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What Nigeria Learned at Russia's West-2025 Drills

Nigeria's top general thanks Moscow for West-2025 and its drone lessons, as Mali's MPs back Russia against Ukraine at the UN. Also here: ECOWAS's first visit to the Sahel bloc, and Congo's war that Trump says is over.

Sergey Konyashin · sergey@konyashin.com

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Russia-Nigeria defense cooperation gets a public thank-you in this issue. Speaking on behalf of Nigeria's president, Chief of Defence Staff General Christopher Musa praised Andrey Belousov for the strategic West-2025 exercises, which Nigerian officers attended as observers, and singled out lessons on drone deployment in coordination with other weapons systems. Belousov answered by praising Nigerian troops fighting Boko Haram. Moscow's line also finds support in the Sahel: members of Mali's transitional parliament backed Dmitry Polyansky's UN statement accusing Ukraine of involvement in terrorism on the continent.

The *Africa Now* bulletin of September 18, 2025 brings together 23 stories, drawn from official statements, interviews with Al Arabiya and Sputnik Africa, and regional and international media.

Scope

In West Africa, parliamentary leaders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger met in Ouagadougou to draft the rules of a joint confederative parliament, and Sierra Leone's Julius Maada Bio became the first ECOWAS leader to visit an Alliance of Sahel States country, meeting Ibrahim Traoré. Ghana agreed to take 40 more migrants deported from the United States.

In Central and East Africa, the Congolese army and M23 rebels are preparing for a war Donald Trump says has already ended, with Qatar proposing a joint force of M23 and Congolese police. UN envoy Ramtane Lamamra held talks in Port Sudan, Somalia offered to mediate between

Egypt and Ethiopia on the Renaissance Dam, and Ethiopia defended the dam before the UN Security Council.

The issue also covers Sergey Vershinin's talks with Staffan de Mistura on Western Sahara, the start of Greek-Libyan maritime delimitation and Turkey's offer to train Libyan National Army personnel, testimony in South Africa about criminal syndicates inside the police and justice system, Mauritius topping Africa in the WIPO Global Innovation Index, and Namibia's goal of 500,000 new jobs.

Excerpt

“ Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, expressed gratitude to Russian Defense Minister Andrey Belousov for organizing the strategic West-2025 exercises. Speaking on behalf of Nigeria's president, Musa praised the exceptional preparation of the exercises, noting they provided valuable insights into modern warfare tactics, including drone deployment in coordination with other weapons systems and military equipment. For Nigeria's armed forces, currently undergoing modernization, participation in these maneuvers was particularly significant. Belousov congratulated the Nigerian delegation on the approaching 65th anniversary of the country's independence and thanked them for their participation as observers. He also conveyed best wishes to Nigeria's Defense Minister Mohammed Abubakar and acknowledged the decisive professional actions of Nigerian servicemen in combating Boko Haram extremists. The two sides discussed current and future directions for defense cooperation between their countries.

*Sergey Konyashin, What Nigeria Learned at Russia's West-2025 Drills
(Africa Now, DémarCHE, September 18, 2025)*

ABOUT

I am Sergey Konyashin, a former Russian diplomat. I spent nearly a dozen years in the Russian Foreign Ministry, with postings in Yemen (2010–2013), Sudan (2014–2018) and Algeria (2019–2021), and left Russia in 2022, after Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Démarche is my independent journal on Russian policy in the Middle East and Africa: analysis from inside the system, for readers outside it. I also write for *The Moscow Times*, *Republic*, *The Insider* and other independent outlets; see konyashin.com/elsewhere for that work.

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