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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1209TH MEETING

18 APRIL 2024
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1209.1 (2024)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1209th meeting held on 18 April 2024, on Briefing on the Security Situation in the Gulf of Guinea-Robust Response to Combat Maritime Insecurity and Piracy.

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the African Union (AU) and Stand-in PSC Chairperson for the month of April 2024, and the Introductory Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; as well as the Presentation by the Deputy Executive Secretary of Natural Resources of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, Mr. Venâncio Soares Gomes;

Also Noting the statements delivered by the Representatives of the Nigeria Navy, the Economic Community of East African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations Office to the AU (UNOAU) and the European Union (EU) Delegation to the AU;

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on maritime security in Africa, as well as on maritime security and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region, particularly, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1174 (2023)] adopted at its 1174th meeting held on 18 September 2023 and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1128 (2022)] adopted at its 1128th meeting held on 19 December 2022; and;

Reaffirming the AU commitment to ensure full operationalization of Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII)] on Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050) and its Plan of Action, adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held from 30 to 31 January 2014; and the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, developed following the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 to 28 November 2018; **also reaffirming** the commitment to ensure full implementation of the Africa Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, adopted by the AU Extraordinary Summit held on 15 October 2016, in Lomé, Togo; as well as the Africa Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC) and the Plan of Action adopted by the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held in Kampala, Uganda, on 26 July 2010; and

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

1. **Expresses concern** over the growing insecurity posed by illicit activities in the Gulf of Guinea, including piracy, organized crime, illegal fishing, armed robbery at sea, and dumping of toxic waste; which undermine the gains of the Continental Blue Economy and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); and in this context, **calls for** the prosecution of those who perpetrate, encourage, finance or facilitate such criminal activities;
2. **Commends** the effort of Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region for the increased acquisition of maritime platforms, which has further strengthened their maritime security capabilities;
3. **Also commends** Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region for the enhanced coordination of their maritime security activities, including joint exercises such as EXERCISE OBANGAME EXPRESS and GRAND AFRICAN NEMO, which are conducted annually in collaboration with multinational navies and partners resulting in enhanced synergy in fighting maritime crimes in the region within the framework of the Yaoundé Maritime Architecture;

4. **Expresses appreciation** to the support provided by the EU-Coordinated Maritime Presence (EU-CMP) which has significantly contributed towards increasing the naval assets in the Gulf of Guinea and enhanced maritime security situational awareness, as well as enhanced cooperation among the Member States of the region;
5. **Commends** ECOWAS, ECCAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and Member States for their efforts towards promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea region, and **acknowledges** the bravery and sacrifices of the maritime security personnel in the region and expresses condolences for all those who have paid their supreme sacrifice;
6. **Welcomes** the establishment the Combined Maritime Task Force (CMTF) in May 2022 and the adoption of the Concept of Operations by 10 countries within the Gulf of Guinea area, as a regional mechanism for collective rapid response to security threats in the region;
7. **Encourages** the AU Commission to further enhance its engagements with the CMTF and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, with a view to supporting the alignment of the activities of the two structures; **urges** the countries of the Gulf of Guinea region to further enhance their maritime security capabilities, law enforcement and border control agencies and to strengthen efforts in mobilizing predictable and adequate financial resources for regional maritime security initiatives in the region, such as the Yaoundé Maritime Security Architecture and CMTF; and **emphasizes the need** for continuous capacity building by the Member States of the region;
8. **Reiterates the need** for increased collaboration with regional partners, enhanced intelligence sharing, joint operations, and joint implementation of robust counter-terrorism measures to safeguard the Gulf of Guinea and to maintain regional stability;
9. **Highlights the importance** of unified and complementary approaches in promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea region; and **reiterates the need** for the concerned Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to further strengthen cooperation on maritime safety and security in the region;
10. **Stresses the need** for adherence and implementation of the relevant regional and international instruments and frameworks aimed at addressing maritime insecurity in the region, including the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, and **encourages** all countries of the region that have not yet done so, to fully adhere and implement the Yaoundé Code of Conduct;
11. **Calls on** Member States of the Gulf of Guinea region, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify all regional instruments, as well as to harmonize their national legal frameworks, with a view to facilitating a collective and coordinated response to maritime challenges in the Continent, as well as to promote judicial cooperation, including extradition of maritime offenders and facilitate cross border operations;
12. **Reiterates the need** for the AU Commission to expedite the activation of the Committee of the Heads of African Navies and Coastguards (CHANS), and the convening of the inaugural meeting of the Committee; as well as the need to expedite the establishment of a Group of Experts or a Task Force to provide technical support to Member States and other stakeholders in delivering on the AU 2050 AIM Strategy and the implementation of the Lomé Charter;
13. **Further reiterates the need** to establish within the AU Commission, a coordination mechanism and/or Unit on Maritime Security without any financial implication, that would be responsible for

coordination, sharing of knowledge and experiences by Member States and regions, and to produce reports and technical advice on all activities relating to maritime security, to the AU Policy Organs;

14. **Acknowledges** the successes and lessons learnt during the AU exercises AMANI AFRICA I and II and **looks forward** to the successful organization of the AMANI AFRICA within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF), to enhance preparedness and capability of the ASF in addressing maritime security threats in the Continent; and

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

African Union Commission (AUC)

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PSC Supporting Bodies

PSC Secretariat

2024-04-18

Communiqué of the 1209th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 18 April 2024, on Briefing on the Security Situation in the Gulf of Guinea- Robust Response to Combat Maritime Insecurity and Piracy.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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