



EMBASSY OF SPAIN IN GHANA

PRESS RELEASE

Accra, 14th March, 2023

Visit of the Spanish Warship ‘Audaz’ and of the Commander of the Operations Command to Ghana

- ‘Audaz’ called at the port of Tema and participated in operational activities in Ghana, a priority for Spain.
- Lieutenant General Francisco Braco Carbó (CMOPS), traveled to Ghana to meet high-level authorities and to see first-hand the activities carried by Spanish forces.

The Offshore Patrol Vessel ESPS ‘Audaz’ called at the port of Tema on March 6, where it carried out military activities with the Ghanaian Armed Forces for six days. In addition, the warship participated in the ‘Flintlock-23’ exercise, supporting a Force of Special Operations located in land. The main goals of the visit were to strengthen cooperations between Ghana and Spain and to promote maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Taking advantage of these events, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco Carbó, Commander of the Operations Command, travelled to Ghana in order to oversee the military activities of the Spanish forces and to establish an agenda of high-level meetings.

Port visit in Tema

Audaz, constructed by Navantia, is one of the four OPVs (Offshore Patrol Vessels) built for the Spanish Navy under the extension of “1st series navy ships”. It was delivered in July 2018, and it has its docking base in Cartagena, Spain. The current staff of ESPS ‘Audaz’ is made up of 77 people. Among them, there are an Operational Security Team

of Marines and a reinforcement of soldiers and seamen for specific capacities. It is commanded by the Captain of Corvette Marcos de Sousa Fuchs.

After having covered more than 8.000 nautical miles since it left Spain last January, the ESPS ‘Audaz’ set course towards Tema (Ghana). Previously, it had participated in the ‘Obangame Express 23’ exercise and it had also visited the ports of Lagos (Nigeria), Pointe Noire (Republic of the Congo) and Luanda (Angola). Audaz’s operations in Ghana fall within the scope of “Foco África 2023” and “Plan Africa”, two strategies of the Spanish Government which consider Ghana a priority of Spain’s foreign policy.

The military cooperation activities carried out with the Ghanaian Armed Forces aimed at improving Ghana’s capacities in fighting terrorism, piracy and other maritime related crimes. The cutting edge equipment of the vessel, together with the high level skills of the Spanish soldiers, were shared with the Ghanaian authorities, who learned about the use of unmanned vehicles such as drones, medical services or various defence mechanisms.

Exercise FLINTLOCK-23 and ESPS ‘AUDAZ’

Audaz also participated in the annual ‘FLINTLOCK’ exercise, organized and directed by the US Special Operations Command for Africa (SOCOMAFRICA). The exercise is designed to enhance the capabilities of Sahel countries to combat terrorist or extremist organizations, illicit trafficking and the flow of foreign fighters. It aims at increasing border security, integrating the Air Forces of host nations in support of Special Operations, as well as adding “Information Operations” into these scenarios. It is the first time that a ship participates in this exercise.

Although special Operation Units from different countries participate in Flintlock, (1300 troops from 30 countries), the ship was the only vessel taking part in the exercise. Furthermore, Spain is participating in Flintlock with additional units from the three Armies and Civil Guard, all working under the leadership of the Commander of the Operations Command, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco (CMOPS).

CMOPS visits Ghana

Taking advantage of the military activities and the strategic importance that Ghana has for Spain, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco Carbó, accompanied by Vice Admiral Alfonso Delgado and the Brigadier General Ángel Herrezuelo, traveled to Ghana to visit the Spanish units and to carry out an agenda of high level meetings with local authorities.

During his stay in Ghana, Lieutenant General Francisco Braco held meetings with the Minister of Defence, Dominic Nitiwul, with Vice Admiral Seth Amoama, Chief of the

Defence Staff, with Rear Admiral Issah Yakubu, Chief of Naval Staff and with General Francis Adu Amanfoh, Special Presidential Advisor for the Accra Initiative.

The delegation was accompanied by H.E. Javier Gutiérrez, Ambassador of Spain in Ghana, who stated that “the visit of the Armada warship AUDAZ and of the Commander of the Operations Command of the Spanish Armed Forces are a testimony to the priority Spain attaches to Ghana and the security in the region.



ESPS ‘Audaz’ during the deployment.



Exercises in Ghana with personnel on board the ship



ESPS 'Audaz' in port



Lieutenant General Francisco Braco with the Minister of Defence, Dominic Nitiwul



Lieutenant General Francisco Braco meets Vice Admiral Seth Amoama, Chief of the Defence Staff, and Rear Admiral Issah Yakubu, Chief of Naval Staff



Lieutenant General Francisco Braco receiving military honors

---00---