

# West African countries urged to fight against piracy

By [Mohammed Awal](#)

5 Aug 2013

The Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Rear Admiral Geoffrey Mawuli Biekro has called for co-operation among Western African countries to effectively clamp down on threats posed by pirates along the Gulf of Guinea.

He made this plea at the Initial Planning Conference for Exercise 'Obangame Express 2014', which was organised by the Ghana Navy, in collaboration with Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) at the US Embassy in Accra.

Exercise Obangame Express is at-sea naval exercise aimed at enhancing interoperability of participating navies to deal effectively with piracy and other maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea.

About 50 participants from 14 countries and regional groupings attended the conference.

The CNS noted that reports from the International Maritime Bureau indicated that there was a rise in piracy incidents along the Gulf of Guinea in 2013; hence the need for effective measures to clamp it down before it gets out of hand.

These soaring phenomena, he observed, had led to economic losses in Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Ghana, thereby necessitating the cooperation of these countries through Obangame Express.

Biekro used the platform to urge the participants to learn from Nigeria and Benin's "Operation Prosperity", which helped the two countries to jointly combat piracy along their respective coast.

"I will like to see further cooperation not only in terms of operations but also the harmonisation of legal frameworks, doctrines and the sharing of information" he emphasised.

Rear Admiral Biekro also used the opportunity to express the Ghanaian Navy's gratitude to the United States Government for the immense contribution to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

On his part, Commodore John Koon, the US Naval Attaché further reiterated the US Governments supports for the exercise