulting in large numbers of casualties.⁴³ At least 230 soldiers were killed by jihadist violence in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali during the quarter, according to a mid-December media report.⁴⁴ USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that these threats, if not contained, “have the potential to spread through the region and impact Western interests.”⁴⁵

NIGER: ISIS ATTACK KILLS 70 SOLDIERS

The deadliest attack of the quarter occurred on December 10, 2019, when ISIS in the Greater Sahara ambushed Nigerien soldiers at a Niger military base, killing at least 70 Nigerien soldiers, USAFRICOM reported.⁴⁶ According to a media report, the attack was carried out by several hundred militants.⁴⁷

The attack prompted an emergency summit of G5 Sahel leaders in which they called for urgent international assistance to combat escalating terrorism in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. At the summit, according to a news report, Niger's president said that terrorists in the region had become "professionals in the art of war" and that the threat they pose is getting worse.⁴⁸

Elsewhere in Niger this quarter, Boko Haram conducted small arms and IED attacks against security forces that included an October raid against a Nigerien military outpost that killed 12 soldiers and wounded 8 soldiers, according to USAFRICOM.⁴⁹

BURKINA FASO: JNIM ATTACKS LOCAL FORCES

In Burkina Faso, JNIM conducted at least 13 attacks this quarter against military forces, USAFRICOM reported. The most lethal attack took place on October 22, 2019, against a Burkina Faso army patrol, killing five soldiers and wounding four soldiers.⁵⁰

MALI: JNIM, ISIS ATTACKS PROMPT WITHDRAWAL

USAFRICOM reported that in Mali, JNIM conducted at least four attacks against military forces during the past quarter. Additionally, ISIS in the Greater Sahara inflicted the most lethal attack of the quarter in Mali, killing 54 Malian soldiers in In-Delimane on November 1, according to USAFRICOM.⁵¹ The Malian government withdrew forces from remote outposts near the Malian border with Burkina Faso and Niger after 140 Malian soldiers were killed in 3 attacks along the border.⁵²

NIGERIA: ARMY CONSOLIDATES TO PROTECT FORCES

USAFRICOM reported that in Nigeria, the Nigerian Army has consolidated its forces in Borno State into a smaller number of installations because of the Nigerian Army's inability to defend remote locations against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram.⁵³ USAID told the USAID OIG that this strategy allows violent extremists to control more rural territory, and conduct attacks in a wider area, which increases the risks to the civilian population and humanitarian workers.⁵⁴ Since this strategy was implemented in August 2019, attacks on the main highways north of Borno State's capitol, Maiduguri, have increased. In December, several nongovernmental organizations determined that the route into and around Maiduguri was unsafe, which may impact the transport of goods and personnel.⁵⁵

USAFRICOM also reported that ISIS-West Africa exploits the security vacuum created by the Nigerian Army's defensive "super camp" strategy.⁵⁶ However, according to USAFRICOM and the DIA, the consolidation strategy thus far has resulted in limited losses to Nigerian Army personnel and equipment, and no "super camp" has been overrun by a terrorist attack.⁵⁷

“A Devastating Surge” of Violence Targeting Civilians in West Africa

VEO attacks in the region were not limited to military targets. The UN envoy to West Africa stated publicly that the region has experienced “a devastating surge” in terrorist violence against civilians. The envoy told the UN Security Council in January 2020 that more than 4,000 civilian and military deaths from terrorist attacks were reported in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in 2019, compared to 770 in 2016.⁵⁸

For example, on November 6, jihadists attacked a Canadian-owned gold mine in Burkina Faso, killing 39 people.⁵⁹ Simultaneous attacks on December 24 in Burkina Faso killed 35 civilians in the town of Arbinda and 7 soldiers at a nearby military base.⁶⁰ Earlier that month, 14 civilians were killed during an attack on a church in Hantoukoura, according to open sources.⁶¹ In Nigeria, ISIS-West Africa released a video on December 26 showing the execution of 11 people in what the group said was a “message for Christians.” The executions were reportedly in retaliation for the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was killed by U.S. forces in October.⁶²

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that security in Burkina Faso is deteriorating faster than anywhere else in the Sahel. The Burkinabe military is “inexperienced, underequipped, and undertrained,” USAFRICOM said. As a result, multiple VEOs are able to entrench themselves among local populations where state presence is lacking.⁶³

More on the increasing violence in West Africa is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Status of VEOs in West Africa

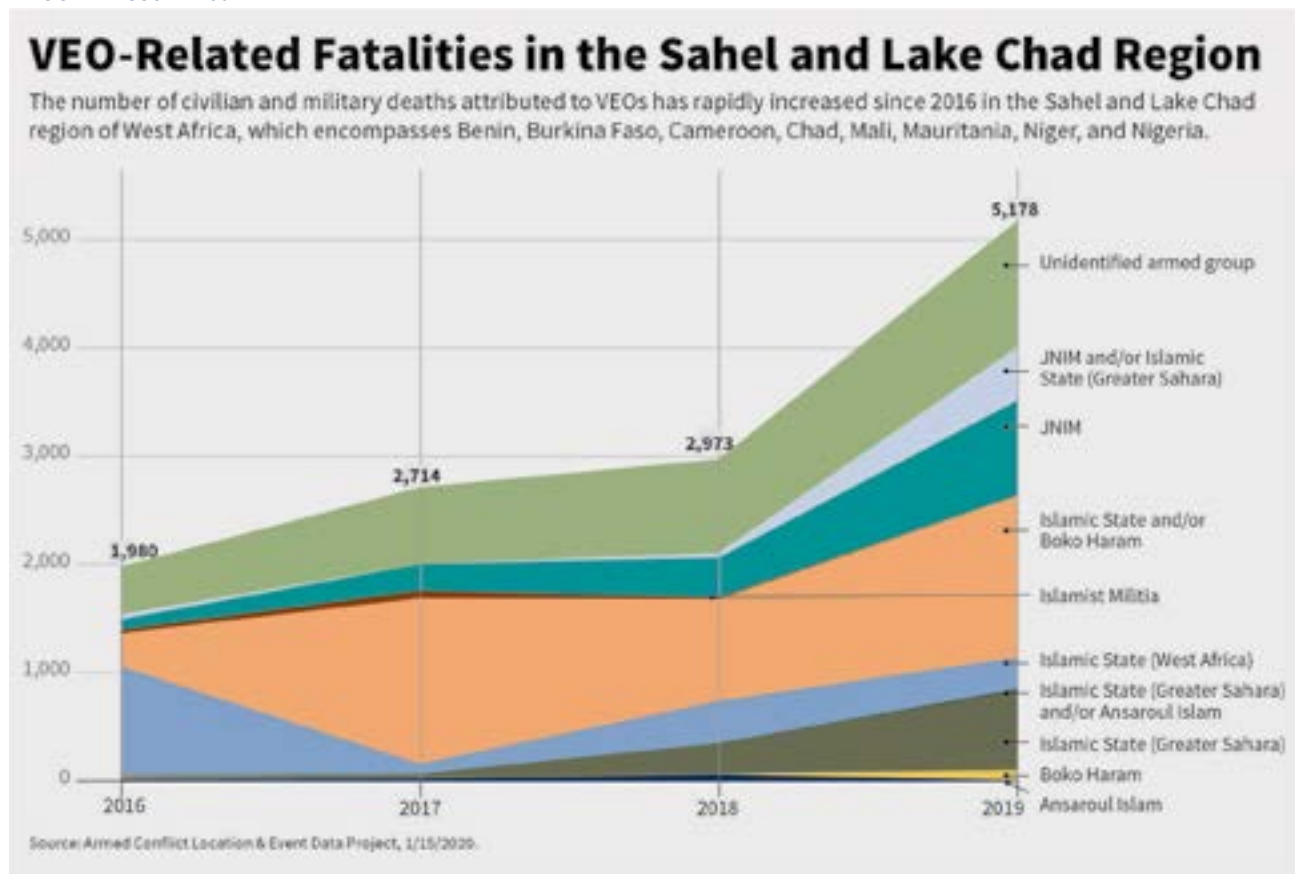
In contrast to the limited terrorist activity in North Africa, the threat posed by VEOs in West Africa is growing. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that VEOs in West Africa are neither degraded nor contained. USAFRICOM stated that challenges in the region, roughly the size of the United States, are linked to extreme poverty, lack of stability, and economic fragility.⁶⁴

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG this quarter that as a result of these challenges and the VEOs’ ability to exploit them, it has now switched from a “degrade” strategy to one of “containment.”⁶⁵ USAFRICOM said that the previous “degrade” strategy sought to reduce VEO effectiveness, while the new “containment” strategy seeks to maintain VEOs at their current size and stop them from spreading into new areas.⁶⁶

JNIM: A GROWING THREAT IN WEST AFRICA

The DIA told the DoD OIG this quarter that JNIM is the most active and effective terrorist group in the Sahel region, with an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 combatants.⁶⁷ USAFRICOM reported that JNIM is capable of conducting complex attacks against regional and international security forces in the Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger border region under the leadership of Iyad ag-Ghali.⁶⁸ Additionally, JNIM is involved in drug smuggling and taxation of smuggling routes in the Sahel, and increased its involvement in gold mining

Figure 3.
VEOs in West Africa



activities for profit during the last year.⁶⁹ JNIM frequently attacks mines in areas outside of government control in the Sahel, using the profits to recruit new members and buy weapons, according to a news report.⁷⁰

The DIA told the DoD OIG that JNIM's goal is to unite all terrorist groups in the Sahel and eliminate Western influence in the region, especially French forces.⁷¹ However, the DIA assessed that JNIM's cooperative relationship with ISIS in the Greater Sahara could be strained as ISIS in the Greater Sahara attacks have garnered more media coverage this quarter. In early December, JNIM issued a public statement accusing ISIS of falsely claiming attacks in the media.⁷²

More on JNIM's growing threat in West Africa is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

ISIS-WEST AFRICA AND ISIS-GREATER SAHARA INCREASINGLY CONNECTED

ISIS-West Africa emerged in 2016 when it split from Boko Haram, primarily because of the indiscriminate violence Boko Haram inflicted, and continues to inflict, on Muslims.⁷³ ISIS in the Greater Sahara was formed in 2015 and operates in the Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger border region, west of the area in Nigeria where ISIS-West Africa is based.⁷⁴

While ISIS in the Greater Sahara has actively cooperated with JNIM in Mali since January 2018, the DIA reported that ISIS in the Greater Sahara likely has increased ties and communication with ISIS-West Africa as well. DIA reported that its analysis of ISIS-West Africa propaganda shows tight links with the group's central command and an incorporation of media from ISIS in the Greater Sahara.⁷⁵

An estimated 3,500 ISIS-West Africa fighters are located in the Lake Chad region, with a concentrated presence in northeast Nigeria, where the group has established pockets of governance and imposes taxes with some support from the local population. The DIA told the DoD OIG that ISIS-West Africa may still receive funds from ISIS "Core" in Iraq and Syria, although it is probably not dependent on ISIS Core as a main source of funding.⁷⁶

According to USAFRICOM, ISIS-West Africa uses small arms, heavy weapons, and IEDs in attacks against fixed and mobile military targets. It also kidnaps security forces and NGO workers, including two Red Cross workers in early December.⁷⁷ The DIA assessed that ISIS-West Africa focuses its attacks against the military, state-sponsored civilian defense groups, and government infrastructure in an attempt to delegitimize the Nigerian government and establish a caliphate in the region.⁷⁸

The DIA estimated that ISIS in the Greater Sahara has up to 300 fighters operating in the Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger border region. The group seeks to establish a permanent foothold there, perform governance functions, and eliminate foreign influence in its areas of operation, the DIA assessed.⁷⁹

More on ISIS activity in West Africa is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

BOKO HARAM: GROWING THREAT IN CAMEROON

An emerging trend over the past year, according to the DIA, is that Boko Haram attacks declined in northeast Nigeria, but increased in Cameroon.⁸⁰ Amnesty International reported that at least 275 people were killed by Boko Haram in the Far North region of Cameroon in 2019 and many others were kidnapped or mutilated.⁸¹

Boko Haram's focus on Cameroon could be related, in part, to ongoing hostilities with ISIS-West Africa. The DIA reported that ISIS West-Africa conducted multiple attacks against Boko Haram this quarter. The DIA also assessed that ISIS-West Africa is effective at distinguishing itself from Boko Haram through its media content distributed in Nigeria in order to gain support from local populations.⁸² Additionally, a surge of Boko Haram attacks outside Nigeria followed a number of clashes with the Nigerian military, according to 2019 Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project report.⁸³

Boko Haram conducts small arms and IED attacks, and kidnap-for-ransom operations against government and wealthy civilian targets.⁸⁴ The group uses revenue generated from these attacks to finance its operations.⁸⁵ Despite the increased activity in Cameroon, Boko Haram remains a threat in Nigeria. USAFRICOM reported that an October attack attributed to Boko Haram killed 12 soldiers and wounded 8 at a Nigerian military outpost.⁸⁶

USAFRICOM and the DIA estimated that Boko Haram has 1,500 fighters operating in the Lake Chad region.⁸⁷ The group recruits members by promising, and in many cases providing, members and their families reliable income and food, according to the DIA. The group also uses social pressure and coercion to support its recruitment efforts.⁸⁸

13 French Soldiers Killed in Mali Helicopter Crash

In West Africa, the U.S. military supports French- and African-led counterterrorism operations in the region. The French-led Operation Barkhane, which began in 2013, involves approximately 4,500 deployed French troops.⁸⁹ USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that the U.S. military supports French efforts by providing airlift, ISR, and aerial refueling support.⁹⁰

Additionally, the U.S. military provides equipment, assistance in the form of intelligence and logistics, and advice to partner nations to deny terrorists safe haven and increase counterterrorism capacity and border security.⁹¹

This quarter was one of the deadliest for France in the history of Operation Barkhane. Thirteen French soldiers died when two helicopters collided during a clash with Islamic State militants in Mali on November 25.⁹² Also this quarter, a French soldier was killed by an improvised explosive device while on patrol in eastern Mali.⁹³

According to media reports, a rise in anti-French sentiment in West Africa and the loss of 14 soldiers this quarter prompted French President Emmanuel Macron to seek a meeting with the G5 heads of state to clarify their position on France's military presence in West Africa.⁹⁴ At the summit, which took place in January 2020, France announced its plan to commit an additional 220 troops to the region, along with a more unified effort of security forces under one command structure, according to media reports.⁹⁵

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that a French operation in October killed JNIM co-founder, Ali Maychou.⁹⁶ The French Minister of Armed Forces told reporters that Maychou was the "second most-wanted terrorist in the Sahel, including by the Americans."⁹⁷ The DoS had designated Maychou a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in July 2019.⁹⁸

ISR Operations Begin at Niger's Air Base 201

USAFRICOM announced on November 1, 2019, that the U.S. military began ISR operations at Air Base 201 in Agadez, Niger. USAFRICOM stated that its agreement with the government of Niger permits armed and unarmed missions to respond to threats and other security issues in the region.⁹⁹

The 6-year transition of operations from Niamey Air Base 101 to Agadez Air Base 201 cost the DoD an estimated \$110 million, according to a media report.¹⁰⁰

More information on Air Base 201's capabilities, types of operations, personnel, and types of aircraft located at the base is contained in the classified appendix to this report.

The Messaging Battle in North and West Africa

VEO MESSAGING

VEOs in North and West Africa use a variety of traditional and emerging technologies to disseminate their propaganda, with varying degrees of effectiveness:

ISIS-Libya: The DIA assessed that ISIS-Libya’s media campaign has a “minimal effect” on the group’s influence or recruiting in Libya. Most of ISIS-Libya’s media releases in 2019 have focused on ISIS global media efforts, including a global re-pledge campaign and a pledge video to ISIS’s new emir.¹⁰¹

ISIS-West Africa: The DIA assessed that ISIS-West Africa’s messaging content has “enabled the group to effectively expand its outreach and influence to nearby communities,” and distinguish itself from Boko Haram in the minds of the local populace.¹⁰² The DIA’s analysis of ISIS-West Africa’s propaganda shows a strong connection between the group’s “command” and its propaganda apparatus.¹⁰³ For example, ISIS-West Africa’s internal media office uses ISIS-Core media platforms and encrypted messaging applications to disseminate content. According to the DIA, recent messaging themes underline support to ISIS Core and exploit ethnic and religious tension in Nigeria. This quarter, several videos “showcased” attack operations, eulogized fallen fighters, and encouraged the migration of ISIS fighters to Nigeria.¹⁰⁴

ISIS in the Greater Sahara: ISIS in the Greater Sahara lacks its own internal media capability, so it releases statements and other media through Mauritania’s Nouakchott News Agency.¹⁰⁵ However, the group appears to have increased its communication ties with ISIS-West Africa and ISIS-Core.¹⁰⁶

JNIM: The DIA assessed that JNIM’s media apparatus may be creating messages that resonate with local tribes. JNIM’s primary messaging outlet, al Zallaqah, frequently publishes attack claims and propaganda, the DIA told the DoD OIG. The group uses Telegram, an encrypted messaging application, to release statements.¹⁰⁷

(continued on next page)



The Messaging Battle in North and West Africa *(continued from previous page)*

USAFRICOM MESSAGING

U.S. counterterrorism activities in North and West Africa include information operations that seek to exploit current and emergent communication technologies to counter VEO messaging.¹⁰⁸

USAFRICOM reported that it monitors, analyzes, and then responds to VEO messaging. USAFRICOM described its messaging strategy in North Africa as “systematic, deliberate engagements with consistent themes” across all its digital platforms to ensure the “VEO Truth” is resonating with its target audience. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it disseminates 7 to 10 “products” across multiple platforms for every 1 released by ISIS-Libya and AQIM.¹⁰⁹

Social media interaction, including number of posts and followers, is a metric that can be monitored and measured. However, it may not be an adequate measure of the effectiveness of VEO and USAFRICOM messaging.¹¹⁰

USAID MESSAGING

USAID reported that its Voices for Peace project seeks to promote counter-extremist messaging by helping radio stations create their own content. The \$25 million program, which runs through 2021, works with 53 priority and 25 monitoring partner radio stations in Cameroon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Chad.¹¹¹ Radio is a key media source in the Sahel, especially among the poorest and most marginalized communities, which lack access to televisions and internet. For those with access to other communication options, the project encourages the sharing of audio files and other content through WhatsApp or transfer between mobile devices through memory cards, Bluetooth, and other methods.¹¹²

In the Lake Chad Basin, as an example, Voices for Peace facilitates the sharing of public information, such as communal budgets. According to USAID, these programs bring attention to poor governance, ensuring that citizens can positively engage with government officials.¹¹³

A study of Voices for Peace, released during the quarter, suggests that this model may have positive effects, at least in terms of reach. Based on interviews of more than 14,000 people across 5 countries, the study reported that approximately 3 million people listen to Voices for Peace stations. This listening audience includes more than 60 percent of the population aged 15 to 35—a key target group for extremist messaging and recruitment. The study found that approximately 36 percent of the listeners have no education, which USAID said validated the practice of providing the programming in local languages, as it increases accessibility. Also, approximately 87 percent of listeners were familiar with Voices for Peace content.¹¹⁴

The study also revealed several obstacles to reaching the program’s goals. It found that most of the supported radio stations did not have a continuous supply of electricity, impacting the consistency of the programming. In addition, radio equipment was damaged and local officials declined to participate in programs due to fear of retaliation by armed groups.¹¹⁵

CAPACITY BUILDING

USAFRICOM provides support to partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad region through train, advise, and assist activities to build the capacity of partner militaries to counter VEOs.¹¹⁶ USAFRICOM halted its capacity-building efforts in Libya in April 2019 when it removed U.S. personnel from the country due to the civil conflict.¹¹⁷

U.S. Advise and Assist Activities in West Africa

The scope of U.S. capacity-building efforts in West Africa varies from country to country, depending on the level of government commitment and capabilities of local security forces. In Burkina Faso and Mali, two of the most unstable countries in the region, most advise and assist activities are conducted through civil-military elements.¹¹⁸

In Nigeria, a small contingent of U.S. personnel work with Nigerians in the Intelligence Fusion Center from which some advise and assist activities are conducted, according to USAFRICOM.¹¹⁹

In Niger, a U.S. Special Forces Operational Detachment provided advise and assist support during the quarter to the 51st Special Intervention Battalion in Diffa, Niger, a unit that conducts operations in the Lake Chad region. Additionally, a Special Forces Operational Detachment provided advise and assist support to the 11th Special Intervention Battalion, which is conducting operations in the tri-border region between Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. A third Special Forces Operational Detachment oversaw train, advise, and assist activities with a counterterrorism force in Arlit, Niger.¹²⁰

According to USAFRICOM, Special Operations Command Africa's engagements in Cameroon are limited to training with the Cameroonian Navy and the Rapid Intervention Battalion on maritime and riverine operations.¹²¹ Similarly, Special Operations Command Africa's engagements in Chad are limited to riverine operations.¹²²

In Benin, according to USAFRICOM, U.S. Army Africa provided relief troop movement of Benin Armed Forces to a security detail assignment at the Multinational Joint Task Force headquarters in Chad. Additionally, U.S. Army Africa conducted initial planning for counter-improvised explosive device training scheduled for February 2020.¹²³

USAFRICOM Provides Limited Support to G5 Sahel Joint Force

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it provides support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, an African-led and French-assisted force that consists of approximately 4,500 troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. USAFRICOM said that it deploys "limited and light U.S. footprint" of training and equipping activities conducted bilaterally with participating countries. U.S.-funded support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force includes training and equipping of battalions in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad. USAFRICOM did not provide specific amounts of funding used to support the G5 Sahel Joint Force, but did report that total pledges from France, European partners, and international donors are approximately \$490 million since 2014.¹²⁴

U.S. Government equipment deliveries to the G5 Sahel Joint Force started in the summer of 2019 and will continue through winter 2020, according to USAFRICOM. However, USAFRICOM did not provide details on the types of equipment and how many were allocated to the G5 Sahel Joint Force.¹²⁵

DoS Conducts Counterterrorism Training in North and West Africa

The DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security provided training to multiple African partner nations this quarter. In North Africa, this training included 15 courses for 324 participants in Tunisia. The courses included Maritime Interdiction, Port and Harbor Security Management, Mass Casualty Incidents, Airport Security Management, Crisis Response Team, Tactical Medicine, Explosives Incident Countermeasures, Firearms Instruction, and Instructor Development.¹²⁶

In West Africa, the DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security delivered training in two countries during the quarter. In Chad, 65 students participated in First Response to Terrorist Incidents and Digital Forensics courses. In Mali, 48 personnel participated in Crisis Response Team-Train the Trainer and Instructor Development courses.¹²⁷

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Violence and Displacement Surge in West Africa

According to the United Nations, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mali more than doubled from approximately 80,000 people in October 2018 to more than 199,000 people in October 2019. In Burkina Faso, the number of IDPs surged from approximately 40,000 in October 2018 to more than 486,000 in October 2019—a tenfold increase.¹²⁸

According to the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System Network, the number of IDPs is expected to continue to increase.¹²⁹

In Mali, according to USAID, insecurity has caused implementers to temporarily suspend programming and change the way programs are designed. USAID extended some programs to account for activity suspension and there are increased costs for security. FFP also coordinates with other humanitarian actors to ensure food assistance reaches those most in need. A future development program, which will be awarded this year, will also coordinate with other USAID programs in Mali.¹³⁰

The Famine Early Warning System Network reported that in Burkina Faso, IDPs who were unable to cultivate their fields or abandoned them due to the insecurity are dependent on host communities or humanitarian assistance, but 31 percent of IDPs live outside of areas more accessible to humanitarian organizations.¹³¹ Further worsening the situation, security incidents often delay the delivery of assistance where it is available.¹³²

USAID Concerned about Nigerian Government Interference in Humanitarian Operations

In the Lake Chad Basin—Cameroon’s Far North region, Chad’s Lac region, Niger’s Diffa region, and northeastern Nigeria’s Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states—most of the humanitarian need is in northeastern Nigeria, where approximately 2.9 million people currently require emergency assistance, including more than 264,000 IDPs residing in camps.¹³³

USAID reported to the USAID OIG that while USAID implementers are working to address the humanitarian needs in northeastern Nigeria, they continue to struggle with the Nigerian government's interference.¹³⁴ Specifically, the Nigerian government has taken uncoordinated actions against humanitarian organizations that are often reversed. For example, following a suspension of Mercy Corps and Action Against Hunger in September, the Nigerian government temporarily reversed the ban in late October. However, the suspension had already prevented nearly 400,000 people from receiving food assistance.¹³⁵

USAID reported that in December, the Nigerian government suspended 13 organizations in Borno state without explanation.¹³⁶ The organizations listed for suspension, described as local and international nongovernmental organizations in the letter, were unclear and included several sectors such as water, sanitation, and hygiene and psychosocial support, and government agencies such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.¹³⁷ USAID told the USAID OIG that it is working to determine which organizations have been suspended and why.¹³⁸

Additionally, USAID expressed concern to the USAID OIG about delays and criminalization of humanitarian assistance in Nigeria.¹³⁹ Specifically, a new law will establish a new Borno State Agency for the Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response, which will have the responsibility to provide oversight and manage the locations, beneficiaries, types of activities, and staff of humanitarian programs. Under the new law, the Borno State Agency has the authority to cancel an organization's registration or imprison and fine individuals.¹⁴⁰

According to USAID, one example of a specific concern with the new law is that when organizations register with the new agency—a duplication of federal and state registration requirements—organizations must also provide detailed work plans that will be compared to the State Stabilization and Development Plan and State Budget plan. As humanitarian assistance is based only on need, USAID said that it is concerned that the Nigerian government may pressure organizations to provide programs based on other criteria.¹⁴¹

USAID told the USAID OIG that Chad passed a similar law in late 2018, which has resulted in the decrease of donor funding to NGOs in Chad. The Chadian law includes similar requirements for government approvals on activities and staff as well as a 1 percent tax on all NGOs. The 1 percent tax is not considered an allowable cost by the U.S. Government due to the bilateral agreement with the Chadian government. The Chadian government has insisted that organizations receiving U.S. Government support pay the 1 percent tax as a "fee" instead. The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations has decided to stop funding NGOs in Chad in 2020 as a direct result of the tax, which reduces available resources for the humanitarian response.¹⁴²

Despite Challenges, USAID Reports Progress on Malnutrition

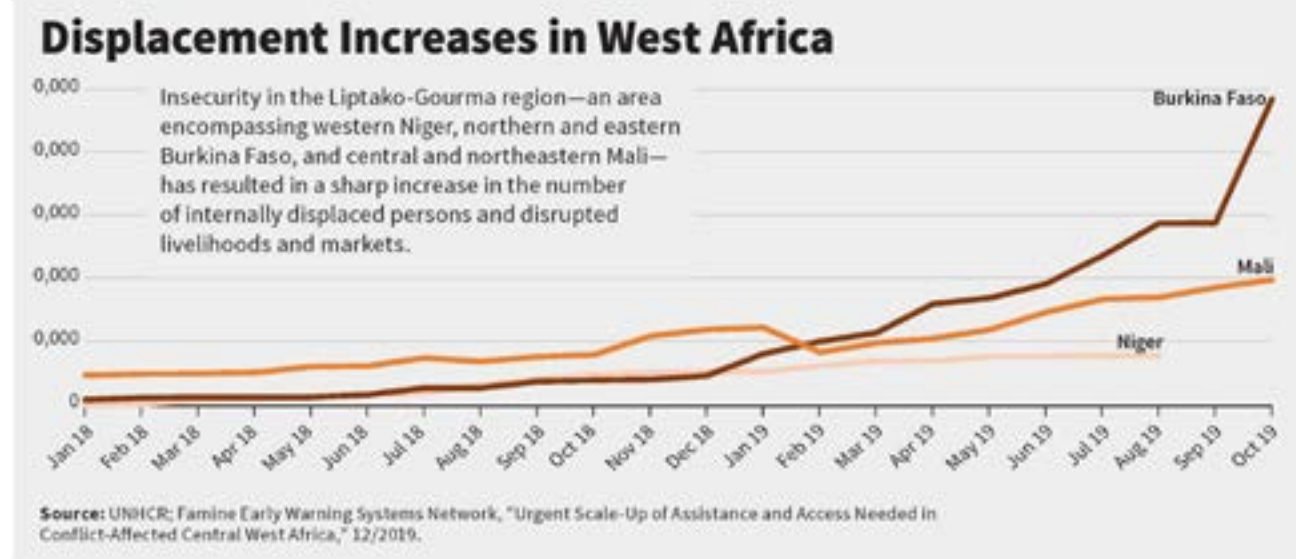
According to USAID, insecurity continues to be a driver of the need for assistance. Boko Haram's targeting of civilians has meant that farmers have not been able to access their lands to cultivate crops. In the less secure areas of Cameroon, Chad, and Borno State in Nigeria, some USAID implementers are now further limiting staff movement and relying on community volunteers to implement some basic activities while curtailing other services. To ensure adequate oversight, implementers need to adapt their monitoring systems, according to USAID.¹⁴³

Figure 4.

IDP in West Africa



The campsite in Pissila, Burkina Faso, where IDP families have increased due to armed conflicts, climate change, and widespread poverty. (World Food Programme/ Marwa Awad photo)



Weather events have also complicated humanitarian assistance delivery. USAID incorporates planning for annual flooding, which is typical through the Lake Chad Basin. For instance, USAID implementers forward deploy supplies and plan for alternative routes and other modes of transportation. USAID said that its implementers also seek to ensure adequate supplies for waterborne diseases, such as cholera, and increase shelter supplies to respond to damaged shelters and increased displacement.¹⁴⁴

USAID reported to the USAID OIG that there have been signs of progress in humanitarian programming. In FY2019 USAID provided \$14 million to nine organizations to support nutrition services in Nigeria. Among those served were nearly 40,000 children

suffering from severe acute malnutrition. As 30 to 50 percent of children under the age of five suffering from severe acute malnutrition die without treatment, according to the World Health Organization, this assistance may have saved as many as 20,000 lives.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, areas in northeast Nigeria would be one food security classification worse without humanitarian assistance. As the largest provider of humanitarian assistance in Nigeria, therefore, USAID is preventing a further deterioration of food security in northeast Nigeria, according to USAID.¹⁴⁶

USAID Disputes Claim that Counterterrorism Clause Negatively Impacts Assistance in Nigeria

USAID has consistently been the top donor in the Lake Chad Basin, providing approximately \$397.4 million in FY2019 in humanitarian funding, according to USAID.¹⁴⁷ U.S. law and UN sanctions prohibit support to terrorist organizations, and USAID tries to ensure that these groups do not inadvertently benefit from the crisis response in Nigeria. USAID takes this same approach in other countries. In mid-2017, USAID began including a special provision to its awards that states that implementers “must obtain the prior written approval of the USAID Agreement Office before providing any assistance...to individuals whom the [implementer] affirmatively knows to have been formerly affiliated with Boko Haram or [ISIS-West Africa], as combatants or non-combatants.”¹⁴⁸

In November, The New Humanitarian, a non-profit humanitarian news organization, published an article on the counterterrorism clause, which asserted that the clause hinders the work of implementers. The article states that the clause is counter to humanitarian principles of assistance being “neutral, impartial, and independent,” and asserts that it effectively requires implementers to vet beneficiaries.¹⁴⁹ USAID told the USAID OIG that the key phrase in the clause is that the implementer “affirmatively knows” the individuals have been formerly affiliated with the terrorist groups, as there is no vetting requirement if there is no such knowledge about beneficiaries’ affiliations. Even if an implementer has affirmative information in regarding a beneficiary’s affiliation, the implementer is required to provide that information to USAID, which will decide if providing assistance to those in question would be consistent with U.S. law. USAID reported that it does not view the clause as a blanket prohibition on providing assistance to formerly affiliated persons, but as a means of complying with U.S. law, including terrorist sanctions.¹⁵⁰

According to The New Humanitarian article, the clause has had a serious negative impact on the operations in Nigeria. Specifically, the article states that implementers have limited the areas where they operate to those areas “safe from legal risk,” and that United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Nigeria is so concerned with the implications of the clause that it has refused USAID funding.¹⁵¹ USAID told the USAID OIG that it disputes these arguments. According to USAID, in the two years that the clause has been included in agreements, implementers have not reported to USAID any significant impact from the clause. Over this period, USAID has received only two requests to provide humanitarian assistance to groups or individuals known to be formerly affiliated with Boko Haram or ISIS-West Africa, and both have been approved. Additionally, while the article indicates that UNICEF has rejected agreements that included the clause, it did sign an agreement with the clause in September 2019. The new funding will support water, sanitation, and hygiene, nutrition, and protection efforts by UNICEF in Nigeria.¹⁵²



50 KG PETIT MIL LOCAL
PROGRAMME ALIMENTAIRE MONDIAL



Date de La Campagne : 2020
Date De Péripiration : 2021
Fournisseur : ENAZIF
Origine : BURKINA FASO



Escalating armed conflicts, population displacement, hunger, and the impacts of climate change have affected millions across the Central Sahel. (WFP photo)

OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

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OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This section of the report provides information on Lead IG and partner agencies' oversight work related to the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations. The oversight work includes audits, inspections, evaluations, and Lead IG investigative activities from October 1 through December 31, 2019.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Pursuant to Section 8L of the Inspector General Act, the Lead IG develops and implements a joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each overseas contingency operation. This effort includes reviewing and analyzing completed oversight, management, and other relevant reports to identify systemic problems, trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform future oversight projects. The Lead IG agencies issue an annual joint strategic plan for each operation.

FY 2020 Joint Strategic Oversight Plan Activities

The Inspectors General for the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are required by the Inspector General Act to conduct comprehensive independent oversight of programs and operations in support of designated overseas contingency operations. The law also requires the development of joint strategic plans to conduct comprehensive oversight and quarterly reports on the status of each overseas contingency operation.

The Lead Inspector General Fiscal Year 2020 *Comprehensive Oversight Plan for Overseas Contingency Operations* classified appendix contains oversight plans for the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations. For these operations, the Inspectors General for the DoD, the DoS, and USAID coordinate oversight activities with the U.S. Army Audit Agency, the Naval Audit Service, and the U.S. Air Force Audit Agency.

The oversight plan, effective October 1, 2019, organizes oversight projects into three strategic oversight areas: 1) Military Operations and Security Cooperation; 2) Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development; and 3) Support to Mission.



FY 2020
Comprehensive
Oversight Plan
for Overseas
Contingency
Operations

Lead IG Strategic Oversight Areas

MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Military Operations and Security Cooperation focuses on determining the degree to which the contingency operation is accomplishing its security mission. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Counterterrorism operations
- Security assistance

GOVERNANCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT

Governance, Humanitarian Assistance, and Development focuses on some of the root causes of violent extremism. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Providing food, water, medical care, emergency relief, and shelter to people affected by crisis
- Assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and returning refugees
- Building or enhancing host-nation governance capacity
- Countering and reducing corruption, social inequality, and extremism

SUPPORT TO MISSION

Support to Mission focuses on U.S. administrative, logistical, and management efforts that enable military operations and non-military programs. Activities that fall under this strategic oversight area include:

- Managing government grants and contracts supporting the logistical needs of U.S. Government installations, building and repairing U.S. Government facilities and infrastructure, and maintaining U.S. Government equipment and property
- Improving the cost, schedule, and performance expectations for major acquisition programs
- Ensuring applicable contracts and grant programs achieve intended objectives and policy goals
- Managing financial resources
- Managing financial agreements with host nations
- Ensuring use of OCO funding complies with laws and regulations
- Administering U.S. Government programs
- Providing for the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Countering trafficking in persons
- Ensuring the security of U.S. personnel and property
- Mobilizing staff and resources

AUDIT, INSPECTION, AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY

This quarter, Lead IG and partner agencies completed 7 reports related to the East Africa, and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations. The reports were related to embassy inspections, financial accountability in humanitarian assistance programs throughout Africa, and the Air Force's management of medical equipment at Air Force bases in Niger.

Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Inspection of Embassy Nouakchott, Mauritania

ISP-I-20-04, November 20, 2019

The DoS OIG inspected the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The inspection covered the embassy's executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information technology management.

The Political-Economic section of the embassy issues foreign assistance grants to further U.S. Government objectives, including to counter violent extremism. The Political-Economic section's grants program was reviewed during the inspection and the DoS OIG found that the section managed its grants activities in accordance with DoS requirements. The DoS OIG found that grant files were largely complete. Where the DoS OIG noted that documents were missing, the information was available elsewhere and embassy staff members added those documents to the grant files during the inspection.

During the inspection, the DoS OIG identified and spotlighted a success: under the Deputy Chief of Mission's supervision, the embassy promoted a whole-of-government approach to foreign assistance programming through a Program and Advisory Council and a Program and Grants Office, maximizing the effect of foreign assistance resources, minimizing redundancies, and ensuring foreign assistance funding is expended in a manner consistent with the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy priorities, priorities which include strengthening security for Mauritians and Americans.

The DoS OIG made 26 recommendations to DoS entities, including 25 recommendations to Embassy Nouakchott, to address various shortcomings. Based on the responses received from Embassy Nouakchott and other DoS entities, the DoS OIG considered all 26 recommendations resolved at the time the inspection report was issued.

The DoS OIG also completed a classified report resulting from the same inspection. Details are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Inspection of Embassy N'Djamena, Chad

ISP-I-20-02, November 7, 2019

The DoS OIG inspected the programs and operations of the U.S. Embassy in N'Djamena, Chad. The inspection covered the embassy's executive direction, program and policy implementation, and resource management. Various sections within Embassy N'Djamena

issue foreign assistance grants to further U.S. Government objectives. The embassy's Political-Economic section issues grants to counter violent extremism. The Political-Economic section's grants program was reviewed during the inspection and the DoS OIG found that the section's management of foreign assistance grants did not meet DoS standards. Specifically, the DoS OIG found that the Political-Economic section's grant files lacked required documentation or signatures on key documents.

The DoS OIG made 25 recommendations to DoS entities, including 22 recommendations to Embassy N'Djamena, to address various shortcomings. Based on the responses received from Embassy N'Djamena and other DoS entities, the DoS OIG considered all 25 recommendations resolved at the time the inspection report was issued.

During the inspection, the DoS OIG identified and spotlighted a success: Embassy N'Djamena successfully launched an innovative program in 2019 to track and monitor Chadian elephant herds to protect them from poaching, diminishing poaching as a source of funding for extremists.

The DoS OIG also completed a classified report resulting from the same inspection. Details can be contained in the classified appendix to this report.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel Under Multiple Awards, January 1 to December 31, 2018

4-624-20-022-R, December 27, 2019

The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), headquartered in Burkina Faso, implemented multiple projects in countries that included Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Chad in 2018, the year covered by this organization-wide audit. The funding was intended to provide early warning of climatological and pest infestation; food production information and related training; improved analysis related to formation and implementation of agriculture policies, food security, natural resource management, and population policies and programs in the Sahel; and improved understanding by decision-makers in the Sahel and for donors of the potential impacts of policies on food security, the environment, and natural resource management.

CILSS contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$6.4 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm also found no material weaknesses in internal control and no instances of material noncompliance.

Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development in Multiple Countries Under Multiple Agreements, January 1 to December 31, 2017

4-624-20-020-R, December 9, 2019

West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) is an institution with the mission of sustainably improving agricultural productivity, competitiveness, and markets in West and Central Africa. CORAF implemented the West African Seed Program to increase the production and supply of quality improved certified seeds. Additionally, CORAF is implementing the Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education, and Development to build the capacity of CORAF; facilitate technology upscaling; and increase the production and availability of quality agriculture products.

CORAF contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined more than \$2.5 million in expenditures and concluded the fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects, program revenues and costs incurred under the award for the period audited. The audit firm did not report any material weaknesses in internal control nor any instances of material noncompliance.

Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Health Initiative for Safety and Stability in Africa Under Agreement AID- 620-A-14-00007, January 1 to December 31, 2018

4-620-20-019-R, November 6, 2019

Health Initiative for Safety and Stability in Africa (HIFASS) is a non-governmental organization in Nigeria that is implementing the Local Partners for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Project Region 3. The project aims to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS and improve the systems and structures of states, local government areas, and communities to ensure the provision of quality care, protection, and support services for orphans and vulnerable children, including in a state within the Lake Chad Basin.

HIFASS contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined more than \$1.4 million in expenditures and concluded that HIFASS' fund accountability statement presented fairly, in all material respects. The audit firm did not report any questioned costs, material weaknesses in internal controls, nor instances of material noncompliance.

Financial Closeout Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in Multiple Countries Under Integrated Partnership Assistance Agreement 623-AA-09-001-00-EA, Implementation Letters 10 and 11, January 1, 2017, to March 31, 2018

4-623-20-001-N, October 24, 2019

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is a regional integration grouping of 21 member states with the mission of achieving sustainable economic and social growth through regional integration. USAID's Integrated Partnership Assistance Agreement had the objective to further the goals and objectives of COMESA by specifically enhancing increased regional economic growth, integration, and stability in the COMESA region.

COMESA contracted with an independent audit firm to conduct an annual audit of its systems in line with USAID award requirements, and USAID OIG reviewed the report for conformance with professional standards.

Auditors examined approximately \$3.5 million in expenditures and found \$1,589 in ineligible questioned costs, 7 material weaknesses in internal control, and 6 instances of material noncompliance. The audit report contained one recommendation that USAID/East Africa verify that COMESA correct three of the instances of material noncompliance.

Final Report by Lead IG Partner Agency

AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY

Medical Equipment Management, 435th Air Expeditionary Wing, Ramstein Air Base, Germany

F2020-0002-REE000; October 3, 2019

The Air Force Audit Agency conducted an audit to determine whether Air Force personnel procured and managed medical equipment at Air Force bases in Niger in accordance with Air Force guidance.

Medical equipment items include instruments, machines, or apparatus used in the course of medical operations. Medical logistics personnel are responsible for acquiring and reporting medical equipment items in use and oversee custodial accountability. As of February 21, 2019, the 435th Air Expeditionary Wing had 169 medical equipment items valued at over \$1.4 million at Air Bases 101 and 201, located respectively in Niamey and Agadez, Niger. Auditors performed work at the 435th Air Expeditionary Wing, Ramstein Air Base Germany; Air Base 101, Niamey, Niger; and Air Base 201, Agadez, Niger, from January through April 2019.

The Air Force Audit Agency determined that Air Force personnel did not procure and manage medical equipment items in accordance with Air Force guidance. Specifically, 435th Air Expeditionary Wing personnel purchased 169 medical equipment items valued at over \$1.4 million without proper authorization and approval. Procuring medical equipment in accordance with Air Force guidance provides assurance the items are enterprise standardized and meet maintenance requirements. Further, equipment maintenance requirements are mandatory for the safety of patients and for preventing liability to the Air Force.

As a result, improper management of medical equipment places the Air Force at risk of jeopardizing patient safety, and opens the Air Force to opportunities of fraud, waste, and abuse.

The AFAA made several recommendations to the 435th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander to improve procuring and managing medical equipment items. Among the recommendations were for medical personnel to comply with Air Force guidance to procure and maintain medical equipment items and conduct pre-purchase evaluations; and for medical logistics personnel to adjust accountability records to account for items on hand but not on record, missing items, and to track items found at a different location than what was identified in the accountable records.

Management agreed with the recommendations.

Ongoing and Planned Oversight Activities

As of December 31, 2019, 14 projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations were ongoing, and 15 were planned. The ongoing projects are related to readiness, security, foreign assistance, and support to U.S. missions. Three of the planned projects contain project titles and/or objectives that are classified or marked for official use only. Those planned projects are included in the count, but details are not included here. Further details regarding those projects are contained in the classified appendix to this report.

Tables 6 through 7 list the title and objective for Lead IG and partner agencies' ongoing oversight projects.

Table 6.

Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of December 31, 2019

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Evaluation of Niger Air Base 201 Military Construction

To determine whether the U.S. Air Force effectively planned, designed, and implemented Air Base 201 to provide airfield and base support infrastructure.

Audit of Readiness of Mobile Medical Teams Supporting Contingency Operations in the U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Areas of Responsibility

To determine whether the Defense Health Agency and the military services are providing effective training to mobile medical teams prior to deploying to U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command areas of responsibility in order to improve trauma care.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Inspection of Bureau of Counterterrorism

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Bureau of Counterterrorism.

Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Training, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Training, Office of Antiterrorism Assistance.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL***Audit of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program***

To determine whether the Bureau of African Affairs is monitoring and coordinating activities of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership in accordance with Federal and DoS requirements.

Audit of Global Engagement Center's Execution of its Mandate to Coordinate Federal Government Efforts to Counter Disinformation and Propaganda Designed to Undermine the United States

To determine whether Federal assistance awards provided by the Global Engagement Center align with its statutory mandate and authority and whether the Global Engagement Center monitored those awards in accordance with Federal requirements, DoS policies and guidance, and award terms and conditions.

Inspection of Embassy Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso embassy.

Inspection of Embassy Yaoundé, Cameroon, and Branch Office

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Yaoundé, Cameroon, embassy and the Douala, Cameroon, branch office.

Audit of Grants and Cooperative Agreements in Somalia

To determine whether the DoS has assessed the risks associated with the implementation of foreign assistance awards in Somalia and has executed compensating controls to mitigate those risks.

Audit of Remote Mission Operations in Contingency Environments

To review the functions and operations of the Yemen Affairs Unit in Riyadh, the Venezuela Affairs Unit in Bogota, and Embassy Mogadishu, some support for which is provided from Nairobi.

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL***Audit of USAID's Initiative Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse***

To determine the extent to which USAID has taken action to prevent and detect sexual exploitation and abuse and to assess USAID's process for responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Audit of USAID's Workforce Transformation and Data Use

To determine how USAID accounts for its workforce; evaluate how USAID uses information to strategically plan and make workforce decisions; and assess how Human Resources Transformation Strategy activities support strategic workforce planning.

Audit of USAID's Self-Reliance Initiative

To determine to the extent to which USAID's self-reliance metrics are incorporated into its development programming strategy and the challenges USAID faces in implementing development activities as envisioned under the Journey to Self-Reliance Initiative.

Audit of USAID's Response to the Lake Chad Basin Complex Emergency

To determine the extent to which USAID has overseen its humanitarian assistance activities in the Lake Chad Basin; adopted measures to mitigate the risks associated with implementers using waivers from competition in procurement in the Lake Chad Basin; and adopted and verified that measures to prevent the diversion of aid from its intended beneficiaries are being followed in the Lake Chad Basin.

Table 7.

Planned Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agencies, as of December 31, 2019**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*****Audit of Military Information Support Operations in Support of U.S. Africa Command Operations***

To determine whether USAFRICOM personnel planned and executed Military Information Support Operations to degrade the enemy's relative combat power, reduce civilian interference, minimize collateral damage, and maximize the local population's support for operations.

Evaluation of U.S. Special Operations Command Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center

To determine whether U.S. Special Operations Command's Joint Military Information Support Operations Web Operations Center provides U.S. combatant commanders the increased capability to conduct Internet-based information operations globally to support the East Africa, and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations.

Evaluation of DoD Counter Threat Finance Activities in Support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. European Command Priorities

To determine whether U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. European Command have established the capabilities to conduct counter threat finance activities intended to deny, disrupt, or defeat and degrade adversaries' ability to use global financial networks.

Evaluation of Tactical Signals Intelligence Processing

To determine whether Theater Support Activity's tactical signals intelligence processing is sufficient to satisfy priority intelligence requirements to support the North and West Africa counterterrorism operation.

Audit of Oversight of the Base Operations Support Services Contract for U.S. Africa Command Bases

To determine whether Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic is overseeing the U.S. Africa Command Base Operations Support Services contract to ensure the contractor is providing proper support services.

Audit of the African Surface Distribution Services Contract

To determine whether the DoD managed the African Surface Distribution Services contract to ensure ground distribution and transportation performance objectives were met.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL***Audit of Construction of New Office Annexes at Embassies Amman and Nairobi***

To evaluate the construction of new office buildings at the Amman and Nairobi embassies.

Audit of DoS Management of Awards to International Organizations

To determine whether the DoS monitored and coordinated awards to international organizations in accordance with Federal and DoS regulations.

Audit of DoS Implementation of National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

To determine the extent to which the DoS implemented the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

Inspection of Embassy Abuja, Nigeria

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Abuja, Nigeria embassy and Lagos, Nigeria, consulate.

Inspection of the Libya External Office

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Libya External Office in Tunis.

Inspection of Embassy Cotonou, Benin

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Cotonou, Benin, embassy.

INVESTIGATIONS AND HOTLINE ACTIVITY

The Lead IG agencies and partners continue to coordinate their investigative efforts through the Fraud and Corruption Investigative Working Group, which consists of representatives from the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (the DoD OIG's criminal investigative division), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the Army Criminal Investigative Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. During the quarter, these organizations coordinated on 14 open investigations related to the East Africa counterterrorism operation and 10 open investigations related to the North and West Africa counterterrorism operation. The open investigations involve procurement and grant fraud, corruption, computer intrusion, theft, and human trafficking.

Each Lead IG agency maintains its own hotline to receive complaints and contacts specific to its agency. The hotlines provide a confidential, reliable means for individuals to report violations of law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; gross waste of funds; or abuse of authority. The DoD OIG has an investigator to coordinate the hotline contacts among the Lead IG agencies and others, as appropriate. During the quarter, the DoD OIG investigator referred two cases to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations.





Schoolchildren gather during a dedication ceremony of their new classroom in the village of Tadress, Niger. U.S. Air Force Airmen constructed the new classroom for the students. (U.S. Air Force photo)

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

Classified Appendix to this Report

This unclassified report includes a classified appendix that provides additional information on the East Africa counterterrorism operation and the North and West Africa counterterrorism operation. The appendix will be delivered to appropriate government agencies and congressional committees.

APPENDIX B

Methodology for Preparing this Lead IG Quarterly Report

This report complies with sections 2, 4, and 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, which requires that the designated Lead Inspector General (IG) provide a quarterly report, available to the public, on an overseas contingency operation. The Department of Defense (DoD) IG is designated as the Lead IG for the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) East Africa counterterrorism operation, and the North and West Africa counterterrorism operation. The Department of State (DoS) IG is the Associate Lead IG for the operation.

This report contains information from the three Lead IG agencies—DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG), DoS OIG, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) OIG—as well as from partner oversight agencies. This report covers the period from October 1 through December 31, 2019.

To fulfill its congressional mandate to produce a quarterly report on these two counterterrorism operations, the Lead IG gathers data and information from Federal agencies and open sources. The sources of information contained in this report are listed in endnotes or notes to tables and figures. Except in the case of formal audits, inspections, or evaluations referenced in this report, the Lead IG agencies have not verified or audited the information collected through open source research or requests for information to Federal agencies.

INFORMATION COLLECTION

Each quarter, the Lead IG gathers information from Federal agencies about their programs and operations related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The Lead IG agencies use the information provided by their respective agencies for quarterly planning and oversight planning.

Various DoD, DoS, and USAID offices participated in information collection for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation this quarter.

OPEN-SOURCE RESEARCH

This report also draws on the most current, publicly available information from reputable sources. Sources used in this report include the following:

- Congressional testimony
- Press conferences, official U.S. Government briefings
- United Nations reports
- Reports issued by nongovernmental organizations and think tanks
- Media reports

Materials collected through open-source research provide information to describe the status of the operation and help the Lead IG agencies assess information provided in their agency information collection process.

REPORT PRODUCTION

The DoD OIG, as the Lead IG, is responsible for assembling and producing this report. The DoD OIG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG draft the sections of the report related to the activities of their agencies. The Lead IG agencies then provide those offices that provided information with opportunities to verify and comment on the content of the report.

Each OIG coordinates the review process with its own agency. During the first review, the Lead IG agencies ask their agencies to correct inaccuracies and provide additional documentation. The Lead IG agencies incorporate agency comments, where appropriate, and sends the report back to the agencies for a second review. Each Lead IG agency participates in reviewing and editing the entire quarterly report.

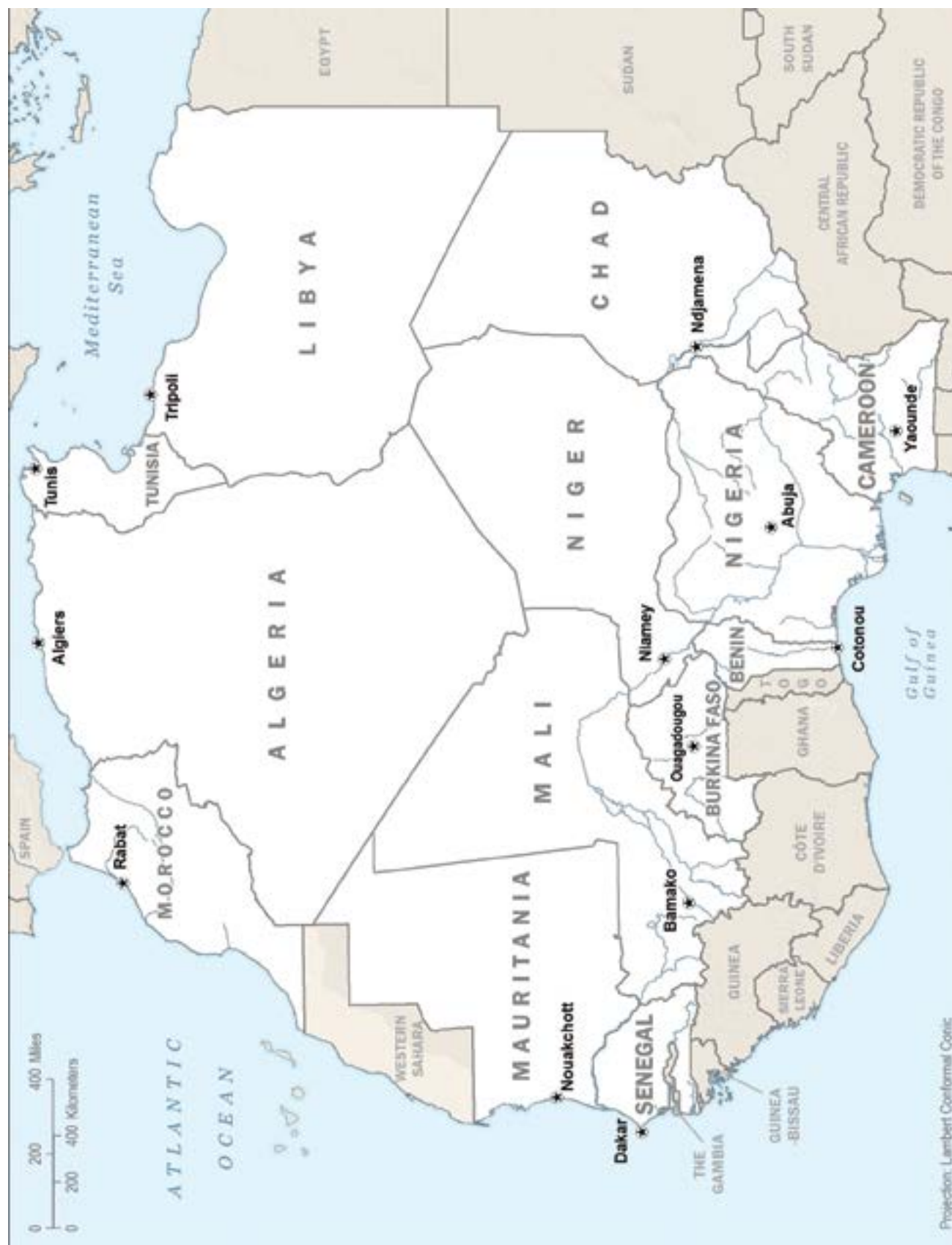
ACRONYMS

Acronym	
AFAA	Air Force Audit Agency
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQIM	al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASWJ	Anlu Sunna Wahl Jama
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FY	Fiscal Year
HIFASS	Health Initiative for Safety and Stability in Africa
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IG	Inspector General

Acronym	
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance
GNA	Government of National Accord
JNIM	Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal-Muslimin
KIA	killed in action
LNA	Libyan National Army
LOE	Line of Effort
MC2	Mission Civil-Military Coordinators
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operation
OIG	Office of Inspector General
SNA	Somali National Army
SSF	Somali Security Forces
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VBIED	Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
VEO	violent extremist organization







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