

Gen. Langley Assumes Command of U.S. Africa Command



Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin passes the U.S. Africa Command guidon to Gen. Michael Langley, incoming commander, U.S. Africa Command, during a change of command ceremony in Stuttgart, Germany, on Aug. 9. *U.S. AFRICOM / Staff Sgt. Flor Gonzalez*

STUTTGART, Germany – U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Michael E. Langley assumed command of U.S. Africa Command in a ceremony at Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, Aug. 9, the command said in a release.

“It is truly an honor to stand before you as the new AFRICOM commander,” Langley said at the ceremony. “I look forward to taking on the mantle of leading these talented professionals here at AFRICOM and across our components as we work shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and partners to advance peace and prosperity for both Africa and the American homeland.”

Langley becomes the sixth U.S. Africa Command commander since the command was established in 2008.

A graduate of the University of Texas at Arlington, Langley was commissioned in 1985 and initially served as an artillery officer. As a general officer, he served as the deputy commanding general for II Marine Expeditionary Force; commanding general for 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade; commander for Marine Forces Europe and Africa; deputy commanding general for Fleet Marine Force Atlantic; and deputy commander for Marine Forces Command and Marine Forces Northern Command.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III presided over the ceremony, with nearly 400 guests from around the world in attendance.

During his remarks, Austin thanked outgoing commander, U.S. Army Gen. Stephen Townsend, for his dedicated leadership over the past three years as he highlighted the critical work the command is doing in Africa.

“The continent is on the front lines of many of this century’s most pressing threats – from mass migration to food insecurity, from COVID-19 to the climate crisis, from the drumbeat of autocracy to the dangers of terrorism,” he said.

Core to U.S. Africa Command’s mission is to work with allies and partners in a whole-of-government approach where defense supports diplomatic and development efforts to address shared security threats.

“Every day, AFRICOM works alongside our friends as full partners – to strengthen our bonds, to tackle common threats, and to advance a shared vision of an Africa whose people are safe, prosperous, and free to choose their own future,” said Austin.

In other remarks, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S.

Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, thanked Townsend for his selfless service throughout his career.

“The whole joint force and this nation are proud of your service and thanks you. You have served in peacetime and in combat and through it all you have led with humility, honor, and credibility,” said Milley.

Milley also spoke highly of the incoming commander. Langley “is the right leader at the right time with the right skillset to lead this critical command. He has the unique blend of character, competence, courage, experiences, and knowledge to lead AFRICOM in this challenging time.”

Townsend, who led U.S. Africa Command since July 2019, retires after a U.S. Army career spanning four decades. “The last three years have been an education and Africa is endlessly fascinating. The continent is big, complex, and diverse. America cannot afford to ignore Africa. America’s future security, and I believe prosperity, depends on a more secure and prosperous Africa,” he said.

U.S. Africa Command is one of seven U.S. Department of Defense geographic combatant commands. The command is responsible for all U.S. military operations, exercises, security cooperation, and conducts crisis response on the African continent in order to advance U.S. interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.