



## **“MAINTAINING SECURITY IN A DEGRADED ENVIRONMENT”**



### **U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa African Land Forces Summit History**

With the establishment of United States Army Africa (USARAF) in 2008, leaders quickly recognized the importance of establishing relationships with chiefs of land forces from partner nations in Africa. USARAF realized the best way to achieve this goal was to conduct a summit solely for African partner nations' chiefs of land forces.

The inaugural African Land Forces Summit (ALFS) was held in Washington DC, in May 2010. The theme for the first summit was “Building and Maintaining Strong Relationships,” and was attended by the United States Army Chief of Staff as guest of honor, as well as 23 chiefs of land forces from African partner nations. The main issues of discussion at the 2010 summit focused on the role of land forces in the current security environment, building relationships with the leadership of countries that represent common interests, and the responsibility of military leaders to democratic governments. Finally, the participants of the first ALFS agreed to conduct a summit every other year; but more importantly, they decided to hold all future summits on the continent of Africa.

The Ugandan Chief of Land Forces agreed to host the first African continent-based summit in Kampala, Uganda in 2012. The theme for the second ALFS was “The Strength of an Army for the Nation and Its People.” The guest of honor was the commanding general of US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and 35 chiefs of land forces from African partner nations who attended the summit. At the 2012 summit, participant nations addressed strengthening Army values, and also preparation for crisis and conflict. Finally, the summit participants were treated to a presentation on security cooperation initiatives in Africa. In planning the way ahead for future summits, the chiefs of land forces agreed to include breakout sessions on key issues and to incorporate more chiefs of land forces as speakers on topics relevant to Africa.

The Senegalese Defense Forces took the lead in 2015 and hosted the third ALFS in Dakar, Senegal. The theme for the 2015 summit was “Training for a Range of Military Operations.” The guest of honor was the commanding general of the US Army Training & Doctrine Command. In attendance were 36 chiefs of land forces from African partner nations, who helped lead a wide range of discussions that ranged from training for peacekeeping operations, the value of military institutions, to regional military cooperation. The 2015 ALFS was a tremendous success, owing primarily to speaker presentations and the dialogue generated amongst the African chiefs of land forces. Additionally, breakout group discussion gained more visibility and participation. Finally, as a way forward, the summit participants agreed to conduct ALFS on an annual basis in a different country in Africa each year.

The Tanzania People's Defense Force hosted ALFS 2016, the fourth gathering of land forces chiefs, in Arusha, Tanzania. The theme for the 2016 summit was “Building Security in Africa through Cooperation,” and the guest of honor was the 39th US Army Chief of Staff. USARAF and the Tanzanian People's Defense Forces welcomed the participation of 36 African partner nations. African land forces chiefs discussed common threats, challenges, and opportunities from national and regional perspectives – identifying workable solutions in the realm of Army readiness, future conflict, and post-conflict operations. The 2016 ALFS saw full participation in breakout sessions and insightful speaker presentations from African leaders.

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The Malawian Defense Force hosted ALFS 2017, the fifth gathering of land forces chiefs, in Lilongwe, Malawi. The theme was “Enhancing Capacity through Partnership in Africa.” The guest of honor was the 35th US Army Vice-Chief of Staff. For this summit, USARAF and the Malawian Defense Force explored common approaches to developing critical warfighting and peacemaking skills, building logistics institutions to support military operations, and executing peacekeeping and peace support operations. As ALFS’s reputation grew and leaders became more involved, summit participation increased to 40 African land forces chiefs. Additionally, this was the first year that NATO partners from France, UK and Canada as well as Brazil participated in the summit; demonstrating that each year we continue to build on our successes and share insights with our Allies and partners. 2017 marked the first year a Command Senior Enlisted Leader program was incorporated into ALFS.

In 2018, the Nigerian Army co-hosted ALFS in Abuja, Nigeria. The sixth gathering of land forces chiefs marked the return of the summit to the West Africa region. The theme for the 2018 summit was “Unity is Strength: Combating Africa’s Security Challenges.” The guest of honor was the 36th Vice-Chief of Staff of the Army and like 2017, the summit hosted land forces chiefs from 40 African partner nations. The 2018 summit enjoyed participation from NATO countries as well as The Adjutant Generals from AFRICOM’s State Partnership Program. African land forces chiefs discussed a broad range of relevant issues to include command and control in the Africa operational environment, protecting the populace while countering VEOs and solving sustainment challenges. The topics were addressed in the plenary sessions and further explored during breakout sessions.

The seventh ALFS was held in Gaborone, Botswana and co-hosted by the Botswana Defense Force. The 2019 summit was attended by chiefs of land forces from 41 African partner nations, the most ever for ALFS. The theme for the summit was “Strengthening Partner Networks” and the guest of honor was the in-coming 37th Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. ALFS 19 featured guest speakers from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, AFRICOM as well as leaders of UN sponsored security frameworks operating on the continent. The ALFS plenary sessions and small group breakouts were supported by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies. ALFS participants focused on partner networks and their critical role in providing coordination and collaboration across regional borders for multinational forces.

The eighth ALFS was co-hosted by the Ethiopian National Defense Force in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during 18-21 February 2020. The theme was “Tomorrow’s Security Demands Leadership Today” and reflected our shared belief that leadership development is an enduring responsibility among military leaders and a vital component to a professional army. The guest of honor was the commanding general of US Army Forces Command. ALFS 20 was supported by a team of academic experts from the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and featured guest speakers representing a wide range of experience from the diplomatic and defense community.

The ninth African Land Forces Summit occurs at a monumental moment in the history of the world, as well as the history of U.S. Army in Africa. In October 2020, the Army consolidated U.S. Army Europe with U.S. Army Africa in order to synergize resources and effects across the two continents. In doing so, the Army elevated the commander of this newly consolidated headquarters to the rank of a four-star general. The initial result has been outstanding in terms of engagement and strategic effects for the U.S. Army in Africa and U.S. Africa Command. Meanwhile, the global pandemic caused by the Corona Virus has challenged the way societies function at nearly every level. In efforts to stop the spread of the virus, governments have imposed travel restrictions and limitations on large group gatherings. For these reasons, ALFS 21 will be conducted virtually in a one-day event that leverages advancements in communication technology now mainstream because of the global pandemic. The theme for ALFS 21 is “Maintain Security in a Degraded Environment.” Land chiefs will explore the impacts of global pandemic on militaries and collaborate on solutions.