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**Republic of Benin taps AdvanFort as first PMSC  
to provide critical West Africa maritime protection  
Gulf of Guinea counter-piracy accord adds international ballast to company rebranding**

Washington, D.C., September 10, 2013—[AdvanFort International, Inc.](http://www.advanfort.com), a leading U.S. maritime security firm, has announced that the Government of the Republic of Benin has granted it permission—the first given by a West Africa government—to conduct counter-piracy operations for both domestic and foreign-flagged commercial vessels throughout Benin's waters.

“It is with great pleasure that I can confirm that President Dr. Thomas Boni Yayi—who is also the African Union assembly chairperson—has made our Private Maritime Security Company (PMSC) the first foreign enterprise to be able to fight the sea-borne marauders where they cause the most problems,” said AdvanFort President and COO William H. Watson.

“In being able to offer in West Africa the same kind of security services for vessel owners and operators that have won us official U.S. government praise for similar efforts off East Africa,” the AdvanFort President added, “we are thrilled to have been chosen by Dr. Boni Yayi and his administration for critical responsibilities as Benin prepares to become a world-class registry for merchant shipping.”

Due to the expansion of its scope of business upon becoming the first major Private Maritime Security Company (PMSC) to win such an agreement with a West African country facing a growing piracy challenge, Captain Watson added, what previously was called the AdvanFort Company is rebranding itself and will operate globally as AdvanFort International, Inc., a Delaware (USA) corporation.

The announcement is the result of a key set of meetings in the all-important Port of Cotonou between Watson and senior Benin government officials.

“Having AdvanFort working counter piracy and security in the Gulf will safeguard cargo and an increased passenger trade,” observed Septime Gnacadja, Director General of Benin-Scaphandrier, Chantier Naval at the Port of Cotonou. “Also, with the exploration of so many oil fields in the Gulf, a maritime security flotilla is what is needed to take care of an unsafe area.”

**Photo:** William H. Watson, president of AdvanFort International, center, surveys the Port of Cotonou, in preparation for providing counter-piracy services to commercial customers.

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