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INTERVIEW WITH REAR
ADMIRAL GODWIN LIVINUS
BESSIONG, CHIEF OF THE
NAVAL STAFF - GHANA NAVY

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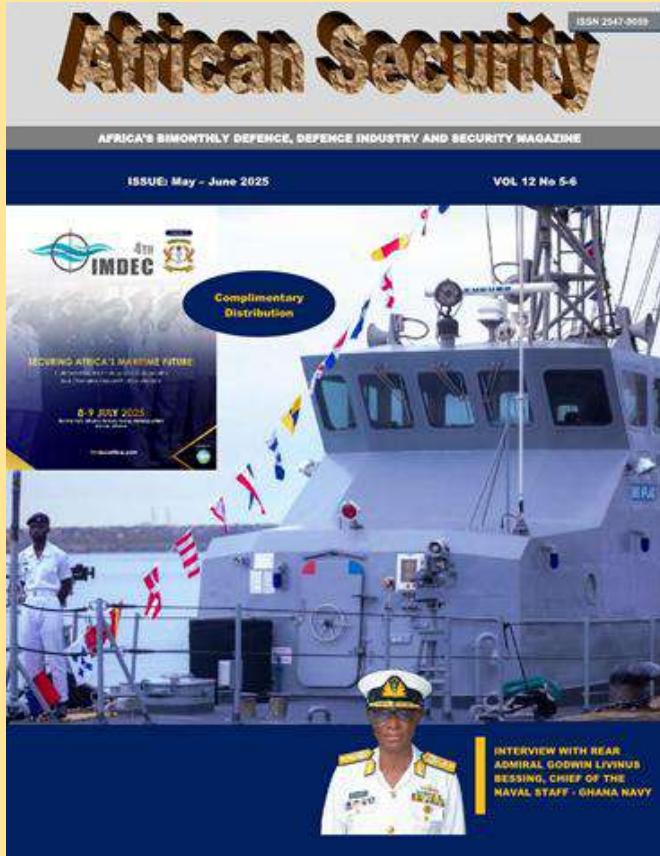
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Editor-in-Chief:

Dimitrios Angelopoulos M. Sc.

Editor: Rear Admiral (rtd) George Kypriotis

Special Editor's Advisor: Col (rtd) Michael Boampong

Marketing & Sales: Dionysis Antonopoulos

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• AFRICA

M&D Ghana services Ltd
P.O. BOX CT 4928 CANTOMENTS
ACCRA, GHANA
TEL: +233208115089/+233547473287
mdghanaservices@gmail.com

• EUROPE: Stephen Barnard

CEO, ADJUTANT MTCT: +49 228 3500886
M: +44 7984 033154 F: +44 1252 315324,
stephen.barnard@web.de
stephen.adjutant@gmail.com

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Modernization of African Navies-Capabilities, Challenges, and Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

In an era of mounting maritime threats and a growing focus on Africa's blue economy, the modernization of African navies is increasingly essential. As coastal nations look to defend their sovereignty, safeguard economic zones, and contribute to regional stability, naval forces across the continent are investing in fleet upgrades, infrastructure, and international partnerships.

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF AFRICA'S SEAS

Africa's coastline spans over 30,000 kilometers, touching the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Red Sea. With over 90% of the continent's trade conducted by sea, maritime security directly impacts food security, energy supply, and economic development.

Key Concerns:

- Piracy (Gulf of Guinea, Horn of Africa)
- Illegal fishing and environmental degradation
- Protection of offshore oil and gas infrastructure
- Smuggling and human trafficking
- Maritime terrorism and piracy resurgence

DRIVERS OF MODERNIZATION

Security Threats

Persistent piracy, terrorism, and illicit trafficking have pushed naval forces to bolster coastal surveillance and patrol capabilities.

Economic and Strategic Interests

Protection of shipping lanes, fisheries, and offshore assets is vital. Key regions like the Mozambique Channel and Suez Canal hold global significance.

Geopolitical Competition

Rising foreign influence from China, Russia, Turkey, and India has spurred modernization efforts—both to assert national sovereignty and benefit from training, technology transfers, and joint exercises.

Blue Economy Goals

Maritime resources represent a major growth opportunity, especially in sectors like fisheries, offshore energy, port logistics, and tourism.

NAVAL UPGRADES

Egypt

Egypt's naval modernization program has been powered by a mix of acquisitions from France, Germany, Italy, Russia, China, and domestic production.

France

- FREMM Frigate (Tahya Misr): A powerful multi-role warship equipped with advanced anti-air, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare systems.
- Gowind-class Corvettes: Egypt ordered four; three have been built locally at Alexandria Shipyard, marking a milestone in naval industrial capability.

Germany

- MEKO A200 Frigates: Four units were ordered, with deliveries beginning in 2023–2024. These versatile warships provide enhanced anti-air and anti-surface capabilities.
- Type 209 Submarines: Egypt has received four modern diesel-electric submarines from ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS), bolstering undersea warfare strength.

Italy

- Fincantieri Frigates: Egypt acquired two Bergamini-class frigates (Italian version of FREMM) and is reportedly negotiating for additional surface vessels.

Russia

- Fast-attack missile craft, coastal defense systems, and naval cooperation agreements have reinforced Egypt's non-NATO partnerships.

China

- Limited equipment transfers and potential for technology cooperation, especially in surveillance and radar systems.

NIGERIA

Nigeria has diversified its procurement sources and entered strategic partnerships with foreign and local shipbuilders. Key acquisitions include:

1. Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)

- China-built P-18N OPVs: *NNS Centenary* and *NNS Unity*, delivered 2014–2015, provide long-range patrol capability.
- Dearsan OPVs (Turkey): Two OPV-76 class vessels ordered in 2022–2023, equipped with advanced surveillance and combat systems; deliveries expected by 2025.

2. Fast Patrol & Interceptor Craft

- Israeli Shaldag-class boats, Chinese patrol craft, and locally constructed Seaward Defence Boats (SDBs) like *NNS Andoni*, *Karaduwa*, and *Oji* are in active service.

3. Amphibious & Logistic Support Ships

- Refurbished landing ship *NNS Kada*, commissioned in 2022, enhances regional transport, humanitarian, and peacekeeping support.

SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Navy is pursuing a gradual modernization strategy focused on coastal security and regional stability. Key developments include the delivery of new Multi-Mission Inshore Patrol Vessels under Project Biro

- SAS King Sekhukhune I (delivered 2022)
- SAS Adam Kok I (launched 2023)
- Third vessel expected in 2025

and a new hydrographic survey vessel to replace SAS Protea. Existing Valour-class frigates and Heroine-class submarines are undergoing maintenance and mid-life upgrades. Despite limited defense budgets and logistical challenges, the Navy remains committed to safeguarding vital sea lanes, supporting peacekeeping, and enhancing maritime domain awareness. South Africa's naval vision balances modest resources with strategic necessity in one of the world's busiest maritime regions.

MOROCCO

The Royal Moroccan Navy is steadily modernizing to enhance maritime security in the Atlantic Ocean and

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THE DNA OF SHIPBUILDING





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Western Mediterranean. Key acquisitions include FREMM-class frigate *Mohammed VI*, SIGMA-class frigates from the Netherlands, and coastal patrol vessels to counter smuggling and illegal migration. Morocco is investing in surveillance systems, naval aviation, and amphibious capabilities to protect its Exclusive Economic Zone, ports, and offshore resources. With growing regional ambitions and strategic partnerships with France, the U.S., and Spain, Morocco is positioning its navy as a key maritime force in North Africa and a contributor to regional maritime stability.

GHANA

The Ghana Navy is enhancing its capabilities to secure its maritime domain along the Gulf of Guinea. Facing challenges such as piracy, illegal fishing, and oil theft, Ghana has acquired new patrol vessels from China, Singapore and Germany, including the Snake-class, the River -class and Defender-class ships. The Navy is also investing in maritime surveillance, radar systems, and special operations. Ghana's participation in the Yaoundé Architecture and exercises like Obangame Express reflects its growing regional role. Future priorities include acquiring offshore patrol vessels and improving naval infrastructure to protect its Exclusive Economic Zone and vital offshore oil and gas assets.

KENYA

The Kenya Navy is modernizing to enhance maritime security along its strategic Indian Ocean coastline. Key upgrades include the acquisition of Shujaa-class and Jasiri-class offshore patrol vessels, enhanced coastal radar systems, and modern naval training facilities. Kenya is boosting its ability to combat piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing while protecting growing offshore oil and gas interests. Strategic cooperation with the U.S., UK, and India supports capacity building and joint exercises. With investments in surveillance, amphibious capability, and maritime infrastructure, Kenya aims to become a key naval force in East Africa and a pillar of regional maritime stability.

TUNISIA

The Tunisian Navy is focused on modernizing its fleet to strengthen maritime security in the Central Mediterranean. Key developments include the acquisition of multi-mission patrol vessels from Italy and the U.S., including Swiftships-built 65-foot and 85-foot boats, and upgrades to older vessels. Tunisia has also invested in coastal radar systems, maritime surveillance, and naval

training. Priorities include countering illegal migration, arms trafficking, and terrorism at sea. With strong support from NATO, the EU, and bilateral partners, Tunisia's navy is transitioning into a more capable force, securing its territorial waters and supporting regional maritime cooperation initiatives.

ALGERIA

The Algerian Navy has undergone significant modernization, transforming into one of North Africa's most capable maritime forces. Major acquisitions include MEKO A-200 frigates from Germany, Kilo-class submarines from Russia, and C28A corvettes from China. Algeria has expanded its naval aviation with helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft and invested in modern shipyards and coastal surveillance systems.

Focused on protecting offshore resources, securing sea lines of communication, and countering smuggling and terrorism, Algeria aims to project power across the Western Mediterranean. Its growing naval presence reflects strategic partnerships, and a doctrine focused on deterrence and maritime self-reliance.

SENEGAL

The Senegalese Navy is rapidly modernizing to address maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea, including piracy, illegal fishing, and trafficking. Recent acquisitions include OPVs from France and Israel, notably the Walo-class patrol boats and the Shaldag MK II fast attack craft. Senegal is also set to receive OPVs under a contract with Piriou. These efforts are supported by improved naval bases, maritime surveillance systems, and training with partners like France and the U.S. As Senegal's offshore oil and gas sector grows, its navy is evolving into a key security actor in West Africa's maritime domain.

BUILDING DOMESTIC INDUSTRY

African states are increasingly focused on reducing reliance on foreign contractors through domestic shipbuilding and support facilities.

- Egypt – Alexandria Shipyard building corvettes
- South Africa – Armscor and Southern African Shipyards for maintenance and upgrades
- Nigeria – Naval Dockyard Limited in Lagos supporting vessel repair

CONCLUSION

Africa's naval forces are at a turning point. As maritime threats grow and economic stakes rise, countries must prioritize smart, sustainable, and cooperative approaches to naval modernization. With a shared vision and adequate support, African navies can become powerful guardians of prosperity, peace, and sovereignty in the continent's maritime future.

Dimitrios Angelopoulos M.Sc.
Captain (Rtd)HN
Advisor on Defence and Maritime Security issues



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CATIC EXECUTIVES CALL ON CNS



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Executives of China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation (CATIC) led by the Director for Africa Department, Mr Fang Xu paid a courtesy visit to the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Rear Admiral Godwin Livinus Bessing, at the Naval Headquarters on Monday 2 June 2025. The purpose of the visit was to introduce the Corporation to the Ghana Navy and explore potential avenues for future collaborations and partnership. Rear Admiral Bessing expressed gratitude for the visit and reaffirmed the Ghana Navy's commitment to partnering with CATIC to leverage their expertise to enhance the Navy's maritime operational capabilities through technological advancements.

ITALIAN AMBASSADOR PAYS COURTESY CALL ON CNS



The Italian Ambassador to Ghana, Madam Laura Ranalli paid a courtesy call on the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Rear Admiral Godwin Livinus Bessing, at the Naval Headquarters on Thursday 19 June 2025. The meeting aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation between Ghana and Italy. Madam Ranalli expressed her gratitude to the CNS, highlighting possible areas of collaboration in the areas of digitalization, education, agriculture and a health initiative aimed at strengthening hospital infrastructure. The CNS commended the initiative which aligns with national development and assured of his commitment to assist in the success of the project. He also stated the collaboration can create an opportunity for bilateral training which can be a valuable tool for strengthening relationships between the two countries. The Ambassador was accompanied by the Italian Defence Attaché to Ghana, Colonel Davide Rosellini.

South African Navy

On 19 June 2025, Chief of the South African Navy, Vice Admiral Monde Lobese, conducted an official inspection at the Port of East London and Guild Theatre ahead of World Hydrography Day 2025.

The inspection at the port included powerful naval vessels, two Multi Mission Inshore Patrol Vessels, a Frigate and the SMB 1 Survey Vessel, currently docked for the upcoming celebrations and the public exhibition on 21 June 2025 at the Port of East London.

Such inspections are vital to ensure operational readiness, security coordination, and the successful execution of the Navy's outreach and educational objectives as it promotes the critical role of hydrography in maritime safety and national development.



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The African Market for Military Helicopters: Evolving Needs, Expanding Opportunities

As African nations face increasingly complex security challenges, ranging from terrorism and insurgency to border surveillance, disaster response, and resource protection, the role of rotary-wing aviation—particularly military helicopters—has become more critical than ever. With vast territories, often underdeveloped infrastructure, and diverse operational environments, helicopters offer African armed forces unmatched flexibility for rapid response, force projection, and humanitarian support.

In recent years, the African market for military helicopters has shown significant growth and diversification, drawing the attention of both traditional aerospace suppliers and new entrants aiming to establish a long-term presence on the continent. A combination of shifting operational needs, aging legacy fleets, and expanding regional threats has driven the demand for modern, multi-mission helicopters that can address both combat and support roles.

Helicopters are indispensable in the African context. The continent's geography—characterized by remote areas, mountains, deserts, dense forests, and underdeveloped transportation infrastructure—makes ground mobility challenging. Helicopters, with their vertical lift capability and ability to take off and land in confined areas, enable armed forces to conduct operations in otherwise inaccessible regions. They play an essential role in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, border surveillance, troop and cargo transport, medical evacuation, disaster relief, firefighting, and support for peacekeeping missions.

As many African militaries face budgetary constraints, there is a growing preference for multi-role helicopters capable of carrying out several types of missions with minimal configuration changes. This demand for flexible, rugged platforms is influencing procurement decisions. At the same time, the drive to modernize fleets—many of which are composed of aging Soviet-era Mi-8/17s or early-generation Western aircraft—is pushing governments to seek cost-effective yet capable alternatives. The fight against violent extremism in regions like the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Horn of Africa is a major driver of military helicopter investment. African forces require rapid mobility and air support in vast and unstable regions where conventional ground units struggle to maintain presence. Helicopters enable fast reaction times and force projection over difficult terrain, giving governments a strategic edge in asymmetric warfare.

Helicopter acquisitions are also increasingly linked to international partnerships. Procurement packages often include not only the aircraft but also pilot and crew training, spare parts, and long-term maintenance support. Countries like the United States, France, China, Turkey, and Russia have all offered training programs and technical assistance to bolster helicopter capabilities in African partner states, enhancing defense cooperation and influence in the region.

In North Africa, countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are significant operators of both Western and Russian helicopters. Egypt fields a large number of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and Mi-17 transport helicopters, while Algeria has invested in Mi-28NE and Ka-52 attack helicopters from Russia. In a notable development in 2025, Tunisia signed a purchase agreement for 12 SUBARU Bell 412EPX helicopters—the first of this variant in Africa. These aircraft will serve multi-role security and military operations, demonstrating Tunisia's commitment to modernizing its fleet with a reliable and proven Western platform.

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West African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana are expanding their rotary-wing capabilities to support counterinsurgency operations. Nigeria has acquired Mi-35M attack helicopters and AW109 utility helicopters, and in 2020, it took delivery of Bell 412EP aircraft for the Nigerian Air Force. Ghana, known for its stability and regional leadership, is gradually upgrading its helicopter fleet with assistance from both Western and Asian suppliers. The International Maritime Defense Exhibition and Conference (IMDEC), held in Ghana, has become an important venue for showcasing aerial capabilities, especially in support of maritime security and anti-piracy operations.

In East Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda have invested in military helicopters to reinforce internal security and support peacekeeping operations. Kenya operates MD 500 helicopters and received UH-1H Hueys from the United States. Ethiopia, with one of the larger air forces in the region, remains a strong user of Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters. Somalia, with international support, is slowly rebuilding its air capabilities. Djibouti, due to its geostrategic location, hosts foreign military bases where helicopters play a key logistical and surveillance role.

Southern Africa is dominated by South Africa, which operates one of the continent's most advanced rotary-wing fleets. South Africa's Air Force uses the locally produced Rooivalk attack helicopter and the Oryx utility helicopter, based on the Aerospatiale Puma. Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia operate Mi-17s, while Botswana and Namibia maintain smaller rotary-wing fleets for national security and VIP transport.

In terms of suppliers, African militaries rely on a mix of American, European, Russian, Chinese, and more recently, Turkish manufacturers. Bell Textron has had a

longstanding presence in Africa, with platforms such as the Bell 412, Huey II, and Bell 505 in service. The new SUBARU Bell 412EPX is gaining traction as a rugged and versatile platform with proven mission capability, as evidenced by Tunisia's recent order.

Airbus Helicopters remains a major player, supplying models like the H125, H145M, and Cougar for military and government use. Airbus also supports many African countries involved in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Russian Helicopters continues to supply Mi-8/17 and Mi-35 helicopters across the continent, although geopolitical complications and sanctions have introduced logistical challenges.

Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) is aggressively expanding into Africa with the T129 ATAK attack helicopter and the Gökbey utility helicopter. These platforms are offered at competitive prices, often with favorable financing and support packages. China's AVIC has also gained ground by supplying Z-9 and Z-10 helicopters, frequently bundled with training and infrastructure support as part of broader defense cooperation deals. Leonardo of Italy provides models such as the AW109, AW139, and AW149, especially for VIP and dual-use roles.

Despite growing interest and activity, the African helicopter market faces several constraints. Defense budgets remain limited in many countries, forcing governments to prioritize critical capabilities. Operating and maintaining helicopters is expensive, and many countries lack local MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) capabilities. Training pilots and ground crews is another challenge, often requiring long-term investments and foreign assistance. Political instability and governance issues can also delay or derail procurement programs.

Nonetheless, the outlook for the military helicopter market in Africa is positive. Regional conflicts, border threats, and the need for rapid deployment capabilities will continue to drive demand. Countries such as Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana are expected to increase investment in air mobility. Suppliers who can offer competitive pricing, localized support, and reliable logistics will be best positioned to capitalize on these opportunities.

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Tunisian Navy Receives Two Island-Class Patrol Boats from the United States

The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship, USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), arrived in Tunis, Tunisia, for a scheduled port visit on April 17, to reinforce the enduring partnership between the United States and Tunisia.

On the same occasion, the Tunisian Navy conducted a commissioning ceremony for two American 110-foot (34-meter) Island Class Patrol Boats, which the United States transferred to Tunisia, the latest in a series of U.S. equipment contributions that strengthen Tunisia's capacity to secure its maritime borders and advance regional security.

As the flagship of U.S. 6th Fleet, Mount Whitney plays a key role in maritime security and cooperation throughout the Mediterranean and African theaters. The visit underscores the U.S. commitment to regional stability and its enduring strategic partnership with Tunisia, a U.S. major non-NATO Ally.

"The USS Mount Whitney's visit is especially meaningful because it falls during the 220th anniversary of the 1805 Battle of Derna, when, through the support and cooperation of Tunisia, the U.S. military defeated maritime terrorism to make a more stable and secure region for commerce and economic development," U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia Joey Hood said.

During the visit, the ship hosted a reception, welcoming military, diplomatic, and civic leaders from Tunisia. The event served as a platform to celebrate bilateral cooperation and discuss shared goals in maritime security, regional defense, and future engagements.

The U.S. and Tunisia have worked closely for decades on military training, professional development, and counterterrorism efforts. This visit by Mount Whitney adds another chapter to the strong legacy of collaboration between the two countries.

"This visit underscores the vital role strong partnerships play in ensuring maritime security," Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet Vice Adm. J. T. Anderson said. "We are grateful for the opportunity to engage with our Tunisian counterparts and reaffirm our commitment to working together for a more stable and secure Mediterranean."

Mount Whitney, forward deployed to Gaeta, Italy, operates with a combined crew of U.S. Sailors and Military Sealift Command civil service mariners in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. The U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

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INTERVIEW WITH REAR ADMIRAL GODWIN LIVINUS BESSING CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF-GHANA NAVY



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How would you define the nature of the maritime security challenges currently facing Ghana and the Gulf of Guinea region?

The maritime security challenges currently facing Ghana and the broader Gulf of Guinea (GoG) can be described as volatile, complex, evolving, transnational and multifaceted.

Although the GoG remains relatively stable compared to other maritime regions, global events such as kinetic attacks on shipping by Houthis in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea has diverted shipping routes through the GoG, thus increasing traffic in the GoG. This shift presents both opportunities and challenges, including the risk of criminal activities like hijacking and theft within the GoG. Like other GoG countries, myriad persistent threats exist, such as piracy, armed robbery, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and marine pollution. These pose substantial risks and militate against harnessing their full potential.

In what ways does the posture and strategic orientation of the Ghana Navy align with or complement the broader defense framework of Nigeria and other regional partners?

The posture and strategic orientation of the Ghana Navy align with and complement the broader defense framework of Nigeria and other GoG countries through regional cooperation, shared operational strategies and multinational security initiatives. Nigeria's efforts at retooling its Fleet and launching its Deep Blue Project constitute great efforts at fighting piracy in that area of the Region. To align herself, Ghana signed a joint communique with Nigeria to enhance regional collaboration for improved maritime security in July 2021. Both Navies agreed to collaborate to build personnel capacity and optimise available maritime domain awareness infrastructure in both countries.

The Communique encouraged the enactment of anti-piracy laws to facilitate and harmonise procedures for the arrest, detention, and prosecution of persons and vessels engaged in piracy and other maritime crimes across the region. The Communique also encouraged both Navies to work together to draw up a Standard Operating Procedure across national maritime boundaries in the Region. Additionally, the biannual International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference held here in Accra also brings together senior officers and maritime experts worldwide to discuss innovative plans to curb piracy and other maritime security challenges in Africa, particularly the GoG.



How does the Ghana Navy execute its core security missions while also fulfilling national responsibilities and international commitments?

The Ghana Navy's core security missions are divided into wartime roles and peacetime roles. The wartime roles include defensive and offensive tasks such as insulating the Coast of Ghana against sea-borne invasion, providing sea transportation for land forces and keeping our sea lanes of communication open in the face of any form of instability. The peacetime roles on the other hand are purely policing, law enforcement and humanitarian roles. Aside from its traditional roles, the Ghana Navy recognises that maritime sector governance is a collective responsibility.

The Ghana Navy has therefore taken specific initiatives with a view to ensuring a more secure and safe maritime domain. The Ghana Navy continues to collaborate with local stakeholder agencies such as the Ghana Maritime Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority, Marine Police, Narcotics Control Commission among others. This collaboration has ensured a safe and secure maritime domain for conducting multinational maritime operations in Ghana.

The Navy has also signed bilateral and multilateral agreements with allied and regional navies to build capacity and improve maritime security. Notably among these agreements are the signing of an MoU among ECOWAS Zone F member states for joint operations as well as participation in Operation ANUANZE, conducted by the Ghana and the Ivorian Navies.

What are the principal pillars of Ghana Navy policy today? Are there particular areas of modernization or doctrine development being prioritized?

The principal pillars of Ghana Navy's policy are to effectively patrol, monitor, and defend Ghana's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) against all maritime threats, including piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, and other transnational maritime crimes.

To achieve these, the Ghana Navy has ventured into the employment of drones to serve as force multipliers, thus enhancing the Navy's operations while reducing the burden on the limited available platforms. Additionally, the recent restructuring of the Ghana Navy has led to splitting of the Naval Dockyard Complex into the Naval Shipyard and the Naval Engineering Workshop. The 2 Units will continue to serve as the main technical and maintenance support bases for the Ghana Navy Fleet, with ultimate responsibility for the repairs of ships' machinery and equipment. The facilities also have potential commercial attraction when expanded to deliver shipbuilding and maintenance services.

What is the expected role of new Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) in Ghana's maritime operations? What are its key operational requirements and capabilities?

Maritime threats like piracy and armed robbery, Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and lingering maritime boundary disputes require a high state of readiness to confront them when they arise. Consequently, the acquisition of new OPVs would greatly ensure a constant presence at sea to conduct intentionally adequate patrols to ward off any would-be maritime criminal. Again, the vastness of Ghana's maritime domain requires platforms in GN's inventory with adequate endurance and range, speed and maneuverability, interdiction capabilities, advance sensors and communications, helicopter operations, crew comfort and sustainability as well as fitted armament for effective policing. The acquisition of OPVs would greatly serve that purpose.

Modern simulation technologies offer powerful tools for naval training. How does the Ghana Navy employ simulation assets to enhance maritime training and operational readiness?

The Ghana Navy employ simulation to enhance maritime training and operational readiness through Tabletop and computer assisted exercises internally for naval



personnel and jointly with maritime stakeholders. Examples of such exercises include emergency bridge simulation exercises to test Executive officers' ship handling capabilities, navigation skills and collision avoidance. The Ghana Navy, in improving professionalism and enhancing capacity of personnel in ship handling, has acquired a Full Mission Bridge Simulator (FMBS) through the support of the Danish Government for training Executive officers. The FMBS facility was commissioned to train personnel on how to manage their vessels especially when on duty at the bridge and thereby enhance operational readiness. The FMBS has been sited at the Naval Training Command (NAVTRAC), as part of the development of NAVTRAC into a Regional Centre of Excellence for maritime training for Ghanaian Naval Officers and other maritime stakeholders in Ghana and the subregion.

How important is the Ghana Navy's procurement strategy in supporting domestic industry? More broadly, how do you ensure that major acquisitions deliver lasting value to the national economy and industrial base?

Ghana Navy's current procurement strategy aims to add platforms to the Navy's inventory for vessels to remain at sea and prevent maritime criminals from freely engaging in their activities. In so doing, some of these vessels would be solely dedicated to fisheries protection and fisheries patrols to ensure that industrial trawling vessels have freedom of operations. This would actively support Ghana's economic aspirations by ensuring a secure maritime environment conducive to trade, fisheries, offshore energy operations, and infrastructural development. In summary, the acquisitions are based on evolving threat analysis and the protection of vital and strategic offshore resources that contribute to national development.

Finally, what is your long-term vision for the Ghana Navy in the 21st century, especially in terms of force development, regional leadership, and international cooperation?

The mission of the Ghana Navy is to develop and deploy maritime forces with the capability to ensure a safe, secure and clean maritime domain of Ghana in collaboration with other stakeholders in order to ensure a sustainable use of maritime domain.



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Hence leveraging on the mission, my vision is "to build and sustain a well-trained, mission-ready, motivated and professional naval force that safeguards Ghana's maritime interests, advances the blue economy, and actively contributes to national, regional and global maritime security, while upholding the enduring values and traditions of our Navy".

In that case, I will continuously enhance naval personnel's professional competencies by raising highly skilled, ethically grounded, and strategically minded personnel through continuous education, leadership grooming, and specialisation in emerging and contemporary maritime issues. Through this, I will maintain a combat-capable and operationally ready naval force through rigorous training, modern doctrine and investment in advance platforms and technologies for rapid deployment across Ghana's maritime domain. Moreover, my idea is to foster strong maritime partnerships and interoperability through joint exercises, information sharing, and active participation in regional and global maritime security frameworks such as the Yaoundé Architecture.





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NIGERIAN NAVY AT 69 - COMMISSIONING OF SHIPS HELICOPTERS AND BASE FLATS

The activities marking the 69th Anniversary of the Nigerian Navy reached an exciting crescendo on Saturday 31 May 2025 with the commissioning of 3 x Warships and induction of 3 x Helicopters into the Nigerian Navy.

The Commissioning Ceremony was done by the Honourable Minister of State for Defence (HMSOD), His Excellency Dr Bello Mohammed Matawalle MON and many dignitaries were present to celebrate with the Navy.

Those present included the Chairman Senate Committee for Defence, Senator Gbenga Daniel, the Chairman House of Representatives Committee on Navy, Honourable Yusuf Gagdi, the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Olufemi Oluyede, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar and former Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Samuel Afolayan (rtd) amongst others.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogalla who was the Chief Host, expressed profound gratitude to the President Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR for his visionary leadership and unflinching support to the Nigerian Navy.

The HMSOD, described the commissioning ceremony as a strategic move to secure Nigeria's maritime domain and safeguard its economic interest. He also lauded the President for his unwavering support to the Armed Forces. The 3 x Warships are fast patrol boats with high endurance named:

- NNS FARO
- NNS SHERE
- NNS IKOGOSI

while the 3 x Helicopters are **Agusta Westland (AW109) Trekker Helicopters** with visual call-signs; NN501, NN502 & NN503, suitable for Over the Horizon Patrols, Maritime Surveillance and Targeting.

It was a historic moment marking another significant milestone in the steady progress of the 3rd largest Navy in Africa. The day ended with the commissioning of the newly re-built Base Flats. The Base Flats comprise 207 single bedroom apartments for junior officers.





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FORGING NAVAL PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONS



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In continued efforts towards strategic maritime partnerships, Commander of the Kenya Navy, Major General Paul Otieno, took part in the International Maritime Defence Industry Exhibition (MADEX) 2025 held in Busan, South Korea. MADEX, held biennially, showcases cutting-edge developments in the global maritime defence sector. The 2025 edition highlighted the latest innovations in naval vessel technology and advanced weapon systems.

During the event, Major General Otieno engaged with key industry partners as well as holding bilateral discussions with the Republic of Korea Navy. The meeting focused on enhancing military cooperation and strengthening ties between the two naval forces. Additionally, Major General Otieno visited the Republic of Korea Navy Comrok Fleet on board Frigate Gyeongnam and Destroyer Class Sejong the Great.

MADEX 2025 was jointly organized by the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN), Korea International Trade Association (KITA), Republic of Korea Marine Corps, and the Association of the Republic of Korea Navy. It drew participation from over 100 delegates representing 29 countries.

Accompanying Commander Kenya Navy was Brigadier (Dr) Justino Muinde, Chief of Naval Medical Services at Kenya Navy Headquarters, Colonel Esther Wanjiku, Defence Attaché at the Kenyan Embassy in Japan and Lieutenant Colonel Gavin Kasyoka, GM Commercial Services at Kenya Shipyards Limited.

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES



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The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kenya, His Excellency KANG Hyung-shik, paid a courtesy call on the Commander Kenya Navy, Major General Paul Otieno, at the Kenya Navy Headquarters on 17 June 2025. His Excellency KANG Hyung-shik was accompanied by Managing Director of the Korea Overseas Infrastructure and Urban Development Corporation (KIND) Africa Office, Ms. Ji-Hye Choi, and Senior Researcher in Political Science, Dr. KIM Yejoo.

The visit aimed to advance bilateral discussions on maritime security, with emphasis on naval capability development and the strengthening of partnerships aimed at safeguarding shared maritime interests.

Discussions further explored avenues for collaboration in the defence industry and other areas of mutual interest within the maritime domain.

Furthermore, the meeting served to reaffirm the cordial and longstanding defence relations between the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Korea within the maritime sector. It underscored the shared commitment of both nations to contribute meaningfully to regional and international maritime security frameworks.

Present during the meeting was the Chief of Operations at the Kenya Navy Headquarters, Colonel Philip Mulumba, and the General Manager Production at Kenya Shipyards Limited, Colonel Hussein Athman Washenga.





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NVL Group understands the growing importance of the geostrategic aspects of the African continent in respect to natural resources and protecting the sovereignty, integrity, economy and wealth of the various African nations. The company has a strong reputation and expertise in tailor-made concepts and solutions for coastal defence and maritime security.

Maintaining security

Today's navies face a broad spectrum of challenges in maintaining security in a fast-changing maritime environment. These geostrategic aspects mean that

nations require affordable, versatile and fast platforms to operate successfully in territorial waters and to protect against traditional threats. Whether the mission is protecting economic resources, countering criminal activity or safeguarding life at sea, a flexible and effective response is essential. At NVL Group, we recognise the importance of building vessels that are easy and economical to operate yet still deliver superior levels of performance.

Customised platforms for any naval requirement

NVL Group provides state-of-the-art patrolling solutions for every kind of

challenge and threat, such as patrol boats, offshore patrol vessels, corvettes, frigates, minehunters or naval support vessels.



• **Territorial sea (<12 nm)**

Offering high speeds of over 40 knots, NVL Fast Patrol Boats can quickly respond to challenges. High performing and with excellent seakeeping characteristics, these boats are ideally suited for interception and patrolling territorial waters.

• **Contiguous zone (<24 nm)**

No matter how long a coastline is, contiguous zones are best patrolled by NVL Patrol Boats, which are characterised by their speed, performance and versatility. The proven design guarantees maximum reliability and endurance.

• **Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nm)**

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is best patrolled by offshore patrol vessels built

by NVL Group. Their multirole and multimission platforms provide permanent maritime security in the operational area due to their endurance and excellent seakeeping capabilities.

Strong support for cost-efficient naval vessel operations

Whatever the requirement, NVL Group works in partnership with its customers to establish the right solutions. We offer the option to build vessels at one of our NVL Group shipyards, or we can transfer both our knowledge and technology to develop our partner's maritime industry. In all cases, we focus on delivering technically advanced, high-quality ships that balance a navy's operational needs with its available budget. NVL Group also provides

sustainability support for existing fleet structures in the form of upgrades, spare parts supply, training, technology and knowledge transfer, and other services to maximise the potential of any navy vessel.

Your naval solution

NVL Group provides you with feasible and economical solutions to fulfil the tasks of today and overcome the challenges of the future. We aim to ensure each ship entrusted into our care remains mission-ready at every stage of its operational life. NVL Group maritime patrolling solutions offer reliable and versatile multi-mission performance, providing a cost-effective yet comprehensive means of meeting maritime security needs across the seven seas.



The maritime zones (from left to right): territorial sea, contiguous zone, EEZ



NVL Group works closely with the customer to enable local build and the transfer of knowledge and technology



FIB 25 fast interceptor boat

NVL Group is a privately owned group of renowned Northern German shipyards and related companies, formerly known as Lürssen Defence. Customers can rely on the company to consistently provide tailored, smart and cost-effective naval solutions that keep navies mission-ready around the world. With deep roots in shipbuilding, NVL Group delivers high-quality naval and coastguard vessels, as

well as comprehensive services throughout the entire life cycle of their fleets. Construction at NVL Group's shipyards is supplemented by licensed manufacture at customer facilities worldwide under technology transfer arrangements. As an independent enterprise, the company remains flexible to market changes and operates a dynamic, safe and future-oriented business.

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NVL B.V. & Co. KG
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28759 Bremen
Germany
Tel.: +49 421 6604 344
info@nvl.de
www.nvl.de



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THE DNA OF SHIPBUILDING

Sailing Ahead Together: How Israel Shipyards and African Navies Are Reshaping Maritime Readiness

In the blue expanse of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, where Africa's future is written in trade routes, resource protection, and security, the strength of a nation's navy speaks volumes. However, a navy is only as strong as its vessels, and like all complex systems, vessels depend on disciplined maintenance and strategic foresight.

At the 2025 IMDEC conference in Ghana, Israel Shipyards Ltd. brought this message to the forefront with compelling success stories that aren't just about vessels—they're about people, partners, and progress. This story begins with two countries—Ghana and Chile—but echoes a continental vision: that Africa's maritime strength lies not only in procurement but in partnership and proactive care.

Anchoring a Global Legacy: Who is Israel Shipyards?
With its roots firmly planted in the port city of Haifa, Israel Shipyards has evolved from a government-run facility in 1959 into a globally respected private enterprise in maritime construction, maintenance, and defense solutions. Over more than six decades, it has become a pillar of innovation and reliability in naval architecture and marine engineering.

Today, its sprawling 335,000 square-meter industrial complex is a beacon of capability and ambition. It houses advanced infrastructure, including a 3,000-ton Syncrolift for ship launching and retrieval, over 1,000 meters of operational dock space, and expansive indoor manufacturing zones covering 45,000 square meters. These facilities enable the construction, retrofitting, and maintenance of naval and commercial vessels to the highest international standards.

But Israel Shipyards is not merely a builder of vessels—it is a builder of sovereignty. Its mission extends beyond steel and design to encompass strategic enablement. The company empowers partner nations to assert control over their territorial waters, enhance their defense readiness, and foster economic resilience through turnkey maritime solutions.

Across continents, Israel Shipyards has left its mark. In Côte d'Ivoire, it delivered full-scale naval projects tailored to local needs. In the Philippines, it contributed to the modernization of maritime security. In Greece, its vessels patrol European waters with distinction. And in Ghana, its partnership is transforming how Africa sustains and commands its fleets.

Each project, whether large or small, echoes a consistent message: genuine defense autonomy is built on a foundation of technical excellence, capacity building, and long-term commitment. By coupling engineering prowess with strategic insight, Israel Shipyards continues to serve as a trusted ally for nations seeking vessels and the ability to sustain them independently and confidently.



Why “Maintenance by the Book” Matters

While vessel launches often grab the spotlight with their ceremonial flair and visual grandeur, the accurate measure of naval power lies in what happens after, below deck, behind the scenes, and often unnoticed. This is where Israel Shipyards’ “maintenance by the book” philosophy shines. It’s a methodical, disciplined approach that goes far beyond routine repairs. It involves adhering to factory-recommended schedules, performing proactive system checks, and executing preventive maintenance before breakdowns occur. Most importantly, it entails equipping local technicians with the know-how, tools, and confidence to sustain complex naval platforms independently.

This approach offers a paradigm shift for many African nations, where defense budgets must stretch to meet multiple priorities. High operational costs, outdated facilities, and the need to send vessels overseas for repairs have historically hindered naval readiness. By bringing ship maintenance in-house and doing it “by the book,” Israel Shipyards helps partner nations turn those challenges into opportunities.

This is not just about keeping vessels afloat. It’s about maintaining fleets combat-ready, extending vessel lifespans, and ensuring availability when national security depends on it. A vessel that spends six months in dry dock overseas represents lost time, strategic vulnerability, and financial drain. Conversely, a vessel maintained locally and predictively becomes an agile, mission-ready asset. Moreover, this approach drives local empowerment. As African navies adopt this disciplined maintenance culture, they also build ecosystems of skilled labor, knowledge transfer, and logistical self-reliance. It creates a new cadre of maritime engineers and technicians whose skills can ripple across industries—from oil and gas to coastal infrastructure.

Israel Shipyards’ model thus reframes maintenance from a logistical necessity to a strategic advantage. It transforms fleets from financial burdens into platforms of influence and deterrence, ensuring that vessels don’t just sail, they perform when the time comes.

Ghana: Rising Tide of Capability

Ghana’s strategic partnership with Israel Shipyards has rewritten the narrative of naval maintenance in West Africa. What began as a technical collaboration soon became a beacon of defense readiness and industrial empowerment.

- Fleet Downtime Cut by 30%:** Time is a vital currency in defense. Israel Shipyards helped Ghana implement a logistics-supported strategy—stocking depot-level spare parts locally and streamlining repair cycles. This allowed vessels to spend more time at sea and less in dry dock.
- Training for Independence:** Israel Shipyards invested in the Ghanaian people. Through specialized technical training, Ghana has a growing cadre of ship maintenance professionals capable of handling sophisticated vessels and systems. This goes beyond cost-saving; it builds pride, careers, and national expertise.



- Enhancing National Security:** Operational vessels mean secured coasts. The Ghana Navy has extended its reach and responsiveness thanks to improved readiness, from intercepting illicit activities to supporting fishery protection missions.

The impact reverberates across the region, positioning Ghana as a naval power and a maintenance hub for West Africa.

Chile: A 45-Year Testament to Engineering Excellence

Thousands of kilometers away, Chile’s experience with Israel Shipyards tells a complementary tale—one of endurance and excellence.

The *Sa’ar 4*-class fast attack craft *LM-30 Casma*, launched in 1973, continues to patrol Chilean waters today. That’s over four decades of active service in some of the world’s most challenging naval environments. From border security to search and rescue missions, the *Casma* exemplifies how quality construction combined with strategic maintenance can deliver exceptional value. Israel Shipyards didn’t just sell a ship—they transferred knowledge, protocols, and pride. That is what sustains vessels beyond their expected years.

Shared Values, Shared Victories

What unites the stories of Ghana and Chile is a philosophy: that naval strength begins with preparation, and preparation starts with maintenance.

But the benefits of this approach extend far beyond the naval yard:

- Economic Multiplier Effect:** Skilled jobs, local supply chains, and technical training spur economic activity. In Ghana, technicians trained under Israel Shipyards’ programs are now applying their skills to other sectors—from oil and gas to engineering.
- Environmental Stewardship:** Modern maintenance techniques reduce emissions and protect marine ecosystems. This aligns with Africa’s growing commitment to sustainable development.
- Regional Collaboration:** Well-maintained fleets allow joint patrols, shared exercises, and maritime confidence-building measures. Ghana’s fleet is already more active in ECOWAS naval initiatives.

- **Strategic Sovereignty:** Perhaps most importantly, investing in local maintenance capabilities reduces reliance on foreign repair yards, making African nations more self-reliant and resilient.

Training: The True Engine of Sustainability

At the heart of Israel Shipyards' model is human capital. The company organizes intensive two-week training programs for maritime crews and dockyard staff each year. These programs combine hands-on instruction, remote diagnostics, and continuous learning pathways.

Technicians are taught not only to fix Vessels but to think strategically, diagnose proactively, and train others. This cascading knowledge effect is how sustainability is achieved.

Whether assisting with real-time troubleshooting via remote platforms or deploying mobile training teams, Israel Shipyards continues supporting its partners long after the ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

The Way Forward: What Africa Can Expect Next

Israel Shipyards envisions a future where every African navy has the tools, training, and trust to maintain its fleets locally. The next phase includes:

- **Joint shipyard ventures in emerging markets**
- **Digital platforms for predictive maintenance**
- **Fleet modernization through life-extension programs**
- **Customized maintenance packages tailored to regional mission**

Final Thoughts: A Wake of Hope

In Africa's waters, where peace, prosperity, and purpose intersect, the message from Israel Shipyards is clear: Resilience is not bought—it is built. Through methodical maintenance, local empowerment, and strategic vision, nations like Ghana are proving that success at sea begins with discipline on shore.

As the continent prepares for a maritime renaissance, one lesson stands: the ship may be made of steel, but its heart beats in the hands of those who care for it.

With Israel Shipyards standing shoulder to shoulder with navies worldwide, that collective heartbeat grows stronger—and the maritime horizon, more secure and full of promise.



© Photo Credit- Israel Shipyards

Serbian, Egyptian special forces conduct joint training

As part of the 2025 Serbia-Egypt Bilateral Military Cooperation Plan, elite units from Serbia and Egypt have successfully conducted joint counter-terrorism training aimed at enhancing interoperability, sharing best practices, and reinforcing strategic military ties between the two nations.

The joint training exercise took place in Serbia at the Rastko Nemanjić Barracks in Pančevo and the Orešac Training Area near Vršac. It brought together combat teams from the Serbian 72nd Special Operations Brigade and Egypt's renowned El-Sa'ka Forces. The two-week-long program was designed to simulate real-world counter-terrorism scenarios in both urban and rural environments, enabling soldiers to refine their skills and adapt to diverse operational conditions.

Supported by the helicopter units of the Serbian Armed Forces, the training included a series of complex tactical and fire missions. These featured helicopter landings, hostage rescue drills, first aid procedures, and medical evacuation operations under combat conditions. Special Forces personnel also engaged in marksmanship training using modern weapon systems currently in service with the Serbian military and participated in challenging climbing exercises to simulate combat in mountainous or elevated urban settings.

This exercise follows a similar bilateral event held in Egypt last year, reinforcing the commitment of both armed forces to maintain a continuous cycle of joint training. In that iteration, Serbian and Egyptian Special Forces conducted live operations at Egyptian combat training fields. Key highlights included a simulated storming of a terrorist hideout within a densely populated residential area using helicopter insertion tactics.



During this complex scenario, hostages were rescued and hostile elements were neutralized with precision. Additionally, both standard and non-standard live-fire exercises were carried out, showcasing the skill, discipline, and coordination of the participating forces. These drills emphasized close-quarters combat, tactical maneuvering, and the use of advanced combat equipment under high-pressure scenarios.

These bilateral exercises align with the Armed Forces General Command's strategic objective of enhancing cooperation with brotherly and friendly nations. By fostering deeper military-to-military engagements and promoting the exchange of operational knowledge, such initiatives serve not only as training opportunities but also as platforms for building trust and lasting strategic partnerships. The recent joint training in Serbia offered a valuable environment for mutual tactical learning and operational synergy. The experience significantly enhanced the combat readiness and technical proficiency of the participating units and reaffirmed the strong and growing defense relations between Serbia and Egypt.

As global security challenges continue to evolve, exercises like this underscore the importance of international cooperation and preparedness, ensuring that partner nations can jointly respond to regional and transnational threats with agility and effectiveness.

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Portugal Acquires Sixth KC-390 and Adds 10 Options; Netherlands Unveils Aeromedical System for C-390

At the 2025 Paris Air Show, Embraer announced two major developments underscoring the growing adoption and capability expansion of the KC-390 Millennium Military Transport Aircraft in Europe. The Portuguese government has decided to acquire a sixth KC-390 aircraft for the Portuguese Air Force (FAP), while also enabling ten additional purchase options aimed at future government-to-government sales to other European or NATO member states. Meanwhile, the Netherlands has signed a contract for an innovative Aeromedical Evacuation System for its C-390 fleet, highlighting the aircraft's versatility and evolution potential.

Portugal initially signed a contract with Embraer in 2019 for five KC-390s, with the first deliveries beginning in 2023. The decision to procure a sixth aircraft marks the first additional order by a current operator, demonstrating Portugal's satisfaction with the aircraft's performance and mission flexibility. The KC-390 enhances FAP's ability to conduct a broad array of missions including cargo and troop transport, aeromedical evacuation, search and rescue (SAR), humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and aerial refueling.

The inclusion of ten new options for future purchases by NATO or EU states reflects a strategic intent to position Portugal as a regional hub for KC-390 operations, maintenance, and training. This includes further development of the KC-390 Training Centre and continued growth of Portugal's aerospace industrial base.

Portuguese Defence Minister Nuno Melo highlighted the strategic value of the program, citing operational advantages and economic benefits tied to Portugal's growing role in KC-390 production and support. Embraer's President & CEO Bosco da Costa Junior emphasized that the new order and expanded options illustrate the aircraft's strong performance, mission readiness, and growing appeal among Western nations.

In a parallel development, the Royal Netherlands Air Force is expanding the operational versatility of its C-390 Millennium fleet through the acquisition of a cutting-edge Aeromedical Evacuation System. The modular roll-on/roll-off system, developed by Embraer, allows any C-390 aircraft to be quickly converted into a mobile airborne hospital, capable of supporting patients in critical condition, including those requiring full life support or isolation for infectious diseases. The system integrates seamlessly with the aircraft's cargo handling setup and can be installed via the rear ramp, ensuring rapid deployment during crisis operations.

Vice Admiral Jan Willem Hartman, Commander of the Materiel and IT Command for the Netherlands, noted that the system will enhance the Netherlands' capacity for humanitarian, disaster response, and military medical operations. The Netherlands' order includes one firm system and seven additional purchase options. Embraer's Bosco da Costa Junior described the aeromedical system as a "major step forward" in demonstrating the C-390's adaptability and mission range. The C-390 Millennium continues to outperform in real-world operations, with a mission completion rate exceeding 99% and a payload capacity of 26 tons. Its capability to operate from unpaved runways, perform aerial refueling (as both tanker and receiver), and support various military and civil missions makes it an increasingly attractive platform for modern air forces. These developments reinforce the C/KC-390 Millennium's growing role in European defense, with Portugal and the Netherlands leading the way in adopting and enhancing the aircraft's multi-role potential.

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Navantia San Fernando celebrates the launch of the OPV for the Royal Moroccan Navy

Navantia San Fernando shipyard celebrated this Tuesday the launch ceremony of the OPV that the company has built for the Royal Moroccan Navy.

The event was attended by various authorities such as the mayor of San Fernando, Patricia Cavada; the mayor of Puerto Real, Aurora Salvador; the deputy government delegate in Cádiz, Blanca Flores; or the Chief of the Arsenal of Cádiz (ALARDIZ), Vice Admiral Rubén Rodríguez Peña.

The director of the shipyard, Alberto Cervantes, was in charge of welcoming all attendees. He recalled the importance of successfully fulfilling this order, which will be followed by other projects already in the portfolio. He also had an emotional memory of his predecessor in the position, with whom this program began, José Antonio Rodríguez Poch, on the first anniversary of his death.

Next, the representative of the Royal Moroccan Navy, Captain Mohammed El Fadili, took the floor. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of this project "as an expression of the deep ties of friendship and cooperation that unite the Kingdoms of Morocco and Spain in general, the Royal Navy and the Navantia shipyard in particular".

He then highlighted the cutting-edge technological features, "which fully embody the ambition of the Royal Moroccan Navy to acquire an efficient, versatile, and durable fleet within the framework of the modernization of all the Royal Armed Forces decided by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, to face constantly changing maritime security challenges".

Finally, the president of Navantia, Ricardo Domínguez, emphasized that the program represents "not only a construction milestone but also the strength of a collaboration that consolidates over time" and "testimony of the shared commitment between Spain and Morocco for security and technological excellence." Ricardo Domínguez thanked the work of the Navantia workforce and the collaborating industry in this "enormous collective effort and commitment".

Once the speeches were finished, the director and the representative of the Moroccan Navy, Alberto Cervantes and Mohammed El Fadili, pressed the button that activated the mechanism by which the patrol boat slid down slipway number 3 into the sea.

The patrol vessel, which is construction number 565 of Navantia San Fernando, has a length of 87 meters and a total beam of 13 meters, and can accommodate a crew of 60 people on board. Its construction also includes a technical-logistical support package (spare parts, tools, and technical documentation), including technical training services for Royal Moroccan Navy personnel in Spain. The patrol vessel is a solution that guarantees long deployment periods at sea with very low operating and life cycle costs. To achieve this, the design of its systems aims to maintain operability, maintainability, and reliability with a reduced crew.

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UAV and Anti-Drone Systems in Africa: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Way Forward

In recent years, the African continent has witnessed an exponential rise in the adoption and deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), also commonly known as drones. These systems are increasingly being utilized across a broad spectrum of sectors—from military and intelligence operations to agriculture, environmental monitoring, and disaster response. At the same time, the rise in drone usage has introduced new security threats, necessitating the parallel development of robust anti-drone or counter-UAV (C-UAV) systems. This article explores the growing role of UAVs in Africa, the associated risks, and how both state and non-state actors are responding with emerging anti-drone technologies.

UAVs have become vital tools across Africa due to their affordability, adaptability, and wide-ranging applications. Militaries and governments in countries like Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Morocco have invested significantly in UAV technologies. These assets are primarily used for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions, border security, and in active combat roles.

For instance, Nigeria has integrated Chinese-made Wing Loong II drones into its operations against Boko Haram in the northeast, while Ethiopia used Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2s during its recent internal conflict. These systems have provided critical real-time intelligence and precision strike capabilities, reducing the need for manned aircraft and ground patrols in hostile environments.

Beyond the military sphere, drones are used extensively in agriculture to monitor crops, assess irrigation needs, and increase yields. In Rwanda and Ghana, drones have revolutionized medical logistics by delivering blood and vaccines to remote areas. Similarly, in South Africa, drones are employed in anti-poaching efforts and environmental monitoring.

However, the proliferation of UAVs comes with inherent risks. The increasing accessibility of commercial drones has enabled non-state actors, including terrorist and criminal groups, to utilize these systems for nefarious purposes. Illicit surveillance, smuggling, and even weaponized drone attacks are now realistic threats on the continent.

In Libya's ongoing civil war, both sides have deployed armed drones with devastating effect, supported by foreign backers. The use of drones by insurgent groups in the Sahel, especially in Mali and Burkina Faso, has also raised alarms. These groups often deploy drones to track military convoys or locate troop positions, enabling ambushes and attacks.

Urban areas and critical infrastructure, including airports, oil facilities, and government buildings—are especially vulnerable to drone threats. The risk is compounded by the fact that many African states currently lack the necessary airspace management systems and regulatory frameworks to monitor and control UAV activity comprehensively.

In response to these threats, African nations are beginning to prioritize the development and acquisition of counter-UAV systems. Anti-drone technologies are broadly categorized into three segments: detection, identification, and neutralization. These systems employ radar, radio frequency (RF) sensors, electro-optical cameras, and jamming equipment to detect and disable unauthorized drones.

Several African militaries have begun to acquire or locally develop C-UAV systems. Egypt, for example, is reportedly working with local and foreign defense firms to integrate radar-based and RF-jamming systems to protect its sensitive sites and borders. Morocco has also expressed interest in C-UAV capabilities following reports of UAV threats from non-state actors in the Western Sahara region. South Africa, home to one of the continent's most advanced defense industries, is a leader in indigenous anti-drone technology development. Companies such as Hensoldt South Africa and CSIR are actively researching and producing counter-drone systems for both military and civilian applications.



Civil aviation authorities across Africa have raised concerns over drones interfering with flight operations. In countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, airport authorities have adopted basic drone detection systems to monitor airspace near runways. However, more comprehensive solutions are needed to ensure long-term safety, especially as UAV traffic is expected to increase with commercial drone delivery services expanding.

Despite the advancements, many African countries still lack coherent legal and regulatory frameworks for UAV operations. Inconsistent or outdated drone laws hamper both commercial growth and security oversight. Some nations ban drones outright without offering a pathway to licensed operation, while others have overly permissive laws that allow loopholes for misuse. The African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), is working to standardize drone regulations across the continent. However, implementation remains uneven due to varying levels of infrastructure and institutional capacity. International cooperation is proving crucial to Africa's UAV and anti-drone landscape. China, Turkey, and Israel are among the major suppliers of UAVs to African countries, while the U.S. and EU have focused more on capacity building, regulatory support, and training.

For example, U.S. AFRICOM has conducted numerous counter-UAV training sessions for African partners under the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Similarly, the EU's CBRN Centers of Excellence Initiative is helping African states build capabilities to respond to unconventional threats, including drone-based attacks. There is also growing interest among African defense and security organizations to co-develop or co-produce UAV and C-UAV technologies with global partners. These partnerships can stimulate local defense industries and enhance operational autonomy.

As Africa's drone ecosystem continues to grow, nations will need to strike a careful balance between leveraging UAVs for socio-economic development and mitigating the emerging threats posed by rogue drones. Critical to this effort will be:

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- Establishing clear legal and regulatory frameworks
- Investing in indigenous R&D and defense industries
- Enhancing regional and international cooperation
- Integrating UAV and C-UAV systems into national defense and public safety strategies

Importantly, public awareness and trust will also play a significant role. Governments must communicate transparently about their use of drones, ensure civil liberties are respected, and provide clear channels for registration and licensing of commercial and recreational drone users.

The future of UAVs in Africa is promising—but also fraught with complexity. These technologies offer transformative opportunities for development, security, and innovation. Yet, without robust countermeasures, legal safeguards, and technical preparedness, the same tools can become sources of instability and violence.

Africa's ability to harness the benefits of drones while defending against their misuse will depend on proactive governance, strategic investment, and international collaboration. As more African nations begin to understand the dual nature of UAVs, the continent is poised to become both a burgeoning market and a critical frontier in global drone security.



Egyptian Navy Receives First “Ras El-Hekma” ASD Tugboat from Alexandria Shipyard

In line with the directives of the political leadership to localize national industries, and within the framework of the General Command of the Armed Forces' commitment to the continuous development of capabilities and armament systems, Vice Admiral Ashraf Atwa, Commander of the Egyptian Navy and Chairman of the Marine Industries and Services Organization, presided over the delivery of the first "Ras El-Hekma" Azimuth Stern Drive (ASD) tugboat of the RASTR 3200 class.

This tugboat is the first of a total of three being constructed for the Egyptian Navy at Alexandria Shipyard in cooperation with the French classification society Bureau Veritas (BV), under a contractual agreement between the Navy and Alexandria Shipyard Company.

The ASD tugboat is distinguished by its competitive cost, high bollard pull capacity of 85 tons, and superior maneuverability and control. It is also equipped with state-of-the-art systems and equipment from leading global manufacturers in the maritime industry. Alexandria Shipyard aims to enter the global tugboat market with this model for the first time in Egypt's shipbuilding history. The company aspires to become a regional hub for the construction and export of this class of tugboats to various countries in the coming phase.

The ceremony was attended by Rear Admiral Hossam El-Din Ezzat, Chairman of Alexandria Shipyard, senior naval officers, representatives of Bureau Veritas, and delegations from major international maritime companies. Additionally, in line with the political leadership's directives to localize national industries, and reflecting the keenness of the General Command of the Armed Forces to foster fruitful cooperation with all authorities and institutions to maximize the utilization of available capabilities and resources,

Lieutenant General Ashraf Atwa, Commander of the Naval Forces and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Marine Industries and Services Organization, along with Lieutenant General Osama Rabie, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, witnessed the launching ceremony of the first tugboat, "Ismailia 1," designated as type (N 113). This tugboat boasts a bollard pull of 190 tons and was constructed at the Alexandria Shipyard in accordance with the contract for manufacturing two tugboats for the Suez Canal Authority. The ceremony was attended by the Governor of Alexandria, the Chairman of the Arab Organization for Industrialization, several Armed Forces commanders, public figures, and officials from the Suez Canal Authority.

Rear Admiral Hossam El-Din Qutb, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Alexandria Shipyard Company, delivered a speech expressing his pride in this unprecedented achievement in the history of shipbuilding in Egypt and the Middle East. He emphasized that this accomplishment serves as a testament to the advanced stage of shipbuilding in the Arab Republic of Egypt, adhering to the latest international standards in the field. He further stated that Alexandria Shipyard will proudly bear the slogan "Made in Egypt for Global Horizons" in the coming period.

Lieutenant General Osama Rabie, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, also delivered a speech, commending the cooperation with Alexandria Shipyard Company for manufacturing a national product that rivals international counterparts and will be a strong addition to the Authority's operational system. He noted that the new tugboat represents the latest and largest addition to the Authority's maritime fleet.

Following the speeches, the tugboat's launching procedures were carried out. Its technical specifications include a length of 71.6 meters, a width of 18.5 meters, a draft of 7 meters, and a speed reaching 16 knots, in addition to numerous features that enable it to efficiently and capably execute all its designated tasks.

This event reflects the recent development witnessed at Alexandria Shipyard, aligning with the Egyptian state's strategic vision to achieve leadership across all fields.

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Bell Signs Fleet Purchase Agreement for 12 SUBARU Bell 412EPX Helicopters with the Tunisian Air Force

First SUBARU Bell 412EPX Order in Africa Announced at Paris Air Show 2025

Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, announced the signing of a fleet purchase agreement with the Tunisian Air Force for 12 SUBARU Bell 412EPX helicopters. The contract was officially unveiled at the 2025 Paris Air Show, marking the first order of this advanced aircraft variant in Africa and a significant milestone for Bell's presence in the region.

The Tunisian Air Force will deploy the SUBARU Bell 412EPX helicopters in a wide range of multi-role military and security missions, including search and rescue, transport, disaster response, and surveillance operations. With this new addition, Tunisia significantly upgrades its rotary-wing capability while expanding its long-standing relationship with Bell. The nation currently operates a fleet of 39 Bell helicopters, including legacy platforms such as the Bell UH-1, Bell 205, and OH-58.

"The Bell 412 is one of the most trusted helicopter platforms globally, and we are honored to support the

Tunisian Air Force as it strengthens its fleet with this proven and versatile aircraft," said Tim Evans, Managing Director for the Middle East and Africa at Bell. "The SUBARU Bell 412EPX is gaining global traction as a high-performance, cost-effective solution for modern defense forces. We're excited to introduce it to the Middle East and Africa region with Tunisia leading the way."

Developed in partnership with SUBARU Corporation, the SUBARU Bell 412EPX represents the latest evolution of the renowned Bell 412 platform. It offers enhanced capabilities, including a maximum internal weight of 12,200 pounds, an external weight of 13,000 pounds, and a cargo hook capacity of 5,000 pounds. Its useful load capacity of 5,385 pounds allows it to execute critical missions in the most demanding environments with speed, safety, and precision.

The global Bell 412 fleet has consistently demonstrated its reliability, adaptability, and rugged performance across military, parapublic, and commercial operations. Today, over 54% of all Bell 412 aircraft in service are used in military or parapublic missions worldwide. Recent 412EPX customers include the Japan Coast Guard, San Diego Fire and Rescue, and the ministries of interior in Croatia and Sarajevo Canton.

Headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, Bell is a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron Inc. With a global footprint and a workforce in which nearly one-quarter have served in the armed forces, Bell remains committed to helping military organizations succeed in their missions.

Textron Inc. is a multi-industry company that leverages its global network of aircraft, defense, industrial and finance businesses to provide customers with innovative solutions and services. Textron is known around the world for its powerful brands such as Bell, Cessna, Beechcraft, Pipistrel, Jacobsen, Kautex, Lycoming, E-Z-GO, and Textron Systems.

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Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Returns to Egypt Following Official Visit to France



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Lieutenant General Ahmed Khalifa, Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, has returned to Egypt following the conclusion of his official visit to the French Republic, accompanied by a high-level military delegation. During the visit, Lieutenant General Khalifa was accorded an official reception that included a review of the Guard of Honor and the playing of the national anthems of both countries by military bands.

Lieutenant General Khalifa met with General Thierry Burkhard, Chief of the French Defence Staff. The two sides held discussions on a number of topics of mutual interest, within the framework of military cooperation and the exchange of expertise between the Egyptian and French Armed Forces. The Chief of Staff reaffirmed the depth and strength of the longstanding ties between Egypt and France, expressing his aspiration to further expand cooperation and partnership between the two armed forces across various military domains. For his part, General Burkhard praised Egypt's pivotal role in supporting the foundations of security and stability in the Middle East, and emphasized his country's keenness to strengthen bilateral military relations in a manner that serves the shared interests of both nations.

The two leaders visited the Joint Operations Center and the Space Command Center, where they received a comprehensive briefing on the operational procedures and coordination mechanisms employed to ensure integrated control among the various branches and specialties of the French Armed Forces. General Burkhard, accompanied by Lieutenant General Khalifa, also conducted a visit to a French military base, where they observed a number of training activities involving the latest French tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and unmanned aerial systems, utilizing advanced technological systems in the field of armaments.

At the conclusion of the visit, Lieutenant General Ahmed Khalifa commended the high standard of training and combat readiness demonstrated by the French Armed Forces, emphasizing that such engagements serve to strengthen military cooperation between Egypt and France.

Rheinmetall Resonant South Africa (Pty) Ltd. established

Rheinmetall has established a new subsidiary, Rheinmetall Resonant South Africa (Pty) Ltd. Upon receiving approval from the relevant authorities, Rheinmetall Waffe Munition GmbH now holds a 51% stake in the newly founded joint venture Rheinmetall Resonant South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

The joint venture takes over almost all of the assets of Resonant Holding and its subsidiaries. The remaining 49% is held by the existing shareholders of Resonant Holding. The new company expects sales potential of more than €100 million per year. The parties have agreed not to disclose the purchase price. With the establishment of the new subsidiary, Rheinmetall is further expanding its range of services to create additional production capacity. This is Rheinmetall's response to the growing global demand for ammunition.

The in-depth vertical integration positions the Group even stronger in terms of independent planning, construction and operation of production facilities for chemical precursors such as propellants and explosives. Rheinmetall Resonant South Africa (Pty) Ltd employs around 150 people and offers proven experience and outstanding expertise in the design and construction of specialised plants. This includes production facilities for chemical and explosive products. Resonant thus complements Rheinmetall's plant engineering business, particularly in the areas of chemical, energy and explosives technology, industrialisation and manufacturing.

On 3 June 2025, Rheinmetall announced that has received additional major orders for the delivery of 155 mm artillery ammunition. An international customer has placed two orders at the subsidiary Rheinmetall Denel Munition to supply extended range, full bore (ERFB) 155 mm artillery ammunition worth a total of a high double-digit million amount.

The order includes projectiles, propellants and fuses. "We are very grateful for the trust that our business partners and customers place in our globally proven extended-range ammunition and our technology for long ranges", says Dr Frank Dirksen, CEO of Rheinmetall Denel Munition. "As a system supplier, we are constantly working to improve our cutting-edge technologies to offer the best possible solutions to modern armed forces". The latest orders are the result of rapidly rising international demand, triggered by the tense global security situation. Rheinmetall is one of the world's leading manufacturers of large-calibre ammunition.

The Düsseldorf-based Technology Corporation Rheinmetall has been increasing its production capacity since 2022, and aims at producing at least 1.1 million 155 mm artillery shells per year by 2027. Like the entire Rheinmetall Corporation, Rheinmetall Denel Munition is constantly expanding its production capacities, as international supply capacities are unable to keep up with demand.

4TH AFRICAN AIR FORCES FORUM: CAS - UNITY KEY TO SOLVING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Bala Abubakar, has called for deeper collaboration among African nations to effectively tackle the continent's complex and transnational security threats. He made this call during his opening remarks at the 4th African Air Forces Forum held at Eko Hotel & Suites in Lagos on 22 May 2025.

Highlighting the theme of this year's forum "Strengthening Collaborations in Advanced Aerospace Technologies for Enhanced National and Regional Security", the CAS observed that "As threats become increasingly transnational in nature, the urgency for enhanced cooperation, innovation, and strategic foresight among African air forces cannot be overemphasised".

In his remarks, the Special Guest of Honour, Honourable Minister of Defence, Dr Mohammed Badaru Abubakar, extolled the key role played by airpower in every military operation. Also, Guest of Honour, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, represented by Deputy Governor Femi Hamzat, seized the opportunity to welcome participants to Lagos, describing it as Africa's most vibrant city, where tradition meets innovation.

The opening day of the forum kicked off with a bang, featuring insightful paper presentations, warm goodwill messages from foreign air chiefs and heads of delegations, as well as an impressive exhibition showcase by top international aviation vendors.

The 4th African Air Forces (AAF) Forum entered its second day today, 23 May 2025, with Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State delivering the keynote address to a gathering of African Air Chiefs, defence experts, and strategic partners at Eko Hotel & Suites, Lagos.

In his address, Governor Uzodinma emphasised the urgent need for stronger collaboration among African nations to address the continent's complex security threats. According to him "Airpower remains one of the most versatile tools of modern defence, offering speed, reach, deterrence and intelligence superiority". He urged all African countries to "translate shared aspirations into binding frameworks: mutual defence agreements, co-development pacts, pooled logistics platforms, shared research infrastructure and joint training protocols". These, he said "are not luxuries but necessary instruments of survival in the face of threats prevalent in this 21st century".

During the event, air chiefs from foreign nations and delegates from across the globe were treated to a breathtaking aerial display by Nigerian Air Force pilots. The precision manoeuvres, high-speed formations and, daring aerobatics drew thunderous applause from the

audience, showcasing the professionalism, skill, and operational capability of the NAF. The display not only highlighted Nigeria's growing airpower but also served as a powerful symbol of unity and shared ambition among African air forces.



African Lion 2025 concludes, showcases US ability to project power with allies across Africa

African Lion 2025 (AL25) concluded with over 10,000 multinational troops from more than 50 nations executing synchronized operations across four countries (Morocco, Ghana, Senegal, and Tunisia), marking the largest and most dynamic iteration in the exercise's 21-year history. This year's exercise featured first-time integration of defensive cyber operations and expanded Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) scenarios, along with rigorous multinational academic instruction. African Lion 25 validated the United States' commitment to building enduring partnerships, enhancing joint and combined force readiness, and strengthening regional security. The exercise included High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) fire missions, airborne operations, amphibious landings, maritime interdiction, and planning exercises with partners from Africa, Europe, and the United States.

"I want to thank Morocco for hosting African Lion and helping strengthen our collective security and readiness through rigorous, multinational training," said U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Michael Langley, Commander of U.S. Africa Command. Exercises like African Lion showcase the value of our relationships with African partners, demonstrating our readiness to confront common threats and promote peace through demonstrated military."

"African Lion enhances the United States' interoperability with Morocco and other key partners to strengthen our collective ability to address regional security threats," said the U.S. Embassy in Rabat Chargée d'Affaires Aimee Cutrona.

"As a major non-NATO ally and historic security partner, Morocco plays a pivotal role in promoting regional stability and security. Guided by President Trump and King Mohamed VI, our bilateral cooperation benefits both Americans and Moroccans, making us safer and stronger."

"African Lion 25 was a clear demonstration of how we project power, build trust, and deliver results," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Andrew C. Gainey, Commanding General, U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-AF). "We set the theater across four countries, moved hundreds of tons of equipment, and executed complex missions alongside our partners. That's what readiness looks like—and that's what deterrence demands."

In Morocco, U.S. and partner forces conducted the largest array of academic instruction, including joint planning, cyber defense, and public affairs courses. CBRN response and HIMARS missions were integrated alongside a multinational planning exercise and humanitarian civic assistance missions in rural communities.

Medical professionals treated more than 1,200 patients across Morocco, Ghana, and Senegal as part of AL25's humanitarian civic assistance programs. "Our team gained invaluable real-world experience across surgical, dental, and veterinary medical specialties. Our medical personnel have built readiness by executing critical wartime skills, which we cannot replicate in the garrison environment," said U.S. Army Col. Kelley C. Togiola, SETAF-AF Global Health Engagement Chief.

As AL25 concludes, the scale and complexity of this year's exercise reflect more than tactical success, they demonstrate enduring strategic value. From live-fire exercises and cyber innovation to humanitarian outreach and multinational planning, the exercise reinforced trust with key partners and proved the U.S. military's ability to project power, set the theater, and operate decisively alongside allies across the African continent.

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Morocco Hosts Conference to Enhance African Military Leadership



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More than 130 enlisted leaders from the U.S. and 30 African countries convened in Rabat, Morocco, June 10-12, for the 7th Africa Senior Enlisted Leader Conference.

Hosted by the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces and U.S. Africa Command, the conference provides a forum for senior noncommissioned officers to share best practices, discuss challenges, and strengthen partnerships. This year's theme was "Resilient, Adaptive, Transformative."

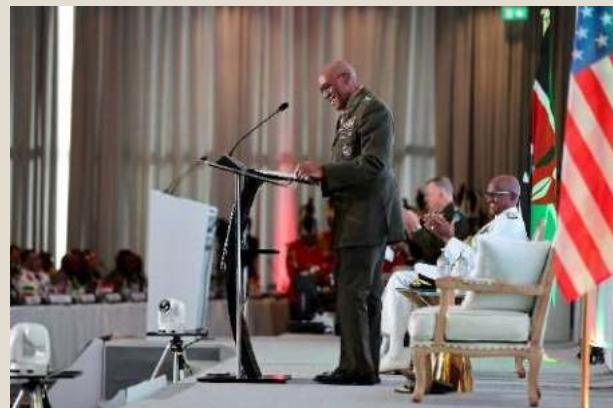
"Africa is a nexus theater—global interests converge on this continent," said U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Michael Woods, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Africa Command. "No matter how advanced our militaries become, success depends on leaders at all levels inspiring their people—igniting a fire in their hearts—especially when it matters most."

U.S. Africa Command, with partners, counters transnational threats and malign actors, strengthens security forces and responds to crises in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability and prosperity. The Africa Senior Enlisted Conference advances that mission by fostering relationships and helping to advance the capabilities of America's military partners on the continent.

"Thirty African partners sent their finest non-commissioned officers to participate in the conference this year. Effective NCO leadership isn't just about training, it's about forging units capable of disrupting the enemy," said Lieutenant General John Brennan. "By empowering those on the ground, our partners are better able to counter terrorism and secure their future."

Last year's event was held in Lilongwe, Malawi. The first conference was held in 2017.

U.S. and Kenya Successfully Conclude 2025 African Chiefs of Defense Conference



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The United States and Kenya jointly concluded the 2025 African Chiefs of Defense Conference (ACHOD) in Nairobi on May 29, bringing together senior military leaders from 37 African nations. Held under the leadership of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and the Kenya Defence Forces, the event aimed to strengthen African-led security initiatives, advance regional cooperation, and address shared challenges such as terrorism, maritime insecurity, and regional instability.

AFRICOM Commander Gen. Michael Langley emphasized the importance of collaboration, stating that the conference allowed African nations and the U.S. to align strategies and build resilient partnerships to confront complex security threats and malign external influences.

Over two days, the conference featured more than 70 bilateral meetings and panel discussions involving high-level military and civilian officials. Topics ranged from counterterrorism strategies to enhancing civilian-military relations and improving maritime security frameworks. The event also showcased U.S. programs like the State Partnership Program and professional military education initiatives that support African security force development.

Kenya's role as a regional security leader was highlighted throughout the event, with the 2025 ACHOD building on the success of the 2024 edition held in Botswana. This year's outcomes included commitments to increase regional counterterrorism coordination and support African-led peacekeeping operations.

With over 150 journalists covering the event globally, the ACHOD sent a clear message of unity and determination in promoting a secure and stable Africa. Since its inception in 2017, the ACHOD has remained a vital platform for fostering defense cooperation and addressing transnational threats. AFRICOM reaffirmed its commitment to supporting African partners in their pursuit of long-term security and prosperity across the continent.

PRESIDENT TINUBU INDUCTS TWO NEW AGUSTA 109 TREKKER HELICOPTERS INTO NAF ORDER OF BATTLE

In a significant boost to Nigeria's air power capability, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, today inducted two brand-new Agusta 109 Trekker helicopters into the inventory of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). The induction ceremony, held at the Presidential Air Fleet Apron in Abuja, marked a key highlight of activities commemorating the 61st anniversary of the Nigerian Air Force.

The President, who was represented by the Vice President, His Excellency, Senator Kashim Shettima, praised the commitment of the Nigerian Air Force in advancing national security objectives and assured continued federal support for defence modernisation. Highlighting the NAF's engagements in countries such as The Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mali, the President described the Air Force as a "cynosure of operational excellence" and a source of pride for Nigeria. Speaking on the importance of the newly acquired aircraft, President Tinubu stated, "Today's ceremony marks another milestone in our unwavering commitment to strengthen our Armed Forces, particularly the Air Force, towards a more secured country."

This acquisition, made alongside platforms such as the Diamond-62 surveillance aircraft, the T-129 ATAK helicopters, and the King Air 360i aircraft, underscores our resolve to prioritise fleet modernisation and the welfare of our men and women in uniform."

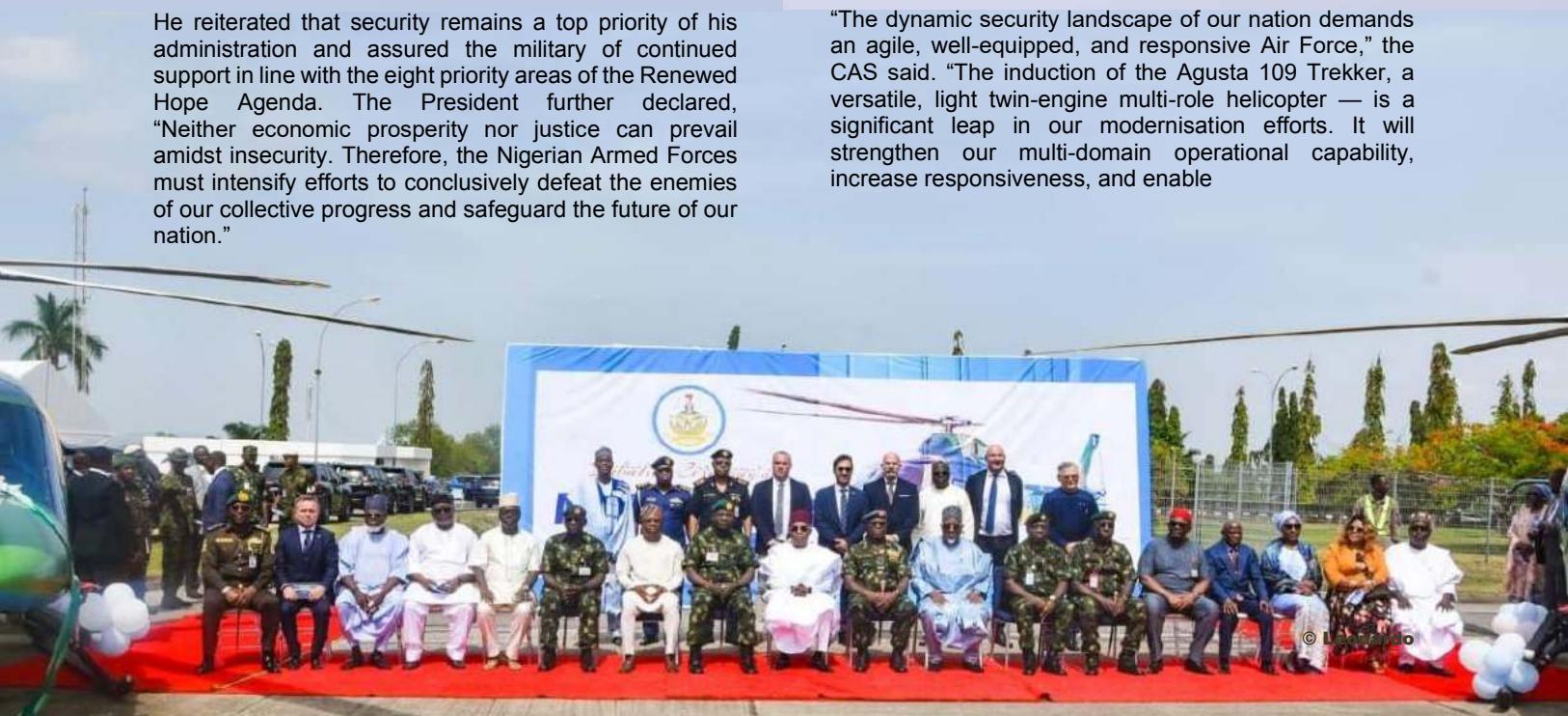
He reiterated that security remains a top priority of his administration and assured the military of continued support in line with the eight priority areas of the Renewed Hope Agenda. The President further declared, "Neither economic prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity. Therefore, the Nigerian Armed Forces must intensify efforts to conclusively defeat the enemies of our collective progress and safeguard the future of our nation."

Emphasising the link between security, democracy, and national development, President Tinubu said that "A well-equipped military is essential not only for securing our nation but also for preserving our democracy. My administration will remain steadfast in modernising the Armed Forces and investing in cutting-edge defence technologies to confront both conventional and asymmetric threats."



Highlighting the strategic importance of the helicopter induction, President Tinubu noted that "this induction ceremony is not merely about adding new helicopters to our fleet; it is a strategic statement of intent, a demonstration of our collective resolve to defend our nation and reinforce Nigeria's leadership in Africa." In his welcome address, the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Bala Abubakar, described the induction as a major milestone in the Service's drive to modernise its fleet and enhance operational effectiveness across all theatres. He underscored the aircraft's role in supporting joint operations, air reconnaissance, close air support, and humanitarian missions.

"The dynamic security landscape of our nation demands an agile, well-equipped, and responsive Air Force," the CAS said. "The induction of the Agusta 109 Trekker, a versatile, light twin-engine multi-role helicopter — is a significant leap in our modernisation efforts. It will strengthen our multi-domain operational capability, increase responsiveness, and enable



President of the Republic of Namibia inspects the Namibian Air Force Shaanxi Y-9E transport aircraft

President of the Republic of Namibia and Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force, H.E. Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, inspected the Shaanxi Y-9E aircraft during a formal ceremony at Hosea Kutako International Airport on 07 May 2025. The aircrafts, procured from China in November last year, mark a significant boost to the Namibian Air Force's operational capacity, enhancing both military readiness and support during humanitarian missions.

Air Force Commander, Air Vice Marshal Teofilus Shaende, highlighted the Y-9E's impressive speed and cargo capability. "These aircraft will play a vital role in transporting troops and equipment, as well as in missions like drought relief and flood rescues," he said. Namibia is the first country to receive this model, an achievement that strengthens both defence and diplomatic ties with Beijing.

President Nandi-Ndaitwah was joined by Vice President Lucia Witbooi, Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare, Defence Minister Hon Frans Kapofi, Deputy Minister Dr. Charles Mubita, Chief of the Defence Force, Air Marshal Martin Kambulu Pinehas, senior officials of the ministry, and senior military officers.



The Shaanxi Y-9 is a Chinese medium utility/military transport aircraft produced by Shaanxi Aircraft Company for the People's Liberation Army. It is a lengthened and upgraded development of the Shaanxi Y-8F.

Development of the Y-9 may have begun as early as 2002 as the Y-8X program. The program was a collaborative effort with Antonov – the designers of the An-12 that it was ultimately derived from – and was aimed at competing with the Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules.

The Y-9 entered the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) service in 2012, with full operating capability being announced in December 2017. The Y-9 is powered by four WJ-6C turboprop engines. The propellers are six-bladed and made with Chinese JL-4 composites and closely resemble the Dowty R406. The WJ-6C is replaced by the Pratt & Whitney Canada PW150B in the Y-9E export variant. The cruise speed is 300 knots (560 km/h; 350 mph) with an endurance of around 10.5 hours. The cargo bay has an internal volume of 155 m³ and is fitted with cargo handling rollers and tie-down rings. The rear entrance to the cargo bay also functions as a ramp.



Maj Gen Bakasumba applauds strong Defence Partnership between Uganda and Zimbabwe



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The Chief of Joint Staff of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF), Maj Gen Jack Bakasumba, has praised the strong defence cooperation between Uganda and Zimbabwe, urging continued collaboration to further strengthen the bond. Speaking on behalf of the Chief of Defence Forces, Maj Gen Bakasumba made the remarks while hosting a delegation from the Zimbabwe National Defence University (ZNDU) at the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs headquarters in Mbuya. The delegation included 22 course participants and faculty members.

Maj Gen Bakasumba credited the UPDF's operational growth and institutional resilience to the visionary leadership of President Yoweri Museveni, whom he described as a steadfast Pan-Africanist. "His leadership has enabled us to grow and undertake numerous successful missions. It laid a strong foundation for our training and operational capacity," he said. Reaffirming Uganda's commitment to regional peace, Maj Gen Bakasumba highlighted the UPDF's involvement in Somalia as an example of Uganda's dedication to African-led peace efforts. "We don't share a border with Somalia, but because of our ideological clarity and commitment to African solutions to African problems, we continue to support peace efforts there," he noted.

He extended appreciation to the Zimbabwean delegation for choosing Uganda as part of their regional study tour, describing their visit as a reflection of deep-rooted friendship. "We are honoured that you selected Uganda as part of your regional tour. We value your visit and do not take it for granted," Maj Gen Bakasumba remarked.

Brig Gen Francis Chakauya, who led the visiting delegation, expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by the UPDF. He said the visit was inspired by the historical and strategic ties between the two nations. "We chose Uganda because of the excellent relationship we share. It is a special bond rooted in a shared vision for strengthening our nations. We hope it continues to grow," Brig Gen Chakauya said. Also present at the event were Maj Gen Don Nabasa, Joint Staff Policy and Strategy; Maj Gen Felix Kulayigye, Director of Defence Public Information; Brig Gen Godwin Karugaba, Joint Staff Logistics; Brig Gen Robert Mugabe, Joint Staff Finance; Brig Gen Wycliffe Keita, Joint Staff Training and Doctrine; Brig Gen Abdul Rugumayo, Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence and Security; and other senior officers.

Hanwha Systems and Milkor Aerospace and Defence Sign Strategic MoU to Integrate AESA SAR Radar on Milkor 380 UAV for Global Export



© Milkor

Hanwha Systems, a leading South Korean defense technology company, and Milkor Aerospace and Defence, a premier manufacturer of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to integrate Hanwha's state-of-the-art Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) system onboard the Milkor 380, a flagship Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance (MALE) UAV platform. Signed at the 2025 Paris Air Show, this partnership aims to deliver a fully integrated, export-ready surveillance and reconnaissance solution to both regional and international markets. The MoU was signed by Julian Coetze, CEO of Milkor UAE, and Hyuck Park, Senior Vice President of Hanwha Systems' Defense Electronics Business Division.

This partnership brings together two highly capable organizations that complement one another," said Julian Coetze, CEO of Milkor UAE. "We are looking forward to our continued collaborative efforts with Hanwha. By combining our resources and expertise, we believe we can create great opportunities, not just in the Middle East but across international markets." Hyuck Park, Senior Vice President of Hanwha, commented,

"This collaboration allows us to combine Hanwha's advanced technology with Milkor's innovative platforms to deliver next-generation defense capabilities to global customers."

Milkor 380 is a multirole UAV designed for Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) and precision strike missions. It boasts over 30 hours of endurance, a payload capacity exceeding 220 kg, and a range greater than 4,000 km.

The platform features multiple hardpoints, SATCOM capabilities, and a modular open systems architecture-making it highly adaptable for a wide range of mission profiles. Hanwha Systems brings deep expertise in AESA radar technology, having developed advanced airborne radar solutions.

The integration of its SAR payload will equip the Milkor 380 with high-resolution imaging, Ground and Maritime Moving Target Indication (GMTI/MMTI), and all-weather reconnaissance capability-significantly enhancing its effectiveness in intelligence-gathering and situational awareness.

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Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) President & CEO, Mehmet Demiroğlu Highlights Company's Export Potential

Speaking at the 55th Paris Air Show, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) CEO, Mehmet Demiroğlu confirmed that the company is in discussions with multiple countries about potential sales of the domestically developed KAAN, highlighting a notable agreement with Indonesia. During a state visit by Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto to Türkiye in April 2025, interest in KAAN was formally expressed, followed by a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed during the Indo Defense Expo 2025 in Jakarta. Demiroğlu clarified that this MoU is more than a preliminary agreement—it outlines specific production quantities and expectations. He said the final contract, involving 48 KAAN jets, is expected to be concluded in the coming months.

The KAAN fighter jet program, launched by Türkiye to boost indigenous defense capabilities, made its maiden flight in 2024. However, supply chain issues have delayed the rollout of the next-generation prototypes. While the P0 prototype has completed two flights, the more production-representative P1, P2, and P3 prototypes will now take flight starting in early 2026 instead of the originally planned end of 2025. Despite these minor delays, TAI remains confident in achieving its goal of delivering Block 10 aircraft to the Turkish Air Force by the end of 2028.

Demiroğlu emphasized that Indonesia's commitment, though not finalized, demonstrates trust in Türkiye's aerospace capabilities.

In addition to acquiring the aircraft, the deal with Indonesia includes technology transfer, industrial collaboration, and joint production. Other countries, including Saudi Arabia, have also shown interest, and TAI anticipates more announcements soon, potentially by early 2026.

Beyond KAAN, TAI showcased a range of platforms at the Paris Air Show, including the Gökbeş utility helicopter, the Hürkuş basic trainer, the Hürjet advanced jet trainer, and the Aksungur UAV. Spain's selection of the Hürjet for training purposes has also generated significant interest, making it the second NATO member after Türkiye to adopt the aircraft.

Under the coordination of Airbus TAI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Spanish companies for our Supersonic Jet Trainer HÜRJET.

Demiroğlu noted the sharp rise in European defense spending and positioned Türkiye as a competitive and capable supplier for NATO and allied nations. He cited TAI's long-standing collaborations with Airbus and Leonardo as evidence of its integration into the European defense ecosystem. The company aims to increase its revenue from \$3 billion in 2024 to \$4.3 billion in 2025, targeting \$12 billion by 2034.

Regarding export potential in Africa, Demiroğlu noted that following the sale of T129 ATAK helicopters to Nigeria, TAI is exploring various other business opportunities with additional African nations.

In parallel, TAI is adjusting its helicopter strategy amid stalled progress on the T-70 Black Hawk program. U.S. sanctions have halted license approvals for key components, limiting production to 38 units. In response, TAI is redesigning its 10-ton military helicopter platform, shifting to a Black Hawk-like configuration, with a mockup set to debut at the IDEF defense exhibition in Istanbul in July 2025.

TAI's expanding ambitions and international engagements underscore Türkiye's emergence as a serious player in the global defense and aerospace market.

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16-20 SEPT 2026



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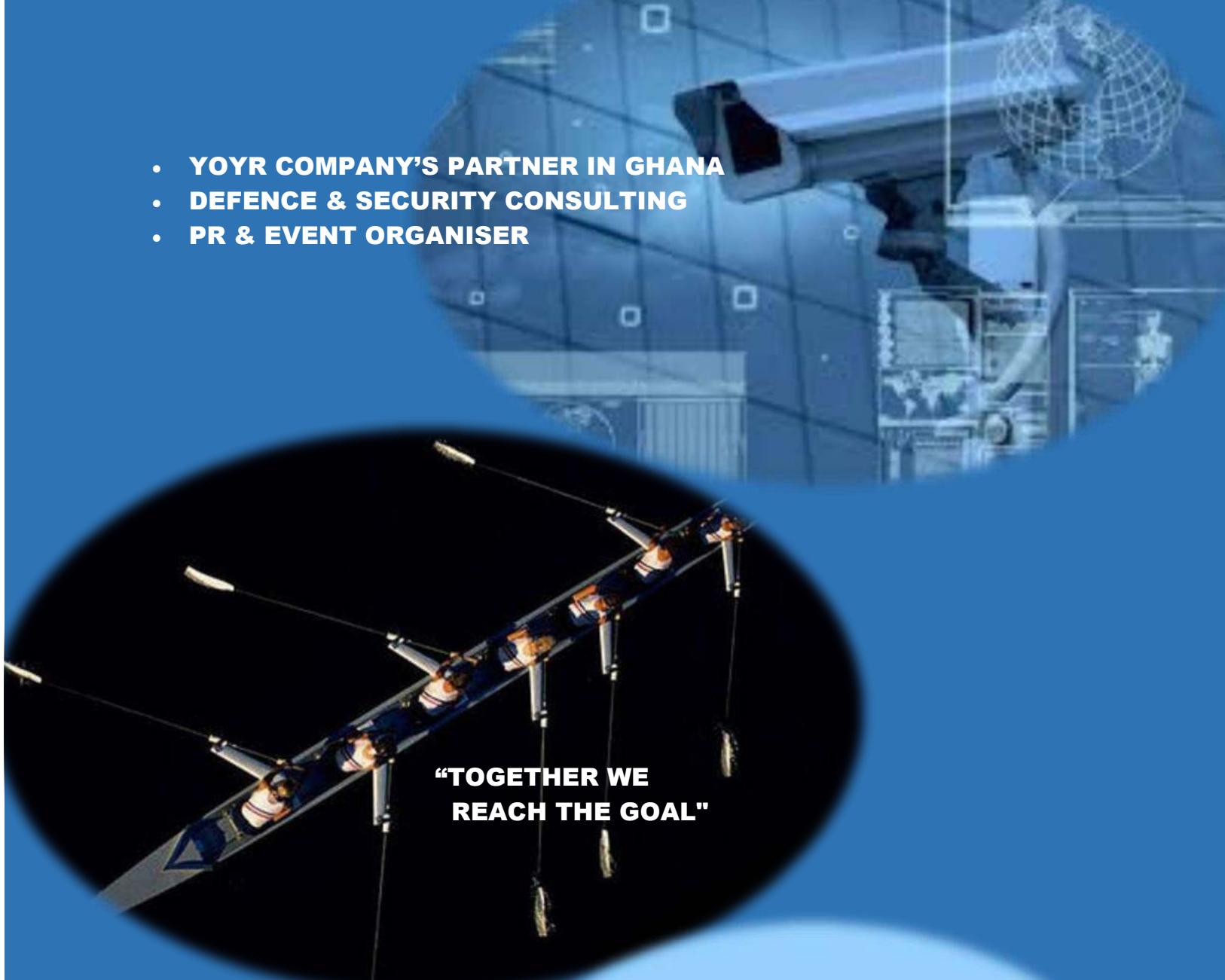
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