

United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

Inputs for the next Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea June 2024 (September 2023-August 2024)

General Assembly resolution [78/69](#)

II Capacity-building

OP29. Also recognizes the importance of the work of the Malta-based International Maritime Law Institute of the International Maritime Organization, as a centre of education and training of specialists in maritime law, including government legal advisers and other high-level officials, mainly from developing States, confirms its effective capacity-building role in the field of **international maritime law**, shipping law and marine environmental law, and urges States, intergovernmental organizations and financial institutions to make voluntary financial contributions to the budget of the Institute which runs annually;

OP34. Recognizes the considerable need to provide sustained **capacity-building assistance**, including on financial and technical aspects, by relevant international organizations and donors to developing States, with a view to further strengthening their capacity to take effective measures against the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea, in line with the relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto;

OP44. Recognizes with appreciation the contribution of the Division to capacity-building activities at the national and regional levels, in particular the work of the Division in promoting wider appreciation of the Convention and in assisting with its implementation, through the provision of information, advice and assistance to States and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the support of the Division for Member State implementation of the relevant parts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the implementation by the Division of the programmes of assistance, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, to meet the strategic capacity needs of developing States in the field of **ocean governance** and the law of the sea;

Eastern Africa

- The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) continued to assist the Federal Government of Somalia in achieving maritime security objectives through the provision of support to the institutional development of governance bodies in charge of drafting maritime laws, policies and regulations. UNSOM also worked on promoting maritime legislation with the Federal Government and with Parliament, which has also gained traction as part of wider efforts to ensure that Somalia is compliant with international maritime conventions.
- UNSOM continued to collaborate closely with the Federal Government of Somalia to support the development of Somalia's National Maritime Security Governance Strategy, which will replace the existing Maritime Resource and Security Strategy. UNSOM also continued to support the development of a broader National Maritime Strategy. Together, these two strategies help advance the Federal Government's priorities in the maritime domain through ensuring security, economic progress and social development as well as the establishment of governance frameworks.

VIII Maritime safety and security and flag State implementation

OP116. Notes the adoption by the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization on 9 December 2021 of resolution A.1170(32), proclaiming an International Day for **Women in Maritime**, to be observed on 18 May every year;

OP120. Welcomes ongoing cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labour Organization relating to the safety of fishers and fishing vessels, and underlines the urgent need for continued work in that area, and notes the revised terms of reference for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Maritime Organization and International Labour Organization Joint Ad Hoc Working Group on **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing** and Related Matters;

OP130. Urges all States, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, to actively combat piracy and armed robbery at sea by **adopting measures**, including those relating to assistance with **capacity-building through training of seafarers**, port staff and enforcement personnel in the prevention, reporting and investigation of incidents, by bringing the alleged perpetrators to justice, in accordance with international law, and by adopting national legislation, as well as by providing enforcement vessels and equipment and guarding against fraudulent **ship registration**;

OP134. Recognizes continued national, bilateral and trilateral initiatives, as well as regional cooperative mechanisms, in accordance with international law, to address piracy, including the financing or facilitation of acts of **piracy**, and armed robbery at sea, and calls upon States to give immediate attention to adopting, concluding and implementing cooperation agreements at the regional level on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships;

OP150. Notes that transnational organized criminal activities are diverse and may be interrelated in some cases and that criminal organizations are adaptive and take advantage of the vulnerabilities of States, in particular coastal and small island developing States in transit areas, and calls upon States and relevant intergovernmental organizations to increase cooperation and **coordination at all levels** to detect and suppress the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in firearms, in accordance with international law;

OP151. Recognizes the importance of enhancing international cooperation at all levels to fight transnational organized criminal activities, including illicit traffic in **narcotic drugs** and psychotropic substances, within the scope of the United Nations instruments against illicit drug trafficking, as well as the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and **illicit trafficking in firearms** and criminal activities at sea falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto;

Eastern Africa

- During the reporting period, UNSOM supported the Federal Government of Somalia in the formation of the National Maritime Coordination Committee. The Committee will provide strategic guidance, enable a whole-of-government approach on maritime issues, enhance coordination between maritime stakeholders in Somalia and address maritime threats such as piracy, illicit flows of weapons, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.
- The Somali Maritime Administration and UNSOM continued working closely with the International Maritime Organization, providing strategic guidance and support to ensure progress towards achieving the initial operational capability of the Somali Maritime Administration, as part of Somalia's increased focus on developing its blue economy. The Somali Maritime Administration is designed to uphold Somalia's national and international responsibilities with

respect to commercial maritime safety and security, ship registration, training and certification of seafarers, logistics and infrastructure.

- UNSOM facilitated monthly engagements of the Somali Navy and Coast Guard Working Group as a key platform to strengthen cooperation between Somali federal authorities and international partners, including Italy, Türkiye, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia, the European Union Naval Force, the European Union Training Mission in Somalia, and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. The Working Group made considerable progress in advancing the training and capacity building of the Somali Navy and Coast Guard, as well as the repair of maritime security assets, thereby strengthening Somalia's maritime security capability. UNSOM's support to enhance the coast-guarding function of the Somali Navy and Coast Guard progressed, including through the establishment of an Operations Coordination Center with the support of international partners. UNSOM also supported the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia in the establishment of Somalia's first Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mogadishu, aiming at expediting search and rescue efforts in the region. The centre is expected to be fully operational by July 2024.
- During the reporting period, UNSOM supported the Federal Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport, the Ministry for Women and Human Rights Development, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy in advancing the role of women in the maritime sector. This initiative is part of Somalia's broader commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, promoting women's participation and representation in key maritime sectors. In November 2023, UNSOM conducted a two-day leadership training for Somali women in the maritime sector. The Mission also continued its support to the annual Somali language radio broadcasts to raise awareness on the roles played by women in the maritime sector in all federal member states. In coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia, UNSOM supported the Federal Government in pursuing the objectives of the women in the maritime sector national action plan (2023-2027) launched last year.

Central Southern Africa

- In December 2023, UNOCA implemented an analytical project on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, with a focus on illicit activities in the maritime zones of Sao Tome and Principe. The project revealed the serious difficulties in obtaining relevant data related to illicit activities in the area, required to draw a conclusive picture of the scope and impact on the country, region and beyond. However, the information obtained indicated that maritime piracy and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is one of the most significant threats to maritime security in the region, and for the country's stability and economic development. Available data also indicated that cocaine was the most prevalent substance of drug trafficking carried out by sea in the Gulf of Guinea, which serves as a transit area for trafficking between Latin America, and final destinations mostly in Western and Central Europe. Sao Tome and Principe is also a destination country for cocaine trafficking, with an estimated 20 per cent of cocaine remaining in the country. The research concluded that corruption and weak national institutions hampered the effective interception of criminal activities in this area.

VIII Maritime safety and security and flag State implementation

OP 143. Remains concerned about piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, with crew members **kidnapped**, but welcomes the decline in incidents of **piracy and armed robbery at sea** in that region,⁷⁰ notes the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 2018 (2011) of 31 October 2011, 2039 (2012) of 29 February 2012 and 2634 (2022) of 31 May 2022 and the statement by the President of the Council of 25 April 2016,⁷¹ supports the efforts to address this problem at the global and regional levels, including the adoption of resolution MSC.489(103) on recommended action to **address piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea**, by the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization at its 103rd session,⁷² recalls the primary role of States in the region to counter the threat and address the underlying causes of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, welcomes **the adoption in Yaoundé on 25 June 2013 of the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa**, and calls upon States in the region to continue to strengthen implementation of the Code of Conduct as soon as possible and consistent with international law, in particular the Convention;

OP 151. Recognizes the importance of enhancing international cooperation at all levels to fight transnational organized criminal activities, including illicit traffic in **narcotic drugs** and psychotropic substances, within the scope of the United Nations instruments against illicit drug trafficking, as well as the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in firearms and criminal activities at sea

Western Africa and Central and Southern Africa

- Piracy and armed robbery against ships continued to decrease overall in the Gulf of Guinea compared to its peak level in 2021, and despite a slight uptick in the first quarter of 2024. The United Nations continues to support regional cooperation mechanisms as well as the Gulf of Guinea States to address and prevent piracy and armed robbery at sea.
- On 18 April 2024, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa attended the fourth annual meeting of the Senior Officials of the Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, held at the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja. During the meeting, three action plans were endorsed; (i) the evaluation of the 2013 Yaoundé Architecture; (ii) the revision of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct; and (iii) the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Yaoundé process. These documents were developed in 2023, with the support of UNOCA, UNOWAS, UNODC and the G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea. UNOWAS, UNOCA and UNODC continue to support the implementation of these action plans.

Central and Southern Africa

- Between September 2023 and May 2024, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) zone of the Gulf of Guinea recorded six incidents, including illegal boarding, thefts and abduction:
 - In Angola, the Inter-regional Co-ordination Centre on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea (ICC) reported an illegal boarding of a Denmark-flagged supply ship in the Luanda anchorage on 4 September 2023. Crew members sounded the alarm, and the boarded men escaped.
 - Subsequently, three separate incidents were reported in Angola in January 2024.

- On 3 January, a robbery was reported by a firefighting vessel at the Luanda anchorage, where three unidentified people stole two breathing apparatus sets and four chemical suits and escaped. The crew was reported safe.
- On 8 January, a Nigeria-flagged tanker suffered an attempted robbery at the Luanda anchorage by five persons attempting to board from a small boat. Duty crew members raised the alarm and the perpetrators escaped.
- In the night of 14-15 January, another case of theft was recorded at the Soyo anchorage, during which an unknown number of persons boarded a ship and fled with mooring ropes.
- On 1 January 2024, the Tuvalu-flagged oil tanker “HANA1” was boarded near the Bioko island in the Equatorial Guinean waters by six unidentified gunmen who opened fire and abducted nine out of 23 crew members, including eight from Myanmar and one from Kenya. After the attackers left, one crew member took command and navigated the ship to Douala, Cameroon. HANA1 had originally departed for Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, on 28 December 2023 for Douala, Cameroon. On 29 May, a Ghana-flagged general cargo vessel on its way from Douala in Cameroon to the Koko port in Nigeria, was boarded by nine suspected pirates, also in the vicinity of the Bioko island in Equatorial Guinean waters. Out of the seven crew members, two, including the Ghanaian captain and a Nigerian engineer, were abducted. After the incident, the vessel returned to Douala.
- On 25 and 26 July 2023, UNOCA participated in a meeting organized in Luanda by the G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The purpose of the meeting was to make progress in the revision of the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa (Yaoundé Code of Conduct), to fully operationalize the Yaoundé Architecture and agree on plans for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Yaoundé process. It brought together representatives from the Economic Community of West African States, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa, and the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa, also representing ECCAS. Central African coastal States and technical and financial partners, including United Nations entities, also attended. Following the technical meeting, UNOCA, UNOWAS and UNODC jointly supported the organization of a core group meeting, held in Dakar, from 14 to 16 August, which resulted in the development of action plans for the evaluation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, the assessment of the Yaoundé Architecture and the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Yaoundé process.

IX Marine environment and marine resources

OP200. Notes with concern the impacts of climate change on the ocean and the cryosphere, including extreme sea level events and sea level rise, to which low-lying islands, in particular small island developing States, coasts and coastal communities are particularly exposed;

Pacific

- In March 2023, DPPA, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum member States who maintain a permanent mission at the United Nations headquarters, held an exchange session for Pacific Ambassadors on the implications of climate change-related sea-level rise. The Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum also provided an update to Member States on regional initiatives relating to the preservation of maritime boundaries in the Pacific region. Member States shared views on ongoing work in this area and future priorities for small island developing States (SIDS). This event formed part of a wider series of ongoing discussions on different aspects of climate-related security risks in SIDS.