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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1174th MEETING

18 SEPTEMBER 2023
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1174 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ



COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1174th meeting held on 18 September 2023, on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on maritime security in Africa and maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region, particularly, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1012\(2021\)](#) adopted at its 1012th meeting held on 23 July 2021; and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1128 \(2022\)](#) adopted at its 1128th meeting held on 19 December 2022;

Cognizant of the relevant regional and international instruments that govern the use of oceans and maritime spaces, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN resolutions on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea region;

Committed to ensure the full operationalization of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050) and its Plan of Action adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in January 2014, and the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, developed following the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 to 28 November 2018; and the full implementation of the Africa Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, adopted by the AU Extraordinary Summit held on 15 October 2016, in Lomé, Togo; as well as the Africa Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC) and the Plan of Action adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Kampala, Uganda, 26 July 2010;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Churchill Ewumbue-Monono, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for September 2023 and the introductory remarks by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;

Also noting the presentations by the Representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Combined Maritime Task Force (CMTF) as well as the representative of the Inter-Regional Coordination Center-Yaoundé (CRESMAO/CRESMAC); and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Expresses** deep concern over the insecurity posed by pirates and organized criminal networks in the Gulf of Guinea region that continue to cause loss of revenue, which undermines the gains of the continental blue economy and stagnating the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
2. **Strongly condemns** illicit maritime acts, including terrorism, piracy, armed robbery against ships, kidnappings, gunrunning, drugs and human trafficking committed in the Gulf of Guinea region; and **reiterates its call** for the prosecution of those who commit, encourage, finance or facilitate such acts, including the masterminds of criminal piracy networks;

3. **Commends** the countries of the Gulf of Guinea region and partners for their coordinated actions and progress made in the maritime domain and in addressing maritime challenges, including maritime crimes and illicit activities in the region;
4. **Expresses appreciations** to the efforts of the Chiefs of the Naval Staff that met in Port Harcourt-Nigeria in May 2022 to advance the establishment of the Regional Maritime Task Force for the Gulf of Guinea in implementing the Communiqué [[PSC/PR/COMM. 1012\(2021\)](#)] adopted by the PSC of the AU at its 1012th meeting, followed by a Technical Committee Meeting to establish the Task Force in Dakar in August 2022 and **calls on** Member States, including stakeholders, to support the endeavors of the technical expert committee set up by the Chiefs of the Naval Staff;
5. **Welcomes** the establishment in May 2022 of a CMTF as a regional mechanism for collective rapid reaction and response to any security threats in the Gulf of Guinea region, as a much needed kinetic capability to strengthen Yaoundé Code of Conduct and other proclamations that advance maritime security and continental blue economy; in this regards, **directs** the AU Commission to engage with the CMTF and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), to work towards supporting the alignment of the activities of the two structures;
6. **Acknowledges** the role played by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in its ten-year implementations, in enhancing cooperation among signatory states in the fight against transnational organized crime in the maritime domain; in this view, **encourages** Member States to reassess the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in order to adapt to the current dynamics following 10 years of adoption, including to consider its expansion to cover the entire Atlantic coast to create a more extensive cooperative mechanism for safety and security in Africa ; also **encourages** all countries of the region that have not yet done so, to fully adhere and implement the Yaoundé Code of Conduct;
7. **Reiterates** that the primary responsibility for combating maritime crimes rests with the concerned coastal Member States of the region; in this regard, **urges** Member States in the region to reinforce and/or to put in place measures to ensure permanent presence of African naval forces at sea; and **appeals** to the bilateral, regional and international partners to continue providing the necessary support and resources to combat maritime crimes and offenses as well as all other illicit maritime acts in the region;
8. **Welcomes**, in this context, the role played by the Rabat African Atlantic Process, engrained in the “Rabat Declaration” in the consolidation of peace, stability and shared prosperity among the African countries bordering the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Guinea;
9. **Encourages** Member States to develop and harmonize their national policies and strategies to a regional and continental level to enable a collective and coordinated response to maritime challenges in the continent; and **reiterates** the need for Member States to ratify and harmonize laws criminalizing maritime offenses including extradition of maritime offenders and facilitation of hot pursuit;
10. **Stresses** the need for enhanced cooperation, including through regional organizations and established regional mechanisms, to strengthen on maritime safety and security in the

region and to continue the implementation of the Yaoundé Mechanism; and **emphasizes** the need for enhanced cooperation, including information sharing and lessons learned among different regions of the continent, in particular between the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and other existing regional mechanisms;

11. **Requests** the AU Commission to expedite the activation of the Committee of the Heads of African Navies and Coastguards (CHANS), critical to provide strategic advice to the AU, including considering the convening of its inaugural meeting; and **reiterates** the need to expedite the establishment of a body of experts or a Task Force to coordinate, share knowledge and make recommendations on maritime security to guide Member States and other stakeholders in delivering on the AU's 2050 AIM Strategy and the and Lomé Charter;

12. **Directs** the AU Commission to establish within the AU Commission, a coordination mechanism and/or Unit on Maritime Security without any financial implication, that would coordinate, enable sharing of knowledge and experiences by Member States and regions, and produce reports and advise on activities related to maritime security to the Policy Organs;

13. **Looks forward** to the successful organization of the first maritime exercise within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF), to enhance the preparedness and capability of the ASF in addressing maritime security threats in the Continental waters.

14. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

2023-09-18

Communiqué of the 1174th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held on 18 September 2023, on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Peace and Security Council

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