

# International Naval Forces Partner in Seychelles to Build Cooperation



Cutlass Express participating forces perform visit, board, search, and seizure training in Victoria, Seychelles, Feb. 15. Cutlass Express, sponsored by U.S. Africa Command and conducted by U.S. Naval Forces Africa, is designed to improve regional cooperation among participating nations in order to increase maritime safety and security in the East Africa regions. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Daniel Charest*

MANAMA, Bahrain – The world's largest multinational naval partnership, Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), launched a two-week mission in the Indian Ocean island nation of the Seychelles with other international organizations Sept. 18 to strengthen regional collaboration and enhance operational readiness, said Combined Maritime Forces public affairs.

CMF is leading Operation Southern Readiness in partnership with the Seychelles People's Defence Force, European Union

Naval Force, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and India which began partnering with CMF earlier this year. This is CMF's first iteration of Operation Southern Readiness.

"Seychelles is a strong regional maritime partner and we are very grateful for them hosting this new opportunity," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and CMF. "We are also excited to work with other international partners, including India, to train and build capacity in a vibrant way."

Nations including Australia, Canada, France, India, Italy, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, the United Kingdom and the United States are slated to participate with personnel, ships and aircraft during several training events.

Multinational forces will conduct training on visit, board, search and seizure techniques; search and rescue operations; maritime law and information sharing.

"The training is designed to enable our partners to meet face-to-face and learn from one another and is only possible because of the teamwork and commitment from all partners," said Royal Canadian Navy Cmdr. Alexis Dieryckx, CMF's senior mission planner. "It's all about building relationships because relationships are the fundamental building blocks for greater collaboration at sea."

CMF consists of 34 member nations whose forces operate in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Northern Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

CMF nations are united in upholding international rules-based order to protect the free flow of commerce, ensure regional maritime security and deter illicit activity by non-state actors.