

UAE donates patrol craft to Seychelles Coast Guard

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The Seychelles Coast Guard's counter-piracy capabilities have received a significant boost with the addition of five patrol craft donated by the [United Arab Emirates \(UAE\)](#) Naval Forces.

The gift of two 30 m Rodman 101 craft and three 7 m fast response boats effectively doubles the strength of the coast guard's patrol flotilla, enhancing its ability to tackle piracy and protect sovereign fish stocks and mineral rights over some 1.3 million km² of the Indian Ocean.

The craft were delivered to [Seychelles](#) from Dubai aboard the cargo ship *MV Beluga Intonation* on 13 December 2010. Following sea trials and crew training, also provided by the UAE Naval Forces, the craft were formally handed over to the coastguard on 5 January 2011.

Displacing 63.6 tons and with a maximum speed of about 30 kt, the 30 m craft were acquired by the [UAE](#) navy circa 2005 and have been renamed *Le Vigilant* (P31) and *La Flèche* (P32) by the coastguard. They are armed with machine guns.

The 7 m response boats - two of which are Seaspray rigid-hull inflatables - can carry seven personnel and also have a maximum speed of about 30 kt.

The donation is one component of a [UAE](#) security assistance programme for the [Seychelles](#) that includes the construction of a new coastguard base at Ile Perseverance and a chain of coastal radar stations valued at USD15 million. The two nations signed a memorandum of understanding on defence co-operation in December 2009.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Seychelles President James Michel - who is also Commander in Chief of the Seychelles Peoples Defence Force (SPDF) - said: "We are deeply grateful for this gesture and we note its importance as our fight against piracy is an immediate concern, which requires swift action and concrete support from the international community."

The UK donated an ex-Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) 14.3 m Tyne-class self-righting lifeboat, the *Baltic Exchange 2*, in July 2010 after a request for assistance from the [Seychelles](#) government. Commissioned into the coastguard as the *Fortune*, it conducts short-range counter-piracy patrols in the inner islands, as well as search-and-rescue and fisheries enforcement operations.

Fortune has a maximum speed of 16 kt, a range of 240 n miles and a crew of seven. Acquired from the RNLI by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, it was transported to Victoria by the UK Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship *RFA Diligence*.

In 2010 the SPDF air wing, Tazar commando unit and the coastguard stepped up the [Seychelles'](#) counter-piracy effort. Notably, in March and November, SPDF forces rescued the crews of fishing vessels that had been seized by Somali pirates. The coastguard's Sirius-class patrol vessel *Topaz* participated in the arrests using intelligence from coalition and Indian naval forces operating in the region.



The Rodman-built 30 m patrol craft have been renamed *Le Vigilant* (P31) and *La Flèche* (P32) for service in the [Seychelles Coast Guard](#). (Office of the President, [Seychelles](#))
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The UAE has also donated three 7 m response boats, two of which are Seaspray rigid-hull inflatables. (Office of the President, [Seychelles](#))
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