

USCMA Resolution
Opposing the New U.S. Military Command for Africa (AFRICOM)
2008 Annual Meeting
Baltimore, MD

Let it be resolved that:

The U.S. Catholic Mission Association joins the Africa Faith & Justice Network in its commitment to call upon the U.S government to stop the further militarization of Africa as demonstrated by the new U.S. military command for Africa (AFRICOM).

The new command puts the people of Africa as secondary to the strategic and resource interests of the United States. The vision of AFJN is a comprehensive foreign policy grounded in true partnership with the African Union, African governments, and civil society on peace, justice, security, and development.

Rationale:

Whereas President George W. Bush announced the creation of AFRICOM on February 6, 2007 with the support of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld,

Whereas African governments, African civil society, and the African Union were not sufficiently consulted before the Bush Administration established the command,

Whereas AFRICOM is designed to secure U.S. oil interests in Africa, engage in counter-terror operations, and counteract Chinese economic investment in Africa thereby privileging Bush's foreign policy agenda and private businesses such as military contractors and oil companies,

Whereas many African governments and regional bodies refused the establishment of a U.S. AFRICOM headquarters or base on their soil and Liberia was the only country to fully support and offer to host AFRICOM,

Whereas U.S. military personnel will engage in humanitarian and development activities as part and parcel of AFRICOM's mandate,

Whereas the United States military is already engaged in capacity-building and training of African military, police, border, and paramilitary forces despite the poor human rights record of many of said forces,

Whereas the budget for the U.S. Department of Defense has dramatically increased while the budgets for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have declined,

Whereas a true and just security is created not by a military command but by debt relief, fair trade policies, job creation, expansion of education, and improvements upon existing U.S. legislation such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR),

Suggested Actions:

1. Call on the U.S. Congress to de-fund U.S. military programs on the African continent and instead increase funding for development initiatives and multilateral diplomatic institutions.
2. Call on the State Department to demand that diplomatic and development efforts not be placed under the jurisdiction of the military and that Ambassadors retain the Chief of Mission authority in their countries.
3. Call on the U.S. government to support the African Union as the first responder to crises and the United Nations as the vehicle for long-term, protracted security needs on the African continent.
4. Call on the State Department and the Department of Defense to cease training and equipping the armies of African governments which have committed gross human rights violations, experienced a military coup, condoned human trafficking, child soldiers, or religious intolerance.
5. Call on Representatives and Senators in Congress to pass legislation which would prohibit AFRICOM from expending funds to hire Private Military Contractors to carry out training and logistics programs with African military, police, border, and paramilitary forces.
6. Call on Senators and Representatives to develop sufficient means of overseeing the impacts of increasing US military presence in Africa through the establishment of regular public reports to both the U.S. Congress and to bodies of legal jurisdiction in each African country.
7. Call on African governments, the African Union, regional security bodies, and the African people to continue to voice their concerns about AFRICOM and to stand against the further militarization of their home continent.