

STABLE SEAS

MARITIME SECURITY INDEX

The inaugural Stable Seas Maritime Security Index is a first-of-its-kind effort to measure and map a range of threats to maritime governance and the capacity of nations to counter these threats. By bringing diverse challenges like piracy, smuggling, and capacity-building into one comprehensive analysis, we can better understand how these issues intersect to affect maritime security. Practitioners and policy makers can use this tool to identify areas for development and expanded cooperation.



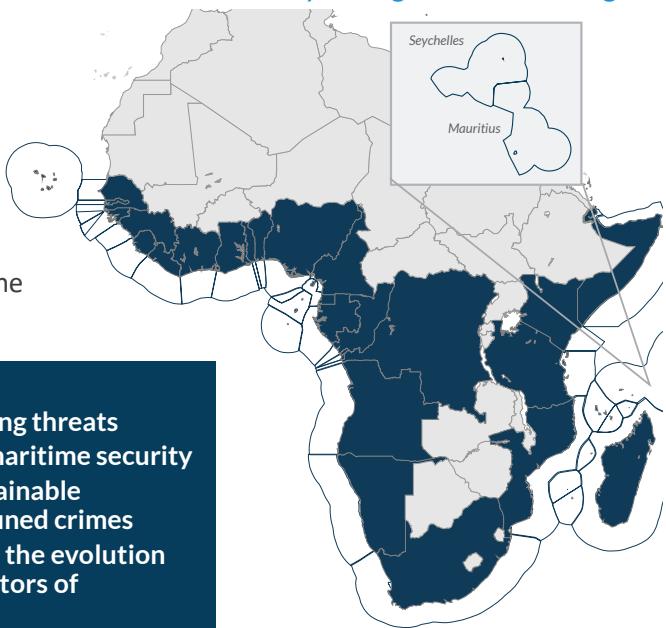
Each state in sub-Saharan Africa has its own unique combination of maritime security strengths and challenges.

An African Vision for Maritime Security

The African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050) illuminates the maritime vision shared by African nations: “developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner,” connecting the challenges and opportunities of the African maritime space. Regional maritime security strategies such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, the Lomé Charter, and the amended Djibouti Code of Conduct unanimously deliver the same message: all maritime issues are linked.

STABLE SEAS GOALS

- Assess current levels of maritime crime and monitor emerging threats
- Prioritize efforts to address the most critical challenges in maritime security
- Guide capacity-building efforts towards long-term and sustainable investments and away from quick solutions to narrowly-defined crimes
- Monitor progress towards greater maritime security, track the evolution of related issues, and measure and map quantitative indicators of maritime security



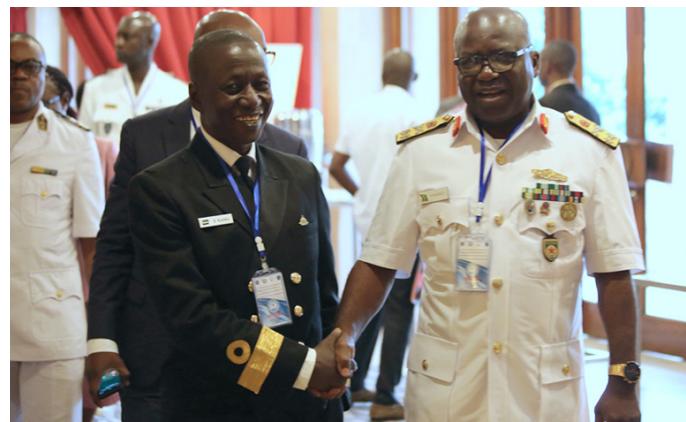
Our Research

Security is a complex and multidimensional concept. Across sub-Saharan Africa, maritime security is threatened by global networks that enable illicit crimes such as drug smuggling, weapons trafficking, and illegal wildlife trade. A growing blue economy and vibrant fisheries sectors support human welfare, but unsustainable development and global environmental threats could undermine progress. The under-governed nature of the high seas fosters piracy, illegal fishing, and forced migration that eventually impacts the security of coastal communities. International cooperation and robust regional security agreements in Africa provide avenues for improving maritime security. The Stable Seas Maritime Security Index seeks to measure and map these factors. Based on three African maritime security agreements (the Yaoundé and Djibouti Codes of Conduct and the Lomé Charter), we define the concept of maritime security by nine issue areas. Our foundational research contributes new data and analysis to this emerging field of study and cooperation.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

African nations have prioritized the establishment of comprehensive, regionally led approaches to maritime security. All countries included in our Index belong to at least one regional cooperative maritime security strategy, such as the Djibouti and Yaoundé Codes of Conduct or the Lomé Charter.



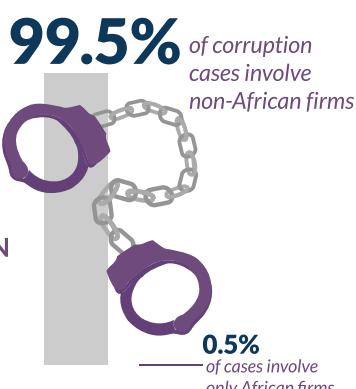
Representatives from Sierra Leone and Nigeria at an international meeting on Yaoundé Code of Conduct. Photo: Jean-Pierre Larroque, OEF



RULE OF LAW

Seaports are choke points for wealth, and this provides opportunities for corruption, bribe-seeking, and illicit economic activity. Our research shows the African maritime space is especially vulnerable to challenges stemming from

weak rule of law because 95% of all international trade in sub-Saharan Africa goes through ports.



NOT JUST AN AFRICAN PROBLEM

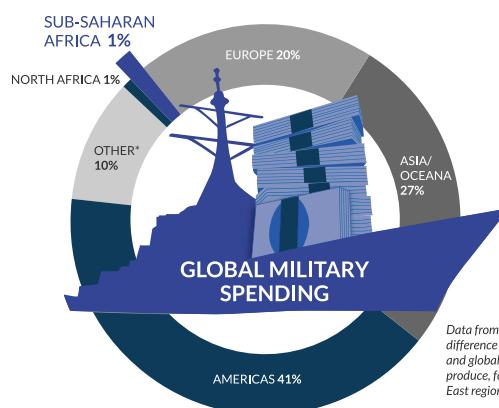
Data from uneeca.org

ILLICIT ACTORS operating in and out of the maritime space are agile and adaptable to changing enforcement mechanisms: tackling one issue can simply shift activity to a new sector. A comprehensive approach to combating maritime crime is therefore required.



MARITIME ENFORCEMENT

Maritime enforcement remains a constraint on security in sub-Saharan Africa. Our research shows that the 30 countries included in our Index, combined, have 10,000 fewer sailors than Japan. And only three countries (Nigeria, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) have roughly 60% of sub-Saharan Africa's sailors.

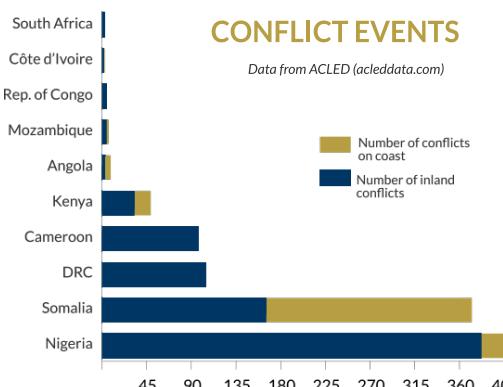


Data from SIPRI. *Other shows difference between regional totals and global estimate. SIPRI did not produce, for example, a Middle East regional estimate.



COASTAL WELFARE

Coastal welfare promotes community resiliency that protects against insecurity, but insecurity on the coast can spillover to the maritime domain. Our research shows 1,039 armed clashes occurred throughout sub-Saharan Africa in 2016. Of these, 256 occurred within 50 kilometers of the coast.





BLUE ECONOMY

The ocean is an increasingly important source of economic opportunity and security in sectors such as energy, food, and tourism.

Our research shows the countries that benefit most from coastal tourism are also the most vulnerable to climate change.



Douala port, Cameroon. Photo: Jean-Pierre Larroque, OEF



FISHERIES

Fisheries support the livelihoods of millions of Africans, but declining fish stocks are becoming flashpoints for conflict.

Comprehensive fisheries legislation is imperative for healthy fisheries. Our research shows fisheries laws in sub-Saharan Africa routinely mandate scientific fisheries data collection, but only half require observer programs needed to verify that data.



OVERFISHING



OVERLAP OF SHIPPING & FISHING AREAS



INCREASING DEVELOPMENT



POLLUTION & DAMAGE TO SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS

AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT IN MARINE SPACES

PIRACY & ARMED ROBBERY



Large investments narrowly tailored to address piracy and armed robbery have limited long-term impact. Our research shows that, since 2010, \$27.6 billion has been invested in deterring Somali piracy. But failure to address root causes of the problem has allowed pirates to move into other forms of maritime crime.

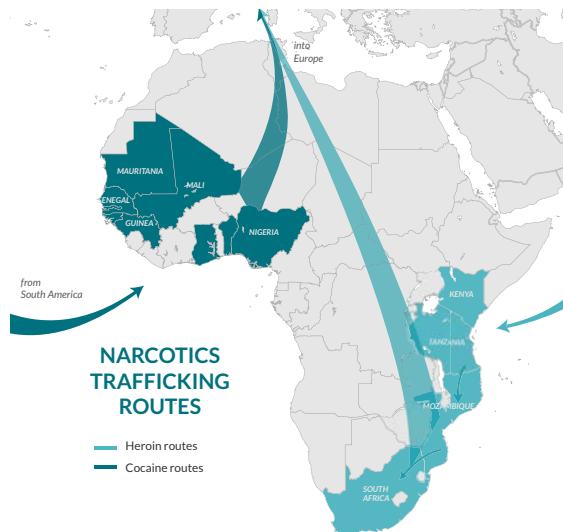
 **\$27.6 BILLION TOTAL COST**
to deter Somali piracy
(from 2010 to 2016)

Source: State of Maritime Piracy reports, Oceans Beyond Piracy



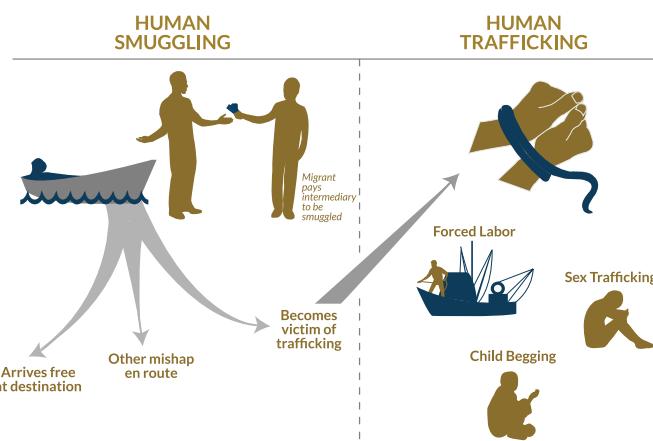
ILLEGAL TRADES

Illicit trade fuels insecurity by destabilizing the legitimate economy and providing funding for criminal and armed groups. Our research shows that, unlike some criminal activity that occurs in remote locations, illicit trade in arms, drugs, and wildlife is concentrated in large ports that provide cover and infrastructure. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to collect more thorough data to fully quantify the impact of illicit trade on economic development potential, including the blue economy.



MIXED MARITIME MIGRATION

Human smuggling, human trafficking, slavery, economic migration, asylum-seeking, and the global illicit sex trade are complex and inseparable. Our research shows these activities are strongly gendered: women and girls are more likely to face sexual exploitation, while men and boys are more likely to be trafficked for forced labor at sea.



Challenges and Opportunities

Coastal countries face significant obstacles to effective maritime governance and security. Maritime jurisdictions are vast and their borders are unmarked and often contested. They are on the fringes of a government's sovereign area and most are adjacent to under-governed international waters. Adequately monitoring and administering policy in the maritime space requires long-term investments in expensive and sophisticated maritime enforcement systems.

Underreporting of the crimes highlighted in Stable Seas significantly impedes quantifying their scope and impact. Piracy is more reliably documented through established reporting systems and information sharing mechanisms, but substantial gaps in reporting still exist, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. Crimes such as arms trafficking and illegal fishing are vastly underreported, partially due to the lack of standardized reporting mechanisms. Without comprehensive understanding of the scope of these problems, African policymakers are challenged to design—let alone implement—effective policies to tackle maritime problems.

However, maritime security can be bolstered by long-term investment in sectors that promote community

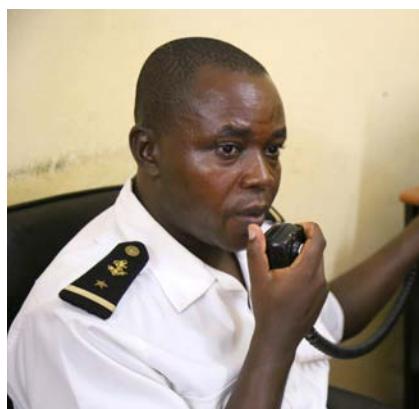
resiliency and stability. In sub-Saharan Africa, the blue economy presents incredible opportunity for sustainable growth. While sectors such as fisheries have long been an important part of African economies, coastal tourism, natural products discovery, and aquaculture have room to grow. African fisheries, when well-managed and allocated for domestic small-scale fleets, provide food and economic security to millions of people. And stable coastal communities prevent insecurity from taking hold and spreading through reduced incentives to engage in illicit trade or armed conflict.

“Piracy cannot be eradicated if the issue of illegal fishing is neglected. The issue of illegal fishing cannot be solved if pollution is neglected. And therefore, there is a cycle between the three which implies that the solution to one problem necessarily involves taking into account the second.”

Dr. Christian Trimua, Executive Director of the Interregional Coordination Centre

VISIT STABLESEAS.ORG to learn more, view future editions, and see this evolving story.

Youpwe fishing village; the Interregional Coordination Centre in Douala, Cameroon; Photos by: Jean-Pierre Larroque, OEF. Children on a beach in Ghana; Pixabay.



OEF Research, Oceans Beyond Piracy, and Secure Fisheries are programs of One Earth Future.

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