

U.S. and African Union (AMISOM) Troops Targeted in Bomb Attacks in Somalia

Al-Shabaab said it has killed five AFRICOM troops traveling in Mogadishu convoy amid an escalation in Pentagon bombings

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Reports from the capital of the Horn of Africa state of Somalia indicate that a convoy of African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and United States troops was attacked by the guerrilla forces of Al-Shabaab on November 14.

A vehicle was utilized in the operation which took place in Weydow village on the road linking the capital of Mogadishu to the Afgoye. (Garowe Online, Nov. 14)

Although a statement from Al-Shabaab indicated that five U.S. soldiers were killed in the explosion this has not been confirmed by Pentagon sources.

These offensive operations on the part of Al-Shabaab are occurring in conjunction with the escalation of Pentagon drone and fighter aircraft attacks inside the country. President Donald Trump since taking office in January has issued orders mandating the deployment of additional troops to Somalia along with an intensified bombing campaign targeting what it describes as Al-Qaeda and ISIS linked elements.

On November 14, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) claimed it had killed “militants” at a location 60 miles from the Mogadishu. The term “militants” is meant to refer to Al-Shabaab.

However, there is no evidence that those who were killed and injured fell into the adversarial category outlined by the Pentagon.

Further justifying its military tactics in Somalia, the U.S. diplomatic corps announced several months ago that its personnel had received threats from the Islamist groups. Meanwhile no specific evaluation of the effectiveness of such bombing and drone strikes are relayed to people in the U.S., Somalia or the international community.

Such bombing raids by AFRICOM are often framed as being conducted in support of and in cooperation with the Somali Federal Government based in Mogadishu. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that the Pentagon is clearly in charge of making these military decisions.

During the previous week, on November 9, AFRICOM in another press release said it had conducted a similar attack supposedly against Al-Shabaab. The organization has been a focal point for U.S. intervention in Somalia since 2010 when the previous Union of Islamic Court (UIC) split over a decision to enter into an alliance with the interim federal regime which is propped up by Washington and the European Union (EU). Al-Shabaab has continued

its war against the western-backed government in Mogadishu over the last seven years.

In regard to the November bombings, AFRICOM said:

“In coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike in Somalia against al-Shabaab on Thur., Nov. 9 at approximately 3 p.m. local Somalia time, killing several militants. The operation occurred in the Bay Region of Somalia, about 100 miles west of the capital, Mogadishu.”

This same statement went on to firmly assert as it relates to its future plans that:

“U.S. forces will continue to use all authorized and appropriate measures to protect Americans and to disable terrorist threats. This includes partnering with AMISOM and Somali National Security Forces (SNSF); targeting terrorists, their training camps and safe havens throughout Somalia, the region and around the world.”

Impact of AFRICOM Strategy on the Overall Security and Stability of Somalia

AFRICOM was officially launched in February 2008 and has been based in Stuttgart, Germany within the European Union (EU). Since its founding, a major operational base for the command has been in Djibouti also in the Horn of Africa like Somalia. This base was strengthened and enhanced under the former administration of President Barack Obama who escalated the number of Pentagon troops deployed in over 30 states in the region.

Thousands of U.S. troops are stationed at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti which is being utilized as a staging ground for AFRICOM and other military operations in both African continent and the Middle East, particularly with specific reference to the Pentagon role in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. The geographic proximity between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula has facilitated the merger of strategic planning involving these respective areas.

Security in Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq has worsened since the advent of AFRICOM. The intervention of the Russian Federation in Syria was a critical turning point in late 2015 in the war to bolster and stabilize the government of President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus.

In corporate and western governmental reports on the security situation in Somalia it is routinely announced that Al-Shabaab has been driven out of the capital of Mogadishu since 2011. Despite these platitudes whose origins emanate from the Pentagon, the Islamist guerrilla organization is still capable of engaging in deadly attacks in the capital.

On October 14 a bomb attack in Mogadishu resulted in the deaths of over 400 people. This vehicular weapons assault may have been connected with an expulsion from the Somalia National Army of an officer disgruntled with the course of the protracted war.

Reduced funding for the 22,000 AMISOM troops from various regional and continental states which have occupied Somalia with Pentagon and EU support for a decade is creating panic among both the western-backed regime in Mogadishu and neighboring states. Uganda, which supplies a majority of these AMISOM troops have urged the western imperialist states and the United Nations to maintain funding levels for the mission. The Somalian government is also keen to continue the AMISOM presence since its own internal existence depends

upon them.

Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir visited his Ugandan counterpart Yoweri Museveni during November 13-15 where the issue of Somali security was discussed. Both presidents urged the western governments to continue their financial and logistical support for AMISOM.



Somalian attack on April 9, 2017

Ugandan President Museveni pledged that he could send an additional 5,000 troops to serve under AMISOM if funding was maintained. This position converges with the Trump administration which cautioned against any drawing down of AU forces.

U.S. State Department Foreign Service Officer Wohlers Marion emphasized:

“We do not support further drawdown of forces beyond that level at this time, due to ongoing security concerns. The United States supports a conditions-based Amisom drawdown that is tied to the development of capable, professional Somali security forces.” (Africanews.com, Nov. 12)

This State Department statement came in the aftermath of an announcement by AMISOM envoy Francisco Madeiro who indicated that the forces would be reduced by 1,000 personnel in order to transfer their responsibilities to the Somali military. The possible reduction in forces would involve five African states reducing their troop levels by four per cent. To ease the reduction, each country would deploy 500 police officers in a plan to train members of the Somalia security forces.

AU Needs Independent Force to Guarantee Security and Development

What is never mentioned in these discussions are the need for African states to develop their own continental enforcement and peacekeeping methodology which is independent of

the U.S. and the EU. If these objectives could be realized, the need for AFRICOM, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would be unnecessary.

The drought in Somalia has resulted in agricultural failures leading to huge food deficits. Over the last decade famine has been a recurrent problem in the region. If the situation could be stabilized the governments in the Horn and East Africa as a whole could turn their attention to the boosting of food production, water resource development and sustainable economic development.

Periodic bombing by the U.S. military will only dislocate more people in Somalia and throughout the region. Millions are already internally displaced as well as becoming refugees in neighboring states. This vicious cycle of dependency and imperialist militarism must be arrested in order to create an environment conducive to self-reliance, genuine independence and territorial sovereignty.

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