



IN BRIEF

East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations

This is the 7th 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 al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates, and other violent extremist organizations (VEO) in designated areas of Africa.

COVID-19 Disrupts U.S. Government Activities in Africa

pp. 12-14

- USAFRICOM **canceled 2 multinational exercises and paused some assistance** this quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The DoS issued authorized departure guidance allowing staff to return to the United States.
- Staffing **constraints** overseas and **restrictions** on USAID's ability to procure and distribute commodities complicated USAID pandemic response efforts.
- USAFRICOM did not observe any **changes in VEO activity** in East Africa or West Africa as a result of the pandemic during the quarter.
- Congress appropriated more than **\$12 billion in emergency funds** to the DoD, DoS, and USAID to respond to the pandemic.

Al Shabaab Attacks Manda Bay

pp. 20-21

- On January 5, al Shabaab attacked an airfield located on Manda Bay, Kenya, **killing 1 U.S. soldier and 2 DoD contractors**.
- USAFRICOM said that al Shabaab "remains **adaptive, resilient, and capable of attacking** U.S. partner interests in Somalia and East Africa."
- In an airstrike, USAFRICOM killed the al Shabaab operative who planned the Manda Bay attack.

Security Institutions in East Africa Show Limited Improvement

pp. 25-30

- The Somali National Army (SNA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) **successfully liberated Janaale**, a stronghold of al Shabaab.
- SNA administrative capacity remains weak and AMISOM **struggles to plan** operations.
- The DoS and FBI partnered to create a **Joint Terrorism Task Force** in Kenya.

Civil War in Libya Continues

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- There **were no VEO attacks in Libya** during the quarter; however, suicide bombers targeted a security checkpoint outside the U.S. Embassy in Tunis.
- Representatives from both sides of the civil conflict met in Berlin in January but did not reach a political resolution.
- As many as **2,500 fighters** from the Wagner Group, a **Russian paramilitary** company, and **3,800 Syrian fighters** were in Libya during the quarter supporting opposing sides in the conflict.

VEOs in West Africa Consolidate, Increase Attacks

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- Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) described the Sahel as a region of "**metastasizing militant networks**" as VEO attacks in the region **increased** during the quarter.
- Several partner nations in the Sahel and Lake Chad region took steps to address the VEO threat, including the **creation of auxiliary forces** in Burkina Faso and Nigeria.
- France, which leads international counterterrorism efforts in the region, announced that it would **send 600 additional troops to West Africa**.

Insecurity Undermines Humanitarian Response

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- Insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic complicated efforts to address a **locust swarm** that has destroyed agricultural crops and livelihoods in East Africa.
- In Nigeria, humanitarian actors increasingly relied on air transport because of increasing **VEO attacks on roads**.
- USAID prepared to close its Office of Transition Initiatives programs in Somalia and Cameroon.

Oversight

pp. 60-67

- This quarter, the DoD OIG released a report on **USAFRICOM oversight and construction of Air Base 201 in Niger**.
- Lead IG agencies had **22** ongoing projects and **12** planned projects related to these operations.