

## The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC), in partnership with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), launches Operation "KUTA" to reinforce the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) in the SRFC zone

Within the framework of the implementation of the PESCAO program "Improving Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa", the CSRP, in partnership with EFCA, organized the fourth joint sub regional fisheries surveillance operation from May 6 to 14, 2019 of Year 1 of the PESCAO program code named "Operation KUTA".

Operation "KUTA", funded by the European Union, took place in the EEZs of Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone whose national patrol boats were supported by the high-sea patrol boat "NP GUARDIAO" of Cabo Verde chartered by the SRFC. This activity aimed at strengthening sub-regional operations cooperation to detect fishing activities that do not comply with conservation and management regulations that are in force in the Member States of the SRFC.

The operation was coordinated by a Sub Regional Coordinating Post in Freetown, Sierra Leone, at the Joint Maritime Committee office. The said coordinating post, chaired by the Head of the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Department of Fisheries Management of the SRFC, was manned by the operations officers of the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance units of Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Sierra Leone and an expert from EFCA. The coordinating post had a visit from the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of Sierra Leone and the Ambassador of the European Union in Sierra Leone.

EFCA supported operation "KUTA" with Integrated Maritime Services (IMS) and Copernicus imagery, which allowed the coordinating post to have permanent and important information on fishing activities. The EFCA expert also boarded the Sierra Leone "SORIE IBRAHIM KOROMA".

In addition, the CSRP had benefited from the support of a maritime patrol aircraft of the French Navy based in Dakar which had to identify 52 vessels including the FU YUAN YU 217 trawler flying the Chinese flag, fishing without authorization in the EEZ of Guinea Bissau. The information was brought to the attention of the national authority of this country and of the other member states of the SRFC for the purpose of taking appropriate measures, including the application of the provisions of the 2009 Agreement to FAO on Port State Measures.

The naval means engaged in operation " KUTA" inspected 55 vessels and reported 03 canoes and 3 advanced artisanal fishing vessels for which the competent national authorities opened an investigation.

In addition, the sub regional coordinating post, after analyzing the information received from the Integrated Maritime Services and Copernicus images from EFCA as well as VMS data from Member States, had to alert all SRFC Member States to the situation of refrigerated vessels; likely to engage in illegal fishing activities in the West African region.

The SRFC and EFCA congratulated their collaboration and partnership with Member States and with France in carrying out operation "KUTA" which has sent a strong message to IUU fishing warning them that illegal fishing no longer has a place in the subregion.



**Photo 1** The high seas patrol vessel "NP GUARDIAO" of Cabo Verde chartered by the CSRP for operation "KUTA". Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019.



**Photo 2.** The Chief of the DSCSA interprets, along with the members of the PSRCO, the coordinates projected on the screen of the videoconference. Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019.



**Photo 3.** Family photo with his Excellency the EU Ambassador in Sierra Leone. Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019.



**Photo 4.** The EFCA expert embarked on the launch of Sierra Leone's "SORIE IBRAHIM KOROMA". Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019



**Photo 5.** The imagery of Copernicus allows the PSRCO to have important information on fishing activities. Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019.



**Photo 6.** The CSRP has benefited from the support of the maritime patrol aircraft of the French Navy based in Dakar as part of operation "KUTA". Snapshot, CSRP, may 2019.