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Suite C5
206-708-7417

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Seattle, WA. 98122
206-323-4330

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Pentagon Gets Green Light To Expand War In Somalia



Somali war victim.

(Trice Edney Wire/GIN) – Clouds are moving across Somalia's drought-wrecked landscape – but not the kind that make grass grow and flowers bloom.

Instead, military aircraft will be raining down "precision fires" after an authorization signed by President Trump that relaxes rules meant to prevent civilian casualties in the region. Military officials are also granted wider authority for conducting airstrikes under the relaxed rules.

The new approach to Somalia is in line with increasingly aggressive policies the administration has already adopted in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

U.S. troops will be working with the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission in Somalia in offensive operations "consistent with our approach of developing capable Somali security forces and supporting regional partners in their efforts to combat al-Shabab," said Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis.

News of the signed authorization was revealed in national newspapers this week.

Experts fear the so-called Somalia campaign carries enormous risks — including more American casualties, botched airstrikes that kill civilians and the potential for the United States to be drawn further into defending a government that barely controls the lands beyond its capital.

The operations are likely to create a new exodus of desperate refugees fleeing towards Kenya which already houses almost a

quarter of a million Somalis escaping war at home.

The war build-up, it must be said, was already underway during the last year of the Obama administration using Special Operations troops, airstrikes, private contractors and African allies in an escalating campaign against Islamist militants in the Horn of Africa nation.

Hundreds of American troops now rotate through makeshift bases in Somalia, the largest military presence since the United States pulled out of the country after the "Black Hawk Down" battle in 1993.

"There appears to be a move by the Trump administration to loosen the rules," said Joel Charny, director of the Norwegian Refugee Council's office in Washington. "The theme seems to be more aggressive, and the consequences seem to be a spike in civilian casualties."

Unnamed defense sources told ABC News that the "southern" portion of Somalia will be considered an "active area of hostilities" for the next six months.

The latest war plans were unveiled as Somalia's government declared the current drought a national disaster, with the U.N. saying roughly half of the country's 12 million people are at risk. A cholera outbreak has also spread.

The country is also one of the seven predominantly Muslim countries included in Trump's recent travel ban that has been suspended by federal courts.

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