



Headquarters, United States Africa Command
General Carter Ham, Commander
Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany - August 2011

MISSION

Africa Command protects and defends the national security interests of the United States by strengthening the defense capabilities of African states and regional organizations and, when directed, conducts military operations, in order to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development.

COMMANDER'S INTENT

Our purpose is twofold: 1) to protect the U.S. homeland, American citizens abroad, and our national interests from transnational threats emanating from Africa; and 2) through sustained engagement, to enable our African partners to create a security environment that promotes stability, improved governance, and continued development. Should preventive or enabling efforts fail, we must always be prepared to prevail against any individual or organization that poses a threat to the United States, our national interests, or our allies and partners.

Africa Command's activities, plans, and operations are centered on two guiding principles:

- A safe, secure, and stable Africa is in our national interest.
- Over the long run, it will be Africans who will best be able to address African security challenges and that AFRICOM most effectively advances U.S. security interests through focused security engagement with our African partners.

Our most important military tasks are:

- Deter or defeat al-Qaida and other violent extremist organizations operating in Africa and deny them safe haven.
- Strengthen the defense capabilities of key African states and regional partners. Through enduring and tailored engagement, help them build defense institutions and military forces that are capable, sustainable, subordinate to civilian authority, respectful of the rule of law, and committed to the well-being of their fellow citizens. Increase the capacity of key states to contribute to regional and international military activities aimed at preserving peace and combating transnational threats to security.
- Ensure U.S. access to and through Africa in support of global requirements.
- Be prepared, as part of a whole of government approach, to help protect Africans from mass atrocities. The most effective way in which we do this is through our sustained engagement with African militaries.
- When directed, provide military support to humanitarian assistance efforts.

Africa Command's area of responsibility is huge, diverse, and complex; so, too, are the security challenges we and our partners face. Accomplishing our mission, focused on safeguarding U.S. national security interests, requires us to ensure our military efforts are synchronized with many others in the U.S. Government. In some cases, Africa Command will be in the lead; in others, ours will be a supporting effort to another department or agency. Our military activities will always be in support of U.S. Government foreign policy and fully coordinated with affected U.S. Chiefs of Mission; but, that does not mean we simply wait for others to ask for our support. I expect our Command to actively seek and propose innovative and imaginative approaches through which we may apply the considerable military capability of the United States to its best advantage. Our plans and operations will always be developed in concert with and informed by those inside our Command from organizations other than the Department of Defense. Their valued experience and expertise contributes significantly to our efforts. While some speak often of the asymmetric capabilities of our adversaries, I choose to seek to leverage the greatest asymmetric capability within Africa Command – our people. Committed, courageous, caring people – military and civilian – ably led by agile and adaptive leaders will win the day.

I recognize accomplishing our mission will take time. Africa Command was founded on the central idea that our nation would be best served through sustained military engagement with our African partners. The relationships we form, the programs we execute, and the activities we engage in with our African counterparts must be effective, enduring, and focused on our shared end state. When we do this right, both we and our partners benefit.

The end states we seek are clear:

- America, Americans, and American interests are protected from threats emanating from Africa.
- African militaries contribute to the safety, security, and stability of their nations and of their regions.
- Africa is not a safe haven for al-Qaida or other violent extremists.
- African peoples are protected from the threat of mass atrocities. African authorities are adequately supported to prevent mass atrocities and to mitigate the consequences of catastrophic events.

Among the many great African proverbs is one which I think is particularly applicable to us...

“If you want to go quickly, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.”

We choose to go far.
We choose to go together.

General Carter F. Ham
General, U.S. Army
Commander, U.S. Africa Command