



AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

COORDINATING SECURITY SECTOR RESPONSES TO ILLEGAL LOGGING IN AFRICA

INFORMATION NOTE

- WHAT:** The Africa Center will hold a multinational academic program for security, justice, and forestry officials to analyze the political economy of illegal logging in Africa and apply that knowledge to enhance cross-border, interagency, and community-level coordination to counter illegal logging in service of citizen security.
- WHERE:** Libreville, Gabon
- WHEN:** July 10-14, 2023
- WHO:** Approximately 60 participants are invited to attend this program. Countries whose security is notably affected by the illicit trade in rare hardwoods are invited: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia. Each country is asked to nominate three participants as follows: one (1) uniformed or civilian security official, one (1) law enforcement official, ideally with organized crime and/or environmental security experience, and one (1) official from the judicial or forestry sector official focused on interagency efforts to counter illegal logging. Because space for this program is limited, submissions will be subject to selection if necessary. To ensure comprehensive peer learning, nominees must include women and men, as well as uniformed and civilian officials. Other invitees will be the African Union's CAERT; CHEDS; ECCAS Peace and Security Department; ECCAS Environment and Natural Resources Department; Central African Forests Commission; Guinea-Bissau Institute of National Defense; Organization for the Protection of Forestry in Central Africa; Interpol Central Africa Bureau; AFRICOM; USAID CARPE; State/OES. To ensure comprehensive peer learning, priority will be given to submissions that include women and men. Because program space is limited, we highly encourage submissions before the deadline.
- WHY:** Illegal logging is a growing feature of transnational organized crime in Africa. Often facilitated by the collusion of senior officials, foreign actors, and criminal networks, it has far-reaching security implications. African countries are estimated to lose \$17 billion yearly to illegal logging, which feeds a cycle of opaque governance, exploitation, and insecurity that can erode the social contract and further instability. Beyond financing insurgency and violent extremism, illegal logging can also threaten

sustainable community livelihoods by worsening deforestation. African states are committed to international agreements, regional protocols, and joint declarations that are intended to help counter illegal logging, but an implementation gap remains. Countries and regions bridging the gap face practical challenges in coordinating across defense, security, justice, and forestry sectors to mount a comprehensive state response, as well as in ensuring that coordination addresses the security, development, governance factors enabling illegal logging. Allowing civil society to influence state responses and provide an external check on state-initiated efforts is also critical. This multinational program will seek to foster peer learning on these issues by introducing a political economy framework for analyzing illegal logging and applying it to identify practical implications for security sector responses.

HOW: The forum will be in-person for five days. It will consist of plenary sessions, discussion groups, and a guided exercise. Innovations, good practices, and lessons learned will also be generated through guided exercises. The program will be held in English, French, and Portuguese under a strict policy of non-attribution.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Expand understanding of challenges that the military, law enforcement, judicial, and forestry actors face in countering illegal logging in Africa, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the tools and techniques they are using to address it.

Analyze the political economy of illegal logging in Africa and the implications for security sector coordination with other state and societal actors to reduce illegal logging.

Share peer learning about how security sector officials can work on the cross-border, interagency, and community levels to counter illegal logging in ways that enhance citizen security through transparent, effective forest resource management.

Integrate program participants into an ongoing community of interagency practitioners who identify regional or inter-regional priority actions that they could pursue together to more effectively counter illegal logging in their contexts.