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GEN. TOWNSEND MEETS AFRICAN LEADERS AT EXERCISE AFRICAN LION 21 IN MOROCCO

CLOSING CEREMONY OF AFRICOM JUNE 17-19

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USPA NEWS - The Commander of U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Army Gen. Stephen Townsend, visited Morocco to attend the closing ceremony of Exercise African Lion 21 and to meet with several African defense leaders June 17-19. “African Lion is our largest and most important exercise in Africa,” said Townsend. “The exercise helps us build readiness as well as build and strengthen partnerships to best operate in a complex, multi-domain environment.” Townsend visited several exercise locations, where he met with troops who took part in the exercise.

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Townsend met with senior Moroccan military leaders, including the Inspector General of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces, Abdelfattah Louarak. “The 17th iteration of Exercise African Lion 2021 has just wrapped up, and it has been a great success at all levels, by having fulfilled all its objectives,” said Louarak. “I am confident that this exercise will succeed in promoting the values of peace and solidarity among the nations, and is an essential milestone in the path towards peace and solidarity in the region and in Africa.” Townsend thanked his Moroccan colleagues, particularly the Southern Zone Commander Lt. Gen. Belkhir El Farouk for outstanding efforts by the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces in planning and executing African Lion 2021, as well as opportunities to deepen the U.S.-Morocco security partnership.Townsend also met with Senegal’s Chief of Army Staff, Brig. Gen. Fulgence Ndour. During their discussion, he thanked Ndour for Senegal’s role as a security leader in West Africa, and for hosting or participating in multiple U.S. Africa Command exercises, including Exercises Flintlock and Obangame Express.----------

On the margins of the exercise, Townsend met with defense leaders from other nations, including Libyan Government of National Unity representatives and the Chief of Staff of the Libyan Army, Gen. Mohamad al-Haddad. During their meeting, Townsend and Haddad discussed the need for foreign forces to withdraw from Libya immediately. Townsend and Haddad also discussed ongoing efforts to unify Libyan military institutions, and opportunities for greater military cooperation with the United States. During the visit, Townsend also met with other U.S. military leaders who were on the ground for African Lion 21, including Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Chief of the U.S. National Guard Bureau. A number of National Guard troops from Utah, Wyoming, and D.C. took part in the exercise. Source: United States Africa Command.

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