

# Trump administration announces new military operation in Somalia

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The Pentagon announced the deployment of dozens of US troops to Somalia last week, the first deployment of regular infantry since 1994, to assist the Somali military in the fight against Al Shabaab militants. Coincident with the announcement of the US deployment, a combat contingent from Uganda arrived in Somalia's capital city Mogadishu on the weekend.

The Ugandan military contingent, which is one part of a multi-country cooperative offensive, replaces a group of Ugandan forces after that group's one-year tour of duty ended. The Ugandan troops are to augment the US-backed African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) against the Islamist militants.

The Ugandan troops are culled from the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF), that country's military, and are largely funded by Washington, which has funneled billions of dollars to regional governments in its imperialist effort to secure the installation of a puppet government in Mogadishu. Uganda, along with several East African countries including Ethiopia and Kenya, are key allies in Washington's efforts.

AMISOM, the multi-country military force operating in Somalia and administered by the African Union with the full backing of the United Nations, is made up of combat forces from Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Djibouti, Nigeria, Zambia, and Sierra Leone. The bulk of its troops come from Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti and Sierra Leone. More than 22,000 combat forces are currently deployed to the war-torn Horn of Africa nation. Additionally, the US already has a contingent of Special Forces personnel operating within Somalia.

The increased military offensive in Somalia is being carried out with the aim of supporting the government of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and its Transitional Federal Government, and neutralizing Al Shabaab, the

Somali Al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist militia.

The US eyes the Horn of Africa as a geopolitical prize due to its strategic importance fronting the waterway for the world's oil traffic through the Gulf of Aden from the Red Sea in the Middle East.

Al Shabaab, perceived by Washington as a roadblock for its imperialist objectives in dominating Somalia, has vowed to "double its response" to the increased US military offensive in a statement by the militant organization's news agency *Shahada*.

On April 9, Somalia's military chief General Mohamed Ahmed Jimale survived a car bomb attack, for which Al Shabaab has claimed responsibility. The attack came after the newly sworn-in military chief's recent declaration he would "launch a new offensive" in cooperation with Washington targeting the militia. Fifteen people were killed in the attack, including several civilian passengers on a minibus in the vicinity.

A day later, the militant group bombed a military academy in Mogadishu, killing five Somali soldiers.

The increased US offensive follows a sordid and bloody history of Washington's involvement in the severely impoverished nation, most notably the infamous 1993 US operation on Mogadishu to neutralize Islamist militants which resulted in a debacle for the Clinton administration and culminated in the shooting down of two US helicopters in Mogadishu. Eighteen US Special Forces personnel and hundreds of Somalis were killed in the 15-hour offensive.

Since its rout in 1993, Washington has largely relied on drone and missile attacks on the country, resulting in scores of deaths of civilians, including women and children.

The humiliating 1993 defeat came in the aftermath of the violent US-backed overthrow of the Mohammed Siad Barre government in 1991, which was aligned

with the former Soviet Union. Consequently, Somalia fell into complete disarray, with no central government, and the country fractured into various tribal factions.

Washington was irked by the formation of the Islamic Courts Union in 1999, set up in the chaotic aftermath of Siad Barre's overthrow as a rival to the US-backed Transitional National Government.

The Islamic Courts Union controlled much of Southern Somalia and Mogadishu until 2006, with its defeat following years of bloody conflict with tribal warlords and US-backed forces supporting the Transitional Federal Government which replaced the Transitional National Government. Al Shabaab grew out of this chaotic stew.

The Transitional Federal Government formed in 2004 and based in Mogadishu is packed with US-backed technocrats and protected by a coterie of East African US-allied military forces. It has never had any popular support in the country.

Since the fall of the Siad Barre government in 1991, the social conditions in the country have deteriorated dramatically, Somalia is today one of the most impoverished nations in the world. In a country which 70 percent of the population is aged 30 and under, youth unemployment is at 67 percent, according to UN figures. The poverty rate for the Somalian masses is at a shocking 73 percent, and life expectancy is 55 years. More than half the population does not have access to clean water sources, resulting in elevated levels of disease.

Decades of war and conflict stoked by US imperialism have taken its toll on the Somalian masses, with thousands left maimed.

Escalating military operations in Somalia also come amidst a devastating famine currently sweeping across Somalia and East Africa, which is expected to afflict tens of millions. The US-backed imperialist violence will only exacerbate the intolerable social crisis afflicted on the Somalian masses and the surrounding region.

The US troop deployment to Somalia is part of Washington's increasing turn to the use of its massive military power to solve the crisis of the capitalist system, not only in Africa, but across the globe. From the standpoint of the ruling class, they will be satisfied with nothing less than the complete subjugation of the African continent's economies under the hegemonic

control of US corporate and banking interests.

With the election of a nationalist figure in Donald Trump to the White House, the US ruling class is turning to ever more aggressive and reckless means to hold onto the massive amounts of wealth it has accumulated at the expense of the world's working class.

Rivals to US domination across the globe such as China and Russia, and increasingly, France and Germany, constitute the ultimate targets in Washington's drive for global domination of economic resources and markets in order to rid itself of the crisis of capitalism.



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