



Maritime Security Conference
Theme: Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Fostering a
Comprehensive Approach to a Complex Problem
August 31st - September 1st, 2023
KAIPTC, Accra, Ghana

Background

In November 2022, under the framework of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund's Maritime Security Programme for the Gulf of Guinea (GoG), the Royal Danish Defense College (RDDC), Kofi Annan International Peace and Training Centre (KAIPTC), and SIGLA of Stellenbosch University held a trilateral conference on maritime security in the GoG. The upcoming 2023 edition continues this path as it focuses on maritime insecurity in a broader sense in the Gulf of Guinea by organising a two-day conference in Accra, Ghana.

The Gulf of Guinea is a vast and diverse region stretching from Senegal to Angola, covering approximately 6,000 km of coastline. It is an important shipping zone, transporting oil and gas, as well as goods to and from central and southern Africa. Around 1,500 fishing vessels, tankers, and cargo ships navigate the waters of the Gulf, thus requiring a healthy and secure maritime space. Since 2022, there has been an encouraging drop in maritime piracy. Although the drop cannot be narrowed down to a single line of effort, it is important to utilise this momentum to sustainably strengthen efforts to achieve and sustain general maritime security over a wide field.

Format

The conference will last two days with a number of sessions each, including Q&A sessions and an interactive session. The purpose of this format is to enable knowledge sharing based on recent developments and research while also enabling the audience to interact with the panel as well as other participants.

The first session entails a panel discussion on the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCC). This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the signature of the YCC by 25 heads of state, which initiated the formation of the Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Security. The architecture was envisioned as a key platform for regional and international cooperation on maritime security, but implementation on key aspects is still missing. Furthermore, as piracy and armed robbery at sea have been prominent features of maritime security for much of the past decade, it is time to conceptualize the potential roles of Architecture in other forms of maritime security issues. Therefore, this session looks closer at the architecture, emphasising maritime security cooperation and what (other) roles it can play in the future. The aim of this session is to produce insights into the state and current/future roles of architecture.

The second session will revolve around the question of maritime capacity building in the Gulf of Guinea. Capacity building constitutes a key approach of the international community to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. The capacity building relates to activities on local, national, regional, and interregional levels, and it is often proposed that capacity building must be demand-driven, meaning that assistance should be rendered based on the needs of the region to ensure a safer and more secure operating environment for maritime trade and other activities. The session will feature an introduction to the current state of capacity building in the Gulf and a group workshop in which authorities, researchers, and private industries can contribute with their personal experiences and recommendations. The aim of

this session is to produce national and regional insights and recommendations for capacity-building activities, now and in the future.

The third session will turn to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Fishing remains a great threat to the marine ecosystems in the Gulf by threatening fish stocks. Some estimates note that fish stocks in the Gulf of Guinea are nearly depleted, which will be disastrous for the coastal states, and seafood is a central source by covering 60 per cent of animal protein and employing a great number of people in the Gulf—in Ghana alone, the sector is believed to employ 790,000 people. These developments threaten livelihoods, exacerbate poverty, and augment food insecurity. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated Gulf of Guinea fishing has far-reaching impacts. It threatens food security and economic growth. West African IUU fishing is estimated to cost \$2.3 billion annually. The issue of IUU fishing in the Gulf of Guinea is complex and requires coordinated efforts from governments, fishing communities, and other stakeholders. Enhanced governance, stricter regulations, and increased enforcement are required to combat this issue and assure the long-term viability of the region's fisheries. This session will focus on questions such as: How do we foster better possibilities for more effective maritime law enforcement, monitoring, and control? What role do regional and international cooperation and governance play in this area?

The fourth session addresses the growing cyber threat targeting critical infrastructure providers, stealing valuable data and trade secrets from companies. Cybersecurity is also distinctively important regarding incident reporting and information sharing. Cybersecurity requires a coordinated effort from the government, the maritime industry, and cybersecurity experts to succeed. This session will look closer at the current state of affairs. Here, critical infrastructure at sea/on land also features prominently. Targeting the cyber sphere as information programs and data sit alongside interferences with infrastructure that carry the data and information flows.

The fifth and last session entails a panel discussion on how we promote Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) within the maritime sphere. Promoting WPS in maritime security requires a multi-faceted approach that includes increasing women's participation, mainstreaming gender perspectives, and strengthening international cooperation and partnerships.

The linkage between the above-written issues calls for a holistic approach through transnational cooperation to understand the linkage between new and traditional problems, including the land-sea nexus that goes beyond piracy. In tandem with the contributions, the organisers envisage releasing an official communiqué, conference report, and research paper(s) to enhance maritime security governance in the Gulf of Guinea.

Outcomes

1. This conference will provide a platform for state-of-the-art academic and practical/industry knowledge sharing to inform practitioners, institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders.
2. It will also create an intersection built on dialogue and joint trust to combine the interests and needs of all stakeholders, ranging from people associated with commercial industries, including shipping, fisheries, and oil, to international, regional, and local academic researchers as well as relevant regional think tanks, institutions, authorities, and policymakers.
3. The conference will also raise awareness among participants on issues related to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea to reinforce cooperation between state and non-state actors to promote maritime security and resilient coastal states and communities.

4. Identify possible future pathways to enhance the level of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Outputs

1. On the second day of the conference, a Communique of the proceedings will be signed by all the heads of the institutions involved.
2. A conference report will be prepared and shared with all participants.

Below are the provisional sub-themes which will be discussed over the period.

Day 1 – Maritime Governance in a Regional and International Perspective

- **Panel Discussions on the YCC:** Implementation on the Eve of YCC’s 10-Year Anniversary Flaws and the Way Forward
- **Interactive Session on Capacity Building in the GoG:** Needs and Ways of Addressing them National, Regional, international, and Industrial perspectives.

Day 2 – Societal Resilience in the Maritime Domain

- **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing:** Impacts of livelihoods
- **Upcoming on the agenda:** Underwater Infrastructure and Cyber Security
- **Panel Discussion on Women, Peace, and Security:** Promoting Women’s Stories and Experiences in Maritime Security. Gender Mainstreaming

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of the Maritime Security Conference on "Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Fostering a Comprehensive Approach to a Complex Problem" is to address the most pressing maritime security issues in the Gulf of Guinea. The conference aims to facilitate knowledge sharing, dialogue, and mutual trust by bringing together stakeholders from academia, industry, policymakers, and institutions. The conference will examine several subthemes, such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, capacity development, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, cyber security, and women's participation in maritime security. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the conference will inform and benefit practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders, enhancing maritime security in the region. Through the signing of a Communiqué and the compilation of a conference report, the conference will contribute to increasing awareness, strengthening cooperation, and identifying future pathways for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.