



# **EAST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION**

## **NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATION**

**LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS**



**JANUARY 1, 2020–MARCH 31, 2020**

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

A 2013 amendment to the Inspector General Act established the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) framework for oversight of overseas contingency operations. This legislation 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 Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) designated the DoD Inspector General (IG) 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. The USAID IG 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 the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation.

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

- Develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight of the operation.
- Ensure independent and effective oversight of programs and operations of the Federal Government in support of the operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and evaluations.
- Report quarterly to Congress and the public on the operation 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 the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation 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 normally includes an appendix containing classified information about the East Africa, and North and West Africa counterterrorism operations. Due to the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Lead IG did not prepare a classified appendix this quarter.

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#### On the Cover

A Burkinabe soldier simulates conducting a patrol during Flintlock 2020 in Thies, Senegal (U.S. Army photo); the World Food Programme (WFP) takes precautionary measures to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 by taking the temperature of civilians at a food distribution point (WFP/Benoit Lognone photo); a WFP staffer inspects the desert locusts in South Sudan (WFP/Peter Louis photo).

## FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit this Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report to the U.S. Congress on the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. This report discharges our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

The purpose of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation is to degrade al Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations, in designated regions of Africa.

This quarterly report describes the activities of the U.S. Government in support of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, as well as the work of the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote the U.S. Government's policy goals in Africa, during the period January 1 through March 31, 2020.

This report also discusses the planned, ongoing, and completed oversight work conducted by the Lead IG agencies and our partner oversight agencies during the quarter. This quarter, the Lead IG agencies issued one evaluation report related to the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation.

This report usually includes an appendix containing classified information about these operations. This quarter, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related staffing challenges, the Lead IG did not produce the classified appendix.

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



**Sean W. O'Donnell**  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen J. Akard".

**Stephen J. Akard**  
Acting 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



**Sean W. O'Donnell**

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 (VEO), in designated regions of Africa.

Across the continent, VEO activity appears to be outpacing U.S., European, and African efforts to counter it. On January 5, al Shabaab militants attacked Camp Simba, a Kenyan base at Manda Bay, Kenya. One U.S. Soldier and two DoD contractors died in the attack. In February, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), told Congress, “We were not as prepared there in Manda Bay as we needed to be.” During the quarter, USAFRICOM increased airstrikes in Somalia, and African Union and Somali forces retook a southern town from al Shabaab. Despite these efforts, USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab “remains adaptive, resilient, and capable of attacking Western and partner interests in Somalia and East Africa.”

In West Africa, VEO attacks continued to increase. USAFRICOM provides limited operational support and non-lethal assistance to African, French, and other allied forces in West Africa. During the quarter, France, which leads international counterterrorism efforts in the region, announced that it would send 600 additional troops to West Africa.

In North Africa, VEOs did not launch any attacks in Libya during the quarter, but an unidentified group attacked a checkpoint outside of the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia. In Libya, fighting in the year-long civil war intensified following a significant increase of foreign mercenary forces. As many as 2,500 fighters associated with the Wagner Group, a Russian paramilitary company, and as many as 3,800 Syrian fighters were in Libya during the quarter. Diplomatic efforts to end the civil war, including the Berlin Conference in January, continued but did not result in a political solution to the conflict.

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was an emerging challenge to U.S. Government counterterrorism and counter-VEO efforts during the quarter. USAFRICOM scaled back its advising to African forces as a result of the pandemic, and many DoS and USAID staff returned to the United States under a DoS authorized departure order. USAID reported that these staff reductions and diversions of USAID stockpiles of personal protective equipment challenged the agency’s pandemic response in Africa. The DoD, DoS, and USAID received emergency appropriations to respond to the pandemic; the Lead IG agencies will oversee the execution of these funds.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated protective measures will likely be felt across the continent, including in East Africa, where a locust infestation continues to destroy agricultural crops, and West Africa, where conflict often prevents humanitarian assistance from reaching those in need. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it did not observe any changes in VEO activity in East or West Africa as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic during the quarter. However, as local forces reduce operations to prevent the spread of the virus, VEOs could exploit the COVID-19 pandemic to recruit fighters and prepare attacks.

The Lead IG agencies intended to publish this report in mid-May per our usual quarterly schedule. However, during the final review, the DoD declared that some of the information in this report was not publicly releasable due to classification and operational security concerns. The Lead IG agencies delayed the public release of this report and asked the DoD to review the classification of the report's contents. Based on the results of that review, we made edits to this report before releasing it publicly.

With my appointment as Acting Inspector General of the Department of Defense on April 6, 2020, I look forward to working with my Lead IG colleagues to continue to report on and provide oversight of these counterterrorism operations and related U.S. Government activities, as required by the IG Act. We thank the dedicated employees of each Lead IG agency who conduct this important work, both in the United States and abroad.



**Sean W. O'Donnell**  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents information related to two counterterrorism operations in the United States 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 violent extremist organizations (VEO), in designated regions of Africa.

The Secretary of Defense designated the two operations as overseas contingency operations in February 2018. At the time of 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 use overseas contingency operation funds.

## OVERVIEW

As the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) pandemic spread to Africa, USAFRICOM, the Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) adjusted their operations to help prevent the spread of the virus. USAFRICOM implemented the Department of Defense’s (DoD) “stop movement” directive and force health protection procedures.<sup>1</sup> USAFRICOM told the DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG) that this order, along with host nation travel restrictions, has complicated activities in Africa.<sup>2</sup> USAFRICOM reported that as of the end of March, it had paused most DoD security cooperation activities across the continent.<sup>3</sup>

In March, the DoS issued authorized departure guidance that allowed embassy staff to return to the United States if they are determined to be at high risk of a poor outcome from COVID-19, or who requested departure for related reasons.<sup>4</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it did not observe any changes in VEO activity in East Africa or West Africa as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic during the quarter. These groups, USAFRICOM said, have maintained a similar pace of attacks and media publication.<sup>5</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic came as the DoD continued to review the posture of U.S. forces in Africa.<sup>6</sup> The DoD is reviewing all combatant commands to align DoD resources with the objectives of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which shifted the focus of U.S. forces from counterterrorism to threats posed by Russia and China.<sup>7</sup>



**A Somali woman adheres to hygiene awareness rules in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. (WFP/ Ismail Taxta)**



## EAST AFRICA

On January 5, al Shabaab militants attacked an airfield located on Camp Simba, a Kenyan Defense Force base at Manda Bay.<sup>8</sup> A U.S. Soldier and two DoD contractors died in the attack.<sup>9</sup> USAFRICOM also reported that al Shabaab increased its attacks in the areas along the Somalia-Kenya border during the quarter.<sup>10</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab “remains adaptive, resilient, and capable of attacking U.S. partner interests in Somalia and East Africa.”<sup>11</sup> During the quarter, al Shabaab maintained its capability to conduct operations, using insurgent-style tactics, including harassing and hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, and improvised explosive device (IED) operations against African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali National Army (SNA) forces throughout southern Somalia.<sup>12</sup>



**U.S. Soldiers rearrange sandbags on a guard tower at Manda Bay Airfield, Kenya. (U.S. Army photo)**

USAFRICOM reported that it conducted 33 airstrikes in Somalia during the quarter, an increase from 9 airstrikes in the previous quarter.<sup>13</sup> USAFRICOM said that one airstrike killed the al Shabaab leader who organized the Manda Bay attack.<sup>14</sup> USAFRICOM, in its first-ever report on allegations of civilian casualties, said that it investigated allegations of civilian casualties related to 10 airstrikes during the quarter, 4 of which it determined to be unsubstantiated. The remaining six allegations remained under investigation.<sup>15</sup>

USAFRICOM and the DoS provide support to Somali and AMISOM forces.<sup>16</sup> USAFRICOM reported that the SNA and AMISOM, as part of Operation Badbaado, launched a successful operation to liberate Janaale, a stronghold of al Shabaab about 75 kilometers southwest of Mogadishu.<sup>17</sup> USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that this was the most significant operation of the quarter in Somalia.<sup>18</sup>

During the quarter, AMISOM withdrew 1,000 troops from Somalia in accordance with a UN plan to remove all AMISOM forces from the country by 2021 and transfer security responsibility to the Somali government.<sup>19</sup> In the meantime, Somali security forces continue to rely on international support to fill capability gaps. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that the SNA struggles with administrative and logistics capabilities.<sup>20</sup>

In early February, the DoS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) announced that they had partnered to assist Kenya in creating the first Joint Terrorism Task Force located outside the United States.<sup>21</sup> Once established, the task force will conduct investigations of terrorism matters in accordance with international law enforcement and human rights standards.<sup>22</sup>

During the quarter, the Somali government passed an electoral law to prepare for national parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled to take place late 2020-early 2021.<sup>23</sup> The U.S. Government and others in the international community have consistently communicated the expectation that the elections be credible, timely, and inclusive.<sup>24</sup>

## NORTH AFRICA

There were no reported VEO-related attacks this quarter in Libya, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>25</sup> However, in Tunisia, a suicide bomber targeted a security checkpoint outside the U.S. Embassy in Tunis on March 6. The blast killed a Tunisian police officer and injured five other people. No U.S. personnel were injured.<sup>26</sup> No group claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>27</sup>

This quarter in Libya, fighting in the civil war between the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) intensified following a significant increase of foreign mercenary forces supporting both sides.<sup>28</sup> USAFRICOM stated that 3,500 to 3,800 Syrian fighters, paid by the Turkish government and given a promise of Turkish citizenship, joined forces supporting the GNA.<sup>29</sup> The Wagner Group, a Russian private military company supported by the Russian Ministry of Defense, has sent an estimated 800 to 2,500 fighters to Libya to support the LNA.<sup>30</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it had observed no credible reports of VEO-affiliated militants among the mercenary forces from Syria, and that fighters were likely in Libya for personal or financial reasons.<sup>31</sup>

Efforts to negotiate a political resolution to the Libyan civil war continued during the quarter, including the Berlin Conference in January, attended by leaders of the GNA and the LNA.<sup>32</sup> According to the conference communiqué, participants agreed to sustain and monitor a cease fire among the two warring parties in Libya, enforce the UN-sanctioned arms embargo, and return to the Libyan-led and -owned political process under the auspices of the UN Support Mission in Libya.<sup>33</sup>

## WEST AFRICA

USAFRICOM provides limited operational support and non-lethal assistance to African partners, France, and other allies in West Africa.<sup>34</sup> During the quarter, several partner nations in the Sahel and Lake Chad region took steps to address uncontained violence and rising terrorist threats, the United Nations reported.<sup>35</sup> In Mali, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta extended an offer of peace negotiations to al Qaeda leadership, which demanded that foreign troops leave Mali before any talks could start.<sup>36</sup> In Burkina Faso, the government enacted legislation to begin a military-led program of recruiting civilian volunteers to combat terrorism.<sup>37</sup> The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessed that the Burkinabe government's self-defense program risks increasing ethnic violence in that country.<sup>38</sup>

In Nigeria, USAFRICOM reported that several state governors created regional auxiliary groups this quarter in response to the Nigerian government's struggles to contain widespread crime. USAFRICOM assessed that these new state-sponsored auxiliary groups will likely be the "litmus test" for an approach to improve security in the rest of Nigeria.<sup>39</sup>

The measures taken by West African governments took place shortly after a summit in mid-January between the heads of state of the G5 Sahel Force (which comprises Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) and French President Emmanuel Macron.<sup>40</sup> The French government, which leads international counterterrorism efforts in the region, announced that it would deploy 600 additional French troops to the tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.<sup>41</sup>

In March, the DoS appointed a U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region of Africa who will be responsible for coordinating U.S. engagement with international and regional partners, including the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to address the threat posed by VEOs in the region.<sup>42</sup>

According to USAID, the ongoing insecurity in West Africa limits humanitarian assistance efforts. USAID reported that in Cameroon, the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives will end programming in May due, in part, to the U.S. Government's shifting priorities in Africa and the focus of the Cameroonian government on a separatist movement in its northern regions.<sup>43</sup> USAID reported that in Nigeria, road insecurity caused by VEO attacks impeded humanitarian assistance to a population of 7.9 million in three northeastern states.<sup>44</sup>

## Lead IG Oversight Activities

This quarter, the DoD OIG completed one report related to USAFRICOM oversight of the construction of Air Base 201 in Niger. As of March 31, 2020, 22 projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations were ongoing, and 12 were planned.

During the quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in an agreement for a contractor to restore about \$229,970 in back pay owed to 31 subcontractor employees following a trafficking in persons investigation at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. During the quarter, the investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies coordinated on 17 open investigations related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, and 2 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; and 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 investigator referred one case related to the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation.







At food distribution points, the WFP has implemented precautionary measures to prevent the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19. (WFP/Benoit Lognone photo)

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Staff from the COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit demonstrate the facility's medical and equipment capabilities at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. (U.S. Air Force photo)

## THE QUARTER IN REVIEW

### OVERVIEW

Violent extremist organizations (VEO) in Africa remain a persistent and growing threat to U.S. and allied interests on the continent. General Stephen Townsend, Commander of United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), told Congress in January that VEOs “are expanding in Africa at a rapid pace, due in large part to weak governance and disenfranchised populations, while employing violence to exacerbate despair and hopelessness.”<sup>1</sup> Most VEOs in Africa, General Townsend stated, “seek to strike at the [United States] in the region, and some aspire to strike the U.S. Homeland.”<sup>2</sup>

Across the continent, VEO activity appears to be outpacing U.S., European, and African efforts to counter it. In East Africa, where USAFRICOM conducts airstrikes and supports Somali and African Union counterterrorism operations against al Shabaab, the militant group has expanded the scope of its attacks. On January 5, al Shabaab militants attacked

Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya, killing one U.S. Soldier and two DoD contractors.<sup>3</sup> (See p. 20) In West Africa, attacks on civilians and partner forces increased during the quarter.<sup>4</sup> (See p. 39) In Libya, where a civil conflict resulted in the repositioning of U.S. forces outside of Libya last year, VEO violence has diminished, but VEO networks in the broader North Africa region remain active.<sup>5</sup> (See p. 45)

Due to the complexity of the VEO threat in Africa and the limited number of U.S. forces there, USAFRICOM relies on African and European partner forces, which have uneven levels of capability, to execute many counterterrorism missions. Natural disasters—particularly drought and flooding—and insecurity undermine the ability of the DoS and USAID to implement counter-VEO programming and provide humanitarian assistance. This quarter, the arrival of coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) added to the difficulties the U.S. Government faces in Africa. The pandemic, which has already led to a reduced U.S. staff presence at embassies and canceled military engagements, will likely place pressure on African governments and societies, potentially leading to further growth of VEOs.<sup>6</sup> (See p. 12)

**Table 1.**

**Counterterrorism and the USAFRICOM Mission**

USAFRICOM structures its mission in Africa according to six lines of effort (LOE), three of which relate directly to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations.

Line of Effort		USAFRICOM Activities
<b>LOE 1</b>	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.
<b>LOE 2</b>	Enhance Partner Capability	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.
<b>LOE 3</b>	Develop Security in Somalia	The approach centers on partnered operations to degrade VEOs and security cooperation to develop the Somali Security Forces to a point where they are capable of their own counter VEO operations and of Securing the Somali Government and its people.
<b>LOE 4</b>	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.
<b>LOE 5</b>	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.
<b>LOE 6</b>	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, 2/17/2019; USAFRICOM, vetting comments, 5/1/2020 and 5/4/2020.

## U.S. Government Agencies Reduce Activity in Africa Due to COVID-19

The World Health Organization reported that there were more than 4,000 recorded cases of COVID-19 in Africa at the end of the quarter, presenting an unprecedented challenge to U.S. counterterrorism and counter-VEO efforts in Africa.<sup>7</sup> While the number of reported cases in Africa during the quarter was fewer than the number of cases in the United States, Asia, or Western Europe, the United Nations warned that cases of COVID-19 will likely increase across the continent.<sup>8</sup>

### USAFRICOM CANCELS EXERCISES AND ADVISORY EFFORTS

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Secretary of Defense announced, and USAFRICOM implemented, a “stop movement” directive and force health protection procedures.<sup>9</sup> USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that this order, along with host nation travel restrictions, has complicated activities in Africa. Most security cooperation activities across the continent have been paused. USAFRICOM added that reduced staffing at U.S. embassies has resulted in less frequent contact with the leaders of partner militaries.<sup>10</sup>

USAFRICOM canceled two multinational exercises that were scheduled to take place during the quarter. In March, USAFRICOM announced that it had canceled Exercise African Lion 2020, but noted that some academic sessions associated with the exercise did take place.<sup>11</sup> Hosted by Morocco, Tunisia, and Senegal, African Lion is a large-scale, USAFRICOM-led military exercise designed to enhance the interoperability of U.S. partner forces, including support for counterterrorism and counter-VEO operations. This year’s exercise was scheduled to take place from March 23–April 3 and would have involved more than 5,000 personnel from 16 countries.<sup>12</sup>

USAFRICOM also canceled Exercise Phoenix Express, scheduled for April 2020. The exercise seeks to improve maritime domain awareness, information-sharing practices, and operational capabilities of North African countries. The exercise was scheduled to occur in the participating African nations’ territorial waters of the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>13</sup>

### THE DOS ISSUES AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE FOR EMBASSY STAFF

On March 14, the DoS issued authorized departure guidance that allows embassy staff to return to the United States if they are determined to be at high risk of a poor outcome from COVID-19, or they request departure for related reasons. The guidance applies to U.S. Government employees under Chief of Mission authority at diplomatic or consular posts worldwide, including DoS and USAID staff.<sup>14</sup>

According to information from a survey of USAID missions abroad in early April, only 7 percent of U.S. direct hire and U.S. and third-country national personal services contractors were working at their regular operating location, 61 percent were teleworking in country, and 32 percent had departed the country. As a result, almost half of USAID missions reported severe limitations on their ability to monitor activities. Similarly, 80 percent of USAID missions reported that implementers had ceased at least some operations in country, and 20 percent indicated that the host government’s ability to serve as a development partner was severely curtailed.<sup>15</sup>



**Congress appropriated more than \$12 billion in emergency funds to the DoD, DoS, and USAID to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## **THE DOD, DOS, AND USAID RECEIVE FUNDING TO RESPOND TO COVID-19**

In March, Congress appropriated more than \$12 billion in emergency funds to the DoD, the DoS, and USAID to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The DoD received \$10.5 billion, though the department has not yet announced how any of these funds will be used to support overseas contingency operations and the counterterrorism operations in Africa.<sup>16</sup>

The DoS and USAID received more than \$2 billion, the majority of which is intended to finance international assistance efforts, including programs in Africa. The appropriation included \$350 million to the DoS for assistance to refugee populations abroad. USAID received \$435 million for health programs, \$558 million for international disaster assistance, and \$250 million to address related economic, security, and stabilization requirements.<sup>17</sup>

USAID reported that it established several internal structures earlier this year to coordinate and advance its COVID-19 response.<sup>18</sup> USAID reported that in March, USAID and the DoS developed a joint strategy to guide their pandemic response.<sup>19</sup> The strategy focuses COVID-19-related assistance on four areas: 1) protecting American citizens and facilitating the continued work of the U.S. Government overseas; 2) supporting local health systems to address the pandemic; 3) responding to potential humanitarian consequences of the pandemic; and 4) addressing second-order economic, civilian security, stabilization, and governance impacts of the pandemic.<sup>20</sup>

USAID reported that during the quarter, it increased its support to African nations in response to the pandemic. For example, USAID reported that it supported awareness campaigns in Nigeria about COVID-19, including door-to-door outreach, collaboration with radio stations, and messages on billboards.<sup>21</sup> USAID said that implementers integrated social distancing protocols in activities, expanded telework and remote management, and increased attention to water, sanitation, hygiene, and health needs.<sup>22</sup>

USAID reported that, in addition to staffing reductions overseas, response efforts have been constrained by its ability to procure and distribute response commodities. USAID maintains a stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE), which it began distributing to foreign governments impacted by the pandemic in February and March.<sup>23</sup> USAID reported that the White House later placed a hold on USAID's procurement and distribution of PPE, directing it to be sent to the United States instead.<sup>24</sup> In March, USAID transferred more than 47 metric tons of USAID stocks of PPE, respirators, sanitizer, and soap to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in response to a FEMA request.<sup>25</sup> As of mid-April, the hold on USAID procurement and distribution of PPE remained in place.<sup>26</sup>

Congress appropriated \$20 million to the DoD OIG and \$1 million to the USAID OIG to provide oversight of pandemic-related funds that their agencies received.<sup>27</sup> The DoS OIG will conduct pandemic-related oversight using its regular operating budget.

## EXTREMIST GROUPS COULD EXPLOIT COVID-19

African nations, many of which have weak health systems, densely populated residential areas, and persistent conflict and displacement, will likely not be able to address adequately the expected increase in COVID-19 infections.<sup>28</sup> Conflict, in particular, can disrupt access to food, water, and health services.<sup>29</sup> In some parts of the continent, VEOs may restrict civilian access to information about the pandemic.<sup>30</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it did not observe any changes in VEO activity in East Africa or West Africa as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic during the quarter. Both ISIS and al Qaeda affiliates encouraged their members to maintain pressure during the pandemic. These groups, USAFRICOM said, have maintained a similar pace of attacks and media publication.<sup>31</sup>

The United Nations called for a global cessation of acts of violence and terrorism, including in Somalia and Libya, so that all resources and support can be channeled to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>32</sup> VEOs appeared to ignore the ceasefire call. Furthermore, analysts warned that VEOs could exploit the COVID-19 pandemic to recruit fighters and prepare attacks. Local militaries may reduce operations or redirect forces to prevent the spread of the virus, as was the case in Nigeria, according to a media source.<sup>33</sup> Public discontent and economic stagnation resulting from stay-home orders could reduce trust in fragile governments and increase opportunities for VEO recruitment.<sup>34</sup>

## SFAB Begins Deployment to Africa

This quarter, the Secretary of Defense authorized the deployment of elements of a Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) to various locations in Africa.<sup>35</sup> The U.S. Army reported that some elements of the SFAB began training partner forces in West Africa during the quarter.<sup>36</sup> According to DoD officials cited in a media report, some SFAB elements will participate in a training mission with the Djiboutian military.<sup>37</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that the SFAB's movement was halted due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that upon the lifting of those restrictions, the SFAB will deploy in accordance with guidance and directives of the Secretary of Defense.<sup>38</sup>

SFABs specialize in train, advise, and assist missions intended to strengthen partners' abilities to provide security.<sup>39</sup> The Army established the first of six SFABs in 2018. Since then, SFAB personnel have deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

The DoD announced that approximately 200 soldiers from the 1st SFAB will replace soldiers from the 101st Airborne assigned to Africa.<sup>41</sup> The DoD said that the deployment of the SFAB will allow elements from the 101st Airborne Division to return to garrison at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, allowing them to train and prepare for high-intensity conflict operations.<sup>42</sup>

Congress raised concerns about the safety of SFAB personnel, available resources, and infrastructure required to support its mission this quarter after 1st SFAB commander



**Members of the Security Force Assistance Brigade discuss the importance of conducting preventive maintenance with Senegalese soldiers. (U.S. Army photo)**

Brigadier General Scott Jackson told the Associated Press that the Africa theater lacks the network of bases, supply chains, airlift, and armored vehicles available in Afghanistan, where the 1st SFAB was originally deployed.<sup>43</sup>

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley told Congress on February 26, “The infrastructure for General Jackson and his guys is going to be very austere...They knew that going into it. They volunteered for that and they are specifically prepared to train, advise, assist, coach, teach, mentor and accompany indigenous forces.”<sup>44</sup> The DoD noted that the deployment of the SFAB to Africa will counter China and Russia on the continent.<sup>45</sup>

### **DoD Africa Posture Review Ongoing**

During the quarter, the DoD continued to review the posture of U.S. forces in Africa.<sup>46</sup> The DoD is reviewing all combatant commands to align DoD resources with the objectives of the 2018 National Defense Strategy.<sup>47</sup> The strategy shifted the focus of U.S. forces from counterterrorism to threats posed by Russia and China (what is often referred to as “great power competition” or “global power competition”).<sup>48</sup>



General Stephen Townsend, Commander of USAFRICOM, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 30. (DoD video stills)

**“[USAFRICOM is] adequately resourced given the tasks we are given to do today.”**

General Stephen Townsend

There were approximately 5,100 U.S. forces, and approximately 1,000 DoD civilians and contractors, deployed to Africa during the quarter.<sup>49</sup> The majority of these DoD personnel are in Djibouti, where Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) is based, with the remainder spread across the continent.<sup>50</sup>

In his January testimony, General Townsend said that USAFRICOM is “adequately resourced given the tasks we are given to do today.”<sup>51</sup> However, General Townsend reported that, like other combatant commands, USAFRICOM does not have enough intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) resources to meet requirements; General Townsend said that about 25 percent of USAFRICOM ISR needs have been met.<sup>52</sup>

USAFRICOM requirements in the region may decrease in the future, General Townsend said.<sup>53</sup> The U.S. Government has been asking European governments to assume a greater share of the counter-VEO activities in West Africa. General Townsend said that European governments have many capabilities, such as refueling and airlift, which the U.S. military currently provides in Africa.<sup>54</sup>

The DoS reported that the leadership of its Bureau of Political-Military Affairs engaged the DoD during the quarter about DoS equities related to the posture review.<sup>55</sup> The Bureau also participated in discussions about burden-sharing in Africa, such as ensuring that allies and partners share security responsibilities and costs and fill critical gaps that may arise from reductions in the U.S. military footprint on the continent.<sup>56</sup>

### **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 use overseas contingency operation (OCO) funds. OCO is a category of funding that supplements base funding for the DoD (and other agencies). In FY 2020, Congress appropriated \$71.3 billion in OCO funds.<sup>57</sup>

The DoD's FY 2020 budget justification document specifies 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.<sup>58</sup>

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. Due to the presence of multiple lines of accounting, some of which are outside of the DoD, the DoD OIG is still unable to estimate the cost of these operations.<sup>59</sup>



**U.S. Soldiers prepare their equipment to provide security in East Africa.**  
(U.S. Army photo)



## EAST AFRICA

The East Africa Counterterrorism Operation seeks to degrade and deny victory to al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia in Somalia and neighboring countries in the region. U.S. military activities conducted in support of the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation primarily focus on Somalia.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> ISIS-Somalia, a local affiliate of the international terrorist group, is active mainly in Somalia's northeastern Puntland region.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. counterterrorism operations in Somalia fall under Line of Effort 3 (Develop Security in Somalia) of USAFRICOM's Campaign Plan. USAFRICOM conducts airstrikes and advise, assist, and accompany missions with the Somali National Army (SNA). The DoD and DoS provide support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the SNA, including the SNA's advanced infantry unit, the Danab Brigade.

DoS and USAID activities in Somalia seek to promote governance, prevent the growth of violent extremism, and alleviate the humanitarian crisis caused by years of conflict, drought, flooding, and poor governance. The United States has provided more than \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to Somalia since 2006, and more than \$250 million to support the development of Somalia's political, economic, and social sectors. The United States reestablished a permanent diplomatic presence at the Mogadishu airport in December 2018. It was designated as Embassy Mogadishu in October 2019.

Events this quarter, including the early January al Shabaab attack on Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya, demonstrate that al Shabaab remains a potent threat in East Africa. Despite U.S. and international operations to counter al Shabaab, the group retains the capability to conduct operations, including cross-border operations that target U.S. interests in the region.<sup>4</sup>

## STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

### Al Shabaab Attacks U.S. Forces at Manda Bay

On January 5, al Shabaab militants attacked a U.S. airfield located on Camp Simba, a Kenyan Defense Force base at Manda Bay.<sup>5</sup> See Figure 1. The militants penetrated the airfield and destroyed six aircraft.<sup>6</sup> One U.S. Soldier and two DoD contractors died in the attack—the deadliest al Shabaab attack on U.S. forces ever and the deadliest incident for U.S. forces in Africa since four U.S. Soldiers were killed in an ambush in Niger in October 2017.<sup>7</sup>

USAFRICOM declined to release further public details about the attack pending an investigation of the incident. Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February, General Townsend stated, “We were not as prepared there in Manda Bay as we needed to be.”<sup>8</sup>

Al Shabaab attempted to expand the impact of the attack through false propaganda. USAFRICOM reported that within hours of the attack, an al Shabaab media element released an initial statement claiming to have killed 17 U.S. troops and released video taken from cellular phones carried by the attackers. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab’s use of real-time video demonstrates the group’s “developing understanding of the information environment.”<sup>9</sup>

Figure 1.

Map of Manda Bay, Kenya





**Al Shabaab attacks in mid-January caused more than 1,000 civilians to flee counties in northeast Kenya.**

Immediately after the attack, USAFRICOM deployed more than 100 U.S. infantrymen to Manda Bay, part of the Command's East Africa Response Force, to secure the facility and improve tactical defenses. The DoD told the DoD OIG that increased force protection measures have been put in place at the facility.<sup>10</sup>

USAFRICOM also sent senior leaders to inspect the site and speak with on-scene leaders and troops to assess required immediate actions. Simultaneously, USAFRICOM launched a senior-leader-led investigation to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the attack.<sup>11</sup>

### **Al Shabaab Violence Increases in Border Region**

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that al Shabaab “remains adaptive, resilient, and capable of attacking Western and partner interests in Somalia and East Africa.”<sup>12</sup> During the quarter, al Shabaab maintained its capability to conduct operations, using insurgent-style tactics, including harassing and hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, and improvised explosive device (IED) operations against AMISOM and SNA forces throughout southern Somalia.<sup>13</sup>

According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), an independent organization funded in part by the U.S. Government, VEO-related violence in Somalia continued at levels similar to previous quarters, as shown in Figure 2. ACLED attributed the majority of these events to al Shabaab, though in many cases, the specific groups remained unidentified. ISIS-Somalia was responsible for at least five violent events in the northeastern Bari region, according to the ACLED data.<sup>14</sup>

Local and international media sources reported that during the quarter, al Shabaab militants attacked Somali security forces, laid IEDs, and raided villages to steal livestock and supplies.<sup>15</sup> Media sources reported that on March 30, an al Shabaab suicide bomber attacked a vehicle carrying Abdisalan Hassan, the governor of Nugaal region, killing him.<sup>16</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that there were no changes during the quarter in the geographic areas that al Shabaab controls or influences in Somalia.<sup>17</sup> However, USAFRICOM reported that al Shabaab increased its attacks in the areas along the Somalia-Kenya border. Al Shabaab also engaged in “low-level” clashes with Somali security forces—both federal and state forces—along the border.<sup>18</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that during the quarter, al Shabaab intensified attacks in the Kenyan border counties of Garissa, Mandera, Wajir, and Lamu. Al Shabaab attacks in mid-January caused more than 1,000 civilians to flee counties in northeast Kenya, USAFRICOM said.<sup>19</sup> Several al Shabaab attacks during the quarter targeted teachers and school facilities in Kenya.<sup>20</sup>

### **U.S. Airstrikes in Somalia Increase**

USAFRICOM reported that it made “incremental progress” during the quarter to disrupt al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia through airstrikes, support to partner-led ground operations, and information operations.<sup>21</sup>

USAFRICOM announced that a precision strike on February 22 killed the al Shabaab operative who planned and directed attacks in the Somalia-Kenya border region, including

the January 5 attack on Manda Bay.<sup>22</sup> USAFRICOM reported that the operative's wife, who "was a witting and active member of al-Shabaab responsible for facilitating a wide range of terrorist activities," was also killed in the attack.<sup>23</sup>

The frequency of U.S. airstrikes in Somalia has increased over the past 2 years, while al Shabaab violence in Somalia and the region has persisted. A USAFRICOM spokesman told a media outlet that "airstrikes are only one means and not the ultimate solution," and that they "create organizational confusion in the ranks of al Shabaab and offer additional effects."<sup>24</sup>

### USAFRICOM Releases Civilian Casualty Report

In April, USAFRICOM released its first-ever report on allegations of civilian casualties as a result of airstrikes in its area of responsibility. USAFRICOM reported that it received allegations of civilian casualties related to 10 airstrikes in Somalia during the quarter. Four of the subsequent investigations resulted in an assessment that the allegations were unsubstantiated; the six remaining investigations were ongoing. USAFRICOM reported that since 2018, it has confirmed civilian casualties related to two airstrikes in Somalia: one in April 2018 and another in February 2019.<sup>25</sup>

Civilian casualties resulting from U.S. airstrikes and ground operations are a persistent concern for human rights advocates and USAFRICOM.<sup>26</sup> In releasing its civilian casualty report, USAFRICOM joins other U.S. and international military organizations that publish details about civilian casualties resulting from their operations. Combined Joint Task Force—Operation Inherent Resolve, which conducts U.S. military operations in Iraq and Syria, publishes monthly reports about civilian casualties.<sup>27</sup> Resolute Support, the NATO-led train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan, provides monthly civilian casualty data to the DoD OIG, which are published in the Lead IG quarterly reports on Operation Freedom's Sentinel.<sup>28</sup>

As USAFRICOM detailed in its report, it receives many more allegations of civilian casualties than it ultimately substantiates through investigation.<sup>29</sup> This is due, in part, to different methodologies used to assess whether casualties occurred. For example, Amnesty International reported, in a March 2019 report, that it investigated allegations of civilian casualties using analyses of satellite imagery and data; photographic material; interviews with medical personnel and other experts; analysis of traditional and social media; academic articles; and reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international bodies.<sup>30</sup> Journalists also use interviews to seek to gather information on alleged civilian casualties, but these interviews are often conducted by phone due to insecurity.<sup>31</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it investigates allegations of civilian casualties using "all available information." USAFRICOM's civilian casualties cell determines that an allegation is unsubstantiated if it meets at least one of the following criteria: 1) no correlated USAFRICOM strike or operation; 2) insufficient information provided in the allegation (e.g., no location, date); 3) action was taken against a valid military target; 4) operational or intelligence reporting refutes the substance of the allegation.<sup>32</sup> If at any time new or relevant evidence becomes available related

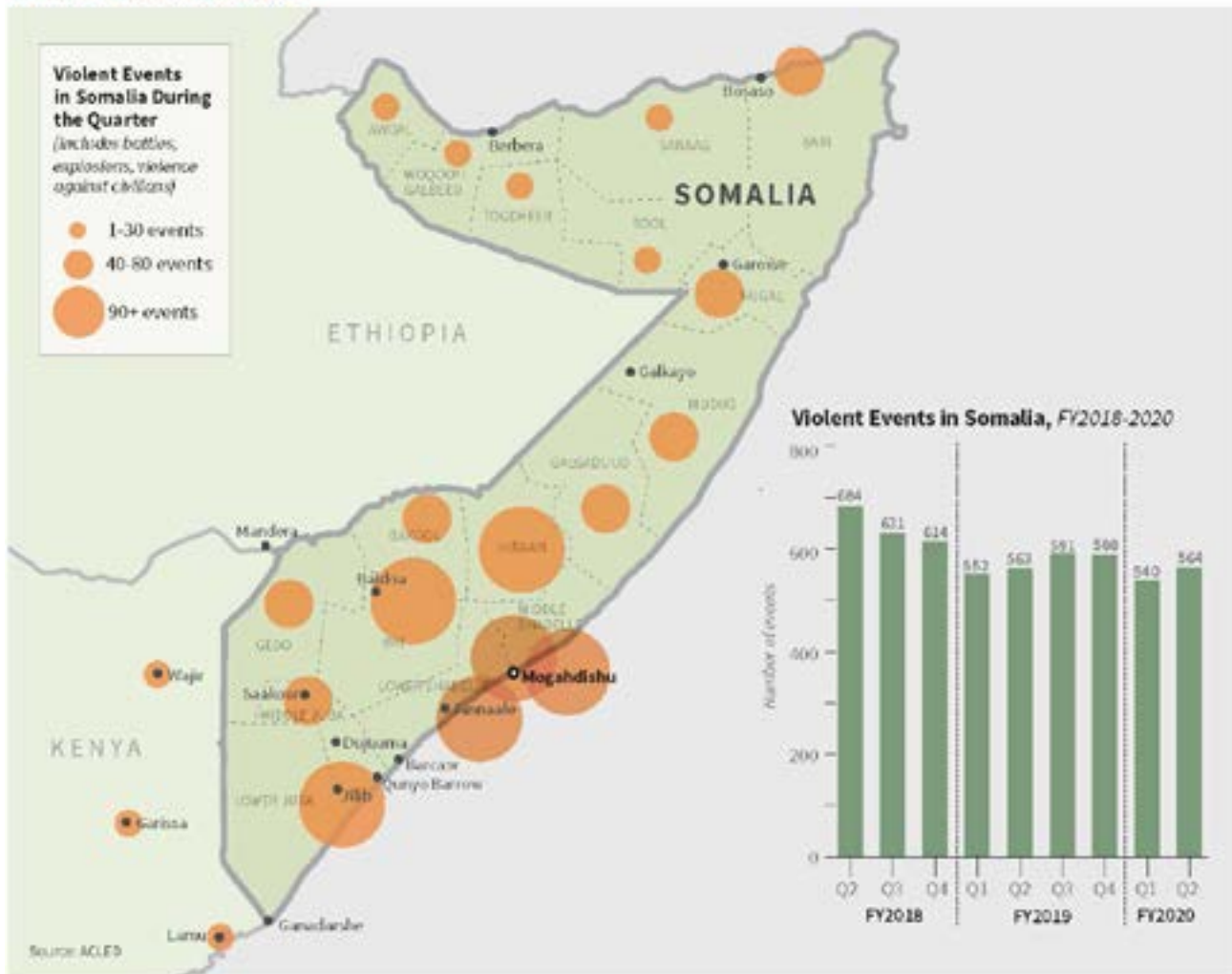


U.S. Soldiers assigned to the East Africa Response Force sit aboard a C-130J Super Hercules waiting to take off at Camp Lemnonnier, Djibouti. (U.S. Air Force photo)



Figure 2.

## Violent Events in Somalia



to a previously unsubstantiated allegation, USAFRICOM will reassess the allegation's veracity.<sup>33</sup> USAFRICOM said that it may conduct further assessments, if additional relevant information is made available.<sup>34</sup>

Another potential reason for differing civilian casualty numbers, which has been observed in Afghanistan, is different definitions of the conditions under which a person may lawfully be made the target of an attack—that is, who is a “valid military target.”<sup>35</sup> The DoD said that USAFRICOM follows a “strict, disciplined, and precise” process for identifying military targets. The DoD said that USAFRICOM operations, which adhere to the Law of Armed Conflict, often surpass thresholds required by current orders and authorities.<sup>36</sup>

The DoD OIG is currently conducting an evaluation of USAFRICOM's targeting procedures and civilian casualty reporting procedures.<sup>37</sup> (See p.65)

## PARTNER FORCE DEVELOPMENT

The United States is one of several countries and international organizations that supports the development of the Somali security forces. According to the 2017 Somali Security Pact, the international community agreed to provide political and material support to the Somali security forces according to a 4-year timeline.<sup>38</sup> The objective of the 2018-2021 period under the Security Pact is “Securing Somalia’s people as they vote in full election.”<sup>39</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it focuses its advisory efforts in Somalia on building the Danab (“Lightning”) Brigade, an advanced infantry component of the SNA designed to liberate Somali territory held by al Shabaab forces. USAFRICOM also supports DoS security assistance programs through the U.S. Military Coordination Center in Mogadishu.<sup>40</sup>

The DoS, through its security assistance programs, supports the development of the SNA (including the Danab Brigade), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and Somali Ministry of Defense (MoD).<sup>41</sup> According to the DoS, its assistance to the SNA includes training and equipment, mentorship, infrastructure, food and fuel rations, and stipends. DoS assistance to AMISOM includes unit mentorship, unmanned aerial surveillance, embedded stabilization expertise, training and equipment, and counter-IED programming. The DoS supports the Somali MoD through provision of institutional development expertise to the MoD to assist with broad security sector reform, capabilities generation, and ministerial capacity building.<sup>42</sup>

AMISOM provides training to Somali forces and conducts sustained offensive operations against al Shabaab. The European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM-S) also supports the development of Somali forces and defense institutions, as do several other countries on a bilateral basis.

### Danab Brigade: New Soldiers Trained, New Equipment

The DoD and DoS continued efforts to develop the Danab Advanced Infantry Brigade during the quarter. Through a contract with Bancroft Global Development, the DoS provides individual soldier training, while the DoD provides collective training for Danab soldiers. Once fully established, the Danab Brigade is expected to comprise 3,000 soldiers across all six SNA sectors.<sup>43</sup>

The DoS and DoD did not provide publicly releasable information on the number of Danab soldiers who began and completed individual training during the quarter. USAFRICOM reported that as of the end of the quarter, there were 850 fully trained soldiers in the Danab Brigade.<sup>44</sup>

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that it has continued to facilitate the purchase and transfer of equipment to the Danab Brigade, as permitted under Title 10 U.S.C. Section 333, which authorizes the provision of training and equipment to the national security forces of foreign countries to build the capacity of such forces to conduct counterterrorism operations. In addition, the U.S. Government supports camp construction and sustainment needs through DoS peacekeeping operation funds.<sup>45</sup>

## **SNA: Success in Janaale, but Weaknesses Remain**

### **SNA AND AMISOM LIBERATE JANAALÉ**

In March, the SNA and AMISOM launched an operation to liberate Janaale, a stronghold of al Shabaab about 75 kilometers southwest of Mogadishu.<sup>46</sup> The operation was part of Operation Badbaado, an ongoing, joint SNA and AMISOM operation to liberate areas in and around the capital from al Shabaab control.<sup>47</sup> USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that this was the most significant operation of the quarter in Somalia.<sup>48</sup>

The Janaale operation demonstrated both strengths and challenges for the SNA. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that while the SNA was able to generate the forces needed for the operation, there were challenges in planning.<sup>49</sup>

The Janaale operation was also a demonstration of the SNA's ability to conduct joint operations. The operation required interoperability among Ugandan forces in AMISOM, SNA conventional forces, and the Danab Brigade.<sup>50</sup> USAFRICOM noted that while the operation was successful, there were some coordination issues among units.<sup>51</sup>

USAFRICOM reported some other successes associated with Operation Badbaado during the quarter. USAFRICOM reported that Operation Badbaado disrupted al Shabaab freedom of movement along supply routes in the Lower Shabelle region. Notably, USAFRICOM said, the al Shabaab legal and court networks were starting to move out of the Lower Shabelle region. However, the second- and third-order effects of Operation Badbaado and the Janaale operation and how they relate to Mogadishu security may not be measurable until a later date.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, USAFRICOM reported that the Somali government arranged joint planning sessions with SNA and AMISOM tactical planners and created a logistics solution to move troops and equipment throughout Lower Shabelle, overcoming al Shabaab shaping operations designed to disrupt SNA and AMISOM forces.<sup>53</sup> USAFRICOM also reported that recent SNA and AMISOM operations in Lower Shabelle resulted in several initiatives that may lead to building long-term institutional capacity.<sup>54</sup>

### **SNA HAS WEAK ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**

USAFRICOM reported that the SNA made some progress during the quarter to develop its administrative capacity. For example, the SNA continued to implement a new human resources system to eliminate “ghost soldiers,” ensure that soldiers are paid directly (without middlemen) and only if they work, and record the soldier's capabilities. Last quarter, the SNA completed biometric registration and linked salaries to bank accounts. However, USAFRICOM noted that there is no regular report of SNA soldiers' reporting for duty.<sup>55</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu has prioritized the development of an asset management system to address this challenge. Another challenge noted by USAFRICOM is the relationship between the MoD and SNA, which could be stronger.<sup>56</sup>

## AMISOM: Withdrawal, Transition Continue

### AMISOM WITHDRAWS MORE THAN 1,000 FORCES

During the quarter, the UN-authorized AMISOM mission withdrew 1,140 troops in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2472.<sup>57</sup> USAFRICOM reported that AMISOM's troop reduction was split among the five troop contributors as follows: 337 from Uganda, 226 from Kenya, 242 from Ethiopia, 105 from Djibouti, and 230 from Burundi.<sup>58</sup> Approximately 19,000 AMISOM troops remained in Somalia after the drawdown.<sup>59</sup>

USAFRICOM noted that not all troops leaving the AMISOM mission have departed Somalia. Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia re-flagged some of their personnel from AMISOM to bilateral missions. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that this reduces the transparency of operations as USAFRICOM and other international partners do not have visibility into the planning and operations of bilateral forces.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to AMISOM troops, approximately 1,000 personnel from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia, Chad, and Zimbabwe serve in AMISOM's police force.<sup>61</sup> The AMISOM police component has the mandate to train, mentor, monitor, and advise the Somali police force with the aim of transforming it into a credible and effective organization that adheres to strict international standards. It is the first police mission deployed by the Africa Union.<sup>62</sup>

Somali police march during a ceremony held at the General Kahiye Police Academy in Mogadishu, Somalia. (AMISOM photo)



## POOR PLANNING, LIMITED TERRITORIAL CONTROL UNDERMINE AMISOM MISSION

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that despite AMISOM's participation in the successful Janalle operation during the quarter, AMISOM has experienced challenges. USAFRICOM identified several areas for AMISOM improvement.<sup>63</sup> First would be expanding AMISOM's control of territory in Somalia. The United Nations reported in November 2019 that al Shabaab maintains direct control or influence over vast swaths of the hinterland and is able to cut off main supply routes and effectively isolate AMISOM and government-controlled territory.<sup>64</sup>

A second area for AMISOM to improve is planning and coordination capabilities. Third, the level of trust between the SNA and AMISOM could be expanded to enhance planning and operations. Finally, a stronger AMISOM chain of command would better integrate forces from the troop-contributing countries.<sup>65</sup>

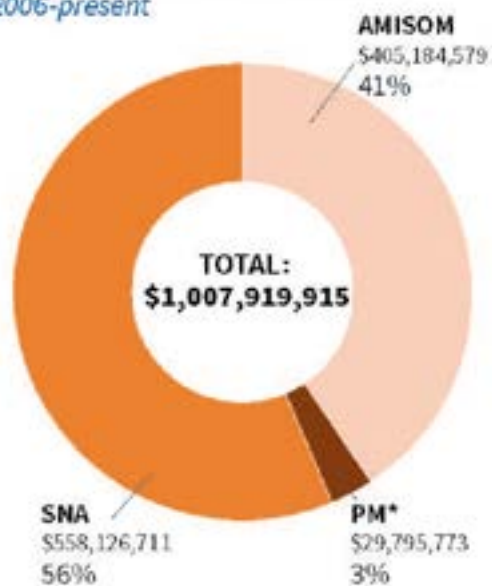
USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that the AMISOM-mandated review in May could serve as a means to update the mission statement and direct the force laydown via directed drawdowns and forward operating base closures, which would free up combat power to counter al Shabaab and support SNA operations.<sup>66</sup>

## The DoS Provides Security Sector Assistance to East Africa

The DoS reported that it has provided more than \$1 billion in security sector assistance to Somalia since 2006 to support the development of the SNA, AMISOM, and the Somali MoD. (Figure 3) This quarter, the DoS provided advisory and mentor support to logistical and operational units of the SNA, including at Baledogle Military Airfield and in SNA maintenance units, as well as advisory support and expertise to the Somali MoD and AMISOM Force Headquarters.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the DoS paid stipends to eligible SNA units and, through a UN Trust Fund, provided non-lethal assistance that included food, fuel, transportation, maintenance, spare parts, medical evacuation, facilities, and conference support.<sup>68</sup>

Figure 3.

### Security Assistance to Somalia 2006-present



\*Program Management (PM) is Embassy support, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and other support intended to enable effective program oversight.

Source: DoS

In January, Kenya accepted delivery of six MD-530F Cayuse Warrior attack helicopters, which it had purchased through the DoS Foreign Military Sales program. The DoS told the DoS OIG that Kenya has expressed a desire to purchase an additional six MD-530F helicopters.<sup>69</sup> The DoS reported that Kenya is in compliance with applicable end-use agreements.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to security cooperation with Kenya, the U.S. Government provides support to the Ugandan security forces. During the quarter, the U.S. Government delivered 18 of 45 Mamba armored vehicles and conducted electronic countermeasure training for the Uganda People's Defense Forces battlegrounds in Somalia. According to the DoS, the training is part of a DoS-funded program intended to help the Ugandan forces develop several route clearance platoons and will be delivered throughout FY 2020 and FY 2021.<sup>71</sup>

The DoS reported that the Ugandan government is currently in compliance with all applicable end-use agreements. The DoS said that these agreements are monitored by active routine inspection programs conducted by U.S. Government staff in Uganda and Somalia. The inspection programs include, but are not limited to, quarterly end-use inspections of routine equipment by serial number and annual inspections of sensitive equipment (such as night vision devices).<sup>72</sup>

## U.S. and Kenya Partner to Establish Joint Terrorism Task Force

In early February, the DoS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) announced that they had partnered to assist Kenya in creating the first Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) located outside the United States. The DoS said that shortly after the January 2019 al Shabaab terrorist attack on the DusitD2 Hotel in Nairobi, the U.S. Government recognized a pressing need for a



Kenyan police and intelligence officers trained at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in preparation for a new Joint Terrorism Task Force in Nairobi. (FBI photo)

JTTF that combined the FBI's training expertise with the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism's capacity-building efforts. The Kenyan-led JTTF (JTTF-K) will be modeled after its U.S. counterparts and will be a multi-agency counterterrorism investigative force headquartered in Nairobi that is intended to meet this need.<sup>73</sup>

During the quarter, the initial cohort of 42 Kenyan investigators began 12 weeks of intensive counterterrorism training at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia.<sup>74</sup> According to the DoS, the FBI administered the curriculum and provided training with assistance from other agencies. Upon completion of the course, the JTTF-K investigators will return to Kenya, where they will be assisted by an FBI Special Agent mentor. Together, the FBI and the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism will assess the success of the training program.<sup>75</sup>

The DoS stated that the JTTF-K will conduct investigations in accordance with international law enforcement and human rights standards. Legal authorities will be derived from the Kenyan Constitution and international treaties. The DoS reported that cases will be prosecuted in Kenya's courts, which promotes the U.S. goal of supporting foreign partners' security and law enforcement sectors.<sup>76</sup>

The JTTF-K is funded by the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism under the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund, which was established by Congress to build the law enforcement capacity of partner nations on the frontlines of terrorism. It is part of a comprehensive program with Kenya to promote terrorism investigations and prosecutions, enhance crisis response, and strengthen border security, according to the DoS.<sup>77</sup>

The DoS OIG is conducting an inspection of the DoS Bureau of Counterterrorism's management and oversight of its worldwide foreign assistance program. (See p. 63) Programs in Kenya, including the FBI counterterrorism investigations training, were included in the reviewed sample.<sup>78</sup>

## European Forces, Turkey Train SNA and Police

European and Turkish forces work in Somalia and neighboring countries to train and support the SNA and Somali police. USAFRICOM provided an update on their activities during the quarter.

The European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM-S), launched in April 2010, supports the development of Somali federal defense institutions through training, mentoring, and advising.<sup>79</sup> This quarter, EUTM-S continued training one infantry company and began a junior officer leadership course. USAFRICOM reported that the European Union also completed an agreement with the Somali government and SNA to provide up to \$13.5 million in non-lethal support to four battalions that are operating in the Lower Shabelle region and budgeted \$5.4 million to contribute to infrastructure projects to further develop SNA headquarters capabilities.<sup>80</sup>

Italy trains the Darwiish paramilitary police force as part of its bilateral agreement with Somalia. USAFRICOM reported that during the quarter, a class of 205 cadets began training at the Djiboutian Police Academy. After completing their training, they will deploy to Lower Shabelle.<sup>81</sup> During the quarter, European Union advisors organized 300 Darwiish officers to deploy to Lower Shabelle, which USAFRICOM described as an “accomplishment,” because previously, Darwiish officers mostly operated checkpoints in Mogadishu.<sup>82</sup>

The Turkish TURKSOM military academy graduated the fourth battalion of Task Force Eagle, a sub-element of the Danab Brigade. USAFRICOM reported that all four Eagle battalions have received their weapons and communications equipment and are fully mission capable. The TURKSOM academy also provides air force and naval training to Somali forces.<sup>83</sup>

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### Somali President Signs Election Law

During the quarter, the Somali government took action to plan for upcoming parliamentary elections that will likely take place in late 2020 or early 2021, the DoS said.<sup>84</sup> The DIA told the DoD OIG that the COVID-19 pandemic could impact the timing of the elections.<sup>85</sup>

The elections will be the first universal elections to take place in Somalia in 50 years.<sup>86</sup> Somalia’s new election law, which Somali President Mohamed Abdelahi Mohamed signed in February, calls for one-person, one-vote direct voting in the upcoming elections. In Somalia’s 2016-2017 elections, Somalia’s clans selected delegates who voted for leaders.<sup>87</sup>

According to USAID, the U.S. Government and others in the international community have consistently communicated the expectation that the elections be credible, timely, and inclusive.<sup>88</sup> In a United Nations Security Council press statement, the Security Council members stated that they welcomed the enactment of the new law, but highlighted the importance of the elections occurring in late 2020 or early 2021 and that the Somali government still needed to clarify other key aspects of the elections, such as implementing a 30 percent quota of parliamentary seats for women.<sup>89</sup>

Somali women distribute food provided by USAID to respond to recurring droughts and floods. (USAID photo)





The DoS reported that in March, the Somali Federal Parliament's Joint Ad Hoc Committee on Elections met for the first time and selected its members. Later that month, the committee met with the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) to discuss how to allocate parliamentary seats, select parliamentarians representing Mogadishu and Somaliland, and approach the women's quota. Both the parliamentary committee and the NIEC plan to issue separate reports on how to address these issues in the coming months.<sup>90</sup>

The DoS also reported that during a March meeting of the electoral security task force, the Somali police force commander tasked his regional deputies to assess the security of 284 voting sites that had been identified in all the Federal Member States except Jubaland and Puntland.<sup>91</sup> USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that al Shabaab has historically used violent attacks—including threats and IEDs—to undermine the electoral process in Somalia.<sup>92</sup>

### USAID Program Seeks to Promote Political Inclusion

USAID reported to USAID OIG that it is supporting the electoral processes in Somalia through the \$31.5 million, 5-year Bringing Unity, Integrity, and Legitimacy to Democracy (BUILD) project. BUILD aims to increase political inclusion of women, youth, and other marginalized groups.<sup>93</sup>

USAID also reported to the USAID OIG that during the quarter, BUILD opened the first Political Parties Resource Center in Mogadishu. Despite the passage of the election law, there are still unresolved issues for political parties, with many Federal Member States not allowing parties to open offices and amendments to the Political Parties Law not yet passed in the parliament. Given the lack of legal clarity for political parties, the BUILD Political Parties Resource Center will provide meeting space for political parties and civil society organizations, to engage in public dialogue, training, and other technical assistance.<sup>94</sup>

USAID OIG reported that through the BUILD project, USAID seeks to build the capacity of political parties to transition from clan-based politics to issue-based campaigns, to understand the party registration requirements, and to develop internal capacity for inclusion. To facilitate the registration of political parties, USAID supported the development of the Office of the Political Party Registrar within the NIEC. USAID reported that it also trained the NIEC in strategic planning, voter education, training methods, and electoral logistics. USAID told the USAID OIG that as a result, political party registration increased from 6 to 63 political parties, of which 36 have youth and women's wings.<sup>95</sup>

USAID reported that since 2016, BUILD has trained 500,000 Somalis, who are members of civil society organizations and youth groups, on principles of good governance, democracy, and federalism, to allow greater civic participation and issue advocacy. Following the training, civil society organizations, as an example, conducted research on topics such as sexual offenses to inform greater debate, formed advocacy coalitions to understand non-governmental organization regulations, and leveraged social media to build broader constituencies.<sup>96</sup>

USAID told the USAID OIG that the 2017 Somaliland elections, which BUILD supported, are an example of the project's past success. The Somaliland elections were held on time, had an 80 percent voter turnout, and included political party election observers.<sup>97</sup> According to independent election observers, the elections were "largely peaceful and well-organized," and "irregularities observed were not of sufficient scale or pattern to have impacted the final result."<sup>98</sup>

### Somalia Receives Debt Relief

In March, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank announced that Somalia had taken the necessary steps to become eligible for debt relief. As a result of the decision, Somalia's international debt is expected to decrease from \$5.2 billion in 2018 to \$557 million over 3 years. The IMF stated that "the immediate normalization of [Somalia's] relations with the international community will re-open access to critical additional financial resources to strengthen the economy, help improve social conditions, raise millions out of poverty, and generate sustainable employment for Somalis."<sup>99</sup>

Immediately following the IMF and World Bank decision, Somalia's Paris Club creditors—including the United States, Italy, France, and Russia—announced on April 1 that they would cancel \$1.4 billion in debt owed to them by Somalia. The debt relief represents 67 percent of Somalia's international debt. The IMF said that it expects other creditors to extend debt relief to Somalia on a bilateral basis.<sup>100</sup> However, the DoS told the DoS OIG that the COVID-19 pandemic will likely affect Somalia's debt relief in unforeseeable ways.<sup>101</sup>

USAID reported that it helped prepare the Somali parliament for the IMF's debt relief announcement through its parliamentary support program in Somalia, called "Damal." USAID reported that Damal facilitated a joint hearing on March 20 for the Budget and Finance Committees of both houses of Somalia's Federal Parliament to address the country's then-anticipated debt relief. The hearing attracted 30 participants from Parliament, think tanks, and the media, in addition to independent subject matter experts. USAID reported that Damal provided pre-event technical advice on event management, witness selection, subject matter research and briefings, and media management related to debt relief and financial management reform in Somalia.<sup>102</sup>

**In March, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank announced that Somalia had taken the necessary steps to become eligible for debt relief.**

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND STABILIZATION

### USAID Consolidates its Stabilization Programs

This quarter, USAID provided the USAID OIG with more details about its plan to close its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) program in Somalia by May 2020. OTI programs are designed to complement long-term development programs and to be fast, flexible, and short-

term (typically 3-5 years). OTI's Somalia program began in February 2016 to support Somalia's Transition Initiative for Stabilization Program (now in its second iteration as TIS+) which supported the SNA, AMISOM, and other international partners as they worked to recover al Shabaab-held territory.<sup>103</sup>

After nearly 3 years, and stalled progress in recovering new territory from al Shabaab, OTI conducted an assessment to consider next steps for stabilization programming in Somalia. USAID reported that after incorporating insights from the DoS and DoD, OTI and the USAID Somalia Mission determined that the stabilization objectives would be best met by consolidating USAID's stabilization efforts into one program that would be managed by the USAID Mission in Somalia.<sup>104</sup>

According to USAID, OTI and TIS+ are coordinating closely on the consolidation, including sharing reports, joint research projects, identification of best practices, and coordinating with other U.S. Government agencies and donors.<sup>105</sup> However, despite the \$80 million OTI program ending, no additional funding has been allocated to TIS+, resulting in a significant drop in stabilization funding in Somalia. TIS+ is also slated to end in May 2021, and a follow-on stabilization program, estimated by USAID to be awarded by April 2021, is currently being designed by the USAID Somalia Mission.<sup>106</sup>

## **USAID Supports CVE Planning in Kenya in Response to Increased Violence**

USAID reported that in Kenya, USAID supports the capacity of local communities and governments to address extremism through its Kenya NiWajibu Wetu (NIWETU) program.<sup>107</sup> Following the January 5 attack at Manda Bay, NIWETU deployed a team to Lamu County, where the Camp Simba is located, to produce a report on the conditions undermining security and public trust.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, USAID reported that this quarter NIWETU supported the establishment of a counter violent extremism (CVE) training and research center at the Kenya School of Government. The center is intended to provide training to Kenyan civil servants, primarily Ministry of Interior personnel, in CVE methods of handling radicalization and recruitment. The curriculum is under development, and training is expected to begin in the next quarter.<sup>109</sup>

USAID reported that following the January 2019 attack on the DusitD2 Hotel in Nairobi, NIWETU provided 37 counties with logistical and technical assistance in support of a presidential directive that all counties develop CVE county action plans.<sup>110</sup> NIWETU recently completed a research report on the implementation of the county action plans to ascertain lessons learned. The research found that additional funding and coordination was required for successful implementation. Instead, the report recommended that the county action plans be implemented through existing forums and structures.<sup>111</sup> USAID said that the recommendations were presented formally to Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Center and NIWETU's focus counties.<sup>112</sup>

# LOCUSTS THREATEN LIVELIHOODS IN EAST AFRICA

East African countries are experiencing the worst locust infestation in more than 25 years. The desert locust is a highly destructive pest, able to travel by wind up to 150 kilometers per day and eat large amounts of vegetation, including crops and pasture. The swarm of desert locusts arrived from the Arabian Peninsula last fall and took advantage of wet conditions in East Africa to lay eggs. During the quarter, as the locusts hatched and threatened farmer livelihoods, Somalia declared a state of emergency.



In one day, a 1 km<sup>2</sup> swarm of locusts can eat the same amount of food as

## 35,000 people.

Swarms in Kenya are as large as 2,400km<sup>2</sup>.

### Locust Impact Likely to Worsen

Locusts continue to lay eggs, and new swarms are expected to form in spring 2020, leading to a potential **400-fold** increase in the locust population by June. With **20.2 million people** currently experiencing severe acute food insecurity in the region, emergency food assistance could be necessary later in 2020 if control efforts are unsuccessful.

#### KEY

← Desert locust movements

/// Areas of infestations (August 2019–February 2020)

#### Estimated Acute Food Insecurity Phases

Minimal Stressed Emergency Famine

Sources: FAO and USAID

(WFP/Peter Louis and Petroc Wilton photos)

Mid-Feb. 2020

UGANDA





## NORTH AFRICA

As part of the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, USAFRICOM conducts counterterrorism operations against ISIS-Libya and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) networks operating in Libya.<sup>1</sup> USAFRICOM retains the ability to conduct airstrikes in Libya.

Counterterrorism operations in North Africa fall under Line of Effort 4 (Contain Instability in Libya) in the USAFRICOM campaign plan. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it seeks to degrade VEOs in Libya and the Maghreb. ISIS-Libya and AQIM conducted no attacks in Libya during the quarter, but AQIM remains an active facilitator of fighters, money, and weapons in North and West Africa.

The U.S. Embassy in Tripoli closed in 2014 amid fighting between rival militias. Diplomatic relations with Libya are conducted through the Libya External Office in Tunis.

**Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Berlin Conference on Libya on January 19. (DoS photo)**

## STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

### Checkpoint Near the U.S. Embassy in Tunis Attacked

USAFRICOM reported that ISIS-Libya and AQIM did not conduct any attacks in Libya this quarter, and that the last reported attack in Libya was by ISIS-Libya in June 2019.<sup>2</sup>

On March 6, two suicide bombers detonated explosives at a Tunisian-staffed checkpoint outside the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, killing a police officer and wounding five other people. No U.S. personnel were injured by the blast.<sup>3</sup>

Tunisian security sources told reporters that the materials in the attack were among the most dangerous used by terrorist organizations in recent years and believed to be smuggled from Libya.<sup>4</sup>

According to media sources, the Tunisian bombers had previously been convicted on terrorism charges in 2014 but were later released. An attorney for one of the bombers told reporters that his client was sentenced for posting social media content with “religious overtones.”<sup>5</sup> Tunisian authorities arrested five people in connection to the bombing but did not disclose further details on their identities or possible VEO affiliation.<sup>6</sup>

### Syrian Mercenaries Join Escalating Libyan Civil War

Foreign government officials and media sources reported that Syrian militants continued to arrive in Libya during the quarter. Turkey’s president acknowledged that his country sent many Syrian militants to Libya to support the Government of National Accord (GNA), which is battling the Libyan National Army (LNA) for control of the country.<sup>7</sup> The U.S. Government recognizes the internationally recognized GNA and supports UN-led initiatives to achieve a ceasefire and political reconciliation in Libya.<sup>8</sup>

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a widely cited UK-based NGO, told the Associated Press that at least 130 of the Syrian militants in Libya are former ISIS or al Qaeda terrorists.<sup>9</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it has no credible reports of ISIS or al Qaeda-affiliated militants among the mercenary forces from Syria, and assessed that the mercenaries are “very likely” fighting in Libya for personal and financial reasons rather than ideological or political motivations.<sup>10</sup> USAFRICOM estimated that 3,500 Syrian mercenaries were in Libya supporting the GNA as of the end of March.<sup>11</sup> Citing press reports, USAFRICOM stated that an additional 300 Turkish-supported “Syrian opposition” fighters arrived in Libya in early April.<sup>12</sup> USAFRICOM reported that it tracks Syrian mercenaries using all available sources of intelligence.<sup>13</sup>

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported a higher estimate of the number of Syrians present in Libya: By its estimate, there were 4,750 Syrian mercenaries fighting in the Libyan civil war as of the end of the quarter, with another 1,900 training in Turkey preparing to join the battle.<sup>14</sup> Turkey reportedly promised Syrian troops fighting on behalf of the GNA in Libya a salary of \$2,000 per month and Turkish citizenship.<sup>15</sup>

## Number of Russian Mercenaries Increases in Libya

In addition to Syrian fighters sent to support the GNA, the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company supported by the Russian Ministry of Defense, has sent fighters to Libya to support the LNA. Estimates of the number of Wagner Group mercenaries range from 800 to 2,500.<sup>16</sup>

According to analysts, the Wagner Group allows Russian President Vladimir Putin the ability to fight covert wars, hide casualties from the Russian public, and mitigate international repercussions from violating the sovereignty of other nations.<sup>17</sup>

The DIA assessed that the growing Wagner Group presence gives Russia increased influence over the outcome of the Libyan civil conflict. Since its initial deployment in September 2019, the Wagner Group has provided advanced equipment, such as unmanned aerial vehicles, and advanced capabilities, such as trained snipers, to the conflict, resulting in significant casualties to forces aligned with the GNA.<sup>18</sup>

The DIA told the DoD OIG that this quarter's increase of Russian mercenaries in Libya is likely in response to the arrival of Turkish military and Turkish-aligned Syrian fighters supporting the GNA.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the Syrian fighters previously discussed, media reporting indicated that an unknown number of Turkish military troops deployed to Libya during this quarter.<sup>20</sup>

It appears that the Wagner Group mercenaries in Libya also include some Syrian fighters. Shortly after the end of the quarter, USAFRICOM, citing social media, reported that an undisclosed number of Syrian fighters are "traveling" to Libya to support the Wagner Group and LNA.<sup>21</sup> According to media reporting, Russia and the Syrian government initially agreed to send 300 to 400 fighters from Quneitra in southwest Syria to Libya. The fighters are former Syrian opposition rebels who reportedly agreed to fight in the Libyan civil war in exchange for \$1,000 per month and clemency from the Assad regime.<sup>22</sup>

## DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

### Libyan Peace Solutions Discussed at Berlin Conference

On January 19, the United Nations and the German government convened the Berlin Conference on Libya to "assist the United Nations to unify the international community in its support for a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis."<sup>23</sup> In addition to German and UN representatives, participants included the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the European Union, the African Union, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, China, and others. GNA Prime Minister Fayeze al Sarraj and LNA commander Khalifa Haftar attended the conference, but they did not speak to each other, according to media reports.<sup>24</sup>

The conference communiqué stated that participants agreed to sustain and monitor a cease fire among warring parties in Libya, enforce the UN-sanctioned arms embargo, and return to the Libyan-led and -owned political process under the auspices of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). The conference communiqué noted that participant nations "commit to refraining from interference in the armed conflict or in the internal affairs of Libya."<sup>25</sup>

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo represented the United States at the Berlin Conference. He stated that participants made progress toward a lasting ceasefire, but there is “still a lot of work to do” and “it’s a complicated battlefield.”<sup>26</sup> Secretary Pompeo also raised questions about the difficulties of effectively monitoring any ceasefire and the existing UN arms embargo, but noted he was optimistic about progress and appreciative of German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s efforts to bring key players together for the conference.<sup>27</sup>

The UN Security Council endorsed the Berlin Conference conclusions on February 12 in UN Security Council Resolution 2510, which began the process of “operationalizing” the conclusions.<sup>28</sup> On February 16, the International Follow-up Committee on Libya convened in Munich with many of the same diplomatic participants to continue work toward a lasting peace.<sup>29</sup> Subsequent meetings of the follow-up committee were temporarily postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>30</sup>

### United Nations Facilitates Additional Dialogue with Libyan Leaders

The Berlin Conference was the second of three steps toward resolution of the conflict proposed in July 2019 by Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative and head of UNSMIL. The other two steps were a truce between the warring parties (a short-lived truce occurred in January) and a “Libyan meeting of leading and influential personalities from all over the country,” which conference participants affirmed in the communiqué.<sup>31</sup>

A senior DoS official, speaking during a February press briefing, described the Berlin Conference as part of an “external track” of meetings and engagements intended to end the conflict. Meanwhile, the official continued, the United Nations facilitated several meetings among Libyan leaders during the quarter as part of an “internal track” of negotiations.<sup>32</sup>

**The Berlin Conference on Libya convened on January 19 in Berlin, Germany. (DoS photo)**



For example, in February the United Nations convened in Geneva Libya's first political dialogue since the LNA's military offensive on Tripoli in April 2019. According to the DoS, the United Nations further facilitated parallel economic talks in Tunis on January 6, and in Cairo on February 9 and 10, with the goal of "spurring Libyan factions to bolster economic transparency and promote the equitable distribution of oil revenues."<sup>33</sup> UN-facilitated talks between the GNA and LNA resulted in an initial ceasefire agreement on February 23, but the agreement has not been implemented.<sup>34</sup>

### **LNA Cuts Off Oil Supply to GNA, Risking Escalation of Humanitarian Crisis**

The DIA reported that on January 18, Libyan actors associated with LNA commander Khalifa Haftar began shutting down export terminals in eastern Libya and two major oilfields located in southwest Libya, cutting off supply and revenue to the GNA-controlled National Oil Corporation based in Tripoli.<sup>35</sup>

According to S&P Global, Libya owns Africa's largest proven reserves of oil.<sup>36</sup> As a result of Haftar's military takeover of the oil reserves, Libya's output has dropped to approximately one-tenth of normal production: down from 1.2 million barrels per day to 123,240 barrels per day since the shutdown in January.<sup>37</sup> Libya's National Oil Corporation announced its losses amounted to over \$4 billion dollars as of April.<sup>38</sup>

By restricting Libya's main source of revenue, Haftar sought leverage at the Berlin Conference. The DIA told the DoD OIG that Haftar also intended to deprive the GNA of revenue to pay mercenaries defending Tripoli, while receiving a higher percentage of oil revenues for LNA-controlled eastern Libya.<sup>39</sup> The DoS told the DoS OIG that the LNA's oil shutdown was intended to broadly pressure the GNA beyond denying revenue for mercenaries.<sup>40</sup>

The DIA assessed that the shutdown has the potential to intensify the humanitarian crisis in Libya as the loss of fuel supplies disrupts power generation, causing blackouts that can impact essential services such as hospitals. Revenue from the sale of oil pays for the operation of power plants and hospitals, as well as the salaries of public servants. However, the DIA added that the GNA has approximately \$82 billion in foreign currency reserves. Those funds, and revenues from the GNA-aligned militias' control of the black market, could be enough to cover the GNA's annual budget for about 2 years, and mitigate the loss of funding which is required to defend Tripoli and provide basic goods to its population, according to the DIA.<sup>41</sup>





## WEST AFRICA

Through the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, USAFRICOM seeks to disrupt and degrade ISIS and al Qaeda affiliates in designated countries in West Africa.<sup>1</sup> USAFRICOM's approach relies primarily on a combination of operational support and security force assistance to African partner nations, supported primarily by French troops.<sup>2</sup> The United States and European allies also provide equipment, funding, and humanitarian aid to African partners.<sup>3</sup>

Counterterrorism operations and related partner nation support in West Africa fall under Line of Effort 5 (Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region) in the USAFRICOM campaign plan.<sup>4</sup>

The United States provides counterterrorism training and support in the Sahel as part of the 2005 Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, a multi-year U.S. Government strategy to build the capacity of countries in the Sahel region to counter terrorist organizations and

**Members of the Guinean Armed Forces practice advanced weapons techniques during Exercise Flintlock 2020 in Nouakchott, Mauritania. (U.S. Army photo)**

violent extremism. In addition to DoD's military assistance, the DoS provides support to partner nation border security agencies, reintegration efforts, and other activities. USAID implements civil society, governance, and other programs in Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership countries.

VEOs accelerated their violent activity in the region during the quarter, often launching deadly attacks on partner forces. USAFRICOM reported that there is a "promising" increase in partner forces' collaboration and willingness to fight together, but many challenges remain.<sup>5</sup>

## STATUS OF THE CONFLICT

### USAFRICOM Pursues a Containment Strategy in West Africa

Last quarter, USAFRICOM reported VEOs in West Africa were neither degraded nor contained. USAFRICOM stated that U.S. strategy had shifted from "degrade" to "contain" due to a number of challenges in the region, including the size of USAFRICOM's area of responsibility, extreme poverty, widespread instability, and economic fragility.<sup>6</sup>

Last quarter, USAFRICOM described containment as actions to "stop, hold, or surround the forces of the enemy" or compel VEOs to restrict activity to a given area and prevent the withdrawal of the enemy's forces for use elsewhere. USAFRICOM stated it measured progress against this objective through its assessment process, intelligence reporting, and analysis.<sup>7</sup>

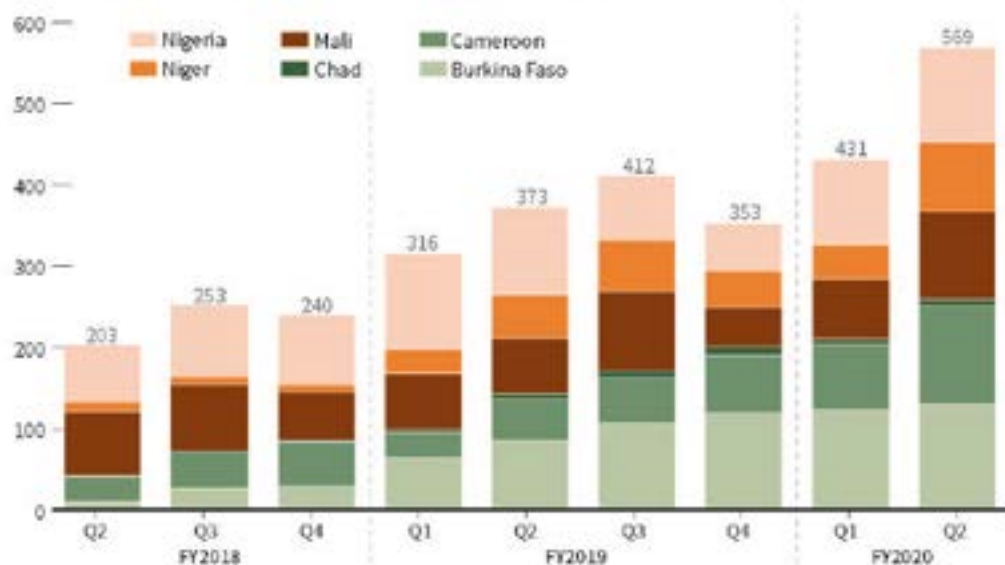
### Violence Grows as VEOs Consolidate

Terrorist violence continues to negatively affect civilians and security forces in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. In a January 2020 report, ACLED described the Sahel as a region of "metastasizing militant networks" that is poorly understood.<sup>8</sup> ACLED reported an increase in VEO-related violence in Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon during the quarter, reflecting a steady increase in violence over the past 2 years, as shown in Figure 4. The largest rise in violence this quarter took place in Mali. Overall, Nigeria has experienced the most violence over the past 2 years, committed primarily by ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram.<sup>9</sup>

Multiple VEOs continued to operate in West Africa during the quarter. (See Figure 5) When asked by the DoD OIG which VEOs are threats to the U.S. homeland, USAFRICOM reported that "no changes were observed during the quarter in the threat that VEOs in the Lake Chad region of West Africa pose to the U.S. homeland."<sup>10</sup>

The security situation in West Africa is a result of a complicated commingling of long-standing ethnic hostilities and the use of jihadist ideology that seeks to vanquish Western influence.<sup>11</sup> VEOs in the region not only exploit existing local conflict; they facilitate conflict in some cases and serve as mediators that can lead to temporary cessation of conflicts in others. The motivations of VEOs within local tribes depends on their strategic objectives and other communal dynamics such as the level of penetration within communities; their sociological composition and that of the communities; and the balance of power between parties in conflict.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 4.

**Violent Events in the West Africa, January 2018–March 2020**

Source: ACLED; includes battles, explosions, violence against civilians.

Speaking to the House Armed Services Committee in March, General Townsend said that in West Africa, al Qaeda and ISIS cooperate with one another, a development not seen in other parts of the world. General Townsend added that while their partnership appears to be a local phenomenon right now, the terrorist threat continues to grow, citing a fivefold increase in attacks in the Sahel since last year. “Unchecked, this threat becomes a threat beyond the region,” Townsend testified.<sup>13</sup> The Commander of Special Operations Command Africa, Brigadier General Dagvin Anderson, told reporters in March that consolidation of VEOs in the region “poses a threat to the United States.”<sup>14</sup>

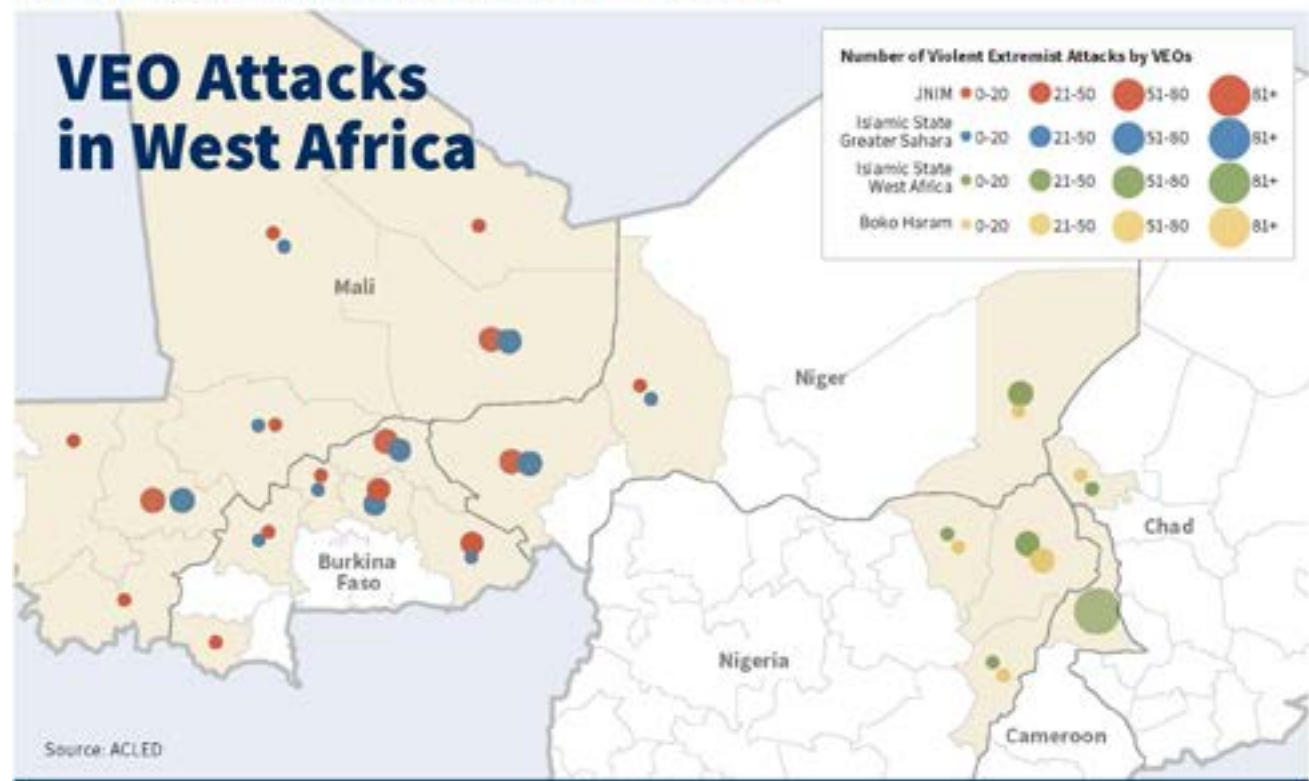
USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that ISIS in the Greater Sahara probably cultivates relationships with other VEOs in the Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger tri-border region by sharing resources, collaborating on attacks, and defending against security forces. Jama’at Nasr al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), an al Qaeda affiliate, also operates in that tri-border region.<sup>15</sup>

### Tri-Border Region Experiences Increasing Insecurity

The lethality of VEO attacks in the tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger has increased since mid-2019. According to USAFRICOM, extremists killed approximately 600 soldiers from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in 2019, compared to roughly 300 the previous year. USAFRICOM reported that this quarter, VEOs conducted at least 89 attacks in the region and 103 attacks during the previous quarter.<sup>16</sup> USAFRICOM reported that Mali-based extremist groups crossed the border into Niger and conducted multiple lethal attacks on security forces this quarter.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 5.

Violent Extremist Attacks in West Africa, January to March 2020



## Violent Extremist Organizations in West Africa



### ● JNIM

**LEADER:** Iyad ag-Ghali

**OVERVIEW:** JNIM's goal is to unite all terrorist groups in the Sahel and eliminate Western influence in the region. It conducts sophisticated attacks against security forces, and also is involved in drug smuggling, taxation of smuggling routes, and attacking gold mines for revenue.

**SIZE:** Approx. 1,000 to 2,000 fighters



### ● ISIS-West Africa

**LEADER:** Abu Abdullah Idris ibn Umar al Barnawi

**OVERVIEW:** 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.

**SIZE:** Approx. 5,000 fighters



### ● ISIS in the Greater Sahara

**LEADER:** Adnan Abu Walid al Sahrawi

**OVERVIEW:** The group seeks to establish a permanent foothold in the Sahel by performing governance functions, and eliminating foreign influence in its areas of operation. ISIS in the Greater Sahara has steadily increased attacks on security forces since early 2019.

**SIZE:** Approx. 500 fighters



### ● Boko Haram

**LEADER:** Abubakar Shekau

**OVERVIEW:** Boko Haram seeks to overthrow governments in its area of operations that are considered non-believers of its interpretation of Islam. It is known for particularly brutal methods of indiscriminate violence against Muslims and non-Muslims.

**SIZE:** Approx. 1,500 fighters

The DIA assessed that France's deployment of additional troops and increasing regional cooperation, primarily in the tri-border region, could help reduce some of the violent extremism over the next several months, but also stated there are concerns of growing anti-French sentiments among African partners in the region.<sup>18</sup>

### **Burkina Faso Arms Civilians to Counter Extremism**

This quarter, Burkina Faso's government formalized a law allowing the military to recruit and arm civilian volunteers to defend against violent extremism and a deteriorating security environment, according to the DIA.<sup>19</sup> Media sources reported that volunteers must be 18 years old and undergo a "moral investigation" before being allowed to serve. Recruits undergo two weeks of training on how to use weapons and military discipline aimed at preventing volunteers from becoming militias.<sup>20</sup>

The DIA told the DoD OIG that the new legislation increases the risk of growing ethnic violence. With national elections scheduled for November 2020 and ongoing VEO expansion in the northern parts of the country, senior Burkinabe security leaders are becoming increasingly concerned with their capacity to address both ethnic and VEO security challenges.<sup>21</sup> USAFRICOM reported that multiple civilian protests took place this quarter voicing economic concerns and continued insecurity.<sup>22</sup>

USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that Burkina Faso's military continues to struggle with an increasing terrorist threat and will continue to face growing instability and insecurity. Until 2016, the Burkina Faso Armed Forces were largely untested against extremist threats. This quarter, VEOs—mainly JNIM and ISIS in the Greater Sahara—conducted at least 35 attacks in Burkina Faso, compared to at least 52 in the previous quarter, according to USAFRICOM.<sup>23</sup>

An ACLED researcher quoted in the media reported that ISIS in the Greater Sahara and other extremist groups appear to be pre-emptively targeting villages enrolling in the volunteer program.<sup>24</sup>

### **Malian Government Attempts to Engage VEOs**

In January, Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta confirmed to reporters his government contacted al Qaeda leaders hoping to start a dialogue in an attempt to stop growing violence in Mali.<sup>25</sup> The head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) in Mali told journalists that she endorsed the Malian government's desire to send emissaries to speak with Islamist militant groups, saying more military forces would not help solve Mali's litany of challenges.<sup>26</sup>

JNIM stated through social media that negotiations with the Malian government would be conditioned on the removal of foreign troops from Mali. The Malian government has not made further public overtures to VEOs.<sup>27</sup> The DIA assessed that removing international forces could increase the threat to U.S. interests by providing extremists greater freedom of movement in the region, although the DIA added that dialogue between the government and terrorists is unlikely to make substantial progress over the near term.<sup>28</sup>

Violence in Mali increased significantly this quarter, according to the DIA. Extremists conducted regular attacks against the Malian military in northern and central Mali, and instigated ethnic violence between militia groups in central Mali.<sup>29</sup> USAFRICOM reported that since December 2019, the Malian Armed Forces suffered more than 140 casualties, leading to multiple protests over a lack of security and an increase in anti-Western rhetoric. VEOs conducted at least 43 attacks this quarter in Mali. JNIM conducted at least 33 of this quarter's attacks, while ISIS in the Greater Sahara executed four attacks, one fewer than the previous quarter.<sup>30</sup>

In testimony to Congress in March, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale stated that ongoing civil conflict in Mali and failure to implement measures of a 2015 reconciliation agreement called the Algiers Accord undermine counter-VEO efforts in the country. Hale stated "security conditions throughout the region are worsening as the key players in Mali fail to fully implement the Algiers Accord nearly 5 years after its signing."<sup>31</sup>

### **Niger Forces Suffer Deadly Attacks**

VEOs conducted 11 attacks in Niger this quarter, including one by ISIS in the Greater Sahara against Nigerien security forces in Chinagodar that killed at least 89 soldiers on January 9, USAFRICOM reported.<sup>32</sup> According to media sources, at least 174 soldiers have been killed by extremists in Niger since December 2019.<sup>33</sup>

The DIA told the DoD OIG that the Nigerien military faces a growing VEO threat following the abandonment of several outposts in early January. The Nigerien government imposed an extended state of emergency that includes restrictions on motorcycle use and the closing of several markets as a direct result of ongoing VEO violence in the Tillaberi region.<sup>34</sup>

According to USAFRICOM, there is a threat of retaliatory attacks by extremists in Niger due to Niger's participation in the French-led intervention in Mali involvement in the regional fight to counter Boko Haram.<sup>35</sup>

### **Nigeria Mobilizes Vigilante Groups to Contain Violence**

Citing press reports, USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG there were 395 reported kidnappings and 696 insecurity-related deaths in Nigeria, mainly due to historical ethnic tensions and the proliferation of armed groups.<sup>36</sup>

USAFRICOM stated that criminals are targeting prominent politicians and public figures around the country, especially in the northwest, to kidnap them for ransom. It is unclear to what degree, if any, these criminals are part of VEO networks in Nigeria. To counter rampant criminality, some Nigerian state governors created what USAFRICOM termed regionally sponsored vigilante groups to augment police. USAFRICOM assessed these new regional vigilante groups are likely be the "litmus test" for the rest of geopolitical "zones" in Nigeria.<sup>37</sup>

The DIA assessed that Nigeria's overall security situation is stable despite the military's struggles to counter VEOs operating in the northeast part of the country. The DIA said that the military's strategy of consolidating forces into larger, more defensible positions in the northeast has resulted in a reduced threat of mass-casualty attacks from ISIS-West Africa.<sup>38</sup>

However, the DIA added that this new strategy still allows VEOs to continue attacks in the region.<sup>39</sup> USAID told the USAID OIG that the “super camp” strategy—the concentration of forces in large bases—allows violent extremists to control more rural territory and conduct attacks in a wider area, which increases the risks to civilian populations and humanitarian workers.<sup>40</sup>

### **Raid on a Chadian Military Post Kills at Least 92 Soldiers**

On March 23, Boko Haram militants raided a Chadian military base in Bohoma, killing at least 92 soldiers. In response to the massacre, Chadian President Idriss Déby announced a military offensive in coordination with other regional forces that included the deployment of Chadian soldiers to Niger and Nigeria. According to open sources, the Chadian Army claimed that approximately 1,000 Boko Haram fighters were killed in the operation, as well as 52 of its troops.<sup>41</sup>

Following the 10-day operation, President Déby announced that Chad would no longer fight extremists outside its borders.<sup>42</sup> On April 9, President Déby, speaking to a group of Chadian Army officers, expressed frustration over a perceived lack of military support by regional partners and said Chadian military troops would no longer serve outside their nation. In April, the Chadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided a clarification and stated that the president’s comments were taken out of context and interpreted erroneously. In this formal statement, the Chadian government declared its continued commitment to participation in the G5 Sahel Joint Force and UN operations.<sup>43</sup>

### **Boko Haram Expands Attacks in Cameroon**

Boko Haram continued to increase attacks in Cameroon during the quarter. Media reporting in February stated that Boko Haram attacks have displaced more than 3,000 people along Cameroon’s northern border with Nigeria since December 2019 through torching houses, abducting, raping, and looting, all of which create panic among villagers.<sup>44</sup>

Boko Haram’s focus on Cameroon could be related, in part, to ongoing hostilities with ISIS-West Africa in northeast Nigeria because of Boko Haram’s continued indiscriminate violence against Muslims.<sup>45</sup> The governor of Cameroon’s Far North region told the media that the wave of Boko Haram attacks is a consequence of a porous border with Nigeria.<sup>46</sup>

The DIA also reported that violence continued to escalate between the Cameroonian government and the country’s English-speaking minority, which seeks to secede from the country. The conflict, known as the Anglophone crisis, has included indiscriminate attacks against civilians from both sides drawing strong international condemnation, the DIA reported.<sup>47</sup> Armed separatist groups in the Anglophone region commit abuses including killings, mutilations, abductions, and the destruction of healthcare facilities, according to an April Amnesty International report. In response to these actions, the report stated, the Cameroonian military committed murder and burned homes.<sup>48</sup>

Special Operations Command Africa told the DoD OIG that there were no U.S. Special Forces present in Cameroon this quarter.<sup>49</sup>

## PARTNER FORCE DEVELOPMENT

### France Increases Military Presence in West Africa

France leads international counterterrorism operations in West Africa through Operation Barkhane, which operates primarily in the tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. This quarter, the G5 Sahel Joint Force heads of state met in Pau, France, with French President Emmanuel Macron to address rising violence and anti-French sentiment among civilian populations in West Africa.<sup>50</sup>

The G5 Sahel Joint Force is a multinational force launched in 2017 to coordinate counterterrorism operations among member countries. The G5 Sahel Joint Force comprises security personnel from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

Following the summit, the French government committed 600 additional soldiers to fight terrorism in the Sahel, bringing the total number of Operation Barkhane troops to approximately 5,100.<sup>51</sup>

France also announced the creation of Task Force Takuba as part of Operation Barkhane. Task Force Takuba is a European contingent of Special Forces to assist and advise Malian forces and accompany them in combat operations.<sup>52</sup> According to a media report, the Czech Republic planned to send 60 troops to West Africa for deployment through 2022, and Estonia said it would commit 95 troops to Task Force Takuba.<sup>53</sup>

The French Ministry of Armed Forces announced in March that Task Force Takuba would reach full operational capacity in early 2021, according to an analyst report. In addition to France, Estonia, and the Czech Republic, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, and the Netherlands have committed an unspecified number of troops.<sup>54</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that it supports Operation Barkhane by providing airlift, aerial refueling, and other services.<sup>55</sup> This quarter, USAFRICOM assessed that French forces, in collaboration with the G5 Sahel Joint Force (an additional 4,500 troops), are taking

**Guinean Special Forces soldiers conduct battle training with Polish Special Forces during Exercise Flintlock 2020 in Nouakchott, Mauritania. (U.S. Navy photo)**



measured steps to bring together the two organizations under a joint command as expressed in a framework outlined during the Pau summit in January. More specifically, USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that a greater synchronization of planning and execution of operations in the tri-border region of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso has occurred.<sup>56</sup>

USAFRICOM reported that the French have asserted their need for continued U.S. support, but understand it is not “open-ended.” Additionally, the French view a U.S. announcement of reduced support in Africa at this time would negatively affect the momentum for increased European and African support in the Sahel that was established during the Pau summit.<sup>57</sup>

Since 2013, the United States has provided approximately \$200 million under the authority granted in Title 10 U.S.C Section 331, in “non-reimbursable logistics,” including aerial and ground refueling to the French in West Africa, USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG. Additionally, \$41 million is allotted for Fiscal Year 2020.<sup>58</sup>

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it is unable to provide a detailed assessment of which European countries have the capacity—equipment and crews that are ready and available—to replace current U.S. support to French and the G5 Sahel Joint Force operations. There are several nations that have a capacity to provide support, but gaining their support will require a broader diplomatic dialogue.<sup>59</sup> USAFRICOM stated it was unable to assess the impact of the additional French troops that will be deployed to the Sahel.<sup>60</sup>

## **G5 Sahel Joint Force, France Take Steps to Improve Coordination**

USAFRICOM reported that French forces and the G5 Sahel Joint Force made “small strides” to bring the two entities under a joint command structure. Although there have been no permanent changes to either organization, France and G5 Sahel Joint Forces have demonstrated greater synchronization in planning of operations in the tri-border region.<sup>61</sup>

Speaking to Congress in March, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale stated that while the G5 Sahel Joint Force is “not yet able to disrupt the growing terrorist footprint across the Sahel, [it] has potential as a coordination mechanism.” Hale said that the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which plans to hold its first meeting in the region in April, will provide “best practices on intelligence sharing and other counterterrorism tools to the countries of West Africa.”<sup>62</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania, reported that Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani assumed the 1-year rotating presidency of the G5 Sahel organization at the 6th G5 Sahel heads of state summit in Nouakchott on February 25. Ghazouani underlined the need to intensify the joint work begun between the G5 Sahel and its international partners to combat security threats emanating from the region. He highlighted “Youth and Hope” as the theme of Mauritania’s G5 Sahel presidency and its corresponding roadmap aimed at boosting youth employment as the best means to combat terrorism. The roadmap outlines five lines of effort: security and defense, resilience, human development and infrastructure, strengthening of community dialogue, and diplomatic engagement.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to the opening of the G5 Summit, the Sahel Alliance convened its first General Assembly. The Sahel Alliance, launched in July 2017, is an international cooperation

platform to enhance the stability and global development of the Sahel region. Members of the alliance include several European countries, the European Union, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme. The United States participates as an observer nation. The alliance is financing and coordinating more than 730 projects with the G5 Sahel countries to address security, demographic, economic, and social challenges. The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott reported that the alliance has served as a donor coordination mechanism for international partners active in the G5 Sahel countries and is focused on development initiatives.<sup>64</sup>

### **Exercise Flintlock Seeks to Improve Special Operations**

In February, Special Operations Command Africa conducted Exercise Flintlock in Mauritania and Senegal. The annual event, begun in 2005, is a special operations exercise focused on enhancing the ability of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership nations to plan and execute advanced counter-VEO operations in a joint and multinational environment.<sup>65</sup> The DoD said that this year's exercise provided a venue for Morocco and other African countries to assume greater leadership roles and contribute significant resources to Flintlock.<sup>66</sup>

U.S. special operations forces supported Exercise Flintlock in advisory roles. The forces oversaw training and served as liaisons between different participating units. Further, the U.S. forces coordinated aspects of logistics, such as arranging visas and transportation of foreign soldiers in and out of Mauritania and Senegal, the media reported.<sup>67</sup>

DoS Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs R. Clarke Cooper, who delivered remarks at the Exercise Flintlock closing ceremony, described what he considered to be the two highlights of the exercise: 1) Mauritania was the first Flintlock participant nation to operate and maintain its own ISR systems throughout the exercise, and 2) the use of "captured enemy material," taken from the exercise battlefield to support judicial prosecutions of terrorists or those who are facilitating terrorists, supported what he saw as the evolution of the exercise from a purely tactical exercise to one that involved ministerial participation. Cooper attributed the increasing sophistication of the exercise to the DoS Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program, which is a Title 22 program that supports national counterterrorism capacity building.<sup>68</sup>

This quarter, the DoS OIG completed fieldwork related to its audit of the DoS Bureau of African Affairs' monitoring and coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program and anticipates releasing the audit report this summer.<sup>69</sup> For further details, see p. 63.

## **DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **DoS Names Special Envoy for the Sahel Region**

In March, the DoS named Dr. J. Peter Pham the U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region of Africa. The Office of the Special Envoy, part of the DoS Bureau of African Affairs, is responsible for coordinating U.S. engagement with international and regional partners, including the G5 Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, to address



Table 2.

## The following countries participated in Exercise Flintlock 2020

United States	Africa		International
394 U.S. forces from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and interagency partners	Algeria (2)	Guinea Bissau (2)	Austria (17)
	Benin (1)	Liberia (2)	Belgium (21)
	Burkina Faso (76)	Mali (50)	Canada (25)
	Cabo Verde (15)	Mauritania (224)	Czech Republic (9)
	Cameroon (25)	Morocco (43)	France (4)
	Chad (91)	Niger (88)	Germany (14)
	Cote d'Ivoire (2)	Nigeria (43)	Italy (32)
	Egypt (2)	Senegal (108)	Japan (2)
	G5 Sahel (5)	Sierra Leone (2)	Netherlands (35)
	Ghana (1)	Togo (2)	Norway (3)
	Guinea (48)	Tunisia (1)	Poland (21)
			Portugal (11)
			Spain (41)
			United Kingdom (34)

Source: DoD USAFRICOM/J372 Joint Exercises Branch, response to DoD OIG request for information, 20.2 NWA 11, 4/1/2020.

the threat from VEOs and prevent these threats from spreading to additional areas. The special envoy is further tasked to promote the full implementation of the Algiers Accord and regional efforts to stabilize the tri-border region of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.<sup>70</sup>

Dr. Pham has extensive academic and diplomatic experience in West Africa, including as the DoS Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region of Africa.<sup>71</sup> His first in-person engagements in his new role were canceled due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions.<sup>72</sup>

## STABILIZATION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

### USAID Ends OTI Cameroon Program

USAID told the USAID OIG that its Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) programming in northern Cameroon will end in May 2020. Launched in September of 2016, the program was designed to reduce conditions that allow terrorism to flourish in the Lake Chad Basin, especially the Far North region of Cameroon. To support communities in countering violent extremism, OTI engages a broad range of local stakeholders on drivers of extremism, such as youth unemployment, intergenerational divides, and intercommunal conflict. Additionally, with security gains that have allowed for the return of displaced people, OTI supports communities in rehabilitating infrastructure—such as restoring markets, health centers, and roads and installing solar street lamps—and opening dialogue around reintegrating former Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa affiliates.<sup>73</sup>

USAID told the USAID OIG that there were three reasons for its decision to close the OTI Cameroon program. First, OTI programs are designed to be fast, flexible, and short-term, usually lasting 3 to 5 years.<sup>74</sup> The OTI Cameroon program has tested a wide array of program possibilities and created opportunities for other organizations to operate, allowing for organizations with longer-term models to build off OTI's efforts.<sup>75</sup> Second, there were shifts in U.S. Government policy focus in Africa.<sup>76</sup>

Lastly, the Cameroonian government has also shifted its focus to the region impacted by the Anglophone crisis that has resulted in the death of an estimated 3,000 civilians and displaced nearly 730,000 civilians.<sup>77</sup> According to USAID, the Anglophone crisis is evolving into the most destabilizing issue in Cameroon, with the government of Cameroon now focused on containing the violence.<sup>78</sup> Despite the change in priorities, the humanitarian needs in the Far North, the region impacted by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, remain. In the Cameroon 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, the United Nations stated that approximately 1 million people in the Far North need urgent assistance and 490,000 have been displaced due to armed conflict.<sup>79</sup>

USAID reported to the USAID OIG that the OTI Cameroon program is compiling a series of legacy documents to inform future programs. After four years of OTI programming, the documents include a comprehensive local partners catalogue, 24 up-to-date community profiles, best practices for operating in the Far North, lessons learned on a cash-for-work activity, and in-depth analysis on the gaps in trauma awareness and reintegration work.<sup>80</sup> Since there are no USAID direct-hire personnel in Cameroon, the documents have been shared with the U.S. Embassy in Cameroon, UN and European Union programs, and other USAID programs. Additionally, to ensure continuity of some aspects of the programming,

OTI has coordinated closely with other USAID programs, such as providing a radio tower to a Voices for Peace partner radio station in an area that previously did not have access to Cameroonian stations. Voices for Peace is a program designed to amplify local voices of peace and tolerance to counter violent extremism in West Africa.<sup>81</sup>

## Road Insecurity in Nigeria Limits Humanitarian Aid

Overall violence has forced humanitarian organizations in Nigeria to scale down activities and withdraw staff members. Across the three states in northeast Nigeria—Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa—7.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, or more than one in two people. However, humanitarian actors are not able to provide an estimated 1.2 million of those people with humanitarian assistance due in part to the Nigerian government’s prohibition on dialogue with Boko Haram or ISIS-West Africa on humanitarian access and, moreover, the general provision of assistance within areas under the organized armed groups’ control.<sup>82</sup>

Road security, in particular, has become a growing concern. This quarter, there have been an increase in attacks along the road from Maiduguri to Kano, which had been the last remaining safe road connecting Borno to the rest of the country.<sup>83</sup> According to USAID, the increase in road attacks is related to the Nigerian military’s super camp strategy. While consolidated military posts have seen fewer attacks, areas where the Nigerian military has retreated are vulnerable to attacks.<sup>84</sup> A recent report indicated that even that last road is becoming too unsafe for humanitarian actors, who are increasingly traveling to Borno by air, increasing the cost of operations.<sup>85</sup> According to the Council on Foreign Relations, if terrorists destroyed the bridge along the road, Maiduguri would only be accessible by air.<sup>86</sup>

USAID said that it provides funding for United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to transport aid workers and life-saving relief items, and provide medical/casualty and security evacuation service in northeast Nigeria. USAID views UNHAS as a critical, unique partner that is pivotal in mitigating logistical challenges and security risks for humanitarian actors on the ground. In FY 2019, USAID provided \$9.5 million to the World Food Program for UNHAS, emergency telecommunications support, and support for common logistics services for humanitarian operations.<sup>87</sup> In February 2020, UNHAS operated flights for 90 humanitarian organizations, transporting nearly 6,000 humanitarian personnel and approximately 20,000 metric tons of commodities.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, USAID is a member of the Nigeria UNHAS Steering Committee, which meets to review UNHAS operations, challenges, and funding levels, and to provide direction on future requirements and decisions.<sup>89</sup>

## USAID Staff Assess Conditions in Burkina Faso

According to the United Nations, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burkina Faso continues to increase at a rapid pace, with nearly 840,000 IDPs as of March 2020. As of January 2020, there were approximately 610,000 IDPs in Burkina Faso—an increase of approximately 230,000 IDPs in three months, and a nearly six-fold increase from March 2019, when there were approximately 115,000 IDPs.<sup>90</sup>

In February, USAID staff traveled to Burkina Faso to assess the humanitarian conditions there.<sup>91</sup> The delegation observed increasing malnutrition cases, overburdened health facilities with limited access to water, and poor shelter conditions.<sup>92</sup>

USAID reported that, during the visit, USAID implementers and Humanitarian Cluster organizations recommended that aid organizations develop a multi-year response in Burkina Faso, as humanitarian conditions are expected to deteriorate and long-term displacement will increase.<sup>93</sup> To plan for a long-term response with outside organizations, according to USAID, the agency is coordinating with other humanitarian donors at the country, regional, and headquarters levels to raise awareness of the growing crisis, encourage burden sharing, and coordinate limited resources. USAID's outreach and coordination has included InterAction, the largest alliance of nongovernmental organizations active in international development and humanitarian assistance. USAID itself has increased emergency humanitarian assistance funding for activities in the region and is assigning additional staff to Burkina Faso to support the response.<sup>94</sup>

### **Niger: After Reintegration, Defectors and Communities Remain Positive**

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey reported that more than 100 days have passed since Niger's "hallmark" effort to reintegrate 125 Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa defectors into Nigerien communities, and both defectors and local community officials remain supportive of the program. As of the end of the quarter, only one defector had returned to Boko Haram.<sup>95</sup>

DoS-funded partners, such as the UN International Organization for Migration, continued implementing programs focused on disengagement, disassociation, reintegration, and reconciliation in communities impacted by terrorists. The DoS continued to fund Search for Common Ground to implement strategic messaging campaigns in Niger's Diffa region that promote defections and counter the spread of violent extremism. The DoS stated that tailored messages articulating the opportunities to defect, receive rehabilitation, and reunite with families are key tools in curbing VEO capacity to persuade and retain individuals.<sup>96</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Niamey stated that government leaders, along with donors, are convinced the program has begun well and there appears to be broad political will to sustain it; however, responsibility for the program and enduring challenges linked to economic disparity and confusion over the fate of non-Nigerien defectors persisted this quarter.<sup>97</sup>





USAID distributes food to reduce acute food insecurity. (USAID 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 January 1 through March 31, 2020.

### 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 IG FY 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

The Lead IG agencies use dedicated, rotational, and temporary employees, as well as contractors, to conduct oversight projects, investigate fraud and corruption, and provide consolidated planning and reporting on the status of overseas contingency operations. Some oversight staff from the Lead IG agencies are stationed in offices in Germany. Oversight teams from these offices and from offices in the United States travel to Africa to conduct fieldwork for their projects.

However, the coronavirus disease–2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic reduced the Lead IG agencies' ability to conduct oversight on projects related to overseas contingency operations. Due to the evacuation of many deployed staff and country-imposed travel restrictions, some oversight projects by Lead IG agencies have been delayed or deferred. The Lead IG agencies reported that their personnel will be able to conduct some work while teleworking and practicing social distancing, but may consider adjustments in project scope of work or in timelines for completing the oversight work.

Despite these restrictions and limitations, which were imposed relatively late in the quarter, the DoD OIG completed one report related to U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) oversight of the construction of an air base in Niger.

### Final Reports by Lead IG Agencies

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

##### *Evaluation of Niger Air Base 201 Military Construction*

DODIG-2020-077; March 31, 2020

The DoD OIG conducted this evaluation to determine whether USAFRICOM and the Air Force effectively planned, designed, and constructed Air Base 201 to provide airfield and base support infrastructure in support of USAFRICOM operations.

Air Base 201 is a military installation in Agadez, Niger. In November 2015, Congress approved \$50 million of military construction funding in the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act to construct the Air Base 201 airfield and base camp. One of the purposes of the airbase is to carry out intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

The DoD OIG determined that USAFRICOM and the Air Force did not adequately oversee and coordinate with stakeholders on the delivery of Air Base 201.

As a result, the airfield and base camp needed to support the USAFRICOM ISR mission was delayed by almost 3 years from the original planned date of completion.

The DoD OIG made 10 recommendations, including for the Air Force to identify oversight responsibilities when troop labor construction projects are planned and programmed at the major command level, and for U.S. Air Forces in Europe–Air Forces Africa (AFAFRICA) Commander to conduct a review of records management to improve internal controls and maintenance of critical records on troop labor construction, planning, programming, and implementation.

USAFRICOM and the AFAFRICA Commander disagreed with the overall finding, stating that USAFRICOM and the Air Force accomplished the construction of an ISR and C-17 capable airfield in an operationally challenging environment with changing requirements during the construction period. However, management agreed to take action on 9 of the 10 recommendations. One recommendation remains unresolved.

The full report is considered “for official use only” and the publicly released report is redacted.

### Ongoing and Planned Oversight Activities

As of March 31, 2020, 22 projects related to the East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations were ongoing, and 12 were planned. The ongoing projects are related to readiness, security, foreign assistance, and support to U.S. missions.

Table 3.

#### Ongoing Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of March 31, 2020

##### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***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.

***Evaluation of Combatant Command 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. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command are planning and executing counter threat finance activities to impact adversaries’ ability to use financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests.

***Evaluation of U.S. Central Command Kinetic Targeting Processes and Reporting Procedures***

To evaluate U.S. Central Command’s target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***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.

***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.

***Inspection of Bureau of Counterterrorism***

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

***Inspection of the Libya External Office***

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

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***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 the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Approach to Identifying and Communicating Construction Project Risks, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned***

To determine whether the DoS administered the design and construction contract for the New Office Annexes at Embassies Amman and Nairobi in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation and whether the contractor fulfilled the contract terms and conditions.

***Inspection of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Special Program for Embassy Augmentation Response***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Special Program for Embassy Augmentation Response.

***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.

***Inspection of U.S. Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland***

To evaluate the programs and operations of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

***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.

***Audit of Department of State's Post Security Program Review Process***

To determine whether the DoS Bureau of Diplomatic Security manages the Post Security Program Review process in accordance with DoS policies and guidelines.

## 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.

**Audit of USAID's Reliance in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) Project**

To assess 1) to what extent USAID designed and monitored the implementation of RISE I activities to align with its resilience policy goals; and 2) to what extent USAID incorporated lessons learned from RISE I into RISE II.

**Audit of USAID's Contract Termination Practices**

To assess 1) USAID's procedures guiding acquisition award terminations, and 2) if selected acquisition awards were terminated in accordance with established requirements.

**Audit of the USAID Compliance with the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014**

To what extent has USAID designated high priority countries and allocated water access, sanitation, and hygiene funding based on the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014.

Table 4.

**Planned Oversight Projects by Lead IG Agency, as of March 31, 2020**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**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 the U.S. Africa Command Support to Foreign Partners for Counterterrorism Operations**

The objective of this project is classified.

**Evaluation of Al Dhafra Air Base United Arab Emirates Fueling Facilities**

To determine whether the Air Force effectively maintains the fueling facilities located at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, to support the U.S. Central Command refueling missions, and that these refueling facilities do not pose health, safety, or environmental risks.

**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.

**Evaluation of the Combatant Commands' Intelligence Interrogation Approaches and Techniques**

To determine whether U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command oversight of intelligence interrogations adheres to applicable DoD policies and regulations, and the overall effect of these policies and regulations on the interrogation process.

**Evaluation of Kinetic Targeting Processes in the U.S. Africa Command Area of Responsibility**

To evaluate U.S. Africa Command's target development and prosecution processes, as well as post-strike collateral damage and civilian casualty assessment activities.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

***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 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 (DCIS, the DoD OIG's criminal investigative division), the DoS OIG, USAID OIG, the Army Criminal Investigative Command, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations.

However, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, DCIS is continually monitoring the health and welfare of the personnel performing DCIS's mission in the USAFRICOM area of operation. DoS OIG investigators based in Frankfurt have been teleworking from their residences. USAID investigators have been similarly affected by the outbreak.

During this quarter, Lead IG investigations resulted in an agreement for a contractor to restore back pay to employees following a trafficking in persons investigation. DCIS and NCIS conducted the investigation into allegations about companies failing to pay their employees for work performed under two contracts awarded by Naval Facilities Engineering Command, at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. On January 23, 2020, the prime contractor agreed to pay about \$229,970 in back pay owed to 31 subcontractor employees.

During the quarter, the investigative branches of the Lead IG agencies and their partner agencies coordinated on 17 open investigations related to the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and 2 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 one case related to the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation to Lead IG agencies and other investigative organizations.





Grade One students at Mohamud Hilowle Primary and Secondary School in Mogadishu, Somalia. (AMISOM photo)

# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A

### Classified Appendix to this Report

This unclassified report normally includes a classified appendix that provides additional information about the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lead IG agencies did not prepare a classified appendix this quarter.

## 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 Chair of the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) designated the Department of Defense (DoD) IG as the Lead IG for the 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 January 1 through March 31, 2020.

To fulfill its congressional mandate to produce a quarterly report the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, the Lead IG agencies gather 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, and 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 agencies gather information from the DoD, DoS, USAID, and other 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 reporting and oversight planning.

#### 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 send 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	
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BUILD	Bringing Unity, Integrity, and Legitimacy to Democracy
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
COVID-19	coronavirus disease-2019
CVE	counter violent extremism
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DCIS	Defense Criminal Investigative Service
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EUTM-S	European Union Training Mission in Somalia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FY	fiscal year
GNA	Government of National Accord
IED	improvised explosive device
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JNIM	Jama'at Nasr al Islam wal Muslimin

Acronym	
JTTF-K	Joint Terrorism Task Force-Kenya
KM	kilometer
LNA	Libya National Army
LOE	line of effort
MD	McDonnell Douglas
MoD	Ministry of Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIEC	National Independent Electoral Commission
NIWETU	Kenya NiWajibu Wetu program
OCO	overseas contingency operation
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PPE	personal protective equipment
PM	Program Management
RISE	Reliance in the Sahel Enhanced project
SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
SNA	Somali National Army
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNSMIL	UN Support Mission in Libya
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VEO	violent extremist organization





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