

STATEMENT OF  
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COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the efforts of U.S. Africa Command to protect and promote U.S. vital interests in Africa. At the outset, I want to remember the soldiers in Niger and Navy SEAL in Somalia we lost during operations in the past year. These brave men epitomize the U.S. Africa Command standard to which we all strive in the service of our country. I offer my sincere condolences to the families for their losses. I have reviewed the contents and signed the results of the Niger investigation, which are currently with the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense. Upon completion of the briefings to the families, our intent is to provide a full and comprehensive briefing to this committee as soon as practical. I also want to recognize all the families who stand with us and support the U.S. Africa Command mission across the continent. On any given day, up to 7,200 U.S. uniformed personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and contractors are in Africa representing all services, career fields, and specialties, protecting our national security and working tirelessly to tackle the many challenges on the African continent. Since I last spoke with this committee, the U.S. Africa Command team has made significant progress with our U.S.-Africa strategy and with building the defense capacity of our African partners. I am truly honored to lead this team and its efforts in a very dynamic strategic environment.

In 2008, U.S. Africa Command was established as the first fully integrated interagency combatant command; its purpose was to foster U.S. long-term, security engagement in Africa. As we commemorate our Ten Year Anniversary, U.S. Africa Command continues to enhance the security and stability of Africa and its people. While our area of responsibility covers 53 countries with complex and varied issues, our mission is clear: *U.S. Africa Command, with*

*partners, strengthens security forces, counters transnational threats, and conducts crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.*

African nations—their people, their increasing appetite for democratic principles, their growing economic impact and potential in global markets—remain an enduring interest for the United States. U.S. Africa Command supports our African partners in building the capability and the capacity to develop local solutions to radicalization, destabilization, and persistent conflict. By making targeted investments and maintaining strong partnerships, we can set the basic security conditions needed for good governance and development to take root. Africa, our allies, the U.S., and the world stand to benefit from a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa.

To achieve this end state, the United States must remain engaged in Africa. In the long term, U.S. interests in Africa are best served by stable nations with effective, accountable governments, well-trained and disciplined militaries, and growing economies. None of Africa's challenges can be resolved through the use of military force as the primary agent of change. Therefore, our first strategic theme is that U.S. Africa Command activities directly support U.S. diplomatic and development efforts in Africa. Working with our interagency partners—primarily the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—is a core tenet of our strategic approach in Africa. In addition, U.S. Africa Command works alongside the African Union, the European Union, regional African economic and security communities, and the United Nations. Together, to provide alternatives to those who might otherwise be attracted to extreme ideologies, we work to develop government accountability, increase education opportunities, and develop strong economies. Further, to professionalize security forces, U.S. Africa Command provides human rights training to make forces more

accountable to the people and lessen the abuses and drivers of radicalization among the civilian populations. Only by partnering with interested stakeholders can long-term U.S. strategic goals be achieved.

U.S. Africa Command's second strategic theme is our focus on the *By, With, and Through* framework. This is a strategic approach that emphasizes U.S. military capabilities employed in a supporting role, not as principal participants in armed conflict. Security operations are executed almost exclusively by the partnered security forces. U.S. Africa Command works with partnered security forces based on their operational needs. The vital objectives of the U.S. and the partnered nation are achieved through a cooperative relationship in which U.S. Africa Command plays a supporting role. African leaders tell us how important it is to develop "African solutions to African problems." The framework of *By, With, and Through* recognizes the importance of partner ownership, which in turn, fosters enduring relationships.

## **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

African agriculture, financial services, manufacturing, and construction are promising sectors attracting international trade and investment. The U.S., therefore, is not the only prospective partner in Africa. We seek constructive, results-oriented relationships with other foreign interests who wish to develop Africa's infrastructure and tackle humanitarian and security issues. We must, however, be aware of interests that run counter to our own, as a larger number of external actors take a great interest in Africa. Though some of their actions contribute to Africa's infrastructure and defense, some of these actors are impeding the continent's long-term stability, economic growth and financial independence. Moreover, external actors may diminish U.S. influence by undermining our development and diplomatic efforts in Africa, and we share this message with our African partners during all levels of engagement. Nonetheless,

as the strategic environment becomes more crowded and competitive, our engagement with external actors, like China and Russia, will continue with an open and clear discussion of intersecting interests and differences.

Extremes in poverty, limited infrastructure, predatory governance, inadequate health care, and in many cases, violent ideology, exist throughout Africa juxtaposed with enormous economic potential and strategic opportunity. This volatile environment creates instability and uncertainty and allows violent extremist organizations (VEOs) to grow and recruit from disenfranchised populations. Keeping military pressure on this VEO network is our third strategic theme. This cycle of disenfranchisement and recruitment feeds extremist movements that aspire to spread their violent ideology. For instance, a youth population with significant unemployment and who are being harassed by predatory and rights-abusing governments and security forces create the perfect hotbed in which to garner ideological support and recruit fighters who will target our partners, allies, and U.S. interests. VEOs also utilize existing illicit networks to move drugs, weapons and persons across the continent. They foment fear and distrust which undermine governments, and when combined with the despair caused by lack of hope for the future, provide for VEO expansion. These VEOs are a significant threat to our partners, allies, and U.S. interests on the continent.

Conflict, instability, and lack of economic opportunity in multiple regions across the continent lead to large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and migrants. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Africa has approximately 18.5 million people categorized as refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and stateless persons as of January 2017. The continent hosts 30% of the world's displaced people, more than any other continent. In 2016, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

estimated there are more than 1.6 million new asylum requests worldwide, and of these, almost 1.2 million were registered in European countries. In Africa, many countries do not have the infrastructure necessary to absorb large influxes of refugees and displaced persons. These large numbers may destabilize already tenuous social, economic, and political institutions and further stress poor populations.

In Africa, weak and ineffective governance is the leading cause of state fragility. According to the 2017 Fund for Peace “Fragile State Index,” 15 of the 25 most fragile countries in the world are in Africa. While governance is not the primary mission of U.S. Africa Command, we recognize building legitimate defense institutions is critical for African governments that prioritize the security of their citizens over that of the state. Therefore, we work in concert with the Department of State, and other partners, to develop human rights-respecting security forces and inspire them to pursue military professionalism in their own institutions. For example, this past November, we hosted an African Senior Enlisted Leader conference to discuss the importance and value of enlisted leadership in the military ranks with noncommissioned officers (NCOs) from nineteen of our African partners. Empowering these NCOs is crucial to strengthening partner militaries, as enlisted force leaders are closest to the soldiers in the field and can relate to them in ways difficult for officers to match. For example, enlisted force leaders work to get soldiers paid on time, remove and reduce corruption, and continue to act as positive role models within their community.

U.S. Africa Command conducts Military Information Support Operations (MISO) to advise and assist partners in countries such as Kenya, Niger, and Nigeria to enable their counter-VEO messaging and enhance their security operations. MISO empowers the government’s ability to increase its outreach to the population and counter adversarial messaging.

## COMMAND APPROACH

### THEATER STRATEGY

Transnational VEOs are not only the most direct threat to U.S. interests in Africa, but also a threat to stability across the continent. Just as the threat on the ground evolves, so too does our Strategy. U.S. Africa Command utilizes the National Security, Defense, and Military Strategies, Guidance for the Employment of the Force, and other U.S. policy documents to guide our current Strategy. The 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) states that the United States seeks to partner with African states that exercise sovereignty over their whole territory, are integrated into the world economy, able to provide for their citizens' needs, and capable of managing threats to peace and security. To that end, U.S. Africa Command will continue to search out willing and capable partners, strengthen existing partnerships, and form new relationships that promote these goals. The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) reinforces U.S. Africa Command's approach of "working by, with, and through" local partners to degrade VEOs, interdict transnational extremist and criminal activity, and increase the institutional capacity of partners to do so with limited foreign assistance. Increasing partner capacity cannot be limited to training and equipping front-line forces. In concert with interagency and international partners, we must also contribute to building the institutions that fortify recruiting, training, sustaining, and fielding of these forces. Such institutions create the stable security environment to allow democracy and development to blossom, which diminish the factors that allow violent extremism and criminality to grow. Put simply, a sustainable solution to instability in Africa involves supporting national institutions and regional organizations willing and able to address their own security challenges.

In order to create the time and space necessary for this long-term effort, we maintain pressure on transnational VEOs. Our primary effort in this aspect is to execute programs with

more capable partners. Working directly with these partners, we target VEOs who pose an imminent threat to partner, allied, and U.S. interests.

U. S. Africa Command focuses on cost-effective solutions that leverage interagency and international support as we continue our decisive effort of building the capacity of and strengthening relationships with African partners, primarily executed through security cooperation activities. To support these efforts, our FY 2019 Budget Request includes appropriate resources—notably, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets.

### THEATER POSTURE

To set the African theater, U. S. Africa Command’s posture plan is designed to secure strategic access to key locations on a continent characterized by vast distances and limited infrastructure while adhering to Department of Defense guidance to maintain a tailorable, flexible, small, and expeditionary presence. Our posture network allows forward staging of forces to provide operational flexibility and timely response to crises involving U. S. personnel or interests without creating the optic that U. S. Africa Command is “militarizing” Africa.

In Djibouti, Camp Lemonnier is an enduring U.S. military installation that serves as a vital hub for Security Force Assistance, operations, and logistics for five combatant commands: U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Transportation Command. Camp Lemonnier provides, operates, and sustains superior service in support of combat readiness and security of ships, aircraft, detachments, and personnel for regional and combatant command requirements; and enables operations in the Horn of Africa while fostering positive U.S.-African relations.

Over the course of the last two years, U.S. Africa Command has endeavored to improve our distribution network. In January 2018, we initiated processes and procedures to establish



the West Africa Logistics Network. This network will position right-sized aircraft on the continent to facilitate distribution from a primary logistics hub to support locations throughout West and Central Africa. That will vastly improve support to approximately 1,800 personnel supporting 11 named operations across a 13-nation region, roughly the size of the Continental United States.

### COMBATANT COMMAND CAMPAIGN PLAN

To contribute to “a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa,” we focus on building partner capacity, protecting U.S. personnel and facilities, and maintaining U.S. access. This approach complements the efforts of our allies, such as France and the United Kingdom.

U.S. Africa Command currently operates along five Lines of Effort (LOEs), which focus resources and operations throughout the continent: 1) Develop Security and Stability in East Africa; 2) Degrade VEOs in Sahel and Maghreb Regions / Contain Instability in Libya; 3) Contain and Degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa; 4) Interdict Illicit Activity in Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa; and 5) Build Peace Keeping / Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capacity of African Partners.

Each LOE links multiple tasks and objectives to achieve a desired end state. While each geographical region presents different challenges, the overall message that “a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa is an enduring American interest” remains our focus. The LOEs help translate our strategy into an operational approach while allowing flexibility to address each region’s specific needs. This flexibility is key as we review and adjust our campaign plan. Over the next few months, we will work with partners, allies, and the interagency to review and then release an updated Combatant Command Campaign Plan in 2018, covering fiscal years 2019-23.

Our strategy features a whole-of-government approach utilizing the specific skill sets of the Department of State, USAID, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and other interagency partners to synchronize and complement our approach. Many partners embed a liaison cell within U.S. Africa Command to support our strategy, a method we endorse and expand as needed. Additionally, U.S. Africa Command understands legislation generally consistent with a proposal outlined in the President's 2019 Budget and the National Security Strategy has been introduced to create a new development finance institution. We look forward to working with this new agency as well.

### EAST AFRICA

For East Africa, the desired end state is one in which VEOs are not able to destabilize Somalia or its neighbors or threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. persons, or our international partners and allies. Accordingly, the desired end state includes transitioning security responsibility from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Somalia's Federal Member States (FMS) so the central and regional governments ultimately secure their own territory, neutralize al-Shabaab, and interdict illicit flows of arms, drugs, money, natural resources, and persons.

In Somalia, the 2017 election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as President "Farmajo," proved to be a strategically significant change in the region. Historically, Somalia has been plagued with drought, extreme food insecurity, and decades of political, economic, and military unrest. President Farmajo inherited clan-based conflicts, al-Shabaab's ongoing violent extremism, and the emergence of ISIS-Somalia.

However, in the short time since taking office, President Farmajo has re-aligned the Somali National Army security sectors to coincide with the borders of the Somali Federal Member

States. He also utilized 2017 as a year of planning while gathering local, regional, and international support. At both the May 2017 London Conference and the December 2017 Mogadishu Conference, President Farmajo reiterated his administration's commitment to implementing Somali national security architecture in 2018 and refocused the AMISOM transition into a conditions-based turnover rather than a time- or date-based transition. International partners, including the U.S., are committed to Somali progress leading to well-trained Somali security forces.

President Farmajo fully supports U.S.-led train and equip missions, as well as U.S. kinetic efforts in support of the FGS. President Farmajo recognizes that Somalia's security cannot be manufactured by international partners but must come from Somali citizens in towns and villages across the country. President Farmajo supports a federal form of government, with power and security responsibilities shared among federal member states and local forces; he also supports military accountability to the civilian population. President Farmajo has demonstrated a willingness to integrate federal, regional, and local interests into his administration and encourages defections from al-Shabaab. Also assisting in Somalia is a coalition of international partners, such as the European Union, the African Union, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

Even with President Farmajo's forward-looking Somalia strategy, al-Shabaab remains a threat to the region, as demonstrated by the devastating October 2017 vehicle-borne IED attacks in Mogadishu that killed over 500 people. While some high-profile defections have occurred, only a small number of fighters have actually defected. In addition, Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)-Somalia remains isolated in northern Somalia with small, limited capabilities.

By the end of 2017, sustained conflict and prolonged food insecurity drove more than two million people to flee their homes in Somalia. Though there are some improvements in 2018, unfortunately, forecasted drought conditions will likely lead to continued poor harvests and reduced food security in Somalia, sustaining and contributing to population displacement. As a component of our whole-of-government efforts, and building on longstanding and large humanitarian investments, in 2017, USAID signed an important development assistance agreement with Somalia, supporting that country's efforts to achieve stability through good governance, economic recovery, education and health. USAID has invested \$400 million in development assistance in Somalia since 2011. Delivered over a five-year period, the funds will support democracy, stabilization and governance, education, and economic growth activities to achieve economic recovery and resilience for Somalia.

With the full support of the Federal Government of Somalia, U.S. Africa Command maintains pressure on the al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia networks and seeks to accelerate the delivery of training and equipment to the Somali Federal Member States. Our joint Department of Defense-Department of State Security Force Assistance efforts in Somalia have built the 1<sup>st</sup> Danab Advanced Infantry Battalion, a combat-tested unit at the leading edge in southern Somalia. Furthermore, with the Department of State and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) Joint Improvised Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO), we are working to improve the security posture in Mogadishu and mitigate the destabilizing effects of vehicle-borne IED attacks in the city.

Our relationship with Djibouti is strong, though we are carefully monitoring Chinese encroachment and emergent military presence. In November, Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti hosted a commemorative event celebrating the Africa First Initiative and its contract awardees, which

President Ismail Omar Guelleh attended as the honorary guest. This long-term initiative to acquire local goods and services for U.S. military members helps boost African businesses. Camp Lemonnier remains the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, and as such, a key component of the command's regional readiness. Furthermore, last August, the Chinese opened their first overseas naval base in Djibouti. U.S. Africa Command views security and access to Djibouti as a top priority. Consequently, we continue to monitor this development to ensure U.S. interests are not deterred.

In South Sudan, the political climate continues to be volatile. U.S. Africa Command maintains constant communication with U.S. Embassy Juba and stands ready to assist them should the situation on the ground necessitate our support. This response capability means the U.S. can maintain diplomatic and humanitarian presence inside of South Sudan as U.S. Embassy Juba works to seek an end to one of Africa's largest humanitarian disasters.

Ethiopia remains a longstanding partner and contributes over 4,000 uniformed personnel to AMISOM, further advancing regional peace and security efforts in East Africa.

Other countries in East Africa continue to develop reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities to build their capacity for counterterrorism operations. Kenya and Uganda have deployed tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in their fight against al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. The Kenyans use theirs to identify ambushes ahead of their patrols, and the Ugandans use theirs as artillery spotters against al-Shabaab concentrations. Both countries have seen the value of such capabilities, and Kenya is now investing their own money in additional platforms. Furthermore, as Kenya received guided strike capabilities, we are developing air-ground integration mentorship programs to optimize the impact of these tools. Both Kenya and Uganda receive helicopters, UAVs, and medium altitude reconnaissance platforms.

## NORTH AFRICA

Turning to North Africa, our four primary objectives in Libya are: degrade terrorist groups who threaten U.S. interests and threaten to destabilize Libya and the region; avert civil war; support the political reconciliation process towards a unified central government; and assist to curb the flow of illegal migrants into Europe via Libya. Efforts by European allies and international organizations are underway to interdict the illicit flow of arms and drugs flowing into and through of North Africa due to porous borders and under-governed spaces.

In Libya, U.S. Africa Command continues to support the U.S. Libya External Office's diplomatic efforts to promote the UN-facilitated Libyan political reconciliation process. Our counterterrorism strategy has allowed time for the political reconciliation process to continue.

Following its late 2016 expulsion from in Surt, ISIS-Libya remains dispersed and disorganized and likely capable of little more than localized attacks. Meanwhile, al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Libya maintains a low profile yet still aims to use illicit means to move fighters and weapons and focuses on building influence within Libya's various extremist groups. The disrupted state of VEOs, however, has not translated into a stable Libya. Libya remains politically and militarily divided, with loyalties shifting based on tribal interests and personalities involved in the struggle for power. Given this turmoil, the risk of a full-scale civil war remains real. We will continue to apply pressure on the ISIS-Libya network, work with the Government of National Accord, and support the international community to consolidate a comprehensive approach to bringing stability and a political settlement to Libya.

In Tunisia, we work to develop Tunisian counterterrorism and border security capabilities. Through programs that build partner capacity, like the JIDO counter-IED awareness program, we

have trained and equipped Tunisia's special operations forces. Recently, elements of the U.S.-trained Tunisian Special Forces airborne battalion successfully engaged a group of terrorists in the Kasserine Mountains, killing a senior ISIS attack planner. On border security, Tunisia is making use of U.S.-provided mobile ground surveillance radar systems and ISR aircraft to better monitor its border with Libya. Furthermore, the U.S.-funded border security project managed by DTRA is on track to provide fixed radar and camera coverage of the Tunisia-Libya border in November 2018. DTRA has begun a second radar to extend coverage to the southern portion of the Libya-Tunisia border. This second phase is funded by the German Government and managed by DTRA.

On 31 January 2017, Morocco was admitted to the African Union (AU), more than three decades after it withdrew from the precursor Organization of African Unity. This means all African nations are now members of the AU. As the country with the largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program within our Area of Responsibility, Morocco has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to operate and maintain advanced U.S. equipment and seeks to increase interoperability with U.S. and NATO Forces. Morocco's role as a net exporter of security makes it a key partner in the region.

Algeria is another highly capable partner in North Africa, who continues to implement an effective counterterrorism program against local extremist groups. Further, U.S. Africa Command and the Algerian People's National Armed Forces hold regular dialogues to advance cooperation on shared security interests.

### SAHEL REGION

The Sahel region of Africa is a critical battleground in the fight against violent extremism and jihadist terrorism. The African-led, French-assisted, U.S.-supported G5 Sahel organization

(Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) has established a joint force to combat violent extremism within the region. U.S. Africa Command is contributing two operational planners to the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

In Mali and adjacent countries, AQIM and its affiliates remain a threat to U.S. interests and the security of our African partners. Mali's government, rebel groups, and pro-government militias are struggling to implement the 2015 Algiers peace agreement. We remain committed to assisting the French-led operations to degrade VEOs and to build the defense capacity in Mali and its neighbors.

Niger is at the crossroads of regional instability: Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, ISIS-Greater Sahara, Jamaat Nursat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and affiliated extremist groups in the region; spillover from the Mali conflict in the west; instability emanating from Libya to the north; and a large flow of would-be migrants to Europe who converge on Agadez en route to Libya. Moreover, Niger faces internal governance and development issues with rapid population growth, environmental degradation, lack of economic opportunity, and stressed infrastructure. While the Department of Defense has increased Title 10 support to Nigerien forces, the U.S. military does not have a direct combat mission in Niger. Instead, U.S. Africa Command has provided training and equipment to the Nigerien Armed Forces and through the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership since 2005, and advises and assists certain Nigerien combat units. Additionally, at the request of the Government of Niger and the Nigerien Armed Forces, U.S. Africa Command is establishing an expeditionary, contingency support location in Agadez. This will be a Nigerien base from which we will fly ISR assets to better identify and monitor threats in the region. Furthermore, Niger will host Exercise Flintlock 2018, a multi-national event among African, allied, and U.S. forces to develop capacity and collaboration between security



forces to protect civilian populations. The fight against terrorism is a long-term effort, and Niger has shown itself to be a dedicated partner.

In Burkina Faso, U.S. forces are supporting intra-theater mobility operations. Additional security assistance initiatives in Burkina Faso include training and equipping army companies dedicated to counterterrorism operations and logistics. On 2 March 2018, our partners sustained devastating attacks on the Burkinabe Army Headquarters and on the French Embassy, and we remain in steadfast support to their efforts.

In Chad, U.S. forces conduct Security Force Assistance focused on logistics, sustainment, and maintenance with the Chadian Special Anti-terrorism Group (SATG). Key programs include counter-Boko Haram equipment (e.g. armored trucks, fuel, and radios), ISR aircraft, and command and control enhancements. In addition, U.S. forces are building intelligence and counter-IED capabilities to augment Chad's counterterrorism efforts. We trained and equipped the National Army with sixty light armored vehicles and provided fuel allotments to support border surveillance as well as counter extremists operations in the Lake Chad Region. In 2017, the Chadian National Army used some of these vehicles to assist in operations to contain ISIS-West Africa in Nigeria, decreasing attacks into Niger and Chad.

#### WEST AFRICA

Unrest within West Africa is driven by local grievances, corruption and weak governance, human rights violations, and imported religious ideology. U.S. Africa Command's principal strategic objective in West Africa and the Lake Chad Region is to contain and degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. U.S. Africa Command works with the four Lake Chad Region countries (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria) to build their capacity to ensure Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa do not threaten partner, allied, or U.S interests.

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), composed of forces from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, coordinates operations and facilitates intelligence sharing. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa continue to hold territory and conduct suicide IED attacks, and to varying degrees terrorize local communities, displacing people from their homes. The persistent violence limits the ability of international humanitarian aid organizations to deliver needed assistance. Basic health care, clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, and food supplies are in short supply to the millions of refugees and displaced persons in the area. U.S. Africa Command supports Department of State and USAID (the U.S. government leads) who work closely with the UN and non-governmental organizations to provide humanitarian development assistance, and stability to the region.

Nigeria's capabilities and capacity continue to grow, with intelligence sharing agreements and additional cooperation with U.S. forces. Nigeria has made arrangements to purchase 12 A-29 Super Tucano light attack airplanes with delivery of the first 8 expected in 2020. Furthermore, President Buhari has encouraged trust in U.S.-Nigerian interaction. However, challenges remain, as MNJTF partners sometimes fall short of respecting international norms of human rights when dealing with local populations. We are closely monitoring reports of the armed forces of Lake Chad Region countries using heavy-handed counter-insurgency techniques and which have led to additional displacement of civilian populations and reports of forcible return of Nigerian refugees from neighboring countries in violation of international humanitarian principles and refugee-related conventions. We continually remind them techniques such as these not only increase regional fragility by undermining public trust and confidence in the state, but also produce the grievances that fuel support for the enemy. Partner nation fiscal challenges and competing security concerns add additional pressure in the region. Nigeria faces unrest in its

southern Delta region, home to its oil fields and oil revenues, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and threats by Biafran separatists. As Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa become localized to northeastern Nigeria, the remaining MNJTF partners have become reluctant to commit resources to what they view as “a Nigeria problem.”

U.S. Africa Command supports the efforts of the Lake Chad Region partners to counter Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa by providing advisors, intelligence, training, and equipment instead of engaging in direct military operations. In July 2017, U.S. Africa Command started training and equipping MNJTF-designated units to counter IEDs. Over a hundred MNJTF soldiers are now less vulnerable to IEDs employed by violent extremists. We intend to expand counter-IED training and equipping programs to other affected regions.

#### GULF OF GUINEA AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In the Gulf of Guinea, maritime security remains a strategic priority due to its role in global oil markets, trade routes, and the presence of approximately 75,000 American citizens residing in the area. Piracy and other illicit maritime activities threaten development efforts, weaken state security, and rob states of resources required for greater economic growth and more effective governance. Incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea trended lower in 2017, but continued to threaten maritime trade and offshore hydrocarbon installations.

In addition to the VEO threat throughout Africa, criminal and smuggling networks remain a persistent danger within the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa. U.S. Africa Command supports our African partners who work with international and interagency partners to interdict and to disrupt illicit trafficking and smuggling networks that finance trans-national criminal organizations.

U.S. Africa Command remains engaged with coastal nations and international partners to increase African maritime capacity and willingness to interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea. We execute the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) and support the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, a strong regional framework for information sharing and operational coordination. In 2017, under the AMLEP, U.S. Coast Guard and Cabo Verde security personnel embarked a Senegal Navy ship for joint patrol operations in Senegal and Cabo Verde waters. This represented the first combined African partner maritime law enforcement patrol hosted from another African partner nation's vessel.

In Central Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) used to terrorize isolated populations. Our surge efforts with the African Union Regional Task Force effectively diminished the LRA to a threat that can now be better addressed by local and state actors, in which the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations are investing. Now, regional efforts are focused on expanding security in this region by investing in civilian law enforcement agencies to provide more security and address illicit trafficking of minerals, natural resources, narcotics and weapons which fuel violence.

#### AFRICA-WIDE CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS

U.S. Africa Command continues to build the capacity of African partners to respond to crises including infectious disease outbreaks. Most of our engagement with Southern Africa is in this regard. Despite its relative stability, Southern Africa faces economic, social, and environmental challenges that include poverty, crime, social inequality, corruption, and lack of water. U.S. Africa Command will continue to work closely with our Department of State and USAID partners, providing support and complementing their efforts when requested.

One of U.S. Africa Command's most valuable implementing partners is the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP). These state partnerships' enduring relationships build and improve peacekeeping capacity, disaster management competency, and overall partner readiness. For example, the SPP currently supports the Botswana Defense Force as they build various defense institutions such as an Office of the Inspector General and a Staff Judge Advocate program. Through U.S. Africa Command's Security Force Assistance, the SPP and other organizations are setting the stage for force development in Botswana. Currently, the SPP pairs 13 African nations with 11 U.S. states. Several more African countries have requested partnerships, and their requests are currently under consideration. We continue to see great value in the SPP program.

Other programs that build partner capacity include the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (APRRP), and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Initiative. GPOI, managed by the Department of State, works to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of international partners to execute UN and regional peacekeeping operations. Most GPOI partners are in Africa (23), as the program builds sustainable peacekeeping capacity within each country to aid in their participation in UN and regional peacekeeping missions. APRRP focuses on six African partners (Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda) to allow for deeper investment in rapid response capability. APRRP allows for development of aviation, medical, engineering, and logistical capabilities; command, control, communications, and information systems; and the formation of police units to handle local law enforcement requirements. GPOI and APRRP professionalize partner militaries and security forces through training and equipping and institution building.

U.S. Africa Command remains committed to aligning capacity building efforts with WPS objectives. WPS integrates a gender perspective in our military activities through two main efforts: 1) staff training and awareness, and 2) integration in the Combatant Command Campaign Plan. For training and awareness, we host “Gender in Military Operations” seminars and provide informative briefings to both U.S. Africa Command and partner leadership during conferences. WPS concepts are integrated into military-to-military engagements; training on human rights, rule of law, and prevention of gender-based violence; and exercises.

U.S. Africa Command’s whole-of-government approach includes building partners’ capacity for responding to disease outbreaks. U.S. Africa Command Surgeon’s Office leads the Africa Malaria Task Force (AMTF) programs through leadership engagements, assessments, and training for 18 African militaries to implement the U.S. government’s President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) and to support countries’ malaria prevention programs. The command’s components lead the Africa Partner Outbreak Response Alliance (APORA) that promotes effective military-civilian partnerships in health and security communities to manage emerging epidemics. Based on the initiative’s successes, we are establishing professional development and training programs for emergency managers and responders in West Africa at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra, Ghana.

### **IMPLEMENTING OUR APPROACH**

U.S. Africa Command relies on partnerships not only with African nations but also with international, multinational, interagency, and specialized U.S. units to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. Fifteen of our international partners are embedded within the command staff in the Multi-National Coordination Center (MNCC). U.S. Africa Command leads and participates in multilateral planning groups for East Africa, North Africa, and the Sahel region, in addition to

our component command-hosted senior leader staff talks with their respective component equivalents. In addition, the U.S. Army's Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) executes a significant share of the Security Force Assistance activities in Africa. Sustained access to the RAF is critical to mission success.

U.S. Africa Command coordinates and integrates its activities with the Department of State and USAID through the annual Africa Strategic Dialogue in the fall and the Africa Strategic Integration Conference in the winter. Working with the Department of State and other departments and agencies, the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) builds the capacity of civil and defense institutions in six countries, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia. Additionally, the Section 333 authority provided in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act assists U.S. Africa Command in building security force capacity and has been essential in enabling African partners in their fight against home grown extremism.

Relationships with U.S. European Command and U.S. Central Command are essential to our mission success. We rely on allies such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain to project U.S. forces out of Europe to support efforts in North Africa, the Sahel, and other location on the continent, and U.S. European Command helps orchestrate these efforts. We coordinate closely with U.S. Central Command for shared response forces, as well as shared equities in Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Gulf of Aden. In 2017, for example, our Exercise Cutlass Express, sought to improve U.S. military interoperability with the armed forces of eastern African nations and European allies. The exercise was linked with U.S. Central Command's international maritime exercise to build capabilities in the region. Finally, our partnership with U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM)—through Special Operations Command – Africa (SOCAFRICA)—is a vital link in containing and degrading extremism on the continent.

To support the Department of State-led mission to protect U.S. personnel and facilities, U.S. Africa Command manages rapid-response forces that are flexible and specialized: the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response at Moron Air Base, Spain; the Crisis Response Force in Baumholder, Germany; and the East Africa Response Force in Djibouti. Also, when required, amphibious Marine Expeditionary Units offer another layer of reaction forces to protect U.S. personnel and facilities. Finally, U.S. Africa Command maintains Defense Cooperation Agreements with several African nations—which allow for the forward staging locations enable faster recovery or evacuation of personnel.

U.S. Africa Command is a supporting effort in the worldwide fight against violent extremism. With regard to resources, we have, historically, been viewed as an “economy of force” area of operations, particularly in comparison to other combatant commands. However, consistent with the National Defense Strategy, we continue to explore efficient and cost-effective ways to make the best use of the assets we are provided. This is best represented by U.S. Africa Command’s limited ISR allocation. With personnel recovery and casualty evacuation, contracted search and rescue assets are an expensive but necessary substitute to our limited capacity. Moreover, most African partners neither have the organic assets nor the funding to assist with personnel recovery or casualty evacuation missions. While U.S. Africa Command will continue to meet its mission with the assets provided, we will also continue to find ways to help protect personnel and enhance mission success.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, ten years ago, at the inception of U.S. Africa Command, many were skeptical of a U.S. combatant command for Africa. However, over the past decade, U.S. Africa Command professionals have built strong and trusting relationships with many African nations, key



partners, and organizations. Today, we continue with our partners to contain and degrade transnational threats, protect U.S. personnel and facilities, prevent and mitigate conflict, and build African partner defense capability in order to promote regional security, long-term stability, and prosperity. In line with the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, U.S. Africa Command will continue to bolster existing bilateral and multilateral partnerships and develop new relationships to deter or constrain threats to U.S. interests. We will focus on working by, with, and through local partners to build the capability required to counter violent extremism, human trafficking, transnational criminal activity, and illegal arms trade. As a command, we will apply small, wise investments toward “African solutions to African problems,” promoting U.S. interests and protecting the U.S. homeland. I am honored to lead our service members, civilian employees, and families of U.S. Africa Command. They inspire all of us every day as “we go further together.”