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AFRICA DEFENSE FOR

THE RISE OF HYBRID WARFARE

Foes Use Old and New Technology to Destabilize Countries

The Hidden Costs of Russian Mercenaries

Piracy Surges Off Somalia's Coast

PLUS

A Conversation With Maj. Gen. Simon Motswana Barwabatsile, Botswana's Ground Forces Commander

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ON THE COVER

This illustration shows that in hybrid warfare, adversaries are using conventional and unconventional tools to launch attacks.

ADF ILLUSTRATION



It no longer takes an army or even traditional weapons to attack a nation. Some of the most devastating attacks can be carried out using only a computer, a mobile phone or other off-the-shelf technology.

Often called “hybrid warfare,” this category combines conventional and unconventional attacks. It includes threats such as cyberattacks, disinformation or attacks on critical national infrastructure. Some hybrid attacks are obvious, others can go undetected for years.

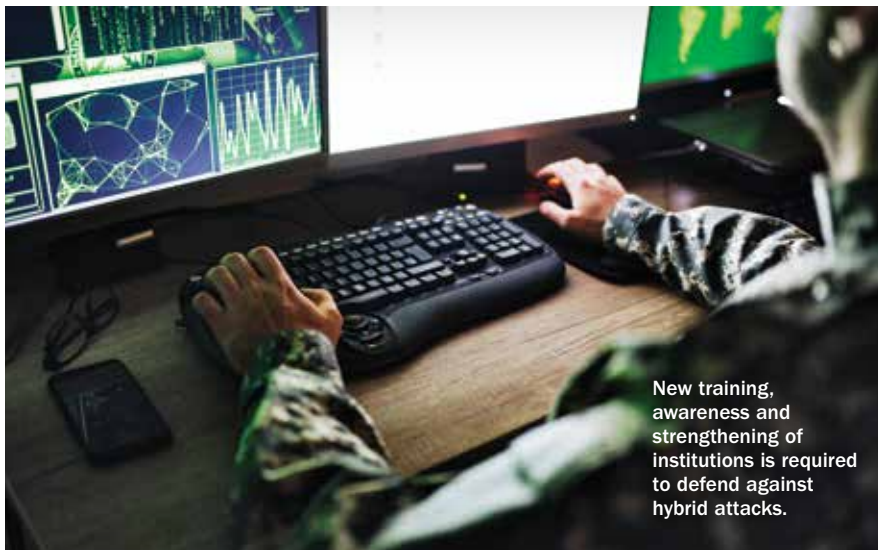
Perpetrators view hybrid tactics as a relatively cheap way to make a big impact. The goal is to shake the stability of the targeted country.

Russia is one of the top global exporters of hybrid warfare; in recent years it has used this strategy to exert control over African governments. Its hybrid strategy aims to influence a country’s political, security, economic and social spheres. Russia deploys mercenaries with pledges of security, but their heavy-handed tactics end up destabilizing the country. It gains control of valuable natural resources and uses disinformation campaigns to sway public opinion in its favor. It has undermined elections and supported coups.

As threats multiply, African countries are looking for ways to protect themselves. One area of focus is adding cybersecurity capacity. The continent has more than 650 million internet users and only about 7,000 trained cybersecurity professionals. This lack of capacity leaves government agencies, businesses and critical infrastructure exposed. Another area is improved governance and security. Countries with weak or corrupt governments and an ineffective security sector are the most susceptible to outside interference. Finally, countries can make sure citizens have accurate information. In countries without a free and responsible press, citizens are easily manipulated by false claims. This environment allows disinformation campaigns to thrive.

These threats aren’t going away, and guarding against hybrid attacks must be a whole-of-society effort. By educating the public, elected officials and security professionals to recognize the threats, countries will be better positioned to withstand these attacks.

| U.S. Africa Command Staff



New training, awareness and strengthening of institutions is required to defend against hybrid attacks.



Hybrid Threats

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‘We Are Each Other’s Keepers’

Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema addressed the 12th African Land Forces Summit in Livingstone, Zambia, on April 24, 2024. The theme of the conference was “Regional Solutions to Transnational Problems.” Hichilema was the first head of state to speak at the summit since its inaugural iteration in 2010. His remarks have been edited for length and clarity.



SGT. 1ST CLASS LERON RICHARDS/U.S. ARMY



Land Forces commanders from across the continent attend the 12th African Land Forces Summit in Livingstone, Zambia, from April 22 to 26, 2024. SGT. 1ST CLASS LERON RICHARDS/U.S. ARMY



We want to express to this distinguished gathering of commanders how delighted we are that 38-plus African

countries would be gathering here in our country in the days we have been here. Let me also express our delight to the choice of the theme, “Regional Solutions to Transnational Problems.”

This is an extremely appropriate theme given the challenges that we are all going through on our continent and beyond.

As chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security of our regional economic community called SADC, the Southern African Development Community, we are extremely active working with other member states to make sure that our region is stable. And we know the importance of keeping SADC stable so that we don’t contribute to instability to other parts of Africa, and invariably, the world.

Let me clearly state that this gathering provides a valuable opportunity to share best practices on how we can collectively foster peace across our various regions. This is extremely important because sometimes, if we have no issues in our country, we begin to feel that our responsibility

ends there. Absolutely not. We are each other’s keepers, within our countries, within our regional blocs, within our continent and our global community.

Experience has shown us that if we turn a blind eye to what’s happening elsewhere, we are behaving like ostriches, sticking our heads in the sand, and then assuming that the whole body is safe. We shouldn’t behave like ostriches at all.

We need a stable Africa. That’s our declaration. And this summit cannot provide any better opportunity or platform for you to exchange notes. So, we declare as leaders that we are committed to achieving that betterment of the lives of our people. We also know that we cannot achieve this without maintaining peace, security and stability. That’s where you come in. That’s your primary responsibility as the people sitting in this hall, working with the rest of our citizens on this continent and beyond.

And as you know, we cannot work as islands. We work in unison with others, in this, our global community. Our call to action is that we urge everyone to contribute to ensuring a stable continent that upholds enduring peace, security and

stability to facilitate the bare minimum economic growth.

The international community must provide or work with us on the continent in three areas. One is intelligence sharing. No. 2, sharing capabilities, including No. 3, technology. I think in today’s environment, technological applications are very important, because we can also reduce putting our men and women in harm’s way unnecessarily when we are able to apply technology to what we are doing to maintain peace, stability and security.

African solidarity is very important. We want to state that true to the African spirit, a good neighbor cannot remain passive when another’s house is on fire. Given the nature of our villages, because your roof is almost touching the roof of the neighbor, if you do not help the neighbor extinguish the fire, the fire will extend to you. Indeed, my saying — and I’m very pleased that it’s being repeated — confirms what I’ve been saying for years: that instability anywhere is instability everywhere.

TANZANIA WILL DEPLOY DRONES

to Monitor Forests ADF STAFF

GETTY IMAGES

The Tanzania Forest Services Agency is adding drones to the tools it uses to protect dwindling woodland areas, which are under pressure from a variety of sources.

“Drone technology is important because it will help us cover a large area and leave the remainder to patrols using vehicles and motorcycles,” said Dos Santos Silayo, the agency’s commissioner for conservation. The agency announced the deployment of four new vehicles and nearly 40 motorcycles to patrol Tanzania’s forests.

“We are committed to enhancing the sector by equipping you with the necessary tools and expertise to drive positive outcomes in forest conservation,” Angellah Kairuki, Tanzania’s minister of natural resources and tourism, said during the ceremony to unveil the equipment.

Tanzania has 45.7 million hectares of forest that cover about 40% of the country. That is down from 61% in 2000, according to the World Bank. Tanzania loses about 400,000 hectares of forest each year, which is twice the global average deforestation rate.

The drones will expand Tanzania’s capacity to track crime in the forests and monitor less-accessible areas so

the agency can deploy patrols more effectively, Kairuki said. The plan echoes the country’s 2016 decision to use drones to monitor its Ngorongoro Conservation Area, where the aircraft watch for poachers and scare elephants from the protected area.

Tanzania has joined other African countries, including Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar and Namibia, that use drones to monitor threatened forests. Kenya and Madagascar also use drones to spread seeds and reforest damaged areas. In other countries, drones can deploy sensors within forests to help monitor tree health.

Tanzania, working with the environmental nongovernmental organization Trees for the Future, is part of a consortium of African countries deploying drones to evaluate tree coverage to help farmers protect the health of their farmland and guard against erosion.

Illegal charcoal and firewood collection, and illegal mining, livestock grazing and agriculture are consuming Tanzania’s forests, Kairuki said.

Threatened areas include the 1,095-hectare Kahe forest preserve that protects water flowing off Mount Kilimanjaro. Illegal logging and livestock grazing are the chief causes of deforestation there, according to forest advocates.



Kenya Hosts Workshop on RESPONSIBLE AI USE

DEFENCEWEB

Kenya's Ministry of Defence co-hosted an inaugural workshop on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the military in June 2024.

The Netherlands and South Korea co-hosted the two-day event in Nairobi. Delegates and military personnel from more than a dozen countries attended to hear about the opportunities, challenges and risks associated with military applications of AI.

The event came about a month after the Stellenbosch University Military Academy in South Africa launched a defense AI research unit as a center of AI excellence.

The workshop, the first of its kind in East Africa, was titled Regional Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Military.

Those attending heard Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Defence Aden Duale predict that AI will not only strengthen defense capabilities but also will help uphold the "principles of justice, peace and human dignity."

"Kenya is committed to ethical AI practices in military operations to promote security and stability in Africa and globally," his keynote address read in part. "I urge you to share your insights and collaborate on solutions that will guide toward responsible and effective use of AI in our military endeavors."

Gen. Charles Kahariri, chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, said a "comprehensive regulatory framework that governs the use of AI in military operations is essential."

"Building local capabilities to develop, deploy and regulate AI is crucial," he said. "These frameworks should address issues such as data privacy, security and ethical use. Policymakers must work closely with technologies, ethicists and military experts to create policies that balance innovation with responsibility."

Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda attended the event.

Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Defence Aden Duale spoke at the AI event.

KENYA DEFENCE FORCES

MILITARY EXERCISE ADVANCES

East African Readiness

ADF STAFF

The 13th iteration of the East African Community's (EAC) regional field training exercise, Ushirikiano Imara 2024, brought together regional partner nations to enhance capabilities among military, police and civilian components to respond to complex security challenges.

The Rwanda Defence Forces hosted the event, whose name translates as "building strong relationships," in June 2024. Land-based training took place at and around the Rwanda Military Academy in Gako. Rwanda hosted a maritime element in Rubavu district.

EAC member nations Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda took part in the exercise. The theme was "Strengthening security sector integration and harnessing common interests consistent with EAC regional peace and stability."

"The importance of security in regional integration cannot be overstated," said Rwandan Defence Minister Juvenal Marizamunda as the exercise opened, as reported by defenceWeb. "Indeed, no country can confront contemporary security challenges single-handedly. It is therefore essential for countries to come together as a region to address these security challenges collectively."

The exercise scenario was based on the hypothetical East African nation of Kangoma as it endured a political crisis, requiring attention to peace support operations, counterterrorism, counterpiracy and disaster management.

Exercise director Maj. Gen. Andrew Kagame said Ushirikiano Imara enhances interoperability and cooperation, and develops and refines capabilities for peace support operations, counterterrorism, counterpiracy, and disaster management. It also builds mutual understanding and trust, strengthening bonds that unite nations.

"This year's exercise serves as testament of our shared determination and enhanced interoperability in consolidation of security efforts, which will see a strengthened trust and friendship among the member states," Marizamunda said as the exercise closed on June 21.

Participants at the 13th Ushirikiano Imara 2024 field training exercise march during the closing ceremony at Rwanda Military Academy in Gako. RWANDA MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



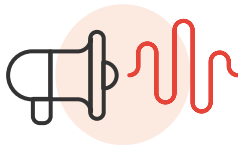


RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE MACHINE

Across the Sahel,
Disinformation
Operations Prop Up
Repressive Regimes
and Harm Civilians

ADF STAFF

ADF ILLUSTRATION



By the time Burkina Faso's health ministry declared an epidemic of dengue fever on October 18, 2023, there already were thousands of cases and hundreds of deaths. The World Health Organization (WHO) said it was the West African country's deadliest bout with the disease in years.

Another dangerous outbreak quickly followed: a deluge of Russian disinformation.

Social media users, including many believed to be backed by the Russian government, began attacking work by Target Malaria, a not-for-profit research organization that fights mosquito-borne illnesses. The group, which is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has worked to prevent malaria in Burkina Faso since 2012.

"But an army of fake social media users falsely accused the group of spreading disease, weaponizing mosquitoes, and creating biological weapons, while heaping praise on Russia," according to Agence France-Presse.

In the face of the organized disinformation campaign, Target Malaria was forced to respond by calling the attacks "false" and "deeply regrettable." Experts say the disinformation campaign is just one part of a concerted, systematic effort by Russia to sow mistrust in basic institutions such as health care, the government, the United Nations and even international humanitarian organizations.

Central to the Russian campaign was the African Initiative, an online outlet with deep ties to the late Wagner Group boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, who built a shadowy network of mercenary, disinformation and mining operations in Africa before he was killed in a mysterious plane crash in August 2023. In the wake of Prigozhin's death, the Russian Defense Ministry has taken over the Wagner Group's operations on the continent and rebranded it under the name Africa Corps.

Just as cases of dengue fever in Burkina Faso were surging in September 2023, the Russian military-run



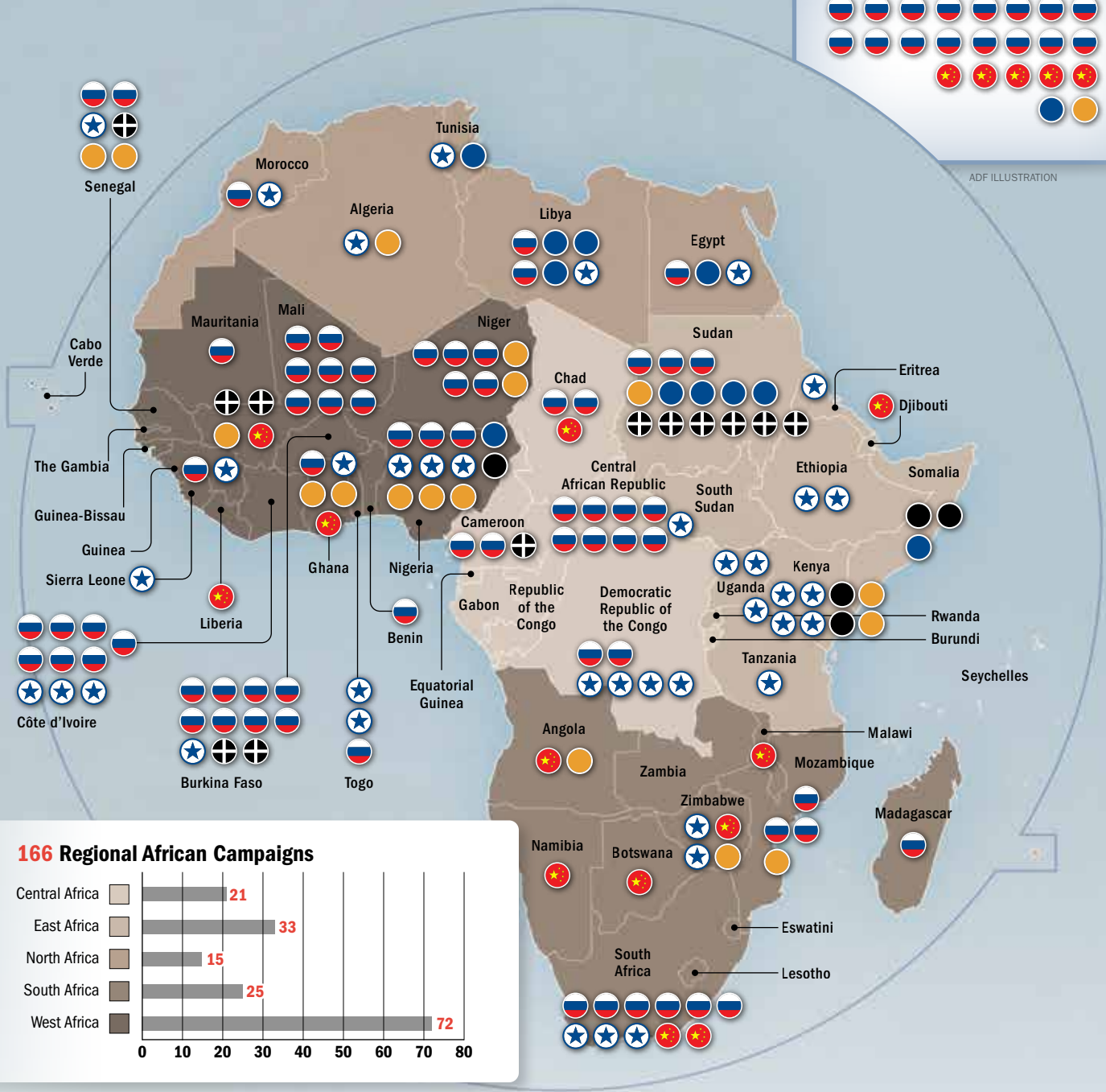
A banner of Russian President Vladimir Putin appears at a Burkina Faso junta rally in Ouagadougou. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Regional Map of Disinformation in Africa

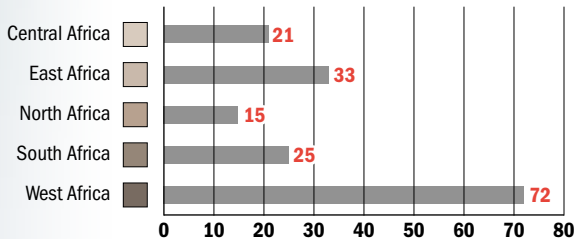
23 Trans-African Campaigns



ADF ILLUSTRATION



166 Regional African Campaigns



Sponsors

- CCP-linked actors
- Domestic political actors
- Kremlin-linked actors
- Military actors (including juntas)
- Militant Islamist group actors
- Other foreign actors
- Other or undetermined actors

“Russia is connected to 80 of the 189 campaigns that we identified and mapped, which is 40% of these disinformation campaigns. This kind of cognitive warfare is a strategy that has come from the Russian Ministry of Defense.”

~ Dr. Mark Duerksen, Africa Center for Strategic Studies



Russian President Vladimir Putin is video recorded at the Russia Africa Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, on July 28, 2023.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Zvezda TV broadcast a news story announcing the launch of the African Initiative.

Artyom Kureev, African Initiative director-general, has said his organization aims to become the “information bridge between Russia and Africa.” But its real goal is to disguise and spread disinformation in the hope that it will be seen as independent reporting and not as a Moscow-directed propaganda campaign.

The WHO reported a surge of dengue fever cases from six in July 2023 to “a staggering 708 cases” by September 9 and urged collaboration with partners such as Target Malaria. “Given the positivity ratio ... it is imperative to uphold and reinforce public health measures,” the WHO said in a weekly bulletin.

Russian disinformation networks made that task much more difficult.

Dr. Mark Duerksen, a research associate at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), has spent years analyzing the growing impact of disinformation campaigns on the continent’s rapidly changing information systems. He called the recent Burkina Faso disinformation campaign Russia’s likely “next wave.”

“There are indications that the African Initiative is probing public health as something amenable to this kind of information warfare,” he told ADF. “They seem to have found another soft spot that they’re going to exploit. It’s really cynical because it’s going to make public health efforts more difficult on the continent. It’s going to make fewer people access care.”

Russian Disinformation in the Sahel

Hybrid warfare combines conventional forms of armed conflict with nonconventional strategic tools, including information operations to influence and subvert or

reframe events. Duerksen says it is a part of the “suite of services” Russia offers to isolated autocratic regimes such as the military juntas that have taken over Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in recent years.

First, Russia identifies and inflames local grievances. In the Sahel, the biggest vulnerability is ineffective security forces facing a tidal wave of expanding violent extremist organizations — regional groups with links to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group terrorist organizations.

Next, Russian operatives cultivate local influencers who spread propaganda and disinformation while building a network on social media and promoting demonstrations to give the appearance of popular support. Then Russian mercenaries arrive and lead counterterrorism training and operations while establishing their payment through contracts for mineral extraction. In the wake of its military operations across Mali and the Central African Republic, the Wagner Group was credibly accused of numerous civilian massacres, atrocities, human rights violations and other war crimes.

Once the mercenaries are in place, the disinformation and influence campaigns can be declared a success.

As the head of research at Logically, a technology company that tracked a surge of pro-Russian and anti-French narratives related to Niger surrounding the country’s military coup in 2023, Kyle Walter has long suspected that Russian funding and social media networks are responsible for fake grassroots rallies. The New York Times reported that Ahmed Bello, the president of a Nigerien civil society group whose acronym is written as Parade, distributed as many as 70 Russian flags at

Russian Wagner Group mercenaries serve as bodyguards to Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra.

REUTERS

multiple protests in Niamey and that the Russian government provided funding through intermediaries conducting similar activities in Mali.

“It is with them that we work to develop the expansion of Russian ideology in Africa,” Bello told the Times.

Researchers at Microsoft have identified Parade as the handiwork of Russia’s Foreign Ministry, and a senior European military official told the Times that the group is a front for Kremlin-backed operations on the continent.

“It’s a whole toolkit,” Duerksen said, explaining the Wagner Group’s blueprint. “It can help [juntas] stay in power and keep the opposition and the journalists at bay. When the disinformation that they’re offering has helped actually bring these regimes to power in the case of the [Sahel] military juntas, they are then intertwined with those regimes.”

In a March 2024 report that drew from the work of more than 30 African researchers and organizations, the ACSS identified Russia as the primary sponsor of disinformation in Africa.

“Russia is connected to 80 of the 189 campaigns that we identified and mapped, which is 40% of these disinformation campaigns,” Duerksen said. “This kind of cognitive warfare is a strategy that has come from the Russian Ministry of Defense. This isn’t just a side project. This is a clear emphasis for the Russian military, and they go about this pretty systematically.”

Whereas the Russian government previously denied any ties to its mercenary groups’ operations, the shift from Prigozhin’s Wagner network to the military-controlled Africa Corps is profound in that Russia is now accountable for its actions.

“Who’s going to be stuck holding that bag with some kind of accountability?” Duerksen said. “Wagner had always given them this deniability that they weren’t associated with whatever they were up to. Now the Russians own it.”

The Wagner Blueprint

The Wagner Group was Russia’s primary vehicle for its ambitions in Africa dating back to 2017, when Prigozhin and his mercenaries arrived and began building a sprawling network.

“They were trying a lot of different disinformation tactics, pushing a lot of different narratives, even conflicting narratives like backing two political candidates at the same time,” Duerksen said. “It seems like they were doing a kind of market research, a lot of experimentation.”



Left: A woman listens to news on the radio in Bangui, Central African Republic. Russia has attempted to gain influence on the continent through radio programming. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Russian flags are displayed at the main market in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Among the most effective strategies is using local languages across social media networks and hiring local people to spread disinformation.

“They’ve realized the messenger matters, that having somebody who either speaks the local language, is really in tune with the local issues or speaks the local dialect is much better than a Wagner Telegram channel based in St. Petersburg,” Duerksen said. “They see these as the vanguard of their influence and how they can get groups into the streets.”

In the Sahel, with its complicated Francophone history, Russia found a vulnerable, willing consumer of its disinformation.

“There were problems with security,” Duerksen said, “so they just really hammered these messages and really tried to contort the political discourse toward this kind of disillusionment, this cynicism, this kind of toxic energy, not channeling it toward anything constructive or productive, but toward the cheering for military coups. It’s kind of a nihilistic politics now.”

Duerksen said that part of Russia’s disinformation design is to focus on three audiences.

The first group consists of local people who consume disinformation content, embrace it and become amplifiers and standard holders. “They’re the ones who are in the street holding Russian flags,” Duerksen said. “That’s a small group, those who actually have become the domestic purveyors.”

The second group is larger, with local people for whom disinformation content is designed to confuse and result in disengagement with politics and social issues. “They’re oftentimes being intimidated. If they try to express an opinion or ask a question in some of these information spaces, the troll army descends on them.”

The third group consists of regional and international media and observers who sometimes share only a surface-level understanding of distant issues and affairs. “It’s hard to cover events, so it gets framed as a popular uprising. I think that’s become very intentionally manufactured around the Sahel trends. It’s advancing a strategic objective that Russia has in the region.”

Analyst Dan Whitman of the Foreign Policy Research Institute has similarly concluded that Russia is exploiting and profiting from violence in the Sahel.

“Instability is the Garden of Eden for disinformation,” he told Voice of America. “I would say [in] two or three years, [Russia] has made the most rapid propaganda successes in the history of propaganda.”

Pushing Back Against the Narrative

Russian disinformation has been used to insulate authoritarian regimes from accountability. In this way, military juntas in the Sahel are no different from Vladimir Putin’s oppressive reign in Russia. Never-ending disinformation campaigns mean that there always will be another distraction, another way to deflect criticism, another internal or external enemy to blame. But pushback is inevitable, especially in the Sahel, where insecurity

touches nearly every life and is only getting worse.

In April, more than 80 political parties and civil groups in Mali issued joint statements calling for presidential elections and an end to military rule. Mali’s junta responded with more oppression, suspending all political activities and barring the media from covering politics — moves it claimed were necessary “for reasons of public order.”

But Malian dissenters are showing that they aren’t going away.

“They’ve realized the messenger matters, that having somebody who either speaks the local language, is really in tune with the local issues or speaks the local dialect is much better than a Wagner Telegram channel based in St. Petersburg.”

~ Dr. Mark Duerksen, Africa Center for Strategic Studies



Wrapped in a Russian flag, a supporter of Burkina Faso’s junta speaks during a demonstration in Ouagadougou on October 6, 2022.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

On April 24, 2024, a group of political parties and civil society organizations appealed to Mali’s Supreme Court “with the aim of annulling the decree which they consider tyrannical and oppressive.”

The mere existence of resistance is a clear sign that a media ecosystem of disinformation is not invulnerable. By pushing back, people undermine the narrative that their military rulers have popular support. Throughout the Sahel, it is not difficult for Malians, Burkinabe and Nigeriens to see that their so-called transition government leaders have no plans to hold elections any time soon.

“Things aren’t going well in the Sahel under these military regimes,” Duerksen said. “Security is getting worse. Economies are disintegrating. That’s been one of the great tricks of these disinformation campaigns. They’ve helped create and keep alive this image that the military juntas are popular.” □

ROUGH WATERS

A WAVE OF ATTACKS OFF THE HORN OF
AFRICA SHUTS DOWN SHIPPING

ADF STAFF



A cargo ship sinks after it was attacked by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea. GETTY IMAGES

Some analysts worried that Somali pirates were staging a comeback when a Maltese-flagged merchant ship, the Ruen, was hijacked off the coast of Somalia in December 2023, marking the first successful attack on such a ship in the region in six years.

Increasing piracy in the ensuing months left little doubt that Somali pirates are back and seemingly more capable than ever, launching attacks at great distances from Somalia's coast.

There were 33 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships by Somali pirates in the first three months of 2024, an increase from 27 incidents over the same period in 2023, the International Maritime Bureau reported. During that time, pirates held 35 crew members hostage, kidnapped nine and threatened another.

"This is a major, major uptick in terms of pirate activity," Ian Ralby, a maritime security expert and chief executive officer of I.R. Consilium, told ADF. "It's the most activity we've seen in the last six years, and it's probably the hottest period we've had since the precipitous decline back in May 2012."

Pirates held the Ruen until March, when the Indian Navy rescued the ship and 17 hostages. The Indian ship captured 35 armed pirates during a nearly 40-hour operation off Somalia's coast.

The Indian Navy said it tracked the vessel before launching the rescue operation and intercepting the ship about 260 nautical miles east of Somalia. It confirmed the presence of armed pirates through a ship-launched drone.

"In a reckless hostile act, the pirates shot down the drone and fired at the Indian Naval warship," an Indian Navy spokesperson said in a defenceWeb report. "In a calibrated response in accordance with international laws, [an Indian Navy ship] disabled the ship's steering system and navigational aids, forcing the pirate ship to stop."

Officials arrested the pirates and took them to India for prosecution. Ralby is eager to learn about their legal outcome.

"Nothing changes the risk-reward calculus more than being prosecuted and sentenced to a long time in jail when it comes to piracy," Ralby said. "That's a risk most do not want to take, and the reward is difficult to achieve

if you have the ever-presence of naval forces either willing to take aim at you with a rifle or collect you and take you into court."

The Ruen likely was used as the base for the takeover of a Bangladesh-flagged cargo ship off the coast of Somalia in mid-March, the European Union naval force said. This is a common tactic used by Somali pirates, most of whom hail from semiautonomous Puntland State.

Somali pirates in January 2024 hijacked eight fishing vessels in the Western Indian Ocean and used at least five of them to conduct more attacks, according to the Neptune P2P group, an international private security company. The rise in Somali piracy coincides with international navies leaving waters around Somalia to defend against repeated attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia in the Red Sea and other regional waters.

"THIS IS A MAJOR, MAJOR UPTICK IN TERMS OF PIRATE ACTIVITY."

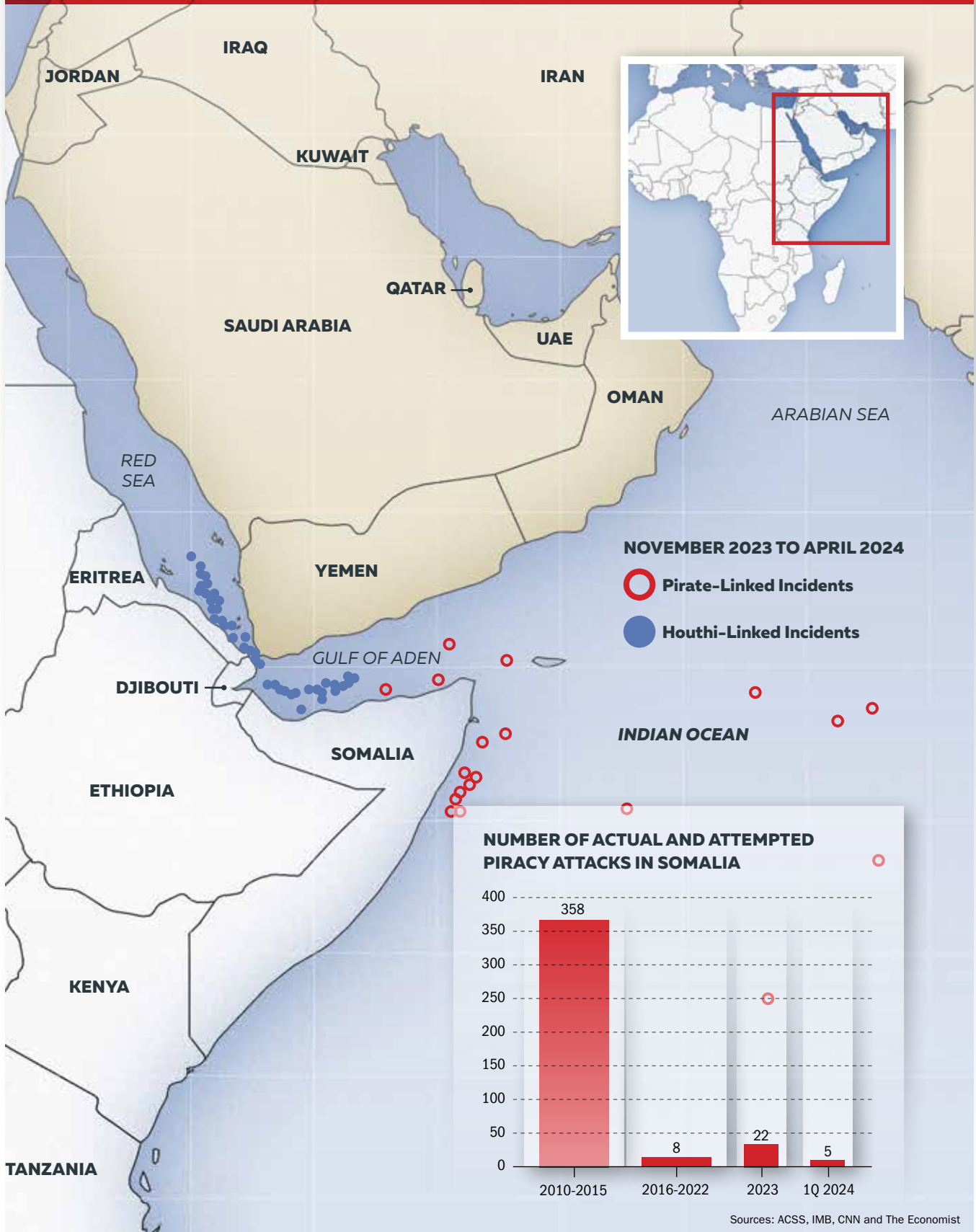
— Ian Ralby,
maritime security expert
and chief executive officer of I.R. Consilium

"As we see the Houthis launch their assaults on global maritime commerce, obviously everyone in the region has diverted their attention to protect shipping and to protect the massive increase in the volume of traffic along the African coastline that have rerouted to avoid the Red Sea altogether," Ralby said. "It's a perfect scenario for pirates to look to gain criminal advantage once again."

Two Somali gang members confirmed to Reuters that they were taking advantage of the distraction provided by Houthi strikes several hundred nautical miles to the north to get back into piracy after lying dormant for nearly a decade.

Abdinasir Yusuf of the Puntland Development and Research Centre attributed

MARITIME THREATS IN EAST AFRICAN WATERS



the surge in Somali piracy to political strife that distracted security forces, as well as the presence of foreign fishing vessels that undermine the livelihoods of local fishermen.

“Piracy never stopped,” Yusuf told *The Economist*, “it was overpowered.”

DISRUPTING GLOBAL TRADE

The converging Somali pirate and Houthi attacks are disrupting global trade. The waterways off Somalia are some of the world’s busiest shipping lanes. Every year, about 20,000 vessels pass through the Gulf of Aden on their way to and from the Red Sea and the Suez Canal — the shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe. The attacks, which often include ransom demands, have increased security and insurance costs.

The hijackings have extended the area in which insurers impose additional war risk premiums on ships. These premiums are an additional cost that insurance companies charge to cover the risks associated with war, terrorism and political unrest in areas of conflict. War risk premiums add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of a typical

seven-day trip, insurance industry officials told Reuters. The cost to hire a team of private armed guards aboard ships for three days also increased in February 2024 to between \$4,000 and \$15,000 monthly, a roughly 50% increase.

Somali pirates on April 15 collected a \$5 million ransom after freeing the Bangladeshi cargo ship *Abdullah* and about 23 crew members. Pirates overtook the coal-carrying vessel about 600 nautical miles east of Somalia in mid-March.

“The money was brought to us two nights ago as usual,” Abdirashiid Yusuf, one of the pirates involved in the hijacking, told Reuters. “We checked whether the money was fake or not. Then we divided the money into groups and left, avoiding the government forces.”

In their heyday, Somali pirates collected \$53 million in ransom payments every year, according to the World Bank. Piracy reached its peak in Somalia in 2011 when pirates launched 212 attacks, during which 1,200 seafarers were held hostage and 35 died. That year, the Oceans Beyond Piracy monitoring group estimated that piracy cost the global economy about \$7 billion.



Somali maritime police patrol off the coast of semiautonomous Puntland State, where many pirate attacks originate. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Convicted Somali pirates stand behind a prison gate in 2016.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Officials recorded only five Somali pirate attacks between 2017 and 2020. The lull was attributed to coordinated anti-piracy naval operations, safety measures such as armed guards on ships, and increased prosecution and imprisonment of pirates.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud acknowledged the renewed piracy threat in March 2024. “If we do not stop [piracy] while it’s still in its infancy, it can become the same as it was,” Mohamud told Reuters.

Analysts at *The Economist* doubt that piracy will return to 2011 levels because opportunities exposed by the Houthis eventually will abate.

AL-SHABAAB INVOLVEMENT

Reports emerged in early 2024 that al-Shabaab militants in Somalia’s northern Sanaag region had extended an offer to cooperate with pirates. Analysts believe the deal is to provide protection to pirates in exchange for 30% of all ransom proceeds and a cut of any loot, Emirati newspaper *The National* reported. The deal could

provide al-Shabaab with critical funds after the Somali government clamped down on its other illegal money sources and froze its bank accounts. The terrorists also are suspected of negotiating with pirates and Houthi rebels to acquire weapons.

The Houthi attacks on maritime commerce “are a great inspiration to anyone who has the capacity and intent to attack shipping” because the Houthis successfully gained global visibility, legitimacy and credibility, allowing them to recruit more members, which may appeal to pirates and their supporters, Ralby said.

“That’s where the concern remains for al-Shabaab to — almost out of jealousy over the Houthi rise to prominence — do something to regain its own visibility and momentum,” Ralby added. “So, if al-Shabaab is watching carefully, which I’m sure they are due to the longstanding arms trafficking flow that went through al-Shabaab up to Yemen, I suspect that al-Shabaab will look for similar opportunities to gain momentum and prominence. That’s an area of real concern.”



“WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE MORE EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE AND HOPEFULLY ANY KIND OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY ON THE WATER IS PAIRED WITH LEGAL FINISH IN A COURT IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT THE PIRATES ARE TRULY HELD ACCOUNTABLE AND NOT JUST CAUGHT AND RELEASED.” – Ian Ralby

Pirates historically have not been attached to terrorist organizations, as pirates almost solely seek money, while terrorists seek financing for ideological reasons. Linking pirates with terrorists can be dangerous, Ralby argued.

“Why? Because if we are labeling pirates as terrorists that makes it very hard to negotiate a ransom,” he said. “If we’re trying to get kidnapped personnel or a kidnapped vessel away from the control of pirates, and we call them terrorists, we hamper our own ability to get them back.”

He said that he hopes the “fiery resistance” to piracy by the Indian Navy and other international forces will deter further attacks, “although we’ll likely see more.”

One important tool in the fight against piracy is the Regional Coordination Operations Center (RCOC) in Seychelles, which organizes regular maritime security operations.

The RCOC in December expanded its area of responsibility and now coordinates operations to counter sea crimes for 21 countries.

“That is a very strong mechanism that did not exist previously,” Ralby said. “So we should be able to see more effective deterrence and hopefully any kind of operational activity on the water is paired with legal finish in a court in order to make sure that the pirates are truly held accountable and not just caught and released. That is not an effective deterrence.” □

Indian Marine Commandos guard Somali men accused of hijacking the Maltese-flagged cargo ship MV Ruen in December 2023.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



ADF ILLUSTRATION



'SECURITY IS AS GOOD AS THE PROVIDER OF IT'

MAJ. GEN. SIMON M. BARWABATSILE, COMMANDER OF BOTSWANA'S GROUND FORCES COMMAND, BELIEVES INVESTMENTS IN TRAINING AND PROFESSIONALISM ARE ESSENTIAL

ADF STAFF

Maj. Gen. Simon Motswana Barwabatsile

is commander of Ground Forces Command and is Joint Force commander for the Botswana Defence Force (BDF). He joined the BDF in March 1989 and rose through the ranks as a commander of armored units. In 2015, he was promoted to brigadier as an armored brigade group commander. He was named major general in September 2023 and assumed his current BDF commands at that time. He served in the 1993 U.S.-led humanitarian operation known as Restore Hope in Somalia, and he served in the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique from February to November 2022 as deputy force commander, acting force commander and as acting head of mission. Barwabatsile spoke to ADF at the African Land Forces Summit, held April 22 to 26, 2024, in Livingstone, Zambia. The interview has been edited for space and clarity.



ADF: *What is your top priority as the commander of Ground Forces Command?*

BARWABATSILE: I think what is important, first and foremost, is to invest in the human resource. The human capital is our key capability. In terms of professional military education and training, we need to invest in them, develop all the necessary skills that are akin to land forces capability — specialists, the infantry, armor, artillery, air defense, and then the specialist ones like engineers, reconnaissance capabilities. We must develop them to the cutting-edge level so that they can work in unison.

And then develop capabilities in terms of combat-ready units and then equipping them properly, starting with the individual Soldier, especially in individual force protection, because, as you know, the contemporary operating environment is infested with lethal assets, especially when you talk about terrorism. We need to have force protection both at the individual level and at the unit level.

ADF: *What actions have you taken in pursuit of those priorities so far?*

BARWABATSILE: I think I can say, thanks to my predecessors, they have already started working in some of these areas, and it is for me now to build into them. As we speak, we currently have work going on in terms of specialist training, so we need to build into that and then move into building teams — combat-ready teams, combat-ready units — that can fight together effectively.

ADF: *Several years ago, as a brigadier, you oversaw counterpoaching operations in Botswana. What is the current state of poaching and wildlife crime in Botswana, and what is the BDF doing to fight it?*

BARWABATSILE: Throughout the country we have centers where we have interagency coordination teams working together, sharing information in the shortest possible time. And we have not only done this within our country; we have also built collaboration, cooperation and relationships with our neighboring states, to the extent that we are able to share information with ease in the shortest possible time. It is a game of time when it comes to these issues of poaching. If you hear of the intent to move to targeted areas in time, you are able to intervene. And that we are getting, especially from our neighboring countries, who are facing the same challenge.

ADF: *You spent time as the deputy commander of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique, known as SAMIM. What did you learn in that role that helps you now as BDF commander of Ground Forces Command?*

BARWABATSILE: I think because those are now matters of operations, it's a good thing that as I take command of the Ground Forces Command, I am also becoming the Joint Force commander. And I have been the chief of staff to the Joint Force commander as a brigadier. I was involved in the initial preparation and projection of forces into SAMIM. What was key was readiness. What we can all agree on is that there is a need to mechanize to ensure that force protection is guaranteed in theater. All the forces that we have been deploying, we made sure that they move with protected vehicles, and protected vehicles are key in this undertaking.

I think now, having been in the theater, I have taken note of the fact that the multinational collaboration, cooperation, even before going into theater, is very critical. We need to find ways and means of constantly training in exercises, through education. Our Soldiers, our land forces, should work with other land forces to prepare for defense and security of our region. I think the other issue that we also saw is our professional military education institutions like staff colleges. We need to increase in terms of exchange students, we need to increase in terms of exercises, joint exercises, because when we talk of the staff college, the officer who comes out of that is the key planner. When you talk about majors, these are the key planners at levels of brigade units, and they are definitely going to be there in theater. They need to be prepared for this multinational engagement.

As you go forward, also the gap of technology becomes apparent. We need to make the theater transparent in terms of what we're seeing, sensing. And we need to invest in the ISR — intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance — capability. The threat that we were facing is elusive, but when they are out of contact with communities, we should be able to detect them and be able to target when they are out. And that can only be done with good ISR and harnessing technology.

Build on the ability to work within communities in terms of civil-military cooperation, build on that aspect. We need to





A Mozambican Soldier watches over civilians in Quionga, Mozambique, in September 2022. Barwabatsile stresses that strong civil-military relations help civilians see security forces as partners. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Barwabatsile said force protection was a priority for the multinational mission in Mozambique.

BOTSWANA DEFENCE FORCE

work hard on it to make sure that when we deploy into operations, we are ready to carry out civil-military operations. That way they will be able to see us as partners and be able to even give information willingly without having to be requested regarding what is happening inside the community in terms of security threats.

ADF: Botswana has been a nation at peace internally and with its neighbors for many years now. What practices or philosophies have allowed Botswana to stay at peace for so long in an often-volatile region?

BARWABATSILE: I think the question is a political question. But as a military, we have to be as professional as we can in the provisioning of the security, which is our sovereign responsibility and our obligation as a military institution. Discipline and professionalism should be the guiding principles for our forces. I think security is as good as the provider of it.

ADF: As BDF ground forces commander, how do you assess the level of cooperation from your regional partners? How essential is that cooperation to regional security?

BARWABATSILE: I think the fact that they agreed to undertake the [SAMIM] mission and the fact that the host nation agreed to accept the mission, it is telling in its own right that there is cooperation. Unfortunately, we cannot contribute to the same degree, because we have different challenges. A point to note is that we went into this mission under the shadow of COVID-19, which has hit hard in our economies, and any contribution to me is sufficient. There are countries that contributed forces. There are those who contributed assets. There are those who contributed staff officers only, not standing forces or formed troops, and there are those who contributed in assisting with intelligence, and those that contributed morally. I believe all of them contributed. If you look at the number of the players, it's more than 50% of membership. To me, that is a success for a first-time mission of its kind.

ADF: We live in an ever-changing world technologically. How is the BDF leveraging military technology in its training and during its deployments?

BARWABATSILE: I think we are working on that. Our endeavor is to have a small but



agile and effective task force, but this can only be achieved by harnessing technology. There is no other way around it, and we need to continue to move in that direction. In this current operation that we referred to, we were mostly, while we had the combat troops, we also had the ISR capability, which was an enabler and a force multiplier, because it was giving us the necessary intel and the necessary reconnaissance, the necessary sensing that we needed. Those are some of the areas that we have tried to harness into technology, and I think we will continue to do so, especially in the drone/UAV area.

ADF: *To what extent are the BDF ground forces using drones, and has that been successful?*

BARWABATSILE: We are using the drones in the ISR responsibilities. Where we have used them, it has paid dividends. But we need to build more in that capability. It's very limited. I think the Mozambique Cabo Delgado theater has shown the need for this and for us previously, even from our history in terms of the antipoaching, it has shown the necessity and the need to have those things. You can't have troops everywhere,

but if you have technology, it can cover those gaps.

ADF: *What do you see as the future of the BDF ground forces? What do you see coming in the next few years for your force?*

BARWABATSILE: The brigades are fundamental or the basis of the ground force. And it is those who have been engaged that we need to crystallize them and equip them. We cannot fully equip them, but we should equip them to levels that their capabilities, and we are able to generate capabilities that may be required in national or in multinational undertakings. We should be able to prepare for that.

ADF: *Is there anything that you would like to add?*

BARWABATSILE: I think what I can add is just that the need to make sure that we have professionalism across all these spheres, all these spheres within the ground force and ensure force protection. Force protection is crucial because from the SAMIM experience, if it was not for force protection in terms of the equipment that we give our troops, we may have lost more than what we lost. Because there was force protection, we managed to save lives. □

Soldiers serving in the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique prepare to board a helicopter for an operation. SAMIM



SMALL, CHEAP AND DANGEROUS

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES



ADF ILLUSTRATION



Drones Can Enhance Missions at Low Costs, but Without Guidelines They Can Exacerbate Insecurity

AS summer gave way to fall in 2021, the Ethiopian government found itself on the back foot against secessionist Tigrayan rebels, who had just captured the towns of Dessie and Kombolcha in the neighboring Amhara State.

The strategic victories positioned Tigrayan People's Liberation Front forces about 400 kilometers north of the capital, Addis Ababa. It also placed the rebels in the forefront of the minds of worried government officials.

"Our country is facing a grave danger to its existence, sovereignty and unity," Minister of Justice Gedion Timothewos said in a November 2021 news conference in Addis Ababa, according to *The National Interest* magazine. "We can't dispel this danger through the usual law enforcement systems and procedures."

In addition to declaring a state of emergency, the government compiled a registry of privately owned weapons in Addis Ababa and told gun owners they might be called upon to defend the city from attack.

A month later, however, a counteroffensive had put Dessie and Kombolcha back in government hands. One key to that success reportedly was the use of low-cost drones from China, Iran and Turkey. News reports from that period lack significant detail as to the extent of drone use, but as a new conflict emerged, Ethiopia's use of drones has become more apparent.

In 2023, rebels in the Amhara region, who fought alongside Tigrayans from 2020 to 2022, continued fighting after Tigrayan leaders reached a deal with the government to stop their war. Within months, Ethiopia was using drones against them with deadly results.

An Ethiopian Orthodox priest told *The New Humanitarian* news agency that a February 19, 2024,



Even small drones can be fitted with cameras for surveillance and aid in targeting adversaries. ISTOCK

drone strike had left the impact spot "littered with body parts of dead people, intact dead bodies, and survivors with missing limbs who were moaning in pain."

A hovering Ethiopian drone had targeted an Isuzu truck near Sasit, a town in Amhara State, that witnesses said was returning from a baptism ceremony. The truck is thought to have carried up to 50 people. The drone strike killed at least 30 civilians and injured another 18, according to ReliefWeb.

Other media reports tell of a drone obliterating an ambulance on its way to a hospital in Wegel Tena.

Ethiopia is just one African nation using drones, sometimes called unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The types of drones vary by size, purpose and origin. But one thing unites them: There are no specific rules guiding the responsible use of drones in combat or counterterrorism. That puts civilians at risk of death and injury and governments without unified guiding principles for drones' continued use.

PROMISE AND PERIL

Drones have dotted the skies above African conflicts for more than a decade. The African Union's multinational force in Somalia started using low-cost drones in 2015 for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, according to the Small Wars Journal. United Nations peacekeeping forces have used drones in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. Their usefulness is clear.

"The promise of drones is really tremendous," Christopher Fabian, UNICEF's principal advisor on innovation, told Inter Press Service in 2022. They can help humanitarian workers in three ways: First, they can span broken or missing infrastructure to carry small payloads. Second, they can provide data and views of disaster sites to pinpoint damage and potential casualties. Drones also can extend Wi-Fi connectivity to refugee camps or schools for internet access.

"Hardware itself does not violate human rights,"

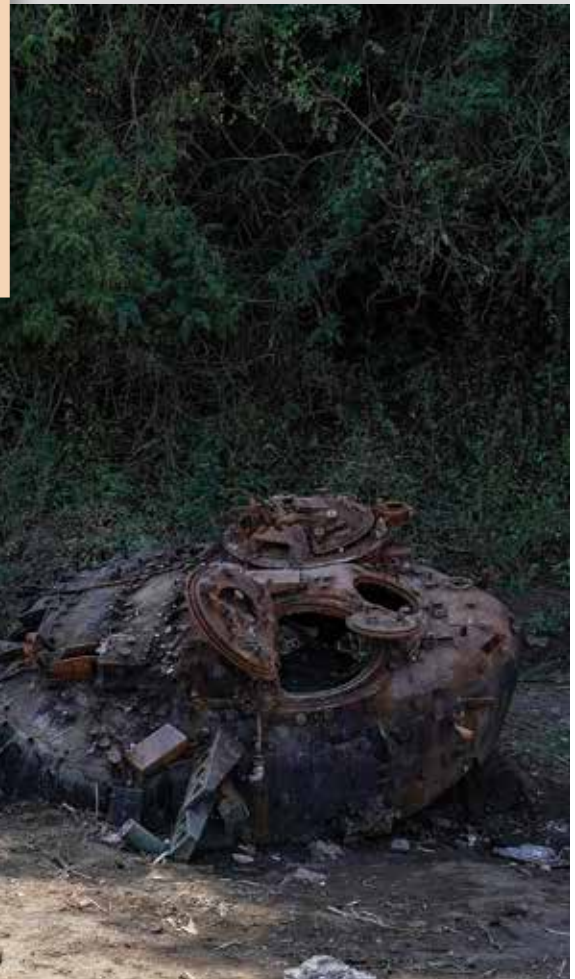
Fabian said. "It is the people behind the hardware." That has been proved true time and time again across the continent. Two March 2024 drone strikes in Amasrakad village, Mali, killed 13 women and children and injured more than a dozen others, according to Amnesty International. A Malian army communique stated that the strikes "contributed to neutralizing many terrorists and some of their vehicles," a claim locals disputed.

Two days later, a drone strike outside Mogadishu, Somalia, killed nearly two dozen people and wounded 21 others. It's not clear who was responsible, but unnamed security sources told The Washington Post that a Turkish drone was involved. Turkey, an ally of the Somali federal government, has its largest overseas military base in Mogadishu. "The accounts are likely to fuel concerns that the proliferation of drones is causing a huge spike in civilian casualties with little accountability," the Post said of the Somalia attack.

"Drones coming to the market and being acquired by



A drone destroyed a tank between Mersa and Libso in North Wollo, Ethiopia.





Above: The Chinese-made CH4 attack drone has been used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Fighters with Libya's Tripoli-based Government of National Accord set up drones in Sirte. Drones with cameras have helped forces spot Islamic State group positions.



governments requires more responsibility and laws to be passed to protect civilians," and operators need more training, Abdisalam Guled, former deputy director of Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency, told Bloomberg in March 2024. "It's a new market, industry and type of weapon, but it has to come with more responsibility."

VARIETY IN TYPE, USE

Drones fall into three major classifications, according to "The Drone Databook" by Dan Gettinger, founder of the now-inactive Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College.

- **Class I** drones weigh less than 150 kilograms, can fly from one to three hours at a time and have a maximum range of about 80 kilometers. They can carry payloads of up to 5 kilograms and have a top speed of 100 kilometers per hour. They can include fixed- and rotary-wing vehicles, and

typically are launched by hand or with a pneumatic rail. Most Class I drones are used for reconnaissance and surveillance.

- **Class II** drones can fly for 10 hours, have a maximum range between 100 and 200 kilometers, and can carry payloads of up to 70 kilograms. Their top speed is 200 kilometers per hour. They can be rotary- or fixed-wing vehicles and may require a small runway for launch. They can carry sensing, targeting and communications equipment, and some lightweight ordnance.
- **Class III** drones can fly for more than 24 hours, carry several hundred kilograms and fly at 300 kilometers per hour or more. Ranges can exceed several thousand kilometers. There are rotary- and fixed-wing vehicles in this class, with fixed-wing drones requiring runways. They fly at medium and high altitudes for long periods, and some are used for lethal strikes and combat.



A Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drone

African nations seeking cost-effective military capacity have acquired drones from companies such as Turkey's Baykar and China's Aviation Industry Corp. in the past five years, according to Bloomberg. In that period, civilian deaths due to drone and airstrikes rose from 149 in 2020 to 1,418 in 2023.

"It's not about the technology, it's about how they're used, and we're seeing a pattern of them being used in ways they are causing an awful lot of harm to civilians," Nate Allen, associate professor at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), told Bloomberg.

ADDRESSING PROLIFERATION

More than a third of the continent's militaries have acquired drones and many nonstate militants are trying to do the same.

"In addition to incorporating UAVs into their arsenals and operational concepts, African governments need to urgently engage in regional and global efforts to govern the spread and come to a consensus surrounding the norms of UAV use," Allen wrote in a 2023 paper, "Turning off autopilot: Addressing the proliferation of unmanned systems in Africa's conflict zones," for the Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa at South Africa's Stellenbosch University.

Drone use spreads quickly because many African conflicts are waged between forces of limited means fighting across vast distances. Five factors, Allen wrote, drive the proliferation:

- Technological advances have made drones more user-friendly and able to receive and collect more data.
- These innovations allow drones to complement or replace assets such as planes, satellites and other systems.
- As technology has advanced, costs have plummeted. UAVs once could cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Now, an Iranian-made Shahed attack drone "costs as little as \$20,000 to make and as much as \$500,000 to shoot down," Allen wrote. Other, smaller drones can cost as little as \$450 and destroy a tank.
- These low costs have allowed a range of companies and nations — such as Iran, Israel, South Africa and Turkey — to establish themselves in the global market.
- As technology advances and is adapted, drones are likely to become more common on the continent.

DRONES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

ADF STAFF

Drones present advantages and challenges for security forces. They allow for the remote delivery of lethal force, which can protect security forces and save lives. However, some worry that those advantages may lower the threshold for drone use, thus endangering others and raising accountability concerns.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) does not specifically address drone use, but the general rules of IHL do apply, according to Geneva Call. IHL covers weapons, weapons systems and platforms. Drones are a platform with the potential to deliver weapons. "Hence, the use of armed drones as a means and methods of warfare is regulated by the IHL rules governing the conduct of hostilities, namely the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions

in attack as well as the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks," a 2020 Geneva Call report states.

Distinction requires that parties to a conflict engage only military targets, be they people or objects.

Proportionality requires that once a legitimate target is engaged, collateral damage is not excessive regarding the anticipated military advantage from the attack.

Precautions must be taken to ensure distinction and proportionality, such as verifying that targets are not civilian.

Security forces must avoid indiscriminate attacks, which means attacks not directed at military targets and those "undertaken with means or methods of warfare that cannot be directed at military objectives or whose effects cannot be limited as required by IHL."



A mockup of Iran's Shahed 149 Gaza combat drone is displayed at a defense exposition.

“Even as they seek to acquire UAVs, it is imperative that African governments take steps to mitigate the risks, negative externalities and consequences of UAV proliferation,” Allen wrote. “In some cases, their proliferation may benefit criminal networks and terrorist groups more than state actors, making it necessary to take steps to monitor and limit their use around certain strategic areas and installations.”

Risks include collateral damage to civilians during military strikes and failing to protect legitimate privacy concerns when drones are used for surveillance and intelligence gathering. Nations should make sure drone surveillance complies with data protection rules and draw up ethical guidelines for when and how drones can be used.

USE BY NONSTATE ACTORS

Amade Miquidade, then-interior minister of Mozambique, in May 2021 told media outlets of how extremists in the nation’s Cabo Delgado province were using drones for precision targeting. In Somalia, security contractors have said that al-Shabaab has used drones for surveillance, according to “Drones and Violent Nonstate Actors in Africa,” a paper by Karen Allen for the ACSS.

The drone market in Africa was expected to be worth \$43 billion in 2024. Growth was expected to include humanitarian use, maritime security and border patrols, she wrote. However, another likely area of growth presents equal parts promise and danger: hobbyist and store-bought drones.

Smartphones, which some militants already use to detonate improvised explosive devices, also can pilot certain drones. Given reports of nonstate groups using small drones in northern Mozambique, the potential threats are clear.

“If we look at the ease with which [the insurgents] are getting weapons and mounting attacks on the military, I will never underplay the possibility that they start making use of more technologically advanced capabilities, and with that I include drones,” South African security expert Jasmine Opperman told Karen Allen. “If you can bring in cellphones by the hundreds through illegal smuggling routes, what is preventing them from bringing in drones?” □



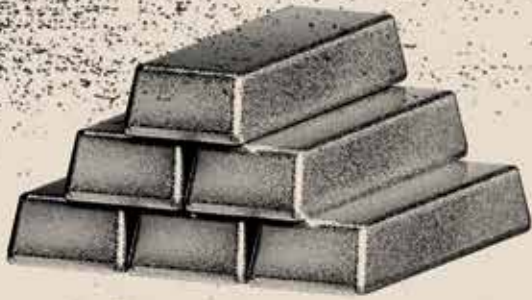
STEPPING INTO THE **DEEP END** OF MARITIME TRAINING

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ARIF PATANI/U.S. NAVY

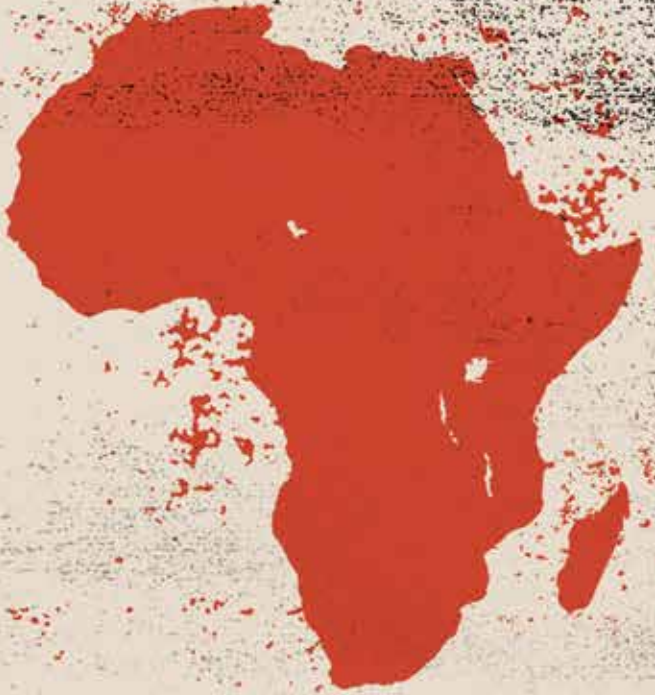
Participants in exercise Cutlass Express 2024 jump into a swimming pool for diver training in Victoria, Seychelles, on February 29, 2024. Eleven African naval forces participated in the U.S. Africa Command-sponsored exercise that was hosted by Djibouti, Kenya and Seychelles. The exercise goals are to enhance maritime domain awareness and collaboration, and strengthen the capability of nations to combat piracy, illicit trafficking, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The first week involved classroom sessions on how to deter sea crimes. The second week focused on tactical combat casualty care, marksmanship, at-sea

maneuvers and close-combat techniques. Participants also observed operations at the Regional Coordination Operations Centre in Seychelles. The center fights sea crimes with the support of regional members Comoros, Djibouti, France on behalf of Réunion Island, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. “This exercise shows our mutual and unwavering commitment to ensuring maritime safety and security in the region,” said Brig. Michael Rosette, chief of Seychelles Defence Forces. “It is through such initiatives and interactions that we continue to improve our interoperability and build stronger ties with all our friendly partners in the region.”





HIDDEN COST



ADF ILLUSTRATION

SERVICES RENDERED THROUGH RUSSIA'S MERCENARY AFRICA CORPS LEAD TO EXPLOITATION AND INSTABILITY

ADF STAFF

AS Russia's Wagner Group expands its reach across Africa with promises of security and support for authoritarian leaders, nations that invited the mercenaries suffer from increased exploitation, violence and instability.

From Sudan in 2017 to Burkina Faso in January 2024, the group's formula is simple: It targets precarious authoritarian regimes, promises to protect their sovereignty, then begins a lucrative exploitation campaign that even the Russian government has admitted smacks of colonialism.

"The narrative that Russia is pushing is that Western states remain fundamentally colonial in their attitude," Jack Watling, land warfare expert at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), told the BBC. "It's very ironic because the Russian approach, which is to isolate these regimes, capture their elites and to extract their natural resources, is quite colonial."

Watling co-authored a February 2024 report for the institute called "The Threat from Russia's Unconventional Warfare Beyond Ukraine, 2022-24" that addresses how Russian mercenaries advance Moscow's interests in Africa at the expense of nations on the continent and their former allies.

Wagner, now rebranded as the Africa Corps, cozies up to authoritarian leaders and promises them what the RUSI report calls a "regime survival package." Russia provides

military support, training, security services and political operatives to drum up domestic support through elaborate disinformation campaigns.

In exchange, Russia claims favorable extractive rights for oil and natural gas in Libya, gold and lithium in Mali, gold in Sudan, and uranium in Niger. Such deals bolster Russian government coffers while keeping energy assets out of the hands of Western powers, such as France, which depends on uranium to run its nuclear power plants.



Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, led the Wagner Group until his mysterious death in 2023 after an aborted rebellion. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





“The result is that Russian security partners initially gain a sovereign capability through Russia’s mercenaries and medium-term personal security,” the RUSI report states. “However, they also become dependent and begin to lose access to alternative security providers. In the medium to long term, the economic concessions Russia demands risk creating an extremely unequal relationship, in which Moscow extracts much more than it offers.”

Wagner mercenaries long were thought to be separate from Russian government control, but the RUSI report belies the notion that the Wagner Group ever was a mere private military company. In fact, Russia’s Ministry of Defense funded Wagner directly and through contracts that exceeded \$10 billion between 2014 and 2023.

“Moscow has followed a pattern of parachuting in to prop up politically isolated leaders facing crises in regionally pivotal countries, often with abundant natural resources. These leaders are then indebted to Russia who assumes the role of regional powerbroker.”

~ Joseph Siegle and Daniel Eizenga of the ACSS

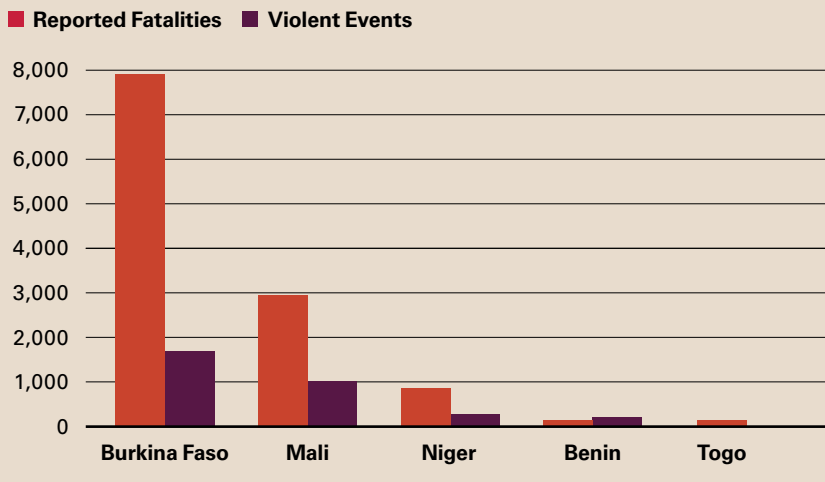
“From May 2022 to May 2023 alone, Russia spent around \$1 billion on wages and compensation payments to Wagner’s fighters,” the report states. That’s 77% of what Russia spent on its national health system in 2022.

“The ‘Wagner Group’ never existed as an official entity,” the report states. “Fighters were employed by various companies. But Wagner became the personnel’s corporate identity anyway.” The connective tissue of its various operations was Yevgeny Prigozhin, a crony of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who ran the organization.

Since the mercenaries fought in Syria, Ukraine and then moved to Africa, “Moscow has followed a pattern of parachuting in to prop up politically isolated leaders facing crises in regionally pivotal countries, often with abundant natural

Supporters of Niger’s National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland wave the national flag, right, and a flag bearing the logo of Russia’s Wagner Group in September 2023. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

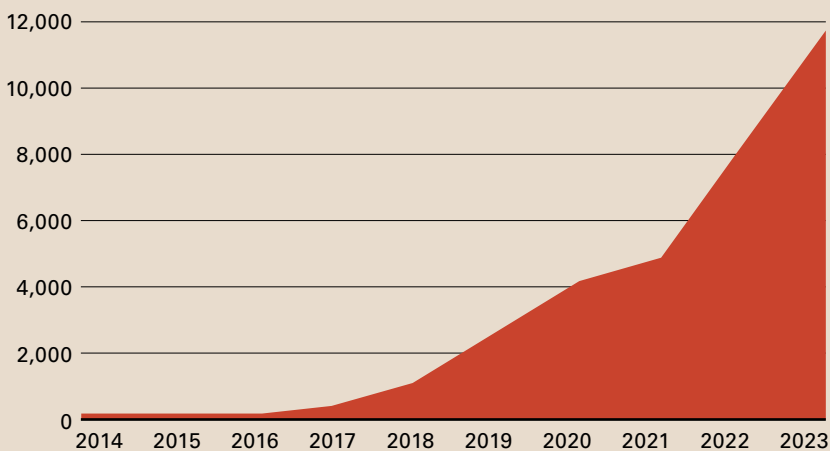
Militant Islamist Group Violence in the Sahel in 2023



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies; data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

The estimated 11,643 fatalities linked to militant Islamist violence in the Sahel mark a record high for any region since 2015.

Fatalities Linked to Militant Islamist Groups in Sahel



Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies; data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

resources,” according to a 2021 paper for the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) by Joseph Siegle and Daniel Eizenga. “These leaders are then indebted to Russia who assumes the role of regional powerbroker.”

After Prigozhin’s death in a mysterious plane crash in August 2023 — two months after he led, then halted, a mutinous march toward Moscow — Wagner rebranded as the Africa Corps. Most notably, the new group has been subsumed by the Russian Ministry of Defense.

This change is significant because it throws off the cloak of a private business interest and, with it, Moscow’s plausible deniability for mercenary excesses such as civilian executions and other documented atrocities.

Now the Africa Corps paramilitary group promises a menu of security services while preserving a “manageable level of instability” to preserve contracts “while enabling its network of businesses to continue their extractive onslaught on African economies,” according to a February 2024 paper by Dr. Mohammed Issam Laaroussi for Eurasia Review.

SUITE OF SERVICES

Africa Corps services now are administered by the Russian intelligence organization known as GRU and offer mercenary clients the “regime survival package.” In some cases, the approach promises leaders personal protection. Wagner mercenaries have offered the president of the Central African Republic such security services for years. The deal provides economic and political shielding from international backlash from groups such as the United Nations. Also, the host country is offered military training and aid in combating extremist groups.

To bolster governments’ national sovereignty, mercenaries provide internal political support through a sophisticated array of media and propaganda services. Radio stations, social media and even contrived public demonstrations, garnished with Russian flags, work to bolster the credibility of the government in the eyes of its citizens.



Russian President Vladimir Putin greets Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré during their meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in July 2023.

GETTY IMAGES

However, documented cases of massacres, executions and abuse of civilians have been noted in connection with Russian mercenaries in the Sahel and beyond. This alienates host nations from other military partners in a way that “may not be fully appreciated when cooperation is first agreed,” the RUSI report states.

“Russian objectives are pretty simple: kill opponents to regimes in countries with military juntas or authoritarian leaders and get gold in return from terrified heads of state all too willing to hand it over,” wrote Dan Whitman in an analysis for the Eurasia Program.

A LACK OF SECURITY

Despite Russian mercenaries selling the promise of security, including help in fighting al-Qaida and Islamic State group militants, Sahelian nations have seen no improvements in recent years. In fact, the opposite has been the case.

A January 2024 report by the ACSS shows that deaths due to militant Islamist violence grew by 20% from 2022 to 2023. The Sahel, where Russian mercenaries have been active, saw deaths increase by 43% during that period.

The estimated 11,643 fatalities linked to militant Islamist violence in the Sahel mark a record high since 2015, the report indicates.

Burkina Faso was home to 67% of all deaths related to militant Islamist groups in the Sahel in 2023, more

than double the number recorded in 2022. The country led the region for extremist violence for the third consecutive year. Mali accounted for 34% of militant Islamist violence in the region.

Mercenaries helped Malian soldiers conduct drone strikes and raids that killed civilians, including children, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in March 2024.

“Mali’s Russia-backed transitional military government is not only committing horrific abuses, but it is working to eliminate scrutiny into its human rights situation,” HRW senior Sahel researcher Ilaria Allegrozzi said in a statement.

Islamist extremists in the past decade have killed hundreds of civilians, committed acts of sexual violence, used improvised explosive devices and imposed strict religious requirements on communities. Now that a United Nations peacekeeping mission and other international forces have left, few feel safe about speaking out against atrocities. Residents report brutal violence at the hands of Malian soldiers and their Russian allies.

“Whatever we choose is bad, wherever we go is to face suffering,” said a man from Nienanpela village where, on January 23, 2024, Malian soldiers and Russian mercenaries executed a 75-year-old man, HRW reports. “The jihadists are brutal and have imposed their way of Islam on us, but the military and Wagner [fighters] who are supposed to protect us, what they do is only to kill, loot and burn.” □



A BULWARK OF PROFESSIONALISM

**As Coups Multiply in West Africa,
Senegal's Military Sticks to Its Founding Principles**

ADF STAFF



**A Senegalese peacekeeper patrols
in the Central Africa Republic.
The U.N. has commended the
Senegalese contingent for its
professionalism and dedication.**

DIRECTEUR DE L'INFORMATION ET DES RELATIONS
PUBLIQUES DES ARMÉES SENÉGAISES (DIRPA)



Senegalese Gen. Mbaye Cissé, chief of army staff, inspects troops on a working visit in Rwanda. DIRPA

Spring 2023 was a tense time in Senegal. Protesters packed the streets of Dakar and, in a rare move, the Armed Forces deployed in the capital to maintain order. With tires burning, armored cars on street corners and Soldiers manning barricades, one writer described the country as “sitting on a volcano.”

As a presidential election approached, some on both sides of the political debate wanted the military to take a more active stance. Calls grew louder for them to either support the opposition movement or back then-President Macky Sall and his party.

In a show of defiance, the Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF) said it would not be drawn into the politics roiling the nation. “The General Staff of the Armed Forces invites political actors of all sides and civil society to keep the National Army out of the political debate for the interest of the nation,” read a statement by Col. Moussa Koulibaly, director of information and public relations. “The latter intends to maintain its republican posture and devote itself to its sovereign missions.”

In an interview with *Jeune Afrique* in June 2023, an unnamed officer said the military would help keep the peace but not deviate from its apolitical stance. “[Deployment in the capital] was necessary to lower the tension, and now it has been lowered,” the officer said. “We want to stay out of the rest of it. Politics might catch up with us, but we hope that doesn’t happen.”

In a region where military coups have proliferated, Senegal is an anomaly. Since independence in 1960, the country has never had a coup. It is among the top troop contributors to United Nations and African-led peacekeeping missions. According to a survey by Afrobarometer, 83% of the population trusts the country’s Armed Forces, the highest percentage among countries polled.

“The Senegalese Army is unique in Africa for its professionalism and for its republican values,” retired French Gen. Bruno Clément-Bollée, who spent much of his career in Africa and now serves as a military consultant for governments, told *L’Express*. “It’s a republican Army that respects the rules and conforms to the laws.”

How has Senegal achieved this? Experts say it has to do with the country’s unique history and founders who built an enduring model of service to the nation. Observers warn, however, that this tradition is at risk if it is not vigilantly protected.

A Partnership of Giants

Senegal’s founding president, Leopold Senghor, is remembered as a pipe-smoking poet and man of peace. Unlike many founding presidents, he envisioned a constitutional democracy and his presidency, although imperfect, laid the foundation for multiparty elections.



Soldiers block a road during protests in Dakar. Although the Senegalese Armed Forces deployed to maintain order, Soldiers refused to become involved in the nation's politics, in keeping with a long tradition. REUTERS

“The Senegalese Army is unique in Africa for its professionalism and for its republican values. It’s a republican Army that respects the rules and conforms to the laws.”

~ Retired French Gen. Bruno Clément-Bollée

In 1962, the young country faced its first political crisis. Prime Minister Mamadou Dia was locked in a power struggle with Senghor. When Dia invoked executive powers and ordered members of the army to barricade the assembly building before a vote, Senghor called it an attempted coup and imprisoned Dia.

Throughout the crisis, Senghor retained the loyalty of the military and had a particularly close working relationship with Gen. Jean-Alfred Diallo, the chief of the Armed Forces.

The partnership proved key. Diallo was an engineer who strongly believed the military should be a force for development. Together the two men created a concept known as “Armée-Nation,” which holds that the military should, first and foremost, serve the population through public works projects and other efforts to improve the day-to-day lives of the Senegalese people.

“They both developed the idea that the army should be a separate actor in economic and social development, and that it should participate in the construction of the country,” said historian Romain Tiquet, who studies West Africa.

The concept was put into action in 1964 with a pilot project in the village of Savoigne, where Soldiers and

young national service conscripts helped build a bridge, roads, wells and buildings and prepared the land for agriculture. It has continued throughout the country’s history. In 1968, Senegal established a military medical school to train doctors who could respond to disease outbreaks such as cholera and yellow fever. In 1999, the country created a committee through which military leaders could meet with members of parliament, government agencies, civil society and the private sector to decide which infrastructure projects to pursue.

The Armée-Nation model oriented the military toward what is often called “human security,” wrote Brig. Gen. Ousmane Kane, former air force chief. “The participation of ‘men in uniform,’ in the development missions created a strong bond with the people whose defense and security are the reasons to serve in the Armed Forces,” Kane wrote.

Today, the concept is deeply ingrained in the SAF. Each year branches of the Armed Forces undertake projects ranging from agricultural work to building schoolhouses to public infrastructure and environmental preservation. The military opens its medical facilities to civilians and holds public health events. The military is not the first responder to national disasters, but it typically supports civilian agencies.

Education as the Foundation

An emphasis on military education dates to the founding of the SAF. In 1962, Senghor and Diallo increased educational investment to nearly 30% of the army budget. “This professionalized focus helped establish a ‘military enclave’ which has made it a strong component of Senegalese development,” wrote U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jahara Matisek, a professor at the U.S. Naval War College.

Today, Senegal offers a variety of professional military education opportunities from the academy up to the command and staff college levels. Its military academy, the École nationale des officiers d’active, was established in 1981 and admits about 100 cadets each year for two years of training. Senegal established the Centre des Hautes Études de Défense et de Sécurité for advanced defense and security studies in 2013 and offers master’s degrees in defense, peace, security and national security. In 2020, the country opened the Institut de Défense du Sénégal, which has a command and staff college and a doctrine development center.

Retired Gen. Talla Niang, former deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of Senegal, said officers typically receive five to six years of education after high school. The education continues throughout their careers.

“In the Senegalese Army, you’re always educated and trained for a particular job before you’re sent to do that job,” Niang told the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). “That way, you know how to do your job.”

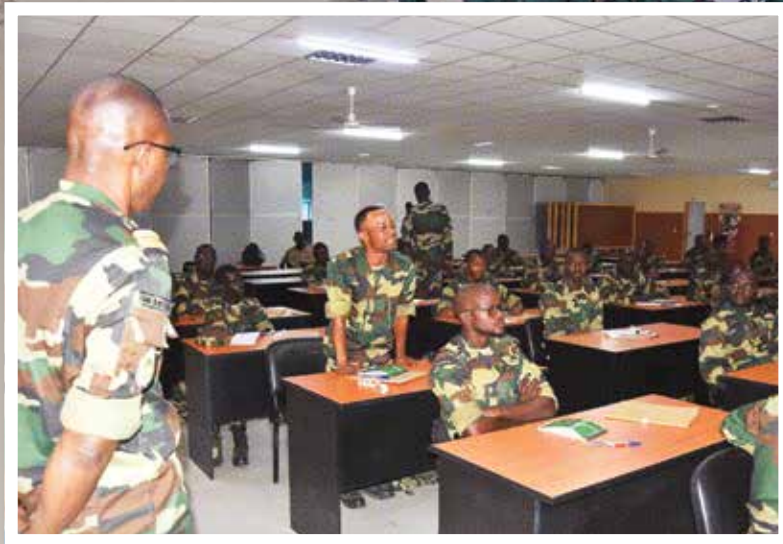


Senegalese Soldiers celebrate after participating in Independence Day celebrations in Dakar.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Senegalese Soldiers march during the country's 63rd Independence Day celebration in Dakar.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Senegalese Soldiers attend a seminar in Thiès. The country has emphasized professional military education as a way of maintaining high standards. DIRPA

Senegal does not yet have a war college, and domestic military education capacity is limited. Matisek, who has spent years studying the country's military by interacting with Senegalese officers, said he found that they had received training from all over the world, making it "hard to get consistency across the force."

"They still somewhat rely on other countries and institutions to provide a lot of education and training. So, there is a cobbling together of different doctrines," Matisek, who said his comments do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. government, told ADF. "They need more capacity at their academy, mid-level staff college and help building a war college so the majority of their force is domestically trained."

Strength in Diversity

Many national militaries do not reflect the countries they serve. Often, the upper ranks are filled with members of one ethnic or religious group with ties to

the president. This imbalance leads to resentment and can be a motivating factor for coups.

Senegal has worked to avoid that. The country is majority Muslim

but boasts an ethnic diversity including Wolof, Fula, Serer, Mandinka and others. The military recruits from all groups.

"Its troops mirror the country's ethnic and regional composition. There is a key or registry that shows this composition," Niang told ACSS. "So, if we say that this ethnic group represents 2% of the population, we will find those 2% in the Army. The Senegalese Army, therefore, is like a microcosm of Senegal itself."

Similarly, Senegal has never created a permanent presidential guard. In countries with dysfunctional militaries, these units are filled with soldiers loyal to the president and are used as a mechanism to maintain power and quash dissent. In Senegal, members of the gendarmerie are assigned to guard the president and rotated out every two to three years.

"That means that those who guard the President — he doesn't choose them, he doesn't know them. The Presidency is an institution. The president does



Military leaders inspect an airport runway under construction in Thiès. The Senegalese Armed Forces has a long history of participating in development projects. DIRPA

not choose the head of the presidential guard,” Niang told ACSS. “The presidential guard cannot launch a coup in Senegal, they are less equipped, do not have sufficient numbers, and aren’t strong enough.”

Merit-Based Promotion

Few things harm morale and effectiveness more than promotions based on cronyism or ethnic preferences. Senegal has promotion boards at every level of its Armed Forces that evaluate a candidate’s qualification for advancement. Senegal’s army maintains a balance of 5% officers, 15% noncommissioned officers and 80% enlisted Soldiers. The country also has avoided bloating the upper ranks of its Armed Forces with officers who advance due to favoritism.

The country’s leadership believes that meritocracy is essential to building a high-performing military. “If you’re promoted on the basis of personal relationships, you may have the rank and the position, but you won’t be accepted or legitimate in the eyes of your peers nor your subordinates. And you won’t be able to give orders to your people so that they execute them without hesitating or complaining,” Gen. Birame Diop, Senegal’s minister of Armed Forces, told ACSS. “Under a merit-based system, not everyone will always agree with you, but you will have the legitimacy and credibility needed to exercise authority over those you lead.”

During his time studying the Senegalese army, Matisek found that units emphasize leadership traits through an informal system known as “djobot.” This dynamic, which roughly translates to “familial relations,” means that Soldiers who exhibit leadership are treated as older brothers or even father figures. This self-identified leadership

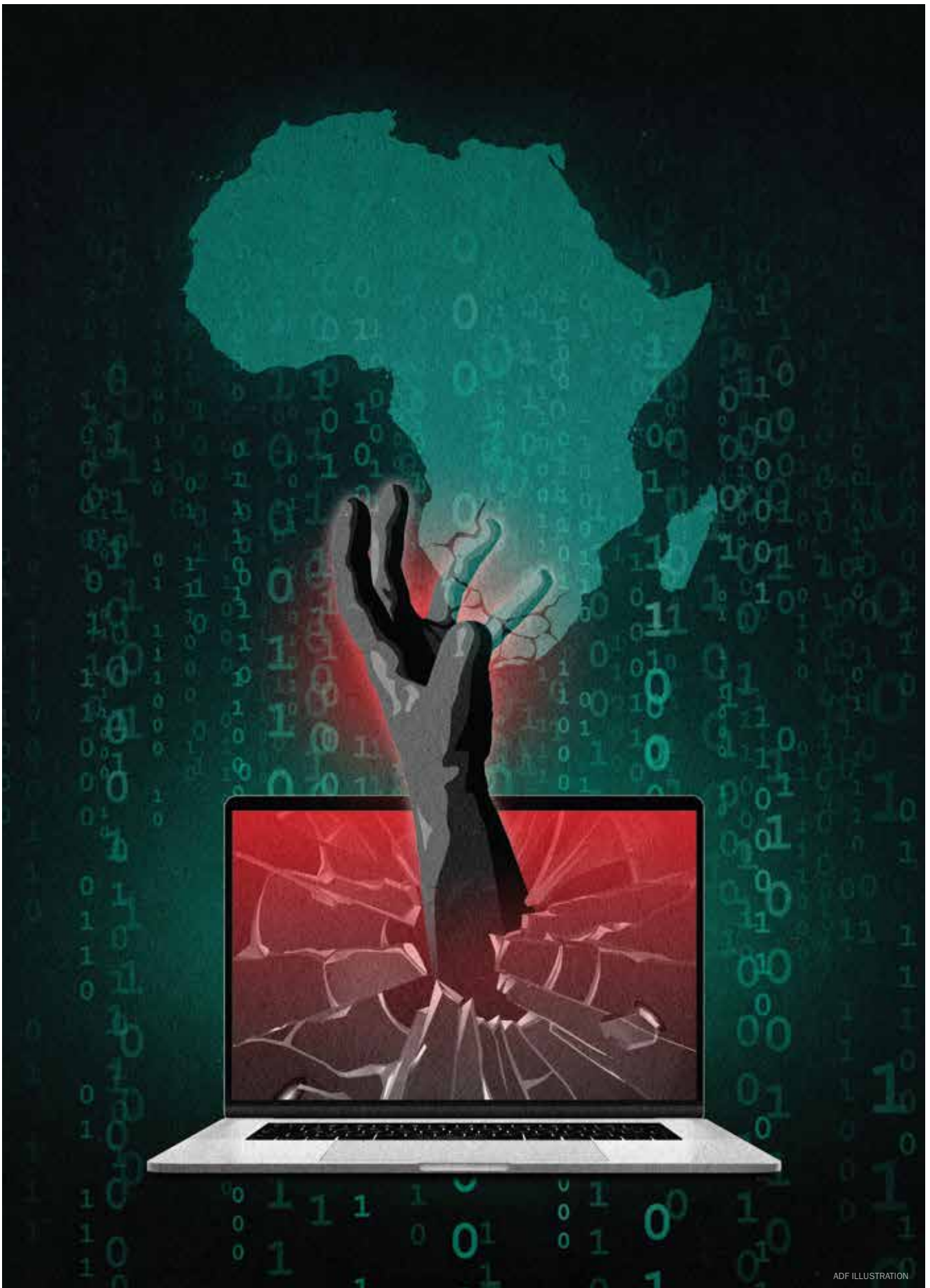
quality can lead to promotion on a formal level. It also means units are self-policing with a culture of high standards and professionalism.

“It’s the informal element of someone being respected and viewed as a good leader who takes care of their troops,” he said. “Perception is reality. The djobot is used to describe how they assess you for your merit.”

As Matisek interacted with Soldiers at all levels of the SAF, he repeatedly heard that professionalism and dedication to republican values were a source of pride and carefully protected. He believes this has helped insulate the country from the coup contagion sweeping the continent. “They take it so seriously with regards to ‘We’ve never had a coup and we’re going to keep it that way,’” Matisek told ADF. “They said, ‘There’s lots of things that we do informally amongst ourselves to make sure that we’re all in agreement about ensuring that we keep the republican tradition of noninterference in domestic politics.’”

Former Soldiers know this tradition must be protected. As election day approached in February 2024, retired paratrooper Col. Seyni Cissé Diop published a newspaper editorial titled “Que Nenni!” or “I think not!” In it, he compared the Senegalese military to the mythical Greek figure Odysseus who ties himself to the mast of a ship to avoid being tempted by the siren song. Coups and political corruption, Diop said, are the siren song leading African militaries astray. He urged his fellow Soldiers to remember their proud tradition.

“You are the inheritors of traditions of loyalty to the republic,” Diop wrote. “You and your institution will survive this political crisis, whatever the cause, if you remain faithful to the spirit of your elders who understood how to guard their dignity as incorruptible Soldiers.” □



ADF ILLUSTRATION

CYBERCRIMINALS SEE AFRICA AS TESTING GROUND

RANSOMWARE, HACKING AND IDENTITY THEFT PLAGUE GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSES

ADF STAFF

A ransomware bug infecting computer systems across Africa is the latest evidence that criminals are using the continent as a testing ground for new attacks.

The Medusa virus targets businesses and government agencies, locking users out of the system and threatening to expose sensitive information if a ransom is not paid. It has hit the Kenya Airport Authority, banks in South Africa, and other companies and organizations. The London-based cybersecurity company Performanta studied the attacks and discovered what appears to be a strategy to focus initially on organizations in countries with limited experience in cyber defense, including countries in Africa.

“In order to achieve a more cyber safe environment for all organisations globally, we need to increase awareness of this growing issue,” said Performanta CEO Guy Golan, as reported by the cybersecurity news site Dark Reading. “It is only through understanding the trends and patterns of geopolitical cyber warfare that will enable us to bring clarity to the global threat landscape.”

Dr. Robinson Sibe, CEO of the Nigeria-based cybersecurity company Digital Footprints, says that although the “rapid growth in connectivity” in Africa has been a positive from a developmental perspective, “it also translates to a sudden surge in vulnerable users and a widened attack surface.” Via email, Sibe told ADF that cybercriminals “simply take advantage of the low cybersecurity readiness and capability maturity of institutions in the African continent.”

“A lot of the institutions in Africa, both public and private, have a very low level of cybersecurity readiness and are therefore vulnerable,” he wrote. “The cybercriminal will be more motivated to target a vulnerable target.”

Cybercrime takes many forms. Norwich University notes that criminals who infiltrate computers and networks have developed malicious software and social engineering techniques to commit different types of cybercrime. The university breaks cybercrime into five categories:

- Criminal hacking is the act of gaining unauthorized access to computer or network data. Hackers exploit weaknesses in the systems to steal data ranging from personal information and corporate secrets to government intelligence. Hackers also penetrate networks to disrupt government and business operations. Authorities say that such hacks cost billions of dollars each year.



As families throughout Africa spend time online, they are facing new cyber threats.



Officials discuss cybercrime and effective responses to it during a regional workshop on Cyber Organized Crime in West Africa in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. UNITED NATIONS

- Malware, or malicious software, refers to any programming designed to interfere with a computer's normal functioning, or to commit a cybercrime. Malware has been around since computers became widely available, with an entire industry devoted to blocking it. Common types of malware include viruses, worms, invasive trojans and various hybrid programs. Subsets of malware include adware, spyware and ransomware. "Locking valuable digital files and demanding a ransom for their release, ransomware attacks are commonly executed using a trojan — malware that disguises its true intent," Norwich reports. "Ransomware typically infiltrates via email, luring a user to click on an attachment or visit a website that infects their computer with malicious code." Ransomware targets have included utilities, hospitals, schools, state and local governments, law enforcement agencies, and businesses.
- When someone unlawfully obtains another person's personal information and uses it to commit theft or fraud, it's identity theft. Not all identity thefts are a result of cyberattacks, but malware such as trojans and spyware is often used to steal personal information. Phishing, the fraudulent practice of sending emails or other messages purporting to be from reputable companies in order to obtain personal information such as passwords and credit card numbers, is a form of identity theft. Phishing attacks on business now have their own name: business email compromise.
- Social engineering is the psychological manipulation of people into performing actions or disclosing confidential information. Cybercriminals use social engineering to commit fraud online. Online dating sites can provide opportunities to initiate conversations with potential victims with the goal of conning them out of their money.
- Software piracy is the unauthorized reproduction, distribution and use of software. In the early days of personal technology in African countries,

computers commonly were loaded with pirated software containing viruses. Pirated software takes the form of counterfeited commercial products, including operating systems and office software. The trade group BSA estimates that as much as 37% of software installed on personal computers globally is unlicensed. Cybercriminals often add malware to pirated software.

The advent and improvement of artificial intelligence (AI) will add another layer of complexity to dealing with cybercrime. The X-Force Threat Intelligence Index 2024, compiled by a team of hackers, responders, researchers and analysts, noted that generative artificial intelligence, which uses deep learning models to create new content including text, images, music, audio and videos, will force everyone to review how they define and respond to cyber threats.

"Policymakers, business executives, and cybersecurity professionals are all feeling the pressure to adopt AI within their operations," the index noted, as reported by Business Insider Africa. "And the rush to adopt [generative] AI is currently outpacing the industry's ability to understand the security risks these new capabilities will introduce."

THE PLAGUE OF RANSOMWARE

Ransomware dates to 1989 and has become a destructive force nearly everywhere computers are used. Victims often refuse to disclose whether they paid ransoms, and if so, how much. In its annual crime report, cryptocurrency-tracing company Chainalysis calculated that ransomware payments exceeded \$1.1 billion in 2023, based on its tracking of those payments across blockchains. It was the highest number the company had ever measured for a single year, and nearly double for the year before.

Dr. Nate Allen, an associate professor at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, says that African countries and companies have become ransomware targets.

"Ransomware is a big threat, in part because at times ransomware will hit key elements of critical infrastructure, such as ports, electricity grids or government services," he said in an email to ADF. "All have been disabled by ransomware in various parts of Africa in recent years. And it is a particular challenge for Africa because, while African countries do not have the same degree of technology-dependent critical infrastructure found in Western countries, what they do have often serves significant portions of the population and can run on outdated software, which makes for an appealing target."

Sibe and Allen agree that business email compromise, or BEC, has become a huge scam in Africa and will result in sophisticated phishing attacks on unsuspecting users.

"According to FBI estimates, BEC actors have been responsible for tens of billions of dollars of losses," Allen told ADF. "They were among the most prolific

groups of hackers that committed insurance and benefit fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic, stealing hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars in aid meant for people who had lost jobs or had to put their lives on hold due to the pandemic.”

In a 2023 report, the consultancy Control Risk reported that cybercrime issues likely will become “increasingly relevant” across Africa as cybercriminals become more sophisticated. The report said that businesses operating in Africa and African companies looking to expand outside the continent “will increasingly need to consider cybersecurity alongside physical security in their planning.” Businesses operating in Africa are likely to face increasingly sophisticated cybersecurity threats and growing exposure to physical issues, such as geopolitical competition or crime, becoming more prominent in cyberspace, the report said.

OUTSIDE HACKERS

Studies show that some cybercrime in Africa is homegrown. But Sibe noted that there are “abundant sources” to show that many cyberattacks in Africa come from bad actors in countries outside the continent.

“There have been several reports of cyberattacks in Africa, linked to Russian threat actors and their proxies in the African space,” he wrote. “Also, last year, during Nigeria’s elections, the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy announced millions of cyberattacks targeting the country’s election infrastructure. According to the statement, most of these originated outside the country (and continent).

“In one of the earlier state elections, some of the attacks reportedly emanated from Asia. In 2021, the Nigerian Computer Emergency Response Team issued an advisory that an Iranian hacking group known as Lyceum was targeting telecoms companies and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, in Nigeria and other African nations.”

Sibe also noted that in 2022, Russian cybercriminals were blamed for attacks on popular Nigerian betting websites and others. He noted that in 2023, there were reports of Chinese state-sponsored threat groups carrying out sustained attacks targeting telecommunications companies and government institutions in African countries.

LACK OF AWARENESS

Sibe says that a major problem for many African nations is that they suffer from a lack of cybercrime awareness.

“Like it is commonly said, the user is quite often the weakest link in a security implementation,” Sibe told ADF. “No matter what security deployments are put in place, without a capable user, there will always be challenges. That said, African institutions and countries need to invest in cybersecurity to improve their resilience and readiness. Most institutions have little or no budget for cybersecurity. Organizations need to build their cyber-resilience through improved infrastructure, processes and regular training of staff.”



Rwanda hosted Africa Cyber Defense Forum 2023, an annual conference that brings together the world’s leading cybersecurity experts and government leaders. RWANDA NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AUTHORITY

He added that there needs to be closer collaboration between public and private institutions, as well as better follow-through on prosecuting cybercrime cases. He noted that there is dedicated cybercrime legislation in most African countries, but unless the justice systems and law enforcement agencies are “forensically ready,” the cybercriminals will always take advantage of the gaps in prosecution.

“Beyond this, Africa has one of the lowest numbers of cybersecurity experts in the world,” he said. “You cannot wage a formidable war against cybercriminals without competent staffing. To solve this sustainably, governments need to strategically strengthen the educational institutions. The idea is to raise competencies to fill the widening gap in cybersecurity talents.”

Allen said that fighting cybercrime is complicated by the fact that it may be too confining a term for what is happening in Africa.

“This is because there is increasingly a ‘cyber’ element to most everything we do, including in the security domain,” he said. Abuse of cyber resources, he said, can include state-sponsored espionage and surveillance; cyber subversion or blackmail targeting key institutions or individuals; and the increasing reliance of military systems, including those being deployed in Africa, on a variety of digital technologies.

Allen noted that economic growth in Africa will depend largely on how well nations deal with cybercrimes.

“Economic growth in Africa and across the world is increasingly tied to digital growth,” he wrote. “Studies have estimated, for example, that for every 10% increase in connectivity in Africa, you get a 2.5% increase in gross domestic product. At the same time, cybercrime is on pace to become a \$10 trillion industry by 2025. The point is you can’t have digitally enabled growth without secure digital systems, and in so far as systems in Africa are particularly vulnerable to cyber threats, it will be a drag on economic prosperity.” □



TRANSNATIONAL
CRIME
CAPTURES COUNTRIES

CRIMINAL ENTERPRISES TARGET AFRICAN NATIONS FOR PROFIT AND FUEL TERRORISM

ADF STAFF | PHOTOS BY REUTERS

Recent seizures of illegal drugs in the Sahel indicate that the conflict-riddled region is becoming a busy route for drug trafficking.

In 2022, authorities seized 1,466 kilograms of cocaine in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, compared to an average of 13 kilograms between 2013 and 2020, according to an April 2024 United Nations report.

“Although annual estimates were not available for 2023, 2.3 tons of cocaine had already been seized in Mauritania by June 2023,” the report said. “The region’s geographical location makes it a natural stopover point for the increasing amount of cocaine produced in South America en route to Europe, which has seen a similar rise in demand for the drug.”

The U.N. noted that the drug trade provides financial resources to armed groups in the Sahel, where extremist groups have expanded as countries in the region fall prey to military coups.

“Drug trafficking is facilitated by a wide range of individuals, which can include members of the political elite, community leaders, and leaders of armed groups,” the report said, adding that this enables armed groups to “sustain their involvement in conflict, notably through the purchase of weapons,” as reported by Al Jazeera.

The drug smuggling is among a wave of transnational organized crimes, or TOC, across the continent. The growing list of such crimes includes kidnappings for ransom, illicit weapons sales, money laundering, illegal financial flows, cybercrime, illegal logging, gold smuggling and human trafficking. The smuggling of endangered wildlife to China and other parts of Asia is a major enterprise involving animals such as pangolins.

In recent years, such crimes have escalated throughout Africa, triggered by political, socioeconomic and technological issues. Aggravating factors include weak and corrupt governance, unenforced border security, bribery, a lack of jobs, poverty and inadequate law enforcement. Increasingly inexpensive technology has created another path for major crimes.

“TOC occurs through networks, which allow criminal syndicates, local actors, and certain corrupt government officials to exploit cross-border differences in economics and policies, fuel illicit markets, and nimbly adapt to African states’ efforts to detect and punish them,” the Africa Center for Strategic Studies reports. “African states are bound in their counter-TOC efforts by governance principles like sovereignty, rule of law, and professional ethics, and are frequently faced with the challenge of calibrating joint strategic actions by military, police, and justice officials, as well as working with local leaders and supranational bodies to respond effectively.”

Organized crime throughout Africa extends to its oceans. Researcher Carina Bruwer, writing for the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in 2023, said that a lack of government and industry accountability have turned Africa’s oceans into “the world’s biggest transnational crime scene.”

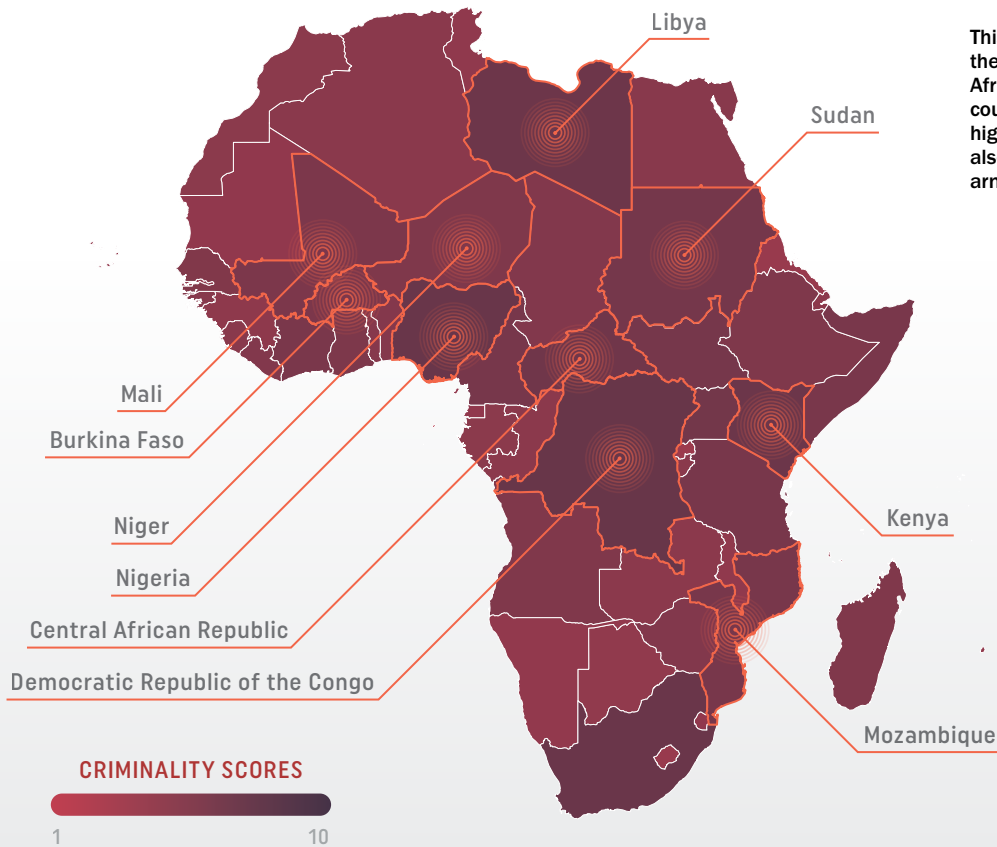


Kenyan officials display packets of heroin, two pistols and ammunition seized from drug traffickers in the port city of Mombasa. Police said they seized 196 kilograms of heroin valued at about \$5 million and arrested six people.

“The ocean is central to global illicit trade,” she reported. “Criminal networks plunder marine resources, scour shipping lanes for vessels to hijack, and traverse coastal state waters and the high seas to move commodities to distant destinations.”

Bruwer noted that Africa’s location between multiple global demand and supply markets made it a viable site for organized crime. “Africa’s east and west coasts are major narcotic transit hubs and global piracy hotspots. Deadly migrant smuggling from North Africa is rife, and to the south, marine resources like abalone and rock lobster face collapse due to illegal harvesting.”

CONFLICT HOT SPOTS



Source: Institute for Security Studies, ENACT Africa Organised Crime Index 2023



Men load freshly cut rosewood logs onto a truck in Sierra Leone. Rosewood and other hardwoods are illegally harvested throughout Africa for use in custom furniture in China.

RANGE OF ORGANIZED CRIMES

Kidnappings for ransom in Africa include travelers, businesspeople, priests and those perceived as being wealthy. SBM Intelligence, a sociopolitical risk consultancy, reported that between July 2022 and June 2023, kidnapers abducted 3,620 people in 582 cases in Nigeria with about 5 billion naira, or nearly \$4 million, paid in ransoms.

In 2023, Interpol and the African Union's Afripol coordinated an operation across 25 African countries

that enabled investigators to arrest 14 suspected cybercriminals and identify 20,674 suspicious cyber networks. Interpol said the networks were linked to financial losses of more than \$40 million.

In Sudan, the Russian mercenary Wagner Group, which has been rebranded as Africa Corps, dominates the unprocessed gold market through control of an unnamed major refinery. A report in Atlas News estimates that nearly \$2 billion in gold is smuggled out of the country annually. The gold bankrolls Russia's war with Ukraine.

In April 2023, environmental investigators found illegal rosewood logging underway in Damongo, the capital of Ghana's Savannah region. By some estimates, more than 6 million rosewood trees have been logged in Ghana since 2012, despite bans that have been imposed since then. The valuable hardwood is used to make custom furniture for the Chinese market.

By the most conservative estimates, 10,000 pangolins are trafficked illegally each year in Africa, CNN reported. Annamiticus, an advocacy group, says that because only a small percentage of the trade is apprehended or reported by the media, the actual number over the course of two years is anywhere from 117,000 to 234,000 pangolins. The pangolins are mostly used for their scales as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine, despite the scales having no medicinal value.

Nigerian officials reported in 2023 that the country's losses from oil theft and other oil-related crimes amounted to \$3 billion from 2017 to 2022. Nigeria's Punch newspaper reported that officials recorded 7,143 pipeline vandalism cases during that same period, with 209 million barrels of crude oil and other products lost.

United States forces intercepted a dhow in international waters between Iran and Yemen carrying more than 2,000 AK-47 assault rifles in January 2023. Shipments of thousands of illicit weapons from the Iran-Yemen arms trade reportedly were transported via maritime routes to Somalia to be sold to violent extremist groups, including al-Shabaab.

In a 2024 report on human trafficking, Statista reported that in 2020, the majority of detected victims of human trafficking in Africa were women and girls. "The most common forms of exploitation were sexual exploitation and forced labor," the research group reported. "In Southern Africa, for instance, 43 percent of victims were exploited for forced labor, while 48 percent were victims of sexual exploitation. Moreover, sexual exploitation was less prevalent among detected victims of human trafficking in East Africa (13 percent) than victims of forced labor (80 percent)."

LINKS TO TERRORISM

Some forms of transcontinental crime are strictly criminal enterprises with no links to ideologies, but some such crimes fuel terrorist groups. "The confluence between terrorism and transnational organised crime

is as old as the history of each," the ISS said in a 2023 study. "For terrorists, the financial gain from organised crime isn't an end in itself but a means to a bigger political, religious or ideological goal."

Ghada Fathi Waly of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime told the U.N. Security Council in October 2022 that terrorism and organized crime are linked throughout Africa, particularly in the Sahel, "which is acutely affected by the activities of active and deadly terrorist groups," according to a U.N. report. She said studies conducted in the border areas of Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon, along with the Central African Republic and Chad, focused on "the illicit trafficking of minerals as a source of funding for terrorist groups." She said that illegally mined gold and other precious metals were "being fed into the legitimate market, providing huge profits for traffickers."

Bankole Adeoye of the African Union told the Security Council that transnational organized crime networks were "instrumental in the illicit trafficking in weapons and ammunition that sustains the operations of terrorists and violent extremist groups, and also support natural resource-related crimes, such as illegal mining exploitation, particularly gold, and the illicit trade in wildlife trophies, such as ivory," the U.N. reported.

Nigerian students and staff members were kidnapped in March 2024 but later released. They are shown at a government house in Kaduna.



In recent years, three neighboring countries in East Africa have had to deal with specific types of transnational crimes: small arms and light weapons sales in Ethiopia, drug trafficking in Kenya, and smuggling in Somalia by al-Shabaab. The U.S.-based Wilson Center, a nonprofit research facility, conducted a 2020 study on the problems of the three countries. The center concluded that those countries, like other nations with similar problems, needed to recognize transnational organized crime as a governance and security challenge that requires a strategic solution.

The study also made recommendations for “key stakeholders,” including nongovernmental groups, to better fight and prevent transnational crimes. Those recommendations apply to any country dealing with transnational organized crimes:

- Apply established anti-crime strategies including tracing, freezing, seizing and confiscating the proceeds of crime. Build up professional state institutions, specifically in law enforcement and national security.
- Establish cross-border cooperation and information sharing, because transnational crime is borderless, and such measures are necessary to combat and prevent it.
- Foster partnerships and collaboration between the government, media, civil society and the private sector: “Encouraging free media to conduct investigations into these criminal

networks and the corrupt officials who support them is essential.”

- Give incentives to civil society entities and private business leaders to advocate against corruption and illicit business activities. “Partnerships between governments and journalists, business leaders, and civil society activists can make a significant contribution to eradicating the TOC scourge from East Africa that is undermining the region’s peacebuilding efforts.”

2023 CRIME INDEX

The ENACT Africa Organised Crime Index tracks trends in transnational organized crime across the regions of Africa, as well as nations’ responses. ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the ISS and Interpol. The reports are intended as a tool for policymaking and setting priorities in response to organized crime in Africa.

The 2023 ENACT report emphasizes the need for African nations to build resilience to resist and recover from such crimes. Its report ranks the 54 countries on the continent according to their levels of criminality on a score from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of crime. It also ranks resilience from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of resistance and recovery.

A Kenyan police officer watches as a pile of illicit small firearms and light weapons burn in Nairobi’s Uhuru Gardens.





An artisanal miner emerges from a gold mine shaft in western Kenya. Gold miners in parts of Africa are forced to work for terrorists, who use the gold to fund attacks.

The 2023 report singled out Kenya as having to deal with multiple types of transnational crime.

“Kenya scores above average for all criminal markets assessed: human trafficking (8.0 out of 10); human smuggling (7.5); extortion and protection racketeering (7.0); arms trafficking (7.5); trade in counterfeit goods (7.0); heroin trade (7.5); cocaine trade (6.0); cannabis trade (6.5); synthetic drugs trade (5.5); cyber dependent crimes (8.0); and financial crimes (7.5),” the report said. “These illicit markets have a negative effect on nearly all parts of Kenyan society. They are not only highly profitable, but also increasing in their pervasiveness.”

Overall, the 2023 report concluded, African nations need to expand their efforts in new directions to deal with transnational crime.

“Most responses to organised crime on the continent tend to focus on institutional frameworks, such as enactment of laws, ratification of international instruments, and campaigns against organised crime as part of political rhetoric and national strategies,” the report notes. “A more holistic approach is needed that encompasses ‘softer’ measures, such as prevention, victim and witness support, and non-state actor initiatives.

“Countries cannot rely solely on legislation and policy without implementation. Engagement with a robust and active civil society is also needed to bolster



A rescued pangolin bought from a wildlife seller rests in a garden in Lagos, Nigeria. Pangolins are illegally trafficked more than any other animal in the world.

resilience at [the] community level. Although the challenge of criminality is increasing, it can be mitigated through a concerted effort that encompasses all resilience building blocks. Countries on the continent need to diversify, intensify and strengthen their collective responses and efforts to build long-lasting resilience structures against organised crime.” □

Djibouti Getting Special Mission Aircraft

ADF STAFF

The Djiboutian Air Force will receive two Cessna Grand Caravan EX turboprop aircraft for special missions such as border patrols after a contract award to Textron Aviation.

The contract was placed by U.S. Army Contracting Command, U.S.-based Textron Aviation announced. “The two special missions Cessna Grand Caravan EX aircraft will be intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) equipped to ensure the border sovereignty of the country of Djibouti,” Textron announced, as reported by defenceWeb.

The United States has supplied Caravan aircraft to a number of African nations for ISR missions. In March 2022, Textron revealed that it was awarded a contract by ATI Engineering Services for four Cessna Grand Caravan EX aircraft for the Tunisian Air Force. ATI was to modify and equip the aircraft with an electro-optical/infrared sensor, operator console, tactical radio, video data link and night vision compatible lighting.

The Grand Caravan EX aircraft first flew in 1982. It is used by air forces, regional airlines, charter operators and cargo carriers worldwide. It also has been used for flight training and humanitarian missions. The design includes a high wing, an unpressurized cabin, a single turboprop engine and fixed tricycle landing gear. It was designed for high payloads and short, rough runways. In standard commercial trim, it holds nine people but can carry up to 14. More than 3,000 have been built.

The U.S. previously provided grant aid funding for 14 Grand Caravan EX aircraft. ATI Engineering in 2020 was contracted to convert two Cessna Grand Caravan EX aircraft for the Rwanda Defence Force.

Grand Caravans have been a popular choice of ISR aircraft among African countries, acquired either as donations from the U.S. or purchased outright. African countries that already possess Grand Caravan EX aircraft include Cameroon, Kenya, Mauritania and Uganda.

TUNISIA

Upgrades Transport Planes

ADF STAFF

The Tunisian Air Force is upgrading two of its Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. The two planes flew to Paya Lebar Air Base in Singapore for upgrades by ST Engineering Defence Aviation Services.

The aircraft are being fitted with Honeywell's Cockpit Display System Retrofit, which is available in three-display and five-display options with large format LCD displays, flight controls, air data and altitude sensors. Improvements also include digital instruments, a multifunctional display, and an array of peripherals such as weather radar, a traffic collision avoidance system and advanced flight controls, defenceWeb reported.

The retrofits have been designed to provide Tunisian Air Force pilots and flight crew with improved safety, better flexibility and efficiency, and easier maintenance, Honeywell said.



The Tunisian Air Force has two C-130H and one C-130B Hercules in service along with two C-130J-30 Super Hercules, which were delivered in April 2013 and January 2015. Ten other Hercules are in storage or preservation.

The C-130 Hercules is a four-engine turboprop military transport plane that first was produced in the United States in 1955. Updated versions still are being made. It was designed for airlifting troops over medium distances and to be able to land on short, basic airfields.

About 70 countries have acquired C-130s over the years. More than 2,500 of the planes have been produced. There are more than 40 variations on the standard C-130. Forbes magazine has predicted that the C-130 likely will become the first military aircraft in history to stay in continuous service for 100 years.

Nigeria to Buy Attack Helicopters

DEFENCEWEB

In a move to improve Nigeria's air defense capabilities and help uphold regional stability, the country's military is acquiring 12 AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters.

U.S. manufacturer Bell Textron has been awarded a \$455 million contract to produce and deliver the aircraft. The U.S. Department of Defense announced the sale in March 2024, adding that the contract includes engineering, program management and logistics support. Work is expected to be completed in July 2028.

In April 2022, the U.S. approved the sale of 12 Bell AH-1Zs to Nigeria for \$997 million. The proposed deal included 28 T-700 GE 401C engines, 2,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System guidance sections, 20 mm guns, sighting systems, night vision equipment, and technical and logistics support. In December 2023, the U.S. announced a contract awarded to Northrop Grumman to produce and deliver an additional 32 "H-1 tech refresh mission computers in support of the AH-1Z aircraft for the government of Nigeria."

The AH-1Z program originally was launched in 1996 by the U.S. Marine Corps. The AH-1Z first flew in December 2000. The Viper model features a 10,000-flight-hour airframe, a four-blade tail rotor and drive system, upgraded landing gear, and a new foldable four-blade hingeless and bearingless main rotor system. The new rotor configuration provides greater agility, a higher top speed, faster climb rate and reduced vibration.

New avionics include a fully digital glass cockpit with large multifunction liquid crystal displays and helmet-mounted displays. The helmet system has day/night capability, and its visor projects forward-looking infrared or video imagery.

The helicopter is equipped with a Hellfire missile system, can carry air-to-air missiles and has a 20 mm cannon.

CPL. JONATHAN L. GONZALEZ/
U.S. MARINE CORPS





RADAR SYSTEM TO GIVE GHANA FULL VIEW OF SEA

ADF STAFF

Ghana is installing a system similar to this Nigerian coastal radar network to improve its maritime domain awareness.

NIGERIAN NAVY

A new surveillance system will give Ghana the most complete picture ever of its maritime domain.

The maritime domain monitoring system includes over-the-horizon radars that will let the Ghana Navy see beyond the 370 kilometers of the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Describing it as a "game changer," Ghana's Chief of Naval Staff Rear Adm. Issah Adam Yakubu announced the project during a February 2024 conference at the Naval Headquarters, Burma Camp. In an interview with ADF during the African Maritime Forces Summit in Accra, Yakubu said the system marks a major upgrade that lets the navy track bad actors who try to conceal their location.

"Currently the systems we use are web based — mostly AIS [automated identification system]. AIS, the bad guys will not transmit. They go dark, and our radar capabilities do not go up to the end of our exclusive economic zone," he said.

Yakubu said the new system was preferable to one that relies on satellites. "We have two choices, satellite or over-the-horizon radar," he

said. "Satellite, because of the maintenance costs, because of the subscriptions, we went for the over-the-horizon radars, which will be able to take us up to the edge of our exclusive economy zone."

Ghana must monitor 225,000 square kilometers of ocean.

The system, expected to be operational in 2024, will replace the current vessel traffic and management information systems sponsored by the Ghana Maritime Authority. It is similar to the Falcon Eye surveillance system used in Nigeria, according to a report by the Ghana Peace Journal (GPJ).

Yakubu said a team from the authority and leaders from the Ghana Navy traveled to Serbia, where they participated in factory acceptance trials for the new equipment.

The planning and preparation needed to acquire the equipment to have total maritime domain surveillance of the EEZ has been ongoing for 10 years, Yakubu said.

"Finally, we are about to achieve this essential objective, which has run through all the strategies that our predecessors had developed and worked with," he said, as reported in the GPJ.

COUNTRIES LOOK TO TECHNOLOGY, COOPERATION TO **COMBAT ILLICIT WEAPONS**

THE EAST AFRICAN

Security chiefs in East and Southern Africa believe new technology and a shared approach are needed to combat arms smuggling.

Delegates from 26 African countries gathered in Nairobi in March 2024 for a regional preparatory meeting in advance of a United Nations conference on preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW).

An attendee called the proliferation of weapons an “existential threat” to the continent’s stability.

“Small and light weapons continue to wreak havoc in communities, fuel conflict, undermine peace and stability, and hinder socioeconomic development in the African continent,” said Kenya’s Interior Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo.

The African Union is discussing the need for a common policy among member states. The continental body and member states also are looking to acquire new tools for tracing weapons from source to end user as well as machines for weapons recycling.

Christopher Kayoshe, AU acting head of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration/Security Sector Reform Division, said this will help achieve the AU’s “silencing the guns” goal.

“It is our desire that the continent is guided by a common position so that these deliberated meetings involved in the AU Commission are valuable,” he said.

Of the 40 million small arms circulating on the African continent, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research estimates that 40% are illicit. Globally, 1 billion small arms are in circulation and kill about 250,000 people each year.

These weapons account for 45% of all violent deaths globally with the data from the U.N. indicating that 260,000 people were killed by small arms in 2021 alone.

The U.N.’s Fourth Review Conference focused on implementing the U.N.’s 2005 International Tracing Instrument that calls for each SALW armament to carry unique identification details and for nations to keep records of weapons within their borders.

Officials burn a stockpile of illegal arms in Ngong, Kenya. Countries are looking for better ways to trace weapons and prevent them from being trafficked across borders. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



ISLAMIC STATE GROUP USES **CRYPTOCURRENCY TO FINANCE ATTACKS**

ADF STAFF

The Islamic State group (IS) has turned to cryptocurrencies to move money from places such as Somalia and South Africa to fighters elsewhere on the continent.

Private donations, known as “sadaqah” in Arabic, make up one of IS’s largest sources of revenue. Although much of this money moves through the informal system known as hawala, some IS supporters use digital currencies such as bitcoin or tether to transfer money quickly while avoiding detection by international agencies seeking to disrupt terror financing.

The Counter ISIS Finance Group reports that West Africa, home to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), has become a focal point for cryptocurrency transfers. The finance group represents about 80 countries and international organizations targeting IS.

Nigeria, where ISWAP operates, is second to India among the world’s largest adopters of cryptocurrency as legal tender. Nigerians use cryptocurrencies as a hedge against economic instability. The sheer volume of transactions — nearly \$60 million in 2023 alone — means IS and other terrorist groups can get lost in the shuffle, experts say.

Cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin use blockchain technology to verify their value and track their movement. Users are anonymous, but once a cryptocurrency wallet address can be tied to an individual, it is easy to search the ledger for every transaction linked to that address.

Observers say that IS has seen its finances plummet from more than \$300 million when it controlled parts of Iraq and Syria to about \$20 million today. The organization has encouraged its African affiliates, such as IS-Somalia and Islamic State Central African Province in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, to finance their own operations.

“It is easier to track cryptocurrency than it is to track cash,” Ahmed Buckley, an expert on terrorism financing, recently told the security publication Janes. “But that hasn’t prevented these terrorist groups and individuals from experimenting, from trying to adapt and learn, and see ways where they can exploit gaps.”



Liberia's Minister of Defense **MAKES HISTORY**

ADF STAFF

Retired Brig. Gen. Geraldine George was confirmed as Liberia's minister of defense in April 2024, marking the first time a woman has held the position. George enlisted in the Army in 2006 after the end of the country's civil war and held positions including infantry brigade commander and leadership roles relating to personnel and operations. She served as deputy chief of staff for six years.

In a 2022 interview to launch a book called "Living Legends," George said her first passion was the law, but after witnessing the destruction her country experienced in the civil war, she thought she could have a greater impact as part of the rebuilt Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

"When the civil crisis came and I saw how civilians were treated and how people in this uniform treated civilians, I felt that I could make a difference when I wear this uniform," she said. "Where people would be respected and people would respect the uniform."

George served in the U.N. peacekeeping



mission in Mali and was awarded the United Nations Medal in 2017. She holds a master's degree in international relations and has received special training in intelligence, counterterrorism, public sector management and administration of justice.

In a 2021 interview for the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, George

said only about 3% of the AFL was female, but she and others were working to expand that through recruitment, outreach and policies to better accommodate female Soldiers.

But, she said, women have to show their value to the armed forces to be fully accepted.

"Getting females on board is not just about the number," she said. "It's about being competent. You have to show that you have worked hard, and you have earned that position."

She added that she hopes others will follow her lead and aspire to leadership roles.

"I have set the example for a lot of females. I have broken that traditional rule that says it's a men's world and only the men can be in the military. Women can also be part of the force and they can even do better, whether in leadership or whatsoever position."

George serves at a particularly difficult time. The previous minister of defense was forced to resign amid protests by wives of AFL Soldiers over housing conditions, pay and retirement benefits.

Brig. Gen. Geraldine George, then deputy chief of staff for the Armed Forces of Liberia, takes part in an exercise in Alpena, Michigan, in 2019.

MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD





Tanzanian and U.S. personnel tour renovated laboratory buildings at a military hospital in Mbeya, Tanzania. The facilities are designed to help the Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces test for and treat HIV.

HJFMRI TANZANIA

efforts toward the HIV epidemic control by 2025 and global efforts to end HIV as a public health concern by 2030," said Brig. Gen. Charles Mwanziva.

The renovations enhanced the labs' capacity and will allow more timely diagnosis and treatment of HIV and other diseases.

Tanzania has made great strides in addressing the disease. The number of people living with HIV dropped from 7% in 2003 to 4.4% during a 2022-2023 national survey. The number of new infections dropped from 72,000 per year in 2016 to 60,000 during the most recent survey. HIV prevalence continues to be higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

The country is making gains toward a goal known as 95-95-95. This would mean 95% of people with HIV are aware of their status through testing, 95% of those who require antiretroviral treatment receive it, and 95% of those on treatment achieve viral load suppression.

"These surveys show that our efforts in Tanzania are making a powerful, real-world impact. They also highlight what we must do next to end HIV in Tanzania," said Dr. Mahesh Swaminathan, CDC Tanzania country director. "These data shine a light on the key areas that remain unreached and require urgent attention."

The Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces has received two renovated laboratory buildings that will help the country in its fight against HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest provider of HIV/AIDS relief on the continent, funded the project. PEPFAR representatives presented the renovated buildings at the Makambako Dispensary in Njombe Region and Mbalizi Military Hospital in Mbeya Region to the TPDF in February 2024.

The TPDF plays a lead role in fighting the spread of HIV in the country and is implementing HIV testing and interventions at its 21 military health centers nationwide.

"The TPDF values the partnership between Tanzania and the U.S. government in supporting the country's

Senegal Moves to Secure Eastern Border With Sentinelle Est

ADF STAFF

The Senegalese Armed Forces (SAF) launched an operation on land, river and air in February 2024 to restore security to the far east of the country, which borders Mali. The operation, known as Sentinelle Est, dismantled illegal gold mining sites along the Faleme River, disrupted trafficking routes and took on violent gangs menacing the region.

"The objective is to reinforce the security of the populations living along the border," Senegal's military public information directorate said in a statement. "Actions were made in all the border villages, sites of economic interest as well as uninhabited spaces."

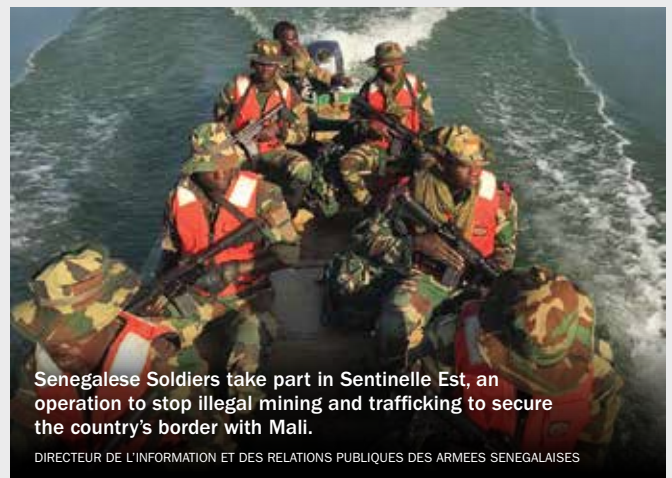
As of April 2024, the operation was ongoing. The SAF noted cooperation with its Malian counterparts to stop a "particularly violent" armed group operating in the area. The effort included land and river patrols, reconnaissance of cross-border routes, and outreach to the civilian population to promote awareness of the threats.

In an April 9 update, the directorate reported that the armed forces had a "good footprint on the ground," and efforts were ongoing to "strengthen the security of the population and protect infrastructure and economic activity."

Analysts have warned of the threat posed to Senegal by the expanding terror presence in western Mali, particularly fighters aligned to the extremist group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin. This group operates near the Senegalese border in areas such as Kéniéba, Mali, a hub of illegal gold mining.

"The jihadists do not yet have the capacity to mine the gold themselves but rather seek to tax local miners," wrote Mathias Khalfaoui for the Hudson Institute. "Beyond the financial benefits jihadists accrue in these regions, these areas of criminal activity are conducive to jihadist recruitment."

In 2022, Senegal inaugurated a new military base in Goudiry in the east of the country. The base is meant to improve the military's capability to address cross-border threats and trafficking.



UNMISS TRIES TO CALM HOT SPOTS IN SOUTH SUDAN



DEFENCEWEB

Late 2023 saw a surge in intercommunal conflict in parts of South Sudan, resulting in 862 instances of death, injury, abduction and conflict-related sexual violence, according to a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

The U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) produced its final quarterly report for 2023 and found a 4% increase in incidents and a 35% increase in victims compared to the previous quarter.

Intercommunal violence by militias and/or civil defense groups accounted for 86% of all civilians affected during the period. The main conflict hot spot, Warrap State, experienced an 87% increase in victims compared to the previous quarter, from 244 to 457. More than half of those affected by the violence were caught in retaliatory attacks related to the ongoing border dispute between Dinka Twic Mayardit in Warrap and Dinka Ngok communities in Abyei, with 263 killed and 186 injured.

The report noted a 54% increase in abduction victims, from 65 to 100, compared to the previous quarter. Small-scale attacks by alleged armed Murle elements from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area make up 43% of all abductions in South Sudan. The brief notes that 104 victims were subjected to sexual violence.

UNMISS civilian protection across the world's youngest country saw upward of 10,000 peacekeeping patrols conducted by land, air and boat in 2023. The mission assists communities in reconciling and building peace through dialogue and actively supports political and peace processes, including security and justice sector reform, and constitution-making and election preparations.

The U.N. has renewed the mission mandate for another year. It has been renewed annually since its inception in

2011. Since 2021, its mandate has been to “prevent a return to civil war, build durable peace at the local and national levels, and support inclusive and accountable governance and free, fair and peaceful elections.”

However, recent research by the South Africa-based Institute for Security Studies indicates that the mission lacks an explicit security sector reform mandate and the capacity to carry it out.

Ghanaian peacekeepers in Unity State, South Sudan, frequently conduct patrols to connect with communities and address their concerns.

GREGORIO CUNHA/UNMISS



A United Nations trainer shows UNMISS personnel how to use dogs to detect mines. GREGORIO CUNHA/UNMISS



African Union Backs SADC Mission to DRC ADF STAFF

The African Union, by way of its Peace and Security Council, has endorsed a Southern African Development Community decision to deploy troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to restore peace and security in the eastern part of the country, overruling protestations from Rwanda.

A communique issued after a March 2024 African Union Peace and Security Council meeting asked the AU Commission to “mobilise requisite support” for SAMIDRC, the regional community’s peacekeeping mission to the DRC. DefenceWeb reported that the first elements of the mission arrived in the eastern DRC in mid-December 2023, with the scheduled movement of part of South Africa’s 2,900-strong contingent put on hold due to a lack of aircraft.

The SAMIDRC force will have 5,000 troops from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania. SAMIDRC replaces the East African Community Regional Force, whose mandate expired in late 2023.

The DRC is fighting the M23 rebel group, also known as the Congolese Revolutionary Army, that is for the most part made up of ethnic Tutsis. The M23 rebellion of 2012 to 2013 against the DRC government displaced large numbers of people.

People displaced by fighting between Congolese forces and M23 rebels gather in a camp outside Goma in March 2024. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UGANDAN TEAM CLEARS IEDS FROM SUPPLY ROUTE

ADF STAFF

The Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces explosive devices team started 2024 by clearing improvised explosive devices (IED) on the major Lower Shabelle Shalambot/Ceeljale supply route as part of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia.

The team was deployed after IEDs, seemingly planted by al-Shabaab fighters, exploded, hitting a civilian vehicle carrying five people, defenceWeb reported. The wounded were evacuated by a mission humanitarian convoy to Ceelwaligo for treatment.

After the team cleared that section of the road, Uganda Battle Group 37 Commander Col. Charles Asiimwe condemned the planting of IEDs.

“The heinous and barbaric acts committed by al-Shabaab of emplacing IEDs along roads must be condemned by peace-loving people of the world. Al-Shabaab is hell-bent on seeing that Somalia does not attain total peace,” he is reported as saying by the mission.

According to the antipoverty Borgen Project, decades of war have left about 1 million land mines in Somalia. These explosives have killed thousands of Somalis and wounded countless others. The presence of mines also limits communities’ access to land, hindering crop growth and causing famine.

Neutralizing IEDs aims to ensure safety for humanitarian relief convoys delivering essential aid to communities. The peacekeeping mission says al-Shabaab plants IEDs to prevent travelers from using public roads.

The United Nations Mine Action Service was established in 1997 to eliminate the threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs by coordinating mine removal, leading operational responses at the country level and supporting peace operations. Over the years, the service has trained, mentored and equipped African Union mission troops in Somalia with a series of IED threat mitigation capabilities.



Ugandan peacekeepers mark a Ugandan national holiday while serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia in February 2024. FARDOSA HUSSEIN/ATMIS



U.S. Partners With Ghana For Exercise Sea Lion

ADF STAFF

The Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base USS Hershel “Woody” Williams completed its participation in Exercise Sea Lion 2024 alongside the Ghana Navy in the Gulf of Guinea in March 2024.

The ship, known as the HWW, hosted five Ghanaian Sailors, while two U.S. Sailors embarked on Ghana Navy vessels. During the personnel exchange, Sailors made their way to longitude and latitude 0 degrees, where the Greenwich Meridian meets the equator. The Sailors then swapped back to their own ships via two separate personnel transfers from an HWW rigid-hull inflatable boat crew.

Once the ships reached the coordinates, Sailors aboard the Ghanaian ships held a crossing-the-line ceremony.

The exercise was to test the endurance and combat readiness of selected Ghana Navy ships. It also was to train personnel in fleet maneuvers, test the interoperability of the three services of the Ghana Armed Forces

Ghanaian and U.S. Sailors participate in a flagging-off ceremony for Exercise Sea Lion 2024 in Tema, Ghana.

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS ETHAN MORROW/U.S. NAVY

and improve counterterrorism operations, according to a report in *Business & Financial Times*.

“It was an awesome experience to go out there and really learn their culture and crossing-the-line ceremony,” said U.S. Navy Chief Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Andrew Hill, one of the Sailors who embarked aboard the Ghana Navy ships. “It was really great to work together with them because they were absolutely amazing hosts to us while we were onboard.”

The HWW is forward deployed to Souda Bay, Greece, and serves as the first U.S. Navy ship assigned to U.S. Africa Command’s area of responsibility. The ship can conduct expeditionary missions, deter piracy, provide maritime security, and provide humanitarian and disaster relief.

BRAZIL TRAINS SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIERS IN JUNGLE WARFARE

DEFENCEWEB

A group of South African Soldiers attached to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have another skill set, jungle warfare, thanks to training offered by Brazilian specialists.

Thirty-six South African Soldiers attached to the U.N.'s Force Intervention Brigade and identified as having instructor potential were selected for specialist training by the Brazilian Jungle Warfare Mobile Training Team detachment. Eight specialists from Brazil's Jungle War Instruction Centre presented the six-module course.

The South Africans trained in shooting, navigation, tactical movement and offensive operations. They also got an overview of general jungle warfare.



The Republic of South Africa Battalion completed its Jungle Warfare Training course in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

CAPT. K. SETSIBA/REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA BATTALION

The South African Army group is the latest to benefit after members of the Quick Reaction Force completed a jungle warfare training course held by their Brazilian counterparts in August 2023. In 2022, 30 members of South Africa's Quick Reaction Force I received their Jaguar badges after training conducted by a Brazilian Jungle Warfare Mobile Training Team.

Kenyan and Malawian Soldiers deployed to the DRC peacekeeping mission also have benefited from Brazilian specialist expertise and knowledge.

Officials described the Brazilians as "the people of choice for this training because of their experience and trophies in this field." South African Soldiers also undergo jungle warfare training in their home country before deploying.



COUNTRIES COMMIT \$2 MILLION TO CLEAR ETHIOPIAN EXPLOSIVES

DEFENCEWEB

Donations from Denmark and Japan will help the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) continue humanitarian mine action operations in northern Ethiopia after conflict from 2020 to 2022.

Denmark's contribution is, according to a U.N. statement, more than \$1 million. Japan has committed \$1.19 million.

The funding will go to UNMAS to promote peace and safety in northern Ethiopia.

Explosive contamination imperils community safety and hampers economic development as it

A specialist discovered explosives outside a camp for internally displaced people in Tigray, northern Ethiopia.

UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION SERVICE

restricts access to land and resources.

UNMAS work to remove land mines and explosive remnants of war ensures, among other things, that humanitarian aid deliveries are not interrupted. UNMAS also will train Ethiopians to perform the nerve-racking work.

The latest funding boost will ensure that UNMAS teams continue surveying and tagging dangerous areas and gathering accurate information on where explosive ordnance and land mines are. Funding also will cover explosive hazard awareness training for humanitarian personnel.

"UNMAS is engaged in improving security for the people of Ethiopia and coordinating humanitarian mine action interventions in the country," said Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS chief of mine action in Ethiopia. She thanked Denmark and Japan for their contributions, adding that mine action was "essential to enable a return to normalcy of education and health systems."



Hannibal floated his 37 elephants across waterways on earth-covered rafts.

HANNIBAL, BATTLEFIELD TACTICIAN

ADF STAFF |

Nearly 3,000 years have passed since the time of the North African conqueror known simply as Hannibal. Yet he still is remembered as a military genius, a man who used elephants in warfare, and a man who helped shape the course of civilization.

He is best known for the audacity of his greatest military achievement: He took his army over the Alps to invade the region now known as Italy.

Hannibal Barca was born in 247 B.C. in the city of Carthage. Remnants of the city remain to this day in what is now Tunisia, the coastal capital of Tunisia. He was born into wealth and power in a city that was the dominant force in the Western Mediterranean. But the region's military and commercial interests were in conflict with Rome. Hannibal's father instilled in him a hatred for the Roman Republic that would last his entire life.

The rivalry between the two powers led to the Punic Wars. The first began in 264 B.C. and lasted more than 20 years. Rome was the victor and imposed harsh terms on Carthage that included crippling its navy. After Hannibal's father was killed in a military campaign, and another officer was assassinated, Carthaginian Soldiers in Spain elected

Hannibal as their leader. He went on to conquer Spain, establishing a base for his eventual war against Rome.

In 218 B.C., he began his quest to cross the Alps. The journey required sophisticated logistics and engineering. To get his 37 elephants across waterways, he constructed jetties and floated them on earth-covered rafts. His horses were shipped on large boats or made to swim. The journey from Cartagena, Spain, took five months, and the trek over the Alps took 16 days. In crossing the mountains, his Soldiers faced guerilla attacks, harsh weather and rough terrain. He completed the crossing with 25,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and most of his elephants.

His victories at Trebia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae are considered masterpieces of tactical warfare. Time and again he was able to outmaneuver and outthink the Roman generals. Hannibal's troops savaged the Roman army, killing at least 15,000 Soldiers. Many were driven into the water to drown. He captured an additional 15,000 Romans and allied troops. His troops intercepted and destroyed reinforcements of about 4,000 cavalry.

But he did not invade the city of Rome. Historians theorize that his troops either were too worn out from

fighting, or Hannibal believed the city to be too well fortified. There also was the problem of the leaders in Carthage failing to provide him with the reinforcements and resources he needed to continue advancing.

Roman leaders such as Fabius Maximus and Scipio Africanus learned from Hannibal's tactics and their own mistakes. Maximus avoided direct engagement with Hannibal's forces, going instead with a war of attrition and strategic strikes against Carthaginian assets elsewhere, including North Africa. Maximus is said to have defeated Hannibal without ever winning a single decisive battle. The turning point came with the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C., where Africanus defeated Hannibal, marking the end of the Second Punic War and securing Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean. The honorary title of Africanus means "conqueror of Africa."

After his defeat, Hannibal returned to Carthage, where he became a magistrate and was responsible for economic and military reforms. But he had made enemies at home and abroad, and his distaste for Rome was returned in equal measure. The Romans wanted him as their prisoner.

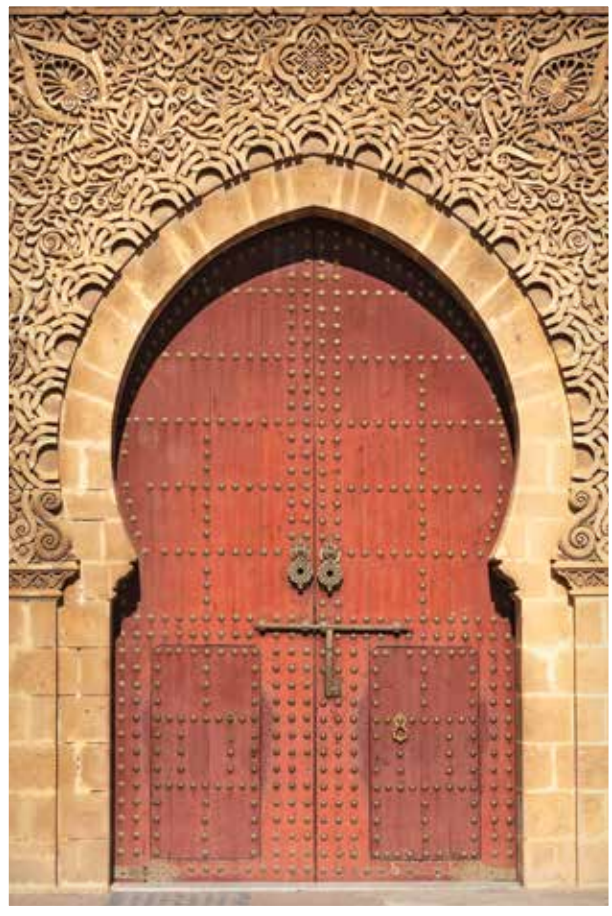
Seven years after the Battle of Zama, Hannibal fled Carthage into exile. He spent his remaining years as a welcomed guest and military advisor in the courts of Eastern monarchs. In some cases, he was directly involved in warfare against his bitter enemies, the Romans.

The circumstances of his death, about 182 B.C., are unknown. One report states that when he discovered the castle where he was living was surrounded by Roman Soldiers, he poisoned himself. Another account says that his host at the castle poisoned him.

Hannibal is considered one of the greatest military tacticians and generals of antiquity, particularly as a brilliant strategist who could identify his own and his opponents' strengths and weaknesses.

CLUES

- 1 The Almoravids founded this city in 1061 A.D. as a military settlement.
- 2 It mostly is associated with Sultan Moulay Ismail, who reigned from 1672 to 1727 and transformed it into a spectacular capital with 45 kilometers of exterior walls.
- 3 Its urban design integrates Islamic and European architecture and town planning.
- 4 Behind the city's high defensive walls are 25 mosques, 10 public baths, palaces, granaries, vestiges of merchant inns and private houses.





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