



REPORT

Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?



21-22 October 2019 Rabat



CONFERENCE MINISTERIELLE SUR LA COOPERATION
HALIEUTIQUE ENTRE LES ETATS AFRICAINS RIVERAINS DE
L'OCEAN ATLANTIQUE



COMHAFAT/ATLAFCO

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES
COOPERATION AMONG AFRICAN STATES BORDERING
THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

WORKSHOP

**"Fight against piracy: What solutions for
the eradication of acts of maritime piracy
in the ATLAFCO zone?"**

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

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Table of contents

I.	INTRODUCTORY NOTE	2
II.	PROGRAM OF THE WORKSHOP	4
III.	INTRODUCTION	5
IV.	OPENNING CEREMONY	6
V.	WORK CONDUCT.....	8
	ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	19
	ANNEX II : AGENDA	22
	ANNEXE III: RECOMMENDATIONS	24
	ANNEX IV: SPEECHES	25

I. INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Piracy and maritime insecurity constitute threats to the stability and the exercise of marine activities.

In addition to the so-called Horn of Africa zone, where the first acts of modern maritime piracy took place, the Gulf of Guinea is the other African part where this scourge proliferates.

Faced with these threats, many legal and policy initiatives have been undertaken both internationally and regionally. Among them we will quote the Code of Conduct for the prevention and suppression of piracy and charter Lome...

In this sense, ATLAFCO has organized the 18 to 19 September 2017 a workshop, in addition to allowing to grasp the extent and economic and social impacts of the phenomenon in ATLAFCO area, has made recommendations to the strengthening and improving the existing systems of fight against maritime piracy, particularly in terms of improving exchange of information, coordination and collaboration, pooling of efforts, funding and operationalization of national and regional strategies.

However, it is clear that the question of the effectiveness of the actions carried out under these initiatives on the ground, remains posed. This is notably the case of the Gulf of Guinea which continues to be the scene of acts of piracy, even recording in recent years an alarming increase in the frequency of pirate attacks and the level of physical violence against seafarers. The International Maritime Bureau (BIM) in its 2018 report indicates that the Gulf of Guinea has 57 of the 156 incidents related to piracy, reported internationally during the first nine months of 2018. Thus, despite all efforts regional and international, the strategic plan to combat piracy has remained ineffective.

The worsening of the phenomenon now represents a growing risk for the States of the region; one is entitled to inquiry on the reasons underlying this failure, and to propose corrective measures and recommendations aimed at making the greater effectiveness of existing control mechanisms.

The organization of this workshop is a reflection among the various institutional actors involved in the fight against crime at sea, to better understand the causes of the persistence and worsening of this scourge in the region, with a view to effectively and sustainably prevent and suppress unlawful acts perpetrated in national maritime areas and beyond.

The participants will thus examine the reasons for the aggravation of the phenomenon, by an analysis of:

- (i) The relevance of the approach adopted so far by the States of the region;
- (ii) The implementation of the main provisions of international legal instruments and the recommendations of the forums dedicated to the issue of maritime piracy;
- (iii) Evaluation of regional measures to combat piracy in the region.

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

Then, on the basis of a diagnosis highlighting the shortcomings acknowledged at the identification and treatment of the causes of the emergence and persistence of this scourge, the implementation of the various proposed strategies established, they will be called upon to propose a more appropriate approach to enhance maritime security in the region.

As part of this reflection, a special place will be given to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers (MRCC) as unique and unavoidable contact *of users of the sea with the land*. Since the designation by the IMO as piracy alert centers, they have become a central piece in the fight against acts of maritime piracy.

This meeting will be complemented by a visit to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) in Bouznika (Morocco), which coordinates the activities of search and rescue of human lives in the North and West African region.

II. PROGRAM OF THE WORKSHOP

- **Section 1: Reasons for the aggravation of the phenomenon of maritime piracy in the region**
 - o Approach adopted by the States of the region in the fight against piracy
 - o Assessment of provisions against maritime piracy in the region
- **Section 2: SAR contribution in the fight against piracy in the region**
 - o Preliminary role of maritime rescue coordination centers through the reception of alerts
 - o Overview of means exploited by the MRCC for support and assistance in the fight against sea piracy
- **Section 3: For an Appropriate Approach to Strengthening Maritime Security in the Region**
 - o The root causes of piracy
 - o Strengthening national arrangements
 - o Implementation strategy for regional agreements
- **Section 4: Towards an integrated multidimensional approach to counter piracy in the region**
 - o Elaborating a regional framework for the prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery committed at sea
 - o Increasing coordination of regional information exchange

III. INTRODUCTION

1. On 21 and 22 October 2019, a workshop under the theme of: "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?" was held in Rabat (Morocco)
2. Attended this meeting:
 - Delegates from the following Member States: Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone.
 - o The Media Observatory for Sustainable Fisheries in Africa (MOFSA);
 - o Institute of Maritime Fisheries Technology / Laarache
3. The workshop was conducted and animated by:
 - o Mr. Abdennaji LAAMRICH
 - o Col. Jawad Bensouda
4. A round table allowed participants to introduce themselves
5. The list of participants is attached to ANNEX I

IV. OPENNING CEREMONY

1. On behalf of Mr. **Moussa DOSSO**, Minister of Animal Resources and Fisheries of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Current President of ATLAFCO, **Mr GNEPA Djoro Hyacin**, Head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC), thanked the Authorities of the Kingdom of Morocco for the constant support they provide to the ATLAFCO and for the facilities that allowed the holding of this seminar.
2. He then stressed the importance of this meeting and took the opportunity to extend his thanks to the ATLAFCO for accepting to introduce Search and Rescue and Piracy phenomena to its activities which contributes to strengthen Africa capabilities in this important domain which is saving lives at sea.
3. He underline the increasing use of SAR services due to the development of maritime activity and traffic density, which is a daily challenge for lifeguards at sea, increasingly calling for active cooperation for a quick and effective intervention.
4. He finally declared open the work of this workshop.
5. In his introductory word, **Mr. Mohamed DRISSI**, head of MRCC, Morocco on behalf of the Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Waters and Forests, welcomed to the representatives of the member countries of the ATLAFCO, as well as the distinguished guests to the work of this workshop.
6. He reminded the importance and relevance of the theme of piracy and saving lives at sea, which is now the main concerns of the international maritime community, because of its particularity and complexity as well as its economic and social impact.
7. He also underline the increasing use of SAR services due to the development of maritime activity and traffic density, which is a daily challenge for lifeguards at sea, increasingly calling for active cooperation for a quick and effective intervention.
8. He further mentioned that this meeting held in Rabat is the expression of an overall will to exchange experience and build capabilities to improve, develop and implement a safe an efficient Maritime organization based on cooperation and information exchange.
9. **Mr. Andennaji LAAMRICH, Head of Cooperation and Information Systems, on behalf of Mr. Abdelouahed BENABBOU**, Executive Secretary ATLAFCO thanked the Moroccan Authorities, for their constant support to the ATLAFCO and the permanent commitment to maritime cooperation in Africa.
10. **Mr. LAAMRICH** explained that this workshop is a continuation to the first 2017 meeting which was a contribution to the efforts of the international community to make seas and oceans secure spaces, conducive to the development of riparian countries and beyond.

- 11.** He added that piracy and maritime insecurity constitute persistent threats to the stability and the exercise of marine activities of States bordering the coasts of the ATLAFCO region in general and those of the Gulf of Guinea in particular. So there is urgent need to tackle this phenomenon.
- 12.** He pointed out that despite various international efforts; the strategic plan to fight piracy has been inadequate because it has not fully addressed the causes of piracy. Therefore, to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, it is essential to apply an integrated multidimensional approach that enhances maritime security while effectively addressing the main causes of piracy under, social and economic conditions and policies of the region, including the poor governance, corruption, unemployment and poverty.
- 13.** He concluded that there is an urgent need for cooperation and coordination of efforts at the regional and international levels for combating maritime piracy in the region that requires a multi-dimensional approach and MRCC could offer an adequate platform or such approach.

V. WORK CONDUCT

14. The agenda was discussed and adopted unanimously, it appears in APPENDIX II.

15. The work was held in plenary as sessions. The presentations revolve around the following themes:

- **Reasons for the aggravation of the phenomenon of maritime piracy in the region**
- **SAR contribution in the fight against piracy in the region**
- **For an Appropriate Approach to Strengthening Maritime Security in the Region**
- **Towards an integrated multidimensional approach to counter piracy in the region**

Section 1: Reasons for the aggravation of the phenomenon of maritime piracy in the region

Presentation 1: The sharp rise of maritime piracy in ATLAFCO zone: Mr. LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)

Summary:

In his presentation Mr. LAAMRICH started by defining the notion of maritime piracy and armed robbery in West Africa. He pointed out that West Africa is becoming the world's new piracy hotspot with 54 incidents occurring in 2015, 95 in 2016, 97 in 2017 and a worrying 112 in 2018. He demonstrated that increase of different attacks especially in the GoG have occurred for a number of reasons including poverty, political instability, a lack of proper law enforcement.

He explained that incidents of piracy in West Africa have evolved throughout the years both in terms of geographical expansion and level of sophistication. Piracy in the form of hijacking and kidnapping for ransom payments was also common off the coasts of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Congo and Cameroon.

He then added that a long list of lucrative targets especially for Nigeria which experienced the most attacks due to an increase in "petro-piracy" which has targeted vessels involved in oil and gas transportation. Piratical activities have progressed from low-level armed robberies and oil siphoning in the Niger Delta to more refined assaults including hijacking and cargo theft within the territorial waters of neighboring countries.

He highlighted that attacks are gradually becoming well-coordinated and more violent targeting not only commercial vessels but crewmembers as well

Finally, he concluded that other reason for West Africa's rise is the downward trend in other regions, particularly East Africa and Asia.

Presentation 2: Cabo Verde

Summary:

The presentation focused on the Cabo Verde Maritime Security Operation Center (COSMAR) which among its missions is to ensure surveillance of maritime areas under

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

national jurisdiction, plan, coordinate and direct maritime security operations against all offenses practiced at sea and associated activities and Collect, compile, analyze and disseminate information in the field of maritime security.

Presentation 3: Côte d'Ivoire

Summary:

In Côte d'Ivoire there were some incidents. The most important took place in 2012 with 5 attacks. Some statistics of 2017 show how the MRCC can play an important role.

Among the Factors contributing to maritime piracy there are socio-economic and political fact, high levels of criminality, ineffective government and law enforcement agencies, reduced naval presence, corruption and lack of regional co-operation.

Regarding national arrangements and regional and International commitments, Côte d'Ivoire adopted the relevant instruments such as (Maritime code in 2017 in which piracy is defined and the rule of prosecution are well defined) and some organization for patrolling and receiving alerts (navy, maritime police, MRCC)

Côte d'Ivoire is part of most of the regional and international maritime security organizations (ECOWAS, MOWCA, and Yaoundé CoC). CRESMAO is one of the security coordination centers located in Côte d'Ivoire.

The country have made some Efforts to fight maritime piracy with a new security strategy has been put in place since 2014 and the constant patrol with navy.

The presentation made some proposed solutions namely: naval Operations in the Regions, information Sharing, Prosecution and Imprisonment, Data Collections and Information, Strong relationship between states, operationalization of Yaoundé COC and grant the MRCCs, in addition to those of search and rescue (SAR), powers in the application of national regulations/instructions and the response to acts of violence against ships.

Presentation 4: Gabon

Summary:

GABON, an oil-producing country (about 200,000 barrels / day) located in the Gulf of Guinea, is not immune to the threat of sea piracy.

The presentation describes the current situation of GABON in terms of maritime piracy and the measures taken, both at national and regional level, to deal with this scourge that threatens the entire western coast of Africa.

GABON has not been the victim of any act of maritime piracy since July 14, 2013, when an oil tanker was hijacked off Port-Gentil. It's the only pirate attack of such magnitude recorded in Gabon so far.

As far as Gabon is concerned, in analyzing the rare cases of piracy that have been recorded, it can be noted that the causes of maritime piracy are of a geographical and socio-economic nature.

- The geographical cause: the situation of the country in the Gulf of Guinea;

- The economic cause: Gabon, with a production of about 200,000 barrels / day, is the 8th oil-producing country in Africa (5th in the Gulf of Guinea);

- The social cause: the indigenous populations living near the oil exploitation zones are very poor and feel, rightly, shelved from the profits generated by the oil industry.

An enumeration has been made on the weaknesses of Gabon in the fight against maritime piracy such as the absence of a Coastguard Corps specifically dedicated to the fight against maritime piracy, the absence of a Secondary Maritime Research Center (MRSC), the absence of nautical means to the General Direction of the Merchant Navy and the absence of national legislation to reprimand the perpetrators of maritime piracy.

Presentation 5: Gambia

Summary:

Piracy is a global threat that has evolved over the years and remains an international challenge. It affects major shipping lanes, and puts at risk the lives of seafarers and merchant seamen from all over the world, of whom hundreds are taken captive each year. The act of Pirate attacks can have widespread ramifications, including preventing humanitarian assistance and increasing the costs of future shipments to the affected areas. Somalia was famous for its pirates' activities but now the Gulf of Guinea mainly in and around the waters between Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo which number more than doubled in 2018 according to the IMB and MDA Annual Reports.

Some causes of Piracy could be:

- Civil Conflict/Breakdown in Rule of Law*
- Poverty/Destruction of Means of Livelihood*
- Profitability of the Trade (Piracy)*
- Bad Governance/Uneven Distribution of resources*
- Inferior maritime domain awareness (MDA)/Monitoring-Surveillance*
- Weak Law Enforcement at Sea*
- Weak Legal Regimes*

The act requires an integrated, interregional and global fight. Liberia has embraced this fight through its participation in the Experts Panel Meetings of June 2016 in Brazil and of Singapore in February 2017. Liberia is signatory to regional and international anti-piracy protocols including IMO's resolutions, Yaoundé Code of Conduct that seeks a regional approach to fighting piracy, arm robbery and all maritime crimes in the region, etc.

Liberia is also making national efforts in the fight against piracy through the establishment of a Division of Monitoring, Surveillance and Rescue. The Division operates a 24/7

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Emergency call center equipped with GMDSS equipment to render assistance to persons at sea. The Center has been operational since 2009 and was recently upgraded to cope with current realities. There is also a national maritime security strategy in place that incorporates all state actors in the maritime space. The strategy amongst other things requires vessels with destination to Liberia do routine radio checks and report any suspicious activities the MRCC.

Presentation 6: - International legal framework on maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships: Mr. LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)

Summary:

The presentation focus on the International legal framework of maritime piracy and its legally definition according to Article 101 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

According to international law, therefore, piracy at sea is an act of violence or detention perpetrated on the high seas against a ship outside of state's jurisdiction of 12 nautical miles off its coast.

Conversely, acts of violence against ships within territorial waters are defined as armed robbery at sea. According to Resolution A.1025(26) (Annex, paragraph 2.2)6 of the 'Code of Practice for the Investigation of the Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships' of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

This differentiation is particularly relevant for the applicability of national or international law as well as for consideration of counter measures stemming from this. It is therefore of primary importance for settling jurisdictional issues when a suspect is arrested, prosecuted and convicted.

However, because of their significance for global maritime security, both acts of violence – piracy and armed robbery are treated on equal grounds.

To deal with these issues, relevant international instruments are cited such as, UNCLOS 82 (United Nations) IMO anti-piracy program (soft law),SUA Convention 1988/2005 (Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (“Rome Convention”) and SOLAS security amendments 2002 (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, '74).

16. Section 2 : SAR contribution in the fight against piracy in the region ...

- **Presentation 7 : The exercise of police powers and forcible action at sea: Col J.BENSOUA (MRCC Morocco) and Improving Collective Military Cooperation: Col J.BENSOUA (MRCC Morocco)**

Summary:

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

After a brief definition of maritime Piracy, the presentations made a description of pirates. Like legendary pirates, modern pirates are still involved in looting and hijacking ships for ransom, but their ways of operations has dramatically changed over time. Modern pirates now don night-vision goggles; carry AK-47s, heavy machine guns, and rocket launchers; navigate with GPS devices; and use sophisticated speedboats mounted with heavy mortars to target ships. Today are part of organized crime gangs that target big and small cargo vessels, and even cruise ships and private yachts.

The presentations then gave a broad outline on the international cooperation in the matter of fighting against maritime piracy with a focus on the regional cooperation that is a central mechanism when it comes to fighting maritime crime in general and piracy and armed robbery at sea in particular. Africa's Regional Economic Communities are growing in their understanding of the importance of protecting maritime territories for their people. Closely linked with this perception is the concept of a 'blue economy' and understanding the economic opportunities that come with a secure maritime area

Presentation 8: SAR as a tool to counter maritime piracy with the emphasis on the role of maritime rescue coordination centers (MRCC): **Col J.BENSOUDA (MRCC Morocco)**

Summary:

The presentation started by describing the organization of the Moroccan SAR that consists of

National Commission for the Coordination of Search and Rescue of Lives at Sea, National Coordinator (Ministry in charge of Ocean Fisheries), SAR Technical Committee ,National Maritime SAR Office (Rabat) Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC Rabat) and Responding and alerting stations

The presentation then focused on the missions of the Moroccan center internationally such as IMO coordinator for the African North West region, coordinator of the International Federation of Maritime Rescue for Africa, observer member of the COSPAS-SARSAT Organization member of the North Atlantic MRCCs Group and correspondent of the Satellite Mission Control Center French MCC of Toulouse.

17. Section 3 : For an Appropriate Approach to Strengthening Maritime Security in the Region

18. The role of national arrangements in strengthening maritime Security in west Africa: (participants)

Presentation 09: Equatorial Guinea

Summary:

Regarding national arrangements regarding the maritime security, the Equatorial Guinea has made the following:

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

- *Establishment of Maritime Security patrols and surveillance.*
- *Installation of radars in coastal strategic points.*
- *Aerial surveillance.*
- *Participation with international bodies: CEMAC, IMO, Gulf of Guinea Commission, ICACS.*

The country committed at the international /regional level especially:

- *Equatorial Guinea is a member of numerous bodies that enlist maritime security:*
- *OMI: Code (ISPS).*
- *Gulf of Guinea Commission: Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC).*
- *Economy within the African Integrated Maritime Strategy (EAMIA 2050).*
- *Equatorial Guinea is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council*

Efforts made by the country to combat piracy are:

- *Human Resources Training: ITAKA Naval School.*
- *Equatorial Guinea as a member of several Regional and International Agencies, e.g. Central African Monetary Economic Community (ECCAS).*
- *Intergovernmental coordination with affected countries.*
- *The creation of an organization of central African monetary economic community member states (ECCAS).*

Presentation 10: Liberia

Summary:

The presentation started by enumerating the assumed causes of piracy such as civil conflict/breakdown in rule of law, poverty/destruction of means of livelihood, profitability of the trade (piracy), bad governance/uneven distribution, inferior MDA/monitoring-surveillance, weak law enforcement at sea weak legal regimes

Regarding the Liberia commitment to regional & international efforts international collaboration on anti-piracy, the representative of Liberia pointed out that his country supporting IMO's Resolutions & other International arrangements on fight against maritime piracy , participated in the Experts Panel Meeting in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, June 2016 , participated in the inaugural meeting of Anti-Piracy Contact points and Workshop on piracy against ships in Singapore organized by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)/10th – 11th January 2017, relevant participant were anti-piracy contact points in Asia and Africa the regions with key shipping lanes and incidences of piracy and arm robbery. The he workshop established point of contact across various anti-piracy points to promote greater networking and facilitate communication and to allow participants share best practices, protocols and experiences in information sharing.

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

He added that amongst the many contacts, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Arm Robbery against ships in Asia (RECAAP) that comprise of 20 contracting states and provide a platform for information exchange with RECAAP focal points.

The Information Fusion Center or IFC also shares a larger platform 24/7 with more than 65 agencies and in 35 countries. www.infofusioncentre.gov.sg

Regarding the regional Collaborations, He stressed that Liberia is a signatory to the Yaoundé Code of Conduct that seeks a regional approach to fighting piracy, arm robbery and all maritime crimes in the region. Liberia enjoys active information exchange with regional Zone F headquarter and all zonal states within and beyond zonal jurisdictions.

Liberia hosts the Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (RMRCC) with shared responsibility to Sierra Leone, The Republic of Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. This formulation was adopted at the IMO Italy Florence Convention of 2000 that established five regional maritime rescue coordination centers on the African Continent.

Since its inception on 23rd April 2009, Liberia comes with over ten years of experience coordinating search and rescue, combating piracy, IUU and all forms of maritime crimes.

Finally, he highlighted that Liberia accommodates the Gulf of Guinea Interregional Network (GoGIN) Project and had its first Crisis Response Training in February 2019 and ships flagged under Liberia are in compliance with all Anti-Piracy measures in place.

Presentation11: Nigeria

Summary:

Regarding the national arrangements regarding the maritime security in Nigeria, the presentation gave an overview of the National Maritime Search and Rescue Committee (NMSAR) that comprises all stakeholders, oil major, fisheries, Military and government Agencies meet regularly: to share information, address the security challenges and also update on their asset that could be available for use during emergency.

Nigerian government has put in place programs that would empower the youths: like the trader money, money given to traders to boost their trade, youth's vocational training and youths in Agriculture to reduce the unemployment

Nigeria is committed in fighting the rising trend of Piracy and sea Criminality at International / regional level

Towards converting Piracy and other Maritime Criminality in the Gulf of Guinea and World over, Nigeria hosted a Global Maritime Security Conference (GMSC) in Abuja, Nigeria 7th to 9th October 2019

Presentation 12: Senegal

Summary:

With a coastline long of 570km, Senegal, as a signatory of the Montego Bay Convention on the sea claims an Economic Exclusive Zone of 200 miles which covers an area of 212 000 km² that exceeds the landmass.

Senegalese waters are continuously busy and the sea is truly key factor in the development of the Senegalese economy.

About 130 fishing vessels and more than 26,000 fishing canoes are registered nationwide to operate in Senegalese maritime domain. Merely 150 commercial vessels including tankers pass off Senegalese waters every day, using the international sea lines. Moreover Dakar Port is an international Port where thousands of ports of call registered yearly.

In a near future, oil and gas exploitation will add more activities in Senegalese sea and consequently more threats never faced before in that area, among them maritime Piracy.

To handle those issues, a maritime safety and security strategy is set up through a maritime domain awareness, adequate intervention mean with well-trained human resources and national and international cooperation.

The presentation recommended:

- *Leverage the MRCC to become a multifunctional center and an Emergency Operation Center for command and control of operation at sea involving assets from various entities so as to play key role in coordinating various incidents at sea related, beside Search and Rescue and Oil spill, to safety threats alike.
Therefore, the MRCC is essential in liaising with the different national structures, for surveillance and coordination of maritime safety and security operations*
- *Understanding the necessity to handle the transnational issues collectively and knowing that the majority of today's threats are transnational, we encourage ATLAFCO maritime services and operational centers to work in cooperation through information sharing, and a coordinated approach through integrated structures in charge of organizing combined patrols along the ATLAFCO coast for successful maritime security operations especially when it comes to fight piracy.*

Presentation 13: Sierra Leone

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

Summary:

Regarding the national arrangements, the government of Sierra Leone has established the Joint Maritime Committee (JMC) to provide coordination and management mechanisms for all maritime resources and activities within Sierra Leone.

There is also the Joint Operation Centre (JOC) which is a center of convergence for information from parties involved in maritime operations:

- *Assets at sea*
- *Administration*
- *Co-ordinates with other mariners, EU & Merchant Navies*
- *The mission of collecting, assessing and managing information is essential in order to take into account new threats (terrorism at sea, armed smuggling, piracy)*
- *Monitoring the evolution in these areas will be a permanent task for the Joint Maritime Committee through the INTEL function of the JOC.*

Regarding the country commitment at international/regional level, attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Guinea have exposed the vulnerability of the region's maritime space, has precipitated various countermeasures. A number of regional associations have been effectively involved in countering piracy in the region; these are

- *The Gulf of Guinea Commission (GCC) created in 2001 but only operational in March 2007*
- *The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)*
- *The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)*
- *The Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) established to ensure a cost-effective shipping service for sub-regional countries focusing on safety and combating pollution*
- *The establishment of Maritime Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (MICC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon agreed by the heads of government from ECOWAS and ECCAS*
- *The Yaounde' Declaration of June 2013 a "Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa" was adopted to further promote collective efforts on information sharing, interdiction, prosecution, and support to victims*

Sierra Leone has made some considerable efforts made to fight maritime piracy such as:

- *Enforcement Coordination -The restricted number of piracy-related trials emphasizes the necessity for greater coordination of legal efforts in the region as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding between ECCAS, ECOWAS, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.*

- *Asset Availability - A classes preventive mechanism characterized by maritime air patrols, ship-borne patrols, ground and satellite based surveillance assets is used to observe and secure the Gulf of Guinea.*
- *Profiling Piracy Networks. Breaking the cyclical chain of attacks on shipping in a cost-effective manner requires a strong power for profiling maritime crime and sharing information among stakeholders in the region.*

19. Presentation 14; Global approach to strength maritime safety and security at sea:
M.DRISSI (MRCC MOROCCO)

20. Presentation 15;The root causes ; Driving factors behind piracy with emphasis on the regional arrangements: **A.LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)**

Summary:

African maritime security is particularly severely affected by maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea. Maritime piracy is not a new phenomenon; it has existed for as long as people and commodities have traversed the oceans.

Gulf of Guinea has been at the epicenter of West African maritime crimes due to several factors. Quite paradoxically, the discovery of large amounts of offshore hydrocarbons has generated poverty rather than wealth. It has exacerbated social tensions and increased environmental pollution.

Only the central government, oil companies, and local elites have benefitted from oil production. Those excluded from the benefits have turned to organized crime in the form of 'petro piracy.' This form of piracy is aimed at stealing crude-oil from tankers and pipelines so as to process the gains in illegally set up refineries.

Most of the kidnapping incidents usually occur within 12 to 50 nautical miles from land. Their reasoning for committing these acts of violence and theft is to seek economic justice, as the region despite being one of the richest in Africa, remains predominantly underdeveloped and polluted.

Along with corruption, unemployment is also driving piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Most often, ships are hijacked for amassing monetary gains. Due to lack of jobs, when people see there is nothing on the ground for them to benefit from, they go to any length and use any means to disturb the economic activities that bring money into the nation.

Piracy and armed attacks are not new ventures in West Africa. Even though several legal instruments and institutional infrastructure like Yaoundé Code of Conduct, Gulf of Guinea Commission, etc. are in place to combat the menace of piracy, trends of last year and in the first quarter of 2019 are alarming.

Both maritime security and governance development are hampered by capacity issues. Therefore, it is imperative for African states to work towards bridging the disjuncture between political will and readiness on one hand, and operational capability on the other.

21. All presentations are available in the original language on the ATLAFCO website at the following address:

<https://www.comhafat.org/fr/actualites.php?id=105>

22. During the third session the committee (Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone) that have been assigned to prepare a draft recommendation project, presented the proposal.

23. After several discussions and the updates made on the proposal, the participants through the draft committee made the final recommendations. **Annex III**

24. This report has been adopted unanimously

25. The work of the workshop is declared closed at 16:30

ANNEX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

N°	COUNTRY	NAMES	TITLE	E-MAIL
1	CABO VERDE	Mr Antonio Duarte Monteiro	Capitaine de la marine	antoniiod.monteiro@amp.cv
2		Mr SILVA CARDOSO ADERITO MOISES	Représentant de la Marine/Cabo verde	adyscardoso@gmail.com
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4	GABON	Mr ULRICH EVRARD BOUPOYA	Administrateur des affaires maritimes, chef de service de l'équipement naval, Expert en Sûreté Maritime	evrardul@yahoo.fr
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Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

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ANNEX II : AGENDA

Draft Agenda Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

21 October 2019	
08 :00-09 :00	Registration
09 :00-09 :45	Opening of the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Address by the Representative of Cote d'Ivoire, President of ATLAFCO- Address by the Representative of Morocco, host country- Address by the Executive Secretary of ATLAFCO
09 :45-10 :00	Introduction of the meeting(background)
10 :00-10 :30	Coffee break and group photo
1 st Session: Reasons for the aggravation of the phenomenon of maritime piracy in west Africa	
10:30-13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The sharp rise of maritime piracy in ATLAFCO zone: Mr. LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)- Current situation of the maritime piracy (all concerned countries of the region)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- CABO VERDE- COTE D'IVOIRE- GABON- GAMBIA- GHANA- GUINEA-BISSAU- EQUATORIAL GUINEA- LIBERIA- NIGERIA- SENEGAL- SIERRA LEONE- International legal framework on maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships: Mr. LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO)
13 :00-14 :00	Lunch
2 nd Session: SAR contribution in the fight against piracy in the region	
14:00 - 16 :00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The exercise of police powers and forcible action at sea: Col J.BENSOUDA (MRCC Morocco)- Improving Collective Military Cooperation: Col J.BENSOUDA (MRCC Morocco)
16 :00 -16 :15	Coffee break
16 :15-18 :00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- SAR as a tool to counter maritime piracy with the emphasis on the role of maritime rescue coordination centers(MRCC): Col J.BENSOUDA (MRCC Morocco)- Discussion(reminding the participants to suggest some

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

	recommendations for the following day)
18.00	End of the first day
22 October 2019	
3rd Session: For an Appropriate Approach to Strengthening Maritime Security in west Africa	
09 :00-10 :30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of national arrangements in strengthening maritime Security in west Africa: (participants) - The root causes ; Driving factors behind piracy with emphasis on the regional arrangements: A.LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO) - Global approach to strength maritime safety and security at sea: M.DRISSI (MRCC MOROCCO) <p>Discussion</p>
10:30- 10:45	Coffee break
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating and training as tool to Strengthening Maritime Sector in west Africa: M.DRISSI (MRCC Morocco) - Technical cooperation trough implementation of regional agreements A.LAAMRICH (ATLAFCO) - Guided discussion: Forging a Common Approach to Maritime Piracy in West Africa.
12 :30-13 :30	Lunch
4th session Towards an integrated multidimensional approach to counter piracy in the region:	
14:00-15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Towards a regional framework for the prevention and repression of acts of maritime piracy and armed robbery(all participants) - The coordination of information exchange at the regional level to counter maritime piracy(all participants)
15:30-15:45	Coffee break
15:45-17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of key recommendations for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone (all participants)
17 :00	End of the meeting

23 October 2019	
Field trip: Visit to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRCC) in Bouznika (Morocco)	
10 :00-11 :00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guided visit to the center and it infrastructure
11:00- 11:15	Coffee break
11 :15-12 :30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of maritime rescue coordination centers in receiving alerts related to piracy, armed robbery, illegal activities and response to maritime disasters: MRCC /Morocco team - Photo of the group

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

12 :30-14 :00	Lunch
14.00	End of the event

ANNEXE III: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for the 2019 workshop on the fight against piracy in the ALAFCO (Gulf of Guinea) Region

NOTING that Piracy and maritime insecurity constitute persistent threats to the stability and the exercise of marine activities of States bordering the coasts of western Africa

RECOGNISING the effort made at the regional level for establishing mechanism to combat maritime piracy

CONSIDERING that the existing MRCCS in African continent are considered by IMO as alerting points against any threat to the maritime space of the region

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the contents of the Tangier's call for safety and security in maritime spaces in Africa formulated during the reflection meeting organized by ATLAFCO on 2017.

The participants in workshop on the fight against piracy in the ALAFCO (Gulf of Guinea) Region, gathered in Rabat (Morocco), recommend

1. To involve the MRCC's/JRCC in the fight against piracy
2. To domesticate the legal laws that the countries are signatory to support and provide technical assistance to vulnerable African States to enhance their capacity to ensure effective coastal and maritime patrol with priority given to the development of effective navies/coastguards.
3. To deploy small arms control enforcements to disrupt small arm dealers those equip the pirates thereby reducing piracy.
4. To upgrade the judicial capacity as well as increasing the operational capabilities either in terms of equipment, infrastructure, manpower and budget.
5. To disrupt and dismantle pirate operation units ashore (Piracy at sea can only be abated if pirate operation units ashore are disrupted or dismantled).
6. To monitor mediums of money transfer used to receive ransom.
7. To ensure effective awareness is created among coastal communities on the danger's piracy poses on the region.
8. To have effective communication and information sharing among member countries.

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

9. To place alerting post in strategic positions (High risk area).
10. To apprehend and prosecute individuals committing or attempting to commit piracy against ships.
11. To conduct regular regional military exercises in high risk areas.

ANNEX IV: SPEECHES

Opening speech by the President of ATLAFCO

Mr. Abdennaji LAAMRICH, representative of the Executive Secretary of the ATLAFCO,

Mr. Mohammed DRISSI, the representative of the fisheries Department;

Dear delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the Ivorian Minister for Fisheries Resources, the current President of ATLAFCO, on the occasion of the workshop on the fight against piracy.

First of all, I would like to thank the Executive Committee of ATLAFCO. My thanks go also to the Minister of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests of Morocco and the whole Government of Morocco, but especially to the Kingdom headed by the King Mohammed VI, a great friend of our states for the warm welcome and the means at the disposal of the delegates for the holding of this meeting.

After the trainings on search and rescue, ATLAFCO decided to attack one of the current threat, piracy and arms robbery. It is for us a big challenge im

Ladies and gentlemen, the ATLAFCO region includes most of the Gulf of Guinea countries. This region is full of enormous fish and mineral resources and large hydrocarbon deposits that make it a great geo-strategic area of interest and a major hub of international trade. Unfortunately that also attracts criminals. The growing maritime crime in our area is a global threat to the development of the region. That is why we must all join forces to fight this

Report of the workshop "Fight against piracy: What solutions for the eradication of acts of maritime piracy in the ATLAFCO zone?"

Rabat, 21-22 October 2019

transnational threat. Indeed, whatever the power of a country, it cannot fight alone.

The objective of this workshop is to provide an overview of this emerging security threats in our zone in order to get out concrete proposals.

Dear delegates, I would like to express my thanks for coming because this topic is important for our respective countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that you will spend a pleasant stay in Rabat, this nice city. I wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you

Address by the representative of Morocco's Maritime Fisheries Department

Mr. Gnepa Djoro Representative of the ATLAFCO PRESIDENT,

Mr. Mohamed BENABBOU, CEO of the ATLAFCO

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It's my pleasure to address on behalf of minister of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries the fifth event dedicated to maritime organized by the ATLAFCO in cooperation with the IMO, IMRF and Kingdom of Morocco.

I take the opportunity to extend my thanks to the ATLAFCO for accepting to introduce Search and Rescue and Piracy phenomena to its activities which contributes to strengthen Africa capabilities in this important domain which is saving lives at sea.

Thanks go also to all attendees for making the trip to participate and contribute to the success of this meeting.

May I remind the importance and relevance of the theme of piracy and saving lives at sea, which is now the main concerns of the international maritime community, because of its particularity and complexity as well as its economic and social impact

I must also underline the increasing use of SAR services due to the development of maritime activity and traffic density, which is a daily challenge for lifeguards at sea, increasingly calling for active cooperation for a quick and effective intervention

Today's meeting in Rabat is the expression of our will to exchange experience and build capabilities to improve, develop and implement a safe and efficient Maritime organization based on cooperation and information exchange.

I am convinced that the background and the experience of participants, our will to improve our system are a perfect key for the success of the training.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I won't close my speech, without thanking all the actors which contributed to the organization of this activity and I hope that this training will be a total success and will meet participants, expectations.

Thank you.

**Distinguished Delegates of Member States of ATLAFCO,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It's an enormous pleasure to be with all of you for the opening of this workshop on the fight against maritime piracy in the countries of the ATLAFCO zone.

I would like, on behalf of His Excellency **Moussa DOSSO**, Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, current President of ATLAFCO, and myself to welcome all and wish you a pleasant stay in Rabat.

I would also like to thank the Moroccan authorities for their constant support and assistance in organizing this event.

Ladies and gentlemen

Piracy and maritime insecurity constitute persistent threats to the stability and the exercise of marine activities of States bordering the coasts of the ATLAFCO region in general and those of the Gulf of Guinea in particular. So there is urgent need to tackle this phenomenon.

In this effect, I would like to draw your attention that our organization has already organized a reflection meeting related to that issue on 2017. Its aim was a contribution to the efforts of the international community to make seas and oceans secure spaces, conducive to the development of riparian countries and beyond.

Among the recommendations of that event, formulated by the participants and integrated in the Tangier appeal, were:

- The alteration into national legislation the provisions of international legal instruments related to the fight against maritime piracy, and other illegal activities committed at sea;

- The harmonization of the legal and institutional framework of the States of the Region;
- The involvement of regional and sub-regional fisheries organizations and economic integration organizations in the fight against maritime insecurity in Africa.

Today, the question is what is the situation in the Region?

The answer is alarming. The frequency of piracy attacks in the region; especially the Gulf of Guinea and the level of physical violence against seafarers have increased recently.

According to the International Chamber of Commerce, the Gulf of Guinea represented a high number of piracy and armed robbery attacks at sea, with 22 incidents reported in the first quarter of 2019. The region also accounted for all of the worldwide crew kidnappings as 21 crew members were kidnapped across five separate incidents.

These incidents were reported in the coastal countries, of Seven ATLAFCO member states, namely Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.

Ladies and gentlemen

Piracy has become so widespread that it now represents a growing risk for states in the region. Although a number of legal and political initiatives that have been undertaken to combat piracy in the region such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct or the Lomé Charter, the question of the effectiveness of the current provisions remains unresolved.

Despite various international efforts, the strategic plan to fight piracy has been inadequate because it has not fully addressed the causes of piracy. Therefore, to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, it is essential to apply an **integrated multidimensional approach** that enhances maritime security while effectively addressing the main causes of piracy under, social and economic conditions and policies of the region, including the poor governance, corruption,

unemployment and poverty. In addition, there is an urgent need for cooperation and coordination of efforts at the regional and international levels.

Ladies and gentlemen

I am addressing to you, the representatives of maritime entities, as field experienced with adequate background which able you to think about the best ways to accelerate the operationalization of different requirements of the legal instruments related to the enhancement of maritime safety and security including the eradication of maritime piracy in our region.

As representatives of SAR entities, you are more qualified to contribute to the fight against the maritime piracy since that the existing MRCCS in our continent are considered by IMO as alerting points against any threat to our maritime space as it was highlighted by the former IMO Secretary-General **Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos** during the establishment of the North and West African sub-regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), on 03 March 2011 in Bouznika, Morocco " *The sharing of information derived from the centers we establish will also play an important role in the fight against piracy, kidnap and ransom on the high seas - something, which IMO, and the whole maritime community, has pledged to tackle with renewed vigor...*"

To conclude, I can say that in one hand we have ocean in the Atlantic coast, which offers huge opportunities for growth and development for our communities, as long as new sustainable activities emerge. On the other hand we have maritime piracy, which stems from pockets of political instability and poverty around our region and risks to jeopardize our efforts; and which, more importantly, still causes the unacceptable loss of human lives and properties.

Our response in the region can rely on the lessons learned from the horn of Africa, including a focus on the implementation of the different relevant international and regional legal instruments and mechanisms, modernizing counter-piracy laws, strengthening capacities for maritime law enforcement and crime investigation, supporting regional networks, strengthening the role of MRCCs as well as information and knowledge sharing.

As mentioned earlier, I trust that combating piracy in our region requires a **multi-dimensional approach** and MRCC could offer an adequate platform or such approach.

Finally I wish you all success in your seminar and I hope that your different interactions will lead to fruitful results on the light of the Tangier Appeal.

Thank you very much