

US “Counter-Terrorism” in Somalia: Alleged Al-Shabaab Bomb Attack against African Union Mission (AMISOM), Four U.S. Personnel Killed

Al-Shabaab claims responsibility after leader was assassinated by Pentagon airstrike

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A reported car-bomb rammed into a convoy of troops from the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) on Sept. 8 killing at least twelve people including four from the United States.

The attack was the first major response in the aftermath of the Pentagon airstrike on a leadership meeting of the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement which has been fighting since early 2008 against the western-backed Somalia Federal Government based in the capital of Mogadishu.

In the U.S. military attack on Sept. 1, the leader of Al-Shabaab, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was killed along with several other high-ranking officials of the organization. President Barack Obama took responsibility for the deaths saying they were part of the ongoing war against terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

Godane had been placed on a most-wanted list by the U.S. State Department offering \$7 million for his capture or death. Other leading Al-Shabaab officials also have huge bounties placed on their heads by Washington.

A spokesman for al-Shabaab said the target of the attack was a U.S. military commander who trains Special Forces in Mogadishu. “We succeeded in killing him and three other Americans. Also a South African mercenary died in the attack.” Abduaziz Abu Muscab told Al Jazeera.

The al-Shabaab spokesman went on to say that the operation “was in retaliation for the killing of our leader. This is not going to be the last attack targeting Americans.” Abu Muscab said.

At least three AMISOM officers and two U.S. personnel working for the Bancroft Global Development firm which performs consultation services for the AMISOM forces were wounded in the attacks. This company, according to an article published in 2011 in the New York Times, trains AMISOM military forces in Somalia.

This NYT article noted 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 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, 2011)

AMISOM Trained, Financed by U.S.-EU to Bolster Federal Government

This attack on Sept. 8 further exposes the role of the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the State Department in Somalia. A weak federal government established by Washington and maintained through a coalition of imperialist states and their allies in the region, would collapse overnight if it was not for the support of the White House.

AMISOM consists of approximately 22,000 troops from various African neo-colonial states including Uganda, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Although AMISOM and the federal government claims that it has pushed Al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu, the guerrilla organization has been able to strike inside the capital on several occasions over the last few months.

The training and coordination of the AMISOM forces along with the newly-created Somalia Federal Army is carried out by the Pentagon, private military consultancy firms and officers from the European Union Forces (EUFOR). A flotilla of warships from the Pentagon and EUFOR Naval units are stationed off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden.

With specific reference to the Sept. 8 attacks, one person on the scene reported that he “saw two minibuses with pools of blood, many civilians were killed,” said Ali Muhidin. “The explosion was enormous.” (AFP, Sept. 8)

One Somali governmental official, Governor Abdikadir Mohamed Nur of Lower Shabelle, said he survived the attack. He told the press that “Most of those killed were civilians traveling in two mini buses who were caught in the explosion. We have also collected 27 wounded civilians including women.” (Raxanreeb.com, Sept. 8)

Nur went on to report that “As we were passing a bus stop at Hawa Abdi area, a small vehicle drove to us, we did not think it could be a suicide car bomber. It stopped between two mini buses as we continued. But immediately the car drove toward us and blew up.”

In a separate military operation, also claimed by al-Shabaab, Somalia government soldiers were attacked in Elasha Biyaha located 15km outside the capital.

U.S. Has History of Interference in Somalia

This is not the first time that Washington has engaged in offensive military operations in Somalia. In the current period since early 2007, the U.S. has carried out bombing operations in Somalia on numerous occasions.

The CIA has a field station in Mogadishu which is utilized to engage in counter-insurgency operations in Somalia and throughout the region. CIA and Pentagon drone operations are conducted from Somalia and extend throughout the Horn of Africa region utilizing Ethiopia and Djibouti, where the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) maintains a military base housing several thousand troops.

Since the failed occupation of Somalia by the U.S. Marines during 1992-1994, resulting in the deaths of dozens of Pentagon troops as well as thousands of local citizens, Washington

has continued to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. Recent oil drilling by several leading multi-national petroleum firms underlies one of the real reasons behind imperialism interests in the region.

Nonetheless, despite this heavy military presence by the Pentagon, the CIA and allied African states along with the EU, the situation inside of Somalia remains unstable. Al-Shabaab still has significant support and named a new leader on Sept. 6.

The new leader, Ahmed Omar, also known as Abu Ubaidah, was selected unanimously at an undisclosed location outside of Mogadishu. Ubaidah pledged to avenge the death of Godane and the other officials by continuing the war against the U.S.-backed military and intelligence forces now occupying the country.

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