

**NAIROBI, Kenya, September 29 (Infosplusgabon) - The Kenyan cabinet has approved a new bill to create a national coast guard to police the country's territorial waters, State House Spokesperson Manoh Esipisu said on Thursday.**

The Kenya Coast Guard Service Bill was approved alongside three other proposed new laws during the cabinet meeting chaired by President Uhuru Kenyatta.

"The Bill is aimed at the establishment of the Coast Guard Service and is informed that Kenya does not have specialised law enforcement agency to deal with maritime issues," Esipisu said in a statement.

According to the government, the Kenya Navy is not currently prepared operationally and legally to undertake the duties of a national coast guard particularly in the territorial and international waters.

The coast guard would mainly undertake the enforcement of maritime law as its key responsibility.

During the cabinet meeting, President Kenyatta asked Cabinet Secretaries present to honour Principal Secretary Mariam El-Maawy, who died in a South African hospital from injuries sustained during an Al Shabaab attempt to abduct her.

She was rescued by the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) during the assault in Lamu.

Esipisu said the cabinet eulogised the Principal Secretary following her passing after observing a minute of silence.

"The Principal Secretary will be remembered for her diligence, honesty and commitment to duty. Cabinet noted that the PS was attacked in the course of duty," Esipisu said.

Cabinet sent a condolence message to the family and friends of the late PS and pledged support for the evacuation of the body from South Africa and in the burial arrangements.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet approved the Urban Areas and Cities Amendment Bill for submission to Parliament.

The Bill is aimed at amending the Urban Areas and Cities Act, 2011 in order to harmonise and cater for the classification of urban centres in the country in a more realistic and viable manner than is provided for in the current law.

In the current law, only Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu qualify to be classified as cities. Only two urban centres qualify to be municipalities, and 130 qualify on township status.

Under the proposed amendments there would be 5 cities, 64 municipalities, 66 townships and 80 market centres.

The cabinet also approved the National Irrigation Policy and Irrigation Bill.

The national irrigation policy gives details of mechanisms through which the national

government and the county governments will work together for the development of irrigation in the country.

It proposes the establishment of the National Irrigation Development Authority (NIDA), which will be responsible for implementation of national irrigation schemes, strategic irrigation schemes, trans-boundary and trans-county schemes.

The policy proposes the establishment of both administrative and legal mechanisms for water harvesting, flood control and water storage infrastructure.

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## **Kenya: Kenya moves to create national coast guard**

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