

US war planes bomb alleged militants in Libya, killing dozens

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Two US war planes dropped multiple 500-pound laser-guided bombs on a farmhouse near the town of Ajdabiya, Libya, this weekend, a Libyan military official told the state-run LANA news outlet Monday.

At least 24 alleged Islamist militants were reportedly killed in the attack, including Mokhtar Belmokhtar, one of the numerous warlords who have risen to prominence as players in the underworld that has come to control large areas of Libya since the 2011 US-NATO war.

Belmokhtar, whose apparent demise has been celebrated throughout the US media, had become a high priority target of the global assassination programs run by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Pentagon after his forces allegedly killed three Americans during a raid on an Algerian gas field in 2012. Belmokhtar subsequently called Islamist militants to rally in opposition against the US-backed French invasion of Mali.

After beginning his career at anti-Soviet jihadist camps set up under supervision of the CIA, Belmokhtar returned to Algeria from Afghanistan in the mid-1990s, where he fought with the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) against the central government. He later joined the Islamist Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (ISGPC), the precursor organization to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Several years after the formation of AQIM in 2006, Belmokhtar broke away to found his own organization, the “Signatories with Blood.”

Given the existence of conflicting reports, it is too early to say with certainty whether the attack succeeded in killing Belmokhtar, whose previous success in avoiding death and capture has earned him the nickname “the Uncatchable.”

Aside from Belmokhtar, four of the dead militants

were involved in the 2012 Benghazi attack that led to the death of the US ambassador to Libya, according to an unnamed source cited in local media.

The bombing is the latest in a series of commando raids and drone and air strikes launched by the US against targets inside Libya since the official end of the NATO campaign.

In the name of killing Al Qaeda leaders, the Obama administration authorized a further expansion of the CIA and Pentagon's “kill lists” and targeted assassination operations in February 2013. Previously focused largely on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Yemen, the US government's targeted murder operations have since expanded to include new areas throughout North Africa.

Flouting US and international law, the Obama administration openly asserts unlimited power to kill and seize persons using “surgical strikes” and “military renditions” across the entire globe, without any form of legal process.

US commandos have launched a series high-profile raids in Libya, including the October 2013 capture of Abu Anas al-Liby and the seizure in June 2014 of Ahmed Abu Khattala.

The intensification of US operations in Libya is justified on the grounds of the “war on terror.” This turns reality on its head. In the first place, US imperialism created the precursor to the original Al Qaeda organization during the Afghanistan war in an effort to destroy the Soviet Union, establishing in the process the camps where Belmokhtar first received training at the age of 19.

During the decades following the dissolution of the USSR, Washington has steadily built up and utilized Islamist forces as pawns of its drive to establish dominance over the former colonial world and the

entire Eurasian landmass.

With the 2011 war against Libya, these methods were brought to a new level. While waging a brutal air bombardment, the US and European powers directly armed and backed Islamist militias, using them as the main ground forces in their war against the government of Muammar Gaddafi.

Not satisfied with turning large areas of the country into rubble, Washington has overseen the transformation Libya into a haven for terrorists and far-right militias, using Libya as a staging area for another US proxy war, also spearheaded by extremist Islamist militants, this time against the Syrian government of Bashar Al-Assad.

The latest US raid comes just weeks after the release of plans, drawn up by the European Union's foreign office, to militarize the entire Mediterranean basin in the name of stemming the flood of African refugees into Europe—up by more than 500 percent between 2011 and 2014.

The EU's military plans include authorization to "bomb the boats," that is, to unleash the high-tech weapons systems of the European powers against vessels docked along African shores suspected of transporting migrants. Given that refugees are often forced by human traffickers to live onboard such vessels for months prior to departure, hidden away in compartments below deck, it is virtually certain that this policy will lead to bombing raids against ships packed with civilians.



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