Despite the Africa-France Summit held recently, and intense attempts by individual French politicians to publicize Paris’ actions on the African continent, criticism of France’s current neo-colonial policy in Africa continues to increase in the region.

Africa has recently become rapidly embroiled in anti-French demonstrations. People have taken to the streets in particular because of the behavior of the French troops stationed in the Sahel region. Undercover of the anti-terrorist Operation Barkhan since 2013, they are only trying to maintain the dominant role of the metropolis in the area without providing significant assistance to the local population in countering terrorists. The demonstration of stated attempts to protect African countries from attacks by terrorist groups turns out to be a bubble as the terrorists have only advanced during the time French soldiers have been present there. The situation in Mali has been simply disastrous, with the militants taking over more and more areas, attacking people far beyond the northern provinces where they initially operated. Security concerns are also severe in the Central African Republic and other neighboring countries.

The movement of a large French military convoy from the port of Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, to Gao, Mali, sparked local anger. Protests took place in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. As a result, the French chose not to travel to Gao via
Mali territory but took a circuitous route. However, protesters were waiting for them there as well. Demonstrators blocked the roads with barricades and tires. In Niger, protesters were fired upon, and two died.

Demonstrators participating in the mass rallies against France believe that the French military is supplying and supporting terrorists, with the help of which they are continuing their neocolonial policy of plundering the African states. The French are also accused of the same by the governments of Mali, the Central African Republic, Chad, and several other African states. “Paris is training members of terrorist groups in Kidal,” Al Jazeera quotes Mali Prime Minister Choguel Kokalla Maïga.

France had already tried to dictate terms of cooperation in the region to Bamako and some other African states but had failed. The African authorities considered the statements made by the Fifth Republic ministers to be an attempt to impose a unilateral partnership and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states.

African journalists believe that local authorities should be more cautious in engaging with the representatives of the Fifth Republic. The latter are trying to plunge the countries of the region into a new civil war. According to correspondents, Africans need to unite and force the former metropolis to respect the rights of African states and withdraw French soldiers from the region. French troops are forced to leave Mali under such pressure, and they are not welcome in other countries either.

The French media have recently exposed France’s illegal activities on the African continent. In particular, the newspaper Libération published the results of an investigation by the Central Office for Combatting Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide and War Crimes (OCLCH), which showed that the French company Nexa Technologies violated the UN arms export embargo to Libya. The publication reported that Nexa Technologies is suspected of selling an Alpha Max system, which allows phone calls to be intercepted in a specific geographical area through the company’s UAE subsidiary. The newspaper stresses that the deal is illegal because Libya has been under a sanctions regime banning the export of weapons and military control systems since 2011.

Another scandal, again related to the French military in Africa, was recently exposed by the investigative website Disclose, which revealed that the undercover French military intelligence mission in Egypt was also involved in illegal operations.

As France’s unprecedented decline in influence on the African continent accelerates, the metropolitan political establishment tries to find scapegoats for its failures on the side, refusing to face reality. France does not want to accept this situation, but it cannot stop the process either. Support for paramilitary opposition groups and attempts to overthrow the legitimate authorities have been unsuccessful. In this regard, propaganda forces are directed by official Paris to search for hostile forces, mainly represented by Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey.

In particular, a recent publication of the French newspaper Le Parisien attempts to explain the failures of the French military policy in Africa by the appearance of the Russian PMCs in Africa, which are responsible for training local government armies. Particular emphasis is placed on such propagandists’ criticism of the Wagner PMCs, considered national heroes in the Central African Republic. In their honor, they have even erected a monument in the capital city of Bangui. According to Le Parisien, this Russian PMCs is allegedly closely linked to the Kremlin and operates in 23 African countries. Because of its activities, the local authorities reject the French military presence, weakening France’s political and economic influence in Africa.

French politicians brought up this criticism of Wagner PMCs at the EU level. They initiated the announcement of sanctions at the EU level during the discussions on this issue on December 13.

However, as the French media note, Paris’ failures in Africa are the result of extreme French arrogance, a purely neo-colonial mentality, and outright predatory aims towards African states. It is no secret that France does not want to lose the resources that it “pumps out” from the African continent, the abandonment of which would entail significant financial losses for French corporations. In this regard, Paris does not shy away from any methods: from supporting radical organizations to organizing an anti-Russian campaign.

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