

US launches Christmas Day missile strikes against northwestern Nigeria

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On Christmas Day, the US military launched multiple cruise missile strikes against targets in northwest Nigeria, which the White House claims killed several ISIS militants and were conducted at the request of the Nigerian government. Trump administration and Nigerian officials have publicly framed the operation as a joint counterterror mission.

News media reported that the operation included missiles launched from at least one U.S. Navy vessel positioned in the Gulf of Guinea against targets in Sokoto State, in Nigeria's northwest. A US military source told the *New York Times* that "over a dozen" Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired, striking two ISIS camps, while US Africa Command (AFRICOM) described "airstrikes" that killed "multiple ISIS terrorists."

The US source stressed that the strikes were carried out with Tomahawk cruise missiles, ship-launched long-range precision weapons repeatedly used by US imperialism in its attacks on Iraq, Syria, Libya and other countries. Media and Pentagon accounts also refer more generally to "airstrikes," implying the additional likely use of carrier- or land-based aircraft, though details remain classified.

US officials indicated that the strikes involved US Navy Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles launched from a surface vessel, almost certainly a Block IV/V "Tactical Tomahawk"-type weapon. These are long-range, subsonic, GPS-guided missiles designed for deep land-attack missions, capable of being retargeted in flight and delivering a 1,000-lb class high-explosive unitary warhead with high accuracy against fixed ground targets, such as the camps hit in Sokoto State.

The Pentagon released video of at least one missile launching from a U.S. Navy vessel after the Nigeria operation, and US defense officials told the press that the strike was conducted from a ship in the region, pointing to standard Tomahawk ship-launched profiles.

Details about the number of people killed in the strikes remain unknown at the time of this writing. AFRICOM's initial assessment only says the operation "killed multiple ISIS militants/terrorists," without further information.

A post by AFRICOM on X corroborated media reports, saying the targets were described as Islamic State or ISIL/ISIS militants in rural parts of Sokoto, an area where various armed

groups operate amid the social crisis produced by decades of imperialist underdevelopment. President Trump boasted that the terrorists "really got hit hard," declaring the strikes to be "numerous and deadly," while refusing to provide basic details on targets or casualties.

Civilian casualty numbers remain contested as AFRICOM's statement speaks only of killing "multiple ISIS terrorists," while US broadcast reports note that the administration "did not offer additional details ... like what was specifically targeted or the number of casualties."

AFRICOM's official communication stated that it had launched the strikes "at the request of Nigerian authorities" in Sokoto State, "killing multiple ISIS terrorists," presenting the attack as a seamless exercise in joint counterterrorism. The command framed the mission as a success, while omitting any reference to civilian harm or the broader destabilizing impact of US militarization in the Sahel and West Africa.

The official US justification for the operation is that it is part of the "war on ISIS," targeting militants allegedly responsible for attacks on Christians in northern Nigeria. Trump had spent weeks publicly accusing the Nigerian government of failing to protect Christians and, according to coverage by National Public Radio (NPR), portrayed the December 25 attack as a long-overdue response to an "existential threat" to Christianity in the country.

In a WABC radio interview, Trump hailed the attack, boasting that the ISIS terrorists "really got hit hard yesterday" and that they had received "a very bad Christmas present."

On Truth Social, Trump wrote that "under my leadership, our country will not permit Radical Islamic Terrorism to thrive," and that ISIS militants in northwest Nigeria had been "targeting and brutally murdering innocent Christians at unprecedented levels, not seen in many years, even centuries."

Along with this declaration, Trump said that "there will be many more" dead terrorists "if their attacks on Christians persist," effectively promising an open-ended campaign of US imperialist attacks on Nigeria and anyone else the fascist president designates.

Senior figures, such as U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, amplified the lies and combined threats with assurances of close partnership with the Abuja regime. On X, Hegseth posted

that “the President was unequivocal last month: killing of Christians in (and elsewhere) must cease,” and that US forces were “always prepared, as ISIS learned tonight — on Christmas.” He concluded by promising “More to come ... Grateful for the support and cooperation of the Nigerian government,” followed by “Merry Christmas!”

The essential purpose of the statements is that the White House reserves the right to fire cruise missiles into any country and that US military operations will be expanded in the coming period. The assault is no doubt part of the drive by Trump administration to assert the domination of US imperialism over the African continent which holds about 30 percent of the world’s proven critical mineral reserves, making it a strategic powerhouse with vast untapped deposits of rare earths.

The Nigerian government moved rapidly to provide political cover for the imperialist attack and to insist that its sovereignty has not been breached. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement backing the strikes as part of “structured security cooperation” with “international partners, including the United States,” and declared that the operation consisted of “precise airstrikes” on “terrorist positions” in the northwest.

The foreign ministry emphasized that this partnership is “built on mutual respect for sovereignty and a shared commitment to regional and global security,” explicitly rejecting any suggestion that the US had acted unilaterally. In televised comments highlighted by international news channels, officials described the strikes as a “joint operation,” stressing that Nigerian intelligence had been provided in advance and that Abuja remained “engaged with Washington” on ongoing security cooperation.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Maitama Tuggar told international media that the operation was a “joint” one with the US, although he said it “had nothing to do with a particular religion,” contradicting the propaganda from Trump. Tuggar said Nigeria is cooperating with Washington on security and presented the strikes as “precision hits on terrorist targets” in the northwest.

In interviews with outlets including CNN and Al Jazeera, Tuggar brushed aside Trump’s comments about religious conflict, saying, “We’re not going to dwell or meticulously analyze what has been, or hasn’t, said,” and insisting that Nigeria’s priority is “to combat terrorism, to prevent terrorists from killing innocent Nigerians, regardless of their religion, be it Muslim, Christian, atheist, or otherwise.”

The Christmas Day strikes in Nigeria mark an escalation of the US drive to militarily dominate Africa. In the span of a few days, the US has launched large-scale attacks against Islamic State targets in Syria and now opened a direct front in West Africa, confirming that the so-called “war on terror” is a permanent framework for global imperialist operations, not a limited campaign.

The Nigerian national bourgeoisie is leveraging its partnership with Washington to bolster its own repressive

apparatus in the face of mounting social unrest and internal class struggle. By publicly insisting that the bombing was a “joint operation” that fully respected Nigerian sovereignty, the government is deepening the country’s dependency on foreign military power and inviting further interventions under the pretext of counterterrorism.

Nigeria’s economy is dominated by services and agriculture, with a significant industrial base. Most workers are in small enterprise employment rather than in large modern factories with estimates of a labor force of around 60–70 million people in recent years, though precise counts vary by source and method.

Services are the largest part of the economy, accounting for roughly half or more of GDP as they also employ the largest share of workers, especially in trade, transport, telecoms, finance and public services. Agriculture remains a central pillar, contributing roughly a quarter to slightly more than a quarter of GDP and providing livelihoods for a very large portion of the population, particularly in rural areas.

Industries, such as oil, mining, manufacturing, construction and utilities, make up approximately another quarter of GDP and employ a smaller share of the workforce than agriculture or services. The World Bank modeled data put industry at about 18 percent of total employment in 2023.

These figures highlight that Nigeria is a predominantly working class and small producer society in which the vast bulk of labor is concentrated in agriculture, low-paid services and small enterprises, while a relatively narrow industrial and oil enclave is tightly integrated into global capital.

From the standpoint of the international working class, the military strikes on Nigeria are a serious warning. They demonstrate that the crisis-ridden American ruling class, led by the corrupt and criminal elements within the Trump administration, is prepared to expand and multiply wars across the globe, fusing religious demagoguery, lies about “human rights” and the fight against “terrorism” with the ruthless pursuit of strategic and economic interests.



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