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### MISSION STATEMENT

The Africa Faith and Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, seeks to educate and advocate for just relations with Africa and to work in partnership with African peoples as they engage in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

Moved to action by their personal experiences in Africa, three Catholic missionary congregations namely the Missionaries of Africa, the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritains), and the Society of African Missions, founded the Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) in 1983 to transform United States policy towards Africa and her people. Since that time, membership has grown and remains committed in faith to advocate in Washington, DC for U.S. relations with Africa that foster justice and peace, and to educate the public across the United States on the truth about Africa.

## U.S. Military Presence and Activity in Africa

By Brandon Beck, Research Intern



In March 2018, General Thomas D. Waldhauser, Commander of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), testified in front of the House Armed Services Committee, as he gave the command's annual Posture Statement to Congress. Part of the importance behind military Generals testifying before Congress is to consider funding for various national defense and military

operations. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 was in question during this time, which eventually received the number of votes to be passed. The F.Y. 2019 defense spending budget is \$716 billion, an \$82 billion increase from 2017 and the highest at any time other than the height of the Iraq war.

General Waldhauser began by noting the 10-year anniversary of U.S. Africa Command, and that it continues to promote security and stability of Africa and its people. He stated general information about AFRICOM, such as the 7,200 U.S. uniformed personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and contractors that work on any given day. However, he was quick to declare that “none of Africa’s challenges can be resolved through the use of military force as the primary agent of change.” Therefore, AFRICOM’s strategic theme explained by General Waldhauser is the *By, With, and Through* framework. The central idea behind this framework is based on the U.S.’s role being a supporting role, “not as principal participants in armed conflict.” Operations are to be carried out *by* partnered security forces, *with* partnered security forces based on their operational needs, and *through* cooperative relationships in which AFRICOM plays a supporting role. This grand strategy is based on the motive to find “African solutions to African problems.”

AFRICOM’s *By, With, and Through* strategy seems reasonable and promising, yet a careful examination of the U.S.’s past and present military operations undertaken by AFRICOM prove that the strategy not effective.

## SAHEL REGION



General Waldhauser's brief but important examination of the Sahel region is centered around the "African-led, French-assisted, and U.S.-supported" G5 Sahel organization, which includes the countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The stated purpose of the joint force is to "combat violent extremism within the region." In 2017, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis stated that there are 1,000 personnel in the Sahel region. The reoccurring dialogue in this matter is that the U.S.'s role in this region in particular is "to advise, assist, and train African militaries," but to not be involved in combat. However, one Department of Defense think tank noted how "It's hard to say it's not a combat mission when there's the potential for conflict and combat as they accompany these African troops" (NPR). This reality is most clearly seen in the killing of four U.S. troops in Niger in October 2017.

General Waldhauser gives a significant amount of attention to **Niger** in his statement. Aside from Niger's internal governance and development issues, the presence of Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, ISIS-Greater Sahara, and other affiliated extremist groups are the driving forces behind the regional instability. The Department of Defense recently increased the scope and support of Title 10 of the U.S. Code, which outlines the role of the armed forces (DNI). Left open-ended and with unspecified statistics, there is still limited knowledge on the scope of U.S. intervention in Niger. There are an estimated 800 troops on the ground in Niger (CNN). However, General Waldhauser again claimed that "the U.S. military does not have a direct combat mission in Niger." Outside of this, AFRICOM has "provided training and equipment" to the Nigerien Armed Forces and "advises and assists" the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership. Finally, AFRICOM is currently moving its drone base from Niamey to the city of Agadez, Niger. This is considered a pivotal development, as Agadez's central location provides for surveillance over a larger area.

The other countries in the Sahel region are not considered as important or receive as much attention as Niger, but they have significant characteristics of the region as a whole as well as purposes for the U.S. military. **Mali**, which borders Niger to the west, is characterized by similar Nigerien conflicts. Al-Qaeda and ISIS-Greater Sahara are the two most active terrorist organizations operating in Mali. General Waldhauser does not mention any specific U.S. aid or involvement aside from AFRICOM's commitment to "assisting the French-led operations."

Similarly, the U.S. military is training and equipping the army in **Burkina Faso** for counterterrorism operations and logistics. The country also borders Mali to the southwest. General Waldhauser mentioned two recent attacks in Burkina Faso in 2018, one on the Burkinabe Army Headquarters and the other on the French Embassy. Perhaps this will lead to increased activity and U.S. aid for our French allies in Burkina Faso.

Finally, **Chad** is another important country in central Africa in terms of its geographical location, regional conflicts, and accessibility of U.S. military forces. In October 2017, the U.S. Army released a statement that it is "boosting its security efforts" in the region to help in the fighting against extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. No explicit number of troops was mentioned, nor scope of military activity. General Waldhauser's AFRICOM stated was similar, as he said that U.S. is focused on "logistics, sustainment, and maintenance with the

"US has hundreds of troops in Niger. Here's why" <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/10/politics/niger-american-troops-presence/index.html>

"Department of Defense Title 10 Authorities" <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/ic-legal-reference-book/department-of-defense-title-10-authorities>  
The U.S. Military In Africa: A Discreet Presence In Many Places." <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/20/558757043/the-u-s-military-in-africa-a-discreet-presence-in-many-places>

"3 Green Berets killed in ambush in Niger" <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/04/politics/us-forces-hostile-fire-niger/index.html>

Chadian Special Anti-Terrorism Group (SATG).” Also, the U.S. military is providing intelligence, border surveillance and counter-IED capabilities, training soldiers, and equipping the National Army with sixty light armored vehicles.

## WEST AFRICA



AFRICOM’s role and objectives in the West Africa region are directly equivalent to those in the Sahel Region. Stated by Gen. Waldhauser, its principal strategic objective is to “contain and degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa.” An important part of the area, called the Lake Chad Region, includes four countries surrounding Lake Chad—Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The main operation in this region is the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), composed of forces from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger,

and Nigeria. According to Gen. Waldhauser, AFRICOM provides advisors, intelligence, training, and equipment “instead of engaging in direct military operations.” The U.S. forces share intelligence and information with the task force, as well as supporting USAID to “work closely with the UN and NGOs to provide humanitarian development assistance, and stability to the region.” Again, a broad claim of “providing stability to the region” poses the question and concern of how many troops, their roles and activities, and the threat and danger they face. Also, AFRICOM plans to expand counter-IED (improvised explosive device) training and equipping programs in the entire Lake Chad region.

The only country explicitly stated and examined in General Waldhauser’s statement is **Nigeria**. While refraining from providing any number of troops or operations in the country, Gen. Waldhauser mentions the U.S.’s role of intelligence sharing and counterterrorism efforts in Nigeria. Nigeria is a key focus of U.S. activity in Africa as a whole, as Nigeria has large oil industries and is the biggest economy on the continent.

Even though General Waldhauser’s statement on AFRICOM’s current goals and operations in West Africa only mention Nigeria (and the Lake Chad Region as a whole), there are several other areas of operation. For example, the U.S. Army released a statement in November 2017, noting the creation of a new output to fight Boko Haram in **Cameroon**.

The question to consider at this point is whether or not AFRICOM is operating in other West African countries. It is clear that in the Lake Chad Region (Sahel region), the U.S. is heavily present and active. U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis even said in October 2017 that the U.S. military has more than 1,000 personnel in the region, referencing the area that includes Niger as well as Mali and Nigeria (CBS News). But do the U.S. station troops and conduct operations in neighboring countries in West Africa, such as Ghana and Guinea? Without any information from AFRICOM or any reporting, this may never be known.



## NORTH AFRICA



**Morocco** is defined in positive light by General Waldhauser, as it has the ability to “operate and maintain advanced U.S. equipment” and seeks to “increase interoperability with U.S. and NATO forces.” It’s geographical location largely contributes to this, as it is on the Northwest coast of Africa, it borders the Mediterranean Sea, and it is close to Western Europe. According to AFRICOM, Morocco has been a common destination of U.S. Navy for joint practices and exercises. Regarding **Tunisia and Algeria**, the common theme is the threat of Libya, which borders both

countries. The U.S. considers Algeria a “highly capable partner in North Africa,” as it has significant counterterrorism programs against extremist groups, according to AFRICOM. General Waldhauser did not mention any sort of presence of U.S. troops in Algeria, yet reports have shown the deployment of troops in Algeria following the deaths of four U.S. soldiers in Niger last year (North Africa Post) .

Tunisia plays an even bigger role in counterterrorism and border security with Libya. The U.S. has provided Tunisia with funding for its border security projects, which is set to “provide fixed radar and camera coverage of the Tunisia-Libya border in November 2018.” General Waldhauser also claimed that the U.S. has “trained and equipped special operations forces.” Again, there is no declaration of any sort of base or number of U.S. troops in Tunisia. This is worrisome, considering that the Tunisian Special Forces have begun to engage in attacks against terrorists—and since we trained these forces, how can we be sure that U.S. forces aren’t involved in these exercises? The short answer is that we can only know if the government tells the American people the truth. Another story such as the death of four U.S. soldiers in Niger last year is not the way the public and other branches of government should have to find out about U.S. troops presence anywhere.

Without dwelling on the prior U.S. intervention in **Libya** in 2011, the U.S. currently plays a quiet but important role in the country. While UN initiatives are aimed at the continuation of the political reconciliation and stability process in Libya, the U.S. AFRICOM has two primarily military objectives: to degrade terrorist groups who threaten U.S. interests and threaten to destabilize Libya and the region, and to avert civil war. ISIS-Libya, al-Qaeda, and other extremist groups are currently dispersed throughout Libya, which contribute to the unstable and divided political and military climate. There is no question that the U.S. (not just AFRICOM) is deeply concerned with the risk of full-scale civil war in Libya. Though Libya is another African country where the U.S. does not have any official military base (particularly since the closing of the Benghazi diplomatic compound after the 2012 attack) in or stated number of troops in, it is clear that it is an extremely important aspect of U.S. involvement in Africa. There are spontaneous air strikes in the country as well, reported by AFRICOM.

One important North African country that General Waldhauser refrained from mentioning is **Egypt**. There are no official reports, bases, or operations of U.S. military activity in Egypt. However, the U.S. Army National Guard recently deployed 200 soldiers to Sinai, Egypt, to assist the Multinational Force and Observers, the peacekeeping force which oversees the terms of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty (Egypt Independent). Also, Egypt receives the fourth most amount of military aid from the U.S., behind Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel.

“Has the US Deployed Soldiers in Algeria?” <http://northafricapost.com/22650-us-deployed-soldiers-algeria.html>

“200 US soldiers to deploy in Sinai for 9 months: US National Guard”<http://www.egyptindependent.com/200-us-soldiers-deploy-sinai-9-months-us-national-guard/>

## EAST AFRICA



General Waldhauser began by addressing Somalia and the country's ongoing conflict, including al-Shabaab's ongoing violent extremism and the emergence of ISIS-Somalia in the north. In 2017, al-Shabaab led an attack in Mogadishu which killed over 500 people. It is reported that in the civil war-ravaged country, the U.S. has recently begun to play a bigger role. Though not stated in the posture statement, it is reported that more than 500 U.S. troops are stationed in Somalia (Newsweek). This number is the

largest since the 1993 Black Hawk Down catastrophe. General Waldhauser did, however, note the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Danab Advanced Infantry Battalion in southern Somalia. Also, recent U.S. military activity in Somalia has been seen by the use of air/drone strikes. Since February 2018, seven strikes have been reported by AFRICOM, though investigators claim the number is over fifteen strikes (Bureau of Investigative Journalism). Though General Waldhauser claims to recognize that security and peace "must come from Somali citizens" themselves, the increased military action in the country has raised questions about the legitimacy of AFRICOM's *By, With, and Through* strategy.

In Djibouti, General Waldhauser referred to our relationship as strong, and he said that security and access to Djibouti are a top priority. Camp Lemonnier is the only permanent U.S. military base in Africa and is significant for numerous reasons. Djibouti borders Somalia, an area of perhaps the most current military conflict on the continent. Also, Djibouti's placement on the horn of Africa is important because of its place in the Gulf of Aden and proximity to the Arabian Peninsula. It is reported that over 2,000 troops occupy Camp Lemonnier, about one-fourth of the total number of U.S. troops on the continent (CBS News).

South Sudan is an extremely unstable country, as it has been involved in civil war since 2013. Over 2 million people have been internally displaced and another 2 million people are refugees (Human Rights Watch). General Waldhauser did not mention any sort of military presence or activity in the country, and there have been no reports of such activity in South Sudan since the evacuation of marines from the U.S. embassy in South Sudan in 2014 (NBC News). However, General Waldhauser claimed that the U.S. "stands ready to assist [U.S. Embassy Juba] should the situation on the ground necessitate our support."

In Ethiopia, the U.S. has a strong and longstanding partnership with this country, according to General Waldhauser. Aside from the fact that Ethiopia is the destination of more U.S. aid than any other African country (\$933 million in 2017, according to USAID), Ethiopia maintains the strongest military in East Africa and the 6<sup>th</sup> strongest on the entire continent (Global Fire Power). This is largely due to U.S. assistance in terms of equipment and training. General Waldhauser reported that Ethiopia contributes over 4,000 uniformed personnel to AMISOM, the active African Union & UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. This shows Ethiopia's regional power and influence. Also, Ethiopia was home to a U.S. drone base from 2011 to 2016, which is reported to have been used primarily to deliver strikes in Somalia (BBC).

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/south-sudan>

"US Embassy personnel evacuated from South Sudan" <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/us-embassy-personnel-evacuated-south-sudan-n3616>

[https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/ETH?fiscal\\_year=2017&implementing\\_agency\\_id=1&measure=Obligations](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/ETH?fiscal_year=2017&implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Obligations)

"US shuts drone base in Ethiopia" <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35220279>

<http://www.newsweek.com/trump-doubles-us-forces-somalia-fight-isis-and-al-shabab-most-black-hawk-down-716923>

"US sends its special forces as Africa's jihadist threat grows" <https://the arabweekly.com/us-sends-its-special-forces-africas-jihadist-threat-grows>

<https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>

The final two countries mentioned in General Waldhauser's testimony are **Kenya and Uganda**. Mentioned in terms of their "capacity for counterterrorism operations," both countries have been active in fighting against al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. Both countries have small but growing militaries, as they receive more and more U.S. military assistance. In Kenya and Uganda are where General Waldhauser most explicitly notes U.S. military assistance: both countries receive helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and other reconnaissance platforms; Kenya receive guided strike capabilities; and the U.S. is "developing air-ground integration mentorship programs to optimize the impact of these tools." In addition, the U.S. is also known to be also

<https://the arabweekly.com/us-sends-its-special-forces-africas-jihadist-threat-grows>

"Somalia: Reported US actions 2018" <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/drone-war/data/somalia-reported-us-actions-2018>  
<http://www.newsweek.com/trump-doubles-us-forces-somalia-fight-isis-and-al-shabab-most-black-hawk-down-716923>