U.S., Cameroon Boost Maritime Security with Unmanned Systems During Obangame Express



Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Crafts (GARC) deploy in formation with the Brazilian Amazonas-class offshore patrol vessel Araguari (P122) during a live robotic and autonomous systems (RAS) demonstration with Commander, Task Force (CTF) 66 during Exercise Obangame Express 2026 in Douala, Cameroon, April 25, 2026. (U.S. Navy)
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U.S. Sixth Fleet successfully integrated advanced unmanned surface vessels (USVs) during Exercise Obangame Express 2026 in Douala, Came

As part of the exercise, Commander Task Force 66 (CTF 66)

conducted USV training initiatives in the port of Douala, integrating Lightfish and Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) platforms to demonstrate expeditionary unmanned systems operations.

During the training, shoreside operators employed Lightfish systems to enhance maritime domain awareness, enabling the detection and identification of simulated malign actors and threat vessels. Once identified, high-speed GARC assets were deployed to respond and conduct intercept operations, showcasing a layered and responsive unmanned capability.

The ability to deploy a diverse package of USVs allows for the detection, identification, and interception of maritime threats with minimal infrastructure. This capability significantly increases operational reach and enhances security in contested or remote regions.

Integrating deployable USVs into the fleet provides a rapid-response capability previously unavailable to surface forces. These systems allow the U.S. to project power into contested waters within hours, bypassing the lengthy transit times required for traditional vessels stationed in Europe.

“On short notice, USV packages can be employed with a small operational footprint to protect ports, escort high-value assets and deter threats to critical maritime infrastructure, offering a flexible and scalable solution to emerging security challenges throughout the world,” said Rear Adm. Kelly Ward, commander of U.S. Sixth Fleet’s Task Force 66. “Obangame Express provided an invaluable opportunity to exercise this capability while training alongside our Cameroonian partners.”

This capability is not limited to West Africa. The Navy’s expeditionary unmanned systems model enables rapid global deployment, providing near-immediate maritime security and

warfighting support to allies and partners worldwide.

Obangame Express is one of three regional maritime “Express” series exercises led by U.S. Sixth 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. Sixth 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.