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FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

**WEST INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL
MARITIME SECURITY
SEMINAR**

READ AHEAD

February 24-28, 2025

ABOUT THE AFRICA CENTER

Since its inception in 1999, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) has served as a forum for research, academic programs, and the exchange of ideas with the aim of enhancing citizen security by strengthening the effectiveness and accountability of African institutions, in support of U.S.-Africa policy.

VISION

Security for all Africans championed by effective institutions accountable to their citizens.

Realizing the vision of an Africa free from organized armed violence guaranteed by African institutions that are committed to protecting African citizens is the driving motivation of the Africa Center. This aim underscores the Center's commitment to contributing to tangible impacts by working with our African partners – military and civilian, governmental and civil society, as well as national and regional. All have valuable roles to play in mitigating the complex drivers of conflict on the continent today. Accountability to citizens is an important element of our vision as it reinforces the point that in order to be effective, security institutions must not just be “strong,” but also be responsive to and protective of the rights of citizens.

MISSION

To advance African security by expanding understanding, providing a trusted platform for dialogue, building enduring partnerships, and catalyzing strategic solutions.

The Africa Center's mission revolves around the generation and dissemination of knowledge through our research, academic programs, strategic communications, and community chapters. Drawing on the practical experiences and lessons learned from security efforts on the continent, we aim to generate relevant insight and analysis that can inform practitioners and policymakers on the pressing security challenges that they face. Recognizing that addressing serious challenges can only come about through candid and thoughtful exchanges, the Center provides face-to-face and virtual platforms where partners can exchange views on priorities and sound practices. These exchanges foster relationships that, in turn, are maintained over time through the Center's community chapters, communities of interest, follow-on programs, and ongoing dialogue between participants and staff. This dialogue—infused with real world experiences and fresh analysis—provides an opportunity for continued learning and catalyzes concrete actions.

MANDATE

The Africa Center for Strategic Studies is a U.S. Department of Defense institution established and funded by Congress for the study of security issues relating to Africa and serving as a forum for bilateral and multilateral research, communication, exchange of ideas, and training involving military and civilian participants. (10 U.S.C

OVERVIEW

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) faces security challenges, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, human, drug, and wildlife trafficking and smuggling, piracy, and armed robbery at sea, among other concerns. Many of these threats are forms of transnational organized crime (ToC) with implications on both land and sea. Thus far, responses to these threats have focused on enhancing the capacity of states in the region and developing a regional maritime security architecture to facilitate coordination across national, regional and international levels. Developing a regional architecture enables WIO states to pull together resources, effectively share information and intelligence, harmonize operations, and achieve legal finish across complex jurisdictional arrangements.

Though there is consensus on the need to develop a regional architecture to improve maritime security coordination in the WIO, stakeholders diverge in their visions of what such an architecture ought to look like and how it should function.¹ As Christian Bueger explains, “(t)he landscape of maritime security initiatives in the Western Indian Ocean is characterized by a patchwork of overlapping and sometimes competing projects, each with its own scope, focus, and level of formality.”² Among the most notable initiatives in the region include the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA); the Maritime Security program (MASE) Architecture; the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) coalition; the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC); the Nairobi Convention; the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA); and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

The DCoC/JA brings together several African states (from Egypt to South Africa), along with several states from the Arabian Peninsula to address the full spectrum of maritime crimes.³ Facilitated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the DCoC has made significant progress in fostering regional cooperation and enhancing maritime security. Among its key achievements is the significant reduction in piracy incidents, with coordinated regional efforts supported by international partners restoring confidence in the safety of critical trade routes.

The European Union-funded MASE programme is more limited in its geographical scope.⁴ Led by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), this initiative developed a regional maritime security architecture covering Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian

¹ Christian Bueger, “Who Secures the Western Indian Ocean? The Need for Strategic Dialogue,” *Center for Maritime Strategy*, September 19, 2024, <https://centerformaritimestrategy.org/publications/who-secures-the-western-indian-ocean-the-need-for-strategic-dialogue/>

² Ibid.

³ DCoC, “Who we are,” *Djibouti Code of Conduct*, <https://dcoc.org/about-us/>

⁴ For more information, please see IOC, “Maritime Security (#MASE Programme),” *Indian Ocean Commission*, <https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/en/portfolio-items/maritime-security-mase-programme/>

Ocean region with two regional centers at its core: the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC). Headquartered in Madagascar, The RMIFC is focused on improving maritime domain awareness through the exchange and sharing of maritime information with national and international stakeholders, while the RCOC headquarter in the Seychelles uses the information provided to coordinate operations at sea. Together these two centers have achieved notable operational results, coordinating several maritime operations each year.

The United States-led CMF is a more military-focused initiative that coordinates operations, information sharing, and capacity-building efforts. In this capacity, CMF brings together the navies of several international actors from outside of the region.⁵ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) IOFMC forum is another important initiative that promotes regional coordination among Indian Ocean countries through improved information sharing and forums for prosecutors and maritime law enforcement agencies, among other activities.⁶ Both IORA and IONS⁷ – championed by India, increasingly play important roles in the region. Lastly, the Nairobi Convention is a binding maritime treaty promoting regional coordination among governments, civil society and the private sector.⁸ However, it is limited to states in Eastern and Southern Africa.

As valuable as these different initiatives are to address the various, multifaceted maritime threats in the region, this diversity of approaches also leads to confusion about the maritime security architecture in WIO. Efforts have been made to initiate and improve collaboration across common objectives,⁹ but without meaningful coordination or a well-established hierarchy, these different initiatives can result in duplicate/redundant efforts, differing priorities and modalities for addressing threats, and gaps in coverage.

This seminar serves as a platform for relevant stakeholders to discuss and assess efforts to continue to develop and operationalize a shared regional maritime security

⁵ Combined Maritime Forces, “About CMF,” *Combined Maritime Forces*, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/about/>

⁶ UNODC, “Global Maritime Crime Programme,” *UNODC*, <https://www.unodc.org/easternafrika/global-programmes/global-maritime-crime-prevention/index.html>

⁷ Ranendra Singh Sawan, “Problems and prospects of maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region: a case study of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS),” *Royal Australian Navy Sea Power Soundings*

⁸ Nairobi Convention, “Who we are,” *Nairobi Convention*, <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/nairobi-convention/who-we-are/>

⁹ For instance, MASE and DCoC/JA have made significant efforts to collaborate and ensure their activities are complementary. UNODC also partners with the CMF, EU Naval forces, INTERPOL and the IMO. Moreover, the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities in the Western Indian Ocean (CGIMA) was established in 2023 to improve strategic dialogue across stakeholders. In the past, forums like the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) Group were created by the CMF, NATO and EU to improve coordination to counter maritime threats, notably piracy. Such forums provided navies of various countries, the shipping industry and private actors an opportunity to meet regularly to coordinate. There also exists the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activity in the Western Indian Ocean, previously known as the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia which played a key role in steering counter-piracy operation across different stakeholders between 2009 and 2020.

architecture to combat common maritime threats among WIO African states. Participants also have an opportunity to assess local, national and sub-regional efforts to improve coordination to address ToC maritime threats.

Seminar Objectives

1. Assess progress coastal (Djibouti, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania) and island states (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles) have made towards developing their national maritime strategies.
2. Examine strategies and mechanisms for the effective design and implementation of a shared sub-regional maritime architecture.
3. Identify the potential for the development and implementation of a sub-regional maritime security strategy.
4. Exchange best practices and lessons learned to effectively counter transnational organized crime across the land-to-sea spectrum.

Seminar Structure

This seminar, spanning five days, comprises both plenary sessions that draw on strategic, policy, academic, and operational expertise, and discussion sessions where participants are encouraged to share freely on the topics that arise. The plenary session presentations will be followed by a moderated question-and-answer period where participants are encouraged to share experiences, question assumptions, and think through creative approaches. This dialogue will continue in small group discussions where the focus will be on problem solving. Participants will be encouraged to share perspectives and learn from each other. A team of experienced facilitators will work with participants to this end.

All ACSS programs are conducted under a strict non-attribution policy. This allows participants to contribute and exchange views without reservation, thereby creating an effective and productive learning environment. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided to allow the seminar to be conducted in French and English. All seminar materials will be provided in these languages.

Session 1: Overview and Nature of Threat: ToC Across Land and Sea

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Understand the links between transnational organized crime on land and at sea.
- Understand trends in transnational organized crime across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).
- Identify the most prevalent criminal actors, the criminal markets they operate in, and the region's resilience sources.

Background:

The WIO faces a variety of maritime security threats, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, human smuggling and trafficking, drug smuggling and trafficking, wildlife trafficking, armed robbery, and piracy. Many of these threats are forms of transnational organized crime (ToC) with implications on both land and sea. While some of these crimes pursue targets at sea with implications on land, for instance piracy, in other cases, such as drug smuggling and trafficking, the sea serves as a means through which criminal actors can transport their illicit goods. Moreover, as indicated by Dr. Carina Bruwer, these “threats are all destined for land, thereby threatening development and security not only at sea, but also on land.”¹⁰

Non-traditional threats are also emerging in the WIO region. Notably, the activities of militant insurgent/terror groups, such as the Houthis in Yemen, al-Shabaab in Somalia and the Islamic State in Mozambique have broader implications for stability and security across both land and sea for several WIO African states, from Djibouti down the Swahili coast to Mozambique. As a 2023 research study explained:

“Terrorism in all its forms, manifesting ‘in/ from/ through’ the seas, has gained increased traction in the recent global security discourse. The blurring of the line between traditional and non-traditional security threats is a reflection of the fact that seas have been used both as a medium or as a geographical space to wage war/ commit violence in order to send a signal of the intent and motives of these perpetrators.”¹¹

In Mozambique, the Islamic State-Mozambique have benefitted from longstanding criminal markets present in Cabo Delgado province and along the Swahili coast to

¹⁰ Carina Bruwer, “Transnational organised crime at sea as a threat to the sustainable development goals: Taking direction from piracy and counter-piracy in the Western Indian Ocean,” *African Security Review* 28 no. 3-4 (2020): 172-188, p. 173.

¹¹ Raghvendra Kumar, “Navigating Non-Traditional Security Threats in the Western Indian Ocean Region: Role of India’s Defence and Security Cooperation with East African Island States,” *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal of Defence Studies* 17 (3) (2023): 214-243, p. 219.

conduct its activities and have, in the process, also posed a threat to harbors¹² and offshore¹³ assets.

Given the diversity of threats in the WIO, many of which are transnational in nature, it is crucial to improve regional coordination to address these shared threats. Doing so requires understanding between states about which of these threats are shared priorities. A brief published in 2019 that surveyed more than 100 representatives from maritime agencies in 10 Indian Ocean states concluded that IUU fishing, drug trafficking, marine pollution, piracy, and human smuggling are the most significant maritime security threats identified by respondents.¹⁴ A similar poll was conducted in January 2023 by Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Respondents from over 20 countries and regional/international from the Western Indian Ocean also indicated that IUU fishing, piracy, illicit trafficking and other transnational organized crimes were the top three shared maritime security threats in the region.

Understanding the nature of these shared maritime security threats, their impact on land and sea, and efforts undertaken among the African states to address them is critical. This session provides participants the opportunity to discuss both traditional and non-traditional maritime security threats.

Further Readings:

1. Carina Bruewer, "Africa's ocean of organised crime," *Institute for Security Studies*, October 09, 2023, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africas-ocean-of-organised-crime>
2. ENACT, Africa Organized Crime Index 2023: Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities (2023) <https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/pages/1708078753063-2023-11-24-oci-africa-final.pdf>
3. Lucia Bird, Julia Stanyard, Vel Moonien, Riana Raymonde Randrianarisoa, "Changing Tides: The evolving illicit drug trade in the western Indian Ocean," *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, (July 2021) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GITOC-Changing-Tides-The-evolving-illicit-drug-trade-in-the-western-Indian-Ocean.pdf>

¹² "Rebels seize port in gas-rich northern Mozambique," *AlJazeera*, August 13, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/13/rebels-seize-port-in-gas-rich-northern-mozambique>

¹³ "Mozambique: Terrorists attack Quirimba island – AIM report," *Club of Mozambique*, April 13, 2020, <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-terrorists-attack-quirimba-island-aim-report-157567/>

¹⁴ Laura Burroughs and Robert Mazurek, "Caught Red-Handed Brief: Maritime Security in The Indian Ocean: perceived Threats, Impacts, and Solutions," *One Earth Future* (June 2019) <https://oneearthfuture.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/caught-red-handed-maritime-security-indian-ocean.pdf>

4. Laura Burroughs and Robert Mazurek, "Caught Red-Handed Brief: Maritime Security in The Indian Ocean: perceived Threats, Impacts, and Solutions," *One Earth Future* (June 2019), <https://oneearthfuture.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/caught-red-handed-maritime-security-indian-ocean.pdf>
5. Carina Bruwer, "Transnational organised crime at sea as a threat to the sustainable development goals: Taking direction from piracy and counter-piracy in the Western Indian Ocean," *African Security Review* 28 no. 3-4 (2020): 172-188
6. Mark Blaine and Francois Vreÿ, "Western Indian Ocean: Where trouble on land spells danger at sea," *Lowy Institute*, October 29, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/western-indian-ocean-where-trouble-land-spells-danger-sea>

Session 2: Transnational Organized Crime and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Discuss maritime crimes, particularly Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and its outsized impact on African states' economy and security in the Western Indian Ocean.
- Understand criminal actors involved in IUU fishing, and state of resilience to IUU fishing in the region.
- Identify lessons learned and opportunities for countering IUU fishing in the region.

Background:

Many of the estimated 60 million people living in coastal zones of the WIO region depend on the sea for their social, cultural and economic security.¹⁵ IUU fishing directly affects the economies of these states and the marine ecosystems in the region, undermining efforts to regulate and sustainably manage fisheries. In addition, these illicit activities put key stakeholders along the seafood value chain at risk. This includes “vulnerable coastal communities in less developed countries that principally rely on the ocean for their livelihoods, as well as large- and small-scale fishers that abide by the rules but lose out to endemic and rampant fraud.”¹⁶ Furthermore, warming ocean temperatures are exacerbating unsustainable fishing practices in the region with devastating impacts on marine ecosystems and local economies.

IUU fishing is also linked to other maritime threats. The dominance of foreign trawlers depleting fishing populations has forced local fishermen in island and coastal states like the Seychelles¹⁷ to venture into illegal waters. Further, IUU fishing contributes to the destabilization of societies, which has prompted local fishing communities to turn to piracy. In the mid-2000s, Somalia's north-eastern Puntland State was considered the epicenter of piracy led by local fishing communities angered by the predation of foreign trawlers. A coordinated response by regional and international actors significantly reduced piracy incidents in the region by 2020. However, piracy appears to be on the upswing again along the coast of Somalia. According to estimates provided by the

¹⁵ UNEP-Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA, *The regional state of the coast report: Western Indian Ocean* (Nairobi: UNEP and WIOMSA, 2015) p. 4 <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/regional-state-coast-report-western-indian-ocean>

¹⁶ WWF, “Unregulated Fishing on The High Seas of the Indian Ocean: The impacts on, risks to, and challenges for sustainable fishing and ocean health,” *World Wildlife Fund* (2020) p. 4, https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwfimt_unregulated_fishing_on_the_high_seas_of_the_indian_ocean_2020.pdf

¹⁷ “Africa Organized Crime Index: Seychelles” (2023), <https://africa.ocindex.net/country/seychelles>

International Crisis Group in a June 2024 report, “Somali pirates have been implicated in more than 30 buccaneering incidents since November 2023.”¹⁸ Moreover, in regions such as Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado, IUU fishing, among other factors, may have contributed to the social destabilization that creates conditions for organized crime groups and the recent insurgency to emerge and thrive.¹⁹

This session provides participants with an opportunity to discuss the impacts IUU fishing on the economies of African states and its broader implications on stability and security in the region. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore lessons learned from efforts to counter IUU fishing.

Further Readings:

1. WWF, “Unregulated Fishing on The High Seas of the Indian Ocean: The impacts on, risks to, and challenges for sustainable fishing and ocean health,” *World Wildlife Fund* (2020) p. 4, https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwftmt_unregulated_fishing_on_the_high_seas_of_the_indian_ocean_2020.pdfhttps://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwftmt_unregulated_fishing_on_the_high_seas_of_the_indian_ocean_2020.pdf
2. Omar Mahmood, “The Roots of Somalia’s Slow Piracy Resurgence,” *International Crisis Group* (June 07, 2024) <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/roots-somalias-slow-piracy-resurgence#:~:text=Somali%20pirates%20have%20been%20implicated,trawlers%20has%20frustrated%20local%20fishermen.>
3. WWF, “Assessing Financial Flows within the South West Indian Ocean Blue Economy – Mozambique,” *World Wildlife Fund* (August 30, 2024) <https://www.wwf-swio.org/latest/reports/?49764/Assessing-Financial-Flows-within-the-South-West-Indian-Ocean-Blue-Economy---Mozambique>
4. Sarah M. Glaser, Paige M. Roberts and Kaija J. Hurlburt, “Foreign Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing in Somali Waters Perpetuates Conflict,” *Frontiers in Marine Science* (2019)

¹⁸ Omar Mahmood, “The Roots of Somalia’s Slow Piracy Resurgence,” *International Crisis Group* (June 07, 2024) <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/roots-somalias-slow-piracy-resurgence#:~:text=Somali%20pirates%20have%20been%20implicated,trawlers%20has%20frustrated%20local%20fishermen.>

¹⁹ “Africa Organized Crime Index: Mozambique” (2023), <https://africa.ocindex.net/country/mozambique>

5. Colleen Devlin, Sarah M. Glaser, Joshua E. Lambert and Ciera Villegas, "The causes and consequences of fisheries conflict around the Horn of Africa," *Journal of Peace Research* 59 no. 5 (2022): 890-902

Session 3: Overview of National and Regional Maritime Security Strategy Development

Format: Plenary presentation
Discussion groups

Objectives:

- Analyze the challenges and opportunities for developing integrated national maritime security strategies.
- Discuss lessons learned from national maritime security strategy development processes in the region.
- Discuss the role of national maritime security strategies in supporting regional coordination and cooperation among African coastal and island states in the Western Indian Ocean.
- Assess progress towards the development of a regional maritime security strategy.

Background:

National Maritime Security Strategies (NMSS) serve as the cornerstones for harmonizing and coordinating the implementation of maritime security measures. An NMSS outlines a state's specific threats, challenges, priorities, and capacities concerning its maritime domain, providing a tailored approach to addressing maritime security.²⁰ These strategies are crucial as they provide a clear understanding of how national resources can be effectively utilized to combat shared threats in a coordinated manner while still addressing unique national security concerns. Additionally, these strategies often highlight gaps in capability, which can inform capacity-building efforts, including training, resource allocation, and international assistance.

Moreover, national strategies reinforce trust and collaboration, vital in a region where national boundaries and jurisdictions can complicate joint operations. The WIO spans several maritime zones, and national sovereignty remains a sensitive issue. An NMSS clarifies a state's capacity and willingness to engage in joint patrols, information sharing, and coordinated responses, ensuring respect for national sovereignty while fostering regional collaboration.²¹

²⁰ The AU's AIM Strategy. 2012. African Integrated Maritime Strategy. Accessed October 15, 2024

²¹ Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds, "Beyond Seablindness: A New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies," *International Affairs* 93 no. 6 (2017): 1293-1311

Coordination at the local, national, and sub-regional levels is essential for regional initiatives in the WIO to function optimally. Without national strategies defining specific roles, responsibilities, and actions for maritime security, regional initiatives lack the necessary foundation for effective cooperation.

A 2022 research study underscores the urgent need to address the issues affecting Africa's maritime security.²² It reveals that limited maritime domain awareness (MDA), significant sea-blindness, loss and under-exploitation of maritime wealth, and lack of sea power are indicators of faulty or absent maritime strategies.²³ These issues lead to high levels of IUU fishing, armed robbery at sea, piracy, smuggling, trafficking, and the persistent external domination of African waters.²⁴ The study's findings serve as a call to action, emphasizing the importance of developing effective maritime strategies to combat these issues.

This session provides an opportunity for participants to assess the progress individual states have made to develop national strategies. Further, participants will discuss the potential a regional maritime security strategy can have in improving coordination with the aim of countering shared maritime threats.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does your country have a national maritime security strategy?
 - a. If yes, what are some of the key lessons learned in the process of developing the strategy and which stakeholders were involved in the process? Were non-state actors, such as the private sector, also involved?
 - b. If yes, what obstacles, if any, did your country face in developing its national maritime security strategy?
 - c. If not, how far along is your country in the process of building a strategy? What support is needed to develop a strategy?
2. How can the development and implementation of national maritime security strategies in African states improve regional coordination to address shared threats through information sharing and capacity building initiatives?
3. The landscape of maritime security initiatives in the WIO is characterized by various projects with varying degrees of coordination, including the DCoC/JA; MASE programme; the CMF; the IOFMC; the IORA and IONS. Can the

²² Manu Lekunze, "Maritime strategy in Africa: strategic flaws exposing Africa to vulnerabilities from food insecurity to external domination," *Third World Quarterly*, 43 no. 12 (2022): 2852-2868.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

development of a unified regional maritime security strategy help to harmonize these initiatives under a shared regional maritime security architecture?

- a. If yes, explain how
4. How can national maritime security strategies support the continued development and operationalization of a shared regional maritime security architecture for Eastern and Southern African states?

Further Readings:

1. Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). "National Maritime Security Strategy Toolkit." *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*. (2016)
<https://africacenter.org/toolkit/national-maritime-security-strategy-toolkit/>
2. IMO, "States work towards regional maritime security strategy for the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden," *International Maritime Organization*, November 21, 2024, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/Pages/WhatsNew-2185.aspx>
3. Christian Bueger and Timothy Edmunds. "Beyond Seablindness: A New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies." *International Affairs* 93 no. 6 (2017): 1293-1311.
4. Manu Lekunze. "Maritime strategy in Africa: strategic flaws exposing Africa to vulnerabilities from food insecurity to external domination." *Third World Quarterly* 43 no. 12 (2022): 2852-2868
5. Francois Vreÿ. "African Maritime Security: A Time for Good Order at Sea." *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs* 2 no. 4 (2010): 121-132.
6. The AU's AIM Strategy. African Integrated Maritime Strategy. (2012).
https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33832-wd-african_union_3-1.pdf

Session 4: National-Level Responses: Coordination

Format: Plenary presentation
Discussion groups

Objectives:

- Assess national efforts towards improved interagency coordination to counter ToC across land and sea.
- Identify strategic approaches for enhancing coordination among maritime stakeholders and other relevant government actors focused on countering illicit activities.

Background:

Coordinating intelligence gathering, information sharing, and maritime operations with neighboring states is critical to enhancing securing the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. The national level serves as the foundation upon which sub-regional and regional maritime security architectures promoting coordination among states can be effective. Coastal and island states that can effectively monitor and secure their maritime domains serve as the first line of defense, providing localized responses.

Maritime security threats in the region are multifaceted in nature and are often forms of organized transnational crimes with implications on land and sea. For this reason, national authorities need to coordinate efforts not only across their navies and coast guards, but also the civil society and industry partners. National authorities also need to secure the political buy-in necessary to dedicate sufficient resources and capabilities to improve maritime domain awareness (MDA) and conduct operations at sea. By strengthening the capacities of national authorities, each WIO state not only enhances the ability to safeguard its waters but also reinforces regional security, creating a safer environment for everyone.

Despite its importance at the national level, many African states in the WIO have limited MDA and maritime enforcement capacities. Many states struggle to effectively gather, analyze, and share information on maritime security threats from various sources. Without these information and intelligence collection and dissemination capabilities, carrying out successful enforcement actions becomes even more challenging. Moreover, national maritime enforcement agencies function with limited resources, facing constraints in both personnel and equipment.

However, some states have been making efforts to improve their MDA and enforcement capabilities. The Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA) calls on members to establish national maritime information sharing centers (NMISCs) and designate national focal points to coordinate information sharing. At the recent High-Level Meeting held in Tanzania in November 2024, DCoC/JA signatory states reaffirmed

the need to expediate the operationalization of NMISCs. For example, Madagascar's National Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Antananarivo, has been effective in coordinating information sharing at the national level. Other states, like Comoros and Mauritius, are also establishing national centers. Kenya's National Maritime Security Committee coordinates across multiple agencies including the coast guard, the maritime authority, ports authority, navy, national intelligence, wildlife service, and prosecution among several others to address maritime threats within Kenya's territorial waters.

Further efforts are still needed to enhance the capacities of national authorities and improve maritime domain awareness among African coastal and island states in the WIO. This session provides participants an opportunity to reflect and discuss what efforts states in the region need to undertake to improve their MDA and maritime enforcement capacity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Within your country, what procedures exist for coordinating surveillance, monitoring, information sharing, and operations across different agencies to address illicit maritime activities?
2. Has your country established a dedicated national maritime information sharing center?
 - a. If yes, what are some of the key lessons learned in the process of developing and operationalizing such a coordination center?
 - b. If not, how far along is your country in the process of developing and/or operationalizing such a center? What support is needed to develop/operationalize the center?
3. What policy decisions could strengthen national maritime coordination structures in your country?
4. Does your country have a liaison officer assigned to the RMIFC and RCOC, as well as a national focal point for the DCoC/JA?
 - a. If yes, what procedures exist for coordinating information sharing through these channels?
 - b. If not, how does your country coordinate with regional actors? What procedures are in place at the national level to facilitate regional coordination?
5. What future technologies are needed at the national level to improve maritime domain awareness, and how can we ensure interoperability in the region?

Further Readings:

- Kelly Moss and Maisie Pigeon, “Stable Seas: Western Indian Ocean,” *Stable Seas* (March, 2022)
- Christian Bueger, Timothy Edmunds and Jan Stockbruegger, “Securing the Seas: A Comprehensive Assessment of Global Maritime Security,” *UNIDIR* (2024)
- Darshana M. Baruah, Nitya Labh and Jessica Greely, “Mapping the Indian Ocean Region,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 15, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/06/mapping-the-indian-ocean-region?lang=en>

Session 5: Regional-Level Responses: Information Sharing and Joint Operations

Format: Plenary presentation
Discussion groups

Objectives:

- Assess the capacity for the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) and the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) to coordinate information sharing and joint operations at sea.
- Distill lessons learned in building trust and coordination across national and regional stakeholders as a basis for timely and accurate information sharing to counter illicit flows across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO).
- Identify specific tools and mechanisms – such as secure communication platforms, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and interagency agreements – that can enhance coordination and information sharing among national agencies and between regional centers.

Background:

Various initiatives already exist to support regional coordination in the WIO.²⁵ One such initiative is the European Union-funded Maritime Security (MASE) program led by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). The program's overall objective is to enhance maritime security and capacity in the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region. To achieve this objective, the program has sought a collaborative approach towards a regional maritime security architecture. The Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) and Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) form part of this architecture.

Both centers were established in 2018 after the signing of two regional agreements which aimed to enhance information sharing and coordinated maritime operations. Located in Madagascar, the RMIFC gathers, processes, stores and shares information drawn from member states. The center's primary objective is to utilize the data gathered to issue alerts in cases of imminent or confirmed threats to maritime security and safety. Put simply, the RMIFC is focused on deepening maritime domain awareness. The RMIFC also delivers daily briefings, weekly analyses and reports, as well as press summaries.

The RCOC, headquartered in the Seychelles, collaborates closely with RMIFC, utilizing information provided by the fusion center to coordinate operations at sea. In doing so,

²⁵ Some of the most notable initiatives include: the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA); the Maritime Security program (MASE) Architecture; the Combined Maritime Force (CMF); the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC); the Nairobi Convention; the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA); and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).

the RCOC works closely with member states to pool resources. As CAPT Sam Gontier, Director of the RCOC, explained during a maritime exercise in 2024:

“The RMIFC’s primary role is to analyze and detect vessels of interest and send that information to RCOC so we can take actions against them” ... “For example, if there is a vessel that we suspect or know is carrying narcotics coming this way, and the closest resources are from Seychelles and Mauritius, we’ll ask them for their support and coordinate the operations from here.”²⁶

Each signatory country²⁷ to the MASE agreements is meant to have an international liaison officer (ILO) assigned to both the RMIFC and RCOC, serving to link their respective national centers with these regional bodies. Further, the IOC has made efforts to improve collaboration, coordination and complementarity with other regional initiatives in the WIO, including with the International Maritime Organization-facilitated Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Accordingly, the MASE program’s regional centers have proven to be effective at achieving operational results. Under MASE’s architecture, the centers conduct dozens of maritime operations each year. Yet, WIO states continue to face capacity and resource challenges which affect their ability to effectively monitor their maritime domain, regulate their maritime activities, and coordinate through regional centers like the RCOC and RMIFC. Further, WIO states continue to face regulatory barriers to information sharing as well as technology and resource constraints. There are several efforts underway to provide no- or low-cost technologies while centers like RCOC work with member states to pool resources in cost-efficient manners to respond to the maritime crimes. Meanwhile, some states are signing memorandums of understanding, ship-rider agreements, and operating protocols to improve operational coordination and information and intelligence sharing. Yet, capacity gaps and information sharing constraints continue to persist.

This session provides participants with an opportunity to assess the capacity of the RMIFC and RCOC to coordinate information exchange/sharing and joint operations at sea. Participants can also draw lessons learned on building trust and coordination across national and regional stakeholders.

Discussion Questions:

1. Through what procedures do regional bodies like the RMIFC and RCOC coordinate with national stakeholders in Eastern and Southern Africa to monitor and secure the maritime domain?

²⁶ Yvonne Levardi. “Maritime Collaboration: RCOC’s Support to Cutlass Express 2024,” *U.S. Navy*, March 07, 2024, <https://www.navy.mil/DesktopModules/ArticleCS/Print.aspx?PortalId=1&ModuleId=523&Article=3699731>

²⁷ Signatory countries include: Comoros, Djibouti, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

- a. What obstacles, if any, do the RMIFC and RCOC experience coordinating with national stakeholders in the region? What efforts are being undertaken to improve coordination with national stakeholders?
 - b. From the perspective of individual states, how can national stakeholders improve coordination with RMIFC and RCOC?
2. How do the RMIFC and RCOC coordinate with other regional coordination entities/initiatives such as the DCoC/JA and UNODC's IOFMC? What procedures are in place to facilitate effective coordination?
 3. How do the RMIFC and RCOC coordinate with international stakeholders? What procedures are in place to facilitate effective coordination?

Further Readings:

1. Indian Ocean Commission, "Maritime Security (MASE Programme)," Indian Ocean Commission, <https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/en/portfolio-items/maritime-security-mase-programme/>
2. "Sécurité maritime en Afrique orientale et australe et l'océan Indien," <https://www.commissionoceanindien.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MASE-new-brochure-FR-LR-Final-V2-30-05-19.pdf>
3. Christian Bueger, "Who Secures the Western Indian Ocean? The Need for Strategic Dialogue," *Center for Maritime Strategy*, September 19, 2024, <https://centerformaritimestrategy.org/publications/who-secures-the-western-indian-ocean-the-need-for-strategic-dialogue/>
4. Yvonne Levardi. "Maritime Collaboration: RCOC's Support to Cutlass Express 2024," *U.S. Navy*, March 07, 2024, <https://www.navy.mil/DesktopModules/ArticleCS/Print.aspx?PortalId=1&ModuleId=523&Article=3699731>

Session 6: Assessing International Engagements in the Western Indian Ocean

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Understand the international community's strategic interest in the Western Indian Ocean.
- Assess the impact of the international community's presence on maritime criminal activities, particularly ToC at sea.
- Deepen understanding of external actors' outlook for the Western Indian Ocean.

Background:

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) is characterized by a patchwork of overlapping and at times competing initiatives, many of which involve international actors. Since Somali piracy peaked between 2008 and 2012, global efforts to strengthen maritime security in the WIO have intensified.²⁸ These efforts have primarily aimed to improve the ability of regional states to handle maritime security challenges and establish a regional maritime security architecture that supports international collaboration. Some of the key international players leading and supporting initiatives in the region include states like the United States (US), France, India and China, supranational unions like the European Union (EU), and United Nations (UN) bodies like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC).

The international presence in the region has yielded positive results. Notably, counter-piracy coordination mechanisms established in 2008 were successful in significantly reducing piracy incidents in the region by 2020, though piracy off the coast of Somalia appears to be on the upswing again.²⁹ Naval operations in the region have also been consequential to efforts to safeguard shipping in the region and addressing blue crimes, including transnational organized crimes. Further, international actors have made efforts to improve operational and information sharing coordination in the region through various mechanisms.³⁰

²⁸ Christian Bueger, "Coordinating and Deconflicting Naval Operations in the Western Indian Ocean," *RUSI*, February 09, 2024, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/coordinating-and-deconflicting-naval-operations-western-indian-ocean>; Bueger, "Who Secures the Western Indian Ocean?"

²⁹ See more information see Omar Mahmood, "The Roots of Somalia's Slow Piracy Resurgence," *International Crisis Group* (June 07, 2024) <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/roots-somalias-slow-piracy-resurgence#:~:text=Somali%20pirates%20have%20been%20implicated,trawlers%20has%20frustrated%20local%20fishermen>; Bueger, "Coordinating and Deconflicting Naval Operations in the Western Indian Ocean."

³⁰ For more information see Bueger, "Coordinating and Deconflicting Naval Operations in the Western Indian Ocean."

Despite the impact of these initiatives and efforts to coordinate and deconflict different projects in the region, there remains a need to further improve coordination efforts in the long-term and support the development of national and regional capacities among African states. National actors continue to face capacity constraints which limit their maritime domain awareness and maritime enforcement capabilities. Though the different international efforts in the region have helped to support improvements in African states' capabilities to address the multifaceted maritime threats in the region, the growing naval presence of various international actors risks escalating geopolitical tensions.³¹ Moving forward, a multi-stakeholder approach is needed that provides African states in the WIO greater opportunities to foster meaningful coordination. With the recent Houthi threat in the Red Sea, resurgence of piracy, and ongoing pattern of traditional and non-traditional maritime security in the region, securing WIO is undoubtedly a shared global duty.

This session provides participants with the opportunity to assess the impact of the external actors' presence on maritime criminal activities in the WIO and understand their long-term outlook and interests in the region.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can external actors continue to contribute to the development and operationalization of a shared maritime security architecture for Eastern and Southern African states in the region?
2. What is the future of the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) in the WIO region, and how best can it support regional initiatives to operationalize a shared regional maritime security architecture among eastern and southern African states?
3. What is the future of Cutlass Express in the WIO? Does the region need more exercises or joint operations? If more exercises are needed, what should they look like?
4. What is India's long-term outlook for the WIO region, and what role can it play in the operationalization of a shared regional maritime security architecture among eastern and southern African states?

Further Readings:

1. Christian Bueger, "Coordinating and Deconflicting Naval Operations in the Western Indian Ocean," *RUSI*, February 09, 2024, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/coordinating-and-deconflicting-naval-operations-western-indian-ocean>

³¹ Ibid.

2. Raghvendra Kumar, "India's Strategic Interests and Partnership with Island States of Africa in the Western Indian Ocean Region," *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 7 no. 2 (2020): 227-243
3. Christian Bueger & Jan Stockbruegger, "Maritime security and the Western Indian Ocean's militarisation dilemma," *African Security Review*, 31 no. 2 (2022): 195-210

Session 7: Counter ToC Collaboration: Prosecuting Maritime Illicit Activities

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Assess the capacity for national, regional and international actors to effectively prosecute illicit maritime activities, particularly, narcotics trafficking, across the Western Indian Ocean.
- Provide an overview of how the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Maritime Crime Programme Indian Ocean West (UNODC GMCP) assists member states in achieving legal finish on illicit maritime activities, particularly drug trafficking and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Distill lessons from navigating the unique legal and logistical challenges of prosecuting maritime crimes, including evidence gathering, chain-of-custody, mutual legal assistance and extradition.

Background:

Prosecuting illicit maritime activities in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) is challenging for several reasons. Many African coastal and island states lack sufficient maritime surveillance, law enforcement, prosecutorial and judicial capabilities to effectively adjudicate and prosecute maritime crimes without international support. Further, not all states in the region have the necessary frameworks to address the numerous illicit activities in WIO, particularly drug trafficking and IUU fishing. Complexities around jurisdictional boundaries also complicate efforts to achieve legal finish.

Where there have been some successes is in the prosecution of piracy off the coast of Somalia. A key factor in the successful prosecution of pirates was the establishment of burden-sharing arrangements, where international naval forces captured suspects, while states in the region, like Kenya and Seychelles, handled prosecution and imprisonment.³² External actors further provided funding for the detention and prosecution of piracy suspects.³³

Moreover, under the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime (IOFMC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) through its Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) Indian Ocean West has launched a series of forums for professionals dealing with maritime crimes. These forums primarily target prosecutors and maritime

³² Christian Bueger, “Somali pirates are back in action. A strong global response is needed,” *Safe Seas*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.safeseas.net/piracy-2024/>

³³ UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, “Counter-Piracy Trust Fund: Strengthening the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia,” *UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office* <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/apf00>; Bueger, “Somali pirates are back in action.”

law enforcement agencies. Through their prosecutor's network, UNODC provides attorneys in the Western Indian Ocean region opportunities to dialogue, receive training on mutual legal assistance, and participate in simulated trials aimed at improving coordination to prosecute and adjudicate regional maritime illicit activities, like drug trafficking. Further, GMCP assists participating states in reviewing their legal frameworks and assists them in implementing international agreements and conventions into their domestic legal frameworks.

This session provides participants an opportunity to assess national, regional and international efforts to effectively prosecute illicit maritime activities. Participants can also draw lessons from navigating the unique legal and logistical challenges of prosecuting maritime crimes.

Discussion Questions:

1. What initiatives has your country undertaken to facilitate evidence gathering and sharing practices with neighboring states and international partners to achieve legal finish? Are there any obstacles you are experiencing at the national level?
2. How does the existing regional architecture in the WIO support the effective prosecution of illicit maritime activities, particularly, narcotics trafficking and IUU fishing? What can be done to improve coordination around prosecution of illicit maritime crimes among African coastal and island states.
3. What opportunities can the UNODC Prosecutors' Network Forum (PNF) continue to provide to support efforts to achieve legal finish in the region. What are your expectations for the future?

Further Readings:

1. UNODC, "Indian Ocean West," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/piracy/Indian-Ocean.html>
2. Christian Bueger, "Somali pirates are back in action. A strong global response is needed," *Safe Seas*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.safeseas.net/piracy-2024/>
3. Christian Bueger, Timothy Edmunds and Jan Stockbruegger, "Securing the Seas A Comprehensive Assessment of Global Maritime Security," *UNIDIR* (2024)
4. Lucia Bird, Julia Stanyard, Vel Moonien and Riana Raymonde Randrianarisoa, "The evolving illicit drug trade in the western Indian ocean," *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* (June, 2021) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GITOC-Changing-Tides-The-evolving-illicit-drug-trade-in-the-western-Indian-Ocean.pdf>

Session 8: Counter ToC Collaboration: Maritime Surveillance and Narcotics Interdiction

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Provide an overview of a maritime narcotics interdiction case conducted in the Western Indian Ocean, taking participants through the different national and regional agencies involved in coordinating maritime surveillance and the interdiction process, including anti-narcotics and maritime law enforcement agencies.
- Discuss the authorities, mandate, rules of engagement, roles, responsibilities, and chain of command across different agencies involved in the interdiction case.
- Distill lessons learned on navigating and overcoming complex jurisdictional arrangements and institutional barriers to coordinating surveillance and maritime narcotics interdiction.

Background:

Numerous illicit flows pass through the Western Indian Ocean, with narcotics being the most common. The coastal and island states of Eastern and Southern Africa have a longstanding history of involvement in illicit drug cultivation, production, use, and smuggling and trafficking.³⁴ Currently, the region serves as both a major transit hub and a destination market for various illegal drugs. Significant quantities of cocaine, heroin, synthetic drugs like methamphetamine and tramadol, and psychoactive substances such as cannabinoids and stimulants arrive and transit through the region from locations such as Afghanistan (including via Pakistan), India, China, and Latin America. There are four transnational maritime drug trafficking routes in the region: the southern route, the lusophone route, the Asian route and the Indo-Pacific route (see figure 1 below).

In response, several maritime security cooperation initiatives, agreements, joint ventures and treaties have been established. Most of these initiatives have been led by foreign actors with longstanding interests in the region, including the United States, India, France, the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU), and the United Arab Emirates. More recently, China and Japan have also entered this space. Among the most prominent maritime security coordination efforts to counter maritime-based narcotics trafficking is the Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). This is one of five multilateral naval task forces conducting maritime security operations in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

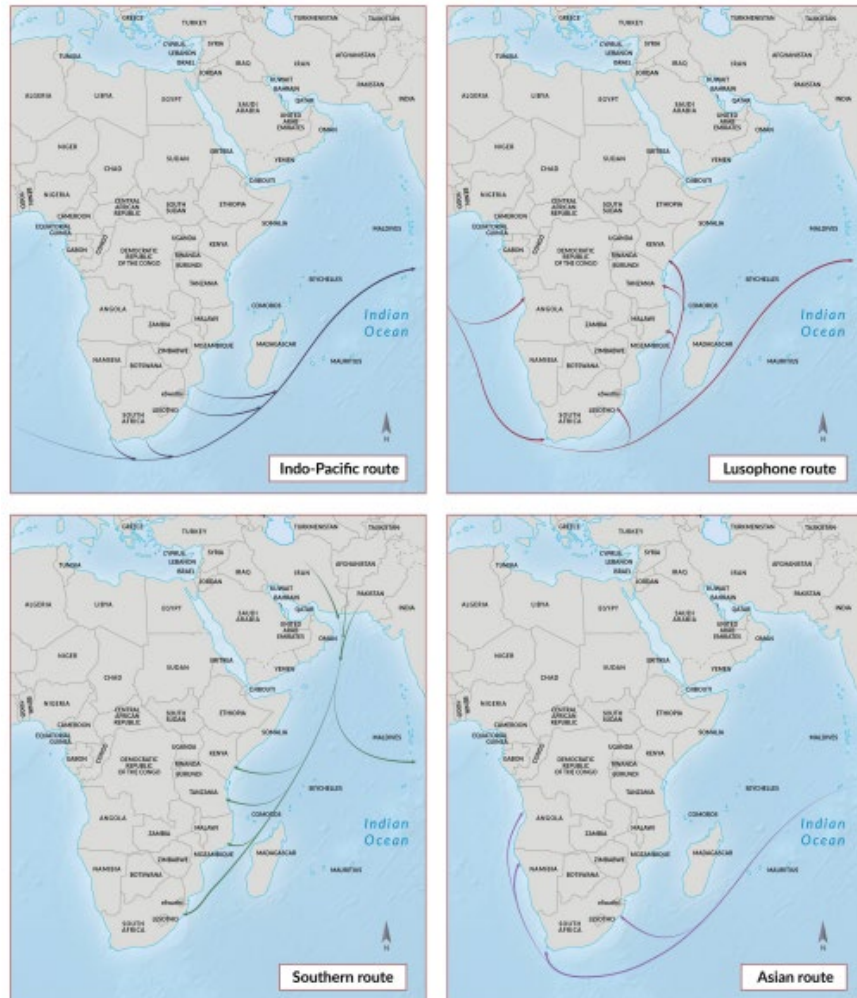
³⁴ See the following for more information Jason Eligh, “Illicit drug markets of Eastern and Southern Africa: An overview of production, supply and use,” *The Eastern & Southern Commission on Drugs The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* (April, 2021) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Jason-Eligh-Illicit-drug-markets-of-Eastern-and-Southern-Africa-GI-TOC-April-2021.pdf>

Several other projects exist in the region. Under the EU-supported Maritime Security Programme (MASE) programme, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) works through the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) and the Regional Coordination Operational Centre (RCOC) to counter maritime-based narcotics trafficking, among other illicit activities, with some operational success. The EU and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also have other initiatives aimed at improving the region's capacity to address drug trafficking.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Policing the vast WIO region is daunting for several reasons. First, tracking the maritime vessels transporting narcotics requires intelligence, but much of this intelligence is dependent on automatic identification system (AIS) data which is often incomplete and/or incomprehensible. Moreover, small boats may not be required to carry AIS, and even AIS-equipped vessels can disable the system, rendering them 'invisible'. Second, several African coastal and island states in the WIO lack sufficient maritime surveillance and enforcement capabilities (including at the prosecutorial and judicial levels) to counter maritime narcotics trafficking on their own. Third, complexities around sovereignty and jurisdictional boundaries often limit the mandates and rules of engagement among regional and international actors, making it difficult to achieve legal finish, though efforts are being made by states in the region to overcome these difficulties.

This session provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities different regional and international initiatives face in countering maritime-based narcotics trafficking. Participants will also draw lessons learned on navigating and overcoming complex jurisdictional arrangements and institutional barriers to coordinating surveillance and maritime narcotics interdiction.

Figure 1: Key transnational maritime drug flows in Eastern and Southern Africa
 (Source: The Eastern & Southern Commission on Drugs, 2023)



Discussion Questions:

1. What are the main challenges your country is experiencing in its efforts to address drug trafficking across the WIO?
2. At the national level, what improvements in legal frameworks and enforcement methods/capabilities are needed to improve maritime narcotics interdiction?
3. How can national actors better pull together limited resources to coordinate joint operations at sea through bodies like the RCOC? What tools and mechanisms exist to support coordination of operations?
4. What role can international partners continue to play in enhancing national capacities to address drug trafficking in the WIO? What support needs to be prioritized?

Further Readings:

1. ESACD, "Maritime-based drug trafficking in Eastern and Southern Africa: An Overview," *The Eastern & Southern Commission on Drugs & The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* (August, 2023)
<https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Maritime-based-drug-trafficking-in-Eastern-and-Southern-Africa-An-overview-GI-TOC-August-2023.pdf>
2. Jason Eligh, "Illicit drug markets of Eastern and Southern Africa: An overview of production, supply and use," *The Eastern & Southern Commission on Drugs The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* (April, 2021)
<https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Jason-Eligh-Illicit-drug-markets-of-Eastern-and-Southern-Africa-GI-TOC-April-2021.pdf>
3. Lucia Bird, Julia Stanyard, Vel Moonien and Riana Raymonde Randrianarisoa, "The evolving illicit drug trade in the western Indian ocean," *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime* (June, 2021)
<https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/GITOC-Changing-Tides-The-evolving-illicit-drug-trade-in-the-western-Indian-Ocean.pdf>
4. CMF, "CTF 150: Maritime Security," *Combined Maritime Forces*,
<https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-150-maritime-security/>

Session 9: Key Takeaways & Next Steps

Format: Plenary presentation

Objectives:

- Identify key takeaways from the seminar and the brief backs delivered by the discussion groups.
- Engage in a roundtable discussion on the feasibility of the proposals delivered by the discussion groups during their brief backs.
- Reflect on potential for further development and operationalization of a sub-regional maritime security architecture for Eastern and Southern Africa.
- Catalyze actionable next steps towards improved coordination among participating states to counter transnational organized crime across land and sea.

Background:

This session of the workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on the previous five days, identifying gaps and strengths in African coastal and island states' efforts to improve national and regional coordination to counter shared maritime security threats. This session will also discuss the practical next steps that participants can take to improve greater coordination and collaboration across national, subregional, regional, and international levels of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). Participants will also have an opportunity to discuss strategies for the continued development and operationalization of a shared maritime security architecture for African coastal and island states in the WIO.

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflecting on the last five days of the program, what steps should national, regional and international actors take to improve coordination in the WIO upon returning home?
2. What do you expect from any follow-on programming on maritime security in the WIO organized by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies?
3. What do you expect from the following upcoming engagements and meetings in the WIO:
 - a. High Level Meeting
 - b. Cutlass Express planning meeting
 - c. IOC meetings
 - d. Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities in the Western Indian Ocean