

Africa 2014: The Quest for Unity and the Role of Imperialism

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Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

In a military operation characteristic of the current phase of United States imperialist intervention in Africa, the Pentagon announced on Dec. 30 that it had killed a leading official of the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance organization based in Somalia. This figure was one of several who the State Department had placed a \$3 million bounty on their heads.

Reuters news agency reported that “The victim, identified as Abdishakur and also known as Tahliil, was the head of Amniyat, a unit believed responsible for suicide attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia’s National Intelligence and Security Agency said in a statement. The U.S. Defense Department said on Monday it launched an air strike in Somalia that targeted a senior al Shabaab leader.” (Dec. 30)

Since 2007, the U.S. and its allies in Britain and France have carried out numerous execution-style attacks in Somalia. These search and destroy missions are an integral part of the U.S.-designed strategic and tactical framework of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) which at present has approximately 22,000 troops in the Horn of Africa state.

These troops come from numerous states including Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and others. It was recently announced that Sierra Leone would not be renewed by the United Nations mandated AMISOM due to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) pandemic which has impacted the country during the year. (Allafrica.com, Dec. 24)

Sierra Leone troops participating in AMISOM were trained by the U.S. Army Africa, a component of AFRICOM. Most of the funding, supplies and coordination of AMISOM is carried out by the Pentagon, the CIA and private military and intelligence contractors associated with such occupations that have extended over the last thirteen years from as far east as Afghanistan to the Middle Eastern state of Iraq, where Washington has re-deployed 3,100 troops over the last few months ostensibly to fight the Islamic State, a group which grew out of the Obama administration’s war against the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad.

In neighboring Djibouti, AFRICOM has established a base at Camp Lemonnier where 4,000 troops and intelligence personnel are stationed. This military base is undergoing a major refurbishment indicating that the Pentagon and CIA penetration of the Horn of Africa is destined to continue for an extended period.

According to an article published by the New York Times on May 5,

The Obama administration said ... that it had signed a 20-year lease on its

military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, the only American installation on the continent and a staging ground for counterterrorism operations in Yemen and Somalia. Djibouti, a country of fewer than one million people the size of New Jersey that borders the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, has played an increasingly significant role in seeking to stabilize regional crises. The deal reflects the small country's outsized strategic importance in helping the United States and other Western allies combat terrorists, pirates and smugglers in the region.

Nonetheless, despite this massive Pentagon and intelligence presence, security concerns are paramount. A series of strikes by guerrilla forces from Al-Shabaab have created tensions in both Djibouti and Somalia.

Several weeks after the announcement about the expansion of Camp Lemonnier on May 27, the Pentagon publication Stars and Stripes reported that

U.S. military personnel at Camp Lemonnier are locked down following a fatal bombing Saturday at a restaurant frequented by westerners in Djibouti, the strategic Horn of Africa nation that borders Somalia. No U.S. personnel were among the dead or injured, but, as a precaution, troops have been restricted to base, the U.S. military's Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa said.

Later in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in response to the targeted assassination of Al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane on Sept. 1, on Sept. 8, a convoy of AMISOM troops accompanied by Pentagon, CIA and private military contractors was attacked resulting in the deaths of at least twelve people.

This attack by Al-Shabaab was largely covered up in the U.S. corporate media. The death of military and intelligence operatives in Somalia exposes the central role of Washington in the ongoing war in the Horn of Africa.

In addition to the official U.S. government personnel killed, this incident revealed the role of Bancroft Global Development, a security firm with close ties to the Pentagon. This outfit has been active in Somalia for a number of years.

The New York Times reported as early as 2011 that

The company plays a vital part in the conflict now raging inside Somalia, a country that has been effectively ungoverned and mired in chaos for years. The fight against the Al-Shabaab, a group that United States officials fear could someday carry out strikes against the West, has mostly been outsourced to African soldiers and private companies out of reluctance to send American troops back into a country they hastily exited nearly two decades ago. (Aug. 10)

Just four days prior to the targeted assassination against the Al-Shabaab leadership on Dec. 29, the AMISOM base in Mogadishu was attacked by the Islamic guerrilla organization. Xinhua wrote of the Dec. 25 attack on the AMISOM compound that "Al-Shabaab militants attacked the main base of the African Union peacekeeping force known as AMISOM in Mogadishu on Thursday, with explosions and gunfire heard inside the base." (Dec. 25)

This same article continues noting "Explosions and gunfire were heard inside the AMISOM

base, as fighters attacked the place. Al-Shabaab spokesman Abdulaziz Abu Musab confirmed the attack, saying its fighters have entered the base by force and carried out attacks.”

These developments since Sept. illustrates clearly that the war in Somalia remains a major source of U.S. imperialist operations in the Horn of Africa and the entire eastern region of the continent. Even with some defections in the leadership of Al-Shabaab, the contradictions between the Somalian people and their foreign occupiers continue to deepen and intensify.

International Criminal Court (ICC): The Legal Arm of Imperialism in Africa

For several years the ICC has been subjected to harsh criticism in Africa. During the Jubilee anniversary of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2013, the predecessor of the AU, much discussion was held around how to approach a Netherlands-based institution that exclusively focuses on pursuing and prosecuting African leaders.

Numerous African leaders have suggested that the AU member-states should withdraw from the ICC and renounced the Rome Statute which laid the ideological and judicial basis for the establishment of the court. Yet no concrete actions have been carried out by the AU Commission based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The ICC recently dropped the prosecution of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. However, it will continue to go after his deputy William Ruto.

Kenyatta was charged with crimes against humanity related to factional clashes over a disputed national election in Kenya during 2007-2008. ICC efforts aimed at the Kenyan government mobilized considerable verbal protests against the institution pointing out the racial bias in its pre-occupation with Africa.

For several years, the Republic of Sudan leader President Omer Hassan al-Bashir and other officials have been issued warrants by the ICC. These warrants and travel bans are related to the Sudanese government’s handling of the armed insurrection carried out by several rebel groups in the western Darfur region of the oil-producing state.

The partition of Sudan in 2011 was also related to the role of the ICC. The suggestion of genocide against the people of Darfur provided a rationale for imperialism to strongly advocate the division of the country.

Even with the division of Juba from Khartoum, the U.S. and its allies are still committed to the succession of Darfur. By weakening this key central African state bordering its neighbors in the north and east of the continent, it provides AFRICOM and NATO further room for expansion.

Sudan was emerging as a major oil-producing state on the continent. Now with the division and renewed tensions between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, both countries are facing economic turmoil.

This crisis in Sudan has been enhanced by the overall decline in oil prices on the global markets. All oil-producing states in Africa will experience the full impact of these economic changes in the coming year.

Africa Must Reject Imperialist Militarism and Judicial Racism

The Pentagon and NATO along with the ICC represent a double-pronged strategy aimed at maintaining neo-colonialism well into the 21st century. As the continent remains divided within the colonial inherited geographical boundaries and state structures, its capacity to address both internal and external threats are compromised.

All of the governments in Africa which have maintained military relations with AFRICOM and NATO countries are in no way more stable and secured from instability. After eight years of bolstered imperialist intervention in Somalia, the degree of tensions coupled with the burgeoning humanitarian crisis has not been alleviated.

Since the presence of the Pentagon-backed AMISOM operation in Somalia, millions of Africans have been dislocated due to hostilities between Al-Shabaab and the Federal Government which is propped-up by Washington and Brussels. While the ICC chases down African leaders both within state structures and without, the imperialist countries through their ruling classes have carried out illegal wars of occupation and regime-change resulting in the deaths of millions throughout Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

These U.S. and NATO wars of aggression move forward with the vocal and silent consent of the so-called international legal system at the UN and in The Hague. The AU must rapidly develop its own system of legal justice to address human rights violations and territorial disputes.

Until an All-Africa High Command is established to intervene in domestic and regional conflicts, the western-based military and intelligence apparatuses will continue their rampage across the continent, its waterways and islands. Such a politico-military institution will inevitably emerge from a renewed revolutionary program aimed at the abolition of neo-colonialism and imperialism from the continent.

A people's army drawing cadres from across the region committed to Revolutionary Pan-Africanism represents the most viable solution to the crises of sovereignty, stability, genuine independence and unity. Ongoing balkanization and western interventions through economic, military, political and legal means will only serve to maintain western hegemony fostering the continuing exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa.

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