



Report on the Webinar on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea



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NATO STRATEGIC DIRECTION-SOUTH HUB 2023

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In collaboration with Dr. Ian Ralby of I.R. Consilium, the NATO Strategic Direction-South Hub organized a Webinar on 3 November 2022 to develop this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the 3rd of November 2022, the NATO Strategic Direction South – Hub (“the Hub”) hosted a two-panel discussion centred on interpreting and implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2634 – the first Resolution on Gulf of Guinea maritime security in a decade. This conversation – involving some of the leading experts, policy-makers and practitioners on the subject – was the continuation of a discussion hosted by the Hub in February 2021. While piracy and armed robbery at sea may be at a 30-year low in the Gulf of Guinea, all speakers agreed that the conditions for piracy and armed robbery at sea have not been addressed, meaning that a resurgence remains possible, if not likely. This reality has been borne out in the attacks that have occurred in the region in the weeks immediately following this event.

While the panellists all indicated that there was a potential role for NATO to play, the prevailing message to NATO was to only act where and when requested to engage by the states and institutions of West and Central Africa. Listening to the needs and interests of the region was repeatedly emphasized as various partners have, often unwittingly, created tensions by acting in a manner that was not welcomed by the sovereign states of the Gulf of Guinea (GoG). Such tensions only make future partnerships more difficult.

Importantly, however, the speakers all emphasized the scope of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2634 was far broader than piracy and armed robbery at sea and included a spectrum of maritime security concerns, even adding terrorism, which had not appeared in previous resolutions. Transnational organized crime and the proceeds of crime were also a focus of the Resolution which went so far as to encourage addressing the root causes of these illicit activities at sea. While the regional architecture is working to create a comprehensive approach to maritime security, all speakers agreed that help and support is needed. The problem, they noted, however, is that often external actors are the initiating force, making it so that sovereign states end up supporting foreign efforts, rather than the other way around. Consequently, an actor like NATO, which has not been traditionally involved in maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, should only engage in the region if it does so with resolute regard for the sovereignty of the region’s states.

Perhaps the key lesson emanating from this Webinar is that the approach to engaging with the Gulf of Guinea is actually more important than the substance. A well-meaning effort can become a cautionary tale of failure if the external actor does not proceed in right relationship with the states of the region.

With that in mind, however, there are a number of areas in which NATO, specifically, could play a useful role, so long as it takes this collaborative and respectful approach.

There are five leading recommendations for NATO emerging from this discussion:

1. Use the Hub as a means of continuing to bring the different stakeholders – including government, military, industry, civil society, practitioners, academics, and others – to have open dialogue about issues, pitfalls and possible approaches to addressing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.
2. Offer to the region a means of learning from NATO's experience as a multinational force, particularly as it establishes more operational elements within the Yaoundé Architecture.
3. Offer to the region a means of learning from NATO's experience in counter piracy operations in the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden.
4. Offer to the region assistance on establishing some of the tools and building blocks on which it relies for its own operations, including confronting challenges of interoperability, standard operating procedures, information sharing, standardization of information, and even overcoming linguistic barriers.
5. In addition to proactively listening to the region, work to bolster and strengthen the region's own institutions, specifically those that have been set up to confront maritime insecurity like the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Yaoundé Architecture, and potentially help support a meeting of the Heads of State in which they can revisit the Yaoundé architecture and steer the course for the years ahead.

The process of implementing these five recommendations could reveal other ways in which NATO could be helpful in supporting the Gulf of Guinea states and institutions in securing the waters of Atlantic Africa. At this time, though, these are the five main areas in which NATO can be a force for good in advancing implementation of UNSCR 2634.

BACKGROUND

Much of the contextual background for understanding the current maritime security situation in the Gulf of Guinea is available in the Hub's 2021 Report¹. While that Webinar and the corresponding Report both focused on coordination of education, training and exercising in the region, it provided a good primer on regional maritime security threats and the responses to them. There are, however, some important contrasts to raise and additional aspects to review to understand the current state of affairs for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Central to the most recent event at the Hub, the United Nations Security Council in May of 2022 passed Resolution 2634², specifically focused on maritime security in West and Central Africa. This latest Resolution calls on states in the Gulf of Guinea to criminalize a wide spectrum of maritime offenses in their domestic laws and to cooperate, not only on pursuing interdiction of maritime crimes, but prosecution of them, as well. It encouraged the states to continue to build out the regional architecture for maritime security, and it encouraged enhancing bilateral cooperation and, when requested, cooperation with the international community. It also encouraged the states to work to address the root causes of maritime crime including piracy and armed robbery at sea, but also transnational organized crime and terrorism. Beyond this Resolution, however, a few other aspects have changed since the last Hub Webinar on this subject.

At the time of the Hub's February 2021 event on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, piracy in the region, particularly focused on kidnap for ransom, was at a peak, as 95% of all seafarers abducted at sea in 2020 were taken in the waters of West and Central Africa³. By contrast this latest event took place amid the period with the fewest incidents of piracy in decades⁴. That said, 2022 has seen other significant security challenges, most notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. As was highlighted in the opening discussion, however, Russia's invasion was partly guaranteed by a trade deal with China on 4 February 2022⁵. Given that China, and to a lesser extent, Russia, were focal points of the discussion in 2021, it is significant to note that the

¹https://thesouthernhub.org/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=285&ver=12&name=MARITIME%20SECURITY%20IN%20THE%20GULF%20OF%20GUINEA.pdf

² <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2634>

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https://thesouthernhub.org/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=285&ver=12&name=MARITIME%20SECURITY%20IN%20THE%20GULF%20OF%20GUINEA.pdf

⁴ <https://gcaptain.com/global-piracy-falls-amid-cautious-gains-in-gulf-of-guinea/>

⁵ <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/02/27/russia-weaponizing-food-supply-chains-00012130>

globalization of insecurity has broken down traditional “areas of responsibility” and forced security actors to address challenges worldwide. Furthermore, with 2022 already seeing a significant food price crisis and 2023 likely to see a food availability crisis⁶, the global significance of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is really coming to a head. Few places on earth have a more active challenge with IUU fishing than the Gulf of Guinea and that point was made extensively at the Hub’s 2021 event, encouraging security actors to not solely focus on piracy.

This confluence of issues and actors has led the NATO STRATEGIC DIRECTION – SOUTH Hub to question whether NATO may have a useful role to play in addressing the maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea. This event, therefore, centred on the May 2022 UN Security Council Resolution 2634, and explored what, if any, assistance NATO could provide in implementing it.

Importantly, this latest UN Security Council Resolution is not the first on Gulf of Guinea maritime security. It is, however, the first in a decade. Resolutions 2018⁷ in 2011 and 2039⁸ in 2012 both brought global attention to the problems of piracy, armed robbery at sea and maritime insecurity in the region, but encouraged the states of West and Central Africa to work together to combat these challenges. Indeed, in 2012, most of what was being called “piracy” was actually armed robbery at sea, with attacks inside of the territorial sea, focused on stealing oil. Changes in the oil market and in regional security capacity, however, pushed the criminals farther out to sea and changed their model to focus on kidnap for ransom. Ironically, some of the more recent piracy challenges – sometime several hundred miles offshore – are the result of improved security along the coast as the nearshore waters have become more inhospitable to attacks⁹. Over the last ten years, the states of the region made significant progress, particularly with regard to cooperative architecture for maritime security¹⁰.

The 2013 Code of Conduct Concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa (“Yaoundé Code of Conduct”) and

⁶ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2022/09/Cafe-Econ-a-looming-Food-Crisis>

⁷ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2018>

⁸ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2039>

⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/piracy-armed-robbery-declining-gulf-guinea-enhanced-national-regional-efforts-needed-stable-maritime-security-top-official-tells-security-council>

¹⁰

https://thesouthernhub.org/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=285&ver=12&name=MARITIME%20SECURITY%20IN%20THE%20GULF%20OF%20GUINEA.pdf

accompanying Declaration helped set forth an interregional approach to securing the waters of Atlantic Africa.

The so-called Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Safety and Security (YAMS) is made up of three layers of institutions. At the apex is the Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC or CIC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon that serves as the focal point for maritime security as well as the main interface with its oversight bodies – the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) – as well as other bodies like the African Union (AU) and the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA).

Then at the regional level, the Maritime Security Centre of West Africa (CRESMAO) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Maritime Security Centre of Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, Congo, both feed into the ICC.

Then at the most operational level, the creation of zonal centres under the auspices of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centres (MMCC), such as Zone D in Cameroon, Zone E in Benin and Zone F in Ghana, have all been working on getting fully operational.

Zone A remains inchoate, but just before the 3rd of November event at the Hub, Zone G signed the memorandum of understanding between the states to establish a multinational maritime coordination centre (MMCC) in Praia, Cabo Verde, bringing to life the latest piece of the YAMS.

Despite the commendable work done, however, challenges remain. In response to those challenges – particularly the threat to international commerce posed by piracy and armed robbery at sea – external actors have initiated various approaches to maritime security in the region over the last few years. Several states and entities, like the European Union Coordinated Maritime Presences in the Gulf of Guinea (CMP) and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), have sent warships in support of ongoing efforts in the region stationed outside of the territorial sea. Under these auspices, the Danish Frigate ESBERN SNARE deployed to the area. On 24th of November 2021, that vessel was involved in a kinetic incident¹¹. While the news in Europe and North America celebrated an operational success against pirates, the response in the region was critical¹². The issues raised were the perceived infringement of sovereignty, the potential violation of human

¹¹ <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/25/danish-navy-frigate-kills-4-pirates-in-gulf-of-guinea-anti-piracy-mission>

¹² <https://safety4sea.com/legal-concerns-raised-after-danish-frigate-kills-pirates-off-nigeria/>

rights, and the failure – regardless of the outcome – to have coordinated with local authorities to determine the legal options for either prosecution or adjudication of any incidents¹³. These points were all raised repeatedly in the latest Hub Webinar, as the ESBERN SNARE – which left the region early following the invasion of Ukraine – is now seen as a cautionary tale.

Ensuring a path to legal finish – as was not done with the ESBERN SNARE – is a major challenge. UNSCR 2634 places particular emphasis on filling current legislative gaps, but as a point of process, even where the law exists, there are exigent concerns. The HEROIC IDUN, a tanker currently held in Nigeria, is becoming a key example of this issue, as well. In August 2022, the vessel arrived in Nigeria to load crude, was partially loaded, and then told to leave and come back. It was 200 miles off Nigeria, waiting, when it claims it was under apprehension of being attacked by pirates¹⁴. The suspected pirate vessel was actually a patrol ship of the Nigerian Navy. The HEROIC IDUN fled and was captured at gunpoint by the Equatorial Guinean Navy, accused of oil theft from Nigeria. Equatorial Guinea transferred the vessel back to Nigeria and the captain and crew are being held pending a trial on 10 January 2023. Meanwhile, international actors including the major shipping associations, are all calling for the crew's release given the strange circumstances and unclear accusations¹⁵.

The lack of clear, consistent approaches – internally or externally – to piracy and maritime crime remains a challenge for the Gulf of Guinea. This Webinar is part of an effort by the Hub to ascertain the nature and scope of those challenges and to discern if NATO may have a useful role to play in addressing them. What follows is an encapsulation of the key points from the discussion, and, thereafter, an enumeration of the prevailing recommendations made for NATO engagement.

DISCUSSION

The discussion, which spanned more than four hours, covered four main themes:

1. The content of UNSCR 2634,
2. The current context in the Gulf of Guinea,
3. Efforts that are underway or need to be undertaken in

¹³ <https://euobserver.com/world/156362>

¹⁴ <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/statement-issued-by-owners-of-the-heroic-idun-idun-maritime-limited/>

¹⁵ <https://maritime-executive.com/article/ics-calls-for-nigeria-to-release-crew-of-heroic-idun>

furtherance of UNSCR 2634, and 4. Ways in which NATO and other partners could further help with implementation of the Resolutions.

Making Sense of UNSCR 2634

Unlike the previous UNSCRs 2018 and 2039, this new UNSCR 2634 is not limited to piracy and armed robbery at sea. This new Resolution includes more emphasis on a few areas that were either not mentioned or lightly treated in the previous Resolutions. Those include:

1. Terrorism
2. Transnational Organized Crime
3. The Proceeds of Crime
4. Sustainable Development
5. Root Causes of Piracy and Other Maritime Crimes

Some panellists felt that these were part of the spirit of the earlier Resolutions, while others, particularly the lawyers, highlighted that these differences were significant. Indeed, the mention of the 1988 Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea (SUA) Convention was noted as a new development, distinct from the previous Resolutions and indicative of the added emphasis on terrorism. Even the mention of the African Union itself was a contrast to previous Resolutions.

Some of the most significant additions were mentions of democracy, women's rights, youth interests, human rights, sustainable development and the root causes of piracy. Indeed, addressing the root causes has not been a focus previously, but was a major theme in the 2021 Webinar at the Hub. Interestingly, however, that Webinar focused extensively on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the nexus to the conditions that allow for piracy.

Yet, in UNSCR 2634, IUU fishing is mentioned, but only once and only in the preamble. There had evidently been greater attention paid to it in early drafts of the Resolution, but those provisions were cut from the final version. Interestingly, fisheries crime – the use of the fishing sector for non-fishing criminal offenses like trafficking or smuggling – was also not mentioned.

As one panellist stated, “transnational crime knows no borders...” so, ever-mindful of sovereignty, it is absolutely critical for the states to cooperate. In that vein, the Resolution also strongly encourages the region to fully implement the maritime security architecture established in Yaoundé in 2013 in response to the previous two Resolutions. The panel underscored the need for this to be a major focus, as this

architecture is also representative of the sovereign states of the region. The sanctity of that sovereignty, while mentioned in the Resolution, has not always been respected by external actors according to much of the panel.

The Current Context

As several panellists highlighted, the 2022 downturn in piracy and armed robbery at sea does not indicate an end to the problem. As was noted by several speakers, "...the pirates are simply on holiday...", as the root causes of piracy have not yet been addressed. Piracy and other maritime crimes should be considered land-based problems with maritime symptoms, and, as of now, the problems on land remain. Indeed, the conditions which gave rise to this scourge of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea still need to be addressed, and UNSCR 2634 even points to these conditions with its language about fostering sustainable development, countering illicit financial flows and strengthening democratic institutions. As one panellist described it, there are at least five key conditions needed to produce a society in which pirates are not welcome:

1. Legal
2. Political
3. Security
4. Economic
5. Social

At present, these five conditions are not, according to the panel, being met in the Gulf of Guinea, and all five are required to rid the region of piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as to diminish other maritime crime.

While some states have adopted new legislation to criminalize piracy and other maritime offenses, many have not. But even beyond the specific status of maritime crime legislation, many of the legal capacities and institutions are not in place in the states of the region. Because the legal and political conditions are insufficient, so, too, are the security conditions and the UNSCR 2634 even links terrorism to the legal, political and economic conditions, underscoring what a critical vulnerability these voids create. When you're lacking in legal, political and security conditions, it is very hard to have good economic conditions, so in the Gulf of Guinea, you have the co-existence of poverty and abundant resources, a contrast felt particularly by the youth. Not surprisingly, therefore, the social conditions are also lacking, creating a

five-factor confluence of issues on land that give rise to the sorts of offenses UNSCR 2634 is aiming to counter at sea.

At the same time as these internal challenges complicate the context at the local, national and regional levels, the panellists pointed out the global significance of the region. In addition to the concerns about food security that can somewhat be met by agricultural and fisheries production in the region, the Gulf of Guinea is critical to global energy supplies. This nexus to external interests also underscores the need of the region to find a means of cooperating with foreign actors in a manner that supports their security without undermining their sovereignty.

What is Being Done and What Needs to Be Done?

The Resolution highlighted both some of what is being done and what still needs to be done. The discussion on the 3rd of November centred primarily on these two questions. Development of national maritime strategies, improvement of national legislation and enhancement of national maritime security capacity were all emphasized as critical to realizing a regional approach to security. The discussion drew attention to the varying laws across the region, noting that only a few states have piracy legislation, but underscoring that when it is implemented, particularly through prosecution, it seems to have a profound deterrent effect. To that end, it made sense that UNSCR 2634 put such an emphasis on the need to criminalize maritime offences and cooperate on ensuring the prosecution of them. At the same time, the discussion noted that more legislation is not always a uniformly positive factor, as laws that curtail the ability to pay ransoms hamper international commerce by making it difficult for ship owners to risk entering the region. The goal of shipping is to reduce the friction for trade getting into and out of the region, but laws can actually have the opposite effect when their implications are not fully considered.

At the national level, the success of Deep Blue Project – Nigeria’s Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, a multidimensional and multi-agency effort led by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) – was highlighted as a remarkable strategic and operational success. Many of the speakers discussed the need to learn from that project and even suggested that the Hub host an event on it. At the same time, the Harmonized Standard Operating Procedures (HSOP) for consistency of action in Nigeria were raised as another success. This also sparked discussion of the need for assistance in developing both national level and regional standard

operating procedures (SOPs) on a variety of topics, starting with information sharing.

Information sharing was a major topic of discussion, as well, particularly in the context of the Yaoundé Regional Information Sharing (YARIS) Platform. That tool, introduced by the European Union, is one of several being used by the Yaoundé Architecture. But what was clear was that there are differing views as to what it will provide. The need for maritime domain awareness touched on the possibility of sharing the costs for satellite infrastructure, as well as using different platforms for tracking vessels. That sharing, however, was focused on GoG states only, seemingly rejecting the role of external institutions like the MDAT-GoG. But what was clear was that there is no universal understanding of what information is needed for creating a common operating picture, never mind how that information should flow. It was emphasized that analytical training is absolutely key, as there is a deficit in capacity at the moment to interpret information and to use it as the basis for initiating an effective response. What was vital, however, was the sense that that information should originate in and remain in the Gulf of Guinea, noting the disaffection with MDAT-GoG as an external tool, and emphasizing that some Gulf of Guinea states are the last to find out about what is happening in their own waters.

This puts the emphasis on the regional bodies as well as the states of the region to have the capacity and capability – as well as the will – to address maritime crime in all its forms. These regional bodies, however, have proliferated over the years, and it was suggested by several of the panellists that there is a need to revisit them.

Two keywords were put forward to guide the process of analysing what has been done and what should be done in the future: 1) practical and 2) coordination. Many of the efforts have seemed sensible on paper, but have not been practical in reality. There is often a disconnect between external actions and the actual needs of the region, as well as a lack of convergence between the efforts of external actors and local actors. Everyone needs to come together to determine how to make that work better.

With regard to the Yaoundé Architecture, the need for the Code of Conduct to be upgraded to a legally binding mechanism was emphasized repeatedly. The Gulf of Guinea Commission was noted as being a potential focal point for all of this engagement, though at present it does not serve that function. The relationship between the YAMS and the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) was also

noted as an area for greater development. And talk of Task Force within African Standby Force led to questions about whether its mandate – effectively to prevent wars – made it even viable for dealing with maritime crimes. Above all these questions, however was an important note: the Yaoundé Architecture was born in 2013 through a meeting of the heads of state of the regional states. Since then, however, those heads of state have not come back together. In the views of several participants, the heads of state must meet again to jump start progress toward any kind of revised architecture or even improved functionality.

Everyone agreed that cooperation is the only way for the states of the region to successfully combat the transnational maritime threats in the region. But that cooperation has to originate from the states. As was noted, the national, regional and international layers to this cooperation are formed with states as the fundamental building block, so the heads of state must direct how things proceed from here.

Possible Roles for NATO

Many external actors have become involved in the Gulf of Guinea maritime security through the recently established Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum and its Shared Awareness and De-confliction (SHADE). Other externally-driven bodies, like the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (FOGG), the Atlantic Security Centre in the Azores and others, increased to support regional maritime security. That externally-based initiation of maritime security efforts means that the region's needs and interests are not always front and centre. It is part of what has led to what one panellist called an “elitist” approach in UNSCR 2634 where a lot of emphasis was put on the international community. As was noted, however, maritime security cannot be outsourced to other states or entities. The caveat to external assistance – when requested – is particularly important for NATO to keep in mind. So rather than coming to the region and saying “we know you have this problem, this is what we’re going to do,” come to the region and ask “we know you have this problem, how can we help?”

To that end, it was recommended that NATO not take any action unless requested to do so. That does not mean, however, just waiting. It means that NATO must educate itself on what the region has done, is doing and wants to do, and identify offerings it can put forward in support. Notably, UNSCR 2634 was not under Chapter 7, meaning that the UN is not going to act directly – it is leaving the responsibility and onus on the states of the region. UNSCR 2634 even expressly asks the UN Secretary General, the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the UN

Office for Central Africa to “continue to report and to support States and sub-regional organizations in their efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, including with respect to mobilizing resources following the adoption of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct to assist in building national and regional capacities in close consultation with States and regional and international organizations.” Thus the extent to which NATO could be involved is up to those sovereign states and the regional organizations that represent them. The responsibility is on NATO, however, to offer up what support it could provide – be it through deployment of assets, provision of training, technical assistance or otherwise.

A number of external actors have become very involved in doing things in the region, but it is not clear what their strategy is or really what they are trying to achieve. For example, what is the EU’s entry port for the CMP? How is YARIS going to be sustained? To be able to take proper advantage of the international community’s capacity to assist, the region must understand not only what the international community is willing and able to do, but what it wishes to achieve in the long-term. The spectres of both colonialism and slavery are not merely historic legacies, but ongoing concerns, so transparency of objectives is critical for an external organization like NATO to be successful in truly helping advance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

NATO’s lessons from being a multinational force, as well as its experience in the Gulf of Aden were of particular interest to the panel. Inviting Gulf of Guinea maritime security professionals to use facilities and resources in NATO – like the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Crete or Maritime Security Centre of Excellence (MARSEC COE) in Istanbul – was specifically noted as being potential ways to build relations and trust while also building capacity. Sharing information – on transnational crime networks and other maritime threats – was also highlighted as being an area of real interest for the region.

Training on information collection, as well as analytical capacity building to interpret information were both highlighted.

Also, platform interoperability is seen as one of the areas in which NATO has leading insights.

While it may be beyond NATO’s traditional roles, both crime prevention and pursuit of legal finish were emphasized as key areas of need. To the extent NATO may not be able to provide assistance directly, it may, perhaps through the Hub, nevertheless facilitate interaction between the Gulf of Guinea actors and the partners who could be most helpful.

CONCLUSION FROM THE WEBINAR

The overwhelming consensus among the panellists was threefold:

1. The event on the 3rd of November was a useful dialogue whereby many of the issues were put on the table in an open, honest and constructive fashion. More such discussions are needed and the Hub could be a useful forum for continuing the conversation.
2. There is a potential role for NATO to play in the region and it should explore what it might be able to offer based on what was said at this event and others.
3. NATO should not act unless and until requested to do so by the states and institutions of the Gulf of Guinea.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANELLISTS:

Over the course of the discussion on the 3rd of November 2022, the following five recommendations emerged.

- **Use the NATO STRATEGIC DIRECTION – SOUTH Hub as a means of continuing to bring the different stakeholders – including government, military, industry, civil society, practitioners, academics, and others – to have open dialogue about issues, pitfalls and possible approaches to addressing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.**

The Hub is a uniquely well-placed vehicle for supporting the Gulf of Guinea's efforts to secure the region's waters. Bringing different voices to the conversation – like independent experts, analysts from other parts of the world, and industry actors (not just trade associations), the Hub can continue to contribute meaningfully to the conversation around implementation of UNSCR 2634 and the wider maritime security ambitions of West and Central Africa.

Among other things, the Hub could help with some of the analysis of what has led to this downturn in piracy and what could continue to not only suppress it, but root it out.

As a platform, the Hub can also help to amplify the voices of African experts who would not otherwise be heard in Europe, North America or beyond. This is a critically important role to support the ongoing development of regional capacity.

In that vein, it was specifically noted that positive success stories don't often get communicated to actors outside the region, so the Hub could also help balance out what has otherwise been a strongly critical understanding of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

- **Offer to the region a means of learning from NATO's experience as a multinational force, particularly as it establishes more operational elements within the Yaoundé Architecture.**

The theory of being a multinational force is one thing, the practical reality of it is another. NATO, as the largest military alliance – and the one with the most linguistic diversity – could be hugely helpful in supplying advice and assistance as the Gulf of Guinea seeks to operationalize military and law enforcement cooperation into one unified security construct. As was noted, there is no jurisdictional gap when it comes to the maritime law enforcement concerns – any such challenges can be overcome – so NATO could really help the region by sharing insights on how to make things work operationally.

- **Offer to the region a means of learning from NATO's experience in counter piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.**

While in 2011 and 2012, there were many reasons to emphasize the distinctions between piracy off the Horn of Africa and piracy (and armed robbery at sea) in the Gulf of Guinea, there is now a need to revisit both and draw lessons. NATO is uniquely well placed to do this. As one panellist put it, NATO could help the Gulf of Guinea “adapt” the lessons from the Gulf of Aden to meaningful effect.

- **Offer to the region assistance on establishing some of the tools and building blocks on which it relies for its own operations, including confronting challenges of interoperability, standard operating procedures, information sharing, standardization of information, and even overcoming linguistic barriers.**

NATO has had to develop a wide array of tools for operating as a multinational force. From interoperability of equipment to standardization of analytical abilities, there are a lot of tools that a nascent multinational force might not even realize it needs. It is in this space that NATO could offer training and at least sensitization that would be useful to the Gulf of Guinea.

- **In addition to proactively listening to the region, work to bolster and strengthen the region's own institutions, specifically those that have been set up to confront maritime insecurity like the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Yaoundé Architecture, and potentially help support a meeting of the Heads of State in which they can revisit the Yaoundé architecture and steer the course for the years ahead.**

To the extent that NATO could support bringing the heads of state together, it would provide tremendous benefit to all. The need for revisiting the approach has come, and given NATO's own experience in rallying the leadership of all the allies to help make progress on key security initiatives, NATO could be a useful voice in calling for such a meeting. NATO's experience in general of having to revise its own internal structure and cope with contextual changes make it a credible potential partner to the Gulf of Guinea. It is from that standpoint of credibility – through analogous experiences – that it could work to help the region achieve its ambition on maritime security cooperation.

PANELISTS:

The 3rd of November event at the Hub was split into two panels, each with four panellists. The full event was moderated by Dr. Ian Ralby, CEO of I.R. Consilium, an expert in maritime law and security, and moderator of the 2021 event at the Hub, as well.

The first panel was titled “Substance and Strategic Significance of UNSCR 2634: What Does it Say? What Does it Mean? And Why Was it Necessary?” The four panellists were:

- Ambassador Namira Negm, Director of the African Migration Observatory and former Legal Counsel of the African Union
- Captain Dr. Kamal-Deen Ali (Ghana Navy, ret.), Director of Centre for Maritime Law and Security (CEMLAWS) Africa and former Legal Advisor of the Ghana Navy
- Professor Assis Malaquias, Dean of the United States Department of Defense’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies
- Mr. George Mangos, Principal at the Interunity Group

The second panel was titled “Options for Implementing UNSCR 2634 Through Both the Yaoundé Architecture and the African Standby Force.” The four panelists were:

- Dr. Dakuku Peterside, former Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)
- Rear Admiral Narciso Junior, Director of the Inter-Regional Coordination Center in Yaoundé, Cameroon
- Prof. Ifesinachi Okafor-Yarwood, Lecturer in Sustainable Development at the University of St. Andrews
- Captain Loïc Moudouma (Gabon Navy, ret), former Deputy Chief of Naval Staff of Gabon

While these experts shared their experiences and insights generously, they did so under the Chatham House Rule, so will not be quoted directly in the following summary of the discussion.

ACRONYMS

AIMS	Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEMLAWS	Centre for Maritime Law and Security
CFMCC	Combined Forces Maritime Component Commanders
CIC	Centre Inter-Regional Coordination
CMP	European Union's Coordinated Maritime Presence
CRESMAC	Maritime Security Regional Centre for Central Africa
CRESMAO	Maritime Security Regional Centre for West Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of Western African States
FOGG	Friends of the Gulf of Guinea
GGC	Gulf of Guinea Commission
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
HSOP	Harmonized Standard Operating Procedures
ICC	Inter-Regional Coordination Centre
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
MARCOM	NATO Allied Maritime Command
MARSEC COE	Maritime Security Centre of Excellence
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
MOC	Maritime Operations Centre
MOWCA	Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa
MMCC	Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIMASA	Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency
NMIOTC	NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre
NSC	NATO Shipping Centre
NSD-S Hub	NATO Strategic Direction – South Hub
REC	Regional Economic Community
SHADE	Shared Awareness and De-confliction
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SUA	Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea Convention
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
YAMS	Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Safety and Security
YARIS	Yaoundé Architecture Regional Information Sharing Platform
ZOPACAS	Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic

