



Beyond Wagner: Russia's Military Engagement in Africa in the 2020s

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Sammanfattning

RYSSLANDS ENGAGEMANG I AFRIKA har under 2020-talet expanderat, utvecklats och fördjupats, i synnerhet efter den fullskaliga invasionen av Ukraina i februari 2022. Kontinenten har blivit en allt viktigare arena i Rysslands konkurrens med väst; en arena som används för att både säkra stöd för ryska ståndpunkter och för att undergräva europeiskt och amerikanskt inflytande. Under denna period har Wagnergruppen och senare Afrikakåren dominerat bilden av Rysslands militära verksamhet i Afrika, vilket har skapat en uppfattning om att engagemanget främst är opportunistiskt. Rysslands militära närvaro sträcker sig dock långt bortom dessa initiativ. Många av de ryska aktiviteterna återspeglar snarare bredare strategiska intressen som kan komma att spela en ännu större roll i en alltmer fragmenterad världsordning.

Nyckelord: Rysslands relation till Afrika, Afrikakåren, Wagnergruppen, ryska flottan, geopolitik, Sahelregionen, vapenexport, paramilitära styrkor

Summary

RUSSIA'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA has expanded, evolved, and deepened in the 2020s, particularly following the launch of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The continent constitutes an increasingly important arena in Russia's competition with the West, serving both to secure support for Russian positions and to undermine European and American influence. During this time, the Wagner Group and later the Africa Corps have dominated attention surrounding Russia's military activities in Africa, contributing to portrayals of its engagement on the continent as primarily opportunistic. However, Russia's military presence extends far beyond these initiatives, and many of its activities reflect broader strategic interests that may grow even more important in a more fragmented world order.

Keywords: Russia–Africa relations, Africa Corps, Wagner Group, Russian navy, geopolitics, Sahel region, arms exports, paramilitary forces

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1. Introduction

ONLY FOCUSING ON RUSSIA'S paramilitary engagement in Africa, not least on the Wagner Group, risks distorting our understanding of Russia's policy towards this continent. It will lead to the wrong conclusions about Russia's strategic goals and long-term plans for engagement in the region. The Wagner Group and its successor, the Africa Corps, must instead be analysed in conjunction with Russia's other military and security-related activities.

After largely retreating from Africa following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia gradually re-engaged with the continent in the early twenty-first century. This engagement expanded during the 2010s and has further deepened and evolved in the 2020s, particularly following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. This is evident in the security and military domain, where Russia's renewed engagement on the continent has attracted growing attention from Western policymakers and analysts, reflecting an increasing recognition that Africa has become an important arena in Russia's broader strategic competition with the West.

In the early 2020s, Russia's military engagement in Africa was often described as operating along two tracks: one overt and closely linked to official state institutions and state-backed cooperation, and one more covert in which prominent roles were played by politically connected businessmen and semi-state actors, including private military companies (PMCs).¹ This dimension has been manifested primarily through the activities of the Wagner Group, which has been present in Africa since 2017. Following the death of the Wagner Group's founder Yevgeny Prigozhin in August 2023, shortly after his failed mutiny against Moscow, a gradual transition began towards the new state-backed paramilitary entity, the Africa Corps. Unlike its predecessor, the Africa Corps operates openly under the authority of the Russian Ministry of Defence and military intelligence (GRU), although it remains outside Russia's regular armed forces.² This marked a shift from a largely unofficial mode of engagement to a more formalised one. Consequently, the traditional overt/covert distinction has become less accurate. At the same time, important

differences remain between more conventional military engagement and the paramilitary-security-oriented activities associated with the Africa Corps, even though the two often overlap.

A growing body of literature examines Russia's return to Africa during the late 2010s and early 2020s. Much of the recent literature, however, has focused on Wagner, and, more recently, the Africa Corps. Russia's more conventional military engagement, particularly its growing naval activity, as well as the interaction between these dimensions, has received comparatively less attention. At the same time, an excessive focus on the paramilitary dimension risks creating the misleading impression that the opportunism often associated with this dimension precludes, rather than complements, a broader strategic approach to Africa.

1.1 Aim and research question

Given Russia's evolving strategic posture and the growing challenge it poses to the West, understanding the role Africa plays in the country's military and foreign policy has become increasingly important. The purpose of this report is therefore to contribute to a better understanding of how Russia's military role in Africa is evolving during the 2020s and how the continent figures in its foreign and security policy. Examining these developments is particularly important in light of the intensifying confrontation between Russia and the West, as well as major changes in the country's military and security posture following the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin and the subsequent restructuring of its paramilitary presence in Africa.

Consequently, the main research question guiding this report is as follows: *How has Russia's military engagement in Africa evolved during the 2020s, and how does this engagement serve Russia's broader strategic objectives in the region?*

To answer this question, the report analyses Russia's military and security presence in Africa as an integrated phenomenon, examining both its more conventional

1 Bonnier, Evelina and Hedenskog, Jakob. *The United States and Russia in Africa*. Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, December 2020, p. 43.

2 Officially renamed the Glavnoye Upravleniye (GU), but still most often referred to by its former name, the Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye (GRU).

military and paramilitary-security dimensions, as well as the ways in which these dimensions interact and diverge. Particular attention is paid to the naval domain, which provides Russia with one of its principal means of maintaining a conventional military presence and projecting power beyond its immediate periphery, yet has received comparatively limited attention in the existing literature about Russia in Africa. To guide the analysis, the following sub-questions are addressed:

- What strategic objectives does Russia pursue through military cooperation and military presence in Africa?
- Which African states have entered into military-security cooperation agreements with Russia?
- In which African states has Russia engaged in naval activities, and how has the nature and extent of this engagement evolved during the 2020s?
- To which African states does Russia export arms, and how have patterns of Russian arms exports to Africa changed during the 2020s?
- In which African states is the Africa Corps active, and what role does its presence play in advancing Russia's interests?

1.2 Method and delimitations

This study combines compiled data on Russian arms trade, military memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and other military-security cooperation agreements, naval visits, and basing with data on the presence of Wagner and the Africa Corps on the continent. The datasets build on official data from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), as well as on the author's own dataset of naval visits, compiled from news sources, official websites, and press releases. A more detailed description of the selection criteria and limitations can be found in the appendix, together with the full list of identified naval visits, MoUs, and other agreements. The study combines earlier FOI and other research on Russia's presence on the continent with expertise on the

individual African countries and their reasons for inviting, tolerating, or wanting to exclude Russian influence.

This report is deliberately concise, with the aim of providing an accessible overview of the different dimensions of Russia's military engagement in Africa. As reflected in the aim and research questions, the analysis focuses primarily on developments since the beginning of the 2020s. Where relevant, historical context is provided, together with broader comparisons with earlier periods. It should be noted that Russian engagement in Africa extends well beyond the military-security domain, encompassing areas such as trade, information operations, and energy cooperation, which often overlap and reinforce one another. This report, however, focuses specifically on the military-security dimension. Other dimensions of Russia's engagement in Africa are therefore only discussed insofar as they are necessary for understanding the study's primary focus.

Two important dimensions that fall outside the scope of this report are the interactions between different aspects of Russia's engagement, including the diplomatic, cultural, and information influence activities that Russia invests heavily in, particularly in states where the Africa Corps is present, and how these initiatives are perceived by local populations. While a growing body of literature has examined such dynamics, future research is needed on how different Russian actors interact and reinforce one another, particularly regarding the military dimensions discussed here, as well as how these engagements shape local perceptions of Russia.

Geographically, the analysis covers both North and sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, Russia's strongest relationships on the continent have been concentrated in North Africa, primarily Algeria, Egypt, and Libya, as well as among former Soviet-aligned partners elsewhere in Africa, such as Ethiopia, South Africa, and Uganda. In recent years, however, the Sahel and parts of Central Africa have emerged as increasingly important arenas for Russian military and paramilitary engagement, alongside a renewed strategic interest in Sudan and the Red Sea. Finally, the report focuses primarily on Russian activities and therefore devotes less attention to the preferences and agency of individual African states or to explaining variation in Russia's ability to develop security relationships across the region. These questions are nevertheless important for understanding the evolution of Russia's regional engagement and constitute a valuable avenue for future research.

1.3 Structure of the report

The structure of the study follows the logic of the five sub-questions. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 examines Russia's strategic objectives in Africa. In addition to discussing Russia's broader objectives on the continent, particular attention is paid to the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea for Russian naval strategy. Chapter 3 maps Russia's military-security cooperation agreements in Africa, with particular emphasis on developments since 2020. Chapter

4 examines Russia's naval activities around the continent, focusing on agreements facilitating simplified port entry, port visits, and naval exercises in African waters. Chapter 5 examines arms exports to Africa. Chapter 6 analyses Russia's more opportunistic paramilitary engagement in Africa through the activities of the Africa Corps. While each chapter discusses the interconnectedness between different forms of military engagement where relevant, the concluding chapter, Chapter 7, provides a more comprehensive discussion of these linkages and considers the future trajectory of Russia's military presence in Africa.

2. Russia's strategic objectives in Africa

RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN Africa should be understood in the context of broader Russian foreign policy goals. Russia aims to assert itself as a major power, positioning itself as one of the primary poles in a multipolar international system. Since the mid-1990s, multipolarity has thus constituted a central element of Russia's grand strategy and has increasingly guided Moscow's international engagement.¹ As relations with the West have deteriorated, especially since February 2022, the promotion of multipolarity and the challenge to Western dominance have assumed greater prominence in Russian foreign policy. This has contributed to a broader reorientation away from the West and towards closer cooperation with what Moscow terms the "world majority," encompassing Asia, Africa, the Islamic world, and Latin America.²

Russia's view of Africa as an important arena in its broader competition with the West is not new. During the Cold War, Soviet engagement on the continent was embedded in a wider ideological struggle with the United States and included extensive military involvement as well as support for socialist and anti-colonial movements.³ Contemporary Russian engagement, while still shaped by competition with the West, lacks the strong ideological component that characterised Soviet-era relations with Africa. Although Russia often frames its engagement through an anti-colonial narrative as a means of gaining influence and legitimacy, its involvement is primarily aimed at advancing Russia's vision of a multipolar world order in which Russia constitutes one of the leading poles, while simultaneously asserting Russia's status as a major power and challenging Western dominance.⁴

As reflected, for example, in the 2023 Russian Foreign Policy Concept, African states are regarded as

important partners in pursuing these broader Russian objectives.⁵ Africa is therefore not merely a region where Russia seeks influence, but also a source of political support that helps legitimise Russia's broader vision of international order while enabling Moscow to challenge the influence and interests of both the United States and European states. Beyond this, relationships with African states help counter perceptions of Russia as internationally isolated, secure support in multilateral forums, mitigate the effect of Western sanctions, and provide access to markets and natural resources, as well as opportunities for cooperation, for example, in the fields of energy and defence.⁶

In addition, Russia seeks more traditional military advantages in Africa, including the ability to project power and to secure maritime routes that run along African shores and are important for both trade and naval purposes.

The naval domain is central to Russia's ability to project military power beyond its immediate periphery. Alongside its air assets, the navy provides a means of deploying conventional military power to regions beyond the reach of its land-based infrastructure. This allows Moscow not only to project power over long distances but also to maintain a visible and sustained conventional military presence far from its own territory. This has become particularly relevant since February 2022, as a large proportion of Russia's ground and air power has remained committed to the war in Ukraine.⁷ Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia's capacity to sustain a continuous naval presence across the world's oceans declined markedly. Since Putin's rise to power, it has gradually sought to rebuild this capability, culminating in stated ambitions to become a great and leading maritime power capable of protecting its

1 Kłyszcz, Ivan, U. *Russian Grand Strategy: The Quest for Major Power Status and a Multipolar World Order*. Cambridge University Press; 2026. E-book.

2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*. 31 March 2023.

3 Matusevich, Maxim. "Revisiting the Soviet Moment in Sub-Saharan Africa," *History Compass*. Vol. 5, no. 5, 2009: 1259–1268.

4 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *The Concept of the Foreign Policy*; Rock, Anna Ida. *Rysslands informationspåverkan i Afrika: Opportunistisk, strategisk och mångfacetterad*. Stockholm: The Swedish Defence Research Agency, February 2026.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *The Concept of the Foreign Policy*.

6 Rock, Anna Ida. *Rysslands informationspåverkan i Afrika*.

7 Adams, James. *Statement by Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. Gen. James Adams, USMC*. Statement before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations, 119th Cong., 2nd sess., Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Posture Hearing, 2026, p. 11.

interests globally, as reflected in the Russian Maritime Doctrine from 2022.⁸

Russia's naval presence around Africa should be understood in this broader context, as it serves multiple political and military purposes. At a symbolic level, it signals great-power status, ambitions for power projection, and an effort to reclaim elements of the Soviet Union's historical maritime stature.⁹ The Mediterranean Sea has a central place in Russian strategic thinking, and outside Russia's adjacent maritime regions, no other maritime region is given the same priority. This reflects

Russia's need for unimpeded access to the Mediterranean in order to allow shipping from its key Black Sea ports and for its three European fleets, Northern, Baltic, and Black Sea, to join forces with its Pacific Fleet.¹⁰ The Mediterranean also serves as a platform for further Russian power projection into the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean. More broadly, while priorities vary across different maritime regions around Africa, Russia's naval presence aims to secure access to key waterways, maintain a forward presence, safeguard maritime routes, and enable military operations across the continent.¹¹

8 Russia's 2022 Maritime Doctrine also expresses an ambition to protect Russian interests globally, strengthen relations with North African states, maintain a naval presence in the Persian Gulf, establish logistical hubs and support facilities in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, utilize regional infrastructure, and secure maritime routes around Africa's coasts against piracy and terrorism. Government of the Russian Federation. *Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*. 31 July 2022.

9 As Kjellén and Lund, for example, point out in relation to Russia's presence in the Mediterranean Sea. Kjellén, Jonas and Lund, Aron. *From Tartous to Tobruk: The Return of Russian Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean*. Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, February 2022, p. 69.

10 Kjellén and Lund, *From Tartous to Tobruk*, 69.

11 See, for example, Government of the Russian Federation, *Maritime Doctrine*.

3. Military-security cooperation agreements

MILITARY COOPERATION AGREEMENTS HAVE long formed a central and interconnected component of Russia's security engagement in Africa, serving both conventional military interests and activities linked to the paramilitary domain. The large number of agreements concluded with African states is frequently highlighted in analyses of Russia's military engagement on the continent.¹ Such figures should, however, be treated with some caution, as comparable data on other external powers is limited. The continued conclusion of these agreements nevertheless suggests that formal defence ties remain an important component of its engagement in Africa.

The number of intergovernmental agreements on military cooperation between Russia and African states remained limited until the early 2000s, but reached 21 by 2015. It then expanded more rapidly, with 36 additional agreements concluded between 2015 and 2026, bringing the total to at least 57 covering 39 African states as of March 2026.² As shown in Table 1, agreements of this kind have been signed with a minimum of six countries since the beginning of the 2020s, including

with Burundi (2022), Madagascar (2022), the Central African Republic (2024), São Tomé and Príncipe (2024), Equatorial Guinea (2025) and Togo (2025).³

The scope and practical significance of such military cooperation agreements vary considerably. They range from largely symbolic framework agreements to those providing for more substantive forms of engagement, including training, exercises, port access, basing arrangements, arms deliveries, and military infrastructure. In some cases, such agreements also coincided with Wagner's presence and facilitated Russian access to key decision-making circles. For instance, in 2019, Russia signed agreements with the Central African Republic and Sudan allowing its Ministry of Defence to establish a presence within the two countries' defence ministries, at a time when Wagner was active in both.⁴

Another, more recent, agreement of particular practical significance is the defence agreement signed with Togo, discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. Signed in 2025, the agreement established a broad framework for expanded military cooperation

Table 1 Military-security cooperation agreements signed 2020–2025.

Country	Year	Agreement	Status
Burundi	2022	On Military-Technical Cooperation	Effective
Madagascar	2022	On Military-Technical Cooperation	Effective
The Central African Republic	2024	On Military-Technical Cooperation	Not yet in force
São Tomé and Príncipe	2024	On Military Cooperation	Temporarily applies
São Tomé and Príncipe	2024	On Military-Technical Cooperation	Not yet in force
Equatorial Guinea	2025	Concerning The Use of The Ports Of Malabo And Bata	Not yet in force
Togo	2025	On Military Cooperation	Not yet in force

Source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs treaty database, as of March 2026.

- 1 E.g. Caprile, Anna and Pichon, Eric. "Russia in Africa: An atlas." *European Parliamentary Research Service*. February 2024; Lindén, Russia's relations with Africa; Meservey, Joshua. "The Kremlin's Long Game in Africa." *Hudson Institute*. 4 July 2026; Stronski, Paul. "Late to the Party: Russia's Return to Africa." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 16 October 2019.
- 2 This number refers to agreements listed in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs treaty database as of 20 March 2026, including agreements classified as "Effective," "provisionally applied," or signed after 1 January 2020. Although the database provides relatively extensive information, not all agreements are publicly available. In particular, information regarding the Africa Corps is limited, while more substantial details on cooperation with the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) are also lacking. See the Appendix for additional information and the full dataset.
- 3 Russia also signed additional agreements with Ethiopia and Uganda during this period concerning the protection of intellectual property arising from or used in bilateral military-technical cooperation.
- 4 The offices were reportedly opened in 2020. The office in Bangui is officially listed on the Russian Embassy's website, while the status of the office in Sudan remains unclear as of May 2026. Reuters. "Russia sends more military equipment to the Central Africa Republic." 24 October 2024; Agenzia Nova. "Russia opens representative offices in the Central African Republic and Sudan." 15 March 2021; Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Central African Republic. "Russian institutions in the Central African Republic." N.d.

and laid the groundwork for a growing Russian military presence in Togo, including the deployment of Africa Corps personnel.

Taken together, these agreements point to Russia's sustained interest in formalising security relationships across Africa. While many have remained limited in

practice, certain agreements have provided a framework for considerably deeper forms of military engagement, including access to military infrastructure. This is particularly relevant in the naval domain, which is examined in greater detail below.

4. The search for a naval logistics base and naval engagement

AS THE RUSSIAN NAVY recovered from its post-Soviet decline, a more sustained presence off the coast of Africa emerged from 2008, as Russia joined international counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and established a recurring presence around the Horn of Africa.¹ As piracy declined in the mid-2010s, Russia's naval activity increasingly shifted towards naval diplomacy and power projection, including exercises, strategic port access, and other forms of showing the flag.

The Russian Navy pursues several key objectives, ranging from projecting great-power status and reclaiming elements of the Soviet Union's historical maritime stature to maintaining a forward presence, safeguarding maritime routes, enabling military operations, and facilitating cooperation between its geographically dispersed European and Pacific fleets. To achieve these, Russia relies heavily on access to logistical hubs, ports, and support facilities in key maritime regions, such as the Mediterranean Sea and areas south of the Suez Canal, including the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In recent years, Russia's naval base in Syria's Tartous has also played a role in supporting the logistics of the Wagner Group and the Africa Corps. Since the outbreak of civil war in Libya in 2014, Russia has backed Khalifa Haftar's forces in the eastern parts of the country, likely to secure a foothold in North Africa and access to Mediterranean ports. Libya also serves as a central logistical hub for Russian operations in the Sahel.² Following the ousting of Bashar al-Assad in Syria in late 2024, speculation emerged as to whether Russia would lose access to its base in Tartous, and whether this might lead to the establishment of a substitute naval facility in Libya or Algeria.³ The status of the Tartous base remained uncertain for an extended period. However, in August 2026, an agreement was reached under which Syria

would retain control of the commercial facilities of the port, while the military facilities would be transformed into "joint training" centres.⁴ It remains unclear what this arrangement will mean for Russia's naval presence in the area. Nor are there any indications that plans for a more permanent naval presence in North Africa have advanced.

For many years, Russia has also sought to secure a naval foothold in or near the Red Sea. Besides power projection, strengthening relations with African countries, and making inroads into them, a key operational advantage of a Red Sea base would be that Russian vessels could remain deployed in the Indian Ocean and nearby waters for extended periods, avoiding long transit routes and the high costs associated with transiting the Suez Canal. In recent years, discussions have focused primarily on Port Sudan. After years of speculation about Russia's interest in establishing a naval base along the Red Sea, Russia signed an agreement with Sudan in 2019 allowing it to build a facility on the Sudanese Red Sea coast with up to 300 personnel and docking rights for as many as four warships, including nuclear-powered vessels.⁵ The status of the agreement has remained unclear since civil war broke out in Sudan in 2023, with reports alternately suggesting progress and that the project has been halted, at least temporarily.⁶ Satellite pictures and open reporting indicate that basic port infrastructure already exists in the proposed location in Port Sudan, including usable quays. This suggests that limited naval access is, in practice, already feasible. However, any larger deployment would require expanded provision for security, accommodation, ammunition handling, and energy supply. At present, the location also lacks a nearby airstrip, which would limit Russia's ability to supply the proposed facility, including the provision

1 Walker, Peter. "British and Russian ships fight off Somali pirates." *Guardian*. 12 November 2008.

2 Stephen, Chris. "Putin's Empire-Building Base Hunt Reaches Libya." *CEPA*, 9 January 2025.

3 See, for example, Black, Edward and Kaushal, Sidharth. "Russia's Options for Naval Basing in the Mediterranean After Syria's Tartus." *Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*, 14 January 2025.

4 Associated Press. "Syria will take back control from Russia of 2 key Mediterranean bases under a new deal." 9 August 2026.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *Agreement Between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sudan on the Establishment of a Logistics Center for the Russian Navy on the Territory of the Republic of Sudan*.

6 Rukanga, Basillioh. "'No obstacles' to Russian Red Sea base – Sudan." *BBC*, 13 February 2025; MarineForum. "Russia removes Port Sudan from its wish list." 6 February 2026.

of spare parts. For now, the project appears unlikely to move forward until the situation in Sudan stabilises.⁷

4.1 Agreements on simplified port entry, port calls, and exercises

In the absence of a dedicated naval logistics base in the region, Russia relies on access to ports across Africa (and beyond) for refuelling, resupply, crew rest, repairs, and maintenance during extended deployments. Under normal procedures, port calls by warships require time-consuming diplomatic clearance. This process can be shortened through agreements on simplified port entry. The first such agreement with an African state was signed with Egypt in 2015. As illustrated in Table 2, Russia has also concluded such agreements with the following African states: Equatorial Guinea (2015), Cabo Verde (2018), Mozambique (2018) and Sudan (2019).⁸ Russian officials also stated in January 2026 that Russia had approved a draft of an agreement on simplified port entry with Benin and that negotiations on a similar agreement are underway with Togo.⁹ The broader defence agreement with Togo mentioned in Chapter 3, ratified by Russia in October 2025, also provides a

legal framework for port calls by Russian and Togolese naval vessels.

In addition, in March 2025, Russia signed another agreement with Equatorial Guinea, which has yet to enter into force, to strengthen its access to the ports of Malabo and Bata.¹⁰ There thus currently seems to be a Russian push for military cooperation and port access in the Gulf of Guinea, likely driven to a large extent by an intent to establish logistical corridors to support Africa Corps activities in the Sahel and Central Africa.

From the mid-2010s onwards, as Russia expanded its naval reach and expanded its use of naval diplomacy beyond its counter-piracy operations in Africa, Russian naval vessels conducted at least 59 port calls in at least 15 African countries between 2014 and 2019. A notable share occurred during extended deployments around the continent, which constituted particularly visible examples of Russia showing the flag.¹¹ The Northern Fleet's destroyer *Severomorsk*, for example, conducted two such deployments, in 2017 and 2018–2019, visiting ten African states. Its port calls featured typical elements of naval diplomacy, including meetings with defence and naval officials, shipboard receptions, and exchanges between crews.¹²

Table 2 Agreements on simplified port entry and other Russian naval access to ports.

Country	Year	Agreement	Status
Egypt	2015	On simplified port entry	Effective
Equatorial Guinea	2015	On simplified port entry	Temporarily applies
Cabo Verde	2018	On simplified port entry	Effective
Mozambique	2018	On simplified port entry	Temporarily applies
Sudan	2019	On simplified port entry	Temporarily applies
Togo	2025	On military cooperation (providing for port calls by Russian naval vessels)	Not yet in force
Equatorial Guinea	2025	Concerning the use of the ports of Malabo and Bata	Not yet in force
Benin	2026	On simplified port entry	Draft
Togo	2026	On simplified port entry	Under negotiation

Source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of March 2026..

7 In May 2025, Port Sudan was hit by a series of drone strikes, demonstrating the risks. Woldemichael, Shewit. "Drone Attacks on Port Sudan Mark Dramatic Escalation." *International Crisis Group*, 7 May 2025.

8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. "Bilateral Treaties." Accessed: 15 March 2026.

9 African Initiative. "Russia plans to continue Russian Navy port calls in Benin – ambassador." 4 February 2026; Xavier, Will. "Russia approves draft agreement on naval ship calls to Benin." *Baird Maritime*, 21 January 2026.

10 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. *Agreement Between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea Concerning the Use of the Ports of Malabo and Bata*. 3 March 2025.

11 Shishkin, Alexander. "The Navy adequately solves the problem of demonstrating the flag" [translated from Russian]. *Vzglyad*. 22 January 2018.

12 TASS. "Northern Fleet ships make 30 long voyages in 2018." 3 December 2018. The second deployment also included patrols and counter-piracy duties.

Russian naval engagement with Africa through port visits has continued and even increased during the 2020s, despite both the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted international mobility, and the war in Ukraine. Between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2025, Russian Navy vessels conducted more than 65 port calls in at least 18 African states.¹³ As can be seen in Table 3, there are notable geographical differences between the 2014–2019 and 2020–2025 periods. For instance, in the latter period, North Africa has replaced East Africa as the principal destination for Russian naval port calls. Port calls to Algeria increased substantially, with 24 visits recorded during the latter period. This trend likely reflects the longstanding political and military relationship between the two countries, as well as the strategic importance of the Mediterranean amid escalating tensions with the West. Furthermore, Russia's need for Mediterranean port access has intensified due to restricted Black Sea access following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and uncertainty surrounding the Tartous base after the fall of the Assad regime in late 2024. These shifts are evidenced by the timing and frequency of the visits: 19 occurred after February 2022, with intensity increasing further in 2025, which saw nine visits alone.

At the same time, the number of visits to Djibouti decreased sharply. While Russian vessels made 12 port calls there between 2014 and the end of 2019, only one was recorded from 2020 to the end of 2025. This likely reflects the declining role of counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa, as well as Russia's pursuit of strategic access elsewhere, particularly at Port Sudan.

As shown in Table 3, Algeria has consequently received by far the largest number of visits during the latter period. In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has received the highest number of visits by Russian naval vessels. This partly reflects visits conducted in connection with naval exercises, but also South Africa's strategic relevance in the region and its close political ties with Russia. Also noteworthy are the visits of two Russian

naval vessels to Cotonou, Benin, in 2024, which appear to have been the first such visits since the Soviet period. These may partly be understood in the context of Russia's growing interest in the Gulf of Guinea states, including its search for maritime access and logistical routes that could support the Africa Corps in the Sahel.¹⁴

These port calls thus serve multiple purposes. While some fulfil necessary logistical functions, others are linked to naval exercises or constitute an important tool of Russian military diplomacy. Overall, the varied nature of these port calls demonstrates the breadth of Russia's maritime engagement on the continent, including not only warships but also intelligence-gathering, rescue, oceanographic research, and training vessels. For instance, across 2024 and 2025 combined, the Baltic Fleet training ship *Smolny* visited nine African countries as part of extended voyages. These visits combined cadet training, including the on-board participation of Tanzanian cadets in 2025, with military-diplomatic engagement aimed at strengthening partnerships, signalling presence, and promoting military cooperation.¹⁵ In contrast, the 2024 port calls by the Baltic Fleet frigate *Neustrashimy* to five African countries suggest a stronger emphasis on presence and elements of power projection, while still serving diplomatic and logistical functions.

Taken together, these recurring visits point to a strategic pattern of engagement, in which Africa constitutes an important focus of Russia's naval outreach. As a point of comparison, Russia conducted considerably more port visits than China, another country with an active naval presence in and around Africa. According to a dataset on Chinese military diplomacy compiled by Saunders and Ha, Chinese Navy vessels made a total of 80 port visits to African countries between 2000 and 2025, of which 30 took place between 2020 and 2025.¹⁶

As shown in Table 4, despite Türkiye's application of the Montreux Convention since February 2022, which significantly restricts the ability of Russian naval vessels to pass through the Turkish Straits and leave the Black Sea, vessels assigned to the Black Sea Fleet accounted for

13 It should be noted that the figure of 65 refers to individual port call events. As some of these visits involved groups of vessels, the total number of Russian ships visiting African ports is higher. See the Appendix for further details.

14 The Russian ambassador to Benin and Togo, Igor Evdokimov, has underscored the significance of the two Russian port calls to Benin in 2024, stating that similar visits will continue in the ports of both Cotonou and Lomé. According to Evdokimov, such visits lay the foundation for further expanded security and defence cooperation with both countries. African Initiative. "Russia and Benin will sign an agreement on military cooperation – ambassador." 30 July 2025; African Initiative. "Russia plans to continue Russian Navy port calls in Benin — ambassador." 4 February 2026.

15 Martin, Guy. "Russian Navy training ship *Smolny* back in Cape Town." *Defence Web*, 7 August 2025.

16 Saunders, Phillip C. and Ha, Melodie. Chinese Military Diplomacy Database. Excel dataset. Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, National Defense University; 2025. One port call in Côte d'Ivoire, which was listed twice in the original dataset for 2023, has been excluded. Port calls in Djibouti are also excluded, as these involve China's own military base rather than engagement with a foreign counterpart.

Table 3 Russian port calls in Africa, by region and country

Region/country	2014–2019	2020–2025
NORTH AFRICA	13	34
Algeria	7	24
Egypt	5	7
Libya		2
Morocco		1
Tunisia	1	
EAST AFRICA	26	10
Djibouti	12	1
Seychelles	6	1
Sudan	1	5
Tanzania	1	2
Mozambique	3	
Madagascar	2	
Eritrea		1
Mauritius	1	
WEST AFRICA	3	3
Benin		2
Cabo Verde	3	
Guinea		1
CENTRAL AFRICA	6	7
Equatorial Guinea	6	2
Republic of Congo		3
Cameroon		1
São Tomé and Príncipe		1
SOUTHERN AFRICA	11	11
South Africa	5	7
Namibia	1	3
Angola	5	1
Total	59	65

Source: Author's own compilation. See the Appendix for the full list of port visits and sources.

14 port calls to Algeria after February 2022.¹⁷ These port calls were made by vessels that were already deployed in the Mediterranean when the full-scale invasion began,

Table 4 Russian port calls in Africa, by fleet.

Fleet	2014–2019	2020–2025
Baltic	21	31
Northern	27	16
Black Sea	8	15
Pacific	3	4

Remarks: * The total number of visits in the 2020–2025 column adds up to 66 because the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets made a joint port call in Algiers in September 2025

Source: Author's own compilation. See the Appendix for the full list of port visits and sources.

including the frigate *Admiral Grigorovich* and the submarines *Krasnodar* and *Novorossiysk*, as well as the corvette *Merkury*, which was commissioned in 2023 and never entered the Black Sea.¹⁸

Russia's naval presence in Africa also takes the form of participation in bilateral and multilateral naval exercises. Russia has conducted a recurring exercise, Bridge of Friendship, with Egypt in the Mediterranean Sea since 2015.¹⁹ Since 2019, it has also held regular naval exercises with Algeria in the same region.²⁰ In addition, Russia participates in a series of exercises with China and South Africa off the coast of South Africa, known as MOSI (I, II, and III), which were held in 2019, 2023, and 2026. The 2026 iteration also included Iranian vessels, and the exercise was subsequently rebranded as Will for Peace. This most recent exercise was framed by South Africa and China as part of cooperation among BRICS+ countries. However, Russia and India emphasised that it was not a formal part of the BRICS framework.²¹

The developments outlined above highlight the importance of the navy to Russia's ability to project power and conduct military diplomacy beyond its immediate maritime periphery. As shown in Map 1, in the absence of a permanent naval base, this presence is sustained through port calls and a growing network of simplified port-entry agreement, providing both logistical support and opportunities for "showing the flag"

17 For more information of Türkiye's application of the Montreux Convention, see Lund, Aron. *Montreuxkonventionen under Ukrainakriget*. Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency. January 2024.

18 Delanoë, Igor. *Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the "Special Military Operation" in Ukraine*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. 7 February 2024.

19 In 2020, it was held in the Black Sea. Eleiba, Ahmed. "Egyptian, Russian navies conclude Bridge of Friendship 3 drill in Black Sea." *Ahramonline*, 26 November 2020; Alexandrova, Lyudmila. "Russia, Egypt enhance naval cooperation in Mediterranean." *TASS*, 8 June 2015; Al-Deeb, Ahmed. "Egypt, Russia conclude joint naval drill Bridge of Friendship in Mediterranean." *Ahramonline*, 17 April 2025.

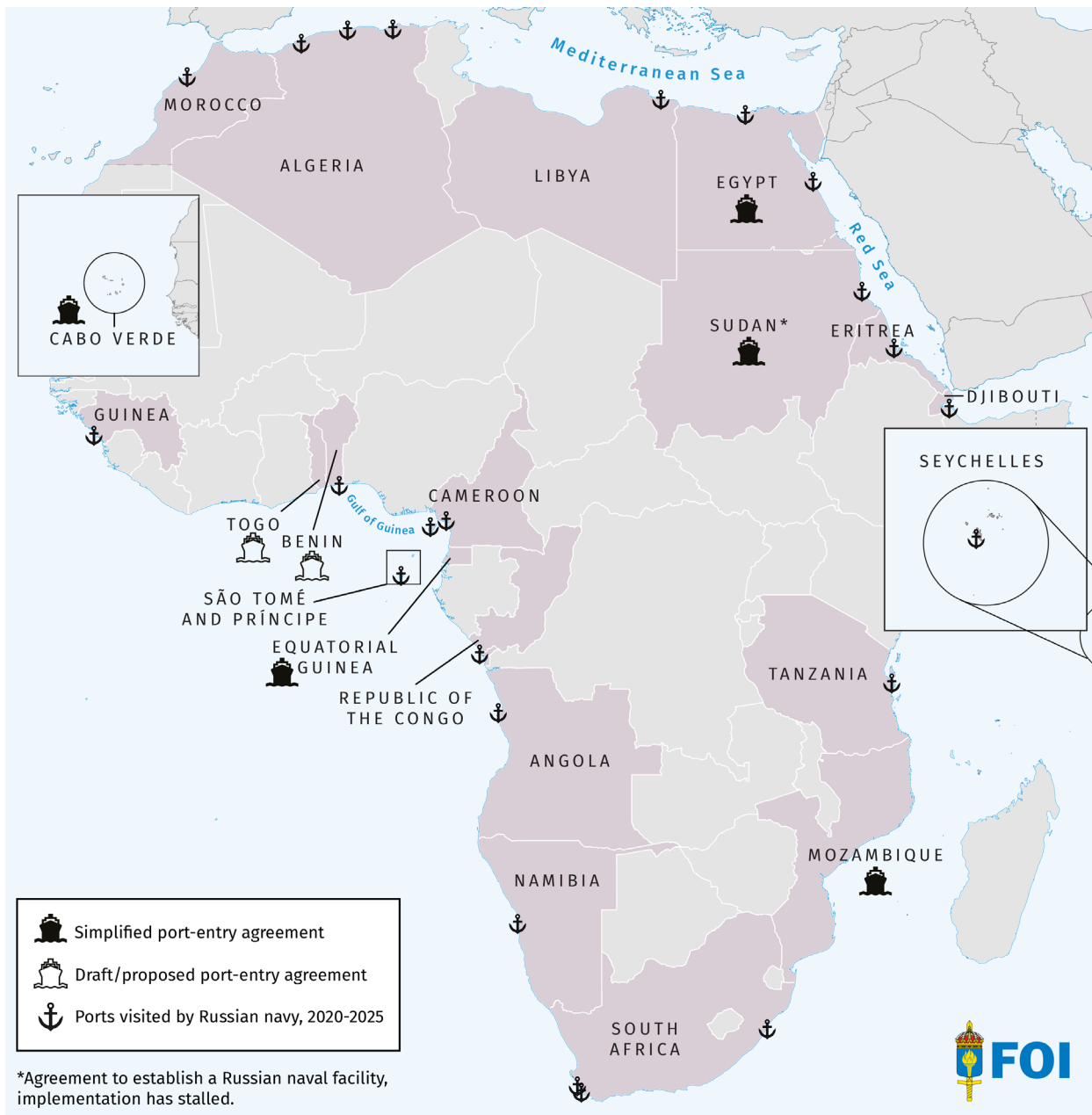
20 Mena Defence. "Everything you should know about the Russian navy visit to Algeria." 24 November 2019.

21 While India chose not to participate, the other original BRICS member, Brazil, participated as an observer. Radio France Internationale. "South Africa's joint drills a show of influence in the Indian Ocean." 9 January 2026; France24. "Chinese, Iranian warships in South Africa for exercises." 8 January 2026; Ministry of National Defence People's Republic of China. "Joint Maritime Exercise 'Will for Peace 2026' Wraps up." 19 January 2026; Neuber, Harald. "Russia makes it clear: BRICS will not become a military alliance." *Berliner Zeitung*, 16 February 2026; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. "Official Spokesperson's response to media queries regarding comments relating to India's non-participation in a so-called 'BRICS Naval Exercise.'" 17 January 2026.

and military diplomacy. While Russia has deepened its strategic reliance on Algeria, partly as a result of limited access to alternative Mediterranean or Black Sea ports, recent efforts also point to a growing focus on establishing logistical routes through the Gulf of Guinea in support of operations in the Sahel and Central Africa.

At the same time, Russia's interest in maintaining access to a naval base in the Mediterranean, while establishing a similar presence south of Suez, is likely to persist irrespective of how the African Corps' presence in these regions develops.

Map 1 Russian naval engagement in Africa.



Source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of March 2026. Author's own compilation of port calls. See the Appendix for the full list of port visits and sources.

5. Arms exports

ARMS EXPORTS ARE ONE of the central pillars of Russia's security cooperation with African states. These exports serve economic purposes but also act as a means of building and consolidating relationships with key partners and creating long-term dependencies, for example, through training, maintenance, spare parts, and upgrades. Since arms exports can fluctuate considerably from year to year, this report uses statistics from SIPRI, divided into five-year periods: 2016–2020 and 2021–2025. This division makes it possible to compare different time periods and identify trends over time.

Russian exports of weapons and military equipment to Africa have declined in the 2020s, both in absolute and relative terms, as shown in Figure 1. Having previously been the largest supplier of weapons to African states in 2016–2020, Russia has now been overtaken by both the United States and China. This development is not primarily driven by other suppliers' increased exports, but rather by a decline in Russia's, which has also been observed globally.¹ This overall decrease is likely due in part to the amount of weapons and equipment consumed by Russia in its war against Ukraine, as well as sanctions that make it more difficult to produce and export weapons, and external pressure from the West to discourage purchases of Russian arms.²

The latter factor may help explain the decline in Africa, as Egypt, previously a major importer of Russian arms, did not import any during the 2021–2025 period, probably in response to a United States call to abstain.³ In 2022, Cairo, for example, cancelled a deal signed with Moscow in 2018 to purchase around two dozen Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets after the United States threatened

to impose sanctions on Egypt's armed forces should the deal go ahead.⁴ Egypt's abstention, combined with a sharp decrease in Algeria's imports of Russian arms, explains most of the decline in Russia's arms exports to the continent in general. It should also be noted that this trend reflects a broader decline in imports of major arms among the financially stronger North African states. At the same time, arms imports in sub-Saharan Africa increased in 2021–2025 compared to the preceding five-year period.⁵

Russia's arms exports have become increasingly concentrated, possibly reflecting both a strategic focus on prioritising selected partners to maximise influence under current constraints, rather than spreading resources across a broader set of states, and greater caution among African states about purchasing Russian weapons, as discussed above.⁶ Thus, the number of African countries receiving Russian arms exports fell from 17 to 11 between 2016–2020 and 2021–2025. On the continent, Russia exported by far the highest value to Algeria (fighter aircraft, air defence systems, missiles, and artillery-locating radar), followed by Mali (helicopters, fighter aircraft, bomber aircraft, transport aircraft, and air surveillance radars) and Ethiopia (fighter aircraft) during the 2021–2025 period, reflecting the strong political and military relations Russia has with these countries.

Algeria reportedly received 14 Sukhoi Su-35 fighter aircraft. There are also media reports that Algeria, as the first export customer, has begun receiving Su-57 fighter aircraft, with two aircraft reportedly delivered and ten additional aircraft expected.⁷ The Su-35 and Su-57 represent Russia's most advanced fourth-generation

1 See, for example, George, Mathew; Djokic, Katarina; Hussain, Zain; Wezeman, Pieter D.; and Wezeman Siemon. *Trends In International Arms Transfers, 2025*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, March 2026, p. 7. However, SIPRI does not include Egypt in the "Africa" region. Nevertheless, this ordering remains unchanged when Egypt is included.

2 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "Ukraine the world's biggest arms importer; United States' dominance of global arms exports grows as Russian exports continue to fall." 10 March 2025.

3 This also follows a general decrease in imports in North Africa.

4 Liam, Darek. "Egypt's Sukhoi Su-35Es sold to Iran due to US pressure." *Military Africa*. 5 September 2022.

5 In sub-Saharan Africa, Russia is the second-largest exporter of arms, following China in the top position. George et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers 2025*, 7–8.

6 Boukhars, Anouar. "Russia's Geopolitical Hedging in the Sahel and West Africa." In Reynolds, Nate Reynolds; Brown, Frances Z.; Wehrey, Frederic; and Weiss, Andrew S. (eds.). *Russia in Africa: Examining Moscow's Influence and Its Limits*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: 2026, p. 17.

7 Sangtarash, Mohammad Hassan. "Russia's Sale of Su-57 to Algeria: A Surprise for NATO and Europe." *Middle East Political and Economic Institute*. 22 March 2025; SIPRI Arms Transfers Database; TASS. "UAC handed over two Su-57 fighters to a foreign customer" [translated from Russian]. 17 November 2025; bmpd (Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, CAST). "The Russian Aerospace Forces Received Su-57 Fighters under the 2025 Program" [translated from Russian]. bmpd blog. 10 February 2026.

and fifth-generation fighter platforms, respectively. According to available information, China and Iran are the only other countries to have received or ordered the Su-35.⁸ This underscores how important Algeria is to Russia as a strategic arms partner and highlights the central role the country plays in Russia's defence-industrial and military relations with Africa and the wider Middle East and North Africa region. Supplying Algeria with such advanced systems is likely intended to build long-term dependencies and preserve a strategically important market. At the same time, these transfers allow Moscow to demonstrate that, unlike Egypt, some North African partners remain willing to resist Western pressure.

As can be seen in Figure 1, other importers of Russian arms in 2021–2025 are the Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Libya (“LNA/Haftar”), Nigeria, Rwanda, Togo, and Uganda. The Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali, as hosts of Russia's largest paramilitary presence through Wagner and the Africa Corps, are thus all importers of Russian arms. The presence of these forces is likely to generate demand for Russian weapons systems, provide opportunities for training local forces, and create the local knowledge, networks, and political access necessary to facilitate arms exports.

Despite the general downward trend in Russian arms export in general, arms exports to African states are likely to remain an important component of Russia's engagement with the continent. Signals from the Russian leadership also point in this direction. In January 2026, President Vladimir Putin announced that, despite Western efforts to obstruct such partnerships, Russia had earned more than USD 15 billion from arms sales in 2025. Analysts, however, regard these figures as heavily exaggerated.⁹ Nevertheless, statements of this

kind highlight the symbolic and political importance that Russia attaches to arms exports. Beyond their economic significance and their contribution to long-term political and military relationships, arms exports demonstrate to potential customers Russia's continued ability to produce and deliver military equipment despite sanctions and wartime pressures, while also signalling that the country continues to maintain international partnerships and has not become internationally isolated.

Africa appears to occupy an important place in this regard. In May 2026, Alexander Mikheyev, CEO of Rosoboronexport, Russia's sole state intermediary for defence exports, claimed that African countries accounted for 30 per cent of the company's order book, with technological cooperation projects valued at more than USD 1.7 billion. He also asserted that military-technical cooperation with African states had returned to levels comparable to those of the Soviet period and, in some respects, exceeded them, while emphasising that Rosoboronexport was continuing to expand its activities across the continent.¹⁰

The overall picture highlights that Russian arms transfers to Africa have declined since the beginning of the decade, largely due to reduced volumes to major importers such as Egypt and Algeria and the pressure of the war in Ukraine. As a result, Russia's arms engagement has become more concentrated, though Africa remains a vital market for the Russian defence industry. Notably, countries hosting Russian paramilitary forces, such as Wagner or the Africa Corps, often import Russian weapons, even if in smaller quantities than Algeria. This paramilitary presence is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

8 Fediushko, Dmitry. “Russia completes deliveries of su-35 fighter aircraft to China.” *Janes*. 16 April 2019; Reuters. “Iran's Revolutionary Guards commander says Iran purchased Russian-made Sukhoi 35 fighter jets.” 27 January 2025.

9 Höller, Linus. “Russia claims \$15 billion in 2025 arms exports, with focus on Africa.” *Defense News*. 2 February 2026.

10 Defence Web. “Africa accounts for 30% of Rosoboronexport orders.” 27 May 2026.

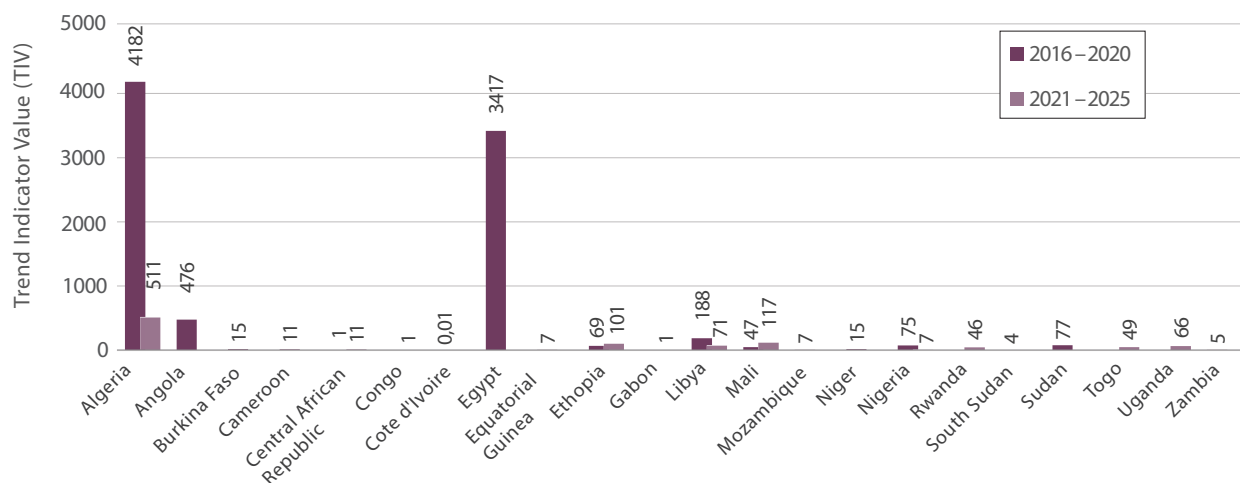


Figure 1 Total Russian Arms Transfers to Africa

Remark: TIV stands for Trend Indicator Value, SIPRI's measure of the volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons. It is based on the estimated military resource value of the weapons transferred and does not represent their financial value or sales price. For further information, see SIPRI's website

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, as of March 2026.

6. Wagner and the Africa Corps: regime security, paramilitary presence and training

PERHAPS THE MOST VISIBLY and widely discussed aspect of Russia's military engagement in Africa during the 2020s has been its opportunistic approach, exploiting political instability, weak state structures, and military-led or coup-affected states to expand its influence at relatively low cost. This has largely taken place under the umbrella of so-called "security assistance," encompassing activities ranging from close regime security and military advising to more forward operational roles alongside local forces, typically accompanied by information operations, initially via the Wagner Group and later through its successor, the Africa Corps.¹ These groups have served, for instance, as important tools for expanding Russia's influence in the regions where they operate, pushing back Western influence, linking security engagement to economic incentives such as mining concessions, circumventing sanctions, and sustaining Russian arms exports. It should be noted that both the Wagner Group and the Africa Corps have been accused of serious abuses against civilians.²

The Wagner Group, a PMC with very close ties to the Kremlin, first established a presence in Africa in 2017. It provided military and security assistance in exchange for political influence and economic gains,

including access to lucrative natural resources such as gold, diamonds, other minerals, and oil.³ During the early 2020s, the group maintained a presence in the Central African Republic, Libya, Sudan, Mozambique, and Mali. It withdrew from Mozambique in early 2020 after only a few months, having arrived in September 2019. The withdrawal followed setbacks in its efforts to support the national army in combating the Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado.⁴ In Sudan, which was particularly important for the group's commercial network, not least as a source of gold, its presence appears to have diminished during the second half of 2023.⁵ As the Wagner Group's activities in Africa have been extensively documented elsewhere, they are discussed only briefly here.⁶ Greater attention is instead devoted to developments following Prigozhin's death and the subsequent transition towards the Africa Corps.

The transition to the Africa Corps seems to be more than merely "cosmetic." It represents a shift from the Wagner Group's "guns for gold" model, under which, in many contexts, security assistance and arms were exchanged for lucrative gold-mining concessions and mineral rights, to a model based on direct payments from host governments.⁷ Another significant difference

1 Rock, *Rysk informationspåverkan i Afrika*.

2 Le Monde. "'Tout ce qui est inhumain, Wagner ose le faire': des réfugiées maliennes témoignent de viols répétés des mercenaires russes." 28 August 2025

3 Doxsee, Catrina; Bermudez Jr., Joseph S.; and Jun, Jennifer. "Central African Republic Mine Displays Stakes for Wagner Group's Future." *Center for Strategic & International Studies*. 3 July 2023.

4 Doxsee, Catrina. "Putin's Proxies: Examining Russia's Use of Private Military Companies." *Center for Strategic & International Studies*. 15 September 2022; Wagner personnel were also reportedly involved in interference in Madagascar's 2018 presidential election, although no Wagner troops appear to have been deployed to the country. The Wagner Project. "Wagner in Madagascar." N.d.

5 This coincided with a broader shift in Russia's approach to the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as well as the death of Prigozhin. While Wagner-linked networks had previously been reported to support the RSF, the Kremlin subsequently moved towards closer cooperation with the SAF. This shift has been linked to Russia's longstanding ambitions to establish a naval base in Port Sudan, which appear to have outweighed the potential economic benefits associated with Sudanese gold through relations with the RSF. Karr, Liam. "Africa File, May 9, 2024: America and Russia's Shifting Roles in West Africa; IS Africa Media; Russia's Morphing Stance in Sudan." *Critical Threats*. 9 May 2024.

6 See, for example, Lindén, Karolina. *Russia's relations with Africa: Small, military-oriented and with destabilising effects*. Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency. January 2023; Parens, Raphael. *The Wagner Group's Playbook in Africa: Mali*. Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2022; Pokalova, Elena. "The Wagner Group in Africa: Russia's Quasi-State Agent of Influence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. Vol. 49, no. 3. 2026; Ramani, Samuel. *Russia in Africa: Resurgent great power or bellicose pretender?* Oxford University Press, 2023.

7 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. *Guns for gold: the Wagner Network exposed*. Seventh Report of Session 2022–23, HC 167. London: House of Commons, 2023; Jeffrey, Charlie. "Africa Corp: Russia's Intelligence-tied Paramilitary." *Grey Dynamics*, 22 October 2025. It should be noted that Wagner neither succeeded in exploiting nor necessarily needed to exploit gold in all countries. In Mali, for example, it reportedly "never managed to launch industrial extraction operations." Maillard, Matteo. "From Wagner to Africa Corps: What the Russian military alliance has really cost Mali." *The Africa Report*, 24 February 2026.

is the Africa Corps' more risk-averse approach, in contrast to Wagner's expeditionary and operationally assertive model.⁸ As of mid-2026, Russia maintains a substantial military presence through the Africa Corps in six African countries: Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Mali, and Niger.⁹ There are also reports from the first half of 2026 that Africa Corps instructors are training local forces in the Republic of the Congo and in Madagascar following the 2025 coup, although few additional details are available.¹⁰ In July 2026, the French news outlet *Jeune Afrique* reported that, following the defence agreement signed between Russia and Togo in 2025, around 300 Africa Corps personnel have been deployed in Togo since the beginning of the year. Their reported tasks include training, intelligence support, and the protection of strategic sites. According to *Jeune Afrique*, the Togolese authorities have, for the time being, declined Russian involvement in direct combat operations.¹¹ Reports of their presence in Togo have yet to be independently corroborated. The following section provides an overview of the countries where a substantial Africa Corps presence has been documented, including the logistical networks and supply routes underpinning its activities.

6.1 The Central African Republic

Among the countries where Russian paramilitary forces are still present, the Central African Republic has the longest history of engagement. The Wagner Group first entered Africa in 2017 by deploying mercenaries and equipment in support of Faustin-Archange Touadéra's embattled regime in the Central African Republic. By late 2020, it had transitioned from a training role to

direct participation in combat. Since then, it has played a central role in protecting the regime and supporting military operations to retake territory from rebel groups. The exact number of personnel remains difficult to verify, but estimates suggest that approximately 1,500 Russian soldiers were present in the Central African Republic as of March/April 2026.¹² The Central African Republic remains the only African country where the transition from the Wagner Group to the Africa Corps has not been completed at the time of writing. Touadéra has long resisted pressure from Moscow to allow the Africa Corps to take over, likely due to reluctance to shift from Wagner's largely self-financed model to one based on direct payments. However, reporting from April 2026 suggests that Touadéra may have ultimately accepted a transition to the Africa Corps.¹³

There is currently no Russian military base in the Central African Republic, although officials from both countries have confirmed that negotiations over its possible establishment are ongoing. Analysts have suggested that these efforts are driven primarily by Bangui, partly as a means of countering a perceived decline in Russian attention as Moscow's focus has increasingly shifted towards the Sahel.¹⁴ In May 2025, Russian officials stated that the proposal remained at "the stage of interdepartmental study," with the two sides discussing mutually acceptable terms for its implementation.¹⁵ Since then, there has been no credible evidence that the project has advanced beyond the discussion stage. It should be noted that the Touadéra government appears interested in improving relations with Western countries. This probably does not indicate a clear shift away from Russia, but rather suggests an effort to diversify external relations and gradually restore ties with France, the EU, and the United States.¹⁶

8 The Sentry. *Doubling Down: Russia's Military Network In West Africa*. April 2026.

9 Maillard, Matteo. "Mercenaires et navires de guerre: quand le Togo ouvre la porte à la Russie et Africa Corps." *Jeune Afrique*. 10 July 2026; Karr, Liam; DeAngelo, Michael; and Ford, Yale. "Russia Operationalizes Military Presence in Togo; SAF Seizes Key Central Sudan Supply Line; Congolese National Dialogue Takes Shape: Africa File, July 30, 2026." *Critical Threats*. 30 July 2026.

10 Kiennemann, Lise. "Arms deliveries and Africa Corps training: How Russia is bolstering its presence in Madagascar." *France24*, 6 May 2026; TASS. "Russian military train Republic of Congo security forces based on special military op." 17 March 2026.

11 Maillard, "Mercenaires et navires de guerre."

12 Olivier, Mathieu. "From Wagner to Africa Corps: Touadéra finally submits to the new guard." *The Africa Report*, 7 April 2026; Arieff et al. *Russia's Security Operations in Africa*; RT. "Africa Corps: des instructeurs russes forment les forces de sécurité du Congo." 21 March 2026. Accessed: 26 August 2026.

13 Olivier, "From Wagner to Africa Corps"; officials from both countries have also stated that negotiations on establishing a Russian base in the Central African Republic are ongoing. However, there are no reports that the initiative has advanced beyond the "interdepartmental study" stage referenced in May 2025. African Initiative, "'We trust Russia a thousand percent.' Interview with the Adviser to the President of the Central African Republic." 6 March 2024; TASS. "The Russian ambassador spoke about the work on the project of the Russian military base in the CAR." 29 May 2025.

14 Bryjka, Filip and Czerep, Jędrzej. *Africa Corps – A New Iteration Of Russia's Old Military Presence In Africa*. PISM Report, The Polish Institute of International Affairs, May 2024.

15 TASS. "The Russian ambassador spoke about the work on the project of the Russian military base in the CAR." 29 May 2025.

16 Dyer, Theo. "The Central African Republic: Inside the Vortex." *Atlas Institute for International Affairs*, 18 December 2025; Radio France Internationale. "French FM says bilateral relations with CAR back on track." 14 March 2026.

6.2 Libya

Following the outbreak of civil war in 2014, Russia has actively supported the forces of Khalifa Haftar, commander of the so-called Libyan National Army (LNA), in eastern Libya, with the Wagner Group present from around 2018. The exact number of personnel remains unclear. Available estimates suggest that Wagner deployed approximately 2,000 personnel to Libya in 2020, though levels reportedly fluctuated thereafter due to shifting operational priorities and demands elsewhere.¹⁷

The Africa Corps, or Russia, now appears to have developed its most extensive African logistical infrastructure in Libya and to have largely inherited Wagner's logistics network on the continent. In addition to using the port of Tobruk as a logistics and access point, they also make use of a network of air bases across eastern, central, and southern parts of Libya.¹⁸ Beyond enabling Russian support for Haftar's forces and providing a strategic platform for operations in the Mediterranean Sea, access to this network has made Libya an important logistical hub for Russian operations and arms supplies in the Sahel and Central Africa.¹⁹ For example, flights by Russian state-owned cargo aircraft supplying Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, typically follow a logistical route through Russian-controlled facilities in Syria and Libya before continuing to the Sahel.²⁰

6.3 The Alliance of Sahel States: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

Russia appears to be pursuing an emerging regional approach to the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), a confederation and security alliance formed in September 2023 by the military-led governments of Burkina Faso,

Mali, and Niger. The three Sahel states have also developed a more coordinated approach towards Russia. For example, all three signed an agreement in 2024 with the Russian aerospace agency Roscosmos to acquire surveillance satellites and a secure communications system, and they have also explored cooperation with Russia on nuclear energy. In April 2025, during a visit by the three countries' foreign ministers to Moscow, Russian foreign minister Lavrov stated that Russia is willing to provide arms and military training to the AES joint force, the creation of which was announced the previous month.²¹ Moscow reaffirmed its support at a similar Russia–AES meeting in Niamey on 8 July 2026, pledging continued support for strengthening the force's operational capabilities.²² The Africa Corps presence and footprint, however, vary across the three countries.

The Wagner Group first arrived in the Sahel in 2021, through its deployment to Mali to support combat operations against jihadist and separatist insurgents. The transition to the Africa Corps was gradual and formally concluded on 6 June 2025, when the Wagner Group announced that its mission in Mali had come to an end.²³ In 2026, Mali was the only state where the Africa Corps conducted counterterrorism operations, in collaboration with the national armed forces. They are also reported to be delivering training in areas such as weapons handling, intelligence, and operational procedures.²⁴ Estimates vary, but as of April 2026, approximately 1,500–2,500 Africa Corps personnel were deployed in Mali.²⁵

By contrast, Burkina Faso's junta leader, Ibrahim Traoré, was initially hesitant to invite foreign troops to tackle the country's security challenges. However, following a coup attempt in September 2023 and a deterioration in the domestic security situation, he opened the door to a limited number of Russian troops. Burkina Faso thus became the first country to formally host the Africa Corps under a bilateral agreement with Russia. Although the contingent was reportedly intended to

17 Arieff et al. *Russia's Security Operations in Africa*.

18 These include Matan al-Sarra, al-Khadim, al-Jufra, Brak al-Shati, al-Wigh, Tamanhint, and Ghardabiya. McGregor, Andrew. "Russia Increasing Military Presence in Africa by Reviving Desert Airbase in the Libyan Sahara." *Jamestown*, 14 April 2025; Yezza, Hicham. "Explainer: Russia's Wagner presence in Libya." *BBC*, 24 June 2023.

19 Radio France Internationale. "Libya's Al-Khadim airbase becomes a hub for Russian arms in the Sahel." 23 June 2025.

20 As was the case under Wagner, the wider network relies on a mix of state-owned and private aircraft. Garcia, Margaux. "Routes and Ramifications Tracking Russian Military Flights to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger." *C4ADS*. 12 August 2026.

21 Notte, Hanna. *Putin's New Frontier: The Prospects and Limitations of Africa Corps*. CNS Occasional Paper no. 67. Monterey, CA: James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, September 2025, p. 9; African Initiative. "Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger create joint forces to fight terrorists." 7 March 2024.

22 Ouedraogo, Souleymane. "AES–Russie: Communiqué conjoint de la 2e session des consultations diplomatiques." *AcoNews.net*. 9 July 2026.

23 Notte, *Putin's New Frontier*, p. 8.

24 Timbuktu Institute. *Russian repositioning In The Sahel From Wagner To Africa Corps*. Dakar: Timbuktu Institute, July 2025.

25 Arieff et al. *Russia's Security Operations in Africa*; The Sentry. *Doubling Down*, p. 9.

expand to 300 personnel, there is no confirmation that such an increase has taken place.²⁶ Africa Corps-affiliated sources stated that around 100 Africa Corps personnel arrived in late January 2024. Although the contingent was reportedly intended to expand to 300 personnel, there is no confirmation that such an increase has taken place. According to Kremlin-linked media, the troops are tasked with training Burkinabé forces, securing key routes and high-risk areas, and protecting the regime.²⁷

The Africa Corps presence in Niger is more comparable to its role in Burkina Faso than to its larger, more operationally extensive deployment in Mali. The first approximately 100 Africa Corps personnel arrived in Niger in April 2024, accompanied by military materiel, including air defence systems.²⁸ They were stationed at Air Base 101 in Niamey, alongside US troops, who remained there until completing their withdrawal in August 2024 following Niger's termination of its bilateral defence agreement after the 2023 coup.²⁹ The Africa Corps have primarily been involved in training Nigerien troops, but are also reported to have advisers embedded within the country's intelligence service.³⁰ In January 2026, they also assisted the Nigerien army to repel attacks against the international airport in Niamey and Air Base 101.³¹

Although the Africa Corps has expanded since 2023, there is a growing view that Russia's appeal in this regard may already have peaked. This perception has been reinforced by recent setbacks in Mali, where the Africa Corps, alongside the Malian army, failed to repel coordinated attacks by jihadist and separatist rebels in late April 2026, suffering significant losses, including a helicopter, its crew, and its passengers, a mobile combat group, and being forced to withdraw from key

locations, including the city of Kidal.³² At the same time, both Russian and Malian actors have engaged in sustained disinformation efforts aimed at deflecting responsibility, particularly by accusing Ukraine and Western countries of supporting the attacking groups.³³ As Mali is often perceived as the Africa Corps' "first major test," it remains to be seen how these developments will affect its presence there and neighbouring states' demand for its services.³⁴

6.4 Equatorial Guinea and ports in Benin, Guinea, and Togo

In November 2024, approximately 200 Africa Corps personnel were deployed to Equatorial Guinea to help protect President Teodoro Obiang and his regime, as well as to train elite forces.³⁵ Few additional details are available, but the deepening of Russian military ties with Equatorial Guinea is also reflected in the 2025 agreements on simplified port entry and on strengthened access to the ports of Malabo and Bata, as discussed above. Equatorial Guinea, like nearby countries such as Guinea, Togo, and Benin, is thus strategically important to Russia due to its major ports, which can facilitate the delivery of military equipment and export of goods to other countries in the region with which Russia maintains security cooperation.

The port of Conakry in Guinea, for instance, appears to have served as a key logistics hub for military deliveries to the Africa Corps in Mali. According to the US-based think tank The Sentry, at least three large military shipments, including trucks, tanks, armoured vehicles, and other military equipment, transited via

26 Bryjka and Czerep, *Africa Corps*, pp. 17–18; Bartosiewicz, Miłosz and Żochowski, Piotr. "The Wagner forces under a new flag: Russia's Africa Corps in Burkina Faso." *Centre for Eastern Studies*, 31 January 2024; African Initiative. Telegram Post. 24 January 2024, 12:39.

27 African Initiative [@africaninitiative]. "On Wednesday at 14:00. . ." [translated from Russian]. Telegram. 24 January 2024, 12:39.

28 Voice of America. "Russian advisors, equipment arrive in Niger." 5 May 2024.

29 Stewart, Phil and Ali, Idrees. "Russian troops enter base housing US military in Niger, US official says." 3 May 2024.

30 Notte, Hanna. "Russia Is Shrewdly Playing the Long Game in Africa." *War on the Rocks*, 17 September 2025; Global Initiative. *After the fall: Russian influence on Africa's Illicit Economies Post-Wagner*. February 2025. Geneva: Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, p. 33.

31 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. "Press release on terrorist attack at Niamey International Airport." 2 February 2026.

32 See, for example, Reynolds et al., *Russia in Africa*; Moisseenko, Alexander. "Russia is 'largely defeated' from Mali to Syria, France's foreign minister says." *Euromaidan Press*, 18 May 2026; Meduza. "In Mali, rebels shot down a helicopter of the Afrika Korps of the Russian Defense Ministry, z-public reported. The crew was killed" [translated from Russian]. 26 April 2026.

33 Obadare, Ebenezer. "Mali Is the Linchpin of West Africa – Now It's Under Jihadist Siege." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 May 2026.

34 Brown, Frances Z. and Reynolds, Nate. "Introduction." In Reynolds, Nate; Brown, Frances Z.; Wehrey, Frederic; and Weiss, Andrew S. (eds.). *Russia in Africa: Examining Moscow's Influence and Its Limits*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2026, p. 4.

35 Africa Defence Forum. "Russian Activities in Equatorial Guinea Raise Concern." 17 February 2026; Binnie, Jeremy. "Russian contingent in Equatorial Guinea breaks cover." *Janes*, 13 May 2025.

Conakry in the first half of 2025.³⁶ However, Russia also appears to be diversifying its use of regional ports, moving beyond the established logistics corridor through Conakry. Lomé in Togo, in particular, seems to be growing in importance. In July 2026, the US-sanctioned Russian cargo ship *Mikhail Britnev* docked there carrying what appeared to be a large shipment of military vehicles. Satellite imagery analysed by experts indicated that the cargo was consistent with vehicles seen arriving in Bamako roughly two weeks later. Malian state television further reported that the convoy had travelled from the port of Lomé across Togo and through Burkina Faso before reaching the Malian capital.³⁷ Russian officials have previously identified Lomé as a potential logistics gateway to the Sahel, for instance pointing out that it is the largest and deepest port in West Africa.³⁸ Yet, the use of Lomé is noteworthy as the route to Bamako is considerably longer than the established route from Conakry. Contemporary reports claimed that Guinea had refused *Mikhail Britnev* access to Conakry, although this remains unconfirmed.³⁹ The shift may also reflect broader Russian strategic considerations, as the Lomé route may avoid exposure to Islamist terrorist activity along the more vulnerable western Malian routes as

well as potential capacity constraints at Conakry port. It may also reflect Moscow's interest in creating greater logistical redundancy.⁴⁰ It should also be noted that airbases in Togo seem to be used as logistics points for deliveries to the AES countries, further highlighting the country's logistical relevance.⁴¹

As shown in Map 2, Russia's Africa Corps has thus been active across West, Central, and North Africa, with recent reports also indicating a limited presence in Madagascar. While its primary footprint remains in the Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali, its presence in and interest in coastal states and ports along the Gulf of Guinea appear to be growing. Although the entity largely evolved from the Wagner Group, it demonstrates significant differences, most notably through its much closer integration into the Russian state and military chain of command and a generally less offensive, more risk-averse posture, with greater emphasis on training, advisory roles, and regime protection than on direct combat. Despite the deteriorating security situation in Mali and Niger throughout 2025 and 2026, and certain setbacks experienced by the Africa Corps in Mali in early 2026, it remains too early to determine the impact on its overall regional influence.

36 The deliveries were reportedly conducted openly under the Russian flag, indicating close relations between Russia and Guinea, another coup affected, military-led state in the region. The Sentry. *Doubling Down*, pp. 6–8.

37 Murphy, Matt. “Russian ship defies sanctions to send military vehicles to Mali.” *BBC*. 1 August 2026.

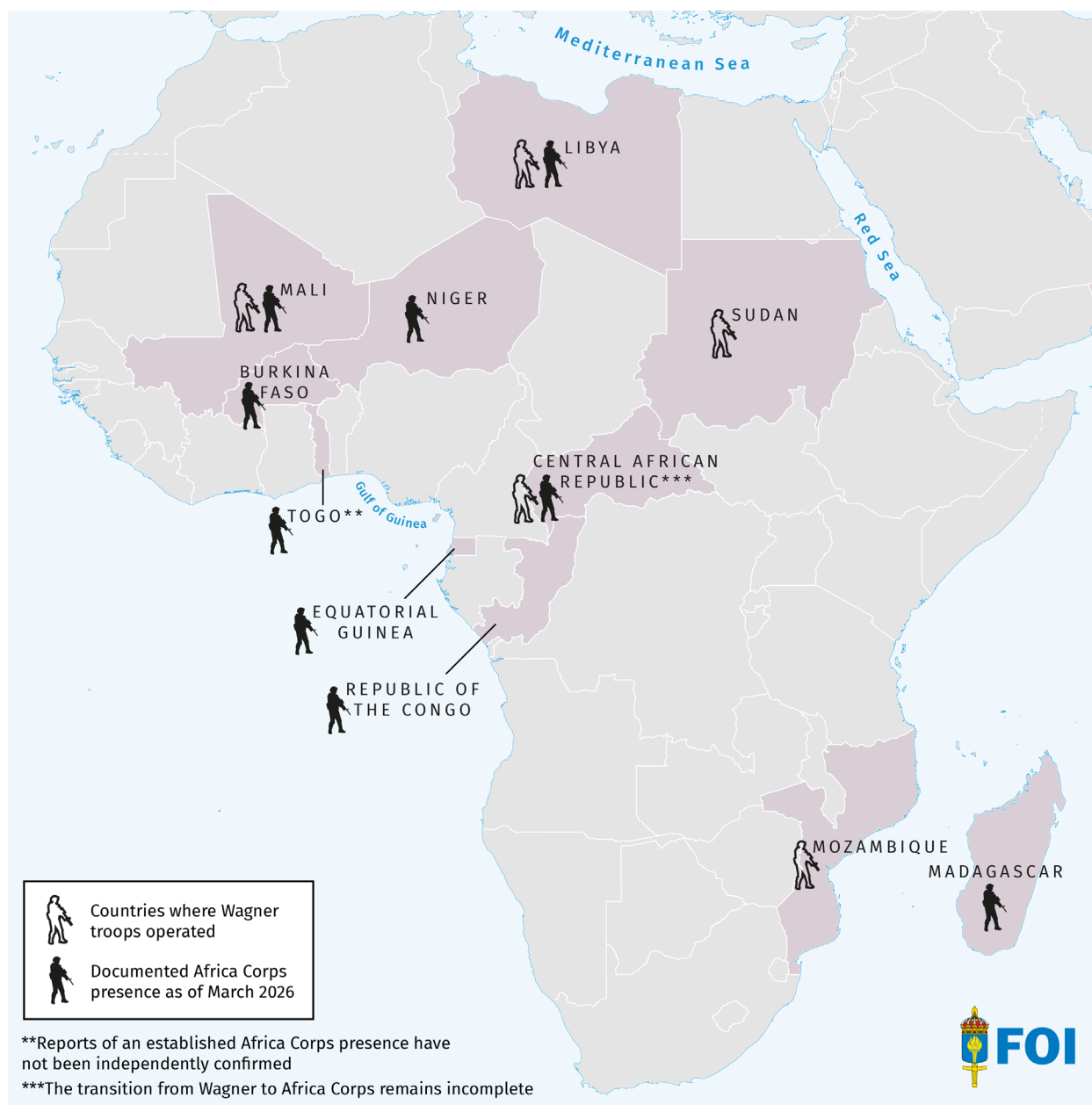
38 In March 2026, Russia's Ambassador to Benin and Togo said that Moscow was considering the establishment of a logistics terminal in Lomé through which Russian ships could deliver cargo destined for landlocked countries in West Africa and the wider Sahara-Sahel region. African Initiative. “‘The Russian Embassy in Lomé will resume work in the coming months.’ Interview with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Benin and Togo concurrently” [translated from Russian]. 10 March 2026.

39 Akpa, Godfrey. “Mali – Pourquoi les blindés russes transitent désormais par le Togo, après le refus de la Guinée.” *IciLome*. 24 July 2026.

40 Karr, DeAngelo, and Ford, “Russia Operationalizes Military Presence in Togo.”

41 Maillard, “Mercenaires et navires de guerre.”

Map 2 Wagner and Africa Corps presence in Africa



Source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of March 2026. Author's own compilation of port calls. See the Appendix for the full list of port visits and sources.

7. Concluding remarks

THIS REPORT INVESTIGATES HOW Russia's military engagement in Africa has evolved during the 2020s and how it serves Russia's broader strategic objectives. To this end, it examines Russian foreign and military policy, military-security cooperation agreements, naval engagement, arms transfers, and paramilitary engagement, as well as how these different dimensions of military engagement interact. An overview of the different forms of Russian military engagement across African countries is provided in Map 3.

7.1 Overlapping interests and the interplay of military engagement

Russia's strategic interests in Africa are multidimensional, encompassing political, military, and economic objectives that often overlap. At the most fundamental level, African states play an important role in one of Russia's overarching foreign policy objectives: the emergence of a multipolar world order in which Russia constitutes one of the leading poles. This objective, together with Russia's broader turn away from the West and towards the "world majority," of which African states constitute an important part, has become more pronounced during the 2020s, and particularly since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

During the early 2020s, Russia increasingly sought to project military power in and from Africa through a range of means. Russia's different forms of engagement are often closely connected and mutually reinforcing. The presence of Wagner and the Africa Corps in countries across the Sahel, West, and Central Africa, as well as in Sudan, has, among other things, helped strengthen political ties and provided Russia with opportunities to demonstrate that it is not internationally isolated, promote its worldview and its narrative of the war in Ukraine, garner support for its positions in multilateral fora, sustain its arms exports, circumvent sanctions, and, not least, counter Western influence. Libya is a particularly illustrative case of overlapping interests and presence. Russia's engagement has been driven in part by political objectives, including support for Haftar, while the country's location also gives it strategic value as a

platform in the Mediterranean and as a logistical hub for Russia's activities in the Sahel.

This report illustrates that Russia's more opportunistic paramilitary approach is only one dimension of a broader military and security engagement on the continent. Russia also seeks traditional military advantages from its military presence in Africa, including signaling great-power status and projecting power through military presence. This is especially evident in the naval domain, where Russia seeks to reclaim elements of the Soviet Union's historical maritime stature, a forward presence, safeguard maritime routes, enable military operations, and facilitate cooperation between its different fleets.

Russia's naval presence also serves a range of other, partly overlapping, purposes. Patterns of port calls provide useful indications of Russia's political and military interests in Africa, although their primary purposes seem to vary across different subregions. The Mediterranean, and thus ports in the North African states bordering it, holds particular strategic importance for the Russian Navy. This is reflected in patterns of port calls and naval exercises, with Algeria standing out in particular. A permanent or recurring naval presence in the Mediterranean, for example, enables Russia to operate close to NATO's southern flank and project power towards Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, and helps connect the operations of its different fleets. At the same time, maintaining a visible presence in the Mediterranean, as well as in other seas bordering Africa, serves to demonstrate Russia's status and ambitions as a global naval power. Another example is the long-standing ambition to establish a military foothold near the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden, which remains a key objective in the region for the Russian Navy.

Recurring visits by Russian warships to other African ports also suggest a broader strategic naval interest in the region. This includes supporting long-range naval operations and conducting exercises with influential African states, as reflected, for example, in its naval relations with South Africa. By contrast, Russia's naval presence around the Gulf of Guinea appears to be more closely linked to the logistical requirements of the Africa Corps operating in the Sahel. More broadly, Russia's engagement with Atlantic-facing states in West and

Central Africa again demonstrates the interconnected nature of its military engagement in Africa, including security cooperation, naval visits and port access, arms transfers, and Africa Corps deployments.

Thus, while many military-security agreements have remained limited in their practical implementation, others have provided a framework for considerably deeper forms of military engagement, including access to military infrastructure. Although the aggregated numbers should be interpreted with caution, as the existence of an agreement says relatively little about the practical depth of a bilateral military relationship, the continued signing of such agreements is nevertheless significant. Having concluded military-security cooperation agreements with well over half of the states in Africa, Russia appears to attach considerable importance to establishing and maintaining military relationships across the region.

7.2 Looking ahead

Russia is likely to continue to project military power in and from Africa through a range of means. With the more formalised structure of the Africa Corps, and thus greater Kremlin control, combined with its still comparatively less expeditionary ambitions, it is likely that the different dimensions of Russia's military engagement on the continent will continue to grow more interconnected. However, the presence of the Africa Corps also illustrates the extent to which Russian actors can only expand where governments are willing to engage with them. In more unstable contexts, particularly in the Sahel and Central Africa, Russian actors have built influence by exploiting political instability and weak state structures, while such an approach is less feasible in more stable states, including those in Southern Africa. Several Southern African states have long-standing ties with Russia dating back to the Soviet period, but these relationships have generally not translated into the kind of paramilitary presence seen elsewhere on the continent.¹

In countries facing greater political and security instability, the recent setback in Mali may indicate challenges for the Africa Corps' future expansion, although its long-term implications remain unclear. While these developments may damage its image, their significance depends partly on expectations of the Africa Corps' role, whether as a provider of training, regime security, or

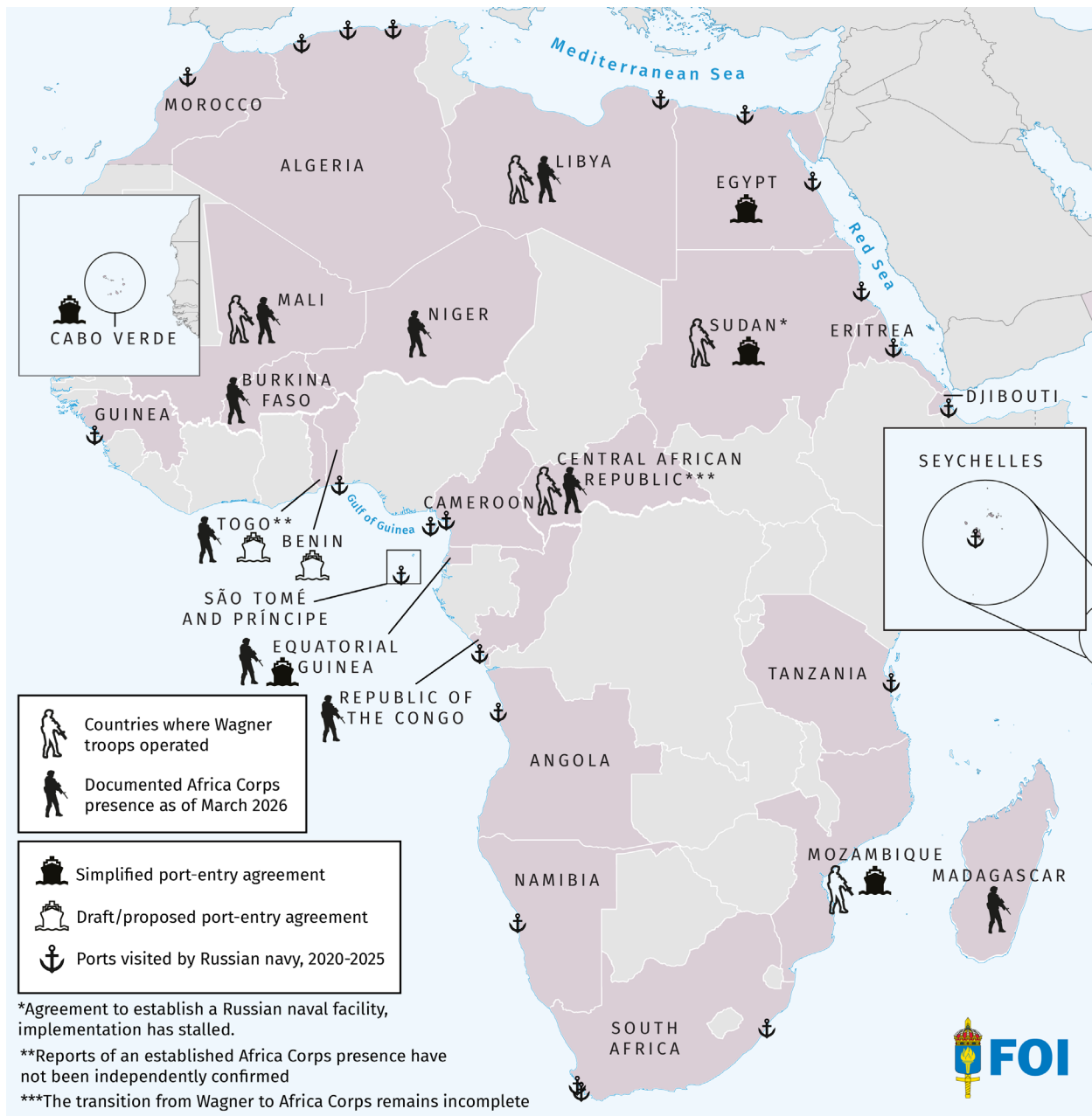
direct combat support. Moreover, limited access to alternative security partners may increase some military-led or authoritarian regimes' reliance on the Africa Corps. Where the Africa Corps is invited, future cooperation is likely to focus on regime security and training rather than broader combat operations, particularly given the Africa Corps' greater risk aversion compared to Wagner. The Central African Republic government's reluctance to transition to the Africa Corps also suggests that not all recipient states perceive the new model as being as attractive as Wagner's.

Russia's recent push for agreements and port access along the Gulf of Guinea likely forms part of Russia's more extensive regional ambitions for the Africa Corps and is likely to remain a priority. Whether Russia can convert different forms of opportunistic ties into more institutionalised and long-term partnerships may become an important test for its future role in Africa, particularly in competition with other external actors. Despite a slight decline in North Africa, arms exports to Africa are likely to remain important to Russia, not only economically, but as a means of building long-term military relationships and dependencies. Thus, arms transfers create foundations for both more conventional military cooperation and the presence of the Africa Corps, which may in turn reinforce opportunities for further arms exports.

Finally, an important takeaway from this report is that Russia's military interest in Africa extends beyond its paramilitary activities. For the Russian Navy, the Mediterranean and Red Seas will remain strategically important. The long-standing ambition to establish a military foothold near the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden will likely remain a key objective in the region irrespective of the trajectory of the Africa Corps. At the same time, its realisation will continue to depend on political opportunities and practical constraints on the ground. Russia's shift away from the West is unlikely to be merely a temporary response to the current geopolitical confrontation. Rather, it reflects a more fundamental reorientation of Russian foreign policy and its approach to the international order. Russia's short-term interests in Africa may change, including which African countries it cooperates with, as may its capacity to pursue these interests. However, the broader strategic relevance of maintaining and expanding relations with countries in Africa is likely to persist. Military and security cooperation constitutes an important element of this long-term engagement.

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Map 3 Forms of Russian military engagement in Africa



Source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as of March 2026. Author's own compilation of port calls. See the Appendix for the full list of port visits and sources.

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Appendix

Military-security cooperation agreements

Note on method and criteria: These include agreements in force or provisionally applied as well as agreements that have been signed since 1 January 2020, as available in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs treaty database as of 20 March 2026. A wide definition of military-security cooperation agreement is applied, encompassing, for instance, agreements on simplified port calls and representation offices within African ministries. The data set below also includes various supplementary agreements, such as agreements on the protection of rights to the results of intellectual activity arising from existing military-technical cooperation. These supplementary agreements, however, are not included in the total number of agreements reported in the main text, as they supplement or regulate aspects of agreements already in place rather than constituting separate agreements on military-technical cooperation. It should also be noted that, although the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mid.ru) provides relatively extensive information, not all agreements may be publicly available. The figures presented in this report should therefore be understood as the minimum number of agreements identified as having been signed between Russia and African states.

Table 1 appendix Military security cooperation agreements between Russia and African states

Country	Signed	Title	Status	Note
Namibia	1996-05-30	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Namibia on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Eritrea	1997-02-14	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the State of Eritrea on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Ethiopia	1998-02-09	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the establishment of a representative office of the ministry of defence of the Russian Federation at the ministry of defence of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the conditions for its stay in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Effective	
Algeria	1999-04-01	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1999-07-21	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on military-technical cooperation	Effective	Delayed entry into force: 2019-03-29
Libya (before 2011)	1999-10-14	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the Supreme People's Committee of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Chad	2000-08-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Chad on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Cabo Verde	2000-11-17	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Cabo Verde on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Republic of the Congo,	2001-07-27	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of the Congo on military-technical cooperation	Effective	

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Country	Signed	Title	Status	Note
Gabon	2002-07-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Gabonese Republic on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Mali	2003-03-25	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Mali on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Uganda	2003-11-18	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Uganda on military-technical cooperation	Effective (but effective date 2019-05-24)	Delayed entry into force: 2019-05-24
Angola	2006-10-31	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Angola on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Burkina Faso	2006-11-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of Burkina Faso on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Mali	2006-12-21	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Mali on the provision of military-technical assistance to the Republic of Mali	Temporarily applies	
Senegal	2007-09-14	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Senegal on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Namibia	2010-05-20	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Namibia on the mutual protection of rights to the results of intellectual activity used and obtained in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation	Effective	Supplementary agreement to an existing agreement
Benin	2010-10-05	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Benin on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Equatorial Guinea	2011-06-06	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on military-technical cooperation	Temporarily applies	
Namibia	2011-09-07	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Namibia on the mutual protection of classified information	Effective	
Morocco	2012-02-09	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco on military cooperation 20120013	Effective	
Morocco	2012-02-09	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco on military-technical cooperation, 20120012	Effective	
Djibouti	2012-09-27	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Djibouti on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Cameroon	2015-04-15	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Cameroon on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Equatorial Guinea	2015-07-20	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on the simplified procedure for the entry of warships of the Russian Federation into the ports of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea	Temporarily applies	
Zimbabwe	2015-10-28	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Zimbabwe on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Egypt	2015-11-24	Protocol between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the simplified procedure for the entry of warships into the ports of the Russian Federation and the Arab Republic of Egypt	Effective	

Country	Signed	Title	Status	Note
Mozambique	2015-12-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Mozambique on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Morocco	2016-03-15	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco on the mutual protection of classified information in the military and military-technical fields	Effective	
Rwanda	2016-10-25	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Rwanda on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Tunisia	2016-11-16	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Tunisia on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Swaziland (Eswatini)	2017-02-08	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Swaziland on military cooperation	Effective	
Swaziland (Eswatini)	2017-02-15	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Swaziland on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Zambia	2017-04-13	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Zambia on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Chad	2017-08-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Chad on military cooperation	Effective	
Niger	2017-08-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Niger on military cooperation	Effective	
Niger	2017-08-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Niger on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Nigeria	2017-08-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on military cooperation	Effective	
Morocco	2017-10-11	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco on the mutual protection of the results of intellectual activity and the protection of intellectual property in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation	Effective	Supplementary agreement to an existing agreement
Tanzania	2018-01-11	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the United Republic of Tanzania on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Mozambique	2018-04-04	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Mozambique on the simplified procedure for the entry of warships of the Russian Federation into the ports of the Republic of Mozambique	Temporarily applies	
Cabo Verde	2018-06-27	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Cabo Verde on a simplified procedure for the entry of warships of the Russian Federation into the territorial sea and internal waters of the Republic of Cabo Verde	Effective	
Burkina Faso	2018-08-21	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of Burkina Faso on military cooperation	Effective	
Sierra Leone	2018-08-22	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on military-technical cooperation	Effective	

Country	Signed	Title	Status	Note
Burundi	2018-08-23	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Burundi on military cooperation	Effective	
Botswana	2018-08-28	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Botswana on cooperation in the field of defence	Effective	
Madagascar	2018-09-28	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Madagascar on military cooperation	Effective	
Guinea-Bissau	2018-11-20	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Rwanda	2019-01-10	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Rwanda on the mutual protection of the results of intellectual activity and the protection of intellectual property in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation	Effective	
The Central African Republic	2019-04-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Central African Republic on the establishment of a representative office of the ministry of defence of the Russian Federation at the ministry of national defence and restoration of the army of the Central African Republic	Effective	
Sudan	2019-05-08	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Sudan on a simplified procedure for the entry of warships into the ports of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sudan	Temporarily applies	
Sudan	2019-05-09	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Sudan on military cooperation	Effective	
Sudan	2019-05-09	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Sudan on the establishment of a representative office of the ministry of defence of the Russian Federation under the ministry of defence of the Republic of Sudan	Effective	
Mali	2019-06-25	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Mali on military cooperation	Effective	
Sudan	2019-07-23	Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sudan on the establishment of a logistics centre for the Russian Navy on the territory of the Republic of Sudan	Temporarily applies	
Uganda	2021-08-23	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Uganda on the mutual protection of the results of intellectual activity and the protection of intellectual property in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation	Effective	Supplementary agreement to an existing agreement
Ethiopia	2021-08-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the mutual protection of the results of intellectual activity and the protection of intellectual property in the course of bilateral military-technical cooperation	Effective	Supplementary agreement to an existing agreement
Madagascar	2022-01-18	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Madagascar on military-technical cooperation	Effective	
Burundi	2022-08-15	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Burundi on military-technical cooperation	Effective	

Country	Signed	Title	Status	Note
Uganda	2022-08-15	Protocol amending the agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Uganda on military-technical cooperation of November 18, 2003	Effective	Amending protocol to an existing agreement
São Tomé and Príncipe	2024-04-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe on military cooperation	Temporarily applies	
São Tomé and Príncipe	2024-04-24	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe on military-technical cooperation	Not in force	
The Central African Republic	2024-08-13	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Central African Republic on military-technical cooperation	Unclear	Listed as both "Not in force" and with an effective date of 20 February 2025.
Equatorial Guinea	2025-03-03	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea concerning the use of the ports of Malabo and Bata	Not in force	
Togo	2025-03-27	Agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Togolese Republic on military cooperation	Not in force	

Port calls by Russian Navy Vessels to African ports

Note on method and selection criteria: The dataset was compiled through systematic keyword searches relating to port visits, African ports, and individual vessels of the Russian Navy. The dataset draws on a range of open sources, including news reporting, military blogs and analyses, and official statements issued by, for example, ministries of defence and naval authorities. A list of the sources used to identify and verify each port call is provided in the dataset below. These searches were supplemented by the use of AI-assisted search tools, including ChatGPT and Google AI, particularly to facilitate searches in languages not spoken by the author, such as Russian, Arabic, and French. Where AI-assisted searches were used to identify potentially relevant sources, the underlying sources were subsequently reviewed and the information carefully translated, cross-checked, and triangulated. AI-generated content was not used as a source in itself.

The dataset should not be regarded as exhaustive, as some port calls may not have been identified through the methodology described above. Nevertheless, the systematic use of multiple sources and the triangulation of the information provide a reliable basis for identifying the overall patterns of port call activity during the period under study. Only port calls involving an African counterpart have been included in the dataset. Port calls in European overseas territories or exclaves, such as Ceuta, have therefore been excluded. It should be noted that the exact date of a port call can sometimes be difficult to determine, as reporting may vary between sources. However, the approximate dates provided have been cross-checked against multiple sources.

The figure reported in the main text refers to individual port call events. As some port calls involved multiple vessels, the total number of Russian naval vessels visiting African ports during the period under study is considerably higher than the number of port call events reported in the text. See the full dataset below for further details.

Table 2 appendix Russian naval vessels port calls to Africa 2014 – 2019

Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2014-05-22	Victoria	Seychelles	Marshal Shaposhnikov; Irkut; Alatau	Pacific Fleet	Destroyer; Oiler; Rescue tug	https://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/555/Marshall%2BShaposhnikov%2Breturns%2Bto%2BSeychelles%2C%2Bleading%2Ba%2Bgroupp%2Bof%2BRussian%2Bnaval%2Bships%2Bto%2Bthe%2Bislands

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Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2015-04-11	Djibouti	Djibouti	Priazovye	Black Sea Fleet	Intelligence ship	https://www.interfax.ru/world/435751
2015-06-06	Alexandria	Egypt	Moskva; Samum; Alexander Shabalin; Ivan Bubnoc; MB-31	Black Sea Fleet	Cruiser; Hovercraft; Landing ship; Replenishment oiler; Tug	https://rg.ru/2015/06/06/flot-anons.html?
2015-07-10	Luanda	Angola	Moskva; Pytlivy; Shakhter; Ivan Bubnov	Black Sea Fleet	Cruiser; Frigate; Rescue tug	https://www.navaltoday.com/2015/07/10/russian-navys-vessels-sail-to-luanda-angola
2015-07-21	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Moskva; Pytlivy; Shakhter	Black Sea Fleet	Cruiser; Frigate; Rescue tug	https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/2133883
2015-07-30	Luanda	Angola	Smolny	Baltic Fleet	Training ship	https://portnews.ru/news/203859/
2015-08-03	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Smolny	Baltic Fleet	Training ship	https://portnews.ru/news/204231/
2015-09-02	Oran	Algeria	Novorossiysk	Black Sea Fleet	Submarine (Improved Kilo class)	https://lenta.ru/news/2015/09/02/oran/ ; https://www.warandpeace.ru/ru/news/view/104692/?
2015-09-11	Djibouti	Djibouti	Epron	Black Sea Fleet	Rescue vessel	https://portnews.ru/news/206353/
2015-09-29	Luanda	Angola	Smolny	Baltic Fleet	Training ship	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/northwest/news/uchebnyy-korabl-baltflota-smolnyy-otpravilsya-iz-angoly-v-ispaniyu
2015-10-07	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Smolny	Baltic Fleet	Training ship	https://portnews.ru/news/207914/
2015-11-17	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2015-11-25	Adabiya (Suez)	Egypt	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2015-12-09	Victoria	Seychelles	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2015-12-23	Mahatzanga	Madagascar	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2015-12-29	Maputo	Mozambique	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2016-01-05	Cape Town	South Africa	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2016-03-04	Cape Town	South Africa	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2016-03-14	Luanda	Angola	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2016-03-19	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://synop.ru/experience/?element_id=435&section_id=0
2016-06-06	Oran	Algeria	Igor Belousov	Pacific Fleet	Rescue vessel	https://portnews.ru/news/223925/

Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2016-08-17	Djibouti	Djibouti	Yaroslav Mudry	Baltic Fleet	Frigate	https://qazinform.com/news/russian-warship-yaroslav-mudry-starts-anti-piracy-mission-in-gulf-of-aden_a2938847 ; https://www.almrail.net/?p=6787&
2016-10-30	Oran	Algeria	Sergey-Osipov	Northern Fleet	Replenishment oiler	https://www.algerie360.com/le-porte-avions-russe-a-atteint-les-cotes-algeriennes/
2017-01-01	Djibouti	Djibouti	Irtys	Pacific Fleet	Hospital ship	https://primamedia.ru/news/596302/
2017-02-09	Alexandria	Egypt	Nikolay Filchenkov	Black Sea Fleet	Landing ship	https://navy-korabel.livejournal.com/181438.html
2017-03-01	Victoria	Seychelles	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://portnews.ru/news/235082/
2017-03-08	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://portnews.ru/news/print/235593/
2017-03-18	Pemba	Mozambique	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/northwest/news/otryad-korabley-severnogo-flota-posetil-mozambik?
2017-03-20	Cape Town	South Africa	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://sldinfo.com/2017/03/russian-naval-task-force-visits-cape-town/
2017-03-25	Walvis Bay	Namibia	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://www.namibiansun.com/news/the-russians-have-landed?u
2017-04-02	Luanda	Angola	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://portnews.ru/news/236770/
2017-04-07	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://portnews.ru/news/236770/
2017-04-18	Praia	Cabo Verde	Severomorsk; Altai; Dubna	Northern Fleet	Destroyer; Rescue vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/58f5ec299a7947704c6d8b00
2017-06-12	Djibouti	Djibouti	Admiral Vladimirov	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/northwest/news/issledovatel'skoe-sudno-baltflota-rf-pribylo-v-port-dzhibuti
2017-07-10	Djibouti	Djibouti	Admiral Vladimirov	Baltic Fleet	Oceanographic research vessel	https://portnews.ru/news/print/242240
2017-10-01	Victoria	Seychelles	Yantar	Northern Fleet	Intelligence/ research vessel	https://defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/russian-intelligence-ship-visited-cape-town
2017-10-19	Alexandria	Egypt	Vice-Admiral Kulakov	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://tass.com/defense/971516
2017-10-30	Port Louis	Mauritius	Yantar	Northern Fleet	Intelligence/ Research vessel	https://mauritius.mid.ru/en/press-centre/news/russian_oceanographic_vessel_yantar_visits_mauritius/
2017-11-12	Cape Town	South Africa	Yantar	Northern Fleet	Intelligence/ Research vessel	https://defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/russian-intelligence-ship-visited-cape-town
2017-11-17	Djibouti	Djibouti	Soobrazitelny	Baltic Fleet	Corvette	https://portnews.ru/news/print/249088/

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Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2017-11-28	Djibouti	Djibouti	Soobrazitelny; Kola	Baltic Fleet	Corvette; Oiler	https://www.korabel.ru/news/comments/korabli_baltiyskogo_flota_pokinuli_port_dzhibuti.html?
2018-08-06	Djibouti	Djibouti	Yaroslav Mudry	Baltic Fleet	Patrol ship	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news/487597
2018-08-15	Algiers	Algeria	Marshal Ustinov; Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Cruiser; Destroyer	https://ria.ru/20180815/1526618076.html?
2018-08-15	Port Sudan	Sudan	Yaroslav Mudry	Baltic Fleet	Patrol ship	https://ria.ru/20180815/1526591209.html?
2018-10-05	Victoria	Seychelles	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://www.tv21.ru/news/2018/10/05/bpk-severomorsk-zashel-v-port-viktoriya-na-seyshelskikh-ostrovakh?
2018-10-15	Pemba	Mozambique	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://ria.ru/20181015/1530675314.htm
2018-10-21	Antsiranana	Madagascar	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://www.hibiny.ru/severomorsk/news/item-bolshey-protivolodochnyy-korabl-severnogo-flota-severomorsk-zashel-v-respubliku-madagaskar-178142/?
2018-10-29	Victoria	Seychelles	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news/494581
2018-11-12	Djibouti	Djibouti	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://www.tv21.ru/news/2018/11/14/severomorsk-zavershil-delovoy-zakhod-v-dzhibuti
2018-12-11	Djibouti	Djibouti	Severomorsk	Northern Fleet	Destroyer	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news/497489
2019-03-25	Djibouti	Djibouti	Admiral Gorshkov; Nikolay Chiker; Elbrus; Kama	Northern Fleet	Frigate; Rescue tug; Logistics vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news_eng/326124?
2019-07-06	Paria	Cabo Verde	Admiral Gorshkov; Nikolay Chiker; Elbrus; Kama	Northern Fleet	Frigate; Rescue tug; Logistics vessel; Replenishment oiler	https://www.tv21.ru/news/2019/07/05/fregat-admiral-gorshkov-posetit-ostrova-zelyonogo-mysa?
2019-08-26	Algiers	Algeria	Marshal Ustinov	Northern Fleet	Cruiser	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/photo/meropriyatiya_v_zagran_uchrezhdeniyah/1468337/
2019-09-10	Alexandria	Egypt	Marshal Ustinov	Northern Fleet	Cruiser	https://portnews.ru/news/283374/?
2019-11-03	Praia	Cabo Verde	Vyazma; SB-406	Northern Fleet	Replenishment oiler; Rescue Tug	https://portnews.ru/news/286410/?
2019-11-08	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Marshal Ustinov	Northern Fleet	Cruiser	https://www.tv21.ru/news/2019/11/08/marshal-ustinov-zashyol-v-ekvatorialnuyu-gvineyu
2019-11-21	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Makarov; Vasily Bykov; SB 739	Black Sea Fleet	Frigate; Patrol ship; Rescue tug	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/ar/coopar24112019.php
2019-11-24	Cape Town	South Africa	Marshal Ustinov; Vyazma; SB-406	Northern Fleet	Cruiser; Replenishment oiler; Rescue tug	https://www.interfax.ru/world/685387
2019-12-17	Bizerte	Tunisia	Perekop	Baltic Fleet	Training ship	https://tass.com/defense/1100197?

Table 3 appendix Russian Warship Port Calls to Africa 2020-2025

Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2020-03-30	Table Bay Harbour, Cape Town	South Africa	Yaroslav Mudry; Yelnya	Baltic	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://defenceweb.co.za/featured/russian-navy-vessels-arrive-in-cape-town-amid-covid-19-lockdown/
2020-04-30	Victoria	Seychelles	Admiral Vladimirsky	Baltic	Oceanographic research vessel	https://seychelles.mid.ru/en/press-centre/news/glimpses_of_a_long_history_of_the_russia_seychelles_relations_by_h_e_ambassador_a_kozhin_published_i/ ; https://rgo.ru/en/activity/redaction/news/the-admiral-vladimirskiy-crossed-the-equator-and-is-moving-towards-kronstadt/
2020-08-11	Algiers	Algeria	Vice-Admiral Kulakov	Northern	Destroyer	https://tass.com/defense/1189289
2021-01-18	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Kasatonov; Nikolay Chiker; Vyazama	Northern	Frigate; Rescue tug; Replenishment oiler	https://defenceweb.co.za/sea-sea/russian-warship-visits-algeria/ ; https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/coopan18012021.php
2021-02-16	Alexandria	Egypt	Admiral Kasatonov; Nikolai Chiker	Northern	Frigate; Rescue tug	https://marineforum.online/en/russian-frigate-visits-egypt/ ; https://defenceweb.co.za/sea-sea/russian-frigate-admiral-kasatonov-visits-egypt/
2021-02-28	Port Sudan	Sudan	Admiral Grigorovich	Black Sea	Frigate	https://english.alarabiya.net/News/africa/2021/02/28/First-Russian-warship-enters-Port-Sudan-ahead-of-plans-to-open-naval-base-Interfax
2021-03-18	Port Sudan	Sudan	Stoikiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://gfsis.org/en/rondeli-russian-military-digest-issue-79-15-march-21-march-2021/
2021-04-10	Port Sudan	Sudan	Ivan Khurs	Black Sea	Intelligence ship	https://gfsis.org/en/rondeli-russian-military-digest-issue-81-29-march-9-may-2021/
2021-04-26	Port Sudan	Sudan	Vasiliy Tatischev	Baltic	Intelligence ship	https://gfsis.org/en/rondeli-russian-military-digest-issue-81-29-march-9-may-2021/
2021-05-05	Port Sudan	Sudan	PM-138	Black Sea	Repair ship	https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/russian-navy-ships-continue-to-visit-sudan
2021-08-16	Algiers	Algeria	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan16082021.php
2021-08-23	Algiers	Algeria	Vice-Admiral Kulakov; Altai; Akadmik Pashin.	Northern	Destroyer; Rescue tug; Replenishment oiler	https://bmpd.livejournal.com/4240041.html ; https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan23082021.php ; https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr23082021.php
2021-11-13	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Grigorovich; Dmitry Rogachev; SB-742	Black Sea	Frigate; Patrol ship; Rescue tug	https://www.armyrecognition.com/archives/archives-naval-defense/naval-defense-2021/russian-navy-warships-to-participate-in-naval-exercise-with-algeria?highlight=WjYdXNzaWEiXQ%3D%3D#google_vignette ; https://en.ypagency.net/243744?

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Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2021-12-03	Alexandria	Egypt	Admiral Grigorovich; Dmitry Rogachev ; SB-742	Black Sea	Frigate; Patrol ship; Rescue tug	https://russianfleetanalysis.blogspot.com/2021/12/russian-forces-in-mediterranean-wk482021.html?
2022-07-17	Algiers	Algeria	Kildin; Vice-Admiral Paromov	Black Sea	Intelligence ship; Replenishment oiler	https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/fr/2022/juillet/cfn17072022fr.php?
2022-10-18	Algiers	Algeria	Stoikiy; Soobrazitelny	Baltic	Corvettes	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan18102022.php
2022-12-10	Alexandria	Egypt	Stoikiy; Soobrazitelny	Baltic	Corvettes	https://egypt.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/o_zakhode_rossiyskikh_voenykh_korabley_v_port_aleksandrii/
2023-02-13	Cape Town	South Africa	Admiral Gorshkov; Kama	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-02-13-controversial-russian-frigate-sails-into-cape-town-harbour-ahead-of-contentious-war-games/ ; https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/14/africa/russian-frigate-south-africa-intl/index.html ; https://tass.com/defense/1576919?
2023-02-17	Durban	South Africa	Admiral Gorshkov; Kama	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://iol.co.za/dailynews/news/2023-02-21-russian-warship-arrives-in-durban-to-join-mosi-ii-naval-exercise/
2023-02-22	Richards Bay	South Africa	Admiral Gorshkov; Kama	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news_eng/390705
2023-08-16	Algiers	Algeria	Kildin SSV-512,	Black Sea	Intelligence ship	https://www.atalayar.com/en/articulo/politics/russian-ship-from-the-black-sea-fleet-docks-in-the-port-of-algiers/20230831152535190288.html
2023-08-27	Algiers	Algeria	Mercury	Black Sea	Corvette	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan27082023.php
2023-11-12	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Grigorovich	Black Sea	Frigate	https://www.interfax.ru/world/931173 ; https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr12112023.php
2023-12-04	Algiers	Algeria	Admiral Grigorovich	Black Sea	Frigate	https://the arabweekly.com/europe-worries-russia-algeria-plan-naval-drills-central-mediterranean ; https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan12122023.php
2024-03-26	Djibouti	Djibouti	Admiral Gorshkov; Kama	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://marineforum.online/en/frigate-admiral-gorshkov-now-in-the-mediterranean-after-round-africa/ ; https://djibouti.mid.ru/ru/poleznaya_informatsiya/press-centre/news/o_zakhode_v_dzhibuti_korabley_vmf_rossii/?
2024-03-28	Massawa	Eritrea	Marshal Shaposhnikov	Pacific	Frigate	https://eritrea.mid.ru/en/press-centre/news/the_president_of_the_state_of_eritrea_visited_the_frigate_of_the_russian_pacific_fleet_marshall_shapo/

Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2024-04-08	Tobruk	Libya	Alexander Otrakovsky; Ivan Gren; Kola	Northern	Landing ship; Oiler	https://defence-blog.com/russia-increases-presence-in-africa/ ; https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4073810?v=pdf
2024-04-13	Safaga	Egypt	Marshal Shaposhnikov	Pacific	Frigate	https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/russian-frigate-crosses-into-mediterranean-sea-through-suez-canal/3191695#
2024-06-10	Alexandria	Egypt	Varyag; Marshal Shaposhnikov	Pacific	Cruiser; Frigate	https://afrinz.ru/en/2024/06/russian-warships-have-entered-the-libyan-port-of-tobruk/
2024-06-18	Tobruk	Libya	Varyag; Marshal Shaposhnikov	Pacific	Cruiser; Frigate	https://afrinz.ru/en/2024/06/russian-warships-have-entered-the-libyan-port-of-tobruk/
2024-07-26	Oran	Algeria	Admiral Gorshkov; Akademik Pashin	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://militarywatchmagazine.com/article/russian-gorshkov-cements-ties-algeria/ ; https://tass.com/defense/1821713
2024-08-29	Cape Town	South Africa	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.military.africa/2024/09/russian-navy-training-ship-smolny-visits-south-africa/
2024-09-04	Wolfish Bay	Namibia	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	Wolfish Bay ; https://fliphtml5.com/jxto/ouun/Namibian_Sun_20240905/
2024-09-10	Luanda	Angola	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news_eng/412784?
2024-09-20	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://tass.com/defense/1845489
2024-09-21	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	Neustrashimy	Baltic	Patrol ship	https://tass.com/politics/1846165
2024-09-21	Douala	Cameroon	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/military/news/627685?
2024-09-26	Casablanca	Morocco	Ivan Gren	Northern	Landing ship	https://afrinz.ru/en/2024/09/northern-fleet-ship-ivan-gren-called-at-a-moroccan-port/
2024-09-27	Cotonou	Benin	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://embassylife.ru/en/2024/10/05/62988/
2024-10-03	Simons town	South Africa	Neustrashimy; Akademik Pashin	Baltic	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://defencweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/russian-navy-frigate-neustrashimy-arrives-in-cape-town/ ; https://tass.com/defense/1852501?
2024-10-10	Walvis Bay	Namibia	Neustrashimy	Baltic	Frigate	https://tass.com/defense/1854813
2024-10-17	Pointe-Noire	Republic of Congo	Neustrashimy	Baltic	Frigate	https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/russia/2024/10/russia-241017-russia-mod02.htm
2024-10-22	Cotonou	Benin	Neustrashimy; Akademik Pashin	Baltic	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://mospat.ru/en/news/92404/ ; https://www.bairdmaritime.com/security/naval/russia-approves-draft-agreement-on-naval-ship-calls-to-benin?
2024-11-10	Algiers	Algeria	Merkuriy	Black Sea	Corvette	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr10112024.php
2024-11-27	Algiers	Algeria	Yantar	Northern	Oceanographic research vessel	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr27112024.php?

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Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2024-12-17	Algiers	Algeria	Yelnya	Baltic	Replenishment oiler	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan17122024..php?
2025-01-11	Algiers	Algeria	Yantar	Northern	Oceanographic research vessel	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr11012025.php
2025-04-06	Alexandria	Egypt	Admiral Golovko; Vyazma	Northern	Frigate; Replenishment oiler	https://en.mehrnews.com/news/230562/Russia-Egypt-conduct-joint-naval-military-drills?
2025-04-16	Algiers	Algeria	Viktor Leonov	Northern	Intelligence ship	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan16042025..php
2025-04-20	Algiers	Algeria	Krasnodar; Eugeny Tchurov	Black Sea	Submarine (Improved Kilo class); Rescue tug	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr20042025.php
2025-05-26	Djen-Djen	Algeria	Vyazama	Northern	Replenishment oiler	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/fr/evenfr26052025.php
2025-06-06	Conakry	Guinea	Boikiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://guinea.mid.ru/en/embassy/actualities/on_the_arrival_of_the_corvette_boikiy_of_the_baltic_fleet_of_the_russian_navy_to_the_port_of_conakry/
2025-06-11	Oran	Algeria	Admiral Grigorovitch	Black Sea	Frigate	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan11062025.php?
2025-07-20	Malabo	Equatorial Guinea	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.military.africa/2025/08/russian-navy-training-vessel-smolny-returns-to-south-africa/
2025-07-23	São Tomé	São Tomé and Príncipe	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.telanon.info/politica/2025/07/25/49555/smolny-atracou-em-sao-tome-e-a-assembleia-nacional-deu-autorizacao-para-treinar-e-formar-a-guarda-costeira/
2025-07-28	Pointe-Noire	Republic of Congo	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://afrinz.ru/en/2025/07/russian-training-ship-smolny-entered-port-in-the-republic-of-the-congo/
2025-08-05	Cape Town	South Africa	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://capetimes.co.za/news/2025-08-08-why-sa-barred-russian-vessel/ ; https://evrimagaci.org/gpt/russian-ship-denied-entry-sparks-south-africa-brics-rift-493480?srltid=AfmBOoqjeRfNU_X55tFBNQ8DxiWRbr4p3U1PiwKXeRnmXSwFRel2686#google_vignette
2025-08-16	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	Smolny	Baltic	Training ship	https://www.military.africa/2025/08/russian-training-ship-smolny-docks-in-dar-es-salaam/
2025-08-31	Algiers	Algeria	Boykiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://afrinz.ru/2025/09/korvet-baltijskogo-flota-sovershil-delovoj-zahod-v-port-alzhira/
2025-09-14	Algiers	Algeria	Novorossiysk; Yakov Grebelsky	Black Sea; Baltic	Submarine (Improved Kilo class) ; Rescue tug	https://afrinz.ru/en/2025/09/russian-navy-detachment-arrives-in-algerian-capital/

Date	Port	Country	Vessel	Fleet	Vessel Type	Example of Source
2025-12-07	Algiers	Algeria	Boykiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://embmoscow.mfa.gov.dz/news-and-press-releases/algerian-russian-military-cooperation-docking-of-the-corvette-boikii-of-the-russian-baltic-fleet-in-the-port-of-algiers
2025-12-18	Algiers	Algeria	Krasnodar; Altay	Black Sea	Submarine (Improved Kilo class); Rescue tug	https://www.mdn.dz/site_cfn/sommaire/actualites/an/evenan18122025.php
2025-12-21	Pointe-Noire	Republic of Congo	Stoykiy; Yelnya	Baltic	Corvette; Replenishment oiler	https://defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/multinational-naval-exercise-between-sa-iran-china-and-russia-scheduled-for-january/
2025-12-31	Walvis Bay	Namibia	Stoykiy; Yelnya	Baltic	Corvette; Replenishment oiler	https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/South-Africa-launches-joint-naval-exercise-with-China--Russia--and-Iran/
2025 (The exact date is unknown)	Alexandria	Egypt	Boikiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://tass.com/defense/2076871 ; https://www1.ru/news/2026/01/27/prosel-43-000-mil-korvet-boikii-baltiiskogo-flota-vernulsia-iz-rekordnoi-ekspedicii.html
2026-01-09	Simons Town	South Africa	Stoykiy; Yelnya	Baltic	Corvette; Replenishment oiler	https://news.usni.org/2026/01/09/chinese-russian-iranian-warships-gather-near-south-africa-for-multilateral-drill
2026-02-04	Victoria	Seychelles	Stoykiy	Baltic	Corvette	https://afrinz.ru/en/2026/02/president-of-seychelles-visits-russian-navy-corvette-stoykiy-in-port-victoria/
2026-03-11	Algiers	Algeria	Severomorsk; Kama	Northern	Destroyer; Replenishment oiler	https://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/sommaire/actualites/an/2026/mars/cfn11032026an.php

