

The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FOGG) Rome Declaration

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The Great Gulf of Guinea



The Gulf of Guinea between Central Africa and West Africa

Geopolitically, the *Great Gulf of Guinea* defines the African Atlantic coast (six thousand kilometres) ranging from Mauritania to Angola, including Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe archipelagos. It is a maritime zone covering two specific geographical, political and economic areas respectively represented by two regional blocs: the *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)* and the *Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)*, both *Regional Economic Communities (RECs)* associated with the *Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC)*¹.

The challenges posed by organized crime at sea do transcend national boundaries in this vast area, and therefore they can be better managed in regional rather than in national terms, that is when the response is concerted and not merely unilateral. With this spirit, the international community and the countries directly concerned, in order to manage the African seas, have so far set up a number of multilateral initiatives including the *G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FOGG)*², this year under the Italian Presidency. The *Gulf of Guinea (GoG) States* are facing growing instability, because of the still insufficient control over their coasts and coastal waters. In the Gulf of Guinea, where more than ten million people depend on fishing, piracy accounts for about twenty percent of worldwide attacks. Most of the assaults or attempted assaults were carried out in national coastal waters, while only fewer than twenty percent occurred in international waters. In fact, Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships at sea is an on the rise threat as far as it mainly concerns oil theft, illegal bunkering and tankers' hijacking. Particularly, 2016 has registered an increase in kidnap for ransom events in the region. Anyway, other illicit cases are money laundering, arms and drug trafficking, human smuggling, maritime pollution, Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, counterfeit medicines and dumping of toxic waste.

Attack zones in the Gulf of Guinea



1 See *infra*.

2 See *infra*.

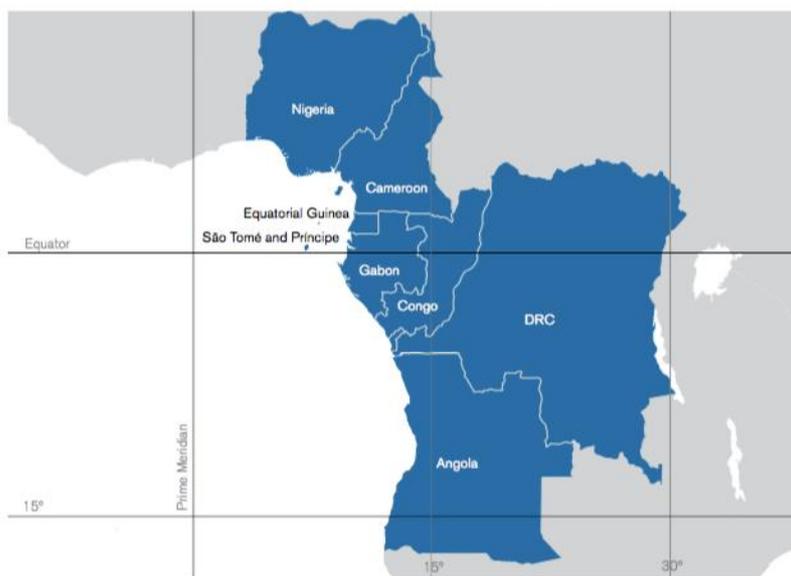
Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea (ARAS)

International law distinguishes between *Piracy* – international waters boarding – and *Armed Robbery at Sea (ARAS)* – or acts of plunder committed in territorial waters. According to the Article 101 of the 1982 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)* of the *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*³, Piracy consists of any of the following acts:

- a) Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
 - i. On the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;
 - ii. Against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
- b) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;
- c) Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

The *International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC)*⁴ follows the definition of Piracy as laid down in UNCLOS Article 101 and that of Armed Robbery in accordance with the December the 2nd 2009 IMO's Resolution A.1025 (26) – *Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships* – describing the Armed Robbery as “any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State's internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea (...) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described above”.

GGC Member States



3 The *International Maritime Organization (IMO)* is a United Nations specialized agency based in London and is home to one hundred and seventy countries. Established in 1948, it aims to promote maritime cooperation among Member States and to ensure the safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment. Its main role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is fair and effective, universally adopted and implemented. For this purpose, the IMO promotes the elaboration and adoption of conventions and agreements on matters relating to navigation and the carriage of passengers and goods by sea. See: <http://www.imo.org/>

4 The *International Maritime Bureau (IMB)*, as a specialised division of the *International Chamber Of Commerce (ICC)*, is a non-profit making organisation that, established in 1981, acts as a focal point in the fight against all types of maritime crime and malpractice. See: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/icc/imb> and also: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre>

The Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC)

The *Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC)*⁵, the Executive Secretariat of which is based in Luanda (Angola), was established by the Libreville Treaty on 3 July 2001 by *Angola, Congo, Gabon, Nigeria and São Tomé and Príncipe*. In 2008, *Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)* joined the organization, whose purpose is to foster cooperation among both ECCAS and ECOWAS seaside Member States. Another GGC's task is to facilitate regional consultations, to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts that may arise from the delimitation of maritime borders and the economic and commercial exploitation of natural resources within national boundaries.

The African Union Lomé Charter and the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS)

The *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS)*⁶ was adopted by the African Union on 6 December 2012, in order to enhance the enormous potential of the African maritime sector (i.e. the *Africa's Maritime Domain – AMD*) and, by and large, of the *Blue Economy* as such. The overall goal of the strategy is both the establishment of a *Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA)*⁷ and the optimization of the *African Integrated Coastal Zone*. October the 15th 2016, the African Union's Heads of State and Government met in Lomé (Togo) for an extraordinary Summit, to discuss the *African Union Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development (Lomé Charter)*⁸, an equally important document, being an expression of the top continental political decision makers renewed responsibility on the African waters sustainable development. Until now, only thirty-three African countries have signed it, but the treaty shall not enter into force, unless at least fifteen nations ratify it.

The Yaoundé Process, the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre on Maritime Safety and Security for Central and West Africa (ICC) and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct

Another important step in the architecture of the regional response to the destabilization threats coming from the African seas was that of the *Yaoundé Summit of ECCAS and ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Gulf (Yaoundé Process)*, held in Yaoundé (Cameroon) on 24 and 25 June 2013. That was the occasion to establish the *Inter-Regional Coordination Centre on Maritime Safety and Security for Central and West Africa (ICC)*⁹ headquartered in Yaoundé and enact the *Yaoundé Code of Conduct*, presiding and overseeing the set of repression responses concerning piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activities. Actually, ICC's wider purpose is to strengthen co-operation, coordination and interoperability of common resources for the implementation of the regional strategy for maritime safety and security.

The Regional Coordination Centre for Central Africa Maritime Security (CRESMAC), the Regional Coordination Centre for West Africa Maritime Security (CRESAMO) and the Multinational Coordination Centres (CMC)

The security architecture initiated by the Yaoundé Process and implemented by the ICC foresees the following organizational chart: two operational centres – one for Central Africa and the other for West Africa – under the Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) that are the *Regional*

5 See: <http://cggrps.org/>

6 See: http://cggrps.org/wp-content/uploads/2050-AIM-Strategy_EN.pdf

7 The *Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa – CEMZA* defines the common maritime area of all the African Union's Member States (MS).

8 See: www.au.int/maritime

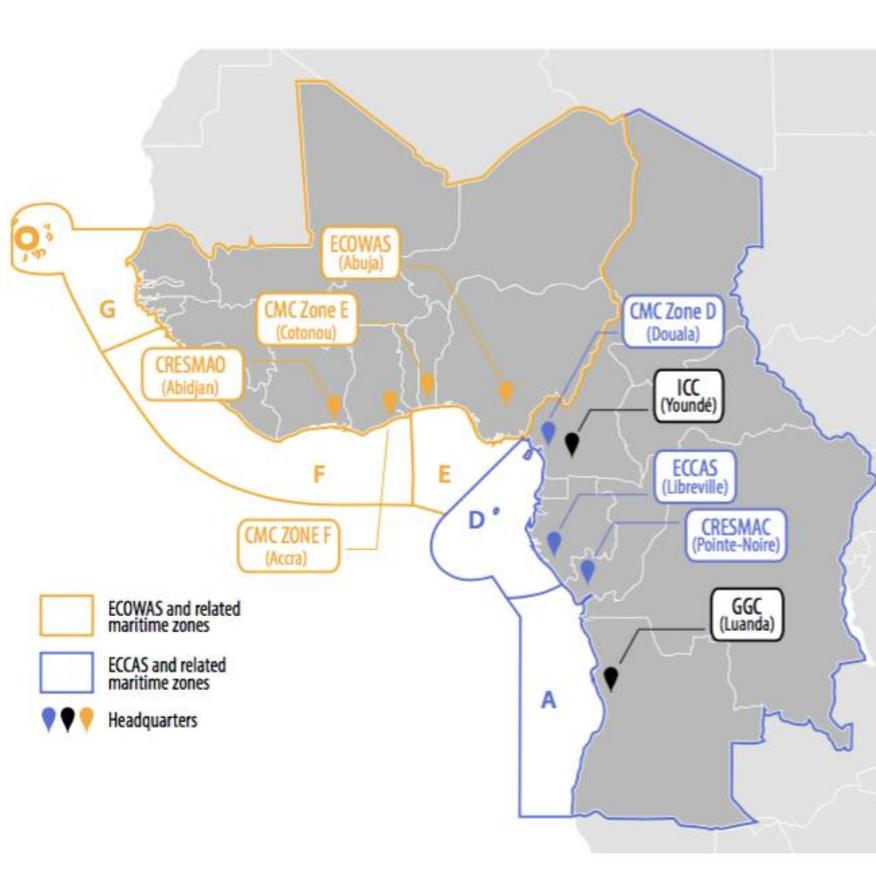
9 See: <http://cicyaounde.org/>

Coordination Centre for Central Africa Maritime Security (CRESMAC)¹⁰ headquartered in Point-Noire (Congo) and the Regional Coordination Centre for West Africa Maritime Security (CRESMAO) based in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire); under these two operational centres there are five *Multinational Coordination Centres (CMC)*, respectively two for CRESMAC (Zone A and D) and three for CRESMAO (Zone E, F and G).

Multinational Coordination Centres (CMC) architecture based on relevant maritime areas:

- CMC Zone a (Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of the Congo) based in Luanda (Angola).
- CMC Zone E (Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Niger) with HQ in Cotonou (Benin).
- CMC Zone F (Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso) with HQ in Accra (Ghana).
- CMC Zone G (Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Senegal and Mali) headquartered in Praia (Cabo Verde).
- CMC Zone D (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe) with HQ in Douala (Cameroon).

ICC and CMC Gulf of Guinea outline with ECOWAS and ECCAS related maritime zones:



10 See: <http://cresmacpointenoire.org/>

The European Union initiatives: the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), the Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea (SGoG), the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan (2015-2020) and the EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea

In 2014, Brussels released the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)*. In parallel, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union adopted a *Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea (SGoG)* and one year after the *Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020*. In 2015, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has created the role of the *EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea*, a major advisory position, even though has it neither the status nor the means of a EU Special Representative (EUSR)¹¹, inasmuch its outreach lies at Head of Delegation level only. The Senior Coordinator looks after the implementation of the EU's strategy and action plan in close coordination with the Council's Political and Security Committee. This position was until the summer of 2017 held by the French official *Hélène Cavé*, who has recently been nominated Head of the EU Delegation to Liberia though.

The Critical Maritime Routes Programme Fighting Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea in the Gulf of Guinea (CRIMGO) and the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network (GoGIN)

Another EU tool, funded between 2013 and 2016, to secure the maritime space of West and Central Africa was the *Critical Maritime Routes Programme Fighting Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea in the Gulf of Guinea (CRIMGO)*¹², then replaced by the *Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network (GoGIN)*¹³. The GoGIN, with ten million Euros at disposal, is improving planning, coordination, communication and IT infrastructures at both national and regional level, by supporting the establishment of an effective and efficient information-sharing network.

The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FOGG)

Twice a year, the *G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FOGG)* meets with the Gulf of Guinea's stakeholders, to review the Yaoundé Process implementation. The G7++ FOGG has been conceived to better coordinate the international partners efforts in the development of maritime capabilities in the Gulf of Guinea. The G7++ FOGG focuses its attention on the importance of African ownership, the link between economic development and security, the relevance of information coordination and exchange, and the need for a comprehensive response, including governance and justice.

In reality, the core theme of what has become the G7++ FOGG had been discussed for the first time in 2011 during the G8 French Presidency in the *G8 Peacekeeping/Peacebuilding Experts Group (G8PK/PB)*, in order to significantly improve the coordination between international donors and beneficiaries of Central and West African States. In 2013, under the G8 British Presidency it was decided to make it stand-alone from the G8PK/PB and to name it G8++ FOGG, with the broader task of optimizing cooperation in capacity building, in order to avoid the long-standing issue of donor countries initiatives duplications thereafter. Following the exclusion of Russia from the G8 due to well-known Ukrainian crisis, the group turned into the G7++ FOGG.

Participants in the G7++ FOGG are classified into two groups: donors and beneficiaries. Donors are divided into G7 countries and non-G7 countries, while beneficiaries in individual states and sub-regional organizations. As far as donors are concerned, the G7 participating countries are *Italy, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Canada* and the *United States*, while non-G7 are *Australia, Belgium, Brazil* (observer), *South Korea, Denmark, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands*,

11 The *European Union Special Representatives (EUSRs)* have the task of promoting EU policies and interests in particular regions or territories and actively work to stabilize the political situation and support both the pacification and the Rule of Law.

12 See: <https://criticalmaritimeroutes.eu/projects/crimgo/>

13 See: <https://gogin.eu/>

Portugal and Switzerland, plus the European Union, the Interpol, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) of Lisbon¹⁴ and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Regarding the beneficiaries, the African counterpart is composed of the following States and Organizations: Angola, Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroun, Congo (Brazzaville), the Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo; the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC).

The G7++ FOGG has set four goals: to work towards a shared view of the extent of threats in the Gulf of Guinea and the need to address them between the countries of the region and the international community; to help the regional governments have the necessary institutions and capabilities to ensure security¹⁵ and the rule of law; to support the development of prosperous economies in coastal countries, enabling them to provide basic services and employment opportunities and to reduce poverty among populations; to establish cooperation structures between the countries of the region, so as to ensure the effectiveness of cross-border action at sea and on the mainland.

The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Meeting in Rome (26-27 June 2017)

The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea gathered in Rome on June 26-27, 2017 under the G7 Italian Presidency – Portugal passed the G7++ FOGG presidency to Italy at the beginning of 2017 – to jointly address developments on piracy, armed robbery at sea and other illegal maritime activities in the Gulf of Guinea. With one hundred participants from over forty states, companies and organizations, a number of common actions in terms of fight against piracy and the fight against drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in arms, human beings and goods, illegal fishing and the abandonment of waste at sea and the development of the maritime economy were deepened.

The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea meeting in Rome was organized with four round tables: *the benefits of maritime security; piracy and armed robbery at sea; Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA); criminality, legal systems and law enforcement*. The first session examined in what way a more secure maritime environment can increase development opportunities in coastal regions by means of experiences and the best practices; *Hélène Cavé*, on behalf of the EEAS, as well as representatives of the Italian Ship-owners Confederation (*Confitarma*)¹⁶ and ENI participated to it. Even though there is not a single, universally applicable definition of the concept of maritime security, it is widely accepted that its strengthening and promotion offers considerable benefits both to coastal and landlocked countries in terms of job creation, investment attraction, infrastructures and increased trade. However, maritime security is not a goal in itself; rather it is the enabling condition for the advancement and prosperity of blue economy.

The second round table analysed in what manner piracy, armed robbery at sea and other illicit activities do affect economic development and social stability in the Gulf of Guinea; among others, the Executive Director of the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC), *Christian Trimua*, attended to it.

14 See: <http://maoc.eu/>

15 The G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea was of paramount importance for the establishment of the *Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre for the Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GoG)*, an oil and freight forwarding sectors initiative supported by IMO and Interpol too and financed by some EU Member States. The MTISC-GoG ceased to operate in June 2016, when it was replaced by the *Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade in the Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG)* that is operated by French and British Navies from the centres in Brest, France, and in Portsmouth, United Kingdom, by supporting actions and interventions by regional navies in response to piracy attacks. In fact, the MDAT-GoG works in collaboration with coastal States in the implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa.

16 See: www.confitarma.it

In 2016, there had been 126 incidents of piracy in the GoG: these attacks have increased significantly and tend to diversify, with criminals adapting their mode of operations to the state's response.

The third session highlighted the importance of technology and the exchange of information networks to improve the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), divided into situational awareness, threat awareness and response awareness. Indeed, although information sharing is the G7++ FOGG core mission, however very few data-owners accept to do so. Principally, information sharing may take place within governments (whole-of-government and/or inter-agency cooperation), between and among governments (bilateral, zonal and regional cooperation), and interregional with international partners, both foreign countries and organizations (multilateral or international cooperation); between public and private sectors.

The fourth round table explored what actions can be taken in the next two years, given that unexpectedly no armed robbery or piracy prosecution has yet been registered in any of the States of the Gulf of Guinea; among others, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Togo, *Valéry Kpade*, joined this very session, whose partakers have recognized the crucial role played by Interpol¹⁷ and noted the progress of legislative reforms set by Nigeria, which will shortly be provided with anti-piracy law, Togo, Ivory Coast, Ghana and São Tomé and Príncipe. The Italian Deputy Foreign Minister, *Mario Giro*, and the Italian Undersecretary of Defence, *Domenico Rossi*, respectively introduced and concluded the two-days G7++ FOGG meeting, pointing out that Italy is convinced that collective security measures are needed, and are to be based on three pillars: political will, security and law enforcement. Also, it is a common wish that coastal states together with international oil and gas corporations, shipping companies and industrial fishing fleets, showed a shared responsibility to guarantee that their activities across the region directly benefit local communities. Combined with the meeting, the Italian Minister of Defence, *Roberta Pinotti*, signed a bilateral agreement with the Congolese counterpart, *Charles Richard Mondjo*, which encompasses possible reciprocal engagements with regard to maritime security, peace-support operations, information exchange and training. On the same day, Minister Pinotti also received the Nigerian counterpart, *Mansur Muhammad Dan-Ali*, discussing the joint commitment of the two countries to countering terrorism in terms of bilateral military cooperation, especially in the field of maritime security.

The G7++ FOGG Rome Declaration

The *Rome Declaration* was issued at the end of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea meeting. According to it, if poorly governed, Africa's oceans and seas do risk to turn into another epicentre for potential conflict, in other words an area that transnational criminal networks can exploit without impunity. Thanks to the *Rome Declaration*, the G7 and partner countries committed to supporting regional maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea through comprehensive capacity building in areas such as maritime governance, coast guards, disaster relief, search and rescue, and information sharing including Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), as well as efforts to improve legislative, investigative and judicial capacities. Finally, it was decided to have a shared chairmanship between a donor country and a recipient country, so Côte d'Ivoire shall co-chair in 2018. Finally, the second G7++ FOGG annual meeting will be held in December 2017, in Lagos, Nigeria, always under the Italian Presidency.

Analysis, assessments and forecasts

Continental blue potential is considerable, since Africa boasts 13 million square kilometres of maritime economic zones, 17 percent of global freshwater resources, 38 coastal states and 90 percent of trade carried by sea, consequently a remarkable "blue potential". Particularly, the private

¹⁷ See: www.interpol.int

sector has strongly emphasised the role of maritime security as the key enabler for the proliferation of business activities, trade-investment, job creation and general development in the maritime-related domain. The international community is introducing a variety of initiatives to improve the maritime security conditions of this region. *The Great Gulf of Guinea is a geostrategic area of paramount importance, not only due to its geopolitical extension, but also because of the growing relevance of its transatlantic relations (Middle Atlantic and Southern Atlantic), to be considered in terms of intercontinental preferential communication routes between Latin America and Africa, and, at the same time, an inevitable crossroads for Europe.*

Therefore, in view of the growing importance of Africa for both Italy and Europe, after the Italian Presidency of the G7 and consequently of the G7++ FOGG Italian Presidency, it would be strategic for Rome to keep on playing an active role on this area, so as to have a greater impact on the European policies towards Africa. To do so, European institutions should be induced to upgrade the level of the EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea, bringing it to the rank of the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) and an Italian candidate ought to be proposed for this position.