

The National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) has issued a call to all young people of African descent to boycott the U.S. military to ensure that they will not be ordered to carry out missions on behalf of Africa Command (Africom), or any military unit or program engaged in violating international law, committing crimes against humanity, or committing crimes of any kind that threaten the peace of any continent. Africom is a rapidly developing initiative that is intended to consolidate and expand the U.S. military presence in Africa. NCBL has concluded that Africom's mission infringes on the sovereignty of African states due to the particularity of Africa's history and Africa's current economic and political relationship to the United States. Further, Africom is likely to violate international law standards that protect rights to self-determination and that prohibit unprovoked military aggression. "We believe that Africom is nothing more than a device to ensure that the U.S. oil industry will continue to have unfettered access to Africa's vast supplies of oil," said Mark P. Fancher, an NCBL spokesman. "If anyone in Africa interferes with U.S. oil operations, we suspect that they will be given the terrorist label and then targeted for military attacks."

NCBL has also announced its commitment to finding pro bono legal representation for people of African descent who are already enlisted military personnel, and who choose to defy orders to participate in Africom operations. "We are not asking anyone to disobey orders, but if they choose to do so because of conscience, we will stand with them and do all that we can to assist," Fancher said. "We believe it is unconscionable for people of African descent to be forced to participate in the destabilization and exploitation of their ancestral homeland – particularly when their ancestors were enslaved and kidnapped from that continent."

In a memorandum (attached) NCBL has detailed a history of crimes committed by the U.S. in Africa. These crimes have included, among others: mercenary attacks, the overthrow of democratic governments, and complicity in assassinations. Fancher said these crimes were apparently part of cold war strategies and measures taken to protect the interests of multi-national corporations. He added that Africom threatens to provide a means for more direct and less covert interference with the internal affairs of African states. "This is illegal, immoral and destined to become the focal point of Pan-African opposition," he said.