

Security, safety and state authority



The sea is very perilous,
and thus it requires utmost wary.
Fernando Oliveira

Introduction

The role of **SECURITY, SAFETY AND STATE AUTHORITY** includes:

- ✘ Maritime safety and safety of life at sea;
- ✘ Maritime security and law enforcement;
- ✘ States of exception and civil protection.

Maritime safety and safety of life at sea

Maritime Search And Rescue

Portugal has international responsibilities to assure maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) in an area around 5.790.000 square kilometres, which is approximately 63 times the national territorial surface. For this purpose, the Navy permanently guarantees a public maritime Search and Rescue Service, which works in cooperation with the *National Authority for Civil Protection (Autoridade Nacional de Protecção Civil)* and the *Portuguese Air Force (Força Aérea Portuguesa)*. In average, approximately 1,000 rescue actions are conducted each year (including shipwreck rescue), leading to the rescue of around 1,000 lives. The success rate has been above 95%, clearly higher than the commonly adopted reference value of 93%.

Through the 28 *Local Maritime Authorities (Capitanias)*, scattered around the national territory, technically and logistically supported by the *Shipwrecked Rescue Institute (Instituto de Socorros a Náufragos)*, the Navy also renders lifeguarding service to swimmers all year round, particularly during the bathing season. To this purpose, hundreds of rescues are successfully performed each year, leading to the rescue of many human lives.



Lifeboat of the Shipwrecked Rescue Institute.



Maritime rescue action by an organic helicopter from a Portuguese frigate.

Aids to Navigation

Some of the world's main maritime trade routes pass through Portuguese waters. It is therefore vital to guarantee the required aids to navigation. In order to accomplish that, the Navy is responsible for the operation and maintenance of approximately 50 major lighthouses, 500 lights on fixed structures and more than 300 buoys which alert the navigators to dangerous zones. This public mission is performed by the *Local Maritime Authorities* and by the *Lighthouse*

Authority (Direcção de Faróis), which also operates a network of *Differential GPS (DGPS)* stations, that improve accuracy and integrity of positioning in Portuguese jurisdictional waters.

Prevention and combat of marine pollution

Preventing and combating marine pollution is a national imperative, due to the environmental and economic consequences that major oil spills can cause to tourism, fisheries and other maritime activities. This task is under the responsibility of the Navy, which has a dedicated service, integrated in the *Maritime Authority General-Directorate (Direcção-Geral da Autoridade Marítima)*. This service is summoned every year to respond to approximately 30 incidents or accidents of marine pollution. The answer to these and other contingencies is planned and executed in accordance with a specific plan, called *Clean Sea Plan (Plano Mar Limpo)*.



Combating pollution.

Administrative activities

Since 1804, *Local Maritime Authorities* have technical and administrative authority over the patrimonial registry of ships and boats and over maritime personnel registry, acting in support of fishing, merchant and nautical-sports communities.



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Maritime security and law enforcement

Surveillance of maritime spaces and resources protection

The oceans are a huge source of food and mineral resources, requiring a great monitoring effort in order to stop its illegal exploitation. To respond to that objective, the Navy permanently keeps several ships at sea. Furthermore, Local Maritime Authorities have jurisdiction to inquire, investigate and decide on illicit activities at sea.

The Navy undertakes around 10,000 annual inspections on fishing boats at sea, in sovereign or jurisdictional waters, approximately 80% of which are professional fishing boats and approximately 20% of which are leisure fishermen.

The Navy also cooperates in monitoring fishing activities in international waters, in the areas covered by the *Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)* and by the *North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)*. This is done in close cooperation with the *Fisheries and Aquaculture General-Directorate (Direcção-Geral das Pescas e Aquicultura)*, thus fulfilling the commitment assumed with the *Community Fisheries Control Agency (Agência Comunitária de Controlo das Pescas)*



Fisheries inspection at sea.

Repression of illicit activities at sea

The Navy also assures a significant intervention in combating illegal maritime activities, such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration, terrorism, weapons proliferation and piracy. In the maritime areas under national jurisdiction or sovereignty, the most common illicit activities are drug trafficking and illegal immigration, in combating these, the Navy cooperates closely with the *Criminal Police (Policia Judiciária)* and the *Border Service (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras)*, respectively.

In the fight against drug trafficking, several actions are conducted, every year, involving the Navy. The result is the seizure of several tonnes of narcotics, mostly hashish and cocaine. In these operations, the Navy usually employs ships, organic helicopters, Marines and Maritime Police agents.



Maritime Police agent.

The fight against illegal immigration is conducted in cooperation with the Border Service, which represents Portugal at the *European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union: FRONTEX*. In this role, the Navy has participated in several missions to detect illegal migration flows originating in the Mediterranean and the North of Africa. Furthermore, the Navy participates actively in the project *European Patrols Network*, also under the aegis of FRONTEX, which is a network of permanent coastal patrols to monitor the southern maritime border of the EU, which includes the south coast of mainland Portugal and the archipelago of Madeira.



Maritime Police speedboat.

States of exception and civil protection

States of exception

States of exception (state of siege and state of emergency) were defined in 1986, as well as the general rules applicable in those situations, in which Constitution and law allow employing the Armed Forces within the national territory, in peacetime. The Navy is ready to commit all its resources if the states of exception are declared.

Civil protection

In the scope of civil protection and satisfaction of basic needs of the population, the Navy conducts, among others, the following activities: watch patrols to prevent fires in areas of high risk during the summer; actions related with the protection of property and the environment, following floods of rivers or other floods; and scooping activities (interdiction of maritime areas for refuelling of aircraft involved in fire-fighting).

Besides these most common and regular activities, the Navy has played a role of great importance in supporting the people in accidents of large proportions, as were the cases of the earthquakes in the Azores on the 1st of January 1980 and on the 9th of July 1998, and the intervention following the collapse of the *Hintze Ribeiro* bridge at *Entre-os-Rios*, on the 4th of March 2001.



Marines supporting the population during a major flood.