

Africom Commander Says U.S. Supports Somali Government to Retake Mogadishu

By [Global Research](#)

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WASHINGTON — A senior U.S. military commander said on Tuesday the United States would support the Somali transitional government to retake the national capital Mogadishu.

William Ward, who runs the U.S. Africa Command, told a Senate hearing the Somali government's effort in retaking Mogadishu is "something that we would look to do in support."

He said the military would do this "to the degree the transitional federal government can in fact re-exert control over Mogadishu, with the help of AMISOM and others." AMISOM stands for the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Mogadishu witnesses near daily attacks on Somali government forces and African Union peacekeepers based there. The internationally recognized government of Somalia is struggling to fight off an Islamist insurgency poised to run over parts of the city with protection from a few thousand African Union peacekeepers.

Clashes have intensified recently in Mogadishu, with the office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) saying last week nearly 26,000 people have been forced to escape violence in the capital since Feb. 1.

The New York Times reported on Friday the United States is helping the Horn of Africa nation's government put together a major offensive to take back the capital, providing training and support. The broadsheet also cited unnamed U.S. officials as saying Pentagon may send special forces to help, as well as striking militants from the sky.

Ward said the United States supports the transitional government, which "has for now our best potential for helping to turn around some of the instability and lack of governance."

Mogadishu is a sore spot in American memory, where 18 U.S. soldiers died in an operation there in 1993. Some of their bodies were dragged along the streets, and the images prompted the end of that intervention. The battle was made into a movie called Black Hawk Down.

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