

U.S., Seychelles Conduct Bilateral Maritime Security engagements



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[By U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs and U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Public Affairs](#)

NAPLES, Italy –

Over the course of 7 days from March 14-21, 2024, United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) personnel worked alongside their counterparts in the Seychelles Coast Guard during multiple bilateral maritime security engagements in Seychelles' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

These events included identifying vessels suspected in

engaging in illicit activity or illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Seychelles' EEZ, which extends into significant portions of East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean. After identification, the U.S. and Seychelles teamed up to intercept vessels of interest to conduct compliant boardings of Seychelles-flagged vessels, ensuring adherence to Seychelles Maritime law.

"Our cooperation on maritime security is a visible sign of our mutual goal of a more secure and prosperous Indian Ocean Region," said U.S. Embassy Seychelles Chargé d'Affaires, Adham Loutfi. "It gives me enormous satisfaction to know that Seychelles and the United States continue to work side by side—demonstrating great dedication, courage, and sacrifice—to ensure the safety and security of our maritime spaces."

These bilateral engagements come immediately after the East African maritime exercise Cutlass Express 2024, which was hosted by Djibouti, Kenya and the Seychelles. Cutlass Express focused on a variety of maritime security and stability issues, providing invaluable training and realistic scenarios for partners and Allies that they can then apply in real world operations, as is the case here.

"The 2024 enactment of the U.S.-Seychelles Bilateral agreement is the second major operation performed with our key Indian Ocean partner, Seychelles Coast Guard, since the agreement was signed in 2021," said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Chief of law enforcement operations at U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. "Seychelles is a distinctly maritime nation, committed to meeting obligations to counter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing as well as deterring illicit maritime activity. The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to performing combined operations with our highly capable counterparts in the Seychelles Coast Guard to stem such global problems. Training on law enforcement tactics, practicing information exchange, and then working together in operational law enforcement patrols, bolsters maritime security in a perfect

demonstration of the U.S. and Seychelles' commitment to keeping the international rules-based order in this region."

Seychelles Special Forces, agents from Seychelles Maritime Safety Authority, the Seychelles Fishery Authority, and the U.S. Coast Guard kicked off the bilateral engagement on March 14. From day one, the team completed joint small boat sorties and maritime operations center communication rehearsals as part of a harmonization period to bring the team together. Once underway aboard the Seychelles Coast Guard ship SAYA DE MALHA, their meticulous planning and pre-underway coordination was evident as their efforts led to eight vessel boardings and over 700 nautical miles steamed throughout the West Indian Ocean.

This also continues a history of maritime cooperation between the United States and the Seychelles, as both nations are committed to preserving peace and stability, upholding freedom of the seas in a manner consistent with international law, maintaining the unimpeded flow of commerce, and opposing any attempt to use coercion or force to settle disputes. In addition to Coast Guard operations and the Cutlass Express series of exercises, the Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) conducted a port visit in Victoria in July 2022, and U.S. Navy Divers have collaborated with Seychellois Divers to conduct survey and salvage missions in the Seychelles as recently as January 2023, demonstrating the diversity of cooperation between the two nations in the maritime domain.

The Coast Guard Atlantic Area located in Portsmouth, Virginia, is responsible for overseeing all Coast Guard operations from the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. Naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.