



IN BRIEF

East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations

This is the 6th quarterly report—and the first unclass quarterly report—submitted by the Lead Inspector General for the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation summarizes the quarter’s key events and oversight of the U.S. mission to degrade al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other terrorist groups in designated areas of Africa.

Al Shabaab Increased Attacks in East Africa

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- On January 5, an al Shabaab attack on Kenya’s Manda Bay Airfield **killed 3 U.S. military personnel**.
- On December 30, an al Shabaab **truck bomb** in Mogadishu killed at least 90 people.
- Al Shabaab’s emir called for priority **targeting of Americans** and U.S. interests following the September 30th attack on Baledogle Airfield in Somalia.
- The DIA assessed that the **threat from al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia** remains “high.”

Surge of Terrorist Attacks Took Heavy Toll in West Africa

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- VEOs killed at least **230 soldiers** in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger this quarter by VEOs.
- The UN envoy to West Africa said more than **4,000 civilian and military deaths** due to terrorism were reported in 2019 in those three countries.
- USAFRICOM stated that VEOs in the Sahel and Lake Chad region were **neither degraded nor contained**.

Humanitarian Efforts Face Lack of Security and Increasing Displacement

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- Humanitarian organizations **suspended programming** in Mali due to increasing violence.
- USAID efforts in Nigeria were hindered by **interference from the Nigerian government**.
- In Somalia, security restrictions **undermined USAID’s ability to directly monitor its programs**.
- The number of people **internally displaced** due to insecurity in Burkina Faso **increased tenfold** in the past year.

AQIM, ISIS-Libya Degraded in North Africa but Russia Impedes U.S. CT Mission

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- ISIS-Libya and AQIM **did not claim any attacks** following U.S. airstrikes over Libya in September.
- Despite a reduced VEO threat, USAFRICOM said that not having forces in Libya due to the Libyan civil war creates the **risk of an ISIS-Libya resurgence**.
- A significant increase in **Russian mercenary forces** fighting in the Libyan civil conflict threatened future U.S. counterterrorism operations.
- USAFRICOM blamed Russian mercenaries for **shooting down a U.S. drone** near Tripoli.

DoD Reviews Focus and Footprint Of U.S. Presence in Africa

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- The DoD is **reviewing its deployment of resources and personnel to Africa** as part of a Defense Wide Review of all combatants commands.
- Secretary of State Pompeo announced that the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS will **focus more on Africa**.
- USAFRICOM identified competition with **China and Russia** as a key challenge in Africa.
- A large area of responsibility and **competition for limited resources** challenge USAFRICOM’s mission.

Lead IG Oversight Activity

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- Lead IG agencies **completed 7 reports**, including inspections of the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania and U.S. Embassy in N’Djamena Chad, where management of foreign assistance grants **did not meet standards**.
- Lead IG and partner agencies initiated **6 new investigations**, coordinated on 24 open investigations, and planned 15 oversight projects.