

Welcome
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REFLECS₃ NEWS

A welcome from Joseph Bibi, Director Designate, REFLECS₃

Welcome to the first edition of REFLECS₃ News. Our work to continue supporting operational investigators and military partners to reduce the threat from Somali-based piracy continues with some excellent successes over the past few months.

We have continued the transition of the original RAPPICC concept towards a broader remit addressing other types of serious cross-border crime affecting the region; such as human trafficking, drugs smuggling, environmental crime and of course piracy.

We hope you find this issue both informative and interesting.

Joseph Bibi, Director Designate, REFLECS₃



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REFLECS₃. One Centre; Three missions

The REFLECS₃ is in the exciting process of transition from a purely piracy focused theme to a broader mission which focuses on enhanced maritime security in the region and building on our successful programme for counter-piracy, commencing a wider engagement with regional partners to help support the fight against transnational organised crime (TNOC).

This new mandate which was authorised by the multi-nation Steering Group, the independent body which provides strategic direction to the Centre, takes the form of three interlinked missions: A Transnational Organised Crime Unit, a Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre and a Local Capacity Building Coordination Group

TOCU

Tackling piracy and a range of other high-threat related regional priorities through collaborative working.

MTISC

Creating a maritime information-sharing centre to “increase domain awareness” and better streamline MARSEC activity

LCBCG

Enhance the coordination of delivery programmes for capacity building in Seychelles and ensure connectivity with programmes across the region

The Republic of Seychelles has been widely acknowledged as a leading entity in tackling the scourge of piracy and has the capability and commitment to deliver a comprehensive Centre such as this. Seychelles is also highly regarded in the East African and Indian Ocean communities for its excellent relationships in the region delivering a consistent programme of initiatives and reforms to enhance regional awareness and strategies to deal with significant threats. The REFLECS₃ building provides a turn-key solution for partners in the region to come together and tackle high-impact threat areas and deliver a sustainable programme to enhance regional security

At the very heart of the concept is the fusion of all three strands to provide, for the first time, not only a comprehensive overview of the threats facing the East African and Indian Ocean region but also building the important partnerships to work together via the TOCU to counter the threats. Supporting this the LCBCG will ensure that the investigators receive the necessary tools in terms of skills and equipment to do the job. All three elements will be under one mission and will enjoy the benefits of co-location in the building of important international delivery partners such as INTERPOL, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, EUNAVFOR as well as the planned deployment of East African and Indian Ocean colleagues. And this ensures the Centre has the capability to deliver the step-change necessary to tackle regional threats.

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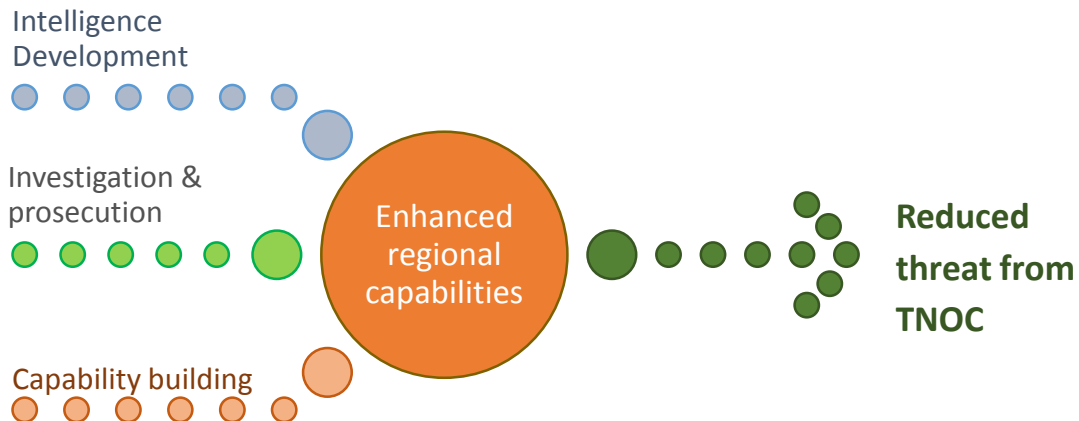
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Building sustainable capability

The REFLECS₃ continues to establish points of contact within each country who will be nominated and authorised by their respective competent authority to engage with the Centre. Their important role will be to facilitate mutual-liaison and operational support.

The Centre also provides an outreach capability where Centre officers will continue to regularly visit the partner countries and work closely with the single point of contacts and regional investigation teams to help progress serious complex cases involving trans-national organised crime. The Centre actively seeks to undertake this aspect of our work with existing partners in order to ensure the maximum benefit is delivered to regional investigators in a coordinated and collaborative manner.

The Centre brings unparalleled support to regional investigators by sharing our significant experience in tackling serious crime and by providing essential support to prosecutions in partner countries. The Centre works closely with regional partners to identify cross-cutting crimes (those committed in two or more countries) and will assist regional investigators to identify such links, to help develop opportunities for mutual co-operation and particularly to support regional investigators and prosecutors to successfully disrupt and prosecute such serious crimes. The Centre will also have the capability for reach-back into the national capabilities of those partners who have already committed officers into the Centre and through those channels, will be able to provide a wide range of essential support and assistance from member states to further enhance existing regional capabilities. The Centre operates on the following model



Intelligence development – assisting regional partners to develop intelligence relating to principal threats.

Investigation and prosecution – supporting investigators and prosecutors across the region to bring serious offenders to court and to confiscate assets gained from the proceeds of crime.

Capacity and capability building - through direct support during the intelligence gathering and investigation phases, provide vocational development to investigators and prosecutors engaged in tackling serious organised crime groups.

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Support to partners

One of the fundamental objectives of the original RAPPICC concept was to create an effective environment where partners could come together and support each other on a multi-national or bi-lateral basis. And this has been successfully transitioned into the new REFLECS₃. The Centre continues to provide state of the art facilities and resources to underpin regional efforts to enhance mutual cooperation in the fight against serious and organised transnational crime in the region.

We have continued to build effective support to partners operating in the region by facilitating meetings and conferences, and by providing the support services of the Centre to investigators based across the East African and Indian Ocean communities.

Of particular success has been our programme to provide direct support to investigators and the judiciary. The Centre has played a pivotal role building effective working relationships between military partners and law enforcement and judiciary colleagues helping both sides to understand better the differing missions each has and particularly, assisting both sides to improve and streamline the collection, transfer and presentation of evidence collected by the military for presentation in a civilian Court. We also provide strong support to the East African Judges and Magistrates Association helping such partners to enhance their vital role in tackling serious and organised transnational crime impacting on the region.



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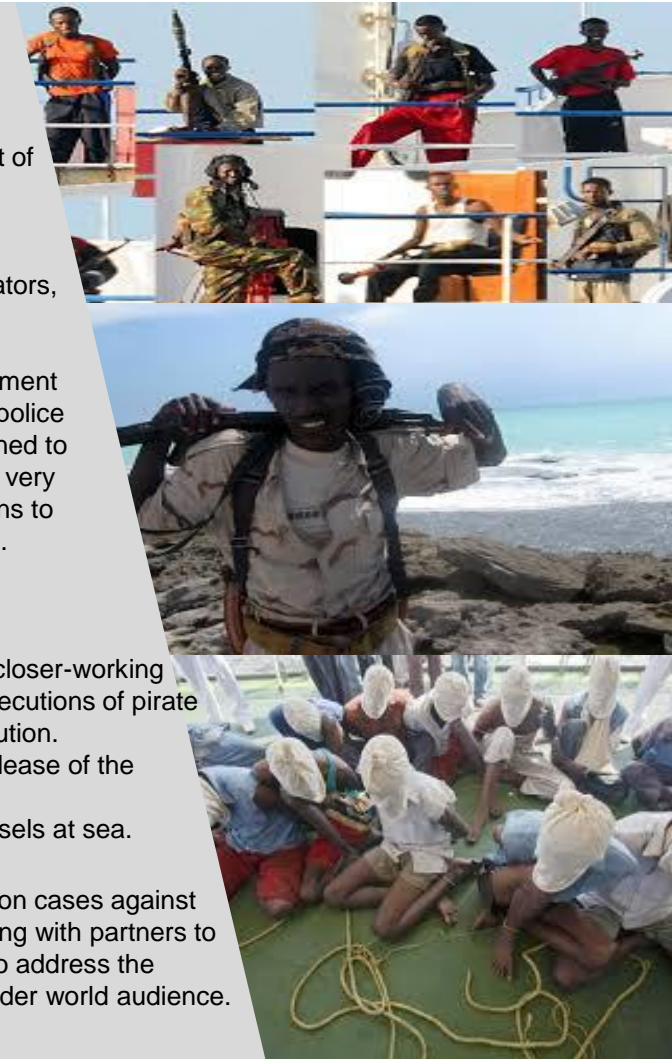
An often heard comment in the news and on the internet is the drop in pirate attacks on vessels in the Indian Ocean and whether this signifies that the threat of piracy from Somali organised crime groups is over. Certainly the exceptional efforts of the combined governmental, military and law enforcement partners operating on an unprecedented multi-lateral basis has had a dramatic effect on disrupting and prosecuting these crime groups. And the fall in successful attacks is strong testimony to that collaboration. But whilst there has been some welcome developments such as the arrest of Mohammed Abdi Hasssan aka “Afweyne” in Belgium and the conviction of others in the United States and elsewhere, the international spotlight has to remain on those facilitators, financiers and leaders who for so long have profited from this particularly violent and distressing crime.

Mounting successful prosecutions against individuals based in the Horn of Africa remains very challenging. Particularly the restraints on current law enforcement capabilities within the region and the structural gap which exists with regard to the all-important treaties and frameworks necessary to conduct international police to police enquiries. To overcome some of these challenges, the law enforcement community has developed a very effective collaboration mechanism designed to focus support on those countries who have the best opportunity to mount a successful prosecution rather than acting in silos an approach which has proven very successful to-date. But those structural challenges remain and the Centre continues to work with a range of partners to create and deliver innovative solutions to some of these issues which in turn enhances the abilities of law enforcement agencies around the world to “reach out and touch” these high-threat criminals.

In the furtherance of this, there remain three key missions which the REFLECS3 is closely engaged in;

- Seychelles Piracy Cell supported by the REFLECS3 has joined with Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar in an INTERPOL initiative called Hameli to catalyse closer-working between regional partners. The Hameli programme is focused on gathering evidence available in the region and joining forces to mount and pursue prosecutions of pirate groups. The programme also works in very close conjunction with other key international partners supporting their efforts to achieve a successful prosecution.
- Project Orion is another example of a Seychelles-led initiative to support the efforts of those partners engaged in the humanitarian efforts to obtain the release of the remaining hostages in Somalia.
- Supporting military partners to enable them to exercise effective domain awareness and to enhance their capabilities to identify and interdict suspect vessels at sea.

These three pieces of activity remain very important to the focus of the Centre as we move forward through 2014. Supporting our partners to build prosecution cases against those individuals who have profited from piracy is one of the core elements towards building sustainable law enforcement capability in the region. And working with partners to support their efforts to attain the release of the remaining hostages who sadly, for a variety of reasons, remain incarcerated in Somali is a our commitment to address the significant distress not only for them but their families and loved-ones and is of significant importance not only to the Government of Seychelles but to the wider world audience.



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Tackling transnational organised crime

A number of influential studies have identified the need for a coordinated response to tackling TNOC in East Africa and Indian Ocean states. In particular the UN 2009 Report highlighted a number of high-threat areas of activity impacting upon the region:

- human trafficking, migrant smuggling, cyber-crime,
- illicit drugs, maritime piracy, threats to environmental resources through poaching, illegal fishing etc.
- weapons-smuggling and counterfeit goods.

In Nairobi in 2010 the regional heads of police, INTERPOL and UNODC **“expressed unanimous desire to strengthen coordination... and agreed that the creation of transnational organised crime units (TOCU) is an important step in achieving this”**

The creation of an East Africa TOCU within the REFLECS₃ brings the exciting prospect of strengthening the regional resistance to serious transnational organised crime by building both the national and international capacity to track crime and criminals and help countries to respond to the problem. To implement this the REFLECS₃ will transition to the following model:

- The Centre will continue its role of creating sustainable regional capacity and capability to undermine serious organised crime group leaders and facilitators who are engaged in transnational organised crime threats which threaten the stability of the region.
- The Centre will also bring the support of experienced investigators to assist Senior Investigating Officers in the region to re-examine current cross border investigations.
- Complementing this, the Centre will assist in providing expertise in investigative techniques including fingerprints, DNA, telephone analysis and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) development along with a wide range of cutting edge law enforcement techniques; all designed to give investigators better options.

These objectives delivered in conjunction with partner agencies will open new lines of enquiry to assist the Senior Investigating Officer to secure a conviction.

“With transnational threats, States have no choice but to work together. We are all affected – whether as countries of supply, trafficking or demand. Therefore we have a shared responsibility to act.” - United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

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In the spotlight: REFLECS₃ hosts EAPCCO regional meetings



The Directors of Criminal Investigation Departments (CID) from the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (EAPCCO) met for a three-day workshop at the REFLECS₃ Centre to discuss counter-terrorism strategies.

The conference was officially opened by Seychelles Police Commissioner Ernest Quatre who is the current Chair of EAPCCO having taken over the role from Inspector-General Kalihaye who hails from Uganda.

Many countries in the region are currently facing threats from maritime piracy and other high threat crimes and the meeting focused very clearly on strengthening the already good relationships between the regional CID teams. The discussions focused on the sharing of information along with improving crime scene management and related training needs.

Delegates from the EAPCCO Permanent Coordinate Committees (PCC), which represent legal, training and planning, gender and IT work streams attended a workshop held over two days at REFLECS₃. The objective of the workshop was to help enhance the progress in delivering a sustainable strategic framework and to set common goals which will assist to combat transnational and other types of crime

Present at the official opening ceremony were EAPCCO chairperson and local police commissioner Ernest Quatre, PCC's outgoing chairperson Grace Akullo, head of Interpol's regional bureau in Nairobi, Kenya, Ebers Dierdrich from the German embassy in Nairobi, Andreas Andreou and Françoise Dorcier from Interpol Lyon France and delegates from EAPCCO member state countries.

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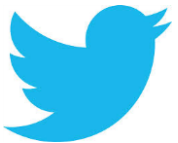
We want to hear your feedback about the content in REFLECS₃ News.

If there is anything you would like to see more of then email Sandra.toepke@rappicc.sc and we will get in touch.

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