



Media Release

For immediate release May 11th, 2013

## **African Liberation Day 2013** **Pan-Africanism and Today's Challenges: Obstacles and Ways Forward**

### ***A Panel Discussion on Militarization and the Great Land Grab in Africa***

Toronto, ON -The Toronto chapter of the Group for Research and Initiative for the Liberation of Africa (GRILA), will commemorate the African Liberation Day 2013 on Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> 2013 at 5:00 p.m. This will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the OAU (Organization of African Unity). This public education event will take place at A Different Booklist which is located at 746 Bathurst (next to the Bathurst Subway station).

In the New Scramble for Africa, the continent is facing the dual threat of militarization and capitalist-driven land grabs. In militarist terms, the US and its European allies are increasingly consolidating their imperialist stranglehold in the region. Under the auspices of the so-called United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), the US is seeking the recolonization of the continent in bid to secure unfettered access to vital resources in the wake of China's ascendancy in Africa. The bloody military intervention in Libya was swiftly followed by deployment of Special Forces in Uganda, paving the way for militarization in the Central African region and the new escalation by President Obama of America's two decades old war in Somalia

In the Sahel region, Mali has suddenly become the centre of a new global "war on terror." Paradoxically, US-backed, French forces in Mali are fighting the same terrorist bands trained by US and NATO Special Forces, now justifying a full-fledged, neo-colonial invasion of Mali by France. Under the pretext of fighting terror, the French-led militarization strategy in Mali is rooted in AFRICOM's hegemonic military objectives of securing vital resources, countering China's strategy and confronting the revolutionary wave sweeping across the continent.

The choice of Mali as a new staging ground for a joint AFRICOM/NATO military offensive on the African continent is not a mere coincidence. With proven oil reserves as well as gold and uranium deposits, resource-rich Mali is strategically located in the heart of the oil-rich Sahel region. Its proximity to oil-rich Libya to the north and the vastly oil-rich, Gulf of Guinea region to the south comprising of oil-producing states of Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and newly oil-rich Ghana, makes it a convenient springboard to direct a new phase of imperialist-driven, military intervention in the continent. Mali is touted as a potential site for AFRICOM's proposed base in Africa.

In addition to threats posed by AFRICOM/NATO militarization, there is also a growing threat to African food security and prosperity from massive land grabs by external capitalist forces. Africa is being used to bail out the world's food crisis by secretive, powerful land grabbers seeking control over land and water resources. The new scramble for prime African land erstwhile dubbed the "Great Land Grab," is driven by biofuel demands in the European Union and other industrialized nations and renewed global attempts to augment food security in other regions of the world, principally in the Persian Gulf and East Asia. The threat posed by AFRICOM's militarization and ongoing land grabs calls for sustained Pan-African response from the grassroots level to national and continental level. On Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, join concerned Pan-Africanists at an African Liberation Day Panel discussion on the unfolding situation in the continent.

**Date : Saturday May 25th, 2013**

**Time : 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

**Location: A Different Booklist -746 Bathurst (South of Bloor), Toronto.**

*Brought to you by the Group for Research and Initiative for the Liberation of Africa (GRILA – Toronto Chapter)*

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**NOTE: A major international campaign around these issues (Militarization and Land Grab) will be announced the same day.**