

# Operationalizing the DCOC: Strengthening Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean



**Sam Gontier (Captain)  
Director.**

**2018 - Initial Operational Capability**

**2019 - Full Operational Capability**

**2023 DCOC Resolution adoption  
into ISN**



RCOC is the only Centre of its kind in the world.

**#MASE Programme**

*A Strong Partnership Towards a Safe and Secure Maritime Domain*



This project is funded by the  
European Union



**Why do we need to work together?**





Funded by  
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Steering Committee of the 2 Regional Agreements MASE



# Key Maritime Threats in the Region

## •Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea:

- A resurgence of attacks and hijacks in strategic waterways.
- Threatens global shipping lanes and regional stability.

## •Illicit Trafficking:

- Drugs, arms, and human trafficking exploiting maritime routes.

## •IUU Fishing:

- Economic losses to coastal states.
- Depletion of fish stocks critical for local livelihoods.

## •Environmental Threats:

- Illegal dumping and oil spills.

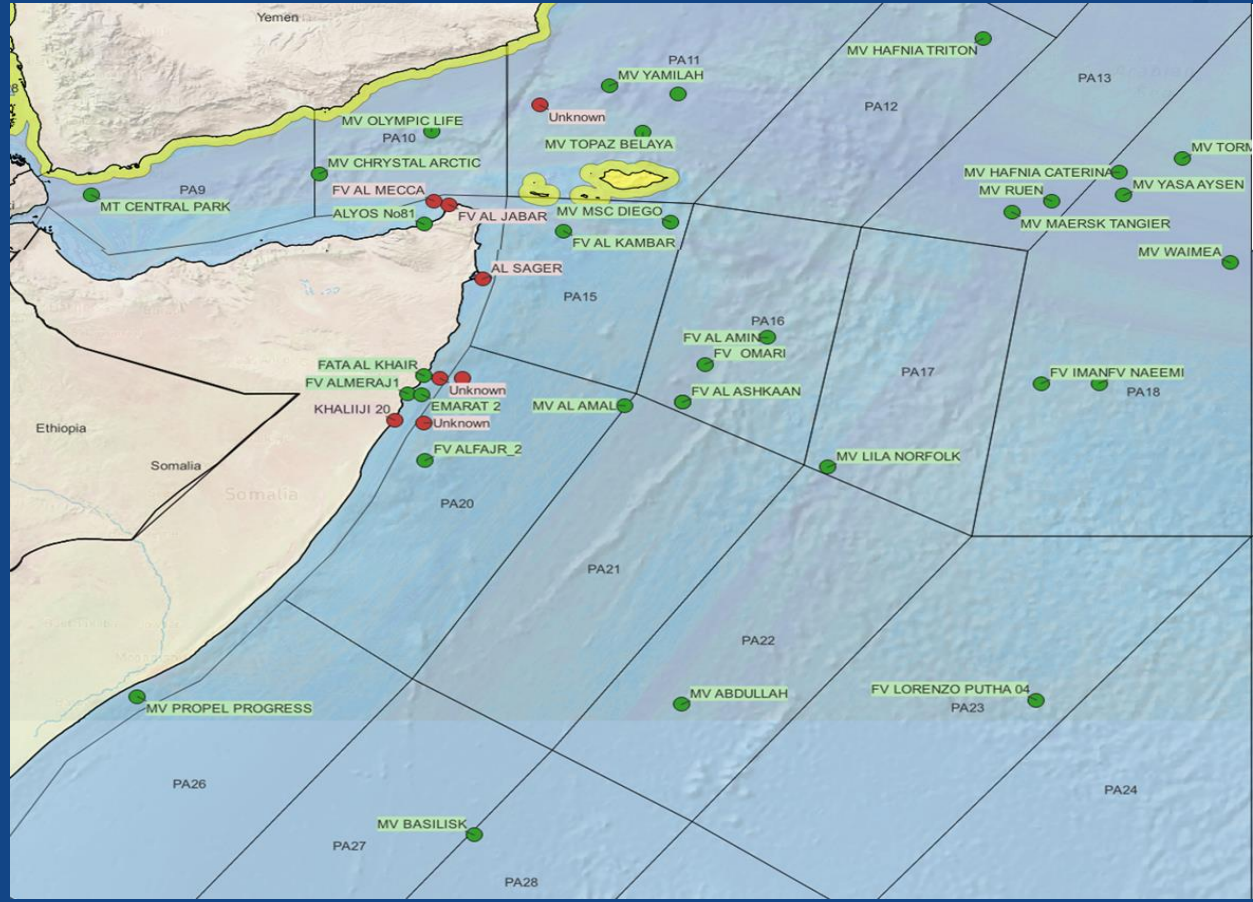
# Piracy Related Events since Nov 2023



**Before nov 23:** "Piracy is suppressed but not eradicated"  
**FACT:** there have been 24 successful boarding since nov 23

**Now:** "Piracy is back. We are fighting piracy"

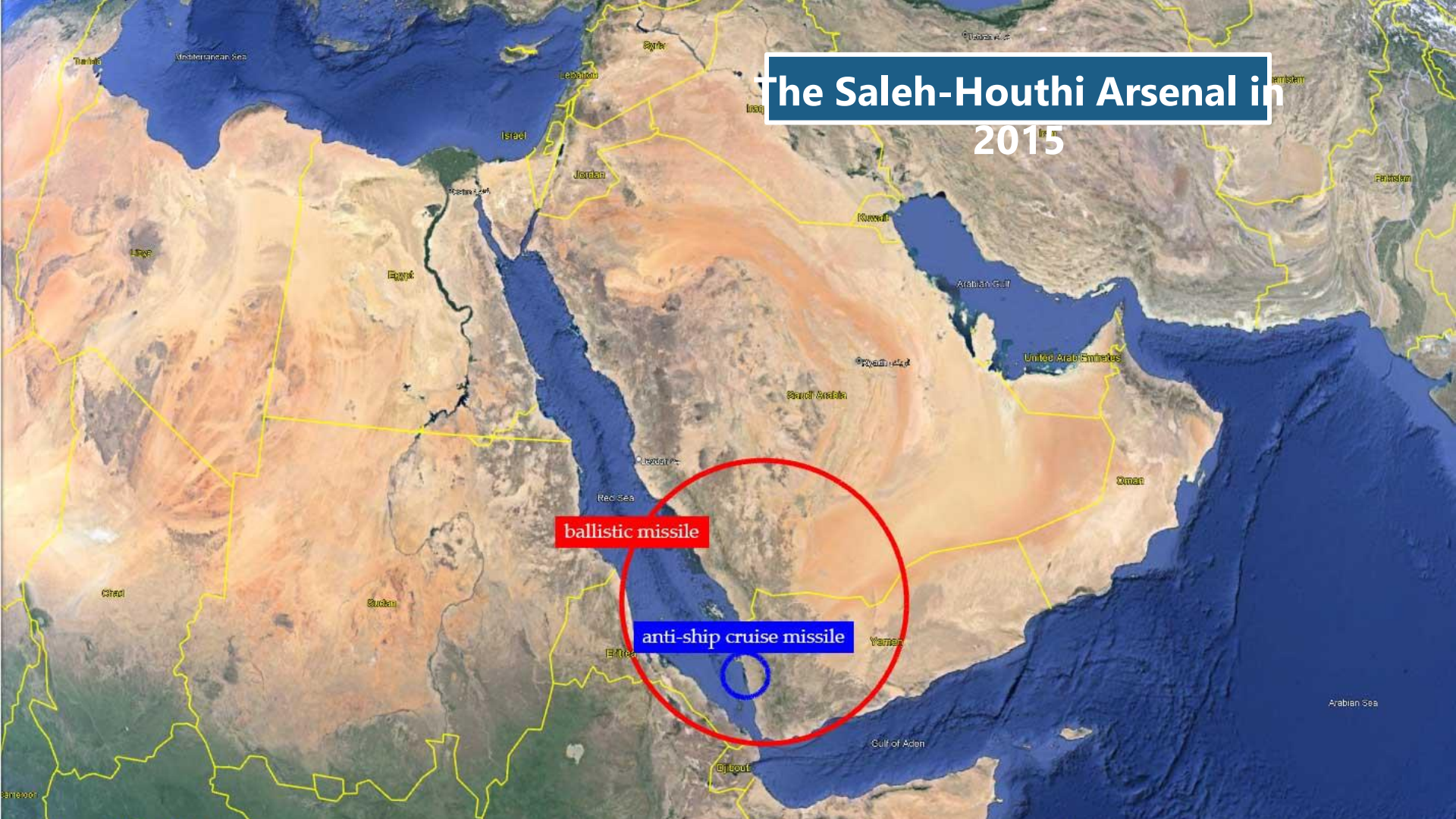
**Hypothesis:** Security forces focus are now on Yemen Conflict



# The Saleh-Houthi Arsenal in 2015

ballistic missile

anti-ship cruise missile



# The Houthi Arsenal in 2024

suicide drone

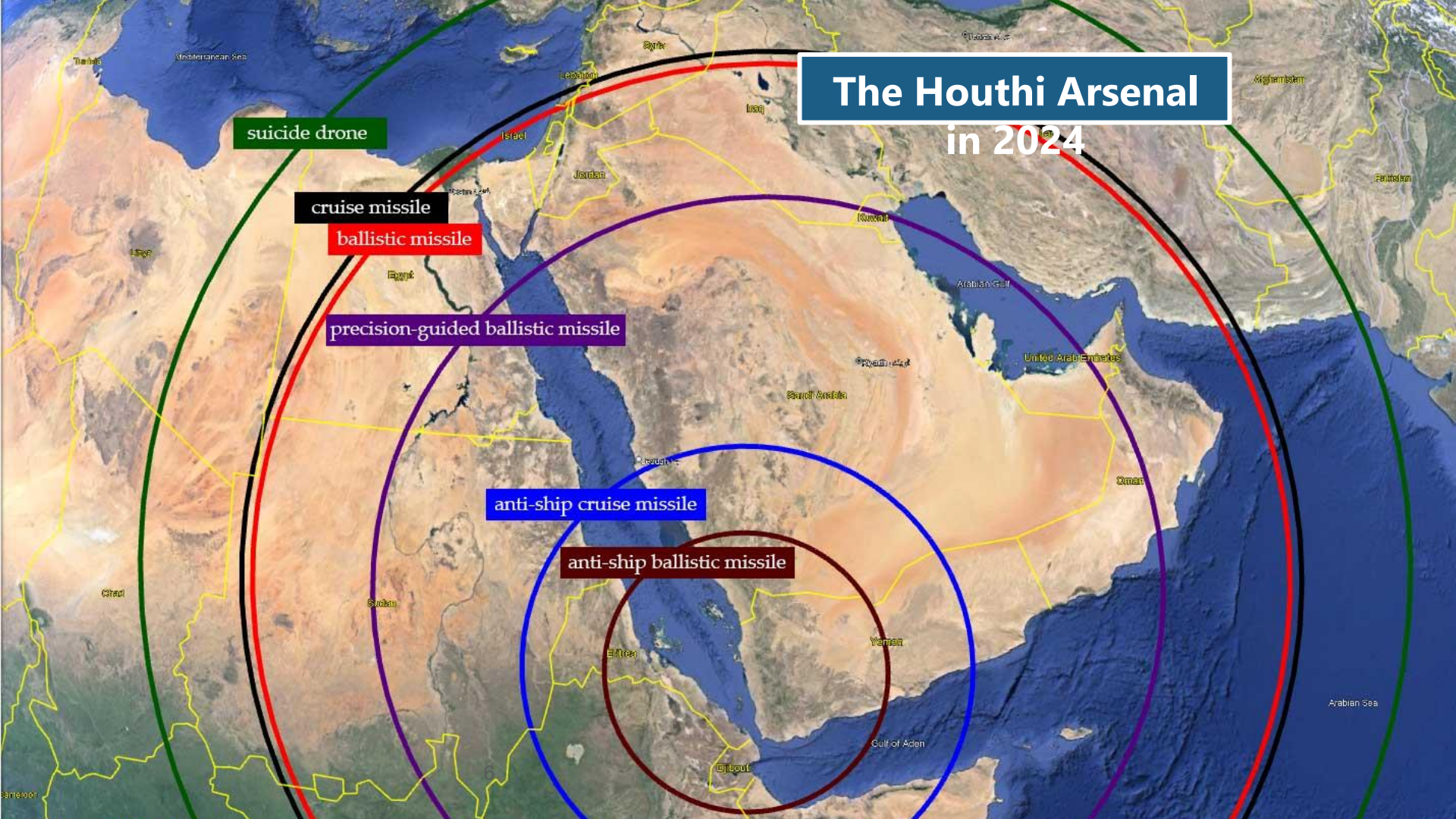
cruise missile

ballistic missile

precision-guided ballistic missile

anti-ship cruise missile

anti-ship ballistic missile





# How do we work together?

## Collaborative Efforts with Navies, Coast Guards, and Strategic Partners

### 1. Enhanced Regional Maritime Security

The DCOC provides a legal and cooperative framework for regional states to combat piracy and other illicit activities. Collaboration ensures that the RCOC aligns its operations with the broader regional objectives, strengthening maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean.

### 2. Operational Coordination

The RCOC serves as an operational hub, and the DCOC, through its signatory states, provides the necessary political and strategic support. Coordinated efforts enable a unified response to threats such as piracy, trafficking, and IUU fishing.

### 3. Leveraging Expertise and Resources

The DCOC includes a wide network of maritime experts and signatory states with various resources. Partnering allows the RCOC to tap into these resources, ensuring efficient use of capabilities and avoiding duplication of efforts.

### 4. Mutual Capacity Building

Through collaboration, both bodies can share knowledge, conduct joint exercises, and strengthen the region's maritime domain awareness. This mutual support helps build robust and sustainable maritime security frameworks.

### 5. International Partnerships

The DCOC's global partnerships with organizations like the IMO and other regional bodies complement the RCOC's operations. Strengthening ties between the RCOC and DCOC enhances credibility and fosters support from international partners.

### 6. Legal and Policy Integration

The RCOC relies on operational legal frameworks to guide its activities, while the DCOC provides high-level policy direction. This integration ensures that the RCOC operates within internationally accepted legal standards, improving governance and cooperation.

### 7. Strengthening Regional Ownership

Collaborative efforts highlight the commitment of regional states to take ownership of their maritime security challenges. This reinforces trust among stakeholders and ensures sustainable security outcomes.

### 8. Broader Area of Responsibility

The DCOC's signatories encompass a large geographical area critical to the RCOC's operations. Close cooperation ensures seamless coordination over overlapping zones of interest and responsibility.

In summary, the RCOC-DCOC partnership fosters synergy, efficiency, and inclusivity, ultimately enhancing regional and international maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean.

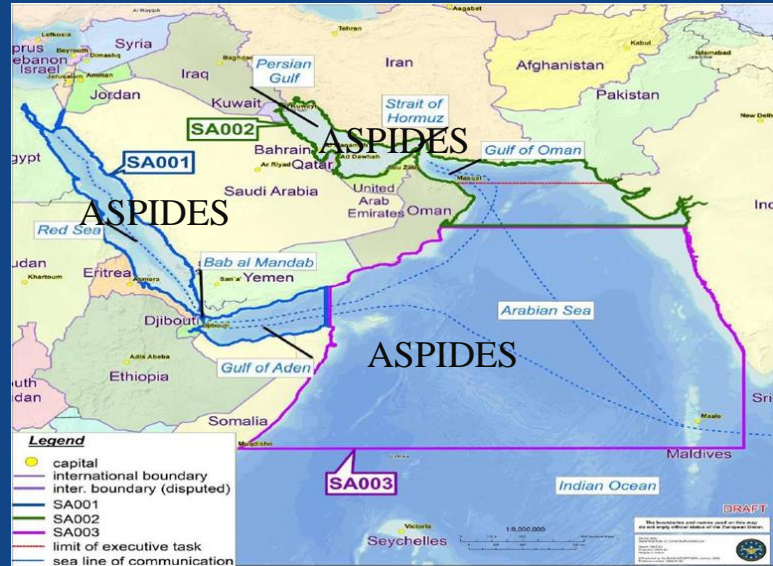
# EUNAVFOR

ATALANTA

ASPIDES

## EU CSDP Operation

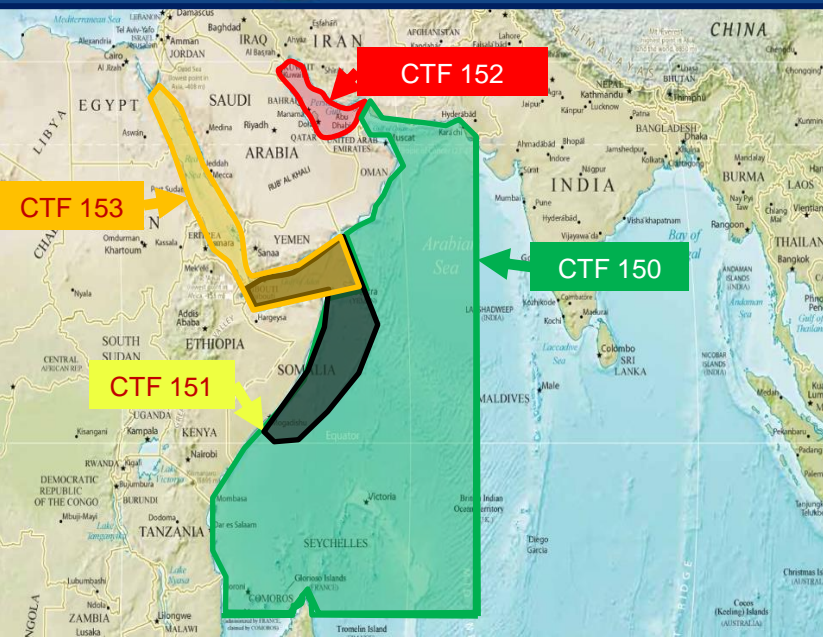
AGENOR to ASPIDES







# Combined Maritime Forces



- CTF-150
- MSO in Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea & Indian Ocean.
- **Counter smuggling activities:** narcotics, weapons, charcoal.

- CTF-151
- To deter, suppress, and disrupt **piracy** on the high seas.
- Regional capacity building.

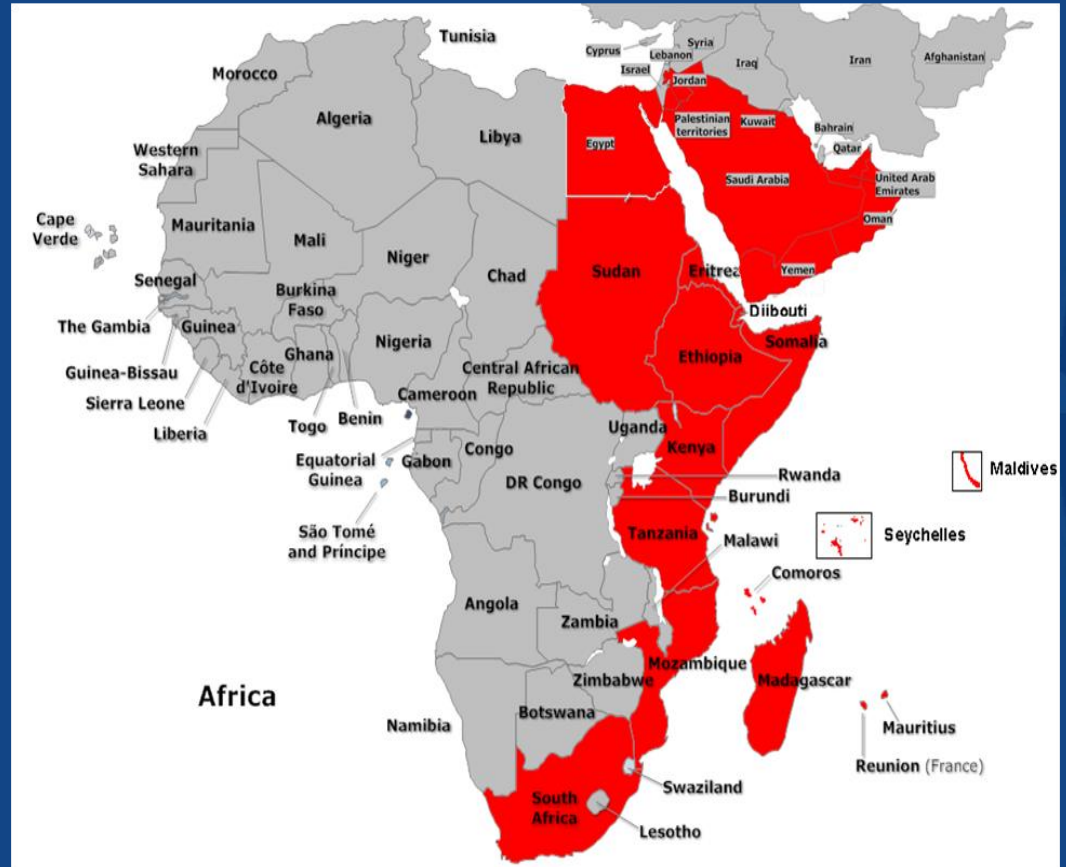
- CTF-152
- MSO in International Waters inside the Arabian Gulf.
- Counter smuggling activities: narcotics, weapons, charcoal
- Promote **free flow of legitimate commerce** and build the regional maritime capability.

- CTF-153
- MSO in International Waters inside the Red Sea, Bab Al Mandeb and Gulf of Aden.
- **Counter smuggling activities:** narcotics, weapons, charcoal.
- Promote **free flow of legitimate commerce** and build the regional maritime capability

# Djibouti Code of Conduct (JA)



- 2009: DCOC Signed by 21 states as a cooperation agreement for countering piracy.
- 2017: Amended to cover other illicit maritime activity including IUU fishing.
- 2023: DCOC adopted the Regional Centres into their ISN.





## Building on existing framework

Strengthened Regional Capability:

Pooling resources such as naval and coast guard assets.

Support from Partners: Strategic collaboration with EUNAVFOR, CMF, and others to bridge capability gaps.



# *OP Sunfish - September 2022*

## *Narcotics seizure 870KG UK-SEY*

### Outcome

Seizure of crystal methamphetamine by HMS MONTROSE from a dhow **after** leaving the area of operation

The drugs totaled 870kg when counted, worth around £15.5m wholesale value in the UK according to the National Crime Agency

Successful boarding's like this help to deter people from using the sea for criminal purposes



# OP Marlin - September 2022

## EUNAVFOR ATALANTA-Seychelles

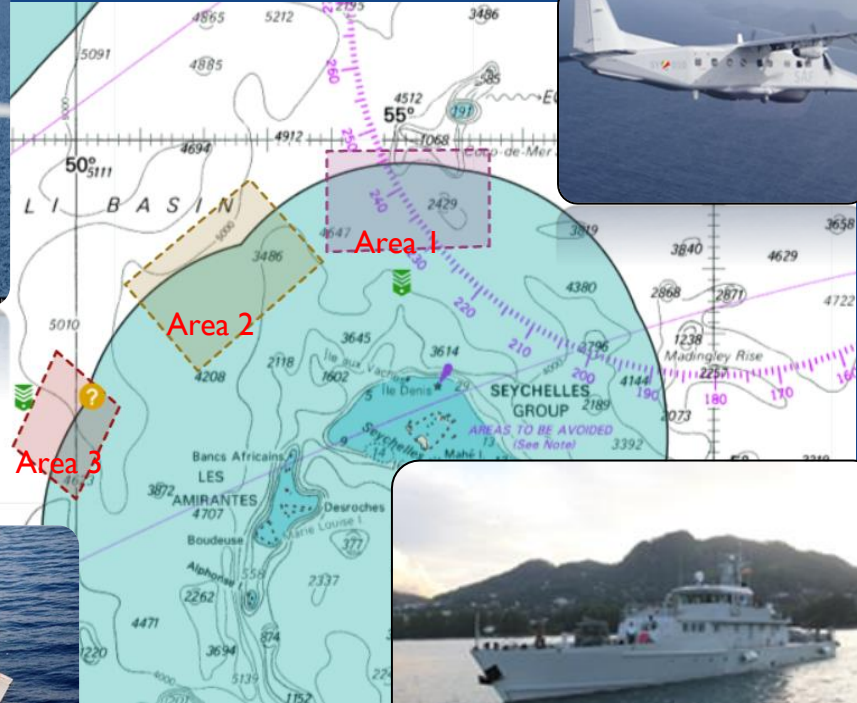


- OPS Area 1, 2 & 3 – 150,000 km<sup>2</sup>

*Coordinated Operation with regional partners to police patrol and protect our regional waters.*

- Maritime patrol time: 131:33hrs
  - Numancia (EUNAVFOR) 2 days 15hrs 33mins
  - PS Etoile (Seychelles) 2 days

- Monitored Vessels: 20



# Op New Dawn - January 2024

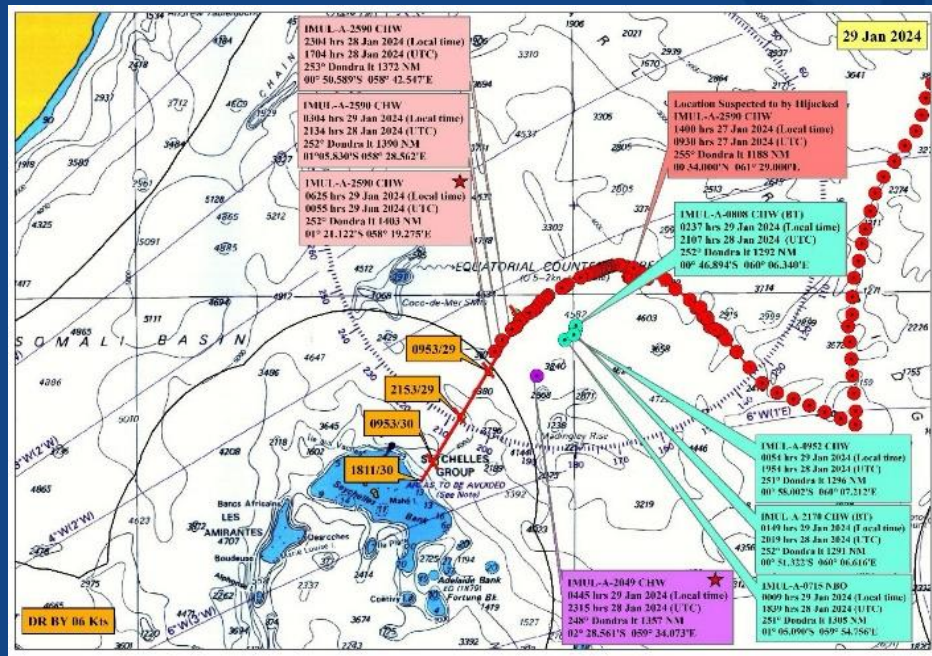
## Pirate attack and Hijacking



Sri Lankan fishing vessel LORENZO PUNTHA was rescued by the Seychelles Coast Guard on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024 NE of Mahé Island within Seychelles EEZ.

All six crew members on-board the fishing vessel were safe and three Somalian pirates are now under the custody of the Seychelles Police Force.

According to information revealed by the rescued fishermen there are about ten to twelve pirates still on board the Iranian FV with some T56 weapons and they are seeking more FV to hijack.



# Op New Dawn - January 2024

## Pirate Mothership

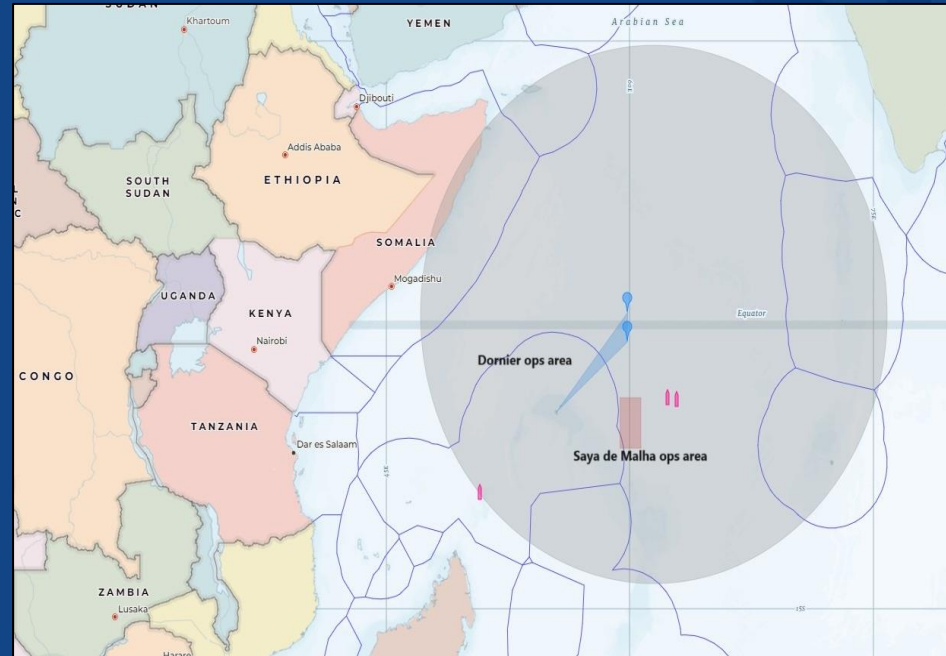


### Seychelles Air Force

To conduct daily flights from 31 January to 4<sup>th</sup> February with the intention of identifying the Iranian Dhow that is believed to be being used as mothership by pirates and any other suspicious vessels of interest. To report any findings through the NISCC.

### Seychelles Coastguard

To deploy within the Area of Operation and patrol and search the area in coordination with information relayed by the Dornier and intercept suspected Iranian Dhow that is believed to be being used as mothership by pirates. Conduct any VBSS of any suspected vessels of interest.



# Op Persian Express June 2024 Anti Narcotics

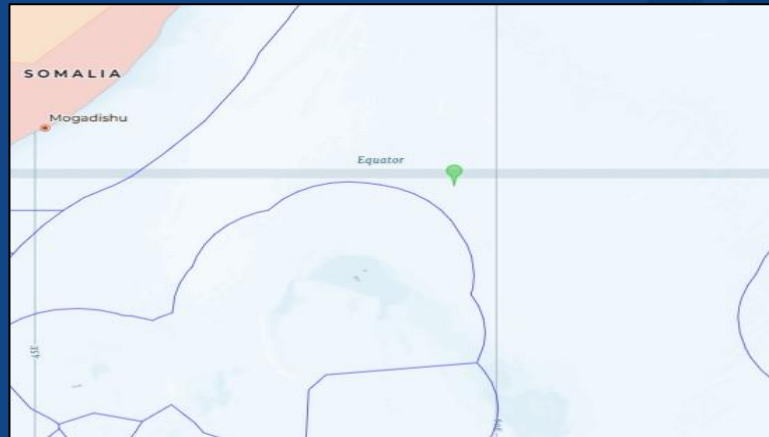


On the afternoon of Tuesday 04th June 2024 intelligence reported that there was Iranian Dhow believed to be delivering narcotics in the region, the location was reported to be just outside the Seychelles EEZ.

The RCOC sent an Asset Request Form to NISCC with the intention of deploying a Surface and Air Asset to intercept the Iranian Dhow.

The SAF successfully identified the position of the Dhow and relayed the information to the SCG Patrol Ship, the Special Forces Unit (SFU) team onboard then mounted a successful boarding and an initial search.

It was decided that the vessel should be safely escorted back to Port Victoria for a more comprehensive search to be conducted.





# Op Persian Express

## June 2024

### 897 KG seized



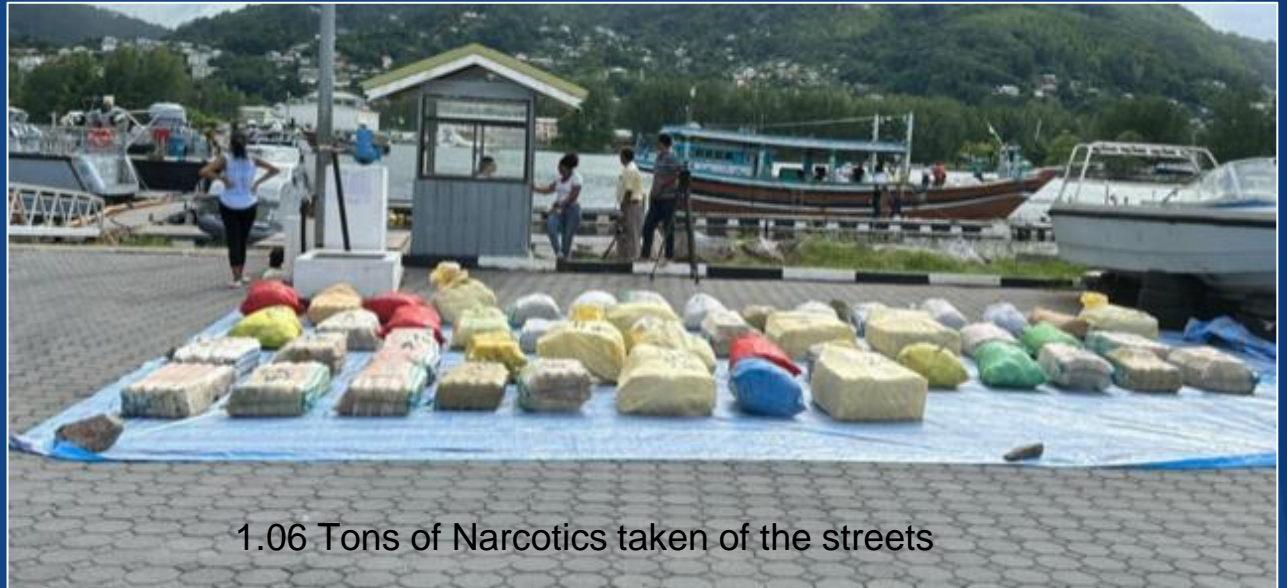
The Dhow was escorted back to Port Victoria. After an extensive search a significant amount of narcotics was identified and correct evidence handling was applied by the search teams.

The interception by the Seychelles Coastguard resulted in one of the largest ever seizures of narcotics within the Seychelles EEZ. The Seychelles Police Force revealed that the initial findings on the intercepted vessel show 897.33 kilograms of cannabis resin, 9.65 kilograms of herbal material, 7.3 kilograms of heroin and 3 kilograms of methamphetamine



# *OP Paille en Queue - April 2023*

## *successful operation based on good information sharing and intel from partners*



1.06 Tons of Narcotics taken of the streets

# Operation RIAKA 23

Joint operation with Madagascar and EU NAVFOR



IUU Fishing

CITES Species identified by  
TRAFFIX



# Ops Mjumbi – Successful joint coordinated operation Comoros & Madagascar





# Opération Whaleshark : Djibouti - EUNAVFOR Atalanta - IOM



# Opération Southern Sky

Narcotics and Anti Piracy Patrol



Joint operation with Seychelles Defence Forces and the Royal Navy ship HMS Lancaster.



# Opération Dolphin Shield



Narcotics and anti piracy Patrol  
Joint operation with Seychelles Defence Forces  
and EUNAVFOR ATALANTA





# *Whats next?*

## **DCOC Working Group 3**

The evolution of DCOC information sharing network is now.







# Thank You

Any Questions/ Comments/ Clarifications/ Inputs

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