Exercise Obangame Express Closes 15th Iteration in Cameroon

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Exercise Obangame Express 2026 officially concluded during a ceremony in Douala, Cameroon, on April 30. *Photo credit: U.S. Navy*

Exercise Obangame Express 2026 officially concluded during a ceremony in Douala, Cameroon, host nation for the 15th iteration, on April 30. The ceremony marked the conclusion of three weeks of training for participants from 30 nations across Africa, Europe, South America and the U.S. reinforcing regional collaboration and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

“As this exercise concludes, our work is not over. Obangame Express is not simply an annual event; it is a catalyst for

continuous cooperation," said Capt. Andrew Cleeves, exercise director for Obangame Express 2026. "I challenge you to maintain the networks you have built, to keep the lines of communication open, and to make 'togetherness' a daily practice."

Obangame Express, the largest multinational maritime exercise in West and Central Africa, is an annual event facilitated by U.S. 6th Fleet and sponsored by U.S. Africa Command. Obangame means "togetherness" in the Fang language to symbolize the partnerships built and strengthened through the collaborative effort.

This year, participants worked together from Maritime Operations Centers located across the Gulf of Guinea and from ships at sea, focusing on countering illicit maritime activity and improving communication and information sharing between nations. With over 30 nations working together across the 5 Yaounde Code of Conduct zones in maritime operations centers and at sea, partners operated in real-time to conduct complex scenarios including piracy interdiction, illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing enforcement and search-and-rescue operations.

"With piracy, illegal fishing, various forms of trafficking and attacks faced on the maritime environment, our response must be commensurate with the challenges: concerted, structured, and sustainable," said Vice Adm. Jean Mendoua, chief of naval staff of the Cameroon navy. "Cameroon, faithful to its international commitments, will continue to play its full role in this collective dynamic."

In addition to at-sea training, subject matter experts from participating nations led classroom instruction on topics such as maritime law and interdiction, medical readiness, and command-and-control techniques. These exchanges are vital for building long-term cooperation and understanding among the partner nations.

“Every time you demonstrate the capability to counter piracy, you are safeguarding the flow of global commerce that fuels economic growth for the entire continent,” said Cleeves. “Maritime security is the bedrock of economic prosperity.”

Participating nations in OE26 include: Angola, Benin, Belgium, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Togo, Tunisia and the United States.

OE26 is one of three regional maritime “Express” series exercises led by U.S. 6th Fleet as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide collaborative opportunities to African forces and international partners to address maritime security concerns.

Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allies, international partners, and other U.S. government departments and agencies to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.