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June 22, 2020 Jacob McCarty

Related Categories: Arms Control and Proliferation; Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; International Economics and Trade; Corruption; East Africa; Europe; Middle East; North Africa; Russia; South Africa; West Africa

SUDAN DIPS ITS TOE INTO THE LIBYAN CIVIL WAR

General Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo, the Deputy Chairman of Sudan's current *de facto* government, recently dispatched some 1,200 Sudanese fighters to Libya to fight on behalf of insurgent warlord Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA). Hemedti's decision has a great deal to do with the United Arab Emirates, which is said to have exerted influence on Khartoum to become more involved in Libya's long-running civil war in order to further Emirati objectives there. The decision to do so, however, has met with widespread criticism from other government leaders, who oppose a more active Sudanese role in the North African conflict and fear that Hemedti's action may reflect a growing preference among the Gulf states for who will become Sudan's next leader. (*Libyan Observer*, May 15, 2020)

GERMANY FUNDS TUNISIAN FINANCIAL SECTOR REFORM

KfW, a German state-owned development bank, recently lent the Tunisian government 100 million Euros to update banking and financial institutions. Such reforms have become a major priority of the fledgling government of President Kais Saied, who is seeking to overhaul the national economy in order to better fund micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The policy is part of a set of aggressive domestic reform and development goals designed to staunch the out-migration of Tunisians now seeking opportunities abroad. To that end, the Saied government has met with representatives of a number of European governments in recent weeks. In Germany, it appears to have found a willing partner - not least because Berlin has itself expressed an interest in finding ways to reduce migration to Europe from North Africa. (Agence Tunis Afrique Presse, June 3, 2020)

RUSSIAN WEAPONS EXPORTS TO THE CONTINENT ON THE RISE

Russian government-linked arms producers are looking to expand their share of the African market. Russia's state-owned arms conglomerate, Rosoboroexport, recently announced that it will begin selling assault boats to at least one Sub-Saharan country in the near future. The move is hardly surprising; arms sales have long served as a pillar of Russia's outreach to Africa, and such dealings have expanded significantly over the past two decades. The effort, however, received new impetus at last Fall's Russia-Africa summit in Sochi.

Moscow's new activism is driven by geopolitics, observers say. According to specialists in Russian-African relations, the Kremlin is hoping that providing arms to countries on the continent will expand its influence there, and help further a multipolar global balance of power. The arrangement makes sense for African nations as well, providing them with a dependable weapons supplier and allowing them to meet their security goals with "no questions asked." (*Deutsche Welle*, May 29, 2020)

CONFLICT FLARES ALONG SUDAN-ETHIOPIA BORDER

Recent skirmishes between Sudanese and Ethiopian forces along their shared border have heightened tensions between the two regional rivals. In late May, the Sudanese foreign ministry requested a meeting with the Ethiopian *charge d'Affaires* to address the killing of Sudanese military personnel and civilians by suspected Ethiopian militias - militias that are allegedly backed by the Ethiopian army. The attack is the most recent altercation between the two nations in their long-running border dispute, and potentially complicates an upcoming round of border demarcation talks between the two countries. The violence also comes at a strained point in each country's domestic politics - while Ethiopia is attempting to navigate the significant economic and human toll of COVID-19, the new Sudanese government is struggling to rehabilitate its global image in the wake of the recently deposed al-Bashir regime. (*Middle East Monitor*, May 31, 2020)

GERMANY RECOMMITTS TO MALI-BASED DEPLOYMENT

Germany has decided to maintain its 450-strong force in the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) until May 2021. In their deployment, German soldiers will aid multiple training missions alongside the 13,000 other UN personnel also attached to the mission. Berlin's decision comes in response to a rise in the number of attacks perpetrated by terror groups in the Sahel - a trend that is raising growing concern in Europe. Nor is Germany the only European country planning to intensify its counter-terror efforts in the Sahel; a coalition of European military forces is planned to deploy to the region by the end of August in an effort to stabilize the security situation there. (*Deutsche Welle*, May 29, 2020)