Middle East Naval Coalition Expands with Seychelles as 10th Member



Graphic image depicting the flag of the Indian Ocean island nation of the Seychelles and its shoreline, Sept. 23. *U.S. ARMY / Sgt. Terry Vongsouthi*

MANAMA, Bahrain – U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) announced Oct. 19 the Indian Ocean island nation of the Seychelles has joined the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC), a multinational maritime coalition established in 2019 to deter attacks on commercial shipping in the Middle East.

Seychelles becomes the tenth member of IMSC and its operational arm, Coalition Task Force Sentinel, which also welcomed Romania in March. Headquartered in Bahrain, IMSC is led by NAVCENT.

“We are very excited to now welcome Seychelles, another great maritime partner in the region,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. “Having representation from countries all over the world makes us a stronger team.”

IMSC was formed in July 2019 in response to increased threats to merchant mariners transiting international waters in the Middle East. Coalition Task Force Sentinel was established four months later to deter state-sponsored malign activity and reassure the merchant shipping industry in the Bab al-Mandeb and Strait of Hormuz.

“Through our presence across the Middle East, we continue to strengthen our coalition and build new partnerships while reassuring those who operate in this region,” said United Kingdom Royal Navy Commodore Ben Aldous, commander of IMSC and Coalition Task Force Sentinel.

In addition to Seychelles and Romania, IMSC’s member-nations include Albania, Bahrain, Estonia, Lithuania, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

Seychelles is also a member of Combined Maritime Forces, another major naval partnership based in the Middle East led by Cooper.