

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN SULLIVAN

REMARKS ON CT IN AFRICA BEFORE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 7, 2017

Good morning and thank you Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak with you about U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Africa.

Last month, Secretary Tillerson hosted an Africa Ministerial that included delegations from 37 countries, the African Union, and members of the private sector and civil society. Advancing our deep and expanding counterterrorism cooperation on the continent was a major focus of the ministerial, along with increasing trade, good governance, and protection of human rights.

To reinforce these priorities, I traveled to Sudan, Tunisia, and Nigeria two weeks ago to engage our willing and increasingly capable counterterrorism partners.

In Sudan, senior leaders stressed their interest in working with the United States to strengthen regional security, and promote greater peace and stability throughout the world. We are encouraged by the Sudanese government's willingness to work with us to eliminate the threat posed by ISIS and other terrorist groups operating in the region, as well as the government's commitment to cut all military and trade ties with North Korea.

In Tunisia, I met with both the Tunisian and Libyan governments. Tunisia, like Morocco and Algeria, has made significant strides in preventing the spread of ISIS and other terrorist groups within its borders through the implementation of military and paramilitary operations, greater law enforcement cooperation among allies and partners, and improved measures to reintegrate returning foreign terrorist fighters.

Libya is perhaps our greatest counterterrorism challenge in Africa. ISIS and other terrorist groups have sought to exploit political instability and find safe haven in Libya's vast ungoverned spaces, making the country both a source of and destination for foreign terrorist fighters. We continue to empower the Libyan government to address these challenges. Libyan Prime Minister Fayed al-Sarraj's government and its aligned forces have been reliable partners in countering these threats – and are in regular communication with the Administration. President Trump and Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis met with the Prime Minister just last week to discuss a range of issues, including counterterrorism. We also strongly back the efforts of UN Special Representative Salamé to facilitate a political solution and prevent a civil conflict.

Nigeria, the last stop on my visit, is a critical U.S. partner that faces a number of threats. Nigeria leads the regional fight against Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, and other terrorist groups that continue to fuel one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Since 2009, terrorist groups in the region have killed more than 20,000 people and abducted thousands of women and girls, causing at least 2 million people to flee their homes. This instability has affected the larger Lake Chad Basin region, prompting the creation of a Multinational Joint Task Force comprised of

Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger –all partners that have asked for U.S. assistance to root out terrorism.

We consider it in our national interest to support Nigeria and its neighbors in this fight. To ensure our continued cooperation, we have also underlined to these partners – and those across the continent - that their security forces must be professionalized, brought into an accountable chain of command, and held responsible for human rights abuses.

These principles are also the backbone of our engagement in Somalia, where we are committed to helping Somalia reform its security sector and improve governance, with a focus on reducing corrupt practices and increasing transparency and accountability. In coordination with that effort, U.S. forces are committed to using all authorized and appropriate measures to protect Americans and to disable terrorist threats such as al-Shabaab and ISIS.

Somalia is also a prime example of how we are working with the African Union, the United Nations, and other multilateral organizations to counter terrorism, promote stability, and support post-conflict peacebuilding. Regional cooperation has already produced results, as we have seen in the creation of the G-5 by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in 2014. Last month, Secretary Tillerson announced our commitment to provide an additional \$60 million in support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force countries. This is in addition to the more than \$800 million in bilateral assistance we have provided to G-5 countries since 2012 to help develop effective security forces.

In closing, I want to underscore a message that I made clear during my trip: while United States is the largest supporter of peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts across Africa, the Secretary and I firmly believe that traditional counterterrorism efforts alone are not enough. Economic reform, good governance, and a respect for human rights must be prioritized to establish and maintain peace and security throughout the continent.

We will continue to support our partners' efforts to strengthen democratic institutions; improve citizen security and justice; respect human rights; stimulate economic growth, trade, health, and investment; and promote development and education. The United States continues to emphasize respect for human rights as a fundamental part of our counterterrorism strategy, which includes thorough Leahy vetting of our security force partners.

Thank you again for giving me the chance to speak with you. I look forward to your questions.