

LEGAL-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF MARITIME INSECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

By

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Abstract

This article examined the legal-economic implications of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and the role of international communities in combating same. The Gulf of Guinea in recent years, has become one of the most dangerous maritime areas in the world. Maritime insecurity is a major regional problem that is compromising the development of this strategic economic area and threatening maritime trade in the short term and the stability of coastal states in the long term. Active engagement in international forums, regional organizations and effective collaboration with other countries will no doubt strengthen coastal states position in addressing maritime insecurity as well as other global challenges. Countries around the Gulf of Guinea therefore need to come together and form a united and formidable force if they must defeat this cankerworm (piracy) that has eaten up the economic fortune the area is blessed with. This article adopted the doctrinal research methodology. It relied on both primary and secondary sources of gathering information. In conclusion, the paper recommended that an adoption of a comprehensive and strategic approach to combatting piracy, terrorism, organized crime, and other transnational challenges around the Gulf of Guinea should be the only way forward.

Keywords: *Sovereignty; Insecurity; Regional Cooperation; piracy; State; Maritime; Gulf of Guinea; International Cooperation.*

1.0 Introduction

Sovereignty is the very essence of the existence of any State hence it is deep rooted in the States' constitutions.¹ It is the right of sovereign states to be recognized by other States and it gives a State the right to relate with other countries on an equal footing irrespective of size. This right further confers on a State the right to enter into diplomatic and trade relations with other States.²

The principle of state sovereignty has as a corollary, the responsibility placed on States to address security threats within their territory.³ This includes the seawards aspect of the state's territory as specified under Arts 2 and 3 of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. Art 2(1) UNCLOS provides that the sovereignty of a Coastal State extends, beyond its land territory and internal waters and, in the case of an archipelagic State, its archipelagic waters, to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea. Art 3 provides that Every State has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up

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¹ CFRN 1999, ss. 4, 5 & 6

² *Ibid*, s. 12

³ *Miranda v Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436, 539 (1966). Section 14(2) (b), Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), 1999 (as amended) clearly manifests the monopoly of government over issues of security by providing that 'the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government'.

to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines determined in accordance with this Convention.⁴ The peculiarity of the maritime domain, in contrast with sovereign territory on land, creates a situation in which threats are not usually restricted by physical territorial boundaries. The mere fact that states located within a region share similar maritime security threats makes cooperation and interdependence in this context of addressing the risks, imperative. Furthermore, in as much as states and state neighbours experience the immediate effect of security threats, the interdependence of world economies due to globalisation creates an imperative for states and international agencies outside the established threat region to contribute to security. This creates avenue for the existence of multi-cooperative security frameworks.

2.0. The Geography of the Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea is a large inlet of the South Atlantic on the West coast of Africa, extending from Cape Palmas, Liberia, to Cape Lopez, Gabon: contains two large bays, the Bight of Bonny and the Bight of Benin, separated by the Niger delta. The Gulf of Guinea is a vast maritime space of 2.3 million square kilometers and 5700 kilometers of coastline with considerable economic wealth. The Gulf of Guinea is made up of 17 countries they include; Senegal, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, etc. The Gulf of Guinea is richly endowed with vast reserves of hydrocarbon, mineral (diamond, tin and cobalt), and fisheries resources, making it a strategic area. While not a major international shipping route, the Gulf of Guinea represents 25 percent of African maritime traffic and has nearly 20 commercial seaports. With 60 percent of Africa's oil production, the Gulf of Guinea is home to 4.5 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and 2.7 percent of proven natural gas reserves. Two-thirds of these reserves are concentrated within the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria, the center of gravity of the region, whose oil sector accounts for 75 percent of the state's revenue and 90 percent of total exports. The Gulf of Guinea also has one of the world's richest fishing grounds and represents almost 4 percent of global fish production. The fisheries sector is a critical source of employment for millions of people. In West Africa alone, up to a quarter of jobs are linked to the fisheries sector. These resources contribute to the economic dynamism of the region, and its economic potential is expected to increase in the coming years (the region will comprise a quarter of the world's population by 2050). But before it can realize and benefit from this potential, threats to its stability and prosperity must first be addressed.⁵

3.0 Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea

All over the globe, Piracy remains an indicator of negative onshore conditions. Poverty, violence, underdevelopment, pollution, corruption, high levels of unemployment, and a lack of good governance create a climate where piracy and other maritime insecurity flourish.

⁴ Art 2(1) UNCLOS 1982

⁵ S. Oyewole, 'Supressing Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: The Prospects and Challenges of the Regional Players' [2016](8) Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs 132,134.

For more than a decade now, the Gulf of Guinea has been plagued by a succession of acts of piracy, making these regions/ maritime space one of the most dangerous and unstable in the world.⁶ The difficulty and complexity of combating piracy and maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea pose an enormous challenge. In 2004, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) rated the Gulf of Guinea “second in the number of piracy attacks only to the Strait of Malacca,” and in August of 2011, part of the Gulf of Guinea became classified as “a war risk zone for shipping,” achieving the same risk category as Somalia.⁷ In November 2011. Also, in 2018, the Gulf of Guinea registered the highest number of piracy attacks compared to other regions in the world⁸ According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) and the International Crisis Group (ICG), these attacks are growing daily “because of limited maritime security presence,” and in 2013, “1,871 seafarers were victims of attacks and 279 were taken hostage,” as stated in the report. In 2014 a total of “41 incidents were confirmed to the IMB PRC [Pirate Reporting Center] in West Africa. report.”⁹

Oil theft or illegal “bunkering represents yet another category of threats to the smooth conduct of commerce in the Gulf of Guinea,” and the Council of the European Union (EU) estimates that Nigeria loses “100,000 barrels of crude oil per day” due to theft.¹⁰ In addition, the Gulf of Guinea is a “preferred transit hub” in the global trade on drugs.¹¹ Incidents of maritime crime are on the rise. In 2020, 27 of the world’s 28 recorded maritime kidnappings occurred in the Gulf of Guinea, where 623 seafarers were exposed to kidnapping, while only eight seafarers suffered a similar threat anywhere else.¹² Between 2021 and 2022, the Gulf of Guinea accounted for 95% kidnappings worldwide.

The lack of a harmonized legal framework and jurisdictional shortcomings in many countries in the region contribute to a great extent the continuous occurrence of this menace. Other illicit trades and traffics of human beings and substances also have a bearing on security in the Gulf of Guinea. Transnational drug cartels take advantage of porous maritime borders and corruption of law enforcement personnel. It is estimated that 25-30% of South American cocaine drug shipments destined for Europe pass through West Africa.¹³

4.0 Legal Frame Work for Combating Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea

4.1. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended)

In the case of *Abacha v. Fawehinmi*¹⁴, the Supreme Court defined the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, the grund-norm i.e, the basic law from which all other laws of the society derive their validity.

⁶ P. Morcos, 2021, A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea

⁷ M. Fiorelli, “Piracy in Africa: The Case of the Gulf of Guinea,” KAIPTC, August 2014, 6, <https://www.kaiptc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/New%20folder/FiorelliM.2014-piracy-in- africa-the-case-of-the-gulf-of-guinea.pdf>.

⁸ IMB’s annual piracy report,” January 13, 2021, <https://iccwbo.org/media-wall/news-speeches/ gulf-of-guinea-records-highest-ever-number-of-crew-kidnapped-in-2020-according-to-imbs-annual-piracy- report/>.

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ European Union, “EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea: Foreign Affairs Council Meeting Brussels,” European Union, March 17, 2014, [eu_strategy_on_the_gulf_of_guinea_7.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/external-affairs/sites/default/files/2014/03/eu_strategy_on_the_gulf_of_guinea_7.pdf).

¹¹ European Union. Bell et al., “Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: A Cost Analysis for Coastal States.,” 3.

¹² Bell et al., “Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: A Cost Analysis for Coastal States.,” 3

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¹⁴ [2000] 6 NWLR (Pt) 228: P-P- v. C.P. [2011]17 NWLR (Pt) 485.

And if any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution, the Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void.”¹⁵ The above provisions clearly place the constitution over and above any other authority or persons. It is the supreme authority in the land and every power is traceable to the constitution.¹⁶

Section 12 of the Constitution provides that no treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly.¹⁷ The impact of Section 12 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution on the Possible obligations owed by Nigeria in Undomesticated Treaties was solidified in the seminal case of *Abacha v Fawehinmi*¹⁸

This section highlights one of Nigeria’s international law characteristics; dualism. Dualism is the notion of law that, in matters requiring legal application, places national law as superior in position, to international law, and consequently requires; that for any international law agreement to be binding and enforceable in such domestic state, it must be domesticated or translated to domestic law, necessarily by the National Assembly. Dualism is in contradistinction to monism which asserts the opposite, which is that international laws become automatically binding on domestic affairs, regardless of whether it is translated into national laws. By virtue of section 12 of Nigeria’s 1999 constitution, Nigeria is clearly a dualist state.¹⁹ Thus unless a law has been domesticated (meaning the law has been transformed into local law, and is no longer merely an international law), such international law has no legal force in Nigeria.²⁰

4.2. The SUPMOA (Suppression of Piracy and other Maritime Offences) Act 2019

The SUPMOA which came into effect in 2019 is a Nigerian state’s response to the Lomé charter. One obligation of the contracting parties of the Lomé charter is to harmonise its national legislation with relevant international legal instruments. The Nigerian government has given effect to this requirement through the SUPMOA Act 2019, which aims to suppress piracy, armed robbery, and other unlawful acts in the maritime domain. These crimes become punishable with life imprisonment and payment of fifty million Naira, in addition to restitution to the owner. Till date, the amount of convictions remains limited with the first conviction being that of a private company involved in the transfer of a ransom payment.²¹

4.3 The United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982

Article 2(1) UNCLOS provides that the sovereignty of a coastal State extends, beyond its land territory and internal waters and, in the case of an archipelagic State, its archipelagic waters, to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea. Art 3 provides that Every State has the right to establish the breadth of its

¹⁵ CFRN.1999, s1(1) & (3); *A.G. Abia State v. A.G. Federation* (2006) 16 NWLR (Pt. 1005) 265

¹⁶ *INEC v. Musa* [2003] 3 NWLR (Pt 806) 72; *A.G. Ogun State v. A.G. Federation* [1982] 2 NCLR 166

¹⁷ CFRN 1999, s. 12(1)

¹⁸ [1996] 9 NWLR (Pt 475)710.

¹⁹ J. Faleti -March 4, 2020, *The Impact of Section 12 Of The Nigerian 1999 Constitution On The Possible Obligations Owed By Nigeria In The Non-Ratified Treaties Of Space Law*

²⁰ Dryad Global Annual Report: Maritime Security West Africa, Key challenges facing the Gulf of Guinea, Dryad Global June 8, 2023, available at “Gulf of Guinea and Nigerian Piracy” <https://www.dryadglobal.com/gulf-of-guinea-and-nigerian-piracy>

²¹ *Ibid*

territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles, measured from baselines determined in accordance with this Convention.²² The peculiarity of the maritime domain, in contrast with sovereign territory on land, creates a situation in which threats are not usually restricted by physical territorial boundaries.²³

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Article 101 defines piracy as: “any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew of the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft. . . on the high seas against another ship or aircraft. . .” The United States incorporates UNCLOS Article 101 in criminalizing piracy in 18 U.S.C. § 1651, which states “[w]hoever, on the high seas, commits the crime of piracy as defined by the law of nations, and is afterwards brought into or found in the United States, shall be imprisoned for life.” As a case example, an 1820 Supreme Court decision, *U.S. v. Furlong*, affirmed the conviction of an Irishman for piracy because he murdered an English subject aboard an American shipping vessel.

5.0 Institutional Frame Work for Combating Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea

5.1 Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)

The Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) was an offshoot from the merger of the National Maritime Authority and Joint Maritime Labour Industrial Council (former parastatals of the Federal Ministry of Transport) on the 1st August 2006.

The Agency provides maritime services in Nigeria and is focused on developing indigenous capacity to respond to maritime security threats.²⁴ Its areas of focus include effective Maritime Safety Administration, Maritime Labour Regulation, Marine Pollution Prevention and Control, Search and Rescue, Cabotage enforcement, Shipping Development and Ship Registration, Training and Certification of Seafarers, and Maritime Capacity Development. The Agency was established primarily for the administration of Maritime Safety Seafarers Standards and Security, Maritime Labour, Shipping Regulation, Promotion of Commercial Shipping and Cobatage activities, Pollution Prevention and Control in the marine environment, the Agency also implements domesticated International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions.²⁵

5.2 The International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevent marine pollution from ships.

The IMO sets standards for the safety and security of international shipping. It oversees every aspect of worldwide shipping regulations, including legal issues, shipbuilding, and cargo size.

²² Art 2(1) UNCLOS

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ Dryad Global Annual Report: Maritime Security West Africa, Key challenges facing the Gulf of Guinea, Dryad Global June 8, 2023, available at “Gulf of Guinea and Nigerian Piracy” <https://www.dryadglobal.com/gulf-of-guinea-and-nigerian-piracy>

²⁵ *Ibid*

The International Maritime Organization is an agency tasked with improving the security and safety of international shipping. One of its key duties is to devise strategies and measures to keep the waterways clean by preventing marine pollution from ships.

IMO Resolution A.922(22) Code of Practice for the Investigation of the Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in its annex, point 3.1-4 provides for Coastal States responsibilities towards ensuring safe, smooth and seamless shipping activities in their domain.

In Point 3.1 it is recommended that states take steps needed to establish their jurisdiction against crimes of piracy and armed robbery at sea, including adjusting their laws and regulations so that the state can detain and prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes. Thus the jurisdiction of a state against the crime will be established when the crime has been regulated in its national legislation.

In Point 3.3, states are also encouraged to make efforts to help ship owners report the incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea they have experienced. In order to achieve this, coastal states are asked to do endeavour and not burden ship-owners with additional costs of reporting such crimes.

Then in Point 3.4, coastal states are encouraged to collaborate bilaterally or multilaterally in investigating crimes against piracy and armed robbery at sea. This means that states that make such agreements must cooperate in investigating the crimes that happened, and not just exchanging information.²⁶

6.0 Economic Implications/Cost of Piracy and other Maritime Crimes on the Gulf of Guinea

There is no doubt that Gulf of Guinea is one of the world's most important shipping routes for both oil exports from the Niger Delta and consumer goods to and from central and southern Africa. There are about 1,500 fishing vessels, tankers and cargo ships navigating the gulf's waters on a daily basis. While attacks take place all the way from Ivory Coast down to Congo-Brazzaville, maritime piracy emerges almost exclusively from Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta.²⁷

With unemployment rates high in the coastal regions of West Africa, weak security and a lack of capacity and capability to enforce maritime laws, the Gulf has become a hotspot for piracy. In addition to stealing oil cargo, maritime piracy in the gulf has evolved into a more financially lucrative business model of kidnapping seafarers for ransom.

Attacks are pushing up the cost of insurance while endangering the lives of crew members. Shippers want an international naval coalition to crack down on piracy, but such support is limited because the value of shipping isn't as great as it is off the Horn of Africa, the approach to the Suez Canal.²⁸ While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cost of piracy (ship-owners are often unwilling to disclose ransom sums and security costs), a 2017 report by non-profit Oceans Beyond Piracy found that attacks on ships cost US\$818.1mn

²⁶G. A. Bunga *Jurnal Hukum dan Peradilan* – ISSN: 2303-3274 (p), 2528-1100 (e) Vol. 9, no. 3 (2020), pp. 425-448, doi: 10.25216/jhp.9.3.2020.425-448

²⁷ Dryad Global Annual Report: Maritime Security West Africa, Key challenges facing the Gulf of Guinea, Dryad Global June 8, 2023, available at "Gulf of Guinea and Nigerian Piracy" <https://www.dryadglobal.com/gulf-of-guinea-and-nigerian-piracy>

²⁸ *Ibid*

that year, nearly half of which was spent on maritime security. Since then, there has been an upward trend in piracy incidents and economic costs involved is likely to have increased as well. Piracy increases the cost of international maritime transport through an increase in insecurity regarding goods deliveries. There is robust evidence to indicate that maritime piracy reduces volumes of trade. The international cost of piracy in terms of trade destruction is estimated to be 28 billion dollars.

7.0 The Role of the Regional Governments and International Communities

Piracy and maritime crimes are transnational in nature, and these cannot be addressed in isolation but with a holistic approach that considers both the land and the maritime spaces as a unified entity.²⁹ Piracy is a crime to which universal jurisdiction can be imposed because it is considered as a common enemy of all humanity and is the oldest internationally recognized crime.³⁰

The geo-strategic importance of the Gulf of Guinea cannot be overstated, with respect to its enormous deposits of natural resources and commerce; however, the dynamic nature of the maritime threat and its detrimental effects on commerce and the economies of member states, warrants a more robust architecture to secure the sea-lanes of communication (SLOC).³¹ In line with this argument, Nna-Emeka Okereke argues that “the security of the maritime domain has over the centuries been fraught with changing dimensions of threat requiring robust maritime security architecture to safeguard the seaways.”³² Maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is thus a common concern for the international communities generally, and third states in particular. At the regional level, within the framework of its peace and security policies, ECCAS has created a regional maritime security centre and organised joint training exercises. However, states do not find it straightforward to organise joint funding or coordinate their efforts. Maritime policies are embryonic and symbolic and states are unable to maintain a continuous presence at sea. In the case of ECOWAS, maritime cooperation is still in its infancy and is hampered by political tensions and distrust of neighbouring states toward Nigeria.³³ Added to this, Nigeria’s inability to effectively govern its territory beyond the urban areas and oil facilities is at the heart of conflicts in the Niger delta and by extension the Gulf of Guinea. To curb this menace, there should be a Coordination between vessels, affected states need to exchange and share information on what is happening on their coastlines, Joint training activities are required so that countries can develop procedures and improve their interoperability, Countries must look to develop strong legislation and prosecute maritime criminals, Countries should also set aside funds to build local security capacity, Centralised reporting and response agencies in the Gulf of Guinea, Collaboration with Private

²⁹ K. Ifesinachi and C. Nwangwu, “Implementation of the Yaounde Code of Conduct and Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea”

³⁰ M. N. Shaw, 2001, *International Law: Fourth edition*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, hlm.423, also see: Peter Malanczuk, 1997, *Akehurst’s Modern Introduction to International Law*, Seventh revised edition, Routledge, New York, p.112.

³¹ *Ibid*

³² N. Okereke, “Gulf of Guinea: Regional Architecture for Anti-Piracy and Maritime Security,” 1.

³³ Report / Africa 12 December 2012 3 Minutes, “The Gulf of Guinea: The New Danger Zone | Crisis Group” <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/guinea/gulf-guinea-new-danger-zone> [s://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/guinea/gulf-guinea-new-danger-zone](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/guinea/gulf-guinea-new-danger-zone)

Maritime Security Companies, Long-term investments in social-economic programs aimed at tackling insecurity in coastal communities.³⁴

At the inter-regional level, cooperation between ECCAS and ECOWAS would allow regional patrols to exercise the right of pursuit beyond maritime borders. However, inter-regional discussions have only just begun and political tensions hamper efforts to promote practical cooperation. Meanwhile, Western powers (U.S., France, U.K.) and emerging nations (Brazil, China, India, South Africa) with economic interests in the region are providing financial support and security expertise to assist local initiatives.

During the early 2010s, countries from West and Central Africa established a framework for international maritime security cooperation in response to the rising threat of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea which is today known as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCC)³⁵. Twenty-five heads of state and governments from the Gulf of Guinea signed the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCC) in June 2013 reaffirming their resolve in principle to eradicate maritime piracy in the region. The framework they crafted at the summit is the Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Security (YAMS).³⁶

Despite widespread international support for this initiative, maritime security threats have become more severe in recent years. In contrast to the rest of the world, crews are frequently kidnapped in the Gulf of Guinea and held for ransom.³⁷ In the Gulf of Guinea seafarers are abducted, tortured, and ransomed more often than elsewhere. The regional response to maritime security issues in the Gulf of Guinea has not been effective because of several factors, including the cooperation's non-binding code of conduct, the insufficient implementation and operationalization of YAMS owing to its cumbersome design, and the member states' different interests and limited capacities to support their own maritime security.

The institutionalisation of regional cooperation and the increase in the number of international initiatives must not obscure the fact that rising crime in the Gulf of Guinea is mainly due to poor governance. Most states in the region have been unable to control economic activities in their maritime zones and in international waters and ensure the development of their coasts. This collective failure has created a major opportunity for criminal networks that feed on the needs and resentments of local communities. A range of urgent measures is needed to reverse this trend: reforms to improve governance of the economy and security sector, comprehensive and effective maritime public policies and practical regional cooperation beyond declarations of intent. A long-term response is needed because, although piracy is a recent phenomenon in the region, its root causes are much deeper.³⁸

³⁴ Dryad Global Annual Report: Maritime Security West Africa, Key challenges facing the Gulf of Guinea, Dryad Global June 8, 2023, available at "Gulf of Guinea and Nigerian Piracy" <https://www.dryadglobal.com/gulf-of-guinea-and-nigerian-piracy>

³⁵ K. Ifesinachi and C. Nwangwu, "Implementation of the Yaounde Code of Conduct and Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea," 2015, 54, <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/RHSS/article/view/27092/0>,

³⁶ Heads of State Summit, "Yaounde Architecture for Maritime Security and Safety (YAMS)."

³⁷ S. Chiotis, "The Grim Realities of a Ship Hijacking in the Gulf of Guinea," *International Journal of Maritime Crime and Security* 02, no. 01 (September 5, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.24052/IJMCS/V02IS01/ART-3>.

³⁸ Report / Africa 12 December 2012 3 Minutes, "The Gulf of Guinea: The New Danger Zone | Crisis Group" <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/guinea/gulf-guinea-new-danger-zone>

8.0 Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that notwithstanding the efforts made by regional states and the international community, maritime insecurity continues to be a reality in the Gulf of Guinea. Poverty, lack of education and high youth unemployment, poor governance and weak law enforcement are breeding grounds for Gulf of Guinea pirates and these are social factors that cannot be ignored if maritime piracy in the region is to be tackled effectively in the long-term. The weakness and general inadequacy of the maritime policies of Gulf of Guinea states and the lack of cooperation between them have allowed criminal networks to diversify their activities and gradually extend them away from the Nigerian coast and out on to the high seas. Crime does not affect only the oil industry; it has diversified to include piracy and increasingly audacious and well-planned sea-borne raids. This situation can only be overcome when the root causes of the problem are addressed. This will require the sustainable development of the coastal communities in the Gulf of Guinea by providing them with better living conditions and livelihoods.³⁹ Affected states need to exchange and share information on what is happening on their coastlines. To finally stamp out piracy and other, maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea or drastically reduce them to the barest minimum there should be joint training activities so that coast states can develop procedures and improve their interoperability. Coast states must look to develop strong legislation and prosecute maritime criminals. Coast states should also set aside funds to build local security capacity. Also, there should be centralised reporting and response agencies in the Gulf of Guinea. Collaboration with Private Maritime Security Companies should be encouraged. And finally, there should be long-term investments in social-economic programs aimed at tackling insecurity in coastal communities

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