

**Statement of the Senior Bureau Official for the Bureau of Counterterrorism  
Monica Jacobsen Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's  
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy**

**“The U.S. Approach to Counterterrorism in Africa”**

**April 21, 2026, at 2:30 PM**

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Administration's counterterrorism policy in Africa alongside my colleague from the Bureau of African Affairs.

The Trump Administration remains vigilant against potential terrorist threats to the homeland emanating from Africa. Our priority is to identify and disrupt these plots targeting the United States and its citizens before they materialize. As President Trump stated in his inaugural address, our top priority is “to defend our nation and protect our citizens,” and that principle guides the Department's counterterrorism approach in Africa.

In response to the presence of ISIS and al-Qaeda in parts of the continent and to remain vigilant against attacks on the homeland, the United States is pursuing a targeted, disciplined strategy that avoids open-ended commitments. This approach is guided by three core principles:

First, the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) focuses on identifying and neutralizing terrorist threats before they reach the United States. We leverage a full range of counterterrorism tools, including visa restrictions, designations, information sharing, and, when appropriate, targeted security assistance. The CT Bureau works closely with interagency partners, such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), to strengthen border security and prevent terrorist travel, including through aviation security programs in Nigeria, Senegal, and Kenya. In coordination with the Department of the Treasury, we also disrupt terrorist financing and constrain the resources that support terrorist operations and external plotting. At the same time, we maintain active diplomatic engagement across Africa to sustain the partnerships needed to safeguard U.S. security interests. Among other benefits, these relationships help us deploy our Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation Systems

(PISCES) across 15 countries in Africa. PISCES extends U.S. borders by enhancing countries' border security capabilities and allowing them to share terrorist data with the United States and other international partners.

Second, we work with capable partners in the region to take responsibility for their own security. We enable partners – we do not replace them. For example, Moroccan forces previously trained by the Bureau of Counterterrorism now train Sahelian forces across sub-Saharan Africa, using U.S.-provided curricula. This is precisely the model we seek to expand, with regional partners leading and sustaining regional security efforts.

Finally, where clear partnership opportunities exist, we deploy counterterrorism capabilities to help secure supply chains for critical resources that underpin U.S. economic prosperity and national security. In Mozambique, for example, the U.S. Export-Import Bank approved a \$5 billion loan last year for a liquefied natural gas project in Cabo Delgado province, which is also home to the world's only graphite mine whose entire offtake is processed in the United States. These strategic assets face persistent threats from ISIS-Mozambique, a localized threat that endangers billions in U.S. investment. In response, my team—working with the Bureau of African Affairs and other security assistance bureaus at State—traveled to Mozambique earlier this year to plan and advance potential targeted CT assistance. These efforts will help the Government of Mozambique counter the ISIS threat while safeguarding investments vital to U.S. economic and national security interests.

We also recognize that, in many parts of Africa, radical Islamic terrorists target civilians based on their Christian faith. As President Trump and Secretary Rubio have made clear, we will respond to atrocities and violence against Christians, including those who knowingly direct, authorize, fund, support, or carry out violations of religious liberty. Our counterterrorism efforts have included - directly targeting the terrorists responsible for this violence, and we likewise hold governments' feet to the fire when they fail to address terrorist threats that undermine religious freedom. We also remain vigilant to threats against U.S. citizens in Africa and will use every available tool to secure the release of U.S. hostages and bring their captors justice.

Taken together, this approach reflects a disciplined, consistent strategy. We prioritize threats with a direct nexus to the homeland, shift responsibility where possible to capable partners, and advance commercial diplomacy that supports U.S. national security.

I look forward to discussing these efforts and working with the Subcommittee to ensure the United States counterterrorism strategy in Africa remains focused, effective, and aligned with our national security priorities.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

