IN BRIEF

East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations

This is the 8th quarterly report submitted by the Lead Inspector General for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. This report summarizes the quarter’s key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to degrade and contain al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations (VEO), in designated areas of Africa.

Violence Continues, Despite COVID-19

• USAFRICOM observed no changes in VEO violence or tactics due to COVID-19.
• USAFRICOM provided reduced or remote advising to African partners to lower the risk of COVID-19.

Al-Shabaab Continues Insurgent-Style Attacks in East Africa

• Al-Shabaab conducted multiple targeted killings in Mogadishu and mortar attacks on the city’s airport where the U.S. Embassy is located.
• Violence declined slightly in the Somalia-Kenya border region despite weekly al-Shabaab attacks.
• USAFRICOM cited adverse weather and resource allocation for decreased airstrikes in Somalia.

USAID Increases Funding for COVID-19 Response

• USAID allocated $17.6 million in COVID-19 aid to Somalia and $66.7 million to the Lake Chad region and central Sahel states.
• Administrative hurdles, additional layers of approval, and inconsistent guidance slowed USAID’s COVID-19 humanitarian response.
• Nigeria’s military has increased harassment of healthcare workers since the onset of the virus.

ISIS-Libya Resumes Attacks in North Africa

• ISIS-Libya conducted its first attacks in more than a year in Libya’s desert region, including small arms attacks targeting the Libyan National Army (LNA) and civilians.
• USAFRICOM monitored VEOs in Libya remotely although it did not use aerial or ground intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in Libya during the quarter.
• ISIS-Libya has remained significantly degraded since U.S. airstrikes in 2019 killed a large number of fighters, including several high-value targets.

Foreign Interference Complicates Libyan Civil War

• USAFRICOM released images of Russian combat jets and equipment supporting Wagner Group mercenaries and their LNA allies.
• Russia supported approximately 3,000 Wagner Group mercenaries and approximately 2,000 Syrian mercenaries in Libya during the quarter.
• The LNA lost territory around Tripoli. The Government of National Accord (GNA) discovered mass graves in areas previously controlled by the LNA.
• DoS diplomatic efforts focused on achieving a UN-led ceasefire and solution to the Libyan civil conflict.

Violence Grows in West Africa Despite CT Successes

• VEO violence remained uncontained as extremist groups expanded operations in the Western Sahel and coastal states.
• In June, a French-led, U.S.-supported operation in Mali killed a top al-Qaeda leader in Africa.
• A Chadian operation killed a large number of Boko Haram fighters in April.

Oversight

• Lead IG agencies completed 16 reports related to these operations, including the DoS’s oversight and management of related foreign assistance programs.