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WORLD MARITIME UNIVERSITY

Malmö, Sweden

**MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF
GUINEA WITH EMPHASIS ON NIGERIA**

By

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Nigeria

A dissertation submitted to the World Maritime University in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
MARITIME AFFAIRS


(MARITIME SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATION)

2022

DECLARATION

I certify that all the material in this dissertation that is not my own work has been identified and that no material is included for which a degree has previously been conferred on me.

The contents of this dissertation reflect my own personal views, and are not necessarily endorsed by the University.

(Signature): 
.....

(Date): 20th September 2022
.....

Supervised by: Prof. George Theocharidis
.....

Supervisor's affiliation: Professor at WMU
.....

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea with emphasis on Nigeria.**

Degree: **Master of Science**

The research investigated the effectiveness of various national and international strategies being employed in the fight against maritime piracy and other sea crimes in the Gulf of Guinea, with an emphasis on Nigeria. Desktop research was adopted to analyze numerous secondary data from online sources such as databases of the IMO, NIMASA, IMB, EU, BIMCO, and other relevant online publications. Findings show that the reason for the recent decline in piracy incidences in the region is due to the improved collaborations between the stakeholders, such as the effort of the international navies from the EU and the US, as well as the deployment of Nigeria's Deep Blue Project assets where most of the region's incidences occurred before.

It was also discovered that prosecution of maritime criminals would facilitate the war against crimes in the Gulf of Guinea. However, only Nigeria has a stand-alone legal framework to prosecute maritime criminals among the Gulf of Guinea member countries. Consequently, to sustain and improve the current security situation, other countries in the region need to adopt Nigeria's SPOMO Act and improve the socioeconomic condition of the coastal communities, including addressing the IUU fishing. Similarly, the study also recommends the establishment of a regional tribunal by the governments of the Gulf of Guinea.

KEYWORDS: Maritime Security, Gulf of Guinea, Piracy, Nigeria

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GoG	Gulf of Guinea
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
BIMCO	Baltic and International Maritime Council
EU	European Union
EEAS	European External Action Service
ILO	International Labour organization
IMO	International Maritime organization
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
ISPS	International Ships and Port Facility Security Code
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	Maritime Safety Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRC	Piracy Reporting Centre
UK	United Kingdom
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
AFD	French Development Agency
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
UN	United Nations
US	United State of America
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
NIMASA	Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency
GMA	Ghana Maritime Authority
WMU	World Maritime University
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
KA IPTC	Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre

GOGC	Gulf of Guinea Commission
CRESMAC	Regional Center for Maritime Security in Central Africa
CRESMAO	West Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre
AU	African Union
GOGIN	Gulf of Guinea Interregional Network
YCC	Yaounde Code of Conduct
MOC	Maritime Operations Centres
MMCC	Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre
ICC	Inter-regional Coordination Centre
MOWCA	Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa
ECSA	European Community Ship-owners Associations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
BMP	Best Management Practices
EDF	European Development Fund
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Security and Peace
SWAIMS	Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
G7	The Group of Seven
G7 ++ FoGG	Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
RMAC	Regional Maritime Awareness Capability System
NIWG	Nigerian Industry Working Group
JWG	Joint Working Group
OCIMF	Oil Companies International Marine Forum
ICS	International Chamber of Shipping
INTERCARGO	International Association of Dry Cargo Ship-owners
INTERTANKO	International Association of Independent Tanker Owners
SPOMO	Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences
MICA Center	Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center
H1	First Half of the year IMB Piracy Report
H2	Second Half of the year IMB Report
SMA	Special Mission Aircraft

SMH	Special Mission Helicopters
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
SMV	Special Mission Vessels
FIB	Fast Interceptor Boats
SBS	Strengthening Border Security
Q1	First Quarter IMB Piracy Report
Q2	Second Quarter IMB Piracy Report
CIMSEC	Center for International Maritime Security
MASC	Maritime Airborne Surveillance and Control
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
C4i	Command, Control, Computer, Communication and Intelligence
SUA Convention	International Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Research

The Gulf of Guinea (GoG) stretches from Cape Lopez to Cape Palmas and it consists of sixteen countries: Nigeria, Guinea, Gabon, Angola, Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Gambia Ivory-Coast, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Togo, and Republic of Congo (Worldatlas, 2021). Furthermore, its coastal region is low-lying, with mangrove swamps, marshes, and lagoons interspersed. However, Okafor-Yarwood et al., (2020), include two additional countries (Senegal and Cabo Verde) to make it 19 members which cut across “the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).”

Figure 1 Map of Africa showing nineteen (19) GoG member countries



Note. From “Map of the Gulf Guinea Region” by Okafor-Yarwood et al., 2020, p.1

The European External Action Service (EEAS), which is an organ of the European Union (EU), in their January 2021 web publication, described the GoG as a large, varied zone and significant maritime hub for oil and gas and also other cargo, with tanker ships, cargo vessels, and fishing vessels, numbering about 1500 traversing the area daily. The publication also identified maritime piracy, human trafficking, sea robbery, illegal fishing activities, and other trans-border criminal activities as a severe risk to the regional maritime security and eventually harm the growth of the zone economically (EEAS, 2021). The region is a bigwig in terms of the population and economy in Africa, where it is expected to have 25 percent of the continent's total population in the year 2050, as well as half of the youth's total population on earth (French Development Agency [AFD], 2021).

Worldatlas (2021) also described that, although GoG is not an excellent shipping avenue, accounts for about twenty-five (25) percent of shipping traffic in Africa with about twenty (20) commercially operated ports and produces 60% of the total oil from the continent (Safety4Sea, 2021). The region also has approximately 35 percent of all the oil resources on earth and other valuable minerals such as diamond, marble, gold, and uranium. Therefore, GoG is a lucrative territory since it is the departure route for much of West Africa's natural resources. However, unlike in East Africa, when pirates caught entire ships along with their cargo, they focused on kidnapping in the west. When ships are allowed to remain floating, kidnapped crews may be moved much more readily to jungle camps where they are usually kept for ransom. These campsites are often located in the Niger Delta, the oil rich part of Nigeria, where most maritime criminals have their bases (Klein, 2022).

Nigeria is one of the major stakeholders playing a crucial functions in the success of maritime security in the GoG. Nigeria's coastal area is roughly 853km with four geomorphological components and a 210,900km² Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Niger-Delta geomorphological area is the most extended (450 km), with the abundant mineral resources and biodiversity. It has approximately “37.4 billion barrels of crude oil and 187 tcf natural gas reserves”. The crude oil amounts to 90% of the country's forex income (Zabbey, N. et al., 2019).

In recent research, Babatunde, et al. (2021) found that the success of Nigeria's application of international laws addressing maritime safety and security is sabotaged by poor implementation due to institutional, political, and socio-legal issues. Similarly, Schneider, P. (2020) likened piracy to terrorism in that both of them involve direct force against people, help in deteriorating the Law of the Sea, and demand extensive efforts to institute maritime security to ensure safety at sea. However, Joubert (2013) argued that there are more differences between piracy and maritime terrorism than similarities, largely because their tactics and objectives differ.

1.2 Problem Statement

As per the latest development in the UN Security Council (UNSC), the menace of maritime piracy in the GoG resulted in the loss of up to USD 1.9B each "year for the nearly two dozen West African states that line it". The GoG is presently the most dangerous area in the world regarding piracy, and it is much more challenging to solve than previous trouble spots, such as the coastline of Somalia. Pirates prey on sailors more frequently than on the cargo they carry, but their activities also affect civilians. Moreover, criminal activity also has a major effect on the towns and cities on land. According to Ghada Fathi Waly, UNODC's Executive Director, this huge amount of money would have been used for some developmental projects in the coastal areas. He also stated that corruption feeds organized crime on land and at sea, creating an unstable environment that has left many people in terrible situations, resulting in increased maritime crimes. The consequent absence of possibilities and dissatisfaction pushes many youths to maritime crimes and leaves them more vulnerable to radicalization. The GoG is a significant transit center where cocaine is shipped to many European countries. Furthermore, a survey by the Stable Seas shows that piracy in the GoG has recently skyrocketed, completely replacing the Red Sea and other places. It is responsible for practically all maritime kidnappings in 2020 (Klein, 2022).

Baltic and International Maritime Council [BIMCO], (2022) in its recent press release, explained the level of piracy in the GoG:

In May, the UN Security Council condemned the GoG as the world's piracy hotspot. Despite the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center tracking an overall drop in global piracy during 2021, threat levels in the region remain high.

Piracy activity in the GoG has posed a severe threat to seafarers and local communities for over a decade. In 2020, 40 percent of piracy attacks, and 95 percent of crew kidnappings occurred in the region. However, attacks decreased by nearly 60 percent in 2021, following the establishment of Deep Blue, the Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Maritime Safety Agency (NIMASA) anti-piracy project, and increased international counter-piracy operations in the GoG.

There has been a decline in the piracy reporting in the GoG this year as there were only twelve (12) marine incidences in the first half of 2022 compared to twenty-three (23) in the same period of 2021 (ICC- IMB, 2022). The sharp decline in the reported piracy and other sea crimes is a result of the combined efforts of some GoG member states and international communities. Indeed this is a welcome development, but the parties fighting maritime crime in the region should not be relaxed; they should strive to ensure improved efforts and sustenance as suggested by many industry experts such as the IMO secretary-general as reported by Channels Television, (2021) and BIMCO, (2022).

In a statement earlier this year, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) forewarned that long-term measures are required to secure sailors in the volatile GoG region. The IMB cited the January 24 kidnapping of a tanker ship off the shores of Côte d'Ivoire, where 17 crews were kidnapped, and thefts in the nearby waters of Angola and Ghana as proof more effort needs to be made. In addition, at the beginning of April, pirates boarded the bulk ship Arch Gabriel 260nmi from the coast of Ghana (AFD, 2022). Hence, this study work is undertaken to assess the structure and results of the various strategies and projects currently being implemented to curb sea crimes in the GoG.

1.3 Aim and objectives

This study work aims to evaluate the impact of different strategies currently being used by joint national and international efforts in combating maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.

And the objectives are as follows:

- To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Deep Blue Project and other strategies used to improve maritime security in the GoG.
- To identify gaps and areas for optimization if any.
- To examine GoG member Countries' and international communities' commitment to enhancing maritime security in the GoG.

1.4 Research questions

The research questions are:

1. How is the Deep Blue Project important to Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea's maritime security?
2. What strategies are currently employed to fight insecurity in the GoG?
3. Are there legal provisions to prosecute sea criminals in the Gulf of Guinea?
4. What can be done to improve and sustain the recent decline in piracy to ensure safer shipping in the GoG region?

1.5 Research Methodology

The method employed for the purpose of this research work is the Desk Research strategy. It is secondary research that employs the use of relevant existing data from reliable internet sources. For this research, different kinds of secondary and primary data were sourced and carefully analyzed to answer the research questions. Secondary data of journal articles were collected from various reputable databases including Scopus, Science Direct, Google Scholar, the Academia, and the World Maritime University (WMU) library. Websites of some relevant organizations were also used such as the IMO,

NIMASA, Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA), the EU, IMB piracy reports, and the US Department of State. The search terms used are "Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea" and "Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea".

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Policy Implementation

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary has defined the term implementation as "the act of making something that has been officially decided start to happen or be used." But, Knoepfel et al. (2011) summarized it "as a set of decisions and activities" executed by the public and non-public players within the political-administrative arrangements to control and manage a policy network.

According to Miller (2020), there are seven stages to follow for an effective implementation process which include: "Set Clear Goals and Define Key Variables; Determine Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships; Delegate the Work; Execute the Plan; Monitor Progress and Performance, and Provide Continued Support; Take Corrective Action (Adjust or Revise, as Necessary); Get Closure on the Project, and Agreement on the Output; Conduct a Retrospective or Review of How the Process Went."

1.6.2 Maritime Piracy

Article 101 of the UNCLOS defined maritime piracy as

(a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State; (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft; and (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

Do we always mean the same thing when we discuss piracy? The response is a definitive "no." Firstly, every important instance of piracy is basically unique when viewed in its

whole; piracy is only a single term for a phenomenon that varies widely and is highly reliant on geographical conditions. Secondly, there is no consensus among lawyers over the meaning of piracy. An international public lawyer defines piracy as an attack, detention, or plunder committed by a private ship on international waters against another vessel for personal benefit as defined in the UNCLOS. Thus, events in ports, rivers, and other domestic or territorial seas are commonly known as "armed robberies against ships." However, the business lawyer is likely aware of a broader meaning of piracy that involves not just the legal term but also attacks in ports and even from the coastline. For example, armed groups that assault ships on Nigeria's internal waters may be deemed "pirates" in common speech and commercial law. However, they are not recognized under international law (Guilfoyle, 2013).

Furthermore, Payne (2010) explained that when you think of illegal fishing, you may not immediately think of pirates, although illegal fishing is frequently referred to as piracy. It is equivalent to thieving a resource instead of cargo. For instance, Somali pirates frequently assert that Asian and European seafood pirates operating in their waters contribute to the region's maritime insecurity. Their assertion is valid to some extent because finding a solution to illicit fishing will significantly reduce piracy attacks on merchant ships.

1.6.3 Maritime Security

The term Maritime Security is a broad topic encompassing many policy areas, and there is no single legal definition of the term. (Ameri & Shewchuk, 2007).

A 2008 report by the then Secretary-General of the United Nations also noted no consensus on the meaning of the term Maritime Security. He, however, enumerated seven (7) items that constitute or are considered risks to Maritime Security. They include (1) armed robbery and piracy at sea, (2) onslaught on the maritime installations, (3) smuggling of weaponry of any capacity, (4) Drug peddling by sea, (5) human trafficking via oceans, (6) "illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing)" and (7) deliberately harming the marine ecosystem (Klein, 2011). Therefore, any activity

undertaken by a nation or state to mitigate any of these seven risks may be considered an effort to enhance maritime security.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the literatures related to the contribution of various scholars and relevant organizations on maritime security in the GoG. The works of various scholars and organizations were reviewed, thus they would provide a framework for this study.

2.2 The Need for Secured Maritime Domain

Gilpin described maritime security as a critical factor in maritime administration and practice, and it is essential to realize the industry's enormous potential fully. That the having secured maritime domain that fosters international peace and safety is central to maximizing the maritime industry's full potential. Furthermore, maritime procedures and management may only be optimized to satisfy the growing world populace's demands for goods, energy, jobs, and marine biodiversity if the maritime domain is secured (as cited by Babatunde, et al., 2021).

2.3 Effort of the IMO to Enhance Maritime Security

In terms of Maritime Security, IMO (n.d.) explained that the IMO makes many efforts through the development and incorporation of some international conventions and codes. In addition, it also assists state members with the guidelines for implementing its different instruments, such as:

1. The International "Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation", also called (the SUA Convention) was adopted in 1988. This consists of its 1988 and 2005 Protocols).
2. "The International Convention for the Safety of Life as Sea", also known as the (SOLAS Convention) 1974 as amended, which includes:
3. "The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code)"

As a result of the security threat arising from the 9/11 plane attacks, the IMO incorporated new measures known as the International Ship and Port Facility Security code (ISPS Code) as part of the SOLAS. It was part of the IMO's effort on maritime security to prevent attacks on ships and port facilities. From the 1980s, the IMO tackled maritime security matters through one of its five main committees, the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). A contrast is made between maritime safety and maritime security. Maritime Safety is concerned with the prevention or reduction of accidents at sea due to defective ships, unqualified crew, or technical failure. In contrast, Maritime Security is concerned with safeguarding from illegal and intentional acts against ships or their crew (IMO, n.d.).

The difference was not always clear inside the IMO, primarily because the words have been used interchangeably. It was only because of the modification of Chapter 11 of the SOLAS Convention that the term maritime security became clear (Klein, 2011).

Although the Law of the Sea Convention defines only a few categories of cross-border transgression that threaten maritime security, there are other different types of crimes that threaten security and safety on the international waters and in the interior waterways. National legislation must work in tandem with international treaties and constructive collaborations between countries, enforcement agencies, and armies to fight illegal operations. Intelligence gathering and information sharing, and unorthodox use of current technologies could help the military maintain security at seas. The Convention gives a solid foundation and international efforts to prevent maritime crimes, securing marine resources, lives, and properties at sea (Burgess et al., 2017).

2.4 Maritime Security in Nigerian Waters

Attacks on vessels and crews from the shores, seaport, waterways, and anchorages are common in and around Lagos, Brass, Port Harcourt, and Bonny River. It is estimated that only one-third of incidents in this area are recorded. Militants in the Niger Delta engage in activities ranging from purely criminal to politically motivated, and a mixture of both within the same organization in some cases (Joubert, 2013). However, Onyenucheya (2021) quoted Dr. Bashir Jamoh, the Director-General of NIMASA, saying that piracy in Nigeria's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has decreased as a result of the deployment

of Deep Blue Project assets. It aims to eliminate such incidents and protect Nigerian waters up to the GoG. More recently, the NIMASA DG also said that Nigeria loses approximately \$25.5 billion yearly to illegal maritime activities and another \$1.3 billion to illegal bunkering (Omonobi, 2021).

On the other hand, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) commended Nigeria's resolve to counter piracy in the GoG, comprising the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, otherwise known as the Deep Blue Project established by the Nigerian Government (NIMASA, 2021).

2.5 Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

The IMO Secretary-General expressed his profound worry with regard to the increase in severity and frequency of pirate attacks in the GoG, which endangers the lives of our seafarers and the safety of regional shipping. He said that IMO is making steps to improve harmonization of various strategies among stakeholders, such as facilitation of meetings with industry representatives. Illicit cases in the GoG constitute a significant and instant threat to the security and safety of crew and vessels working in the region. The attacks on the container ship Mozart in January 2021, where some seafarers died and 15 other kidnapped, added to the urgency of the situation (IMODOC-Circular Letter No.4382). However, the situation improved later in the year with the IMB in its 2nd Quarter (Q2) report 2021, stating that the kidnapping incidences in the Gulf of Guinea were the lowest since Q2 of 2019 (NIMASA, 2021).

In the first quarter of 2022, there were no reports of any crew members being kidnapped, courtesy of maritime security agencies in the GoG region. Indeed, this is good news considering the previous year, which saw forty crew members taken hostage during the same period. With the combined actions of local, regional, and international navies, the number of marine incidents dropped from sixteen in Q1 of 2021 to 7 during the same time in 2022. However, the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre strongly recommends that the organizations and Authorities concerned as well as the international navies should keep up the good work to make sure that sea crimes are decisively tackled in this extremely dangerous region (ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB), 2022).

According to Global Security, (n.d.) the Gulf of guinea faces security threats in various forms and sources such as:

- Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing, carried out by citizens of the region, but also by foreign entities to the region;
- Use of sea-route for drug trafficking;
- Use of sea-route for human and arms trafficking;
- Piracy on the sea and armed robbery, whether on the high sea or in territorial waters of the states;
- Illegal trans-shipment and oil theft;
- Sea pollution, predominantly resulting from industrial activities carried out at sea, and also from domestic activities and from discharge of toxic substances;
- Illegal and unregulated immigration (Global Security, n.d.).

2.6 Regional Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea

According to Babatunde et al. (2021), maritime security is maintained by implementing and adopting legal and policy provisions designed to protect national integrity and promote good maritime order. They maintained that the ocean and its riches, by definition, have no borderlines; similarly, the dangers to safety and security at sea are transnational in nature. Consequently, transnational laws at the regional and international levels are used to address them. Thus the challenges caused by maritime piracy are threats that the International Collaborations can tackle and deal with successfully (Ban, 2012).

Similarly, the Member States from the GoG region during a meeting in Nigeria in 2021 under the aegis of Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) reiterated that maritime security project in the GoG is a collective duty because its failure has collective repercussions. Therefore, the forum unanimously accepted that the main conversation in the region presently is collaboration, hence, collaboration, cooperation, coordination, and communication are the collective watchwords in the region (IMODOCS- MSC 104-INF.7).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Efforts to Enhance Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

Concerned on the level of sea piracy and maritime crimes along the vast coastline of the GOG, various efforts are currently being made to ensure safer shipping in the region. These include measures taken by some member states, regional organizations, and international organizations such as the IMO, the United Nations, and European Union (Adejuyigbe, 2021).

3.1 Creation of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GOGC)

The formation of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GOGC) by the agreement endorsed in 2001 by some of the nations in the region, including Nigeria, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, Angola, as well as Sao Tome and Principe. The Commission is charged with protecting members' mutual interests and aiding in law and order (Adejuyigbe, 2021). From its inception, the Gulf of Guinea Commission's original goals were to foster close cooperation in utilizing the GoG's natural riches and to foster conditions of confidence, peace, and security that would support the member states' benign growth. In order to guarantee the economic growth of member states and the welfare of their populations. The organization has been concentrating more on developing a regional marine security strategy since 2013 (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

Given that coastal governments founded the GoGC, it is imperative that security be implemented in the GoG to ensure the region's harmonic growth. This is especially true given that the GoG is an open sea devoid of impediments that fully hinder a threat from manifesting itself. It is also a cause for the region's member states to cooperate (and hence develop synergy) in order to gain control of the shared marine domain. Furthermore, the Charter of the GoG Commission incorporates recommendations of the Heads of Government to develop the GoG into "Zone of Peace and Security," which emphasizes the significance of government backing in terms of cooperation of navies of the member states to operate in the zone (Global Security, n.d.).

The first practical framework to foster collaboration among the navies of the member states of the commission was offered by Central Africa. Hence, "on 24th October 2009, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) established the Regional Center for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC), under the auspices of the Annual Maritime Conference of the Committee of Peace and Security of ECCAS". Therefore, the sub-region is split into zones A and B. However, despite being founded in October 2009, CRESMAC did not start operating until October 20, 2014, and it still does not have all of the intended Transnational Coordinating Centers. It may be a consequence of the "Fragmented Belt" Theory, which limits the strengthening collaboration amongst the region's member nations and impacts the coordination of their navies. Thus, the zone is viewed as a sluggish naval power incapable of containing the security challenges within its marine environment (Global Security, n.d.).

Likewise, the West African Maritime Domain, the region with a much higher insecurity impact on the GoG's maritime environment, took a longer period to set up an operational structure to combat the danger of pirates and other sea crimes. "The Regional Center for Maritime Security in West Africa (CRESMAO)" began in the Ivory Coast in 2015 but was not yet finished as of 2018. Western Africa's maritime domain is likewise partitioned into Zone E, F, and G (Global Security, n.d.).

Global Security, (n.d.) further explained that:

The effective establishment of the Regional Maritime Security Centres, Multinational Maritime Centres of Coordination and the Naval Operational Centres (COM) at national levels, could eventually contribute to the development of synergy among the navies of the countries of each of the zones and subsequently among the navies of all the countries in the Maritime Domain of West Africa. Initially, only the Multinational Maritime Center of Zone E is functional and effectively carrying out its functions under the leadership of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

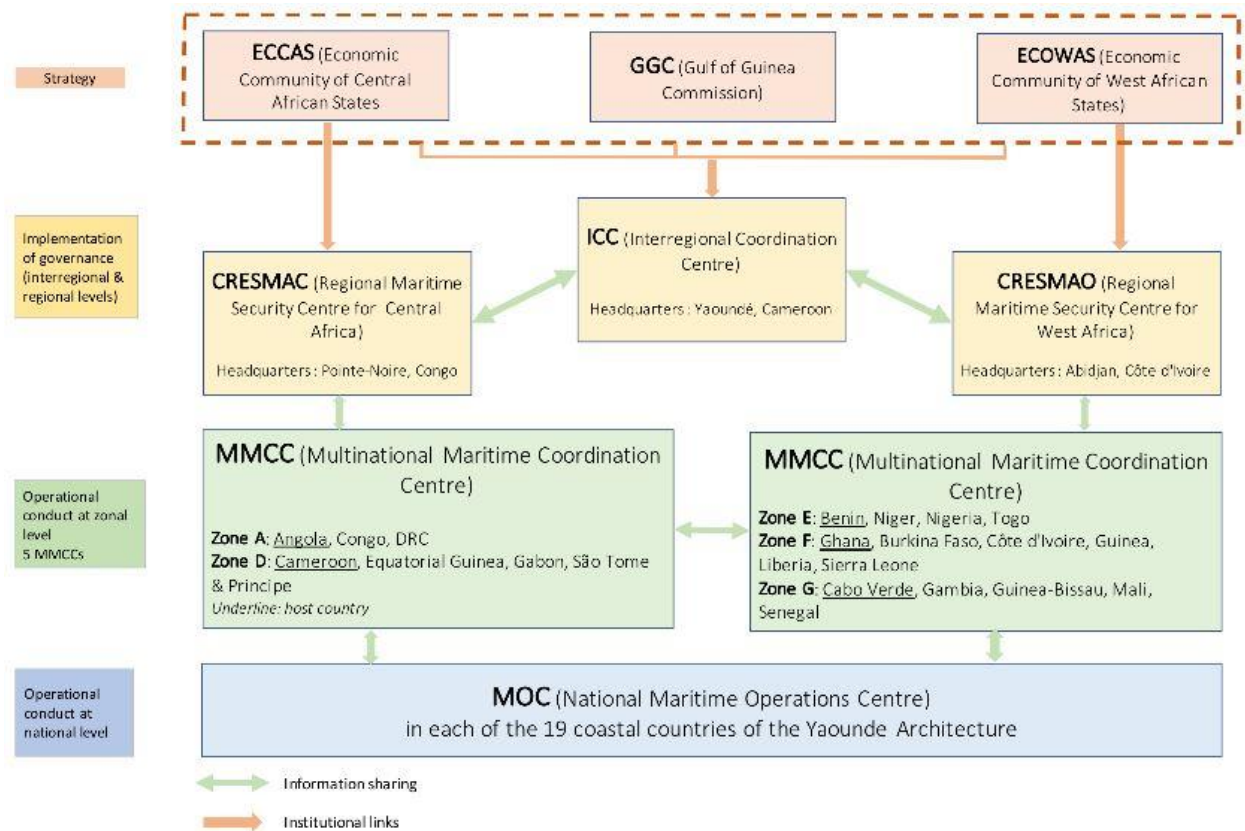
The Gulf of Guinea Commission facilitated the 2012 Luanda Declaration to improve maritime security in the area and promote collaboration among its state members. "The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)" and the "Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)" were requested by the UN Resolution in 2011 to work together to combat maritime crimes through joint collaborative forces to be patrolling the region. Another UN resolution in 2012 also asked the Gulf of Guinea member nations to work with the African Union (AU) and hold a meeting to draft a regional anti-piracy policy.

3.1.1 The Yaounde Code of Conduct

In 2013, the Yaounde Code of Conduct was adopted by 25 West and Central African countries to make information sharing easier. Consequently, in order to manage the exchange of information among the two regional centers in Congo and Ivory Coast; an Interregional Coordination Center was established in Yaounde, Cameroon (Adejuyigbe, 2021).

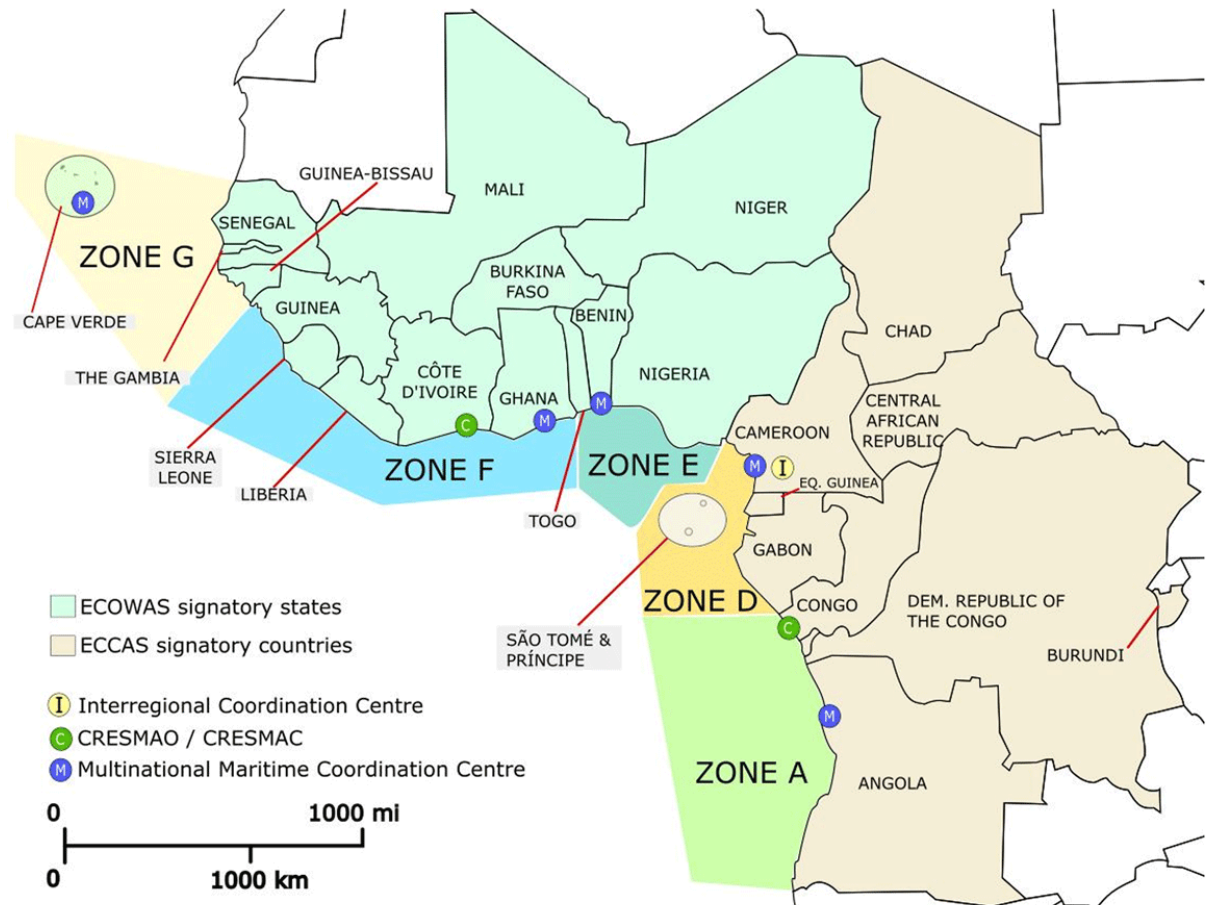
According to the Gulf of Guinea Interregional Network [GOGIN], (n.d.), the Yaoundé Summit resulted in the establishment of three (3) different components, which are: "the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, the Heads of States Declaration, and the Memorandum of Understanding between regional organizations. This set of instruments inspired the elaboration of the Yaoundé Architecture", as illustrated in figures 2, 3, and 4.

Figure 2. Yaoundé Architecture



Note. From “Yaoundé Architecture” by GOGIN, 2022.
<https://www.gogin.eu/en/about/yaounde-architecture/>

Figure 3. Signatory countries of the Yaounde Code of Conduct (YCC)

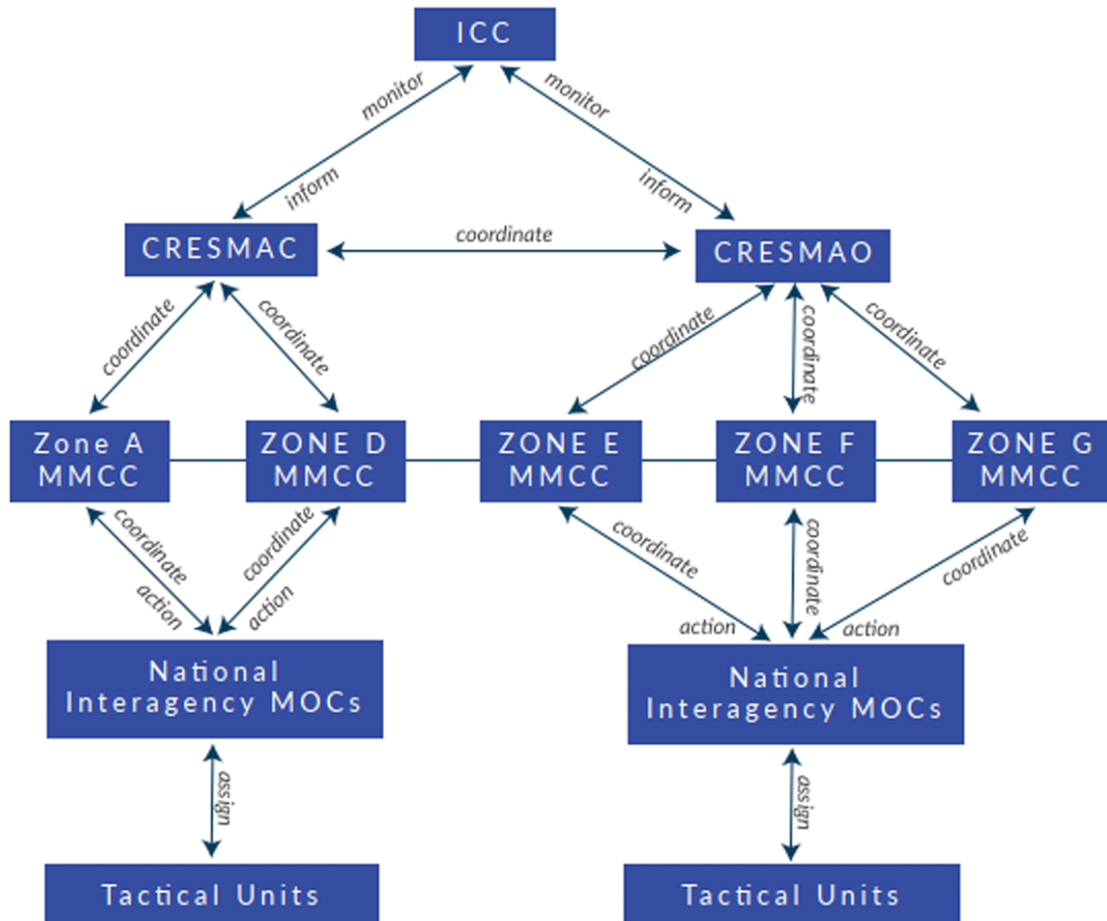


Note. From “Sovereignty and Transnational Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea” by Yücel, (2021)

Every signatory country of the YCC is required to establish a national maritime security committee that correlates each country's efforts to advance maritime security in the GoG. In addition, article 11 of the YCC stipulates that signatories "should designate a national focal point to facilitate coordinated, effective, and timely information flow among the Signatories." The focus areas serve as the national linkage to the remaining parts of

Yaoundé Architecture and are located in the Maritime Operations Centers (MOCs) (Yücel, 2021).

Figure 4. Organizational charts of the Yaoundé Architecture



Note. From “Stable Seas Report” by Okafor-Yarwood et al., (2020), p. 69.
<https://safety4sea.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/gulf-guinea-executive-summary-digital-english.pdf>

Following the establishment of the GOGC and subsequent development, European Council on Foreign Relations [ECFR], (2020) enumerated the timeline and the normative framework of the Commission as:

3.1.2 Timeline

- 2001** Creation of the Gulf of Guinea Commission
- 2013** Yaoundé summit – launch of a comprehensive regional initiative with ECOWAS and ECCAS.
- 2014** Official launch of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC) in Yaoundé.

3.1.3 Normative Framework

- 2001** Constitutive Act of GGC.
- 2013** Adoption of the Memorandum on Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, which set objectives and areas of cooperation between ECCAS, ECOWAS, and the GoGC.
- 2013** Adoption of the code of conduct concerning the fight against piracy, armed robbery against ships, and illicit maritime activity in west and central Africa (ECFR, 2020).

The Integrated Coastguard Network was established by the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) for coordinating interregional maritime security strategies and collaborating with the IMO and the United Nations (Adejuyigbe, 2021). “But the Yaounde Architecture still lacks an appropriate legislative and judicial framework, without which enforcing the rule of law in the Gulf is nearly impossible” (Berriault, 2022).

3.1.4 GoG Declaration on Suppression of Piracy

BIMCO (2022a) explained that the "Gulf of Guinea Declaration on Suppression of Piracy" was written by experts and key players in the shipping sector to curb the mounting fears the pirates' attacks in the gulf created. Many organizations such as Maritime Administrations, shipowners, shipping companies, and freight unions have all signed the Statement. As of 4th March 2022, there are total of five hundred and twenty eight (528) signatories to the declaration which includes World Maritime University, Sweden; Union of Greek Shipowners, Greece; NICO Maritime Security Solutions Ltd, Nigeria; and European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA).

Over the past ten years, the GoG's piracy issue has been a scourge for mariners. As a result, all mariners traveling to the area in 2021 face the prospect of being abducted for ransom and held at gunpoint. Although the overall frequency of pirate attacks has remained essentially stable, the intensity, scale, and sophistication of the attacks on shipping have increased and now occur more than 200 nautical miles away from the pirate strongholds, primarily found in the Niger Delta (BIMCO, 2022).

BIMCO, (2022a) also quoted the declaration exactly as designed and signed by many stakeholders:

Declaration

We, the signatories to the Gulf of Guinea Declaration on Suppression of Piracy, demand that no seafarer should face the grave risks of kidnapping and violence when transporting cargo, supporting the offshore sector, or fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

We recognize the important steps taken and positive initiatives underway by coastal States in the region. We call on all stakeholders e.g coastal and flag States, shipowners, charterers, maritime organizations, importers and exporters,

oil, and mining companies, offshore operators, fishers, supranational organizations, labour unions and NGOs, to sign this pledge and join together in a coalition to end the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea through:

- Tangibly supporting antipiracy law enforcement (as mandated by international law including international treaties, e.g the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) by non-regional naval forces providing a capable incident response capability to complement regional coastal States' antipiracy law enforcement operations;
- Enhancing regional capacity building with priority given to those coastal States which demonstrate the will to participate actively in law enforcement at sea;
- Encouraging non-regional navies to work actively together with each other and the Gulf of Guinea coastal States' antipiracy law enforcement forces and agencies to suppress the pirate threat;
- Supporting the deployment of law enforcement staff from regional coastal States on non-regional navy ships for capacity building purposes and to assist in the arrest and prosecution of pirates;
- Facilitating the implementation of effective shipboard defensive measures within the region, including via the BMP West Africa guidance and through other onboard active and passive protective measures;

- Improving domain awareness (eg via radars on offshore platforms) and sharing of relevant information between antipiracy law enforcement forces and agencies;
- Increasing effective law enforcement activity ashore to disrupt the underlying criminal enterprises where they are based;
- Providing prison facilities for arrested pirates (ideally in the region), and encouraging coastal States in the Gulf of Guinea to actively prosecute;
- Working towards improving the transparency between law enforcement agencies, military forces, and protection services; and
- Actively conveying the messages above to relevant stakeholders.

We firmly believe that piracy and attempts at kidnapping are preventable; as a minimum we need to see, by the end of 2023, that:

- The number of attacks by pirates should be reduced from current levels by at least 80%; and
- No seafarers should have been kidnapped from a ship in the preceding 12-month period (BIMCO, 2022a)

3.2 International Efforts to Ensure Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

3.2.1 EU Maritime Strategy on Security in the Gulf of Guinea

EEAS (2021), in their online publication, explained that the EU Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan includes certain activities devoted to the GoG region. It calls on the EU to

keep on assisting the GoG security strategies and national and regional activities in the mechanism of Yaoundé architecture.

The European Union in 2014 incorporated an EU Strategy for GoG to help in the Yaoundé Architecture—the intraregional efforts by ECOWAS, ECCAS, and GOGC to combat maritime crimes in its broadest meaning as agreed at the Yaoundé Heads of State Conference in 2013. The EU GoG Action-Plan was established to support the execution of this strategy. While working with West and Central Africa, the EU hopes to reinforce the regional undertakings to combat maritime insecurity and cross-border organized crimes via the Strategic framework. With the help of this plan, the EU is doing its part to raise public enlightenment about the dangers of maritime insecurity and support regional and local organizations. Additionally, foster international collaboration among national, regional, and local players and encourage a more productive and robust coastal economy and community (EEAS, 2021).

The EU is dedicated to enhancing marine security in the GoG and strongly supports building regional coastal governments' local competencies. Thus, several capacity-building programs and projects supported by "the European Development Fund (EDF)" and "the Instrument contributing to Security and Peace (IcSP)" are directed at putting the Strategy for the GoG and its evolving Action Plan into practice. They consist of the following:

- “GoGIN project and WeCAPS under the Critical maritime routes programme;
- SWAIMS, an EDF-funded project to support the implementation of the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy;
- PASSMAR project” (GOGIN, n.d.).

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies [CSIS], (2021), the execution of Yaounde Architecture received special administrative and monetary assistance from the international communities, beginning with the EU that has 400,000 citizens living in the zone and buys in 13% of the oil it consumes. This support has come in the form of both political and financial assistance.

When a Panamax bulk carrier was attacked at 260NM off the coast of Ghana on the 3rd of April 2022, the International communities fighting insecurity in the GoG were alerted by the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre for support. Consequently, the Italian Navy quickly dispatched a warship and a helicopter to the scene, which rescued the ship's crew and allowed the vessel to make its way to a secure port while being escorted. The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre has praised the Italian Navy's immediate and effective response for their unquestionable contribution to the successful rescue of the ship's crew and the ship itself (ICC-IMB, 2022).

For the past three (3) decades, France has maintained a consistent presence in the GoG. When pirate activities began to rise in the early 2010s, a number of nations mobilized their fleets for operations and support, which vary from marine patrolling and anti-piracy activities to development and training, as well as supplying vessels and weaponry to coastal countries to combat the escalating menace in the region. Italy, Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the US were all interested and took part in either safeguarding their stakes in petroleum and fishing businesses or for diplomatic purposes (Berriault, 2022).

The "Coordinated Maritime Presences program" was introduced by the EU in 2019 to have it fully operational by 2020. Since then, Five EU countries (Denmark, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) have stationed naval troops in the GoG and ensured at least one ship to be present indefinitely. Four pirates were killed in a firefight with the Danish navy team in November 2021 outside Nigeria's territorial sea. The EU opted to prolong the initiative for an additional two years, beginning in January 2022. (The Maritime Executive as cited by Bassist, 2022)

Due to the highly scarce resources of the regional navies, especially in warships capable of fighting on the high seas, the navies of Europe and the United States have become directly involved in the region. It is common practice for maritime assets to be sent to the GoG to carry out a variety of missions there, including retraining local militaries and conducting anti-piracy patrols. However, it has also been opined that the worsening security scenario necessitates greater transatlantic cooperation, even though both the

EU and the US have long been involved in the region. The GoG could be an excellent place to show the advantages of transatlantic cooperation in light of the constant requests for such a relationship between Washington and Europe (CSIS, 2021).

3.2.2 The US Participation

The US believes securing the waters surrounding Africa is essential for maintaining a stable and secure global environment. This is why the US Navy Africa is dedicated to becoming a dependable and long term partner in Atlantic Africa. Nevertheless, because of the vast expanse of the continent, no single nation can ensure safety and security on its own. However, since the ocean is directly related to economic growth, one of the US's primary responsibilities is to assist its partners in maintaining this ecosystem. Moreover, the practical approach to achieve it is by assisting African organizations and initiatives in enabling them to build capacity and handle this crisis (US Department of State, 2022).

The United States Africa Partnership Station is a maritime program that supports regional anti-piracy activities in the Gulf of Guinea. The initiative aims to enhance maritime domain awareness and regional integration. Furthermore, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) has a target to enhance regional capability and security organizations to combat maritime crimes (Adejuyigbe, 2021). The US is also one of the biggest players in tackling insecurity in the GoG under the G7++FoGG initiative.

3.2.3 Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7 ++ FoGG)

G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FoGG) was established when the United Kingdom was the president of G7 in 2013. The group's primary purpose is to assist in fighting maritime crimes under the Yaounde Code of Conduct (GoGIN, 2019). Additionally, since its creation in 2013, "the G7++ FoGG played a mobilizing role. This group comprises the countries that make up the G7 and other nations and organisations that share similar values (CSIS, 2021).

Furthermore, GoGIN, (2019) in explaining the composition of the G7++FoGG members stated that:

In addition to the G7 countries (Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, France, United Kingdom, United States of America and United States of America), the G7++ FoGG includes Belgium, Brazil (observer), Denmark, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, the European Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL.

Originally focused on anti-piracy issues in the Gulf of Guinea, the G7++ FoGG has since extended its scope to all illegal activities at sea, such as illegal fishing or different types of trafficking including human beings, drugs, weapons, animals and natural resources.

The established five Working Groups carry out the tasks performed by the G7++FoGG: Legal Aspects; Maritime Domain Awareness; Education and Training; Blue Economy; and Operations (GOV.UK, 2022).

3.3 Anti-piracy initiatives by Some GoG Member States

3.3.1 Nigeria

As one of the leading members of the GoG, Nigeria used to be a hotbed for maritime piracy and violent sea robbery. In addition, militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta region carried out multiple attacks on foreign oil corporations, kidnapped their personnel, and held them as hostages as part of their campaign for improved resource management and responsible exploration in the region. As a result, criminal groups moved in to fill their shoes despite the fact that the government could disarm the militants by military action and a subsequent amnesty program designed to rehabilitate them. Motivated by illicit profits, these criminals attack ships, engage in illegal oil bunkering, and abduct crew members for ransom (Adejuyigbe, 2021).

Ships-and-Ports reported that the government of Nigeria has prioritized the demanding work of countering piracy and armed robbery at sea and has spent a great deal on acquiring security equipment and necessary infrastructure. In 2018, over 173 boats were obtained to allow the Nigerian Navy to patrol the Gulf of Guinea and riverine regions adequately and regularly. It has also modernized its surveillance equipment, including "the Regional Maritime Awareness Capability System (RMAC) and the Falcon Eye System." This was made known by the Chief of Naval Staff during a news briefing commemorating the 62nd anniversary of the Nigerian Navy (as cited by Adejuyigbe, 2021).

Nigeria and an alliance of international shipping partners launched a new strategy in July 2022 to eradicate piracy in the GoG. The process has set up a periodic evaluation of the GoG's "country-piracy initiatives and commitments." It will suggest areas to be improved and reinforced to end maritime piracy in the region. The plan of action is divided into two parts (1) steps the Nigerian Industry Working Group (NIWG) can manage, and (2) measures requiring regional and international stakeholders. The alliance aims to reduce piracy in the GoG and safeguard trade routes and users (BIMCO, 2022).

NIMASA (2020) while explaining the membership composition of the coalition mentioned above stated that:

The Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), the Ministry of Transport, Nigerian Navy, Nigeria Ports Authority, Marine Police Interpol, the oil industry (represented by OCIMF) and shipping industry (represented by ICS, BIMCO, INTERCARGO, INTERTANKO and the Nigerian Shipowners' Association) was established in May 2020 in order to facilitate coordination between government and industry and align efforts to deter and respond to incidents of piracy and armed robbery in Nigerian territorial waters and EEZ. The NIMASA/Industry Working Group (NIWG) is the

first coordinated effort between industry and the Nigerian Government (represented by NIMASA, Ministry of Transport, Nigerian Navy, Interpol, Marine Police, Customs and Nigerian Ports Authority) to address the issues of maritime security.

Two tremendous efforts achieved by Nigeria in its fight against insecurity in the GoG include launching of the Deep Blue Project in 2021 and enacting the SPOMO Act in 2019. These efforts were discussed in great detail in later in this chapter.

3.3.1.1 *The Deep Blue Project*

It is against the backdrop of the worsening insecurity in the GoG that Nigeria through NIMASA established the “Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure”, otherwise called the “Deep Blue Project”. The “Project is the first integrated maritime security strategy in West and Central Africa with the aim of tackling the incidences of piracy, sea robbery, and other crimes at sea” (NIMASA, 2021b). This means it is one of Nigeria's policies being implemented to ensure maritime security in Nigerian territorial water and, by extension, the Gulf of Guinea in line with NIMASA's mission of safe and secure shipping. In his remarks at the flag-off of the project, President Buhari of Nigeria stated that the Flag-off represents a significant step forward in the ongoing shift in strategic action regarding regional maritime security. He said it will work as a model for the GoG member states and many of their partners to institute new plan of action and align efforts with the existing framework to enhance maritime security in the region (International Maritime Organization [IMO], 2021). Similarly, the IMO Secretary-General - Kitack Lim, in his goodwill message during the launch of the project commended Nigeria and stated that “There is still more work ahead for all of us. The world is watching and we must ensure we succeed in our objective to enhance security in the Gulf of Guinea region” (Channels Television, 2021).

The Gulf of Guinea recorded only 52 piracy and robbery attacks in 2021 (Maritime Information Cooperation & Awareness Center (MICA Center), 2022). A remarkable achievement influenced by many factors, including Nigeria's Deep Blue Project (Goldman

and Global, 2021) which was flagged off on June 10, 2021, by Nigeria's President Muhammad Buhari (NIMASA, 2021b). The Project is highly commended by the majority nationally and internationally as a step to improve maritime security in the GoG as contained in Channels Television (2021) and BIMCO (2022).

The project is consistent with the nation's comprehensive maritime security strategy, founded on four (4) core elements: 1. situational awareness of the maritime domain, 2. rapid response capabilities, 3. law enforcement, and 4. internal and regional collaboration (Tola, 2021). The deployment of assets to the practical application of these four elements is helping Nigeria achieve the project's objectives of curbing maritime piracy, oil-theft, armed robbery, and illegal human and drug trafficking. This is so, looking at how the number of piracy reported by the IMB in its H2 (2021) and H1 (2022) dropped within Nigeria's water and the gulf of Guinea region after the project's launch. More so, there is no incidence of piracy this year within Nigeria's territorial water or EEZ. Consequently, Nigeria is now removed from the global piracy list by the IMB (NIMASA, 2022a).

However, some industry experts express concern over the exact impact of the project in the Gulf of Guinea. Goldman and Global (2021) stated that "despite Nigeria's leadership position in respect to the uplift of resources for the countering of piracy, there is a very real question for the usage and impact of the Deep Blue Project in reducing the rate of piracy." Others argued that to eradicate piracy and other sea crimes effectively, the route course must be squarely dealt with, as asserted by (Dryad Global, 2021). Similarly, Eight months after the inauguration of the Deep Blue Project, the deployment of some of the assets is hampered by a lack of an organogram and appropriate arrangement defining the duties and roles of the major stakeholders in the Ministry of Defense; Nigerian Navy, Air force, and Army; and NIMASA under the supervision of the Ministry of Transportation (MMS-plus, 2022).

An Australian maritime specialist, Capt. Enisuoh, indicated that Nigeria's maritime domain was so expansive that only two (2) mission patrol aircraft could not contribute to the decline in piracy in the GoG. He stated that international navies patrolling the region's

seas between July and November of 2021 to protect their economic interest were the only explanation for the dramatic decline in piracy (Agha, 2022).

Nevertheless, Nigeria is leading other GoG countries in terms of financial and military and legal commitment toward eliminating piracy and other sea crimes within its waters up to the GoG region. The enactment of the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences (SPOMO) Act by the President in 2019 and the first conviction under the Act in 2020 (NIMASA, 2020) is highly commendable. Also, Nigeria's budget for the Deep Blue Project is about \$195 (Agha, 2022), which includes the land, Air, and Sea assets (NIMASA, 2021b).

NIMASA (2021a), while explaining what constitutes the land, sea, and Air assets of the Deep Blue Project stated that:

The land assets include the Command, Control, Computer, Communication and Intelligence (C4i) Centre for domain awareness and intelligence gathering, 16 armoured vehicles for coastal patrol, and a 600-strong Maritime Security Unit specially trained for interdiction. The air assets include two Special Mission Aircraft (SMA) for surveillance of the EEZ, three Special Mission Helicopters (SMHs) for search and rescue, and four Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). The sea assets comprise two Special Mission Vessels (SMVs) and 17 Fast Interceptor Boats (FIBs).

According to NIMASA (2019), the C4i Operational Center works 24/7/365 a year with System Operators to monitor the Nigerian EEZ in real time, and intelligence System Operators perform in-depth investigations on ships, including their history. In addition, intelligence officers are keeping an eye out for any threats to Nigeria. Furthermore, certified shift supervisors manage the operating employees during operational shifts to ensure appropriate execution of the center's and the organization's Standard Operating Procedures and to ensure professional and efficient operation and proper information distribution procedure.

Figure 5. C4I Operational Components



Note. From “C4I Operational Center” by NIMASA, 2019, p. 1.

Figure 6. Air and Water Assets of the Deep Blue Project



Note. From “The Deep Blue Project Assets; Helicopters and Intervention Speed Boats” by NIMASA, 2022. Copyright 2022c by NIMASA.

NIMASA (2019) further The C4I Operational Center provides the following capabilities:

- Real-time monitoring and surveillance of the Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- Taking into its consideration – piracy, oil theft smuggling of any sort, national regulations, international law.
- Information gathering methods within the internal platforms that eventually will use as an extensive data bases.
- Extensive maritime intelligence capabilities allowing the staff to investigate vessels throughout a 3-year period of operation.
- Predictive capabilities to take all necessary precautionary measures regarding ‘High-Risk’ vessels ‘en-route’ to the Nigerian EEZ prior to their arrival.
- Real-time updates on vessels underway to the Nigerian EEZ from COVID-19 high-risk regions.
- US sanctions compliance monitoring capabilities.
- Direct link with the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) to inform on piracy and armed robbery events occurring in the Gulf of Guinea.
- Daily delivery of information method to allow rapid response and easy decision-making process.
- Weekly statistical analysis analyzes high-risk locations in the Nigerian waters, including Ship-to-Ship hot spots, piracy-prone areas, and many others.

Furthermore, apart from the Deep Blue Project, the NIMASA DG was recently quoted by the Punch explaining the Success recorded due to Nigeria's SPOMO Act 2019. Mr. Jamoh stated "we have secured 23 convictions, out of which 10 were sentenced to 10

years imprisonment, 10 seven years, while 3 foreigners were fined for their involvement in crime within the Nigerian territorial waters". The prosecution will be a lesson for those still in maritime crimes (Egole, 2022).

However, in terms of socioeconomic approach, Nigeria, as a member of the Lomé Charter, shall plan to implement steps that satisfy Chapter II, Article V of the Charter, which suggests that parties "create productive jobs and eliminate extreme poverty." Additionally, the Charter promotes greater social cohesiveness through equal policymaking. However, the aim of effectively combating piracy at sea without addressing Nigeria's prevalent socioeconomic and governance problems is dangerously reductionist in its approach (Dryad Global, 2021).

3.3.2 Ghana

The maritime environment of Ghana has undergone tremendous transformation in the past ten years. The finding of hydrocarbon resources changed the economic landscape and propelled the country's growth. Piracy is one of the most apparent challenges to maritime security and safety that Ghana, like all other GoG nations, must deal with (Dalaklis, as cited by Dalaklis, 2019). The main issues that primarily threaten Ghana's maritime domain include marine pollution, IUU fishing, Illegal Bunkering, and stealing of Crude-Oil (Dalaklis, 2019).

According to Knott (2019), the naval spokesman of Ghana during the 2019 International Maritime Defense Exhibition and Conference in Ghana, while explaining the need for collaboration, stated that:

Collaboration between the navies in the Gulf of Guinea is extremely important because crimes or insecurity is transnational, it can move from one country to another, so there is a need for us to have that collaboration, such that if a ship has a problem in another country's waters or there is a piracy attack and the pirates move to another country, there could be that communication. And the navies around the various countries could come together to fight such crimes.

The Ghana Maritime Authority has purchased 6 modern speed-boats and 4 search and rescue boats to improve security and safety within its coastal environment. The Authority's goal of coordinating with other law enforcement agencies to fend off sea-pirates and stop illegal marine practices along the coastal area is supported by the procurement of the speed-boats. A joint operation with the Authority, the Navy, the Port Authority, and the Marine Police Unit monitor the Takoradi and Tema Port anchorages at night along with some national installations with these boats to ensure no illegal activity occurs there. The Authority strives to be ready for catastrophes and calamities, and the Search and Rescue vessels are a part of that effort (GMA, 2022).

Approximately 1500 cargo ships, tankers, and fishing boats are thought to travel through the GoG every day. In addition to other economic damage, the GoG's pirate activity costs African nations approximately 2 billion dollars annually (Safety4sea, 2021).

Ghana's Minister of Information in December 2021 stated that when Ghana assumes membership in the United Nations Security Council in January 2022, it will advocate for international action to combat the prevalence of piracy in the GoG (Safety4sea, 2021). Consequently, Ghana and Norway jointly promoted a United Nations resolution on piracy in the GoG (The Maritime Executive, 2022). Hence, on the 31st of May 2022, the UN Security Council unanimous vote approved a resolution (2634 of 2022) urging the GoG member countries "to criminalize piracy and armed robbery at sea under their domestic laws and to investigate, prosecute or extradite, in accordance with applicable international law, perpetrators of such crimes, as well as those who incite, finance or intentionally facilitate them." Additionally, the resolution asks for the GoG countries promptly respond to a request by one of them for either internal or regional effort with international communities' help (United Nations, 2022).

Ghana's Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia was also reported in December 2021 saying that as part of a broader effort to enhance Ghana's military capability, the government prepared to outfit the country's "Navy with offshore patrol vessels and fast patrol boats" (ADF, 2022).

According to ADF (2022), Ghana has troops dedicated to Strengthening Border Security (SBS) which participate in annual training drills with the assistance of the Danish and American forces. The offensive exercise, along with others like close-quarters warfare and emergency medical training, is meant to improve the country's maritime security, increase its capacity to defend its territorial seas, and improve collaboration with its neighboring countries in the GoG. The SBS was set up in 2016 with the assistance of the Nigerian Special Forces. Currently, the SBS conducts operations within Ghana's EEZ with a range of ships, which include fast patrol crafts, and it collaborates with the Ghanaian Air Force to swiftly attach troops whenever required.

The effort of Ghana and other GoG Nations in maritime security seems to make progress against sea crimes. According to the IMB quarterly piracy report, the GoG accounted for less than 20 percent of worldwide piracy in Q1 of 2022, after accounting for 43 percent over the same span last year. However, the IMB warned in a statement earlier this year that sustained measures are required to make sure the continuous safety of sailors in the unstable GoG region. Ghana can exhibit better control off the shared shore by cooperating tightly with Nigeria and neighboring countries, especially when crimes transcend international borders (ADF, 2022).

3.3.3 Cameroon

Alhassan and Mensah described Cameroon as a critical stakeholder in creating the GoG's emerging maritime security governance framework. The country is home to important regional maritime security governance organizations, including "the GoG Inter-regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security and the Multinational Coordination Centre for ECCAS Zone D." Cameroon is locationally the center of the GoG, and its fishing industry structure is similar to that of other states in the region (as cited by Beseng & Malcolm, 2021).

Despite data from prior years indicating that the majority of pirate attacks took place outside Cameroonian waters, there were still few reports of piracy occurrences around Douala anchorage, as captured by the IMB reports. This is why in 2019, Cameroonian Authority decided that every ship waiting at the anchorage is to be provided with armed

guards to secure them for free until they move to the berth. The stakeholders welcomed this action as it has removed the bureaucratic wait to obtain approval from the Ministry of Defense and the Presidency whenever such security protection is required by any ship in the previous system (Hellenic Shipping News, 2019).

Cameroon collaborates with many domestic and regional stakeholders to combat piracy and other sea crimes. For example, there has been a continuous collaboration between the navies of Nigeria and Cameroon that started in 2014. Each nation permits the other's navy to pursue within its waters. Additionally, the two fleets have developed a communication system and support one another while conducting operations. As a result, the two nations have significantly decreased the number of piracy incidents in the region. In addition, they were able to deal with the issues of drug peddling and kidnapping around Calabar in Nigeria and Bakassi in Cameroon. However, that does not imply that all is tranquil. Collaboration was not that simple in the past, and when all the nations of the region get along, they have much more to do (Kindzeka, 2017).

3.3.4 Other GoG Member Countries

Other countries of the region also play significant role in the GoG maritime security. They collaborate with each other and the international navies present in the region through different platforms including the Yaunde Architecture (Adejuyigbe, 2021). The Yaoundé Code of Conduct, is the primary declaratory tool developed by governments in the region (Bassist, 2022).

The Yaounde accord covers 25 states, just between ECOWAS and ECCAS, each having their own political, economic, and regional goals, as well as some with long-standing and deeply-seated disputes and grievances. Although the nations in the GoG agreed on a scheme for international maritime security, several of them are unlikely to permit external naval involvement in their territorial sea. Regional political engagement, leadership, and ongoing collaboration are required to achieve results. However, these objectives can be hampered by political and economic rivalry and sovereignty issues (Berriault, 2022).

The governments of Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and Sao Tome and Principe formed a broad coalition in 2009 to protect their shared shorelines from miscreants (Adejuyigbe, 2021).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Discussion of the findings

It is crucial to understand the precise nature of the issue from a legal standpoint before developing an effective plan to combat sea crimes in GoG. This is grounded in the straightforward logic that it is difficult to have a workable solution to an issue without first identifying the root cause of that issue. That argument implies that any security strategies should be on a solid legal foundation, considering the rights and obligations of countries in the numerous maritime zones under UNCLOS. There are some problems about sovereign powers and jurisdictions, as well as the many maritime boundary disputes that is common in the GoG area largely because of the hydrocarbons deposit in the region (Center for International Maritime Security [CIMSEC], 2014).

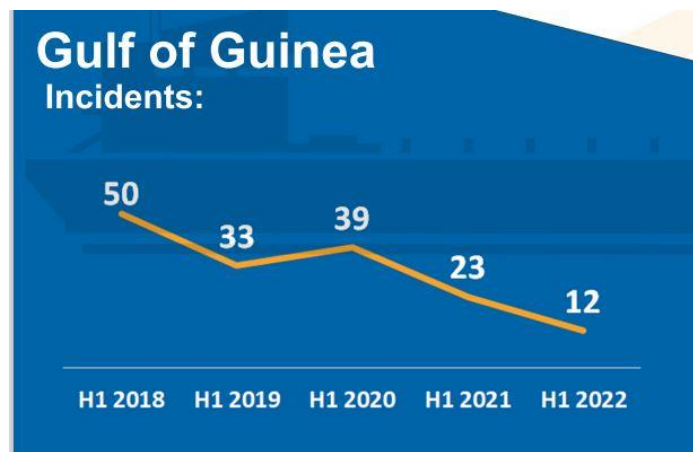
There is a total of twelve (12) incidences in the GoG from January to June 2022, an indication that, In spite of a decline of the marine incidences, the region is still facing sea crimes such as attacks and kidnapping (ICC-IMB, 2022). Consequently, Coastal countries in the GoG should firstly acknowledge that it is the obligation of each coastal nation, not the international organizations, to safeguard their domestic waterways, seaport infrastructure, and territorial seas. This crucial aspect must be recognized to ensure the region's amiable and adequate maritime security (CIMSEC, 2014).

The necessary collaboration between nations to combat maritime insecurity is emphasized in article 100 of the UNCLOS 1982. The article stated, "All states shall cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of piracy on the high seas or in any other place outside the jurisdiction of any state." (Dalaklis & Ndze, 2017). From the literature reviewed in the previous chapters, an increase in cooperation between countries in the GoG region has been clearly noted, and the effort is yielding a positive result. ADF, (2022) also corroborated that the collaboration between GoG countries put the region in a solid position to effectively combat piracy and other illegal activities. This is important as everyone has the right to feel secure while performing their job and return to their families without fear of being harassed or harmed. No less is acceptable for seamen (BIMCO, 2022).

According to Dryad Global's recent report, there are new signs that the IMO will persuade 25 nations in West and Central Africa to embrace "the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Offences (SPOMO) Act" prepared by NIMASA and enacted by Nigeria in 2019. According to the report, the IMO Secretary-General is planned to speak during the MOWCA general meeting coming up in November this year in Abuja. He is expected to make all the MOWCA members accept the Act to prosecute maritime pirates and other criminals regardless of where the crime is committed in the MOWCA region (Dryad Global, 2022).

The result of the combined efforts of the international communities and GoG member countries especially Nigeria who is playing a leading role with the deployment of its Deep Blue Project assets and prosecuting sea criminals through the SPOMO Act has started to produce a positive results. The evidence to that can be seen in the first half of year 2022 (H1) IMB Piracy report, where the number of reported piracy attacks in the GoG dropped from 50 incidences in H1 of 2018 to the lowest 12 incidences of the same period in 2022.

Figure 7. Comparison of Half of the year (H1) IMB Piracy Report from 2018 to 2022



Note. From "H2 IMB Piracy Report 2022", by IMB, 2022

Figure 6 shows a graphical representation of the number of piracy incidence that occurred from 2018 to 2022. It can be seen that the number of reported incidences fall from 50 in

H1 of 2018 to 33 incidences in the same duration of 2019. But in H1 2020 the number rose to 39 incidences.

It is clear evidence that the improvement of the security situation in the GoG has so far been consistent from 2020. However, Berriault (2022) opined that the situation has only been contained, not eliminated entirely and that the sharp drop down of the number of piracy reported by IMB might be a result of Covid19 restrictions that significantly reduced the volume of trade activities in the GoG and the rest of the world and therefore no targets to be attacked. Although the world is recovering from the effects of covid19 and trade is beginning to rise again, it remains to be seen if the improved situation will be sustained. Nevertheless, some experts, including the current NIMASA Director General, attributed it to Nigeria's deployment of the Deep Blue Project assets in 2019 and the improved collaboration between GoG member countries and the international interventions (NIMASA, 2022b).

However, it has been noted that Bribery, corruption, and weak governance are the core causes of marine crimes in GoG. Adequate marine security in GoG will remain elusive if millions lack food, shelter, jobs, and medical care. Some of those responsible for administering state affairs and maintaining law and order engage in harmful actions. Government policies and acts sometimes are sometimes the causative agent of the lawlessness. And since they do not see or feel any good impact from the government, regular citizens have little respect for law and order or established authority. Our government is a powerful educator. For good or ill, it teaches through example. If the government breaks the law, it develops disrespect for the law and invites instability. Improved governance and strict enforcement of anti-bribery and corruption legislation are urgently needed. Good governance, accountability, and openness reinforced by law-keepers respect for the rule of law are anti-crime remedies. Actualizing these easy treatments for depravity may be the most challenging aspect of suppressing regional insecurity since it will involve significant social mobilization with the goal of full reorientation and mentality change from leaders and the general public (SIMSEC, 2014).

It is also essential to highlight that the Military actions against the pirates and other sea criminals, although crucial, are insufficient. Both military and civilian players involved in maritime and overall administration require a more thorough and multifaceted strategy (Berriault, 2022). Practically all GoG states have no unemployment insurance. As a result, unemployed people in the region regularly resort to law-breaking to survive. Nigeria, the most populous and richest country in the region, has severe unemployment and poverty. The problem is exacerbated by the government actions and inactions that in some instances are not carefully considered before implementation. The privatization of Nigerian seaports, for example, led to the layoff of approximately 18,000 workers in 2006. This had the dual effect of increasing the number of people without jobs who had previously worked in the maritime industry as well as the number of people who committed crimes related to the sea. To the contrary, there was no maritime security endeavor that will be successful as long as many people with ties to the marine sector, and the maritime security, are unemployed (SIMSEC, 2014)

The GoG is a significant oil producer in Africa, and many of its members depend primarily on oil as their source of foreign currency. Berriault (2022) explained that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is economically beneficial to the GoG as an alternative energy source for some European countries. He said, “A cut in imports of Russian oil and gas could benefit the Gulf of Guinea’s oil producers and would make the region’s maritime security agenda even more relevant.” Furthermore, Uchechukwu (2022), in a July publication on International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) reported that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nigeria, Niger Republic and Algeria was signed for the installation of gas pipelines to be supplying 30-billion cubic meters per year of natural gas from Nigeria to Europe.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Conclusion

It is evident from the information examined in the previous chapters that the international and national navies present in the GoG play a significant role in curtailing the insecurity in the region. Although the piracy level in the region has significantly reduced, the member countries still need more work to be done in collaboration with local and international stakeholders. Among the GoG countries, Nigeria has so far been playing a leading role in establishing the legal framework to prosecute sea criminals, budgetary spending to acquire and deploy assets to combat maritime insecurity, as well as local and regional collaboration. Even though it has been revealed that some countries in the region are currently understudying Nigeria's SPOMO Act (Adenubi, 2022), none of the countries in the region has standalone legislation against maritime crimes. The need to resolve other factors contributing to piracy and other sea crimes has also been established. The other factors include unemployment, corruption and the unfavorable economic condition of the coastal communities along the vast coastlines of the region.

5.2 Recommendations

SIMSEC (2014) made the following practical recommendations to resolve the insecurity in the GoG:

5.2.1 Offshore Based Recommendations

I. First and foremost, countries in GoG must acknowledge that each coastal state is responsible for securing its internal seas, port infrastructure, and national territorial sea, not the international organizations. To maintain solid and efficient maritime security in the area, one must understand this critical aspect. Because, the sovereign rights of a country stretch to its territorial sea, and the country has exclusive control to maintain its territorial sea's proper order and security. As a result, every coastal state has a duty to ensure adequate and sufficient security for marine activities in its territorial seas. It appears to be solid reasons for arguing that a coastal state may be held accountable for breaching the

UNCLOS requirements for proper and sufficient security in its territorial waters by the doctrine of state responsibility if it fails to protect sufferers of sea crimes and port facilities. Naturally, each case's facts will determine whether or not such responsibility is applicable. However, it may be easily proven against coastal states with poor marine security as a result of bribery, corruption, and poor governance (SIMSEC, 2014)

II. Nigeria, in particular, should enact a zero-tolerance policy against offshore bunkering. This is due to the fact that the illicit operations in the oil business in the region, particularly Nigeria, are directly related to the rise in marine crimes in the GoG. In addition, the region's offshore bunkering industry frequently involves shady negotiations with corrupt tycoons, which can serve as a breeding ground for organized crime and other illicit activities, such as gang rivalries, whereby some may eventually result in assaults on vessels (SIMSEC, 2014).

III. SIMSEC (2014) further stated that states in the GoG must take stern, forceful anti-smuggling actions with no leniency policy. Contraband is the cornerstone of crimes against seamen. It may be due to the secret nature of these activities that is conducted covertly without security protection to dodge payment of customs and port duties, increasing the predisposition for criminal activity attacks vessels. Therefore, any effort to reduce piracy and armed robbery at sea in GoG will be ineffective unless it first reduces the high rate of smuggling. In short, efforts to combat illegal behaviors that endanger the safety of maritime navigation in GoG should be measured against anti-smuggling initiatives.

IV. SIMSEC (2014) added that GoG countries must prioritize clearing shipwrecks from their waterways and enact strict regulations to avoid vessel abandonment. The reason for this is that the abundance of abandoned ships in the area poses a threat to navigation and the environment and serves as a cozy haven for pirates to store their weapons and initiate onslaught on other ships. The appropriate agency must identify these vessels using all available means to collect payment for the expense of removing such wrecks from the owners. Consequently, Nigeria can depend on Article 3 of the Nairobi International Treaty on the removal of Wrecks Convention to maximize its advantage for

its benefit. Other countries in the region should domesticate the treaty and equally benefit from it.

V. It is clear that fighting maritime crime ashore, as opposed to offshore, in the GoG does not necessitate the addition of more warships. Due to the highly lucrative nature of such illicit activities and the minimal likelihood of being caught and prosecuted, maritime criminals in that region will always take a chance. Therefore, navy and coast guard operations should be carried out to discourage, identify, and thwart maritime criminals before they can undertake any successful operations. The ability of the authorities to virtually control their maritime environment is necessary for this purpose so that potential criminals can see and feel the presence of security operations. This cannot be done with warships but rather with high speed and equipped patrol boats which can outwit criminals' speed boats, emphasizing using air operations. Therefore, a more significant number of well-equipped, quicker patrol boats with officers with the appropriate training are required. Furthermore, Maritime Airborne Surveillance and Control (MASC) would aid the naval and coastguard troops and be cost-effective given the size of the area to be maintained under surveillance (SIMSEC (2014)). Therefore, in addition to more patrol and reconnaissance planes with diverse competences, together with effective use of contemporary technology, what is needed is better equipped and faster patrol boats. For effective maritime law enforcement, it will also be necessary to harden, reinforce, and coordinate the navies and coastguards operations in GoG nations to guarantee effective and efficient patrol by adequately personnel. Given the widespread accusations of corruption within the Nigerian navy, this will be especially helpful in the case of Nigeria (SIMSEC, 2014)

VI. Due to the size of the area that needs to be monitored, GoG nations should employ the use of cutting-edge technology to curb marine crimes. More provision maritime surveillance equipment to supplement ground and air patrols, authorities can virtually manage their maritime domains thanks to current technology that is constantly evolving. Although technology helps to improve maritime security, no technological system can guarantee 100% surveillance, and specific systems may need to be linked with others to improve dependability. In order to be effective, selecting the proper technology also

needs to consider the local conditions and infrastructure in place, such as the frequent interruptions of the energy supply, especially in Nigeria (SIMSEC, 2014).

5.2.2 Onshore Based Recommendations

VII. SIMSEC (2014) continued that in their national security policy, GoG governments must prioritize Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). MDA is the study of anything in the marine realm that could affect a coastal state's security, safety, economy, or environment. GoG countries rely significantly on their Maritime Domain. Criminal activities within the GoG region is a direct result of neglecting to invest and utilize the MDA by National governments in the region until not long ago. Security policies in the region should include everlasting provision of MDA and programs must be adapted to each state's socioeconomic demands. MDA strategies should be critically appraised often to guarantee effectiveness and alignment with regional and worldwide goals. Maritime security initiatives will not be successful until GoG member nations commit to long-term MDA programs. Nigeria is doing well in this regard through its C4i center and the Eagle Eye.

VIII. Coastal countries in GoG must recognize that marine activity is the backbone of their economies and allocate enough funds for maritime security. Funding must work closely with a mechanism to guarantee that allotted resources are used as intended. All GoG littoral governments earn much of their income from their maritime industry, yet they do not allocate enough resources for maritime security. Most GoG states lack navy or coastguard capabilities, except Nigeria and Ghana, which can operate at sea for a while (SIMSEC, 2014).

IX. GoG governments must enhance work possibilities in their coastal areas to engage individuals who turn to crime for survival. Therefore, coastal communities need robust job-creation programs. The fishing subsector must be revived from the long abandonment. Resolving the IUU fishing will surely unlock the economic potentials in fishing business which will in turn create jobs, improve socioeconomic status of the coastal populace and hence facilitate maritime security in the region (SIMSEC, 2014).

X. Furthermore, SIMSEC (2014) explained that the GoG governments must evaluate and revamp legal systems for prosecuting maritime criminals. This is important because of corruption charges against prosecutors and judges who handle such cases, notably in Nigeria. Low prosecution rates relative to captured perpetrators encourage such crimes. Nigeria's SPOMO Act is worthy of emulation in this regard.

XI. According to SIMSEC (2014), to improve the prosecution of maritime criminals, GoG governments should consider establishing a regional tribunal. This may require amending domestic criminal laws to provide a specialized regional tribunal with harmonized authority over marine offenses committed within member state's territorial waters. "The different legal systems of the various Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries in the region should not be an obstacle as there are several international criminal courts and tribunals with templates for such initiative." Moreover, a specialized tribunal will help tackled sea crimes as the criminals will be convinced that the authorities serious.

XII. GoG member countries must fight marine crime regionally. The permeable and adjoining nature of maritime borders indicate that sea crimes is not a one country problem but a transboundary as these borderlines were fully delineated which is why some border disagree exist in the region. The Yaoundé Code of Conduct exclusively addresses offshore dangers, not ashore core causes. It does not address the region's low conviction rate for maritime offenders (SIMSEC, 2014).

Similarly, the goal of efficiently combating piracy offshore while neglecting to tackle the multiple social and economic issues and governmental challenges that plague is dangerously simplistic. (2021, Dryad Global). Therefore, GoG member countries must also make meaningful commitments to improving the socioeconomic lives of the communities in and around coastal areas of the region, as required by Lome Charter.

5.3 Further Area of research

Data for the efforts of most GoG members in the fight against sea crimes could not be obtained online; as such, it is difficult to assess precisely to what extent they contribute

to the recent success in the decline in piracy in the region. Consequently, there may be a need to conduct further research using a different method. It is then possible to suggest specific recommendations to individual countries to adopt to sustain the current success and finally and permanently defeat maritime insecurity in the region.

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