

Issue 51 | September 2025

Securing Africa's South Atlantic

A risk assessment of organised maritime crime

Carina Bruwer

Summary

The Atlantic Ocean is a vital conduit for vessels transporting and sourcing licit and illicit commodities. Much of the focus on maritime crime has been on the North Atlantic and the Gulf of Guinea, with fragmented attention paid to illicit activities further south in the Atlantic bordering Angola, Namibia and South Africa. This paper maps transnational organised crimes facilitated by vessels, with the aim of identifying challenges and opportunities in safeguarding southwestern Africa's coast.

Key points

- Various vessels transport and source illicit commodities in Africa's South Atlantic.
- The Red Sea conflict has increased vessel traffic around Southern Africa's coast, bringing both opportunities and risks to trade.
- Cocaine remains the primary drug entering Africa via the South Atlantic, but synthetic drug and precursor trafficking is increasing.
- Flags of convenience facilitate illegal fishing on the Angola/Namibian border.
- Limited resources constrain counter-efforts.
- Mapping Africa's South Atlantic illicit markets provides an evidence base for stakeholders working to counter them.

Glossary

- **Flag state:** State in which a vessel is registered or is otherwise entitled to fly its flag
- **Coastal state:** State with a coastline that has the right to prescribe and enforce laws applicable to vessels in its national waters
- **Port state:** State that has the right to prescribe and enforce laws applicable to vessels in its ports
- **Flag of convenience:** Flying the flag of a country other than the country of ownership for financial benefit or to evade controls
- **IUU fishing:** Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- **MDA:** Maritime domain awareness
- **NMSS:** National Maritime Security Strategy

Introduction

Humanity is inextricably tied to the ocean, which sustains life by regulating the climate and providing oxygen, food and energy. Revered across cultures and identities, its depths are severe, its waters in constant flux, and much of it remains unexplored. It is regionally divided into five oceans – the Arctic, Southern, Indian, Atlantic and Pacific. The Atlantic Ocean is the second-largest and a geographic, economic and strategically vital seascape connecting Africa, Europe, the Americas and Antarctica. It is the world's most travelled ocean and has long been a gateway for both licit and illicit trade as goods move between source, transit and consumer states.

Below the surface, the ocean holds a treasure trove of natural resources, including marine species, minerals and hydrocarbons. The blue economy also provides jobs and tourism income and is increasingly being explored for renewable energy sources.¹

In recognition of the central role the ocean plays in human wellbeing and economic prosperity, states globally seek to increase their maritime presence to safeguard their interests. This is reflected in the recent adoption of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction treaty, which seeks to protect the high seas from unsustainable exploitation. So, too, African states seek to secure their marine environments and blue economies. But to fully unlock the opportunities held by the ocean, African states should safeguard their shores from increased competition for ocean access and resources, including from criminal actors likewise looking to profit from the sea.

Criminal actors have permeated the Atlantic's waters and societies from the high seas to coastlines, and from coastal communities to the highest echelons of government. Although tales of pirates and slave ships traversing Atlantic trade routes are reminiscent of a bygone era, these waterways remain a conduit for piracy and slavery's contemporary equivalents, along with myriad other illegal activities. Like legal trade, these crimes are facilitated and accelerated by globalisation, technology and ever-expanding, cost-effective international trade.²

The Atlantic Basin is divided into north and south, with the South Atlantic hugging Africa's southwestern coastline. Most attention on Atlantic criminal markets has focused on trans-Atlantic trade, the North Atlantic and West Africa's Gulf of Guinea, where armed attacks and drug trafficking illustrate the potential impact of insecurity at sea on governance, livelihoods, biodiversity, security and shipping.³ In contrast, research on Southern Africa's role in South Atlantic illicit economies is fragmented despite being the scene of multiple cross-border illegal trades.⁴

As more local, regional and international vessels traverse Southern Africa's coasts and harbours, it is imperative that states and other stakeholders become as amphibious as criminal networks. This threat assessment aims to provide policymakers, practitioners and researchers with an overview of the key transnational organised crimes (TOC) perpetrated in the South Atlantic waters off Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

Section 1 provides an overview of Southern Africa's Atlantic-bordering countries, namely Angola, Namibia and South Africa. Section 2 highlights key considerations applicable to crimes committed at sea. Section 3 outlines key organised criminal activities perpetrated on board vessels.

Section 4 reviews the local, regional and international responses to these activities. Section 5 unpacks key barriers to implementing policy and operational responses, revealing their vulnerabilities and shortcomings. The final section provides practical recommendations to enhance the response.

Research scope and methodology

Although maritime crimes have land-based components, this report focuses on TOC on vessels at sea with limited reference to ports and harbours. Data was gathered through a literature review of books, academic and media articles, reports, international treaties, and national laws, policies and strategies. This was complemented by qualitative interviews with respondents from South Africa, Namibia and Angola. The respondents commented on the most prevalent forms of TOC in the region's waters, the criminal actors involved, and counter-efforts to mitigate TOC's effects.

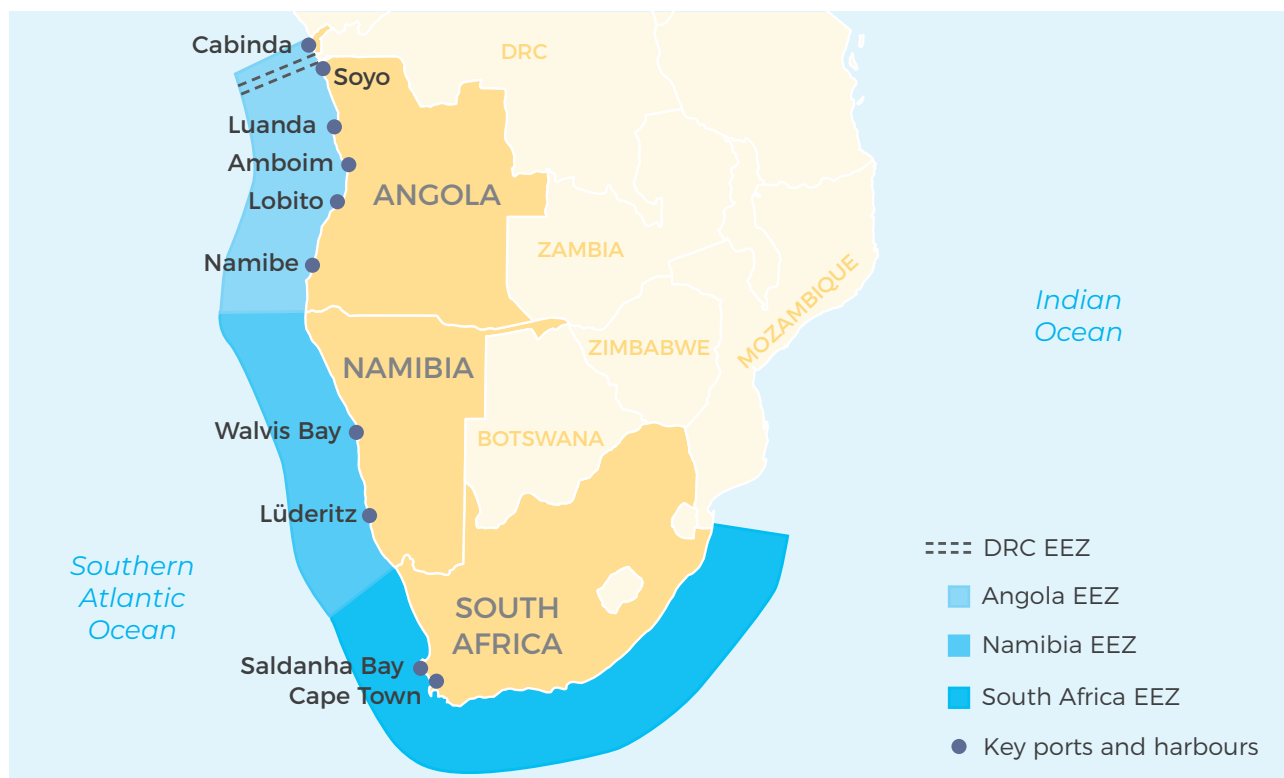
Preliminary interview respondents were purposively sampled, and additional participants were identified through snowball sampling. Interview respondents work in different capacities related to responses to TOC at sea. This includes representatives from departments of transport, police, defence forces, customs, fisheries, etc. Respondents working in the fishing industry were also interviewed. Data was triangulated between the different data sources.

Southern Atlantic coastal state overview

Chart 1: Southwest Africa at a glance

COUNTRY	ANGOLA	NAMIBIA	SOUTH AFRICA
Population	33 million (2022) ⁵	2.8 million (2023) ⁶	61 million (2023) ⁷
Coastline	~1 600 km	~1 570 km ⁸	~3 000 km ⁹
Income	Lower-middle income ¹⁰	Upper-middle income ¹¹	Upper-middle income ¹²
Key maritime contributors to gross domestic product (GDP)	Oil ¹³	Mining, fishing ¹⁴	Mining, transport ¹⁵
Exclusive economic zone (EEZ)	518 433 km ²	580 000 km ²	1.5 million km ²
Marine protected areas (MPAs)	~0.01% of Angolan waters ¹⁶	~1.7% of Namibian waters, consisting of Namibian Islands MPA ¹⁷	~5% of South African waters ¹⁸
Key ports and harbours on Atlantic coastline	Luanda Cabinda Lobito Namibe Soyo Amboim ¹⁹	Walvis Bay Lüderitz ²⁰	Saldanha Cape Town ²¹
Department primarily responsible for vessels	Ministry of Transport National Maritime Agency	Ministry of Works and Transport Directorate of Maritime Affairs	Department of Transport (Maritime Affairs)
Fragile States Index ²²	39 th	112 th	78 th

Chart 2: Exclusive economic zones and key ports



Source: *Marineregions.org*

Angola, Namibia and South Africa are Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states and constitute the Benguela Current Convention, derived from the current that borders the region and separates the Atlantic from the Indian Ocean at Cape Agulhas in South Africa. Southern Africa, especially South Africa as a tri-oceanic country located along major sea routes, relies primarily on maritime transport for trade and occupies a significant geostrategic location.

Southern Africa relies primarily on maritime transport for trade and occupies a significant geostrategic location

While this location and well-developed transport infrastructure²³ are conducive to legal trade, it equally causes the region to serve as a corridor for illegal trade. Its coastlines are long and often remote, with no nearby trans-Atlantic neighbours, amplifying the ability to operate in distant waters undetected.²⁴ The region's criminal ecosystems are further shaped by global, regional and local geopolitics, socioeconomic conditions and trade dynamics. Expanding commercial connections and trade infrastructure without parallel social and coastal development, adequate financial and regulatory frameworks and effective maritime monitoring, all attract TOC to the region.²⁵

Much of Angola, Namibia and South Africa's resource wealth is at sea. Their waters are rich in biodiversity, lucrative marine species, minerals, oil and gas.²⁶ All three countries also serve as logistics hubs for trade with landlocked SADC neighbours via extensive inland connections of roads and railways. Although participants highlighted South Africa's central location for international distribution, the entire region is experiencing increased vessel traffic as vessels reroute around the Cape Route due to attacks by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.²⁷

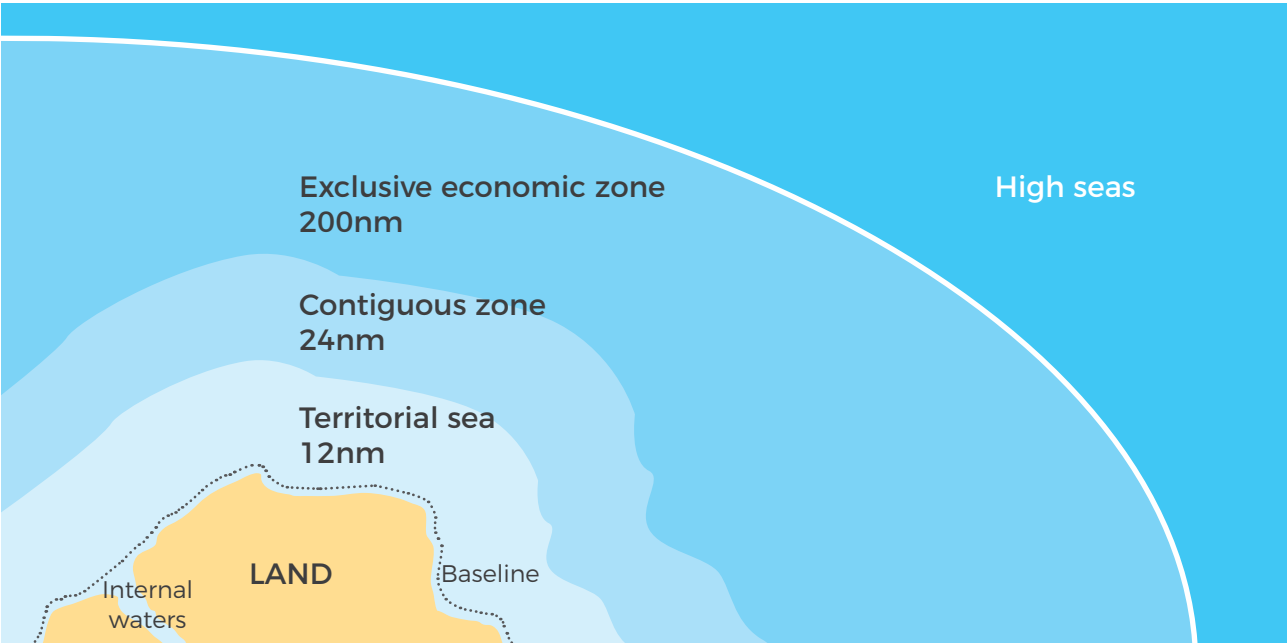
The next section highlights key considerations applicable to crimes committed on board vessels at sea and in port.

Responsibility to combat maritime crime

At sea

The ocean’s immense size complicates detecting and responding to TOC. When crimes occur at sea, flag, coastal and port states share law enforcement responsibilities, which are determined by the crime type, distance from shore, and vessel’s nationality. Coastal states have varying law enforcement powers up to 200 nautical miles from land. This jurisdiction typically increases the closer to a country’s coastline a crime is committed.²⁸

Chart 3: Smuggling and trafficking of illicit goods by sea



Source: Adapted from Global Maritime Crime Programme, *Maritime Crime: A Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners*, 2020, https://www.unodc.org/documents/Maritime_crime/GMCP_Maritime_3rd_edition_Ebook.pdf.

Maritime zone	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Article	Which acts may be responded to?	Rights of the Coastal State
Internal waters	Article 8	All criminal offences	Arrest and prosecute
Territorial sea and archipelagic waters	Article 2-4 and 27; Article 47 and 49	Criminal offences which: (a) consequences of the crime extend to the Coastal State; (b) crime is of a kind to disturb the peace of the country or the good order of the territorial sea; (c) assistance of the local authorities has been requested by the master of the ship or by a diplomatic agent or consular officer of the Flag State and (d) such measures are necessary for the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances	Arrest and prosecute
Contiguous zone	Article 33 ^a	Criminal offences which break or are intended to break fiscal, immigration, sanitary and custom (FISC) laws in Coastal State's territory or territorial seas	Prevent attempts, arrest and prosecute committed offences
EEZ	Article 55-59	Criminal matters affecting Coastal State's sovereign rights to its economic resources and economic exploitation of the zone	Arrest and prosecute

Source: Author²⁹

Beyond coastal state waters are the high seas, where no state has sovereignty. A vessel's flag state has primary jurisdiction over its vessels, which is especially important on the high seas. Foreign-owned vessels can register in South Africa,³⁰ Namibia³¹ and Angola³² under certain circumstances – although none of the three is a significant flag state for vessels operating internationally.

In port

Over 80% of global trade is transported by sea, and this is set to increase as port infrastructure expands, including in SADC. Southern Africa's centrally located ports are a global transit point,³³ currently servicing considerably more vessels due to the conflict in the Red Sea. Between December 2023 and March 2024, container vessel arrivals by gross tonnage increased by 328% in Cape Town alone.³⁴ Since there are concerns regarding South African ports' capacity to handle much more trade,³⁵ Namibia and Angola may see larger increases in maritime trade volumes, especially following ongoing port expansion in the region.³⁶

Rather than preferring certain ports, criminal networks usually rely on established trade routes. This is why illegal trade often passes through ports with high trade volumes, such as Durban in South Africa and Walvis Bay in Namibia. Although ports form bottlenecks and are often where illicit shipments are seized, the colossal volume of trade complicates identifying illegality. Coupled with this are often parallel legal and illegal shipments of the same commodity, which obscures illegal trade, and limited technology and profiling abilities to identify illicit shipments. One participant told ENACT: 'Ports are a non-competitive environment for traffickers, so they haven't had to get too sophisticated.'³⁷

Location is also important, as it is for legal trade. Fish, for example, is often offloaded near fishing grounds or where fishing companies' jetties are located. So, while rock lobster might be offloaded in Lüderitz, horse mackerel is offloaded in Walvis Bay.³⁸ Lüderitz is also shallower than Walvis Bay, which means larger vessels do not typically dock there.³⁹ Available infrastructure and transport to the hinterland are also relevant for onward transport of commodities.⁴⁰

Some terminals are run by private companies. For example, Luanda's multipurpose terminal is privately managed⁴¹ and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) has recently taken over Walvis Bay's container terminal, which has unlocked new routes through the region.⁴² A participant warned of potential increased drug trafficking once a planned direct route between South America and Walvis Bay becomes operational. Although privately operated terminals are subject to the same security measures as the rest of the port, limited staffing, outdated infrastructure and private jetties outside of ports limit government oversight.

Since slipways and harbours are not considered ports of entry, they lack surveillance and border control measures

Multiple agencies are present in ports, sometimes with overlapping or unclear mandates. South Africa's Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) and the South African Revenue Service declined to participate in the research, noting maritime crime was not within their mandate. This despite playing a key role in security and customs clearance, along with the newly established Border Management Authority. Transnet's 2024 annual report fails to mention illicit trade and the Namibian Ports Authority (NAMPORT) 2024 annual report only notes illicit trade as a reputational risk.⁴³ While the Maritime and Port Institute of Angola (IMPA) is the overarching port regulator in Angola, each port is managed by a separate entity.

Participants also noted security concerns in small harbours with barely any security,⁴⁴ yet increasing illegal activity such as drug trafficking.⁴⁵ One said: 'It wouldn't make too much sense to do any smuggling through a formal port when there's plenty of other places you can bring things ashore without any controls.'⁴⁶ South Africa's Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy notes the 'near collapse' of South Africa's small harbours, including their security.⁴⁷

Smaller harbours and landing sites known not to carry out checks, or where staff are complicit,⁴⁸ can attract vessels seeking to avoid detection. Since slipways and harbours are not considered ports of entry, they lack surveillance and border control measures.⁴⁹

Chart 4: Comparative port cargo volumes – Namibia, Angola and South Africa

COUNTRY	ANGOLA	NAMIBIA	SOUTH AFRICA
Ports authority	NAMPORT	IMPA	TNPA
Total cargo handled annually	~8.4 million tonnes in 2024 ⁵⁰	17.1 million tonnes in 2021 ⁵¹	~211 million tonnes in 2024 ⁵²

Vessels as criminal conduits

Vessels as instruments of crime are uniquely difficult to counter. They are often transnational – registered in one country, carrying crew and cargo from across the globe, fishing under licences from multiple countries, and passing through different states' waters.

Different vessels facilitate TOC – from container vessels to fishing vessels, small dinghies, pleasure craft, and uncrewed vessels. Vessels' size, design and technology dictate how far offshore they can travel, and how much and what kinds of goods they carry. This also dictates whether they can access remote shorelines or large commercial ports. The choice of vessel is influenced by the commodity being moved, its size, origin, destination and criminal networks' access to vessels.

Some vessels engage exclusively in criminal activities, while others participate primarily in legal trade. Some, like fishing vessels, are more susceptible to criminal activity due to the nature of their operation. While fast vessels are often preferred for a quick getaway, routes and vessels are also chosen based on the corruptibility of crew members.⁵³

Shipping containers allow bulk shipments to cross the globe at low cost,⁵⁴ with large illicit shipments often concealed by legal trade. The options for exploiting containers are bountiful, and without sufficient risk profiling, even finding a container exclusively carrying illegal goods is akin to finding a needle in a haystack. Illegal commodities are routinely hidden among legal goods – they may be placed in hidden container compartments, misdeclared, swapped using the 'rip on/rip off' method (original seals are broken, cargo replaced and fraudulent seals applied), commingled with lookalike products, or placed into containers when vessels are already at sea.

Because containers follow shipping schedules, they often pass through multiple jurisdictions and are transhipped. For example, in 2018, a 400 kg cocaine shipment was found in Namibia, hidden among packages of photocopy paper. It left Brazil's Port of Santos, transited through Cape Town, and was seized in Walvis Bay.⁵⁵ Drugs have also been attached to vessels. This parasitic method entails a diver securing a shipment to a vessel's hull, which is then retrieved by the same or another diver upon reaching its destination. A Brazilian diver responsible for these attachments was arrested on his way to South Africa in 2023.⁵⁶

Criminal cargo is also transhipped between vessels. As a customs officer from Namibia said: 'If you travel between Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, you will always see smaller vessels running between these big vessels. So one could only assume that this is when smuggling takes place.'⁵⁷ While larger vessels typically call in ports, smaller vessels prefer unguarded coastlines from where they can transport shipments directly to harbours, marinas, or the shore. This allows vessels to avoid controls, especially when transfers are done further out at sea. Commodities can also be deposited at sea for collection, as has been the case with cocaine-filled barrels with location devices found in South Africa.⁵⁸

Case study: In 2024, an incident allegedly occurred whereby mules failed to collect a shipment dropped at sea by a bulk carrier regularly transporting drugs between South America and South Africa. The shipment was equipped with a flotation device and GPS tracker, but it was overlooked by the mules who were waiting on a small vessel off the coast of the Western Cape. Two gang members from Cape Town, reportedly responsible for the collection, were murdered following the incident.⁵⁹

Criminal networks avoid law enforcement by remaining outside coastal state waters or hiding the vessel's identity and ownership. Crews also disable their automatic identification system (AIS) so that the vessel's movements cannot be tracked. AIS can, for example, show vessels slowing down or potentially engaging in illegal transshipments or bunkering.

International regulations also differentiate between vessels. While some require International Maritime Organization (IMO) numbers and AIS, fishing vessels do not.⁶⁰ Not all flag and coastal states therefore require vessels to use AIS or to have an IMO registration number, which is displayed on a vessel's hull and documentation, and serves as its primary form of identification.⁶¹

Vessels also avoid accountability by registering under flags of convenience in countries unable or unwilling to hold their vessels accountable. This is facilitated by open registries, allowing vessels to register under a country's flag without any link to that country. This is typically done in exchange for economic incentives, and some allow vessel owners to remain anonymous.⁶² Vessels also change ownership to escape responsibility. Such owners might also abandon crew members and often lack insurance.⁶³

Other efforts to evade jurisdiction⁶⁴ include:

- Operating in the waters of a state with limited ability to respond
- Not registering under any flag⁶⁵
- Frequently changing vessel registration (flag-hopping)⁶⁶
- Naming multiple vessels the same and operating them under a single licence
- Registering in a country with privately managed ship registration, limiting state oversight
- Registering under a fictitious name or company
- Flying a false flag or shifting between flags
- Changing or hiding the vessel's name and IMO number
- Registering in a country that does not criminalise relevant offences, rendering the prosecution of extra-territorial offences impossible
- Disguising cargo's origin or destination, or misdeclaring shipments
- Offshore transactions

Hiding the beneficial ownership of vessels, companies and funds is a popular practice to exploit corporate and financial structures in countries where ownership information is protected.⁶⁷ South Africa and Namibia are improving their regulations related to establishing beneficial ownership as part of their efforts to get off the Financial Action Task Force's grey list. Angola was also grey-listed in 2024.⁶⁸ A representative from Namibia's Financial Intelligence Centre told ENACT that since 2023, all businesses were required to declare beneficial ownership, but there had been pushback as not everyone wished to disclose such information.⁶⁹

If a flag state and ownership cannot be verified, attributing responsibility is difficult. This discourages mutual legal assistance, cross-border law enforcement and financial investigations.⁷⁰ The lack of regulation and oversight of these vessels can endanger crew members, as safety and labour standards are often flouted.⁷¹ These vessels often lack insurance and pose an environmental risk owing to the increased risk of pollution,⁷² including when they participate in illegal ship-to-ship oil transfers.⁷³

The maritime industry relies heavily on administrative paperwork, allowing documents to be manipulated along the supply chain. This includes permits, licences and vessel registration documents. A participant from an international organisation combating fisheries crime noted that document manipulation could be addressed through digitisation, but that corrupt interests could delay this transition for their own benefit.⁷⁴

Corruption is indeed rife in the maritime industry. Small-scale bribes are paid to port staff and officials to ignore violations, lower penalties, or allow labour law violations, which can result in human trafficking and forced labour practices. Corruption also extends to the highest levels of government, with many illicit activities at sea being facilitated by state actors acting as intermediaries.⁷⁵

Case study: During Namibia's Fishrot scandal, the state-owned National Fishing Corporation of Namibia transferred fishing quotas from Namibian businesses to companies in which the accused, including government ministers, had personal interests. These companies had connections to Iceland's biggest fishing business, Samherji, which allegedly paid millions of dollars in bribes to South West Africa People's Organisation representatives in exchange for preferential access to Namibia's fish stocks.⁷⁶

Criminal markets in Africa's South Atlantic Ocean

This section provides an overview of key TOCs off Angola, Namibia and South Africa's coasts. It outlines crime types, actors, routes, and transportation modes. The scope of these crimes is diverse and its impacts widespread. These criminal activities threaten security, biodiversity, crew members, and coastal communities, while related corruption undermines state institutions and impacts their ability to prevent and disrupt TOC.

Piracy and armed robbery

Atlantic incidents of piracy and armed robberies are concentrated in the Gulf of Guinea. While oil was the initial target of attacks, criminal networks shifted to kidnapping for ransom over time. Attacks around Angola have taken the form of armed robberies and theft occurring nearshore. Attacks are currently restricted to the north, particularly near Luanda, where most incidents involve theft from anchored vessels or vessels in port.⁷⁷

In 2023, the United Nations (UN) Security Council warned that Gulf of Guinea attacks might increasingly shift south due to increased law enforcement in hotspots like Nigeria.⁷⁸ In 2024, Angola indeed experienced both the most successful and attempted attacks in the region.⁷⁹

Case study: In July 2024, two Nigerians and a Ghanaian were arrested for the attempted robbery of an Angolan-flagged oil tanker that was moored in Luanda after being seized by authorities. The three had travelled to Angola a few days earlier and were identified by maritime surveillance. This was the fourth attempted ship robbery in about a year.⁸⁰

Robbers pretending to be fishermen also use speed boats and fishing vessels to rob fishing boats of engines, fish, nets and personal goods.⁸¹ In 2021, 10 such incidents were recorded,⁸² and between 2021 and 2022, 20 cases of engine theft from fishing boats were recorded.⁸³ The same group is suspected of being responsible for these thefts.⁸⁴ There are also regular reports of fuel theft, where fuel is siphoned from ships and transported to the coast for sale.

From 2019 to mid-2024, maritime security authorities conducted several operations that resulted in the seizure of at least 100 vessels involved in robberies and fuel smuggling. These included Operation *Mar Seguro* (Safe Sea), established in 2018 to enhance maritime security. However, in most cases, the suspects abandoned their vessels and escaped.⁸⁵

Case study: In 2024, the Angolan Navy arrested two Ghanaian-flagged vessels in territorial waters on suspicion of fuel smuggling and illegal fishing. In another incident in 2024, seven people were arrested for smuggling 8 000 litres of fuel from a foreign-flagged ship in the Port of Luanda.⁸⁶

Although limited attacks have occurred far offshore from Angola, inadequate maritime domain awareness (MDA) combined with decreased defence budgets and increased vessel traffic⁸⁷ can provide fertile ground for criminal groups preying on vessels. The risk is heightened by vessels waiting for extended periods to enter congested Angolan ports.⁸⁸

Drug trafficking

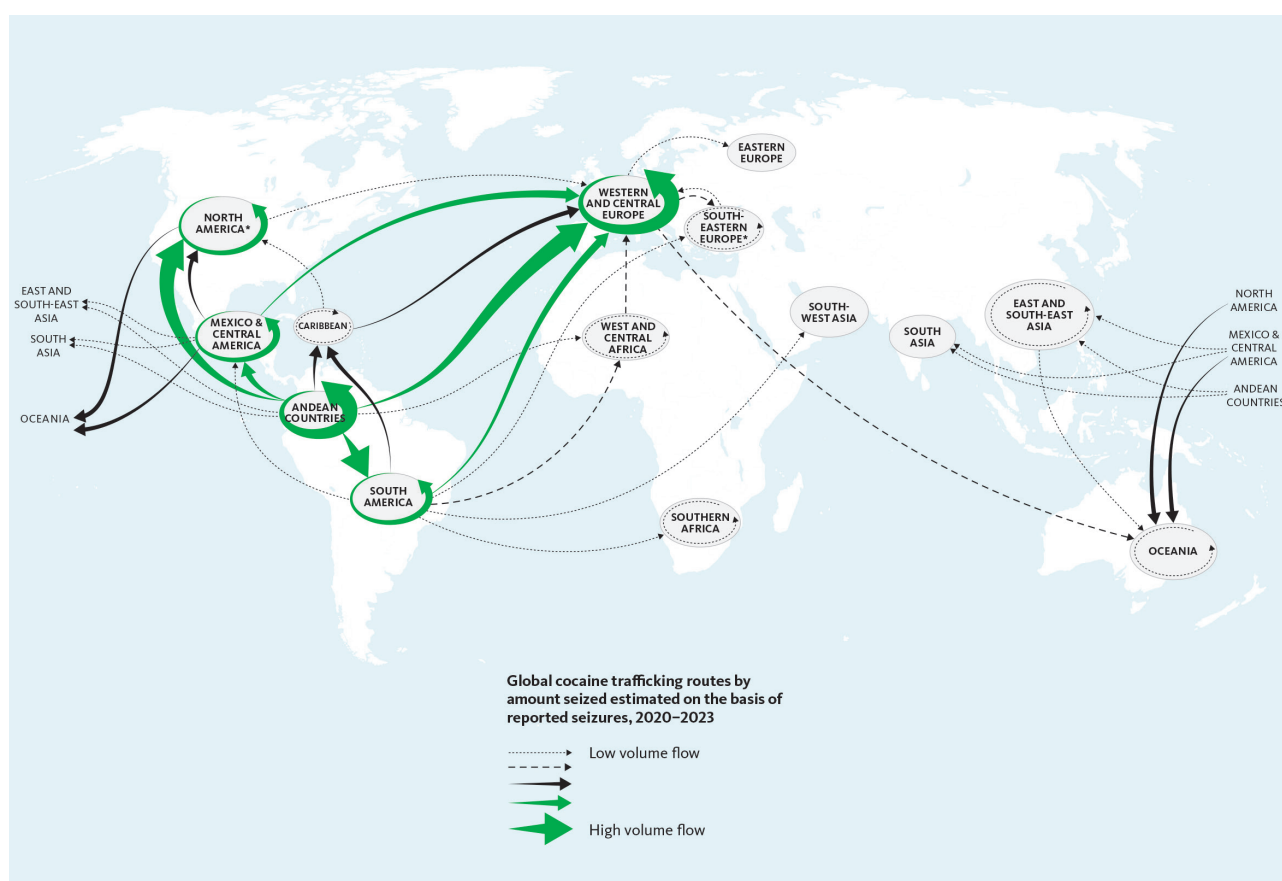
Various drugs and precursor chemicals enter Southern Africa via the Atlantic Ocean, but cocaine remains the primary concern.⁸⁹

Cocaine

Southwest Africa serves as a cocaine transit zone from the Amazon Basin in South America. Brazil, bordering cocaine-producing Columbia and Peru, is the key transshipment and departure point to Africa. Containerised cocaine seizures and the quantities seized reached record levels across Africa in 2021. Most shipments are in transit through West, Central and Southern Africa en route to consumers primarily in Europe, Asia and Australia.⁹⁰

Although West Africa has traditionally received most cocaine shipments, the 2023 Global Report on Cocaine warns of Central and Southern Africa's increasingly important role in the trade. Considering the number of people receiving treatment, cocaine consumption may also be increasing in the region.⁹¹

Chart 5: Global cocaine trafficking flows as described in reported seizures, 2020–2023



Source: World Drug Report 2025

Angola

Angola is a popular cocaine transit point from Brazil to West and Southern Africa, Europe and the Middle East.⁹² Latin American trafficking networks exploit lusophone⁹³ and historical ties with Angola, alongside the country's weak law enforcement and judicial system, and corrupt state officials. Participants said Angola's main challenge was not its inability to monitor its seas, but collusion between security and police forces, and traffickers.⁹⁴

Case study: In December 2023, Spanish authorities intercepted the Angolan-flagged fishing vessel *Simione* as part of a larger drug trafficking operation. The ship, carrying three tonnes of cocaine, had been reported stolen from custody, after being seized in an unrelated criminal investigation. The vessel allegedly regularly collected cocaine from other vessels on the high seas, and the shipment, destined for Spain, was intercepted a few days later. Security sources from diplomatic missions in Angola suggested the theft was faked to absolve Angolan authorities, who claimed the vessel was authorised to leave the Port of Luanda to fish. From there, it collected drugs from a vessel that departed from Senegal, and intended to tranship the drugs to a Spanish fishing vessel, which was to offload the shipment in Galicia, Spain. Security experts suggest that many fishing vessels in Angolan waters are used to transport drugs to Europe.

Namibia

Namibia has limited incidents of cocaine trafficking, but there is concern that trafficking and consumption are increasing.⁹⁵ Cocaine transits through Namibia to South Africa, while heroin has transited through Namibia and Angola en route to Europe.⁹⁶ The Global Report on Cocaine has warned that Namibia's location between cocaine transit zones makes it susceptible to trafficking, and a Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) representative reported a proliferation of drugs in coastal towns like Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, possibly indicating drugs entering through sea ports. Most interceptions occur from containers in Walvis Bay.⁹⁷

In 2018, intelligence led NAMPOL to seize over 400 kg of cocaine from a container in Walvis Bay that originated in Brazil's Port of Santos.⁹⁸ A NAMPOL representative said the maritime shipment may have been to test whether the route was viable since most cocaine arrives directly from South America by air courier or by road from South Africa and Zambia.⁹⁹

Other Namibian participants however questioned whether this was the first shipment of its kind.¹⁰⁰ One said: 'If somebody is comfortable transporting over [N\$]200 million worth of drugs, that means that's not the first time. How much drugs has actually gone through our ports without people even knowing?'¹⁰¹ Because Walvis Bay often serves as a feeder port, transit consignments are not scrutinised unless identified as coming from a vessel of interest, and illicit shipments are therefore likely to remain undetected.¹⁰² While no drug transshipments have been identified in Namibia's waters, a naval representative noted that this was not impossible, as small vessels were not detected on Namibia's MDA systems.¹⁰³

South Africa

South Africa is a primary cocaine transit point globally, with seizures reaching 5.3 tonnes in 2021.¹⁰⁴ Most cocaine transiting South Africa arrives in containers from Brazil, especially from the Port of Santos,¹⁰⁵ and is destined for global distribution. Containerised cocaine trafficking between South America and South Africa is well documented as record-size maritime shipments have been seized in recent years. This is attributed to increased maritime trafficking following the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁰⁶ and the increased availability of cocaine. South Africa is also Africa's premier cocaine consumer.¹⁰⁷

Most shipments have been seized in South Africa's busiest port, the Port of Durban, which forms part of an established trade route from Santos.¹⁰⁸ On the Atlantic coast, the Port of Cape Town serves as an entry and exit point. When asked what attracts cocaine traffickers to South Africa, a participant noted: 'You need to understand the significance of the Cape sea route. We are between Europe, South America, Asia, everywhere.'¹⁰⁹

Participants suggested that fishing vessels likely also engaged in drug trafficking. For example, a former State Security Agency official relayed how vessels destined for scrapping in Asia were found drifting just outside the border near Namibia. One undertook a journey to South America and returned to the region but remained outside territorial waters.¹¹⁰

Smaller harbours and vessels are also used. In 2021, over a tonne of cocaine was seized from a converted fishing vessel in Saldanha. The seizure resulted from prolonged observation and uncovered a trafficking network run primarily by Bulgarians. The vessel and two others were forfeited to the state.¹¹¹ This case illustrated how smaller vessels collect shipments from larger vessels at sea. In July 2024, 400 bricks of cocaine were found in a rubber duck in Still Bay after suspicious activity led police to the boat being towed from the harbour.¹¹² The vessel likely also collected the shipment from another vessel at sea.

South Africa also receives cocaine from Mozambique, as Brazilian networks increasingly send maritime shipments via Lusophone Mozambique and Angola.¹¹³ From South Africa and Mozambique, cocaine is reportedly shipped to Europe via the Middle East to avoid strict controls in Western Europe. A participant suggested that with the current oversupply of cocaine, such shipments could indicate trafficking networks seeking new markets.¹¹⁴

Another theory is that heroin and methamphetamine trafficking vessels travelling via the Indian Ocean might be carrying cocaine on their return journeys, although such links remain speculative.¹¹⁵ Methamphetamine concealed among imported fruit from South Africa has been seized alongside cocaine in Pakistan and India.¹¹⁶

Synthetic drugs

Synthetic drugs and precursors used to manufacture synthetic drugs are also seized in the region. Identifying precursors is however challenging, as is identifying illicit shipments, since precursors also have legal uses. It is suggested that legally imported precursors are diverted by corrupt state and private actors in both South Africa and Namibia.¹¹⁷

The United States (US) Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has designated South Africa as a key importer of precursors globally.¹¹⁸ Precursors used to produce drugs like mandrax, methamphetamine, CAT and MDMA have been seized in South Africa, arriving from India¹¹⁹ and China. These precursors have passed through Cape Town and been seized in Walvis Bay, which acts as a transit point for precursors to and from Cape Town.¹²⁰ A Namibia Revenue Agency (NAMRA) staff member reported a precursor seizure following a controlled delivery from Namibia to South Africa, only for the docket to be 'lost' by South African authorities.¹²¹

Methamphetamine is increasingly being seized and consumed across the region, and is being manufactured in South Africa,¹²² considered a key African node in global methamphetamine trafficking. Together with Mozambique, South Africa is the African country where the most methamphetamine has been seized,¹²³ and it is Southern Africa's largest methamphetamine consumer, and possibly one of the biggest globally.¹²⁴

Methamphetamine has been intricately linked to South Africa's illegal abalone trade since Western Cape gangs began trading methamphetamine and methaqualone precursors with Chinese abalone-buyers to

Cocaine intercepted from a rubber duck in Stilbaai



Photo: South African Police Service (SAPS)

manufacture methamphetamine locally. This led to increased local consumption in the Western Cape and further afield,¹²⁵ and provides a cautionary tale of convergence between illicit markets.

Methamphetamine destined for South Africa however still comes primarily from Nigerian supply chains,¹²⁶ including by sea, often after transiting Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Namibia, especially Walvis Bay. From there, it is routed to Cape Town's port, from where it is distributed.¹²⁷ Shipments also arrive from Asia. Most methamphetamine is moved onward, primarily by air, to other African countries, Asia, Europe and Australia.¹²⁸ Mexican-produced methamphetamine has also been seized in South Africa after transiting through Brazil with or along the same routes as cocaine shipments.¹²⁹ The US has warned of the increased presence of Mexican drug cartels in Southern Africa.¹³⁰

While reports further suggest increased fentanyl use in South Africa, also linked to Mexican drug cartels, no maritime links have been discerned yet.¹³¹ Mandrax is also imported for local consumption, arriving by sea from India, and entering the Port of Cape Town.¹³²

Drugs moving through the region have made Southern Africa the African region with the most people who inject drugs (PWID), and PWID who are HIV-positive.¹³³ Growing volumes remaining in the region are likely to further fuel domestic consumption.¹³⁴

Fisheries crime

The Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem off South Africa, Namibia and Angola is one of the most productive ocean regions globally and is rich in species like horse mackerel, hake and crustaceans. These species are exploited for their high value and are under increased pressure due to greater consumer demand and technology that enables vessels to better pursue and catch larger quantities of fish.¹³⁵

Fisheries crimes take place from the high seas to coastlines, extending to land and the internet, all aimed at obscuring illegality and maximising profit. These crimes go beyond illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing¹³⁶ to include supply chain violations, from vessel registration to market. Common offences include fishing without the necessary documentation, exceeding quotas, using prohibited gear, unauthorised transshipment or processing, targeting protected species or undersized individuals, discarding catch illegally, misreporting catch data, concealing vessel identities and corruption.¹³⁷

There are several structural reasons that heighten the risk of criminality in the fishing industry. The industry is a primary employer globally, and because fishing vessels remain at sea for extended periods without oversight, crew members are at high risk of exploitation. Fishing vessels are indeed notorious for human trafficking and forced labour practices.¹³⁸ These vessels are also popular with traffickers as the legitimate act of fishing provides cover for exploitation. The strong smell of fish can obscure contraband, and inspectors are wary of compensation claims that could come from searching fresh produce that could spoil.¹³⁹

Organised fisheries crime by large operators should be distinguished from small infractions by subsistence or small-scale fishers. Large-scale fisheries crime not only affects fish populations but is often transnational and, therefore, difficult to police.¹⁴⁰ A senior staff member at Stop Illegal Fishing noted that: 'Few countries have the means to patrol outside territorial waters, [so] what happens in the EEZ, nobody really sees it unless you start to move into satellite monitoring and analysis of numerous other sensors which very few are capable of doing.'¹⁴¹ This results in fisheries offences having a low risk of detection, yet high financial reward.¹⁴²

The Gulf of Guinea is the global epicentre of IUU fishing, and as traditionally targeted fish stocks diminish globally, South Atlantic species may be increasingly targeted.¹⁴³ Species currently targeted on a large scale are discussed below.

Because fishing vessels remain at sea for extended periods without oversight, crew members are at high risk of exploitation

Angola

Key fisheries in Angola include horse mackerel, tuna, sardines, sardinella, lobster, and shrimp.¹⁴⁴ The fishing sector contributed 1.77% to Angola's GDP in 2021 – less than half of its 2017 level¹⁴⁵ – due to species decline from overfishing and illegal fishing by foreign vessels.¹⁴⁶ Around 150 000 people benefit financially from the fisheries sector, although much of Angola's fish processing ability was lost after the Angolan civil war (1975 – 2002). Most fish is for local consumption.¹⁴⁷

A representative from Angola's *Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura* identified illegal fishing as the country's primary maritime crime threat.¹⁴⁸ It is carried out mainly by foreign-flagged industrial vessels licensed to fish in Angola. These vessels are leased to or co-owned in joint ventures with Angolans, since wholly foreign-owned vessels are not allowed to fish in Angola.¹⁴⁹ However, many of these local partnerships are reportedly based on Angolan front companies, effectively making the fishing venture wholly foreign and run from countries like China, Japan, Russia, Spain, South Korea, and Poland. Vessels from African countries like Nigeria and Namibia are also licensed to fish in Angola.¹⁵⁰

A fisheries crime expert said most vessels engaged in illegal activity in the south fly flags of convenience, like Cameroon

Illegal fishing activity is concentrated in the south near Benguela and Namibe provinces, close to Namibia's border.¹⁵¹ This is the most productive fishing ground, and it is here where species like horse mackerel are illegally harvested by these foreign-flagged vessels. The vessels often underreport their catch in Angola or fish during closed seasons, such as in 2022, when a licensed vessel was seized with 300 tonnes of horse mackerel on board during a fishing ban.¹⁵²

A fisheries crime expert said most vessels engaged in illegal activity in the south fly flags of convenience, like Cameroon, and turn on their AIS only when they enter port. These vessels illegally tranship catch in Angola's waters, including

its territorial sea, and have also been apprehended in other regional countries. An entire fleet of these vessels has been pursued by law enforcement, with some being fined or banned from operating in Angola, while others have been put up for sale.¹⁵³

Nearly half of Angola's annual fish production of over 400 000 tonnes is from artisanal fishing and 65% of species are targeted by both industrial and artisanal fishers.¹⁵⁴ Local fisherfolk have also accused licensed Chinese trawlers of illegal fishing, causing their own catches to decline. These trawlers reportedly fish indiscriminately, targeting multiple species, including in the four nautical mile near-shore area reserved for artisanal fishing. This causes artisanal fishers to venture further out to sea, putting their lives and smaller vessels at risk.¹⁵⁵

The IUU fishing vessels identified in Angola also operate in neighbouring countries. Although no prosecutions have occurred outside Angola, its authorities have been notified to investigate since they have licensed these vessels.¹⁵⁶

IUU fishing in Namibia is intricately linked to Angola, with the latter's limited ability to monitor and respond to incidents being a key challenge. Like Namibia, allegations of corruption taint Angola's fishing sector, with high-profile Angolans reportedly benefitting from Namibia's infamous Fishrot scandal.¹⁵⁷

Namibia

Fishing is Namibia's third-biggest contributor to GDP, sustaining nearly 17 000 direct jobs in 2022.¹⁵⁸ Only Namibian companies or joint ventures with 50% Namibian ownership are allocated fishing quotas. In 2021, the industry generated N\$10 billion in foreign currency, with 80% of the catch being exported.¹⁵⁹ Hake is Namibia's most valuable fishery, followed by horse mackerel.¹⁶⁰

Namibia's productive fishing system attracts illegal fishing since 'you don't have to put in a lot of effort to get a large catch.'¹⁶¹ Namibia is estimated to lose N\$1.5 billion and 400 000 tonnes of fish to illegal fishing annually. While there are suggestions that much IUU fishing is perpetrated by Chinese industrial fishing

vessels,¹⁶² research participants identified foreign-flagged vessels licensed to fish in Angola and targeting horse mackerel as Namibia's biggest challenge.¹⁶³

Horse mackerel is illegally fished in Northern Namibia near the border with Angola. While some of these vessels are Angolan, most are only licensed to fish in Angola,¹⁶⁴ and are instead flagged to Cameroon. Cameroon is a known flag of convenience cited by the European Union (EU) and has recently significantly expanded its fishing fleet by registering foreign-owned and IUU fishing vessels,¹⁶⁵ including vessels owned by European companies.¹⁶⁶ Cameroon is also a popular flag of choice for Russian vessels evading sanctions.¹⁶⁷

Although complex company structures often obscured these vessels' true ownership,¹⁶⁸ participants reported that their crew and captains were primarily Russians and Ukrainians,¹⁶⁹ and that some of the captains previously operated in Namibia's legal fishery. The vessels are Russian-made and are the same type of vessels used in Namibia's legal horse mackerel fishery.

After switching off their AIS, these vessels cross from Angola into Namibia's EEZ, often at night, before crossing back into Angolan waters. These vessels likely also fish within 200 metres of the shoreline where trawling is prohibited and which serves as a nursery for hake and horse mackerel.¹⁷⁰ An industry representative says while these vessels primarily target horse mackerel, they fish indiscriminately and retain anything of value.¹⁷¹ The catch is then illegally transhipped in Angolan waters¹⁷² and mostly transported to Central Africa via West Africa.¹⁷³ Some shipments are also moved via Zambia to the DRC, while others are destined for Mozambique and other SADC countries.¹⁷⁴

These vessels also reportedly operate in other countries' waters with their AIS turned off,¹⁷⁵ and often call at Cape Town's port for supplies, crew changes, and repairs. A senior South African fisheries inspector reported arresting some of these vessels for infractions such as lacking logbooks, but said there were no successful prosecutions yet. It is suspected that fish are illegally caught in Namibia, transhipped in Angolan waters, and that vessels then enter the Port of Cape Town empty, possibly feigning repairs before repeating the cycle. South African authorities are collaborating with Angola to investigate.¹⁷⁶

Icelandic vessels implicated in the Fishrot scandal have also been found guilty of illegally fishing horse mackerel in Namibia's waters, including in its MPA.¹⁷⁷

Limited incidents of illegal shark fishing practices have also occurred. In 2020, a containerised shipment of 26 tonnes of shark fins was intercepted in the Netherlands after arriving from Namibia.¹⁷⁸ In 2022, with the help of Sea Shepherd, a Namibian-flagged vessel with links to Taiwan was arrested for illegally carrying shark fins.¹⁷⁹

A fisheries expert noted that some Namibian-flagged vessels that purport to primarily fish tuna and swordfish might instead be targeting sharks. The volume of shark products imported from Namibia also does not correspond with the data captured in exports. This could be due to poor trade reporting or misdeclaring products to enable trade in species listed on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), like blue sharks and mako sharks. The expert suggested this could be addressed by improving Namibia's CITES processes.¹⁸⁰

While hake is also illegally fished, Namibian participants believed most violations probably involved underreporting.¹⁸¹ A NAMRA staff member said joint venture fishing vessels often misdeclared catch data to avoid taxes. An industry representative noted that, like in South Africa, Namibia's hake industry was a national fishery, making scrutiny difficult and politically sensitive. However, he was unaware of foreign vessels fishing illegally for hake, arguing that they would have to travel deep into Namibian waters and close to shore.¹⁸² Tuna might also be illegally fished offshore at certain times of the year.¹⁸³

In 2020, a containerised shipment of 26 tonnes of shark fins was intercepted in the Netherlands after arriving from Namibia

While fishing vessels were often noted as being involved in other crimes in South African waters, the only reported incidents in Namibian waters were labour-related violations.¹⁸⁴ An industry representative said since each Namibian fishing company had its own jetty with security, moving illicit commodities through there would be difficult.¹⁸⁵ Some participants said vessels would have a better chance of smuggling commodities through the Port of Walvis Bay.¹⁸⁶

South Africa

South Africa is rich in marine biodiversity due to the contrast between the warm and cold ocean currents hugging its western and eastern shorelines. Key exported marine products include hake, horse mackerel, shark meat and fins, anchovies, sardines, South African abalone and West Coast rock lobster.¹⁸⁷ Most illegally targeted species are destined for Asia and are moved via sea, air, and over land through, e.g. Namibia, Angola, Lesotho, the DRC, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.¹⁸⁸

South Africa does not issue permits to foreign fishing vessels. Participants suggested that most vessels engaged in fisheries crime in South Africa were local, and violations primarily related to underreporting.¹⁸⁹ Foreign fishing vessels have, however, been prosecuted before, with offending vessels reportedly often coming from China and Spain.¹⁹⁰ These vessels exhibit typical foreign fleet behaviour, loitering around South Africa's EEZ and intermittently switching off their AIS, at which time they are suspected of illegal fishing or transshipping catch.

West Coast rock lobster and abalone

South African abalone (hereafter referred to simply as 'abalone') and West Coast rock lobster have been among the most targeted species in the country. Both are high-value and heavily relied on by fishing communities, but are significantly depleted – largely due to illegal harvesting. With fewer resources to fish, the total allowable catch (TAC) and total allowable effort (TAE) have declined, leaving many to fish illegally.¹⁹¹ Both species are relatively easy to access – some inhabit shallow waters, and can be accessed from land. When vessels are used, they are typically small and fast.¹⁹²

One of South Africa's biggest illegal fishing cases involved Hout Bay Fishing Industries, which plundered West Coast rock lobster for years, primarily for export.¹⁹³ However, participants said this species was currently targeted by locals for the domestic market, and probably not in an organised way.¹⁹⁴

Seizure of 397 West Coast rock lobster and 6 069 lobster tails near Cape Town in 2023



Photo: SAPS

The illegal abalone trade supplying Asian markets is well documented. Abalone is endemic to South Africa and occurs in shallow environments from where it is easily harvested by divers from shore or using small boats. Despite years of law enforcement efforts, the illegal trade persists, and abalone is effectively too depleted to be fished sustainably. Efforts to reduce the impact of fishing on the species include minimum size limits and fishing seasons, but since illegal fishers do not adhere to these, stocks are not given the opportunity to recover, and two-thirds of confiscated abalone are below the legal minimum size limit.

Between 2019 and 2021, eight to 10 million specimens were illegally harvested,¹⁹⁵ with land-based seizures occurring regularly. TRAFFIC estimates that the illegal trade deprives South Africa of around R628 million annually.¹⁹⁶ As noted earlier, intermediaries trade abalone for drug precursors.

Seized abalone, 2024



Photos: SAPS

Abalone trafficking is historically run from the Western Cape, which is considered South Africa's gangster epicentre. Law enforcement pressure in the Western Cape, especially in the Overberg region, has however amplified poaching in the Southern Cape region and Eastern Cape province.¹⁹⁷

In addition to legal farms in South Africa, there are a few legal abalone farms in Lüderitz in Namibia which, two participants noted, are likely exploited to launder illegal abalone from South Africa.¹⁹⁸ Forged documents from these farms have been identified,¹⁹⁹ and there are discrepancies between the amount of abalone being exported from Namibia and that being imported into Hong Kong. The imported numbers far exceed Namibian production.²⁰⁰

Whereas abalone was previously exported frozen, it is now almost exclusively dried before export. This prevents spoiling and affords shipments more time to travel to market. It also potentially increases profit since networks don't have to sell it when prices are low. Abalone often leaves South Africa via neighbouring countries, like Zambia and Namibia, from where it might attract less suspicion. Most abalone leaves the continent by air, although some is shipped in containers by sea.²⁰¹

Sharks

South Africa is home to over 200 species of sharks, rays and skates. Sharks are targeted intentionally or caught as bycatch in pelagic (open ocean) longline fisheries, especially for tuna and swordfish. A third of the 22 species fished in large quantities are endangered and critically endangered. The figure could be higher, but limited data complicates an accurate classification.²⁰² While the biggest threats to sharks are overfishing and bycatch as part of other fisheries, they are also illegally fished, often for their fins.²⁰³ Most illegally caught shark derivatives are destined for China and Hong Kong.²⁰⁴

Notable shark seizures include 33 tonnes of shark fins at a storage facility in Cape Town in 2018,²⁰⁵ and juvenile sharks with their heads and fins removed on a Cape Town beach in 2020.²⁰⁶ In 2024, a South African company was convicted of illegal shark fishing in De Hoop MPA.²⁰⁷

There have also been shark fin seizures at the Port of Cape Town.²⁰⁸ According to a fisheries expert, this is because most pelagic longline vessels, including vessels from Taiwan, Korea, Japan and China, land their catch in Cape Town.²⁰⁹ The region is, therefore, not only home to rich fish stocks, but Cape Town, Luanda, Walvis Bay and Lüderitz all serve as landing sites for foreign longliners and trawlers fishing elsewhere.²¹⁰

Another fisheries expert said Taiwanese and Chinese operators were the main offenders: 'There is not one single longliner that is not shark finning. They all do it because it's too valuable. We've seen it [during] monitoring ... they fin every shark they catch, whether it's protected or not [...] If you look at the

foreign vessels coming into Cape Town [...], they will have caught that catch elsewhere. But that doesn't make it legal.'²¹¹

Incidents of illegal shark catches have, however, reportedly declined, likely due to South Africa's improved shark fishery management and pelagic fishery permit conditions, which have discouraged the landing of sharks. While Japanese tuna vessels retain a few blue and mako sharks above a certain size, they land fewer sharks overall as their crews are skilled at targeting tuna. Taiwanese and Korean vessels are reportedly more indiscriminate and 'catch sharks, tuna, sailfish, swordfish, dolphins, anything.'²¹²

Other species

Participants suggested that the focus on 'sexy' species like abalone, West Coast rock lobster and sharks had been to the detriment of other species. Other species suspected of being subject to IUU fishing practices include hake²¹³ and squid, although squid is fished on the East Coast by Chinese vessels.²¹⁴ Hake is South Africa's most valuable fishery and is mostly exported to Europe.²¹⁵ A fisheries expert suspects that there is underreporting and overfishing of hake, and that a transshipment hotspot identified off the West Coast is possibly used to offload hake to conceal exceeded quotas. He also expressed concern about the self-regulating nature of the hake and squid fisheries, whereby the government relies on the industry to self-report catch data. He said this is what enabled Hout Bay Fishing Industries to plunder rock lobster.²¹⁶

The Angolan-licensed vessels targeting Namibia's horse mackerel reportedly increased port visits to Cape Town after Namibia began denying them entry

Industry representatives, however, refute this allegation, saying it is in their best interests to operate legally and for stock to be healthy.²¹⁷ A representative from the South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association said 8% of the hake fishery was monitored by observers, allowing for cross-checking of self-reported data. The hake fishery is also certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, which helps regulate the industry and prevent illegal fishing. While local vessels might occasionally exceed their catch limits, they have not reported encountering foreign fishing vessels. Fishing companies also track their own vessels using AIS and could identify suspicious activity.²¹⁸

The Angolan-licensed vessels targeting Namibia's horse mackerel reportedly increased port visits to Cape Town after Namibia began denying them entry. Here, they change crew, refuel and are suspected of feigning repairs, essentially using it as a port of convenience. Investigations into these vessels are ongoing, but without catch on board, establishing illegality is difficult, and states lose income when they deny port entry.²¹⁹

Impact of illegal fishing

Overfishing and illegal fishing have led to stock declines, resulting in significant economic losses to governments, corporations and fishers who depend on the legal fishery.²²⁰ One example is sardines, which have declined to such an extent that the fishery has been closed in Namibia.²²¹ IUU fishing also threatens food security, especially when depleting affordable species like horse mackerel.²²²

Participants noted the difficulty in assessing the impact of illegal fishing, which means it can be underestimated. It is also not considered during stock assessments or TAC allocations, potentially contributing to overfishing.²²³ An industry representative said illegally harvested fish was sold on the same market as legally caught fish, which lowers prices. 'These guys operating these Russian boats [...] they need their cash. That fish gets thrown on the market, price low or not. And they push the market price down even more.'

Illegal harvesting has severely depleted South Africa's abalone²²⁴ and West Coast rock lobster stocks.²²⁵ In Angola, illegal fishing halved the fishing sector's economic contribution in five years.²²⁶ Horse mackerel catches fell from around 800 000 tonnes annually to 300 000 tonnes in a decade,²²⁷ possibly driving Angolan-licensed vessels to target Namibia's stocks.

The impact of declining abalone stocks has shown that as resources become more valuable due to their scarcity, they attract organised criminal networks, leading to multiple other security threats, especially on land. Because criminal networks do not have to play by the rules, they have a competitive advantage and can force legal fishers out of the market.²²⁸ Some illegal fishing vessels also pose a threat to navigation due to their dilapidated state.

The lucrative nature of fisheries crime also attracts corruption. The potential impacts of this were well documented in Namibia's Fishrot scandal,²²⁹ and in South Africa in 2015, when an experimental horse mackerel quota was allocated in addition to the TAC, reportedly to benefit a specific businessman who had no prior involvement in the fishery. The vessel that was to be used was an Icelandic vessel based in Namibia.²³⁰ Maintenance of fishing patrol vessels in South Africa also received a heavy blow when an irregular tender assigned responsibility for the vessels to the South African Navy, which failed to maintain them, resulting in millions in repair costs.²³¹

As resources become more valuable due to their scarcity, they attract organised criminal networks, leading to multiple other security threats

Firearm trafficking

Limited incidents of arms trafficking have been reported in the region. These appear to be concentrated in Angola, primarily Lobito and Cabinda, and are linked to the eastern DRC conflict. Arms are also trafficked to Angola from the DRC to support secessionists in Cabinda province.²³² Weapons are moved through ports, where officials are bribed to facilitate passage. Arms trafficking vessels appear to be from West African countries like Ghana, Togo, Benin, Senegal, and Nigeria. Angolan vessels belonging to foreign nationals are also used.

According to security sources, an undocumented container of weapons, reportedly from the US and destined for the DRC, was found at the Port of Luanda in September 2024. The shipment was not claimed, and authorities could not establish its destination or owner.²³³ Arms are typically moved overland from the Port of Luanda to the DRC, facilitated by corrupt interior ministry agents at the Luvu border in Zaire province.²³⁴

Namibian participants did not report maritime arms trafficking as a concern. And although South Africa faces major challenges with illegal arms, research participants did not report maritime trafficking as a concern, primarily due to the lack of recent incidents.

Case study: A curious incident occurred in December 2022 when a US-sanctioned Russian-flagged merchant vessel, Lady R, docked in Simon's Town Naval Base, South Africa. The vessel disabled its AIS, and its cargo was seen being offloaded at night. While the government admitted to receiving an arms shipment from a company in the United Arab Emirates, it denied that any cargo was loaded onto the vessel, as was suggested by observers. Various sources, including the former US ambassador to South Africa, suggested that weapons destined for Russia were loaded onto the vessel before its departure.²³⁵

The Lady R



Photo: Limewrite/Wikimedia Commons

Land-sourced natural resource trafficking

The region is also rich in natural resources on land. Since extracting lucrative offshore oil in Angola and offshore diamonds and gas in Namibia requires specialisation,²³⁶ most illegal maritime trade relates to moving land-sourced resources to markets. Alternatively, it takes place on land after offshore resources have been sourced from the sea, such as the Namib Desert Diamonds (NAMDIA) robbery in Windhoek in January 2025.

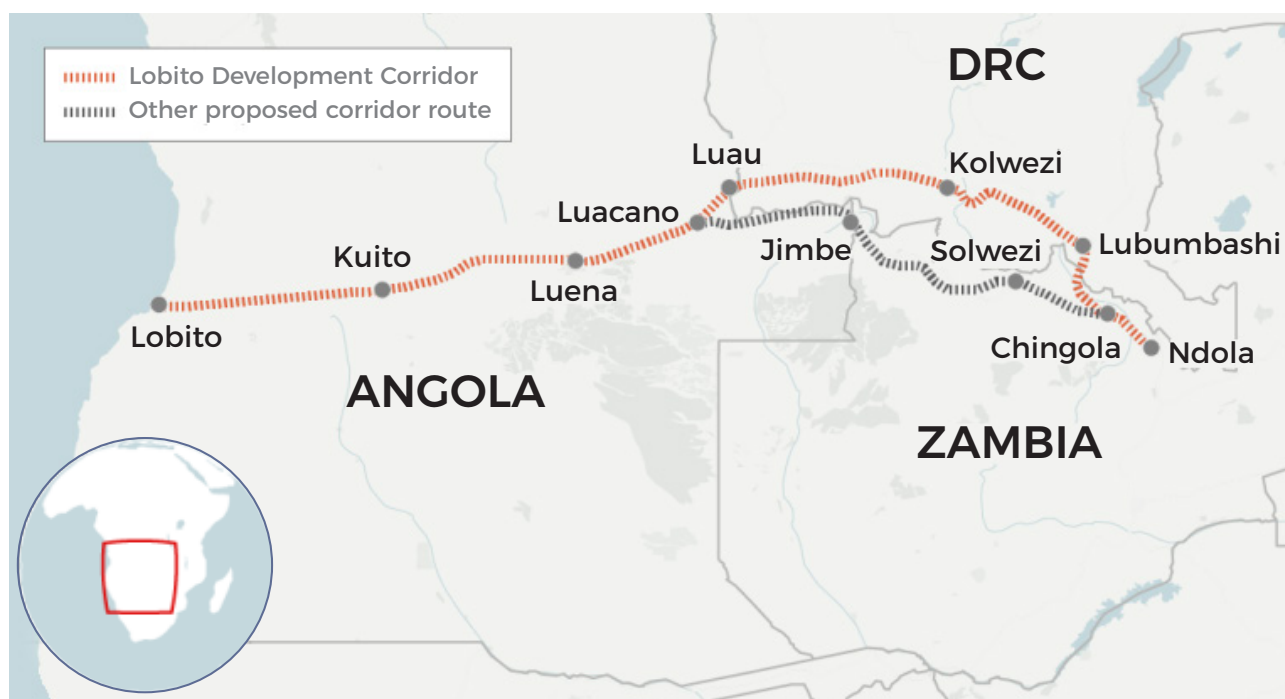
Minerals

Diamonds are mined in southern Namibia's marine and coastal area near Oranjemund and contribute the largest share of the mining sector's GDP.²³⁷ While there is illegal mining on land, a representative from NAMPOL's Protected Resources Division said they were not aware of large-scale illegal activities related to extracting diamonds at sea.²³⁸ Mining areas are, however, access-restricted with limited governmental oversight. As a naval representative noted: 'Even the government, no one can go there. It's like a country on its own.'²³⁹ Another NAMPOL representative did however suggest that illegal diamonds might be exported via the coast to avoid border controls on land.²⁴⁰

Various minerals from across SADC are exported through the region's ports. The Port of Lobito serves as a key gateway for critical resources from the DRC and Zambia via the Lobito Corridor. The port and the corridor are being developed and will compete with Walvis Bay,²⁴¹ which also serves as a trade hub via the Walvis Bay Corridors to the SADC region.

The US and China have both invested in the Lobito Corridor – the US to transport critical minerals like cobalt and copper,²⁴² and China through an oil-for-infrastructure deal.²⁴³ The corridor could therefore also potentially facilitate the transport of illegally mined minerals to the coast. Commentators have already identified the possible security threats the route could exacerbate, especially in the DRC.²⁴⁴ The route's use for illegal trade was also illustrated in May 2025 when 100 containers carrying 3 000 tonnes of quartz were intercepted in Luanda after an attempt to export it in contravention of a ban. The exporter declared that the minerals were destined for testing in China, but the shipment's size indicated illicit trade.²⁴⁵

Chart 6: The Lobito Corridor



Source: Lobitocorridor.org

Chart 7: Walvis Bay Corridors



Source: Walvis Bay Corridor Group

Timber

Illegal timber is moved via container vessels. Walvis Bay serves as a key export hub for timber from the DRC, Zambia and Angola.²⁴⁶ A senior Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) official noted that Namibian timber was sometimes laundered through Angola before being moved back through Namibia. Raw timber may not be exported from Namibia,²⁴⁷ the DRC, Zambia or Angola, and yet in 2017 it was reported that hundreds of raw logs left Walvis Bay for China monthly.²⁴⁸ Most illegally harvested timber is destined for China,²⁴⁹ and Chinese nationals linked to wildlife crimes have been connected to the illegal timber trade in Southern Africa. Some shipments also go to Vietnam and Europe.²⁵⁰

Rosewood, kiaat and Zambezi teak are among the most targeted species.²⁵¹ Zambezi teak is not CITES-listed. For the others, CITES permits are often forged or misclassified to enable export. The challenge with identifying illegal timber shipments is that it is often obscured by legal timber. Parallel markets also enable permits to be forged. Identifying and inspecting large shipments in port areas with limited manpower further complicates the response. A wood identification lab is being established in Windhoek, and port and border staff receive training on identifying illegally harvested species.²⁵²

TRAFFIC's Wildlife Trade Portal highlights frequent timber seizures in Angola, where timber is also exported by sea.²⁵³ A former State Security Agency official also reported detecting illegal maritime timber shipments in South Africa.²⁵⁴

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking

In 2021, the Angolan Border Guard Police estimated that over 3 000 migrants irregularly enter Angola by sea annually. This is facilitated by smugglers and corrupt officials, primarily in the northern provinces bordering the DRC. Most migrants arrive from the DRC and the number of migrants has reportedly increased since the eastern DRC conflict intensified.²⁵⁵ These migrants are then exploited as cheap labour in informal jobs, especially in Luanda, but also in fishing and agriculture. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.²⁵⁶

Namibian and South African participants did not report organised smuggling or human trafficking at sea. They did, however, highlight labour violations in the fishing industry. While cautious not to stereotype, participants noted that most violations occur on Asian vessels,²⁵⁷ especially tuna longliners and vessels from China, Japan and Taiwan.²⁵⁸ They also identified increasing incidents of illegal labour practices involving Africans and on board African-flagged vessels.²⁵⁹ These incidents are, therefore, not driven by the countries in which they take place, but rather by where the vessels are from.

Case study: In 2022, 60 crew members and suspected human trafficking victims were identified on board industrial fishing vessels legally fishing in Namibia. The accused were however acquitted and the vessels released. A fisheries expert suggested that the prosecution should have succeeded.²⁶⁰

Two vessels intercepted on suspicion of labour violations in Namibia



Photo: Stop Illegal Fishing

Foreign vessels arrested for labour violations in Cape Town²⁶¹ include vessels from Taiwan²⁶² and Indonesia.²⁶³ A former State Security Agency employee however said South Africa's ability to identify people smuggling or trafficking was limited, and people appearing to be crew could easily walk off a ship and out of the port.²⁶⁴

Responses to criminality in Southern Africa's Atlantic

The response to maritime criminality in the region is primarily focused on law enforcement, with limited resources being a primary concern. This section focuses on key responses, including legal frameworks, operational efforts, state obligations, and the challenges to meeting these.

International frameworks

TOC off Africa's coast has been discussed at length at the UN Security Council, highlighting its impact on security, navigation, and coastal and landlocked states.²⁶⁵ In addition to overarching UN instruments like the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, key instruments apply specifically to vessels.

2016 UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA)

The PSMA²⁶⁶ is the first binding instrument applicable to IUU fishing and empowers port officials to refuse entry or port services to foreign-flagged fishing vessels suspected of IUU activity. Vessels denied port access must seek refuge elsewhere or cease their illegal activities. The PSMA establishes port controls rather than sea controls in recognition of the difficulties of identifying and intercepting illegal activity at sea.

This approach focuses on ports as bottlenecks for enforcement, which is especially important for states with limited maritime law enforcement capacity.²⁶⁷ The PSMA also aims to prevent illegally caught fish from entering the legal market and assumes that its financial impact on offending vessels will be more effective than issuing a fine.²⁶⁸

The true power of the PSMA lies in multiple states sharing information with each other, regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and other organisations, so that ports collectively deny such vessels entry.²⁶⁹ While fishing vessels can avoid coming to land for extended periods by transshipping, catch needs to be offloaded at some stage, and applying the PSMA can at least prevent the use of regional ports.²⁷⁰

By denying port access, pressure is taken off the criminal justice system. A fisheries expert said increasing the number of vessels and aircraft to patrol the region's waters was unrealistic when budgets were small. Instead, the region should focus on implementing port state measures and combining that with surveillance data from multiple sources.²⁷¹

Namibia, South Africa and Angola are parties to the PSMA. Angola acceded to the PSMA only in 2022. South Africa is in the process of domesticating the PSMA,²⁷² while Namibia is reportedly yet to incorporate its minimum standards into legislation.²⁷³ Namibia is, however, implementing the necessary measures and cooperating under its framework.

Namibia and Angola are also signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Port State Control for West and Central African Region, and South Africa to the Indian Ocean MoU on Port State Control.²⁷⁴

IMO instruments

The 2004 International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) provides governments and the private sector with minimum standards for ships and ports to ensure they do not threaten the safety of navigation and adhere to maritime security measures.²⁷⁵ Opinions differed on regional ports' adherence to the ISPS Code, but officially, all eight South African ports,²⁷⁶ Namibia's Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, and Angola's Luanda, Cabinda, Lobito and Namibe, are ISPS Code-compliant.²⁷⁷

In December 2023, the IMO adopted Resolution A.1192(33) on the 'dark fleet',²⁷⁸ which targets vessels trying to evade control, including those flying flags of convenience. It confirms the threat posed by such vessels if not addressed through port and flag state measures and provides recommendations. The IMO also has guidelines to prevent and suppress the smuggling of wildlife on ships engaged in international traffic. These address the use of legitimate shipping by criminal networks to facilitate biodiversity crime.²⁷⁹

‘... actors threatening Africa’s maritime domain continue to grow in number and capability...’

2007 International Labour Organization Work in Fishing Convention

The convention establishes minimum standards on board fishing vessels to protect crew members from labour abuses and human trafficking.²⁸⁰

Regional maritime security instruments

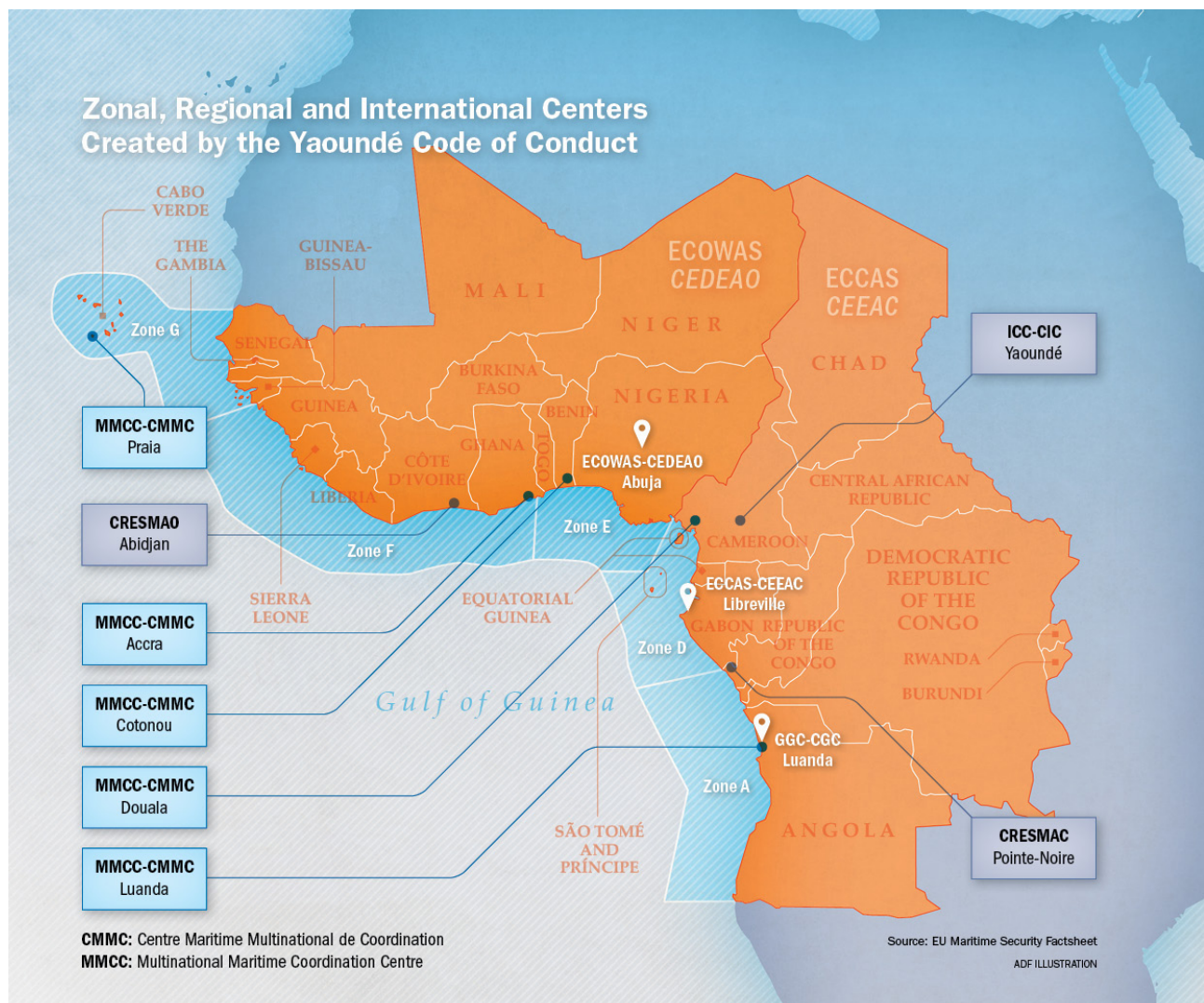
Instrument	Region	Membership
African Union (AU) African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS)	Africa	AU member states
African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter)	Africa	No SADC ratifications yet ²⁸¹
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Maritime Safety and Security Strategy ²⁸²	ECCAS	Angola
SADC Integrated Maritime Security Strategy	SADC	Angola, Namibia, South Africa
SADC TOC Strategy	SADC	Angola, Namibia, South Africa
SADC Protocol on Fisheries	SADC	Angola, Namibia, South Africa
2013 Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa (Yaoundé Code of Conduct)	Gulf of Guinea	Angola
Djibouti Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden		South Africa
Benguela Current Convention	Benguela	Angola, Namibia, South Africa

The AU’s AIMS acknowledges that ‘as the actors threatening Africa’s maritime domain continue to grow in number and capability, there must be a corresponding African endeavour to address these at the national, regional and continental levels.’²⁸³

There is no shortage of regional instruments aimed at maritime security in the region. However, little of this has filtered through to the national level. Uptake and implementation have been

poor due to limited political will and resources. This is reflected in the absence of national maritime security strategies (NMSSs) in Angola, South Africa, and Namibia.

Chart 8: Yaoundé Code of Conduct Member States



Source: EU Maritime Security Factsheet

In response to illicit activities in the Gulf of Guinea, ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission developed the Yaoundé Architecture. Its primary instrument is the non-binding Yaoundé Code of Conduct, which aims to foster regional collaboration, including collective cross-border efforts to share information, pursue vessels and prosecute offenders. However, implementation has been slow due to limited resources and states failing to take regional ownership of implementation as roles and responsibilities are unclear.²⁸⁴ An Interregional Coordination Centre oversees two regional maritime security centres,²⁸⁵ which in turn receive information from national maritime operational centres. There are also Multinational Maritime Coordination Centres (MMCCs) that cover different zones. While there is an MMCC in Luanda, it is reportedly not yet operational.²⁸⁶

South Africa is also a party to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which was developed in response to Somali piracy and has since expanded its scope to other maritime crimes through the Jeddah Amendment. Its application does not extend to the South Atlantic.

The outlier to these two codes of conduct is Namibia, which belongs to neither.

Law enforcement efforts to secure the region's waters

Law enforcement responses primarily consist of physical patrols by vessels and planes, risk profiling, inspections, and using MDA technology. Key institutions responsible for securing the region's waters include the police and border management entities (up to 12 nautical miles of the territorial seas), navies (up to the limits of the EEZ), flag states on the high seas, and port states. Myriad other government departments are also involved, including transport, environment, fisheries, mineral resources, and customs.²⁸⁷

The key maritime law enforcement institutions in each country are briefly noted below. Information on available assets was primarily gleaned from secondary sources.

Angolan fisheries patrol vessel, Foz do Zaire



Photo: Graham Curran, Marine Traffic

Angola

The Angolan Navy reportedly has 24 patrol vessels,²⁸⁸ and has procured additional vessels²⁸⁹ and MDA technology.²⁹⁰ It is however still perceived as lacking the resources and capacity to effectively patrol its EEZ.²⁹¹ The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) reportedly has 15 patrol vessels, some of which are relatively new, plus two vessels with vessel tracking technology.²⁹² However, most naval and fisheries patrol vessels may not be operational.²⁹³ The Angolan National Police²⁹⁴ and *Policia Fiscal* (Fiscal and Customs Police) also have patrol vessels.

Namibia

The navy has three patrol vessels and one logistics vessel. Patrols are, however, limited by insufficient funding for fuel and vessel maintenance.²⁹⁵ This also means Namibia cannot pledge assets to joint naval exercises and often only sends observers.²⁹⁶ It also complicates inter-agency cooperation. Namibia has two coastal naval bases. The closest one to Angola is in Walvis Bay, from where a patrol vessel takes over 24 hours to reach the border.²⁹⁷ The navy regularly embarks other law enforcement agencies during patrols, for the eventuality that they might encounter incidents outside of their mandate. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) operates an aircraft and two patrol vessels and also embarks naval representatives during patrols.²⁹⁸

Although NAMPOL's water wing has a few vessels, participants said it patrols only rivers, and not Namibia's territorial sea. The navy is therefore expected to also patrol the territorial sea.²⁹⁹ A NAMPOL representative

acknowledged their limited maritime capability, causing them to rely on the navy and NAMPORT to identify illicit shipments. He said that accessing Namibia's coastline was easy, and without intelligence, illicit shipments were likely to enter Namibia successfully.³⁰⁰

South Africa

The head of the South African Navy (SAN) has repeatedly stated that the navy is in crisis due to budget cuts affecting equipment, resources, staff and patrol frequency. As a result, he said: 'The SAN only has a very basic idea of what is happening in our EEZ at any given time.'³⁰¹ In 2024, the navy operated just one frigate and one inshore patrol vessel.³⁰² In the 2023/2024 financial year, the SAN spent only 2 641 hours at sea, of which just over a third were dedicated to actual force employment.³⁰³ The SAN has received three new vessels since 2022, although it needs at least 15 to cover the EEZ.³⁰⁴

The SAN embarks fisheries and South African Police Service (SAPS) members during patrols. A senior South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) representative noted that the SAPS's water wing was 'very thin on the ground' with little likelihood of being capacitated to effectively patrol South Africa's territorial sea.³⁰⁵ A Department of Transport (DoT) representative said: 'They use rubber ducks. It's very embarrassing that a government department with that kind of responsibility does not even have patrol vessels.' Due to the lack of patrols, he says criminal actors feel comfortable taking chances.³⁰⁶

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has four patrol vessels.³⁰⁷ A representative from an international organisation suggested that the DFFE could compare with the strongest fisheries enforcement capabilities in Africa.³⁰⁸ While the DFFE sometimes also embarks police and naval personnel,³⁰⁹ mandated agencies often participate only after being informed of suspicious activity.³¹⁰

DFFE Patrol vessel Sarah Baartman



Photo: Crane/Flickr

South Africa is currently in a precarious position with the establishment of the Border Management Authority (BMA), which aims to integrate border management by consolidating functions previously handled by multiple agencies. The multi-agency Operation Phakisa, although not a permanent structure, has a similar integrated management aim, focusing on fisheries and environmental crime in coastal areas. The BMA is expected to assume responsibility for the coastal zone, and while it is planning to procure vessels, it does not yet have maritime capabilities,³¹¹ is underfunded, and must still appoint most of its personnel.³¹²

Participants were sceptical of the BMA's short-term ability to protect South Africa's ports and coastline. They also suggested that the BMA's deployment could shift criminal activity away from official borders.

Cooperative and cross-border law enforcement arrangements

There are multiple examples of inter-agency, inter-state, and international law enforcement efforts in the region. South Africa, for example, has a Maritime Security Advisory Committee comprising representatives from various government departments that advise the transport minister.³¹³ Operation Phakisa also has an inter-agency Priority Crimes Committee.³¹⁴ In Namibia, the Container Control Programme established a joint port control unit in Walvis Bay where multiple agencies, including NAMRA, MEFT, NAMPOL and NAMPORT,³¹⁵ profile containers to identify illicit activity. The unit is relatively new, but has proven effective elsewhere, provided agencies are capacitated and willing to share information.

The region is also moving towards implementing national maritime single windows (MSWs), a single portal for vessels to submit electronic pre-arrival notifications. While vessels have the right to innocent passage through coastal waters, they must submit an Advance Request for Port Entry (AREP), enabling authorities to assess the vessel's activities before granting entry. MSWs are mandated by the IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic³¹⁶ to enable all relevant agencies to gather the information necessary to clear a vessel for port entry.³¹⁷ MSWs also serve a similar purpose to one-stop border posts and will shorten the amount of time consignments spend in port.³¹⁸

Participants noted the challenges of not having an MSW. A participant said: 'You need close cooperation in terms of mapping all vessels coming in and out and that must be visible to all the departments. It isn't today and that is a weakness.'³¹⁹ A NAMPORT staff member said: 'Each agency seems to be functioning completely on its own, which leads to resource overutilisation, because for the same programme, three different institutions provide the same service.'³²⁰

South Africa's Merchant Shipping Act is under review to introduce an MSW. NAMPORT is in the procurement phase of its MSW³²¹ and Angola's Lobito Port received its MSW platform in 2023 with the support of Singapore.³²² MSWs would therefore allow all government agencies with an interest in merchant shipping to view vessel information on a single platform,³²³ simplifying inter-agency cooperation and expediting vessel clearance.

South Africa has MoUs with Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia that allow for hot pursuit when vessels flee

With regard to inter-state cooperation, multiple MoUs aim to facilitate cooperation in response to maritime threats. For example, South Africa has MoUs with Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia that allow for hot pursuit when vessels flee.³²⁴ Namibia and Angola signed an MoU on sharing information on suspicious vessels in the border region. The MoU also provides for joint patrols, but its implementation has been questioned due to Angola's inaction following reports of suspicious vessel activity on the border.³²⁵ There are also general cooperative MoUs between NAMPOL, the SAPS and the Angolan National Police.³²⁶

There are inter-regional learning exchanges, such as those by Stop Illegal Fishing, SADC Atlantic (discussed below), and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).³²⁷ Regular capacity-building workshops run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also occur.

Cooperation with external actors illustrates the region's strategic importance globally. For example, the Indian Navy visited Namibia in 2023, while the US has engaged with Namibia³²⁸ and Angola³²⁹ on maritime security in 2025 and the US is set to develop the Angolan coast guard.³³⁰ Multiple external actors host and participate in training activities as well. Examples include the US³³¹ and Portugal's training of Angolan marines,³³² and Brazil's longstanding capacity-building relationship with the Namibian Navy. International cooperation often takes place in the form of naval exercises, such as exercises between South Africa, Brazil and India,³³³ between South Africa, China and Russia,³³⁴ and the US-led Obangame and Cutlass Express which the US recently indicated might be expanded to Southern Africa.³³⁵

Naval exercise between South Africa, India and Brazil in 2024



Photo: Military Africa

The EU is another key player in regional maritime security capacity-building,³³⁶ including criminal justice capacity-building aimed at improving maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, supporting the Yaoundé Architecture, and upscaling port security and the safety of navigation.³³⁷ EU navies also intermittently have a presence in the Gulf,³³⁸ which is illustrative of foreign actors maintaining a presence in the South Atlantic as they seek to expand their regional influence.³³⁹

These external states have significantly larger navies and their partnerships can prove valuable³⁴⁰ in lieu of regional assets, provided relationships are mutually beneficial and can refrain from becoming entangled in geopolitical rivalries.

Maritime domain awareness

States complement physical patrols with technological surveillance to monitor vessels. This includes satellite tracking via AIS, which transmits vessels' position, identity, speed, etc., and is mandatory for certain vessels over 300 gross tonnage undertaking international voyages. Unlike AIS, vessel monitoring systems (VMS) are primarily used by governments and fisheries departments as a tool for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). VMS shares vessel locations periodically and can be delayed.³⁴¹ States regulate the use of AIS and VMS differently, requiring certain national and international vessels to have either or both AIS and VMS.

Key entities responsible for maritime security and overseeing vessels, such as the region's navies, fisheries departments, and DoT, employ various monitoring tools. Angola's National Maritime Coordination and Surveillance Centre was opened in 2024³⁴² and the US Military's Africa Command has provided them with licenses for vessel monitoring systems like SeaVision.³⁴³ Namibia's Global Maritime Distress and Safety System infrastructure, which monitors vessel communications, is currently being modernised.³⁴⁴ A Namibian participant said although vessels are being monitored, data from various systems need to be integrated and staff must be trained on data analysis.³⁴⁵

South Africa's DoT oversees the Maritime Security Coordination Centre (MSCC), which clears vessels entering South African waters.³⁴⁶ SAMSAs operates the Centre for Sea Watch and Response, responsible for ensuring vessel safety at sea. Sea Watch receives AREP 96 hours before arrival, verifies details, and shares the information with the MSCC, which distributes it to the relevant authorities, including law enforcement, who can object to the vessel's entry. Should intervention be necessary, the MSCC coordinates the response.³⁴⁷

South African regulations currently only require 'conventional ships' to provide pre-arrival notifications, but efforts are underway to extend this requirement to non-conventional ships for better regulation.³⁴⁸

SAMSA also uses long-range identification and tracking of ships, enabling it to monitor vessels as far as Brazil.³⁴⁹ Like the MSCC, SAMSA does not have its own patrol vessels, despite requesting a budget from Treasury and the DoT.³⁵⁰ Data from AIS, VMS, and other sources is currently integrated through the Oceans and Coastal Information Management System-Integrated Vessel Tracking (OCIMS-IVT) system.³⁵¹ Yet, South Africa's Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy notes the shortcomings of its MDA systems and stresses the need for an integrated monitoring and surveillance system along with access to satellite radar and visual imaging.³⁵² A fisheries expert also commented: 'different agencies are in possession of incident data which would identify patterns of illegal activity at sea, but they don't know what to do with that data to improve their response.'³⁵³

It is therefore uncertain if OCIMS is not fit for purpose or whether it needs to integrate data from more sources. Participants did say more staff were needed and should be trained to become specialists in using technology, especially in interpreting information and integrating data from different sources.³⁵⁴

The strength of these systems lies in integrating and sharing data on suspicious activity, but they still require assets to respond to incidents, and this is where the region falls short. As a DoT representative said: 'We have our waters just open, anyone can come in ... if you go to the offices of defence, intelligence or the navy or fisheries, they will show you in their app – do you see these vessels that are parked here? These are the people who are waiting for darkness to come in and steal the fish, they do it every day. And we don't react, we don't have the capability.'³⁵⁵ A researcher from Namibia similarly noted that although Namibia had good MDA, it meant little without being able to respond to an incident swiftly.³⁵⁶

Fisheries law enforcement efforts

In addition to traditional maritime law enforcement efforts, fishing vessels are subjected to MCS through quota and permit systems, fisheries observers on board fishing vessels, and fisheries inspectors on patrol vessels and in ports.³⁵⁷ There are also regional efforts to conserve fish stocks outside coastal state waters.

Chart 9: SADC Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre Region



Source: SADC MCSCC

This is done through RFMOs, established under the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, to regulate straddling and highly migratory fish. South Africa, Namibia and Angola are parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources in the South-East Atlantic Ocean (SEAFO), which is based in Namibia, as well as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

The challenge with RFMOs is that they are administrative bodies with no enforcement powers or vessels of their own. They therefore depend on the exercise of flag state jurisdiction and inter-state cooperation.³⁵⁸

One of the developments participants were most optimistic about³⁵⁹ was the establishment of the SADC Atlantic project in 2023, and the SADC Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC)³⁶⁰ in Mozambique. The SADC Atlantic initiative

aims to pool resources and expertise to enhance the monitoring and response to fisheries crime in Angola, South Africa and Namibia, leveraging the capabilities of the MCSCC. It focuses primarily on foreign vessels and port state measures and has improved inter-state cooperation to share information and identify and monitor suspicious vessels.³⁶¹

The project has developed a risk assessment methodology similar to assessments done following an AREP, enabling authorities to evaluate a vessel's history before granting entry. This assessment also looks for other illicit activities, like forced labour and drug trafficking.³⁶² The SADC Atlantic's informal communication platforms avoid bureaucratic processes and has led to the arrest of suspicious fishing vessels in Cape Town.³⁶³ Ideally, this shared information can result in suspicious vessels being refused port entry and licences throughout the region. The MCSCC is also developing a regional fishing vessels register, and will share information with RFMOs and other regional maritime security centres.³⁶⁴ SADC Atlantic also hosts inter-country capacity-building and learning exchanges. Training has included analysing AIS, satellite imagery and radar data, and using SeaVision, which integrates Skylight and Global Fishing Watch data. A fisheries expert said, however, that training good analysts took years, and training should be sustained.³⁶⁵

The SADC Atlantic initiative has a risk assessment methodology enabling authorities to evaluate a vessel's history before granting entry

Fisheries enforcement in Angola

Angola's Law No. 6-A/04 on Aquatic Biological Resources regulates fisheries. Angola also has a national action plan to combat IUU fishing (NPOA-IUU), which was reviewed in 2024.³⁶⁶ Angola is a member of ECCAS's Gulf of Guinea Regional Fisheries Commission,³⁶⁷ which in 2024 partnered with Global Fishing Watch to improve the use of technology for vessel surveillance and to review fisheries laws and policies.³⁶⁸ A Fisheries Monitoring Centre is located in Luanda. Angola's inability to prevent Angolan-licensed foreign fishing vessels from plundering Namibia's horse mackerel is however an indication of its limited law enforcement capacity. This is discussed below.

Fisheries enforcement in Namibia

Namibia's Marine Resources Act of 2000 regulates fisheries, which are monitored from the Fisheries Monitoring Centre in Walvis Bay. Although foreign vessels are not required to have AIS, the centre can monitor those with the functionality.³⁶⁹

The act prohibits transshipment at sea and restricts trawling in the 200-metre inshore area. Foreign fishing vessels must submit an AREP five days before, and undergo port inspection³⁷⁰ by fisheries inspectors who are empowered to investigate, search, seize and arrest on suspicion of fishing violations.³⁷¹ Fishing vessels are also required to carry observers, who report incidents to inspectors to investigate.³⁷² Namibia's NPOA-IUU³⁷³ complements these measures, along with fisheries MoUs with Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.³⁷⁴

Fisheries inspectors are often accompanied by police during patrols and inspections. Fisheries staff have been trained to identify indicators of forced labour, but an MFMR representative reported that cooperation with labour inspectors would improve if they were present during inspections.³⁷⁵

Like the navy and police, the fisheries department's patrol and surveillance ability is limited.³⁷⁶ A senior representative from the MEFT noted that Namibia had nearly 200 fisheries inspectors, and around 140 observers, but since just one vessel patrols at a time, only a few of the inspectors can enforce laws at sea.³⁷⁷ A senior rep from the Department of Maritime Affairs noted: 'We have probably one of the most active MCS programmes globally. But our MCS is limited in the sense of the resources [...] and human capacity.' He said offences and trends could remain undetected if the ability to intercept vessels did not improve. Two fisheries patrol vessels are currently operational and patrol for a third of the month. This is insufficient to cover the EEZ and should be supplemented by technological surveillance.³⁷⁸ The MFMR also has one aircraft.³⁷⁹ Although it aspires to acquire drones, it has not done so yet.³⁸⁰

Half the MCS effort is concentrated in Namibia's northern border with Angola,³⁸¹ but a naval representative said even if illegal activity were identified through for example VMS, it would take a vessel a day to travel from Walvis Bay to the Angolan border. Depending on the location, it may also be too far for the fisheries aircraft to arrive on time. Although Namibia has denied EEZ and port entry to some vessels,³⁸² those fleeing to Angolan waters pose a challenge. The naval representative shared instances where Angolan authorities were notified about fleeing vessels, but no feedback was received, despite some of these vessels also lacking fishing licences for Angola.³⁸³

Namibian patrol vessels



Photo: Victor Libuku/ILO/Flickr

Angola's licensing of, and limited ability to respond to, IUU fishing vessels, therefore, impacts Namibia.³⁸⁴ An official from Namibia's MFMR noted: 'The fact that they are operating or are comfortably present in Angolan waters gives us a sense that they may be associated with the Angolan authority.' Cooperation with Angola is however improving, partly due to engagements through the SADC Atlantic.³⁸⁵

An assessment of fisheries enforcement in Namibia found that while knowledge and understanding of detecting and prosecuting fisheries crime was increasing, ongoing challenges included a lack of technology, limited understanding of fisheries-related offences and prosecutions, and limited training opportunities. And as noted earlier, Namibia's fishing industry has been tainted by corruption.³⁸⁶

The fishing industry itself also contributes to MCS.³⁸⁷ An industry representative reported that their vessels regularly reported suspicious vessels, but that no action followed. He attributed this to limited resources and potential Namibian interests in these vessels. He argued that were law enforcement based near the border, they would have an opportunity to apprehend these vessels since their fishing gear takes time to retract. Instead, 'They need peace and quiet to work there, and that peace and quiet is guaranteed because the patrol vessel is in Walvis Bay.'³⁸⁸ An Angolan-flagged vessel was however intercepted by Namibia in the border region in 2023.³⁸⁹

Fisheries enforcement in South Africa

DFFE fisheries control officers (FCOs) are mandated in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act of 1988. No foreign vessels are allowed to fish in the country's waters and transhipments are only allowed in port and with a permit. Vessels may also be required to have observers on board to monitor catch.³⁹⁰ A fisheries

law expert noted that these observers rarely reported any wrongdoing, which might indicate collusion with, or fear of, the crew. While some large vessels have observers on board, this is required only every six months, and relates primarily to scientific observations.³⁹¹

Foreign vessels must submit an AREP and obtain an EEZ permit to enter South African waters. They must notify the FCO of their intention to enter port to land catch, which allows for a pre-inspection and risk assessment. This assessment considers the vessel's history, including any labour violations, and a physical inspection follows on arrival.³⁹² If infringements are found, relevant departments are notified, and a criminal case is opened. Illegal catches are seized and auctioned, and the proceeds given to the DFFE. Vessels may also be forfeited and permits may be revoked.³⁹³

A senior FCO noted that foreign vessels engaged in IUU were, however, challenging to apprehend, as they often fled, and port costs could accrue if the vessel was held in port for an extended period.³⁹⁴ Fisheries officers, designated as Environmental Management Inspectors, are also unable to carry their own case dockets, limiting their ability to see cases through to trial.³⁹⁵

FCOs cooperate with other agencies by embarking on patrolling naval vessels, such as those participating in Operation Phakisa.³⁹⁶ Patrol vessels with SAPS officers on board have been used to inspect suspicious vessels when no naval ships were available. FCOs use body-worn cameras, enabling senior FCOs to assist remotely during inspections.³⁹⁷

Most surveillance takes place nearshore due to limited staff and resources. The department has three inshore and one offshore patrol vessels that conduct intermittent patrols, but most participants consider this insufficient to effectively monitor and respond to incidents at sea.³⁹⁸ Limited funding to operate and maintain vessels is a challenge, as well as the lost ability to conduct aerial patrols.³⁹⁹ A fisheries expert suggested that patrols were not intelligence-driven and VMS data was not continuously monitored as MDA centres were not always manned.

Reflective of state actors not always welcoming external offers of assistance, such as from NGOs or international partners,⁴⁰⁰ participants highlighted the government's apprehension to subscribe to global MDA systems, like the American-based Skylight and Global Fishing Watch, which can track vessels not transmitting AIS. Until these systems are employed, authorities must rely on active AIS and VMS (for local vessels) to identify suspicious activity.⁴⁰¹

South Africa has an NPOA for sharks.⁴⁰² Successful, but now defunct, environmental courts specialised in prosecuting marine resources cases, especially abalone trafficking, but funding ran out, and the courts were closed. Few fisheries crime cases

The DFFE has three inshore and one offshore patrol vessels, but most participants consider this insufficient to effectively monitor and respond to incidents at sea

are prosecuted under the Prevention of Organised Crime Act (POCA), meaning that organised criminal elements often go unaddressed. The tendency is to issue fines instead.⁴⁰³

Another challenge is the limited data on certain species populations. A fisheries expert recalled an abalone poacher telling him that scientists simply did not know where to look for populations. But one indication of the declining stock is that seized abalone are getting smaller. In 2023, the DFFE coordinated the development of an abalone strategy alongside multiple stakeholders, including legal rights holders and illegal harvesters. Stakeholders have commented on the strategy, which has been endorsed, but is not yet being implemented.⁴⁰⁴ A fisheries trade expert said this delay could further taint the strained relationship between DFFE and coastal communities.⁴⁰⁵

Law reforms

Participants considered the legislation applicable to shipping, vessels and marine resources as mostly satisfactory, but identified enforcement as the key challenge. They stressed the importance of using POCA legislation to address organised elements and to facilitate cooperation between different entities.

A few important law reforms are underway, including increasing oversight over vessels and incorporating data from different sources for vessel risk assessments. South Africa is domesticating the PSMA and the DFFE has asked for comment on draft regulations to the Marine Living Resources Act, namely the Proposed Regulations Relating to the Entry of Foreign Fishing Vessels into South African Waters,⁴⁰⁶ that will allow greater oversight over foreign fishing vessels transiting through South African waters or calling into port.

The regulations include notification of entry, the requirement for a port entry permit, the requirement to use AIS, and stowage of gear while in transit. In line with the PSMA, port entry can be denied if evidence of IUU fishing is found. Vessels will also be prohibited from deleting vessel tracking data for a prescribed period.⁴⁰⁷ To increase oversight of small vessels, South Africa's Merchant Shipping Act Draft National Small Vessel Safety Regulations are currently under consideration.⁴⁰⁸

Experts noted the difficulty in proving illegal activity at sea, which could be addressed by legislative changes

Participants suggested additional law reforms, often in relation to fisheries crime. Many suggested increased penalties since administrative fines are trivial compared to the value of illegal catches. They argue fines also don't deter the organised enterprises behind the offences,⁴⁰⁹ and crews continue engaging in illegal activities after paying fines.⁴¹⁰ Low fines for violations of Namibia's Forest Act, which applies to timber trafficking, were also cited. Although there is a new draft bill in this respect, POCA charges could be used in the interim.

However, imprisoning crew members will not impact beneficial owners, while financial penalties and vessel forfeiture will.⁴¹¹ In Argentina, for example, fines are

accompanied by the costs of the catch and law enforcement expenses. This could be considered to increase penalties in the region and to recover costs.

Experts noted the difficulty in proving illegal activity at sea, which could be addressed by legislative changes, such as instituting no-dive zones in nearshore areas exposed to illegal harvesting. As law reforms progress, fisheries experts have proposed requiring all vessels entering SADC ports to submit an AREP and mandating AIS use for fishing vessels above a certain size. If coastal states made this a requirement, it would allow enforcement by both flag states and coastal states. Ensuring that legislation provided the necessary law enforcement powers to agencies other than police, including port security officers, was also noted.⁴¹²

Regional states need to ratify international instruments applicable to vessels,⁴¹³ fishing and illicit trade and domesticate their provisions. Any law reforms should be accompanied by dedicated resources for implementation. States must also criminalise illegal activity by their nationals on board foreign vessels.⁴¹⁴

Primary barriers to effective responses to illicit vessel activity

The research explored stakeholders' biggest challenges in mitigating TOC at sea. The below six factors are considered the greatest barriers.

Fragmented efforts

Illicit trade in the South Atlantic is not addressed in any pan-Atlantic forums or cooperative instruments,⁴¹⁵ including in Africa. Participants largely attributed this to the lack of pressing security threats compared to the Gulf of Guinea and Western Indian Ocean, where lives and maritime trade are routinely at risk.⁴¹⁶ It could also be due to more pressing threats on land.⁴¹⁷

Unlike Angola and South Africa, Namibia is neither a member of the Yaoundé nor Djibouti Code of Conduct. This is likely due to Namibia's location and limited implication in maritime crimes, but it could expose the country to exploitation.

Although several recently established pan-Atlantic and African-Atlantic forums exist, none focus exclusively on maritime security or TOC, and they are too new to assess their potential impact on regional cooperation. Examples include the Atlantic African States Process⁴¹⁸ and the US-driven Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation.⁴¹⁹

While not nearly as influential as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, there is also the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS), originally aimed at non-militarisation and South-South cooperation. Driven by Brazil, its members met for the first time in a decade in 2023 to try to revive it. It remains to be seen whether ZOPACAS could potentially foster more collaboration around trans-Atlantic maritime crime.⁴²⁰

Participants all stressed the importance of combining limited resources. A naval officer said: 'In the Gulf of Guinea, those countries realise that we cannot operate in isolation. You can tighten your maritime security in Namibia, but if Angola does not do the same, then there will be a problem.'⁴²¹ This is seen with Angolan-licensed fishing vessels exploiting Namibian and South African waters for illicit activity. Stakeholders also cited the language barrier with Angola as a reason for limited engagement.⁴²²

A worrying shortcoming is the lack of regional maritime security coordination and information-sharing centres equivalent to those in the Gulf of Guinea and Western Indian Ocean. There is no equivalent in the South Atlantic except for the recently established fisheries MCSCC in Mozambique, which shares fisheries information with Angola, Namibia and South Africa.⁴²³

National efforts to coordinate agencies and regulate vessel activity are also challenging. South Africa's Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy, for example, notes the fragmented nature of law enforcement at sea, calling for a robust coordination mechanism.⁴²⁴ Such challenges are also illustrated in the registration of fishing vessels. The DoT usually registers fishing vessels, while fisheries departments issue fishing licences. Fisheries departments, therefore, rely on the DOT to conduct vessel risk assessments, so that when fishing licences are considered, a thorough history of the vessel is available.⁴²⁵

National maritime security strategies

Although Angola's permanent representative to the UN noted that Angola 'promotes the adoption of maritime security strategies consistent with the prevailing situation in the Gulf of Guinea and Southern Africa,' Angola does not have an NMSS.⁴²⁶ It does however have a blue economy and ocean strategy.⁴²⁷ Namibia also has a blue economy strategy, but other than noting budget constraints to monitor IUU practices, it makes little mention of the need to secure its ocean.⁴²⁸ A naval representative said the absence of an overall maritime security authority impeded cooperation between entities responsible for maritime security.⁴²⁹

South Africa has an Oceans Economy Master Plan and has developed a draft NMSS,⁴³⁰ led by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) with input from various state departments. However, a DoT staff member reported that the SANDF questioned whether it should lead the strategy, saying it should fall under the DOT. The representative recalled saying to the SANDF: 'The DoT is not responsible for security in

this country. You cannot ask the DoT to develop an NMSS that will be implemented by the SANDF and the SAPS.'

The representative also noted there had been no discussion between the heads of navy and maritime in the DoT about the way forward. Despite an invitation from the Portfolio Committee on Defence for the DoT to present the NMSS, he said this was not the department's mandate. As a result, the draft strategy is in limbo, with no clarity on who should champion it.⁴³¹

One participant further confirmed that while there was consensus on the necessity of NMSSs, no one wanted to take responsibility for its implementation due to budget constraints. The participant recalled a meeting some years ago where the hypothetical scenario of the Cape Route experiencing a significant increase in shipping traffic was raised. At the time, no one took it seriously enough to ensure the region was able to absorb the influx of new business opportunities, which he attributed to the lack of a clear strategy.⁴³²

Because there are no NMSSs, participants felt roles were undefined, and mandates were unclear,⁴³³ leading to no entity directing responses. Participants often expressed challenges regarding who should be in charge of securing the maritime domain, with key mandated agencies, like transport departments, lacking vessels and only monitoring activity from land.⁴³⁴

Political will versus political capacity

Participants often distinguished between political will and political capacity and agreed that political will was illustrated by dedicating resources to address TOC at sea. But while the lack of resources is by far the greatest barrier to countering TOC and cooperating in doing so, this does not necessarily mean there is a lack of political will. As Lekunze notes: 'Inherent operational problems in African navies limit action even when navies are situationally aware.'⁴³⁵ A lack of political will is, however, illustrated in the absence of NMSSs and limited inter-agency and cross-border cooperation. But this distinction does not matter – both result in inaction.

Corruption

Corruption was often cited as the reason for governments not prioritising TOC at sea.⁴³⁶ This includes corruption when vessel documents are issued, when shipments enter ports, when fines are paid, and even when laws are passed⁴³⁷ or seized shipments disappear.⁴³⁸ As the Fishrot scandal showed, a handful of corrupt individuals can have a big impact.⁴³⁹ Participants highlighted the potential of corruption with paper-based licences and permitting systems, especially in fisheries.⁴⁴⁰

Challenges in maritime domain awareness

Participants acknowledged that when it came to MDA, 'we don't know what we don't know because you can't monitor what you can't see.'⁴⁴¹ As argued by Richardson et al., 'Detection relies on maritime surveillance systems, which are largely non-existent beyond national borders in the South Atlantic. Interdiction depends on [coast guard] and naval capabilities, which are typically sub-standard, particularly off the African coast.'⁴⁴² Participants acknowledged blind spots and limited integration of agencies with a maritime mandate's individual MDA systems nationally and regionally.⁴⁴³ The development of MSWs and regional information sharing centres could help address this.

Because foreign vessels are not always obligated to turn on their AIS in coastal state waters, their coverage is less than local vessels fitted with VMS.⁴⁴⁴ While there are satellite-based systems like Skylight and Global Fishing Watch that can increase states' ability to monitor vessels even if they do not use VMS or AIS, countries have been cautious about using them due to their US ownership and concerns about national security and ownership of information.⁴⁴⁵

Another challenge is delayed data and intelligence. South Africa's long-range identification and tracking, for example, has a six-hour time lapse.⁴⁴⁶ Delays are exacerbated by bureaucratic processes, which can only be bridged by having the necessary inter-agency and cross-border relationships.⁴⁴⁷ A 2025 parliamentary briefing on security also noted that South Africa's maritime surveillance was handicapped by outdated radar systems.⁴⁴⁸

Challenges in maritime law enforcement

Identifying, boarding and inspecting suspicious vessels at sea is challenging. The logistics of inspecting vessels on the open ocean, often far from land, coupled with limited jurisdiction and sometimes hostile crew, complicate maritime interdictions. In ports, commercial interests require fast turnaround times, further limiting the time and resources available to identify illegality.⁴⁴⁹

But by far the biggest challenge to effective law enforcement identified by participants was the lack of resources and technical expertise. This is not surprising, and a challenge globally due to the size of the ocean, the quantity of goods moved through ports, and law enforcement efforts being focused on land. Maritime security often doesn't feature in training curricula of law enforcement entities that aren't primarily focused at sea.⁴⁵⁰

In theory, navies should be best able to patrol large areas. Yet South Africa, Angola and Namibia's navies are small – despite their vast EEZs. Participants agreed that the region's navies had limited impact in securing its waters, given their lack of vessels and resources.⁴⁵¹ For maritime and aerial patrols, scant funding to procure, run and maintain vessels and planes is a major impediment. The impact of limited patrols has been described in the context of South Africa's Operation Phakisa: 'The positive impact Operation Phakisa has had when officials are deployed is noticeable and local communities have expressed appreciation for the presence of the enforcement officers. However, these achievements are underscored by the intensification of poaching activities as soon as the Phakisa operations end and security personnel withdraw.'⁴⁵² Irregular patrols are therefore unlikely to have a deterrent effect.⁴⁵³

Participants also said the lack of assets endangered law enforcement: 'Poachers will shoot and they'll ram you and they do everything to stop you because they've got the money; they lose a rigid-hulled inflatable boat, they just replace it.'⁴⁵⁴ Another noted how law enforcement was often outnumbered by criminal actors. Financial constraints also limit cooperation between countries, including joint patrols and investigations.⁴⁵⁵ Maritime industry reports of suspicious activity at sea are helpful, but when no action follows, often due to limited resources to respond, the public loses trust in law enforcement.⁴⁵⁶

Only a fraction of containers in ports worldwide are scanned, and most countries have few scanners. Limited space to carry out searches is challenging, in addition to the costs of holding containers and vessels during investigations.⁴⁵⁷ Fishing vessels are more regularly inspected, but they are primarily checked for fishing violations and not other illegal activities. Participants were also sceptical about security measures keeping up with port expansion and increased trade⁴⁵⁸ and the risk of ports falling victim to cyberattacks.⁴⁵⁹

Specialist skills are needed to detect, investigate, and prosecute maritime crimes. 'Law enforcement is very good on terrestrial cases. When it comes to maritime cases, it's always a challenge,'

The biggest challenge to effective law enforcement identified by participants was the lack of resources and technical expertise

said one participant.⁴⁶⁰ While there is ongoing training and awareness-raising, more is needed, and some of it can only be learnt through experience.⁴⁶¹ Participants said the focus often fell on easily identifiable targets or 'low-hanging fruit' due to the limited capacity to investigate TOC up the supply chain, such as combing through financial transactions and analysing devices to connect suspects.⁴⁶² This is especially true when investigating and prosecuting fisheries crime. Instead of focusing on 'foot soldiers', controlled deliveries could expose the entire supply chain.⁴⁶³

Another significant challenge is in the unequal implementation of law enforcement, particularly when neighbouring countries are either lax or uncooperative in cross-border investigations. This includes flag states or coastal states failing to implement port state measures that would deny suspicious vessels access.

Recommendations for a watertight response

The research interviews reflected on the opportunities to improve responses to maritime crime committed on board vessels in Africa's South Atlantic. The following recommendations reflect key priorities for enhancing stakeholder responses.



Develop national maritime security strategies

The lack of clear direction, roles and responsibilities in securing the maritime domain could be addressed through the development of NMSSs⁴⁶⁴ for Angola and Namibia, and the finalisation of South Africa's draft NMSS. These strategies must be rooted in regional realities and capacities. As Lekunze said: 'African states cannot [...] assume that in heated global strategic competition, international law, diplomacy and transnational governance schemes would prevail in providing maritime security. African states must develop strategies that reflect challenges arising from the changing nature of the international system.'⁴⁶⁵

While regional countries are arguably good at developing frameworks, allocating the resources to implement them often falls short.⁴⁶⁶ An evidence-based strategy can, therefore, also be used to elevate maritime security challenges to national priorities and secure necessary resources for implementation.

Monitor trends and quantify economic losses

Interview participants struggled to identify specific trends in illegal maritime trade, such as which commodities were moved through specific ports of entry. If incident data is collated and analysed, it can identify trends and inform targeted responses.

Coupled with an evidence base and NMSSs, quantifying losses related to TOC at sea could further motivate regional governments and other stakeholders to allocate desperately needed budgets and resources to the response. A cost-benefit analysis could illustrate how a small investment in security would be considerably less than the losses incurred if security measures are lacking.⁴⁶⁷ One example is the loss of port fees when fishing vessels are denied port access,⁴⁶⁸ versus the loss of lucrative marine resources. This also requires scientific research to quantify losses to marine biodiversity as a result of illegal harvesting and the inability to optimally exploit resources also targeted by illegal trade.

Capacitate maritime law enforcement entities

All participants expressed the need for more patrol vessels for both maritime and port law enforcement actors, and interviews were dominated by the challenge of limited resources for maritime surveillance and waterborne responses. While it may seem like a simple solution to ensure patrol vessels are funded, fuelled and underway,⁴⁶⁹ in reality it is an expensive endeavour few developing states can afford, this is why maintenance is so important. As a participant remarked: 'When you allow your infrastructure to collapse, it means starting from scratch.' Maintaining maritime infrastructure is cheaper than deteriorated assets such as patrol vessels requiring replacement.

MDA relies on complementary vessel patrols and technology. To address blind spots due to too few patrolling vessels, technologies that provide real-time information,⁴⁷⁰ as well as integrated systems making data visible across agencies and the region, need to be explored. Regionally, this can be addressed by establishing information sharing and coordination centres or platforms. The integration of MDA and vessel information systems would empower law enforcement to gather and share information and to respond to incidents swiftly. But this can only be optimised if they can be combined with vessels that can be dispatched in response to an incident or if port authorities can respond to vessels in port.

Countries could adopt mobile MDA technology, like drones, in lieu of vessels.⁴⁷¹ NAMPORT, for example, uses a drone to oversee vessels at anchorage.⁴⁷² Participants suggested digitising processes related to vessel administration and goods clearance to accelerate processing, facilitating faster, safer trade, to make data visible to multiple stakeholders through an integrated system, and to prevent corruption and fraud.⁴⁷³

Surveillance systems in ports need to be monitored full-time⁴⁷⁴ and can employ artificial intelligence to identify suspicious activities and trends.⁴⁷⁵ Ports should comply with the ISPS Code⁴⁷⁶ and ensure scanning equipment is functional and staff are trained to identify illicit activities.⁴⁷⁷ This applies to all law enforcement entities, which must be able to identify illegal substances, such as drugs and precursors, animal and plant species, and potential human trafficking. To secure ports, participants suggested improving access control for crew members in ports, improved coordination between customs and container handling operations,

and improved communication between regional customs agencies, such as through the Southern African Customs Union.

Instead of acquiring more vessels, naval bases could be established closer to problem areas, such as the border between Namibia and Angola.⁴⁷⁸ The role of navies globally is evolving into one that includes law enforcement roles. Not all participants were convinced that the contemporary nature of maritime security justifies naval investments, suggesting that coast guards with offshore patrol vessels might be better suited.⁴⁷⁹ South Africa's BMA and Angola's coast guard could fill this gap once fully operational. One participant further suggested navies should stop acquiring old or donated vessels and invest in fast, medium-sized vessels instead.⁴⁸⁰

Participants supported expanding law enforcement powers to address a broader range of offences at sea and in port

The chief of the SAN has acknowledged that limited maritime assets force African navies to take on broader coast guard functions.⁴⁸¹ Participants supported expanding law enforcement powers to address a broader range of offences at sea and in port, provided entities receive adequate training and resources to execute these powers. They favoured integrated border management or specialised TOC agencies with broad authority to combat illegal activities at sea. While this aligns with South Africa's BMA aims, participants were sceptical about its success without proper funding.⁴⁸² Criminal justice officials should also be better equipped to identify, investigate and prosecute TOC in the maritime domain.⁴⁸³

Two suggestions for funding more resources were to use funds from fines and forfeited assets⁴⁸⁴ and to allocate a percentage of the value of fishing quotas to fisheries enforcement.⁴⁸⁵ Elsewhere, like Kenya, coast guard functions have been funded by various government departments with mandates in the maritime domain.⁴⁸⁶

Private industries dependent on the maritime domain could also contribute to security measures.⁴⁸⁷ For example, in Ghana, the oil industry is helping the navy procure more boats, with financing provided by the Ghana Commercial Bank.⁴⁸⁸ The shipping and fishing industries are also valuable partners in sharing information with law enforcement. In Kenya, for example, a mobile app allows local fishers to alert authorities to suspicious activity.⁴⁸⁹ Regionally, countries that have joint fishing ventures with Namibia and Angola could contribute resources to secure the region's waters.

Participants stressed the importance of dual criminality and harmonizing laws regionally, especially regarding natural resources. For example, by listing certain marine species on CITES, foreign law enforcement entities are empowered to help combat illegal trade, potentially reducing the targeting of these species and the profits to TOC networks. Alternatively, legislation similar to the US Lacey Act could be considered. The Lacey Act criminalises trade in natural resources illegally obtained in another country⁴⁹⁰ and applies to individuals and other entities, like companies.⁴⁹¹ This could also address the shipping of illegal commodities through neighbouring countries to 'legitimise' shipments.

Law enforcement and other stakeholders must be trained on anti-corruption measures in the maritime domain and should be empowered to identify and report corruption.

Enforce port state measures against IUU vessels and expand oversight to other TOCs at sea

Considering the fleet of IUU vessels using Angolan, Namibian and South African ports, these countries need to intensify cooperation to investigate illicit activity and deny licences and port entry to these vessels. They should also seek to establish beneficial ownership of these vessels and engage with the flag states that register them.

The PSMA holds valuable lessons for dealing with vessels suspected of being involved in other TOCs. While this would be unfair to apply to container vessels where there are no grounds to believe crew are complicit, smaller vessels that are often engaged in illegal activity could be treated in the same way as fishing vessels. This is in line with preventive law enforcement powers afforded by UNCLOS. As one participant noted: 'Whether they're moving drugs or wildlife products or weapons or people, if they're aware that when they come into Luanda, Lobito, Walvis, Lüderitz, Cape Town ... that illegal operators stay away from our ports because they're seen as secure, that they're aware that everyone's sharing information. They'll go somewhere else, but at least they won't come here.'⁴⁹²

As foreign fishing vessels operating from Angola's waters with impunity have shown, the PSMA is only effective when implemented, requiring countries to balance the economic contribution of these vessels with the need to enforce their laws.

Move from rhetoric to action: practical regional cooperation

Participants reiterated the importance of cooperation between national agencies, and between regional and international stakeholders to pool resources. But across TOC research, this has become rhetoric with no clear guidelines on how to practically operationalise it, especially without dedicated resources.

Although regional instruments like MoUs exist, they are not necessarily implemented. And while some advocate for establishing pan-Atlantic cooperation and information-sharing forums, especially for joint law enforcement and patrols,⁴⁹³ participants were less in favour, preferring to use existing forums to collectively address their challenges, and diplomacy to facilitate cross-border cooperation.

Suggested options to facilitate regional cooperation include Namibia joining the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, expanding the Gulf of Guinea concept to Atlantic Africa⁴⁹⁴ or exploring an option similar to the trilateral planning cell aimed at collectively addressing drug trafficking in South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania.⁴⁹⁵

Interestingly, few participants suggested joint patrols between regional law enforcement, instead focusing on national inter-agency cooperation,⁴⁹⁶ perhaps recognising the region's limited assets. Expanding existing collective efforts could include more joint port control units, as has been established in Walvis Bay. Alternatively, integrated MDA and information systems can allow for indirect inter-agency collaboration.⁴⁹⁷

Participants were, however, clear that any forums should be operational, bringing together stakeholders who can take commitments on paper and implement them on the ground. This could be as simple as bringing together multi-agency law enforcement representatives from across the region to discuss their biggest challenges and cooperation needs,⁴⁹⁸ and to establish informal relationships.

Increase oversight of small vessels and small harbours

Enforcement efforts are currently concentrated on larger vessels and official ports of entry, with limited regulation and oversight of smaller vessels, such as recreational vessels, and harbours. Landings and transshipments are rarely monitored in smaller harbours. Like regional ports, smaller harbours are also being developed, with plans for possibly establishing new harbours⁴⁹⁹ and therefore requiring increased security measures. As with larger vessels, licensing and registration of smaller vessels should only proceed after thorough checks on vessels' history.

Prioritise the entire supply chain and its socioeconomic drivers

Responding to incidents without investigating the entire supply chain yields short-term results at best. Instead, the entire supply chain must be addressed. Efforts should therefore not be limited to, for example, engaging with source countries, but also with market states and transit states through which illegal commodities are moved or laundered into legal markets. This is similar to container profiling based on its origin and destination. A fisheries inspector suggested that the destination of landed catch should be declared so that fisheries market trends can be identified.⁵⁰⁰ This could also be applied to other illegal commodities, including those in transit.

Participants noted that while law enforcement may suppress TOC or displace it elsewhere, including away from maritime routes,⁵⁰¹ lasting change will only occur if socioeconomic conditions improve for the communities along Southern Africa's Atlantic coast.⁵⁰² The same applies to societies where crew members come from or where illicit commodities originate. If livelihoods can come from sustainable use of the sea, fewer people might feel compelled to illegally exploit it for short-term benefits.

If livelihoods can come from sustainable use of the sea, fewer people might feel compelled to illegally exploit it

While this would not address the entire illicit supply chain, it would mitigate the impact of TOC on local communities.⁵⁰³ The challenge with law enforcement and compliance efforts is that they are often at the expense of coastal communities who have relied on the sea for centuries, leaving them criminalised and without prospects for improved socioeconomic wellbeing.⁵⁰⁴

The region's shipping and fishing industries could be developed to integrate and generate more intra-African trade. This would ensure the region was not merely a transit zone for shipping, but an active participant. More

opportunities for fishing could be unlocked. As an industry representative said: 'We're not catching the fish that is out there. If there is fish out there which is caught illegally, it is not hurting us because we haven't got the capacity to catch it.'⁵⁰⁵ Increasing fish processing ability in the region could also provide jobs and skills.⁵⁰⁶

Conclusion

TOC in Southern Africa's Atlantic is widespread and has far-reaching impacts. These TOCs concern multiple countries, none of which have the capacity to respond to them alone. It is the responsibility of flag, port and coastal states to work together if they are to mitigate the impacts of TOC at sea. Considering that a lot of the region's wealth lies offshore, the limited maritime security architecture and law enforcement assets are concerning.

As the changing international order sees powerful states increasingly trying to leverage relationships in Africa, African states' agency is increasing.⁵⁰⁷ With Southern Africa's exceptional geographic location at the centre of global trade, the region should capitalise on its strategic importance to form partnerships to protect not only Angola, South Africa, Namibia and their people, but also the global vessels and goods passing through its waters.⁵⁰⁸

Patalano writes: 'The very foundations of the prosperity that underwrites open economies rests upon maritime physical and digital connectivity ... In a contested maritime century, we should start thinking about navies as the ultimate national security insurance policy.'⁵⁰⁹ While navies might not be the answer for all Southern African countries, more vessels at sea, coupled with technology to increase MDA, are non-negotiable. These maritime law enforcement entities might not fight wars, but the enemy they face is insidious, often cannot be linked to a single state, and is better resourced and more flexible than the governments trying to curtail them.

Will Southern Africa's Atlantic states seize the opportunities presented by their maritime resources – or will they be ruled by the criminal actors currently commanding the ocean?

Notes

- 1 Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022, <https://mfmr.gov.na/documents/411764/2631681/Draft+Namibia+Sustainable+Blue+Economy+Policy.pdf/b4b334bd-b3e7-4e8b-442f-cbbc6fac34e2>.
- 2 See, for example, E Duarte and M Correia de Barros (eds.), *Maritime security challenges in the South Atlantic*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- 3 Interview, senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa; Also see, for example, Monitoring and Support Project for the Global Illicit Flows Programme and Seaport Cooperation Programme, *Maritime threat assessment of illicit flows across the Atlantic*, 2022; P Isbell, *The Rising strategic significance of the Atlantic basin: an Emerging 'Pan-Atlanticism'*, 2023, www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2023-12/PP_17-23_Paul%20Isbell.pdf; P Matibe, Why Gabon matters: strategic significance along the Gulf of Guinea, *DefenceWeb*, 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/joint/diplomacy-a-peace/why-gabon-matters-strategic-significance-along-the-gulf-of-guinea/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 4 F Matthias and T Siman, Maritime regional security governance in the Atlantic: antagonisms, overlaps and cooperation, *Nação e Defesa*, 2023, 164, <https://revistas.rcaap.pt/nacao/article/view/32164>.
- 5 World Bank, *The World Bank in Angola*, 9 October 2024, www.worldbank.org/en/country/angola/overview.
- 6 ER Aikins, Namibia, ISS, 16 September 2024, <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/namibia/>.
- 7 J Cilliers and A le Roux, South Africa, ISS, 11 February 2025, <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/south-africa/>.
- 8 Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022, <https://mfmr.gov.na/documents/411764/2631681/Draft+Namibia+Sustainable+Blue+Economy+Policy.pdf/b4b334bd-b3e7-4e8b-442f-cbbc6fac34e2>.
- 9 South African Government, *Geography and climate*, www.gov.za/about-sa/geography-and-climate#:~:text=South%20Africa%20occupies%20the%20most,Mozambique%20on%20the%20Indian%20Ocean.
- 10 J Cilliers, Angola, 2024, ISS, <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/angola/>.
- 11 ER Aikins, Namibia, ISS, 16 September 2024, <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/namibia/>.
- 12 J Cilliers, Angola, 2024, ISS, <https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/angola/>.
- 13 Lloyd's Bank, *The economic context of Angola*, www.lloydsbanktrade.com/en/market-potential/angola/economical-context
- 14 Namibian Government, *Status of the Namibian economy*, 2018, www.npc.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Status-of-the-Namibian-Economy-Report-2018.pdf.
- 15 South African Government, Official guide to South Africa, 2022, www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/02%20South%20Africa%20at%20a%20Glance%202021-22.pdf.
- 16 UNEP-WCMC, *Protected area profile for Angola from the world database on protected areas*, 2024, www.protectedplanet.net.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 South African Government, *Marine protected areas*, www.marineprotectedareas.org.za/about.
- 19 The World Folio, *The importance of Angola's ports*, 2014, www.theworldfolio.com/news/augusto-da-silva-tom/3141/; Insights Global, *Port infrastructure in Angola will allow the country to capitalize on its resource wealth*, 2022, www.insights-global.com/port-infrastructure-in-angola-will-allow-the-country-to-capitalize-on-its-resource-wealth/.
- 20 NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report 2023*, www.namport.com.na/files/documents/afb_Integrated%20Annual%20Report%202023.pdf.
- 21 Transnet National Ports Authority, *Transnet National Ports Authority Report 2023*, https://nationalgovernment.co.za/entity_annual/3440/2023-transnet-soc-ltd-annual-report.pdf.
- 22 Angola, Namibia and South Africa occupy very different positions on the 2023 Fragile States Index which ranks 179 countries from most to least fragile. The index gives an indication of states' ability to control their territory and borders, their monopoly on the legitimate use of force and ability to provide basic services. Based on this ranking, Namibia is the least fragile of the three countries, see <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/>.
- 23 UNODC, *An aid to strategic responses to organized crime in East and Southern Africa*, Vienna: UNODC, 2023; Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 24 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 25 E Duarte and M Correia de Barros (eds.), *Maritime security challenges in the South Atlantic*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019; D Hamilton (ed.), *Dark networks: human security in the Atlantic Basin*, Centre for Transatlantic Relations SAIC, 2016; Also see UNODC, *An aid to strategic responses to organized crime in East and Southern Africa*, Vienna: UNODC, 2023.
- 26 Benguela Current Convention, www.benguelacc.org/; Also see Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022, <https://mfmr.gov.na/documents/411764/2631681/Draft+Namibia+Sustainable+Blue+Economy+Policy.pdf/b4b334bd-b3e7-4e8b-442f-cbbc6fac34e2>; South African Government, Official guide to South Africa, 2022, www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/02%20South%20Africa%20at%20a%20Glance%202021-22.pdf.
- 27 Dryad Global, Houthi attacks drop vessel transits by half through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, *DefenceWeb*, 5 February 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/houthi-attacks-drop-vessel-transits-by-half-through-the-bab-el-mandeb-strait/?referrer=newsletter>; J Power, Houthi Red Sea attacks still torment global trade, a year after October 7, 2024, *Al Jazeera*, www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/10/5/a-year-after-october-7-houthi-red-sea-attacks-still-torment-global-trade; Interview, NamPort staff member, Online; Interview, NAMRA staff member, Online.

- 28 The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines maritime zones in which coastal states have jurisdiction.
- 29 C Bruwer, *Smuggling and Trafficking of Illicit Goods by Sea*, in L Otto (ed), *Global Challenges in Maritime Security: an introduction*, Springer 2023.
- 30 In terms of the Shipping Registration Act 58 of 1998 Section 16.
- 31 Merchant Shipping Act 57 of 1951 Section 11.
- 32 Merchant Navy Law, Decree-Law No 42644 and Decree No 42645. Also see <https://practiceguides.chambers.com/practice-guides/shipping-2025/angola>.
- 33 Transnet National Ports Authority Brochure, [www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net/OurPorts/Cape%20Town/Documents/\(TNPA\)%20Cape%20Town%20Brochure_lr.pdf](http://www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net/OurPorts/Cape%20Town/Documents/(TNPA)%20Cape%20Town%20Brochure_lr.pdf); NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report 2023*.
- 34 T Hutson, *Red Sea Crisis and implications for trade facilitation in Africa*, *Africa Ports*, 24 April 2024, <https://africaports.co.za/2024/04/24/feature-red-sea-crisis-and-implications-for-trade-facilitation-in-africa/#:~:text=Conclusion,in%20Durban%20and%20Cape%20Town>.
- 35 L Steyn, 'We need a lot of help': Transnet unlikely to rail 200 million tonnes this year, but it will try, *News24*, 3 September 2024, www.news24.com/fin24/companies/we-need-a-lot-of-help-transnet-unlikely-to-rail-200-million-tonnes-this-year-but-it-will-try-20240903; D Van Dalen, M Ndhlovu and R Gopaldas, *Impact of Red Sea crisis on Africa – red flag or red herring?* *ISS*, 12 February 2024, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/impact-of-red-sea-crisis-on-africa-red-flag-or-red-herring>.
- 36 Clyde & Co, *Navigating troubled waters: unpacking South Africa's port challenges and charting a course for transformation*, 2024, www.clydeco.com/en/insights/2024/01/navigating-troubled-waters-unpacking-aouth-africa; NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report*, 2023; UNCTAD, *Review of maritime transport*, Geneva: United Nations, 2023, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/rmt2023_en.pdf; NAMPORT, *Integrated annual report*, 2023; Insights Global, *Port infrastructure in Angola will allow the country to capitalize on its resource wealth*, 2022, www.insights-global.com/port-infrastructure-in-angola-will-allow-the-country-to-capitalize-on-its-resource-wealth/.
- 37 Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 38 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 39 Interview, Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 40 P Manuel Campos, *Angolan port infrastructure and the competitiveness in the Southern African Development Community*, *European Journal of Economic and Financial Research*, 7(1), 2023.
- 41 Insights Global, *Port infrastructure in Angola will allow the country to capitalize on its resource wealth*, 2022, www.insights-global.com/port-infrastructure-in-angola-will-allow-the-country-to-capitalize-on-its-resource-wealth/; United States Government International Trade Administration, *Angola – Country Commercial Guide*, 2024, www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/angola-marine-technologies-fisheries-and-sea-ports.
- 42 MSC, *MSC enhances connectivity in South Africa*, 2025, www.msc.com/en/newsroom/customer-advisories/2025/january/msc-enhances-connectivity-in-southern-africa.
- 43 NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report*, 2024, https://www.namport.com.na/files/documents/278_Annual%20Report%2012%20Months%20ended%2031%20March%202024.pdf; Transnet National Ports Authority, *Annual report*, 2024.
- 44 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; UNODC, *Report: Value Chain Analysis of the Fisheries Sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 45 M Duval, *R252 million drug bust raises concerns about security at SA's small harbours*, *IOL*, 23 July, 2024.
- 46 Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 47 South African Government, *Comprehensive maritime transport policy (CMTF) for South Africa*, 2017.
- 48 Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 49 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 50 NAMPORT, *Integrated annual report*, 2024.
- 51 UNCTAD, *Angola sustainable freight transport assessment*, 2025, https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/dtltlb2024d3_en.pdf.
- 52 TNPA, *Port statistics*, 2025, <https://www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net/Commercial%20and%20Marketing/Pages/Port-Statistics.aspx>.
- 53 Interview, Law enforcement officers from international law enforcement agency, South Africa.
- 54 J Bastrup-Birk et al, *Next generation organized crime: systemic change and the evolving character of modern transnational organized crime*, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2023.
- 55 ENACT, *TOC Index: South Africa summary*, 2023.
- 56 C Dolley, *R70m cocaine seized in Durban harbour months after 'cartel diver' boarding SA flight arrested in Brazil*, 19 October 2023, *Daily Maverick*, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-10-19-r70m-cocaine-seized-in-durban-harbour-months-after-cartel-diver-boarding-sa-flight-arrested-in-brazil/.
- 57 Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
- 58 See, for example, K Legg, *R100m coke found at sea*, 3 January 2014, *IOL*, www.iol.co.za/news/r100m-coke-found-at-sea-1628124.
- 59 T Makhetha, *Cape Town gang boss and associate found murdered nearly four months after kidnapping – sources*, *News24*, 16 October 2024, www.news24.com/news24/cape-town-gang-boss-and-associate-found-murdered-nearly-four-months-after-kidnapping-sources-20241016.

- 60 International Maritime Organization (IMO), *SOLAS Chapter V: Safety of navigation*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f0081ed915d74e33f3c6e/solas_v_on_safety_of_navigation.pdf; IMO, *Resolution A.1106(29): Revised guidelines for the onboard operational use of shipborne automatic identification systems (AIS)*, adopted 2 December 2015, [wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1106\(29\).pdf](http://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1106(29).pdf).
- 61 North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017; G Gauci, The legal fiction of a genuine link as a requirement for the grant of nationality to ships and humans: the triumph of formality over substance? *International and Comparative Law Review*, 2018, <https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10026.1/10449/Nationality%20of%20Ships%20and%20Humans%2005.09.2017.pdf?sequence=1>.
- 62 IMO, Resolution A.1192(33), *Urging member states and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the 'dark fleet' or 'shadow fleet'*, adopted 6 December 2023, [wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192\(33\).pdf](http://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192(33).pdf); North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017.
- 63 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 64 North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017.
- 65 G Gauci, The legal fiction of a genuine link as a requirement for the grant of nationality to ships and humans: the triumph of formality over substance? *International and Comparative Law Review*, 2018, <https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10026.1/10449/Nationality%20of%20Ships%20and%20Humans%2005.09.2017.pdf?sequence=1>.
- 66 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 67 IMO, Resolution A.1192(33), *Urging member states and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the 'dark fleet' or 'shadow fleet'*, adopted 6 December 2023, [wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192\(33\).pdf](http://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192(33).pdf); J Bastrup-Birk et al, *Next generation organized crime: systemic change and the evolving character of modern transnational organized crime*, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2023.
- 68 Financial Action Task Force, *Jurisdictions under increased monitoring*, 5 October 2024, www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/High-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/increased-monitoring-october-2024.html.
- 69 Interview, Financial Intelligence Analyst, Financial Intelligence Centre, Namibia.
- 70 See, for example, E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 71 North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017.
- 72 IMO, Resolution A.1192(33), *Urging member states and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the 'dark fleet' or 'shadow fleet'*, adopted 6 December 2023, [wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192\(33\).pdf](http://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/AssemblyDocuments/A.1192(33).pdf).
- 73 R Beckman, T Nguyen and J Ong Jie Hao, *The 2023 IMO Assembly Resolution enables states to challenge the 'dark fleet' that threatens the marine environment*, 18 March 2024, the National University of Singapore, <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/blogs/the-2023-imo-assembly-resolution-enables-states-to-challenge-the-dark-fleet-that-threatens-the-marine-environment/#:~:text=The%202023%20Resolution%20contains%20paragraphs,to%20avoid%20pirates%20and%20armed>.
- 74 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 75 Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online.
- 76 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 77 International Chamber of Commerce, *IMB piracy and armed robbery map 2024*, www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-map.
- 78 UN documents for UNOWAS (West Africa and the Sahel), S/PV.9355 *Briefing on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea*, 21 June 2023, www.securitycouncil-report.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9355.pdf.
- 79 ICC International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and armed robbery against ships: report for the period 1 January – 31 December, 2024*.
- 80 Interview, Tax and customs police officer, Angola.
- 81 Novo Jornal, *Assaltos em alto mar 'aliviam' pescadores de motores de seus barcos e peixe acabou de pescar*, 31 August 2021, www.novojornal.co.ao/sociedade/interior/assaltos-em-alto-mar-aliviam-pescadores-de-motores-dos-seus-barcos-e-peixe-acabado-de-pescar-104086.html.
- 82 LUSA, *Angolan fishermen report armed robberies on the high seas in Luanda*, 30 August 2021, www.lusa.pt/lusofonia/angola/article/2021-08-30/34224416/pescadores-angolanos-denunciam-assaltos-%C3%A0-m%C3%A3o-armada-em-alto-mar-em-luanda; C Bell, *Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: a cost analysis for coastal states*, Stable Seas, 2021.
- 83 Interview, Tax and customs police officer, Angola.
- 84 LUSA, *Angolan fishermen report armed robberies on the high seas in Luanda*, 30 August 2021, www.lusa.pt/lusofonia/angola/article/2021-08-30/34224416/pescadores-angolanos-denunciam-assaltos.

- %C3%A0-m%C3%A3o-armada-em-alto-mar-em-luanda; C Bell, *Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: a cost analysis for coastal states*, Stable Seas, 2021.
- 85 Interview, Tax and customs police officer, Angola.
 - 86 *Xinhau*, Angola seizes two vessels for smuggling fuel, illegal fishing, 12 March 2024, <https://english.news.cn/africa/20240312/04e9571429684d609d5a1fbf3129ce2d/c.html>.
 - 87 C Bell, *Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: a cost analysis for coastal states*, Stable Seas, 2021.
 - 88 P Manuel Campos, Angolan port infrastructure and the competitiveness in the Southern African Development Community, *European Journal of Economic and Financial Research*, 7(1), 2023.
 - 89 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa; E Duarte and M Correia de Barros (eds.), *Maritime security challenges in the South Atlantic*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019; also see UNODC, *World Drug Report 2023*, 2024.
 - 90 J Eligh, *A powder storm: the cocaine markets of East and southern Africa*, Vienna: GITOC, 2022; ENACT, 2023.
 - 91 UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023; UNODC, *World Drug Report 2025*, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2025.html>.
 - 92 ENACT, *TOC Index: Angola summary*, 2023; UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023; E Duarte and M Correia de Barros (eds.), *Maritime security challenges in the South Atlantic*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
 - 93 S Jespersen and M Verrier, Capitalising on criminality: a new Lusophone route through Mozambique, *Journal of Illicit Economies and Development*, 5(3), 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31389/jied.160>.
 - 94 Interview, Officer of the Angola Crime Investigation Service, Angola.
 - 95 See, for example, Statement by Honourable Kalumbi Shangula, Minister of Health and Social Services at the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 12–16 April 2021, Vienna, Austria; Interview, NamPol Senior representative, Online.
 - 96 ENACT, *TOC Index: Namibia summary*, 2023.
 - 97 Interview, NAMPOL senior representative, Online.
 - 98 UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023.
 - 99 Interview, Senior law enforcement officer from NAM-POL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
 - 100 Interview, NamPol Senior representative, Online.
 - 101 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
 - 102 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
 - 103 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; P Mensah, Strengthening maritime security for ocean sustainability within Namibia's green economy transition, *Academia Environmental Sciences and Sustainability* 2025:2, <https://doi.org/10.20935/AcadEnvSci7792>.
 - 104 UNODC, *World Drug Report 2023*, 2024.
 - 105 ENACT, *TOC Index: South Africa summary*, 2023.
 - 106 UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023.
 - 107 ENACT, *TOC Index: South Africa summary*, 2023.
 - 108 UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023. Also see, for example, Border Security, Police seize over R80 million worth of drugs in Durban harbour, *ProtectionWeb*, 4 December 2024, www.protectionweb.co.za/border-security/police-seize-over-r80-million-worth-of-drugs-in-durban-harbour/; N Nair, Cocaine worth R15 million found on vessel in Richards Bay port, *DefenceWeb*, 23 April 2024, www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/cocaine-worth-r15-million-found-on-vessel-in-richards-bay-port/?referrer=newsletter.
 - 109 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
 - 110 Ibid.
 - 111 N McCain, 60 years collective sentence for three bust in huge West Coast cocaine shipment, *News24*, 16 May 2021, www.news24.com/news24/60-years-collective-sentence-for-three-bust-in-huge-west-coast-cocaine-shipment-20210516.
 - 112 SAPS, *Illicit drug trade dealt heavy blow with seizure of drugs estimated at R252 million in Still Bay*, 2024, www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/msspeechdetail.php?nid=54529.
 - 113 UNODC, *Global report on cocaine 2023: local dynamics, global challenges*, United Nations Publications, 2023; S Jespersen and M Verrier, Capitalising on criminality: a new Lusophone route through Mozambique, *Journal of Illicit Economies and Development*, 5(3), 2024, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31389/jied.160>.
 - 114 Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa. Also see UNODC, *Colombia: Potential cocaine production increased by 53 per cent in 2023, according to new UNODC survey*, 18 October 2024, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2024/October/colombia_-_potential-cocaine-production-increased-by-53-per-cent-in-2023--according-to-new-unodc-survey.html.
 - 115 Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
 - 116 R Vernekar, Drugs smuggled into India from South Africa seized in Navi Mumbai, *Imphali Times*, 2 October 2022, www.imphaltimes.com/news/drugs-smuggled-into-india-from-south-africa-seized-in-navi-mumbai/; Legal Brief Africa, *SA and India co-operate over major drug bust*, 2025, <https://legalbrief.co.za/diary/legalbrief-africa-new/story/sa-and-india-co-operate-over-major-drug-bust-2/print/>.

- 117 J Eligh, *Illicit drug markets of Eastern and Southern Africa. Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs*, 2021a; J Eligh, *A synthetic age: the evolution of methamphetamine markets in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Geneva: GITOC, March 2021b.
- 118 United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control*, 2023.
- 119 See, for example, C Dolley, Ex-Bollywood actress off the hook in Indian drug bust case involving SA-linked trafficker Vicky Goswami, *Daily Maverick*, 1 September 2024, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-09-01-ex-bollywood-actress-off-hook-in-sa-linked-drug-bust/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=first_thing.
- 120 J Eligh, *A synthetic age: the evolution of methamphetamine markets in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Geneva: GITOC, March 2021b.
- 121 Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
- 122 C Dolley, Breaking (very) bad – more links between South Africa and global drug trafficking cartels exposed, 27 July 2024, *Daily Maverick*, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-07-27-breaking-very-bad-more-links-between-south-africa-and-global-drug-trafficking-cartels-exposed/#Echobox=1722105020; SAPS, Illicit drug trade dealt heavy blow with seizure of drugs estimated at R252 million in Still Bay, 2024, www.saps.gov.za/newsroom/msspeechdetail.php?nid=54529.
- 123 UNODC, *World Drug Report 2023*, 2024.
- 124 J Eligh, *Illicit drug markets of Eastern and Southern Africa. Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs*, 2021a.
- 125 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 126 United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2023. *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control*; J Eligh, *Illicit drug markets of Eastern and Southern Africa. Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs*, 2021a.
- 127 J Eligh, *A synthetic age: the evolution of methamphetamine markets in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Geneva: GITOC, March 2021b.
- 128 UNODC, *World Drug Report 2023*, 2024.
- 129 J Eligh, *Maritime-based drug trafficking in eastern and southern Africa*, Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs, 2023; J Eligh, *A synthetic age: the evolution of methamphetamine markets in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Geneva: GITOC, March 2021b.
- 130 P Matibe, Africom's high-ranking leaders engage Angola in strategic talks, *DefenceWeb*, 29 July 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africoms-high-ranking-leaders-engage-angola-in-strategic-talks/>.
- 131 C Dolley, Fatal fentanyl hits SA – Mexican cartels among drug trafficking gangs and money launderers 'active' in Mzansi, 16 November 2022, *Daily Maverick*, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-11-16-fatal-fentanyl-hits-sa-mexican-cartels-among-drug-trafficking-gangs-and-money-launderers-active-in-mzansi/>; United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2023. *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control*.
- 132 J Eligh, *Maritime-based drug trafficking in eastern and southern Africa*, Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs, 2023.
- 133 UNODC, *World Drug Report 2023*, 2024.
- 134 J Eligh, *Maritime-based drug trafficking in eastern and southern Africa*, Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs, 2023.
- 135 The Economist, *The tragedy of the high seas*, 22 February, 2014, <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2014/02/22/the-tragedy-of-the-high-seas>; D Willima, D Reva and T Walker, Does Africa gain from the WTO's landmark fishing subsidies deal?, *ISS*, 13 September, 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/does-africa-gain-from-the-wtos-landmark-fishing-subsidies-deal>.
- 136 IUU fishing is defined in the FAO's *International plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing*, 2001, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/dda4ea4e-5603-4984-b22b-ae6cacbf2d1c>.
- 137 Interview, Representative from National biodiversity Institute, Angola; Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>. Also see North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017.
- 138 Stop illegal Fishing, *Keeping illegally caught fish out of African ports*, 2019, https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PSM-SIF-2019-pamphlet_ENG_WEB.pdf.
- 139 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 140 North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group and INTERPOL, *Chasing red herrings: flags of convenience and the impact on fisheries crime law enforcement*, Oslo: NA-FIG, 2017.
- 141 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 142 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 143 D Hamilton, 2022. *Building a broader Atlantic community*, 2022, https://oceanrep.geomar.de/id/eprint/57665/1/FP_20221202_atlantic_community_hamilton.pdf.
- 144 CFFA, *Potential negotiations in sight for an EU-Angola fisheries agreement: How would existing joint ventures be treated?*, 15 May

- 2023, <https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/potential-negotiations-in-sight-for-an-eu-angola-fisheries-agreement-how-will-existing-joint-ventures-be-treated>; Ministério da Agricultura e Pescas, *Anuário Estatístico Das Pescas 2020*, 2021, https://www.ine.gov.ao/Arquivos/arquivosCarregados/Carregados/Publicacao_637867472944421600.pdf.
- 145 República de Angola, *Plano de Ordenamento do Espaço Marinho – POEM*, Decreto Presidencial no 88/23, de 30 de Março de 2023. Diário da República I Série – N.º 58, 2023, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ang215706.pdf>.
 - 146 Interview, Senior representative from Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura of Angola, Angola.
 - 147 UNCTAD, *Harnessing fishery resources for socio-economic development: lessons for Angola and Haiti*, Geneva: UNCTAD, 2022.
 - 148 Interview, Senior representative from Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura of Angola, Angola.
 - 149 Article 118 of Law on Biological and Aquatic Resources Law Nr. 6-A/04. Also see FAO, *Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles: Angola*, <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/facp/ago?lang=en>.
 - 150 CFFA, *Potential negotiations in sight for an EU-Angola fisheries agreement: How would existing joint ventures be treated?*, 15 May 2023, <https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/potential-negotiations-in-sight-for-an-eu-angola-fisheries-agreement-how-will-existing-joint-ventures-be-treated>.
 - 151 Interview, Senior representative from Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura of Angola, Angola; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
 - 152 J Mark, Angola loses hundreds of millions of dollars to illegal fishing, *VOA*, 6 July, 2023, <https://www.voaportugues.com/a/angola-perde-centenas-de-milh%C3%B5es-de-d%C3%B3lares-com-a-pesca-ilegal-/7169940.html>; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
 - 153 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
 - 154 UNCTAD, *Harnessing fishery resources for socio-economic development: lessons for Angola and Haiti*, Geneva: UNCTAD, 2022.
 - 155 ADF, *Chinese vessels decimating Angolan fish stocks, local fishermen say*, 14 May 2024, <https://adf-magazine.com/2024/05/chinese-vessels-decimating-angolan-fish-stocks-local-fishermen-say/>; CFFA, *Potential negotiations in sight for an EU-Angola fisheries agreement: How would existing joint ventures be treated?*, 15 May 2023, <https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/potential-negotiations-in-sight-for-an-eu-angola-fisheries-agreement-how-will-existing-joint-ventures-be-treated>.
 - 156 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
 - 157 Voice of Angola, *Corruption in Namibia's fishing sector involves Angolans*, 19 November 2019, <https://www.voaportugues.com/a/corrupt%C3%A7%C3%A3o-na-namibia-envolve-angolanos/5175331.html>.
 - 158 Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022; Also see B Chiripanhura and M Teweldemedhin, AGRODEP Working Paper 0021 *An analysis of the fishing industry in Namibia: the structure, performance, challenges, and prospects for growth and diversification*, 2016, 10.13140/RG.2.2.36280.57609.
 - 159 International Labour Organization (ILO), *Deep-dive research into decent work challenges and opportunities in Namibia's fishing supply chain*, 2022.
 - 160 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
 - 161 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
 - 162 ADF, *Namibia increases efforts to combat sea crime*, 2022, <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/11/namibia-increases-efforts-to-combat-sea-crime/>.
 - 163 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa. Also see S Ndara, *Namibia's MCS Measures to deter IUU Fishing*, Marrakech 27-28 Oct 2015; Fishing Industry News SA, *Namibia moves to strengthen protection of its maritime domain*, 2024, <https://www.fishingindustrynewssa.com/2024/01/24/namibia-moves-to-strengthen-protection-of-its-maritime-resources/>; O Tlhage, *Illegal fishing concerns Klazen*, *Namibian Sun*, 17 October 2023. Available: <https://www.namibiansun.com/fishing/illegal-fishing-concerns-klazen2023-10-17>.
 - 164 D Matthys, 'Capture of Angolan vessel a stern warning', *The Namibian*, 5 January, 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/capture-of-angolan-vessel-a-stern-warning/>; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
 - 165 C Bruwer, *Foreign fishing vessels plunder Namibia's horse mackerel*, ENACT, 3 June 2025, <https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/foreign-fishing-vessels-plunder-namibia-s-horse-mackerel>; Environmental Justice Foundation, *An EJF briefing prepared for the Government of Cameroon: an analysis of Cameroon's fishing and fishing-related fleet*, January 2023, <https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF-Briefing-Cameroon-fishing-fleet-2023-English.pdf>.
 - 166 Dryad Global, *Cameroon becomes a go-to country for foreign fishing vessels*, 4 August 2022, <https://channel16.dryadglobal.com/cameroon-becomes-a-go-to-country-for-foreign-fishing-vessels>.
 - 167 E P Martin, *As dark fleet sails into lax flags, more cracks emerge in shipping's international safety order*, 23 February 2023, <https://www.tradewindsnews.com/opinion/as-dark-fleet-sails-into-lax-flags-more-cracks-emerge-in-shipping-s-international-safety-order/2-1-1407776>.
 - 168 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online. Also see J Mark, *Benguela: Foreign trawlers still challenge the fight against illegal fishing*,

Novojornal, 2022, <https://novojornal.co.ao/sociedade/detalhe/benguela-arrastoes-estrangeiros-ainda-desafiam-combate-a-pesca-ilegal-defendido-pelo-pr-na-cimeira-dos-oceanos-30234.html>.

- 169 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online. Also see J Mark, Benguela: Foreign trawlers still challenge the fight against illegal fishing, *Novojornal*, 2022, <https://novojornal.co.ao/sociedade/detalhe/benguela-arrastoes-estrangeiros-ainda-desafiam-combate-a-pesca-ilegal-defendido-pelo-pr-na-cimeira-dos-oceanos-30234.html>.
- 170 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 171 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 172 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 173 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 174 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 175 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 176 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 177 Vessel Tracker. *Tutungeni*, <https://www.vesseltracker.com/en/Ships/Tutungeni-8607347.html>.
- 178 Ministerie van LNVN on X, 2020, <https://x.com/minlwn/status/1341760640789192708>; Stop Illegal Fishing, *SADC MCSCC's first incident case study demonstrates illegal fishing, labour abuse and hidden ownership*, 14 September 2023, <https://sadc-mcsc.org/news/sadc-mcscs-first-incident-case-study-demonstrates-illegal-fishing-labour-abuse-and-hidden-ownership/>.
- 179 ADF, *Namibia increases efforts to combat sea crime*, 2022, <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/11/namibia-increases-efforts-to-combat-sea-crime/>; Stop Illegal Fishing, *Illegal Fishing, Labour abuse and hidden ownership uncovered in Namibia*, 2023, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/INCIDENT-CASE-STUDY-NO.-1-ILLEGAL-FISHING-LABOUR-ABUSE-AND-HIDDEN-4.pdf>; Sea Shephard, *Namibia renews joint patrols, vessel busted for shark fins*, 7 September 2022, <https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/latest-news/namibia-shark-fins/>.
- 180 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 181 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 182 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 183 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 184 See, for example, ADF. 2022. *Human trafficking victims discovered on shadowy fishing vessels in Namibia*, 11 October, <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/10/human-trafficking-victims-discovered-on-shadowy-fishing-vessels-in-namibia/>.
- 185 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 186 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 187 DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023.
- 188 Nelson Mandela University, *SA legal expert appointed to SADC's top illegal fisheries control body*, 2024, <https://news.mandela.ac.za/News/SA-legal-expert-appointed-to-SADC%E2%80%99s-top-illegal-fi>; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 189 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 190 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 191 DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023; O Wright, S Louw, N Okes and A Breunig, *The online trade in high-value marine products from South Africa: a rapid assessment*, TRAFFIC, 2024.
- 192 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 193 Times Live, *The man who destroyed the West Coast rock lobster*, 2017, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-07-21-knock-on-door-and-handcuffs-in-future/>.
- 194 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 195 DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023.
- 196 N Okes, M Bürgener, S Moneron and J Rademeyer, *Empty Shells: an assessment of abalone poaching and trade from southern Africa*, TRAFFIC, 2018.
- 197 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 198 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
- 199 Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 200 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa. Also see E Smit, *Namibia becomes a smuggling route*, 20 July 2023, Available: http://the-eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/NAM_2023_07_Namibia%20becomes%20a%20smuggling%20route_Allgemeine%20Zeitung_Eng.pdf
- 201 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia. Also see Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibian Police Force, Office of the Prosecutor General, *National report: wildlife protection and law enforcement in Namibia for the year 2022*, 2022.
- 202 DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023.
- 203 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 204 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.

- 205 South African Government, *Environment, Forestry and Fisheries releases 2018/19 National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report*, 2019, <https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/environment-forestry-and-fisheries-releases-201819-national-environmental-0>;
- S Moneron and M Burgener, *South Africa's shark and ray trade dynamics*, TRAFFIC, 2022, Available: https://sharksunderattackcampaign.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SharkAttack_SharkTradeReport.pdf.
- 206 S Moneron and M Burgener, *South Africa's shark and ray trade dynamics*, TRAFFIC, 2022.
- 207 J Evans, Landmark De Hoop Marine Protected Area conviction sets precedent for environmental accountability. *Daily Maverick*, 3 December 2024, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-12-03-de-hoop-marine-protected-area-conviction/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=first_thing.
- 208 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 209 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 210 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 211 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 212 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 213 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 214 See, for example, Bowmans, *Prosecuting illegal fishing*, 15 January 2017, <https://bowmanslaw.com/insights/prosecuting-illegal-fishing/>.
- 215 Interview, Fisheries industry representative, South Africa.
- 216 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 217 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, South Africa.
- 218 Interview, Fisheries industry representative, South Africa.
- 219 MRAG Asia Pacific, *Port state measures before and after study*, 2023.
- 220 J Mark, Angola loses hundreds of millions of dollars to illegal fishing, VOA, 6 July, 2023; E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Senior representative from Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura of Angola, Angola.
- 221 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia; Namibian Chamber of Environment, *Why the Namibian moratorium on sardine fishing must continue*, 15 November 2021, <https://conservationnamibia.com/blog/b2021-sardine-fishing.php>.
- 222 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 223 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia; Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 224 IUCN, *Red List of Threatened Species*: *Perlemoen*, 2021, <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/78771094/78772518>.
- 225 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; IUCN, *Red list of threatened species: Cape Rock Lobster*, 2011, <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/170072/6725661>; DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023.
- 226 Interview, Senior representative from Serviço Nacional de Fiscalização Pesqueira e da Aquicultura of Angola, Angola.
- 227 J Mark, Angola loses hundreds of millions of dollars to illegal fishing, VOA, 6 July, 2023.
- 228 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 229 F Links and E Mbathera, *We are the ones that suffered the most: the human rights impacts of the Fishrot corruption scandal on Namibian fisheries workers*, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2024.
- 230 B Jordan, Horse mackerel 'experiment' off the menu, says court, *TimesLive*, 6 November 2016, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2016-11-06-horse-mackerel-experiment-off-the-menu-says-court/>; Interview, Fishing industry representative, South Africa.
- 231 Public Protector South Africa, *Docked vessels*, 2014, <https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/wp-content/uploads/migrated/Docked%20Vessels%20-%20TJP.pdf>.
- 232 ENACT, *Organized crime index: Angola summary*, 2023; Interview, Official from Angola Criminal Investigation Service, Angola.
- 233 Oladrao, *War weapons container without documents "stranded" in the Port of Luanda*, 10 October, 2024, <https://ladrao.info/2024/10/contentor-de-armas-de-guerra-sem-documentos-encalhado-no-porto-de-luanda/>.
- 234 Interview, Official from Angola Criminal Investigation Service, Angola.
- 235 South African Presidency, Executive Summary: Report of the Investigative Panel: Independent Investigation into the Lady R Cargo Ship in Simonstown December 2022, 2022, <https://thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/files/LadyR%20Report%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>; R Davies, Explainer: What we know about the explosive Russian ship scandal so far. *Daily Maverick*, 12 May 2023, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-05-12-explainer-what-we-know-about-the-explosive-russian-ship-scandal-so-far/>; M Walsh, The Breakdown of the US-South African Strategic Partnership. Foreign Policy Research Institute, 23 May 2023, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/05/the-breakdown-of-the-strategic-partnership-between-south-africa-and-the-united->

- states/; M Walsh, Investigation into the Alleged Russian Arms Shipment in South Africa Demands Patience. Howard University, 24 May, 2024, <https://cfas.howard.edu/articles/investigation-alleged-russian-arms-shipment-south-africa-demands-patience>.
- 236** World Ocean Review, *Oil – a dirty business in West Africa*, <https://worldoceanreview.com/en/wor-3/environment-and-law/coastal-state-responsibility/oil-a-dirty-business-in-west-africa/#:~:text=Although%20experts%20applaud%20Angola%20for,has%20played%20a%20greater%20role>.
- 237** Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022.
- 238** Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 239** Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 240** Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online.
- 241** NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report*, 2023.
- 242** See, for example, P Fabricius, SA joins global nail-biting over US elections while Agoa uncertainties persist, *Daily Maverick*, 2024, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-11-04-sa-joins-global-nail-biting-over-us-elections-while-agoa-uncertainties-persist/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=first_thing; NAMPORT, *Integrated Annual Report*, 2023; D Wingrin, Africom deepens Southern African engagement amid growing security worries, 1 August 2025, *DefenceWeb*, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africom-deepens-southern-african-engagement-amid-growing-security-worries/>.
- 243** J Richardson et al, *The fractured ocean: current challenges to maritime policy in the wider Atlantic*, Policy Center for the New South, 2012, <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/fractured-ocean-current-challenges-maritime-policy-wider-atlantic>.
- 244** P H Ngorora, Modern plunderers': Lobito Corridor plans bring fear, hesitation in DRC Will the US-supported project be a hub for regional trade, or a new gateway to plunder DR Congo's natural resources? *Aljazeera*, 2 January, 2025, [https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/1/2/modern-plunderers-lobito-corridor-plans-bring-fear-hesitation-in-drc#:~:text=Goma%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the,of%20the%20Congo%20\(DRC\)](https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/1/2/modern-plunderers-lobito-corridor-plans-bring-fear-hesitation-in-drc#:~:text=Goma%2C%20Democratic%20Republic%20of%20the,of%20the%20Congo%20(DRC)).
- 245** Southern African Times, *Angola halts illegal export of 3,000 tonnes of quartz to China*, 31 May, 2025, <https://southernafricantimes.com/angola-halts-illegal-export-of-3000-tonnes-of-quartz-to-china/>.
- 246** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibian Police Force, Office of the Prosecutor General, *National report: wildlife protection and law enforcement in Namibia for the year 2022*, 2022; K Nott, A Nott and D Newton, *A critical assessment of the economic and environmental sustainability of the Namibian Indigenous forest/ timber industry with reference to Zambia and Angola*, TRAFFIC, 2019; K Lukumbuzya and C Sianga, *Overview of the timber trade in East and Southern Africa: national perspectives and regional trade linkages*, TRAFFIC & WWF, 2017; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 247** Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia.
- 248** NAMPORT, *Southern Africa: Namibia launches first SADC anti-trafficking programme*, 2021, <https://www.namport.com.na/news/1012/Southern-Africa-Namibia-Launches-First-SADC-Anti-Trafficking-Programme/>.
- 249** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibian Police Force, Office of the Prosecutor General, *National report: wildlife protection and law enforcement in Namibia for the year 2022*, 2022.
- 250** Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia.
- 251** Ibid.
- 252** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibian Police Force, Office of the Prosecutor General, *National Report: Wildlife protection and law enforcement in Namibia for the year 2022*, 2022; Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia; A Huff, Curbing illegal timber trafficking in Namibia, 24 June 2024, *US Department of Agriculture*, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/apply/curbing-illegal-timber-trafficking-namibia>; K Nott, A Nott and D Newton, *A critical assessment of the economic and environmental sustainability of the Namibian indigenous forest/timber industry with reference to Zambia and Angola*, TRAFFIC, 2019; Monitoring and Support Project for the Global Illicit Flows Programme and Seaport Cooperation Programme, *Maritime threat assessment of illicit flows across the Atlantic*, 2022.
- 253** K Nott, A Nott and D Newton, *A critical assessment of the economic and environmental sustainability of the Namibian indigenous forest/timber industry with reference to Zambia and Angola*, TRAFFIC, 2019.
- 254** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 255** Avaliação nacional da implementação da arquitetura de proteção e segurança marítima da África central e a participação da sociedade civil e do sector privado em Angola, unpublished.
- 256** Interview, Director of Civil Society Organization, Angola. Also see US Department of State, 2023 Trafficking in persons report: Angola, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/angola>.
- 257** Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 258** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 259** Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 260** African Defence Forum, *Human Trafficking Victims Discovered on Shadowy Fishing Vessels in Namibia*, 11 October, 2022, <https://adf-magazine.com/2022/10/human-trafficking-victims-discovered-on-shadowy-fishing-vessels-in-namibia/>; A Hartman, *Nata Fishing cleared: vessels and rights restored*, 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/nata-fishing-cleared-vessels-and-rights-restored/>.

- 261** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 262** D Pinnock and M Marschke, The lawless oceans – forced labour on rust-bucket boats docking at Cape Town harbour, *Daily Maverick*, 1 November 2023, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-11-01-lawless-oceans-forced-labour-on-rust-bucket-boats-in-a-cruel-sea/>; ILO, *First fishing vessel detained under ILO Fishing Convention*, 17 July 2018, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/first-fishing-vessel-detained-under-ilo-fishing-convention>.
- 263** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 264** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 265** United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 2634 (2022) adopted by the Security Council at its 9050th meeting, on 31 May 2022*, <https://www.wcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Security/Documents/02634.pdf>. Also see, for example, Security Council Report, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/maritime-security/>; Security Council Report, *High Seas Crime Becoming More Sophisticated, Endangering Lives, International Security, Speakers Tell Security Council*, 5 February 2019, <https://press.un.org/en/2019/sc13691.doc.htm>.
- 266** FAO, *Agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing*, 2009, <https://faolex.fao.org/treaty/docs/tre000003E.pdf>.
- 267** SADC Atlantic, *The SADC MCSCC: working towards a common future*, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SADC-ATLANTIC-The-SADC-MCSCC-Working-towards-a-common-future-1.pdf>; Stop illegal Fishing. Keeping illegally caught fish out of African ports, 2019.
- 268** Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 269** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 270** Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 271** Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 272** DFFE, Consultation on the proposed Regulations relating to the entry of foreign fishing vessels into South African Waters, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202401/50009gon4256.pdf.
- 273** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; MRAG Asia Pacific, *Port state measures before and after study*, 2023.
- 274** Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 275** IMO, *ISPS Code, 2003*, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/SOLAS-XI-2%20ISPS%20Code.aspx>.
- 276** Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 277** LCA, *Angola Port Assessment*, <https://lca.logcluster.org/print-preview-current-section/863>.
- 278** IMO, *Resolution A.1192(33) adopted on 6 December 2023 (Agenda item 13) Urging Member States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions to prevent illegal operations in the maritime sector by the 'Dark Fleet' or 'Shadow Fleet'*, 2023. There is also the 2012 IMO Cape Town Agreement on the Safety of Fishing vessels which is not yet in effect due to insufficient ratifications.
- 279** IMO, FAL5/Circ.50 1 June 2022, *Guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the smuggling of wildlife on ships engaged in international maritime traffic*, 2022.
- 280** ILO, *Work in fishing Convention*, 2007 (No. 188), https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40americas/%40ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_914916.pdf.
- 281** African Union, *African charter on maritime security and safety and development in Africa (Lomé Charter)*, 2016, <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-maritime-security-and-safety-and-development-africa-lome-charter>.
- 282** M L Baker, Toward an African maritime economy—empowering the African Union to revolutionize the African maritime sector, *Naval War College Review* 64(2), 2011, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1531&context=nwc-review#:~:text=The%20ECCAS%20Maritime%20Safety%20and,interests%20in%20the%20maritime%20domain.&text=The%20draft%20offered%20an%20approach,AU%20or%20inter%2D%20national%20partners>; G Ingerstad and M Tham Lindell, *Studies in African security: challenges to peace and security in Central Africa: the role of ECCAS*, FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2015, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%205327>.
- 283** African Union, *AIMS*, 2014, <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/clearinghouse/sites/default/files/2050%20Africa%E2%80%99s%20Integrated%20Maritime%20%28AIM%29%20Strategy.pdf>.
- 284** For a detailed discussion on challenges, see, for example, *United Nations Security Council, 9355th meeting on peace and security in Africa*, 21 June 2023, New York, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_PV_9355.pdf.
- 285** Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC), the Regional Centre for Maritime Security of West Africa (CRESMAO) and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security of Central Africa (CRESMAC).
- 286** Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, *Yaoundé Code of Conduct maritime zones A & D workshop executive summary*, <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-12-MSS-Angola-Executive-Summary-EN.pdf>; T Barker, Enhancing maritime domain awareness: Obangame Express bolsters Africa's Yaoundé Code of Conduct, *American Navy*, 9 May 2024, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3770532/enhancing-maritime-domain-awareness-obangame-express-bolsters-africas-yaound-co/>.
- 287** Namibian Government, *Blue economy policy for Namibia*, 2022.
- 288** G Pramod, *Angola – country report, policing the open seas: global assessment of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance*, 2023, <https://iuriskintelligence.com/wp-content/>

uploads/2024/12/Angola-country-Report-Global-Fisheries-MCS-Report-2023.pdf.

- 289 P Kenyette, Angolan navy receives Ocean Eagle trimaran patrol boat from French CMN, *Military Africa*, November 29, 2022, https://www.military.africa/2022/11/angolan-navy-receives-ocean-eagle-trimaran-patrol-boat-from-french-cmn/#google_vignette; G Martin, CMN proceeding with work on Angolan BR71 Mk II corvettes, *DefenceWeb*, 17 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/cmn-proceeding-with-work-on-angolan-br71-mk-ii-corvettes/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 290 C Bell, *Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: a cost analysis for coastal states*, Stable Seas, 2021.
- 291 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; G Pramod, *Angola – country report, policing the open seas: global assessment of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance*, 2023, <https://iuriskintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Angola-country-Report-Global-Fisheries-MCS-Report-2023.pdf>.
- 292 International Trade Administration, *Angola country commercial guide, marine technologies (fisheries and sea ports)*, 2024, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/angola-marine-technologies-fisheries-and-sea-ports>; DefenceWeb, *Damen launches Ngola Kiluange fishery patrol vessel for Angola*, 6 February 2012, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/damen-launches-ngola-kiluange-fishery-patrol-vessel-for-angola/>.
- 293 G Pramod, *Angola – country report, policing the open seas: global assessment of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance*, 2023, <https://iuriskintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Angola-country-Report-Global-Fisheries-MCS-Report-2023.pdf>.
- 294 O Nkala, Angolan border police take delivery of three new patrol boats, *DefenceWeb*, 25 August 2017, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/angolan-border-police-take-delivery-of-three-new-patrol-boats/>.
- 295 A N Justinu, *An investigation into the effectiveness of maritime security in IUU fishing in Namibian waters: a case study of the Kunene river mouth*, Masters dissertation, University of Namibia, Windhoek, 2022.
- 296 P Matibe, Africom's senior envoys deepen US-Namibia partnership, *DefenceWeb*, 28 July 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africoms-senior-envoys-deepen-us-namibia-partnership/>.
- 297 A N Justinu, *An investigation into the effectiveness of maritime security in IUU fishing in Namibian waters: a case study of the Kunene river mouth*, Masters dissertation, University of Namibia, Windhoek, 2022.
- 298 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia. Also see P E Bergh, *Focus on MCS for fishery compliance: experiences from Namibia*, Technical Paper 6, Report of a regional workshop on fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 24 – 28 October 1999, <https://www.fao.org/4/x8468e/x8468e18.pdf>; A Hartman, Naval base proposed for Kunene River, *The Namibian*, 20 November 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/naval-base-proposed-for-kunene-river/>.
- 299 Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia; R O Iroanya and C B Simataa, *Illegal Fishing and Maritime Security: Historical and Contemporary Challenges in Namibia*, *Scientia Militaria*, 52(3), 2025, DOI 10.5787/52-3-1485.
- 300 Interview, Senior NamPol staff member, Online.
- 301 D Wingrin, SA Navy struggles to counter maritime threats amid severe underfunding, *DefenceWeb*, 7 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/editors-pick/sa-navy-struggles-to-counter-maritime-threats-amid-severe-underfunding/?referrer=newsletter>; Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa. Also see D Wingrin, Navy briefing highlights budget and procurement woes, *DefenceWeb*, 18 November 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/navy-briefing-highlights-budget-and-procurement-woes/?referrer=newsletter>; D Wingrin, SA Navy Admiral highlights need for funding and collaboration, *DefenceWeb*, 31 May 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/sa-navy-admiral-highlights-need-for-funding-and-collaboration/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 302 DefenceWeb, *SANDF fleet at 'all-time low' as the military 'sits helpless'*, 19 November 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sa-defence/sa-defence-sa-defence/sandf-fleet-at-all-time-low-as-the-military-sits-helpless/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 303 D Wingrin, Navy briefing highlights budget and procurement woes, *DefenceWeb*, 18 November 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/navy-briefing-highlights-budget-and-procurement-woes/?referrer=newsletter>; DefenceWeb, *Busy time ahead for Amatola*, 8 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/busy-time-ahead-for-amatola/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 304 Mi Chimoio & G Martin, South African Navy commissions second MMIPV and names third as SAS Adam Kok III, *DefenceWeb*, 29 April, 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/south-african-navy-commissions-second-mmipv-and-names-third-as-sas-adam-kok-iii/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 305 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 306 Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 307 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 308 Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 309 See, for example, D Wingrin, Navy briefing highlights budget and procurement woes, *DefenceWeb*, 18 November 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/navy-briefing-highlights-budget-and-procurement-woes/?referrer=newsletter>; K Helfrich, SA Navy frigate wraps two-month maritime protection tasking, *DefenceWeb*, 10 March, 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/sa-navy-frigate-wraps-two-month-maritime-protection-tasking/>.
- 310 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 311 ProtectionWeb, *BMA seeking boarding/reaction boats*, 13 November 2024, <https://www.protectionweb.co.za/tenders/bma-seeking-boarding->

reaction-boats/; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.

- 312** DefenceWeb, *Border Management Authority short on funds and personnel*, 3 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/security/border-security/border-management-authority-short-on-funds-and-personnel/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 313** Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa. These agencies include DOT, NPA, DFFE, SAPS, SSA, NICOC, DIRCO and the BMA.
- 314** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 315** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibian Police Force, Office of the Prosecutor General, *National Report: Wildlife Protection and Law Enforcement in Namibia for the Year 2022*, 2022.
- 316** South African Government, *Stakeholders' consultation: ratification of Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic*, 1965, as Amended, Government Gazette, 2023, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202306/48843gen1874.pdf#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20FAL%20Convention%20is,uniformity%20in%20formalities%20and%20any%20other%20procedures.&text=The%20FAL%20convention%20will%20bring%20about%20seamless,of%20arrival%2C%20stay%20and%20departure%20of%20ships.
- 317** IMO, *Single window for ship data exchange to become mandatory*, 23 May 2022, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/pages/FAL-46-amendments.aspx>.
- 318** Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
- 319** Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 320** Interview, NAMPORT staff member, Online.
- 321** Tenders On Time, *Supply and Delivery of Maritime Single Window*, Namibia, 2024, <https://www.tendersontime.com/tenders-details/supply-delivery-maritime-single-window-62f62ee/>; Southern Africa's Freight News, *Namport steering National Single Window project*, 19 May 2022, <https://www.freightnews.co.za/article/namport-steering-national-single-window-project>.
- 322** IMO, *Angola port gets Maritime Single Window*, 21 November 2023, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/pages/Angola-port-gets-Maritime-Single-Window-.aspx>.
- 323** Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 324** Parliamentary Monitoring Group, *SA National Maritime Security Strategy; DoD/Armscor Service Level Agreement Joint Standing Committee on Defence*, 10 November 2022, <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/35993/>.
- 325** Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; R O Iroanya and C B Simataa, *Illegal Fishing and Maritime Security: Historical and Contemporary Challenges in Namibia*, *Scientia Militaria*, 52(3), 2025, DOI 10.5787/52-3-1485.
- 326** Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 327** Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 328** P Matibe, Africom's senior envoys deepen US-Namibia partnership, *DefenceWeb*, 28 July 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africoms-senior-envoys-deepen-us-namibia-partnership/>.
- 329** P Matibe, Africom's high-ranking leaders engage Angola in strategic talks, *DefenceWeb*, 29 July 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africoms-high-ranking-leaders-engage-angola-in-strategic-talks/>.
- 330** P Matibe, Understanding US-Angola security cooperation and military partnership, *DefenceWeb*, 3 December, 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/joint/diplomacy-a-peace/understanding-us-angola-security-cooperation-and-military-partnership/?referrer=newsletter>; DefenceWeb, *USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams visiting Angola*, 13 August 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/uss-hershel-woody-williams-visiting-angola/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 331** Africa Defence Forum, *Angolan marines develop techniques to combat illicit maritime activities*, 24 March 2022, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/angolan-marines-develop-techniques-to-combat-illicit-maritime-activities/>; DefenceWeb, *USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams visiting Angola*, 13 August 2024.
- 332** Interview, Diplomatic Source, Angola.
- 333** A D Pereira, The South Atlantic, Southern Africa and South America: cooperation and development. *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations*, 2(4): 31-45, 2023; D Wingrin, Naval exercise Ibsamar VIII commences in South Africa, *DefenceWeb*, 9 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/naval-exercise-ibsamar-viii-commences-in-south-africa/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 334** DefenceWeb, *SA Navy needs to change and adapt quickly or become obsolete – Mkhonto*, 25 November 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/sa-navy-needs-to-change-and-adapt-quickly-or-become-obsolete-mkhonto/?referrer=newsletter>; G Martin, Indian, Brazilian, and Chinese warships heading to South Africa, *DefenceWeb*, 30 September, 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/indian-and-chinese-warships-heading-to-south-africa/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 335** P Matibe, Africom's senior envoys deepen US-Namibia partnership, *DefenceWeb*, 28 July 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africoms-senior-envoys-deepen-us-namibia-partnership/>.
- 336** P Matibe, Understanding US-Angola security cooperation and military partnership, *DefenceWeb*, 3 December, 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/joint/diplomacy-a-peace/understanding-us-angola-security-cooperation-and-military-partnership/?referrer=newsletter>; DefenceWeb, *USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams visiting Angola*, 13 August 2024; Interview, Senior Political Officer, EU Delegation in Angola, Angola.
- 337** European Commission, *Angola*, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/angola_en.
- 338** European Union External Action, *EU maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea: strategy and action*

plan, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/note_eu_gog_strategy.pdf.

- 339 E Duarte and M Correia de Barros (eds.), *Maritime security challenges in the South Atlantic*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019; N Helmy, Chinese military naval bases in Africa and US-Indian naval influence around the world, *Modern Diplomacy*, 31 July 2023, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/07/31/chinese-military-naval-bases-in-africa-and-us-indian-naval-influence-around-the-world/>; P Morcos, A Transatlantic approach to address growing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, *CSIS*, 1 February, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea>.
- 340 A D Pereira, The South Atlantic, Southern Africa and South America: cooperation and development. *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations*, 2(4): 31–45, 2023.
- 341 Global Fishing Watch, *Understanding fishing activity using AIS and VMS data*, <https://globalfishingwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Understanding-Fishing-Activity.pdf>; Global Fishing Watch, *What vessels are required to use AIS? What are global regulations and requirements for vessels to carry AIS?*, <https://globalfishingwatch.org/faqs/what-vessels-are-required-to-use-ais-what-are-global-regulations-and-requirements-for-vessels-to-carry-ais/>; Global Fishing Watch, *What is VMS?*, <https://globalfishingwatch.org/faqs/what-is-vms/>; Pew Charitable Trust, *Tracking fishing vessels around the globe*, 2017, https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2017/04/illegal_fishing_tracking_fishing_vessels_around_the_globe.pdf.
- 342 Prensa Latina, *Angola announces national maritime surveillance system*, 7 February 2024, <https://www.plenglish.com/news/2024/02/07/angola-announces-national-maritime-surveillance-system/>; Xinhau, *Angola's president inaugurates maritime monitoring center to safeguard EEZ interests*, 17 January 2024, <https://english.news.cn/20240117/c7adbe5b8ede41778f0d079d8ecd2693/c.html>.
- 343 D Wingrin, Africom deepens Southern African engagement amid growing security worries, *DefenceWeb*, 1 August 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/african-news/africom-deepens-southern-african-engagement-amid-growing-security-worries/>.
- 344 Telecom Namibia, *Telecom Namibia modernizes maritime safety with latest GMDSS system*, 10 September 2024, <https://www.telecom.na/media-centre/806-telecom-namibia-modernizes-maritime-safety-with-latest-gmdss-system>.
- 345 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 346 Interview, Senior representative, Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 347 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative, Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 348 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 349 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa; South African Government, *Comprehensive maritime transport policy (CMTP) for South Africa*, 2017, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201703/2017comprehensive-maritimetransportpolicya.pdf.
- 350 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 351 National OCIMS, *Integrated vessel tracking*, <https://ocims.environment.gov.za/IVT.html>.
- 352 South African Government, *Comprehensive maritime transport policy (CMTP) for South Africa*, 2017.
- 353 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 354 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 355 Interview, Senior representative, Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 356 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 357 Stop illegal Fishing, *Keeping illegally caught fish out of African ports*, 2019; B Chiripanhura and M Teweldemedhin, *AGRODEP working paper 0021: an analysis of the fishing industry in Namibia: the structure, performance, challenges, and prospects for growth and diversification*, 2016, 10.13140/RG.2.2.36280.57609.
- 358 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 359 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 360 SADC Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre, <https://sadcmtccc.org/>.
- 361 Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Stop illegal Fishing, *Keeping illegally caught fish out of African ports*, 2019.
- 362 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 363 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online. Also see Stop Illegal Fishing, *SADC Atlantic shows growing impact in Angola's actions to fight IUU fishing*, 30 October, 2024, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/news-articles/sadc-atlantic-shows-growing-impact-in-angolas-actions-to-fight-iuu-fishing/>.
- 364 SADC Atlantic, *The SADC MCSCC: working towards a common future*, 2023, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SADC-ATLANTIC-The-SADC-MCSCC-Working-towards-a-common-future-1.pdf>; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing; Stop illegal Fishing, *Keeping illegally caught fish out of African ports*, 2019.
- 365 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online. Also see, for example, I Okafor-Yarwood, *West Africa's coast was a haven for piracy and illegal fishing – how technology is changing the picture*, *The Conversation*, 6 March 2024, <https://theconversation.com/west-africas-coast-was-a-haven-for-piracy->

and-illegal-fishing-how-technology-is-changing-the-picture-222803.

- 366 CFFA, *Potential negotiations in sight for an EU-Angola fisheries agreement: How would existing joint ventures be treated?*, 15 May 2023, <https://www.cffacape.org/publications-blog/potential-negotiations-in-sight-for-an-eu-angola-fisheries-agreement-how-will-existing-joint-ventures-be-treated>; FAO. 2024. *Needs assessment workshop held in Angola to strengthen fight against IUU fishing*, 19 March 2024, <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/news-events/detail/en/c/1679606/>.
- 367 Global Fishing Watch, *Global Fishing Watch and Gulf of Guinea Regional Fisheries Commission forge partnership in fight against illegal fishing*, 5 June 2024, <https://globalfishingwatch.org/press-release/global-fishing-watch-and-gulf-of-guinea-regional-fisheries-commission-forge-partnership-in-fight-against-illegal-fishing/>.
- 368 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 369 J Muyamba, Fishing sector: Focussing on sustainable resources management, *New Era Live*, 15 May 2015, <https://neweralive.na/fishing-sector-focussing-on-sustainable-resources-management/>.
- 370 S Ndara, *Namibia's MCS Measures to deter IUU Fishing*, Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation between Arican States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean, Marrakech, 27-28 Oct 2015.
- 371 Section 5 MRA.
- 372 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 373 Namibian Government, *National plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing*, 2007, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/nam165163.pdf>.
- 374 G Pramod, *Namibia – country report in IUU Risk Intelligence global evaluation of fisheries monitoring control and surveillance in 84 countries*, 2018; Sections 4(3)(a) & (b) of the MRA.
- 375 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 376 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia. Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online. Also see R O Iroanya and C B Simataa, *Illegal Fishing and Maritime Security: Historical and Contemporary Challenges in Namibia*, *Scientia Militaria*, 52(3), 2025, DOI 10.5787/52-3-1485; P Mensah, *Strengthening maritime security for ocean sustainability within Namibia's green economy transition*, *Academia Environmental Sciences and Sustainability* 2025; 2, <https://doi.org/10.20935/AcadEnvSci7792>.
- 377 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 378 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 379 A Hartman, *Naval base proposed for Kunene River*, *The Namibian*, 20 November 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/naval-base-proposed-for-kunene-river/>.
- 380 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 381 Southern Africa's Freight News, *N\$1.5bn lost annually to illegal fishing in Namibia*, 29 November 2023, <https://www.freightnews.co.za/article/n15bn-lost-annually-illegal-fishing-namibia>.
- 382 MRAG Asia Pacific, *Port State Measures Before and After Study*, 2023.
- 383 A N Justinu, *An investigation into the effectiveness of maritime security in IUU fishing in Namibian waters: a case study of the Kunene river mouth*, Masters dissertation, University of Namibia, Windhoek, 2022; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 384 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 385 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 386 TV Warikandwa, *Fighting fisheries crimes in the fisheries industry: Practical training reflections of the efficacy of Namibia's fisheries law enforcement*, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2), 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2286043>; P Fabricius, *Namibia's Fishrot trial will test the scales of justice*, *ISS*, 18 February 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/namibias-fishrot-trial-will-test-the-scales-of-justice>.
- 387 See, for example, P Mensah, *Strengthening maritime security for ocean sustainability within Namibia's green economy transition*, *Academia Environmental Sciences and Sustainability* 2025; 2, <https://doi.org/10.20935/AcadEnvSci7792>.
- 388 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 389 D Matthys, 'Capture of Angolan vessel a stern warning', *The Namibian*, 5 January, 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/capture-of-angolan-vessel-a-stern-warning/>.
- 390 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024; MLRA Article 50 and Regulation 82; Also see CapMarine, *Fisheries Observers*, <https://capmarine.co.za/fisheries-observers/>; DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, 2023.
- 391 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 392 Stop Illegal Fishing, *Body worn cameras in action*, 2022, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/?s=madagascar>.
- 393 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa. Section 28 MLRA.
- 394 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 395 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 396 Ibid.
- 397 Stop Illegal Fishing, *Body worn cameras in action*, 2022, <https://stopillegalfishing.com/?s=madagascar>.
- 398 Interview, Fisheries industry representative, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa. Also see South African Embassy Den Haag, *Marine resources*, <https://zuidafrika.nl/trade-investment/ks-marine-resources/#:~:text=South%20Africa%20has%20four%20environmental,Sarah%20Baartman%20and%20Ruth%20First>.

- 399 Interview, Fisheries industry representative, South Africa.
- 400 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 401 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 402 DFFE, *Status of the South African marine fishery resources 2023*, Cape Town: DFFE.
- 403 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 404 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 405 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 406 DFFE, Regulations Relating to the Entry of Foreign Fishing Vessels into South African Waters, No. 5774, 24 January 2025, https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202501/51950gon5774.pdf.
- 407 Maritime Review, *Regulating foreign fishing vessels in South African waters*, 2024, [https://maritimereview.co.za/Articles/ArtMID/397/ArticleID/618/CategoryID/11/CategoryName/Marine-Law-Insurance/Regulating-foreign-fishing-vessels-in-South-African-waters;DFFE,MarineLivingResourcesAct,1998\(Actno.18of1998\):ConsultationontheproposedregulationsrelatingtotheentryofforeignfishingvesselsintoSouthAfricanwaters,GovernmentGazette,2025,https://18a66295-3a0f-41fb-a13d-9849edd3b2a3.usrfiles.com/ugd/18a662_20a3b01e891845e39ed865bdc36e375a.pdf;Interview,Seniorfisheriescontrolofficer,SouthAfrica](https://maritimereview.co.za/Articles/ArtMID/397/ArticleID/618/CategoryID/11/CategoryName/Marine-Law-Insurance/Regulating-foreign-fishing-vessels-in-South-African-waters;DFFE,MarineLivingResourcesAct,1998(Actno.18of1998):ConsultationontheproposedregulationsrelatingtotheentryofforeignfishingvesselsintoSouthAfricanwaters,GovernmentGazette,2025,https://18a66295-3a0f-41fb-a13d-9849edd3b2a3.usrfiles.com/ugd/18a662_20a3b01e891845e39ed865bdc36e375a.pdf;Interview,Seniorfisheriescontrolofficer,SouthAfrica).
- 408 SAMSA, *National small vessel draft regulations*, 2024, <https://www.samsa.org.za/DRAFT%20REGULATIONS/National%20Small%20Vessel%20Regulations,%202024.pdf>; Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 409 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 410 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 411 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 412 Interview, NAMPORT staff member, Online.
- 413 Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 414 E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 415 See, for example, P Isbell, *The rising strategic significance of the atlantic basin: an emerging 'pan-Atlanticism'*, 2023, www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2023-12/PP_17-23_Paul%20Isbell.pdf.
- 416 Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 417 See, for example, F Matthias and T Siman, Maritime regional security governance in the Atlantic: antagonisms, overlaps and cooperation, *Nação e Defesa*, 2023, 164, <https://revistas.rcaap.pt/nacao/article/view/32164>.
- 418 North Africa Post, *Speakers of African Atlantic states' parliaments praise Royal Atlantic Initiatives in Rabat Declaration*, 7 February 2025, <https://northafricapost.com/84167-speakers-of-african-atlantic-states-parliaments-praise-royal-atlantic-initiatives-in-rabat-declaration.html>; African Business, *3rd Ministerial meeting of the Atlantic African states process: adoption of the Rabat Declaration II*, 2023, <https://african.business/2023/07/apo-newsfeed/3rd-ministerial-meeting-of-the-atlantic-african-states-process-adoption-of-the-rabat-declaration-ii>.
- 419 US Department of State, *Atlantic cooperation*, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/atlantic-partnership>.
- 420 C Bruwer, *Cabinda to Cape Town: how crime-proof are Africa's Atlantic shores?*, ISS, 2024, <https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/cabinda-to-cape-town-how-crime-proof-are-africa-s-atlantic-shores>.
- 421 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 422 Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia.
- 423 Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 424 South African Government, *Comprehensive maritime transport policy (CMTP) for South Africa*, 2017.
- 425 Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia.
- 426 United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Ismael A. Gaspar Martins, *Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the UN, Open debate: piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea*, 25 April 2016, https://www.un.int/angola/fr/statements_speeches/sc-open-debate-piracy-and-armed-robbery-sea-gulf-guinea.
- 427 FAO, *Estratégia Nacional Para O Mar De Angola (ENMA) 2030*, 2022, <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/ang211637.pdf>.
- 428 Government of the Republic Of Namibia. 2022.
- 429 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 430 Department of Transport, *Annual report financial year 2022/2023*, 2023, https://www.transport.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Final_DoT_Consolidated_Annual_Report_2022_23_06112023_Signed.pdf; Also see F Vrey, South Africa is surrounded by sea but doesn't have a plan to protect it: three steps to get one, *The Conversation*, 20 September 2022, <https://theconversation.com/south-africa-is-surrounded-by-sea-but-doesnt-have-a-plan-to-protect-it-three-steps-to-get-one-190678>.
- 431 Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 432 Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 433 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 434 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.

- 435** M Lekunze, Maritime strategy in Africa: strategic flaws exposing Africa to vulnerabilities from food insecurity to external domination, *Third World Quarterly*, 43:12, 2852-2868, 2022, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2022.2110059.
- 436** Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; A; Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online.
- 437** E Witbooi, K-D Ali, MA Santosa et al, *Organised crime in the fisheries sector*, Washington: World Resources Institute, 2020, <https://oceanpanel.org/blue-papers/organised-crime-associated-fisheries>.
- 438** C Dolley, R200m cocaine theft from KZN Hawks office may tie police to global drug traffickers, *Daily Maverick*, 12 August 2025, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-08-12-suspicious-r200m-cocaine-theft-from-kzn-hawks-office-likely-links-police-to-global-drug-traffickers/>.
- 439** Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
- 440** Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 441** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 442** J Richardson et al, *The fractured ocean: current challenges to maritime policy in the wider Atlantic*, Policy Center for the New South, 2012.
- 443** Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 444** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 445** Ibid.
- 446** Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 447** Interview, Law enforcement officer from international law enforcement agency, South Africa.
- 448** DefenceWeb, *South African seas and skies "vulnerable"*, 23 May 2025, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sa-defence/sa-defence-sa-defence/south-african-seas-and-skies-vulnerable/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 449** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 450** Interview, NAMPORT staff member, Online.
- 451** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 452** South African Government, *Environment, Forestry and Fisheries releases 2018/19 National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report 2019*, 2019, <https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/environment-forestry-and-fisheries-releases-201819-national-environmental-0>.
- 453** Interview, Senior representative from Department of Transport, South Africa.
- 454** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 455** Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Financial Intelligence Analyst, Financial Intelligence Centre, Namibia.
- 456** Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 457** Interview, Senior investigator, Investigations and Intelligence Unit Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia.
- 458** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
- 459** Interview, NAMPORT staff member, Online.
- 460** Interview, Fisheries scientist, Namibia.
- 461** Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.; Senior law enforcement officer from NAMPOL Protected Resources Division, Namibia; Interview, Law enforcement officers from international law enforcement agency, South Africa.; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
- 462** Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia, Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 463** Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 464** Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 465** M Lekunze, Maritime strategy in Africa: strategic flaws exposing Africa to vulnerabilities from food insecurity to external domination, *Third World Quarterly*, 43:12, 2852-2868, 2022, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2022.2110059.
- 466** Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online.
- 467** Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa; Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 468** MRAG Asia Pacific, *Port state measures before and after study*, 2023, <https://www.researchgate>.

net/publication/374945817_Port_State_Measures_Before_and_After_Study.

- 469 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia; Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 470 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa
- 471 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior representative, Directorate of Maritime Affairs, Namibia; D Kouakou, Gulf of Guinea navies turn to drones for surveillance, *DefenceWeb*, 2 January 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/gulf-of-guinea-navies-turn-to-drones-for-surveillance/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 472 Interview, NAMPORT staff member, Online.
- 473 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa; Interview, Senior staff member, Stop Illegal Fishing, Online; Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
- 474 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 475 Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online.
- 476 Interview, Senior representative, South African Maritime Safety Authority, South Africa.
- 477 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa; Interview, NAMRA Customs and Excise staff member, Online.
- 478 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia.
- 479 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 480 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 481 D Wingrin, Calls for African solutions to African maritime security challenges, *DefenceWeb*, 16 October 2024, <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/calls-for-african-solutions-to-african-maritime-security-challenges/?referrer=newsletter>.
- 482 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 483 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa; Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 484 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 485 Interview, Naval representative and researcher, Namibia; Senior representative from UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, South Africa.
- 486 Kenyan Coast Guard Service, <http://kcg.go.ke/about-us/>.
- 487 D Hamilton, 2022. *Building a broader Atlantic community*, 2022.
- 488 Honourable Kathleen Ayensu, *Oceans and ocean regions governance: third colloquium*, University of Pretoria, in collaboration with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, 11–12 November 2024.
- 489 Kenyan Coast Guard Service, Twitter, 2025, <https://x.com/OfficialKCGS/status/1907459463432249853>.
- 490 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa.
- 491 Stop Illegal Fishing, *The United States Lacey Act: its application to fisheries and considerations for the potential adoption of Lacey-like provisions in the countries of the Western Indian Ocean*, 2016.
- 492 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 493 D Hamilton (ed.), *Dark networks: human security in the Atlantic Basin*, Centre for Transatlantic Relations SAIC, 2016; J Richardson et al, *The fractured ocean: current challenges to maritime policy in the wider Atlantic*, Policy Center for the New South, 2012; D Hamilton, 2022. *Building a broader Atlantic community*, 2022.
- 494 ACSS, Maritime safety and security: whole-of-africa *Maritime Dialogue – Clarifying the Maritime Security Architecture in Africa*, 2019, <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2019-05-MSS-Namibia-Program-Summary-EN.pdf>.
- 495 Interview, Law enforcement officer from international law enforcement agency, South Africa. Also see Trilateral Planning Cell, *About us*, <https://trilateralplanningcell.com/about-us/>.
- 496 Interview, Fisheries legal expert, Namibia.
- 497 UNODC, *Value chain analysis of the fisheries sector in South Africa*, 2024.
- 498 Interview, Senior law enforcement officer from NAM-POL Protected Resources Division, Namibia.
- 499 T Carnie, Interview, Fisheries legal expert, South Africa. See, for example, Concerns raised after China offers to fast-track SA fishing harbour plans, *Daily Maverick*, 23 July 2024, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-07-23-concerns-raised-after-china-offers-to-fast-track-sa-fishing-harbour-plans/>.
- 500 Interview, Senior fisheries control officer, South Africa.
- 501 Interview, NamPol Senior Representative, Online.
- 502 Interview, Law enforcement officers from international law enforcement agency, South Africa; Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 503 Interview, Wildlife trade expert, TRAFFIC, South Africa.
- 504 Interview, Former staff member, South African State Security Agency, South Africa.
- 505 Interview, Fishing industry representative, Namibia.
- 506 UNCTAD, *Harnessing fishery resources for socio-economic development: lessons for Angola and Haiti*, Geneva: UNCTAD, 2022.
- 507 Prof. Kwesi Aning Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre.
- 508 K El Aynaoui, *The Atlantic ocean: a new frontier for global cooperation and African growth*, Brookings Institute, 11 February 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-atlantic-ocean-a-new-frontier-for-global-cooperation-and-african-growth/>.
- 509 A Patalano, The new age of naval power, *TIME*, 5 March 2024, <https://time.com/6836406/naval-power-us-china-russia/>.

About the author

Dr Carina Bruwer is an ENACT Senior Researcher for Southern Africa at the Institute for Security Studies. Her research focus includes transnational organised crime, environmental crime, maritime security and international law.

About ENACT

ENACT builds knowledge and skills to enhance Africa's response to transnational organised crime. ENACT analyses how organised crime affects stability, governance, the rule of law and development in Africa, and works to mitigate its impact. ENACT is implemented by the ISS in partnership with INTERPOL and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Borges Nhamirre, ISS Research Consultant, for his contribution to the Angola sections of this paper.

ENACT is funded by the European Union (EU). This publication has been produced with the assistance of the EU.