



PRESS RELEASE

Operation Levante 2: A Regional Maritime Security Mission

Victoria, Seychelles – August 26, 2024 - The Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC), in collaboration with the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) as well as its regional and international partners, including the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Madagascar, United Kingdom and EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta in Somalia, successfully conducted Operation Levante 2 from 15 to 22 August 2024. This Preventive operation was organized during the port visits of the ships ESPS NUMANCIA (EUNAVFOR Atalanta) and HMS LANCASTER (Royal Navy) to Kenya and Seychelles, respectively.

Operation Levante 2 is part of a strategy to deter and repress various illegal activities at sea in the Western Indian Ocean, identified under the surveillance of the RMIFC, such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The main objectives of Operation Levante 2 were to improve maritime domain awareness (MDA), deter illegal activities at sea, strengthen maritime security, integrate legal experts in operations and promote information sharing between regional and international partners. In addition to this, the operation made it possible to test the interoperability of the forces of the different participating countries and partners, notably Kenya, Madagascar, the United Kingdom, Operation Atalanta.

The operation made it possible to monitor more than 60 vessels over an area of 1,223,815 km². A particular case involving a Kenya flagged vessel suspected of IUU fishing just outside the Somali territorial seas (TTS) is currently being handled in cooperation with Somalian and Kenyan authorities.

The RCOC would like to thank all forces involved as well as its regional and international partners, including the UK and Operation Atalanta, for their continued commitment to maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean.

Captain Sam Gontier, Director of the RCOC, comments:

"With the collaboration of member states and partners within the Regional Maritime Security Architecture (RMSA), we are continuously increasing our patrols across the Western Indian Ocean. The RCOC, through new partnerships and the inclusion of additional member states, is expanding its presence and capabilities to conduct joint operations. This strengthened presence plays a vital role in upholding the rule of law and combating the notion of a "No man's sea," ensuring that security and order are maintained throughout the region".





The two regional centres involved in this mission, RMIFC and RCOC, were initially established under the EU-funded MASE programme, under the component implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), with the objective of enhancing maritime safety and security in the western Indian ocean through regional and international cooperation. the IOC, with the renewed contribution of the EU, continues to support the regional maritime safety architecture and the actions of the Regional Centres through the EU-Funded "Safe Seas Africa" programme

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