



Dr Charles UKEJE / Prof. Wullson MVOMO ELA

# AFRICAN APPROACHES TO MARITIME SECURITY - THE GULF OF GUINEA

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## List of abbreviations

APSA - African Peace and Security Architecture

ACOTA - Africa Centre for Strategic Studies

AIMS - Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy

AIS - Automated Identification Systems

APS - African Partnerships Station

APSI - African Partnership Station Initiative

AQIM - Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

ASECMAR - Regional Coordination Centre Support for Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

AFRICOM - African Command

ASF - African Standby Force

AU - African Union

AU/PSC - African Union Peace and Security Council

BFF - Bakassi Freedom Fighters

CA/RRM - Central African Rapid Response Mechanism

CDS - Defence and Security Commission

CEMAC - Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa

COPAX - Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa

CRESMAC - Central Africa Regional Maritime Security Centre

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States

EU - European Union

EVEXI - Evidence Exploitation Intelligence

FES - Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

FOMAC - Multinational Force of Central Africa

GGC - Gulf of Guinea Commission

GGESS - Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy

GGGF - Gulf of Guinea Guard Force

IMB - International Maritime Bureau

IMF - International Monetary Fund

IMO - International Maritime Organisation

INTERPOL - International Criminal Police Organisation

ISPS - International Ship and Port Facility Security

IUU - Fishing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

MARAC - Central Africa Mechanism for Rapid response

MCC - Multinational Coordination Centre

MEND - Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta

MOSOP - Movement for Survival of Ogoni People

MOWCA - Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa

MTISC - Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre

MUJAO - Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa

NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development

NOC - Naval operations centre

OCIMF - Oil Companies International Marine Forum

PMCs - Private Military Contractors

RECs - Regional Economic Communities

RECAMP - African Peace Keeping Capacity Building Programme

RMAC - Regional Maritime Awareness Capability

SALW - Small Arms and Light Weapons

SAS - State Action at Sea

SOLAS - Safety of Life at Sea

SUA - Suppression of Unlawful Acts

UNO - United Nations Organisation

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNOCA - United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNOWA - United Nations Regional Office for West Africa

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

WMD - Weapons of Mass Destruction

ZOPACAS - South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone

## II Abstract

Over the past two decades, there has been a surge in international concerns about maritime safety and security, with particular attention to the danger that insecurity on the seas pose to global commerce, peace and stability. This increased interest has, in turn, coalesced around the need to reflect upon and critically rethink conventional wisdom as it relates to the geopolitics of the seas, and to understand how such feeds into existing policies and actions at the national, regional, continental and global levels. Although the nature, scope, dimensions and consequences of maritime safety and security have been shown to vary across countries and regions, there is now greater urgency to recognise and document such complex differences as well as what they might portend, in the short, medium and long terms, for countries and for the international community. This briefing note focuses on the wide range of situational and structural factors that have converged to make the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) gain its current notoriety as one of the most dangerous in the world, in equal if not to a greater measure as the Straits of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden. Undertaken as a key initiative of the West Africa Regional Office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), this study is inspired by the need to investigate the root causes and complexities of maritime insecurity in West and Central Africa, the two contiguous regions whose territorial waters sit on what is widely known as the GoG.

The study also evaluates the relevance and impacts of country-level, regional and trans-regional initiatives already undertaken to tackle maritime insecurity in the GoG, given that insecurity on the seas increasingly portend grave danger to stability and prosperity for countries in the regions. A key conclusion of the study is that: faced with the dire consequences of maritime insecurity, countries in the region have so far not been able to develop a cogent and coherent maritime security policy, strategy or framework to effectively tackle the menace. The study recommends that what is required- and most desirable- in the medium and long terms in order to establish effective and sustainable maritime governance regime is for GoG countries to move quickly and decisively towards the harmonisation of policies and

effective implementation. Beyond what has mostly been ad-hoc, token and symbolic national level responses, the path to follow would require collective action, the type that is supported by substantial continental and global commitments in the short, medium and long terms.

### III. Mandate and Justification for the study

This study was inspired by the urgent quest to mobilise a critical mass of concerted national, regional and global responses to the threats emanating from maritime insecurity in the GoG. From an African perspective, according to a recent report published by the Brenthurst Foundation, maritime security is "anything that creates, sustains, or improves the secure use of Africa's waterways and infrastructure that supports these waterways." It accordingly encompasses "a vast range of policy sectors, information services and user communities, including maritime safety, search and rescue, policing operations, operational safety for offshore oil and gas production, marine environmental monitoring and protection, navy operations support." Clearly, promoting maritime security has become expedient given how poor attention to- as well as ineffective management of- the continent's vast maritime domain and assets have been directly linked to several emerging threats to peace, security and development. These threats range from the upsurge in pirate attacks which stood at 1,434 incidents between 2003 and 2011, to the rise in criminal activities linked to theft and illegal trade in crude oil, trafficking of persons, drugs, firearms and pharmaceuticals, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; waste dumping and pollution, to name just a few.

Apart from the obvious impacts on the safety of oil infrastructures, global trade and other geo-strategic interests of major powers, these threats have also converged to make the waterways unsafe: for the inhabitants of the littoral communities stretched along the estimated 6,000 kilometres of the Atlantic seaboard from Senegal to Angola who rely on the waters for their subsistence and livelihoods; and for countries within the zone whose developmental fortunes are inescapably tied to the sea and coastal areas. While the rise in piracy has intensified apprehension that the GoG has become a notorious "gangster's paradise", there has also recently been an increase in awareness of the need to mobilise concerted national, regional, continental and global actions to mitigate and reverse the tide.

The objective of this study is to investigate the scale and impact of maritime insecurity and its political dimensions

as well as to assess the impacts of existing and emerging instruments, initiatives and interventions to address the problem. The expectation is that the study, along with those carried out on other regions of Africa, would engender more thoughtful and robust debate and policy-oriented actions within and outside the region. Such development could feed continental approaches to maritime security into the wider and on-going global measures to tackle maritime insecurity.

Key components of the study therefore focus on stock taking, current responses and policy recommendations. Stock taking documents the thrust, dynamics and consequences of maritime insecurity in the GoG. Here, the key questions interrogated include but are not limited to: How does resource exploration and exploitation in the region affect maritime security? What are the main non-resource related challenges driving or deriving from maritime insecurity? Which stakeholders are involved, who is affected by the threats, and what are the consequences of their involvement? Finally, what entry points already exist or should be considered for more effective governance or regulation of maritime security in the GoG?

Available evidence suggests that there is some modest, even if incongruent and disconnected, efforts and current responses to promote maritime safety and security. In this regard, then, the key questions are: Which felt needs and geo-strategic interests drive maritime security responses? What is the precise nature and scope of national and regional responses to maritime insecurity vis-a-vis interventions by external actors such as the United States, the European Union, and emerging powers such as China and India? Lastly, what is the scope for inter-regional cooperation of the nature currently being advanced by West and Central Africa to regulate and address maritime insecurity in the GoG, given especially the realities of regional disparities and fault lines between the two? Finally, the key recommendations are made regarding alternative perspectives and future prospects for maritime security in the region in the short, medium and long term.





## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Extent of the Gulf of Guinea

The GoG is a vast, diverse and highly important region. It constitutes about 16 countries that are strung along roughly 6,000 kilometres of unbroken coastline. From the north-western coast of Africa downwards, these countries include Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the island state of Sao Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola on the southernmost fringes.

### 1.2. Economic importance of the Gulf of Guinea

In recent times, the GoG waterways have served as a critical gateway to the world for virtually all of its littoral countries, but also for land-locked countries including Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and the Central African Republic, which depend on access to the sea for the import and export of goods and services from and to major global markets. With globalisation, the region is also fast becoming pivotal to international navigation as a relatively safer, if longer, route connecting the Far East to countries in the North and South of the Atlantic. Given that over 90% of global freight is by sea, the GoG has become a veritable sea-route for international trade and commerce, especially now that the shorter Arab Gulf passage is costlier and riskier due to wars and piracy in the Middle East and North Africa. It has also become the new frontier for what is widely touted as the "second scramble" for Africa; only that this time, the prize is not territories but access to and control of newly discovered vast hydrocarbon resources.

Historically, the GoG (sometimes referred to as the "Bight of Benin") was critical to the penetration, advancement and consolidation of the European colonial enterprise and presence in Africa via missionary, commercial and consular activities. Thus, at the peak of European pacification missions in Africa, the GoG was a theatre for

unprecedented economic, political, diplomatic and military intrigues/rivalries among key European colonial powers jostling to gain access to and control new territories. During that period, the GoG was the hub of extensive trans-Atlantic trade relations linking Africa with Europe; trade relations which at various times was dominated by the export of slaves, palm oil, rubber, ivory, gold, etc., and the importation of sundry goods such as firearms and ammunition, liquor and spirits.

In addition to established oil producers such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Angola, several West African countries including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal have made discoveries of crude oil in commercial quantities, bringing the estimated projection of proven deposits for the region to about 50.4 billion barrels (while actual production is about 5.4 million barrels per day). Furthermore, the GoG is widely known to be home to a substantial bio-diversity of marine and rain forest resources, especially fish and timber; resources that are highly prone to imprudent exploitation in the context of weak or non-existent national and regional regulatory frameworks for extraction and exports.

What is evident from all the above indicators is that the design and implementation of any effective maritime strategy to tackle threats to regional security must take cognisance of the unique and also multifaceted nature of maritime insecurity.

### 1.3 Trends

Until recently, countries in the GoG focused on land-based threats to security while the maritime dimensions were hardly considered in the design and implementation of security and defence options and strategies. At a level, this may be partly due to capacity deficit which many countries in the region face in terms of the acquisition, maintenance, deployment and regulation of necessary resources required to establish and exercise credible presence on the territorial waters. Thus, what is in place currently does not seem to effectively deter criminal elements and violent social movements whose activities now threaten security and stability in the region. Indeed,

the military response of some of the states as well as international actors which have interests in energy resources in the region appears to have worsened the security situation mainly by increasing the risks of weapons proliferation and deepening human rights abuses. This creates a policy dilemma for governments and other stakeholders who justifiably feel compelled to clamp down on crime and violence with legitimate force; however these actors cannot guarantee that the state security forces would refrain from committing abuses which would invariably deepen resentment and fuel insecurity. To put the growing instability into perspective, a recent report by Chatham House noted that "the high rate of piracy in the GoG represented a significant ratio of attacks in African waters, due to unsuccessful counter-piracy operations." This indicates that there is growing realisation of the impact of poorly executed military responses to instability in the GoG and underlines the need to comprehensively rethink existing strategies.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the growing attacks, several of which have brought harm to crew members and vessels, are not opportunistic but rather well-orchestrated actions by networks of local and international criminal gangs often acting with the connivance of citizens and government officials in GoG countries. These attacks reflect deeper governance and security dilemmas which the countries face both as individual countries and collectively as a group of countries. Regardless of the conditions that may have contributed to the incubation of maritime insecurity, it is obvious that any creative and sustainable solution must incorporate the interests and inputs of multiple actors and agencies across West and Central Africa. Solutions must also be pursued in a coordinated manner within both the national and regional spaces.

#### 1.4 The paradox of plenty

While the maritime security challenges facing the GoG are not peculiar, their manifestation represent two profound contradictions. First, and perhaps the more

obvious, is that although the region's waters have been some of the most lucrative both for legitimate and illegitimate activities, GoG states are among the poorest and worst governed states in the world. Indeed, in most of the countries, the exercise of state control is very lean and pales as one moves away from their capitals into the hinterland<sup>1</sup>, or towards the coastline and into the territorial waters. Apart from Nigeria, and to a lesser extent Angola, no other GoG country boasts of any significant naval or coastguard capability to constitute effective deterrence or counter-measure against growing maritime crimes. This is a debilitating weakness if one considers the pivotal role that GoG waters play in the extractive industries that underpin most economies in central and western Africa.

Second, despite substantial revenues from natural resources, virtually all GoG countries face daunting governance and social deficits. They are not only some of the worst in terms of human development indicators but grossly deficient on most governance indexes such as open and transparent government, respect for the rule of law, free press and the conduct of regular and crisis-free elections. The very fact of resource abundance has, paradoxically, become a "curse" on the ability of these states to build effective and sustainable governance structures and institutions.

The last contradiction is that while its huge potential is not lost on governments and the international community, the GoG waters have become a breeding ground and safe haven for a network of local and international criminal elements whose transnational criminal activities undermine security in the entire region and threaten the supply of critical resources to the global market.

#### 1.5 Consequences

An obvious consequence of these developments is that the GoG has become a significant element in the security makeup in Africa. The rise in insecurity (and the instabilities associated with them) has a wide range of implications. Apart from the much-touted ones such as

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1. Many of the capitals are located along or very close to the coastline.

piracy and violent crimes at sea, there are other less acknowledged but equally vicious ones which impact directly on the livelihoods, cultures, histories and social identities of coastal communities whose fortunes are tied to the maintenance of safe and secured waterways. Some of these implications include environmental degradation, distortions in the economies and widespread social anomie. The challenge for analysts and policy makers alike is to understand the critical interfaces between maritime and onshore insecurities and beyond this, to adopt appropriate measures that can address uneven development which underpins many security challenges. This scenario makes the maritime environment a top security priority for the international community. According to *The New African*<sup>2</sup>, Western Africa is the “new danger zone” of “international waters.” Acting on the concerns of the international community, therefore, the United Nations- with the collaboration of other development partners- has underlined the seriousness of the problem by encouraging the establishment of a regional integrated system of maritime security and safety in the GoG. Growing attention to the challenges posed by maritime security in the GoG is an acknowledgement of the urgent need to transcend the orthodox- but mostly narrow- overwhelming focus on addressing land-based threats to incorporate sea-borne threats.

Thus, a more robust understanding of maritime insecurity as articulated in the current study starts with a throw-back to the collapse of the foundational values linked to security and safety of navigation, international trade, use of offshore resources, marine ecosystems and the stability of society and the state in Africa. By way of tentative observation, therefore, what this study demonstrates is that the rise in maritime insecurity, in its different manifestations, is nurtured by: (a) acute fixation on an economy based on revenues from natural resources, particularly oil; (b) negligence of threats emanating from the seas by the post-colonial state; and (c) absence of

adequate, coherent and effective operational strategies to galvanise national, regional and international efforts.

## 1.6. Implications

What the foregoing discourse suggests is that while the current focus by the international community is often on piracy and other crimes on the high seas, it is impossible to disentangle the threats to maritime safety and security from the legion of challenges linked to political and governance crises in the region. By acknowledging them as trigger factors, it becomes less cumbersome to account for all the spatial contexts within which maritime security challenges emerge. More importantly, it is necessary to include such contexts in the design of appropriate policy responses. After all, these different spatial contexts impact on maritime security in the GoG in different but profound ways than policies have cared to reconcile with. In this regard, there are three apparent and mutually-linked spaces to anchor a more nuanced approach to understanding the nexus between maritime security and broader issues of security and development in the GoG. The features of the three spaces- domestic or national, regional and global- and how they are interconnected are discussed in greater detail in Section 3 of this report.

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## 2. Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Situational and structural factors

### 2.1. Root causes of maritime insecurity

Insecurity, in the GoG is characterised by complex factors and manifestations. These factors can only be situated within the context of historical and contemporary developments. Such wider discussion is often missing at high-level political summits such as the meeting of Heads of States and Governments of the West and Central Africa which took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 2013, to produce a comprehensive strategy for maritime security in the GoG. While obviously important in their own right, it is likely that the agenda of such summits would focus more on treating the symptoms (i.e. how to repress piracy and other criminal activities that threaten international commerce and resource security). The root causes of the problem which stem from decades of bad governance and truncated developmental aspirations for the vast majority of citizens living in the GoG are often overlooked. Given that the policy and political leadership of some GoG states may be implicated in creating the problems in the first place, it is precisely by returning to the uncomfortable but critical agendas of social, economic and political development as prerequisites for security that the GoG states can hope to resolve the threats on the seas.

### 2.2. Economic and security dimensions of international maritime monopoly

In the context of a growing neoliberal globalisation, the sea has become a critical channel of international trade. In the words of Emmanuel-Marie Peton<sup>3</sup>, "it is essentially a maritime economy, seeing that over 50,000 ships cover 80% of world trade, fundamental to our societies' lifestyles; that 80% of trade in hydrocarbons is conducted through marine channels and mineral resources transported by sea serve for production in factories and industries (90% of iron minerals)."<sup>4</sup>

The flip side of course is that the thriving of a global maritime economy has invariably led to a corresponding rise in maritime insecurity. First, this is because "oceans are by nature grey areas, for the most part, often escaping State control, the immensity of their stretch makes them impossible to manage." Second and especially "since 2008, maritime areas have become easy channel for the inflow of activities of criminals aided by the vulnerability of many states that have been unable to impose controls on their territory. Such 'ungoverned' zones become production sites or transit routes for sundry criminal activities particularly the trafficking of drugs and arms."

### 2.3. Impact of oil policy of Western powers after 9/11

The concept of an "oil strategy" as propounded by a French expert in oil affairs, Pierre Terzian<sup>5</sup>, has assumed greater salience since the end of the Second World War in 1945. According to Terzian, as a factor in "world disorder", oil strategy involves the quest to gain access to and secure control of oil resources around the world. Whereas Africa only featured in the global oil strategy of the major powers in the context of control by European colonial powers, it was only in the last decades of the Twentieth Century that the continent's natural resources and revenues from it raised the profile of Africa in the geopolitics of world resource endowment.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, a new oil (energy) policy has been developed by Western states led by the United States. The oil new is anchored on diversifying and securing the supply of oil and gas resources located away from the politically turbulent Middle East in general and Saudi Arabia in particular. Thus, as Michael T. Klare<sup>6</sup> writes: "supply of oil and precious metals [is becoming] a major geostrategic stake defining the policy of Western powers and consequently, that of their rivals."

Although for the most part recognised as being one of the spheres of influence of former European colonial

3. Emmanuel-Marie Peton, 'Les Pirates en justice, le casse-tête légal', Université Panthéon-Assas/Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (IRSEM), Paris, 2010.

4. E-M Peton, op cit.

5. Pierre Terzian is CEO of PETROSTRATEGIES SA, which focus area is consulting and oil press.

PETROSTRATEGIES has conducted economic studies on hydrocarbon industry including exploration and production regime in a dozen African countries.

6. Michael T. Klare is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College, UK. He is the author, most recently, of *The Race for What's Left*.

powers, the Gulf of Guinea is becoming a vital area of United States national security interest, largely justifying the establishment of an autonomous Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008 and a priority action zone for China and other emerging powers such as Brazil, India and Russia. Given this new equation, the GoG countries have considerable combined hydrocarbon assets, including proven reserves.

#### 2.4. The profit-based economy: the “curse of oil”

For most countries in the region, huge revenues from the oil and gas sector account for the bulk of national earnings. Such excessive reliance on profits from the production and sale of hydrocarbon resources has transformed several of the countries into rentier economies or what Achille Mbembe described as “off shore States”, that is states whose survival is heavily

dependent on revenues they receive by way of rent from the sale of strategic natural resources such as crude oil and gas. Although it is by no means a 'basket case', the profit-base of several GoG countries is exemplified by the experience of Equatorial Guinea. In that country, oil production and revenue have been on the increase while traditional sectors such as agriculture (cocoa) and lumbering (wood) are jeopardised and abandoned. It is not by accident, therefore, that the economy of that country is overwhelmed by incidences of rising unemployment and inflation. Rather than drive other sectors of the economy, the oil industry in Equatorial Guinea has transformed into an economic enclave, as elsewhere in other GoG countries. This phenomenon, popularised by Terry Lynn Karl<sup>7</sup> in the analysis of the petroleum industry in Brazil as “the paradox of plenty”, is based on the popular theory of rent seeking or the “Dutch Disease syndrome” in which the systematic

Table I: Oil data of selected Gulf of Guinea countries (September 2007)

	Year of first Discovery of oil and or gas	Year of first production	Oil reserves in 2009 (billion barrels)	Crude oil production in 2009 (1000 barrels/day)	Revenue Reserve/Production
<b>Angola</b>	1955	1956	9,0	1.906,4	12,9
<b>Cameroon</b>	1955	1978	0,2	76,9	7,7
<b>Congo</b>	1951	1957	1,6	267,8	16,4
<b>DRC</b>	1970	1975	0,2	16,4	33,4
<b>Equatorial Guinea</b>	1991	1992	1,1	322,0	9,4
<b>Nigeria</b>	1956	1958	36,2	2207,8	44,9
<b>Gabon</b>	1956	1957	2,0	242,1	22,6
<b>Sao Tomé and Príncipe</b>	2006	2012	0,0	0,0	0,0

Sources: PRIO/CSCW (2007), oil data. Country profiles (September 2007)

7. Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-states*, University of California Press, 1997 - Business & Economics - 342 pages

Table II: Growth of total revenue (TR) and oil revenue (OR) in Central Africa in billion F CFAs (2002 - 2004)

Year	Revenue	Cameroun	Congo	Gabon	Equatorial Guinea	Chad
<b>2002</b>	TR	1343,2	571,7	1018,2	414,6	110,0
	OR	368,9	397,5	608,7	362,5	98,4
<b>2003</b>	TR	1363,3	603,6	1049,1	471,2	133,1
	OR	324,1	421,6	507,2	409,7	111,2
<b>2004</b>	TR	1286,7	738,0	1111,5	773,5	217,5
	OR	337,7	530,0	600,0	700,3	119,3

Source: Tamba I., Tchatchouang J. C., Dou'a R. (dir) L'Afrique Centrale: le paradoxe de la richesse, Yaoundé, Presses Universitaires de Yaoundé, 2007, pp.39, 34 and 55.

Table III: Social Indicators of countries of Central Africa

Country	HDI	IDH Classification	Life expectancy	Literacy rate in adults (15 and over) %	GDP per head (\$)
<b>Cameroun</b>	0,497	148	45,8	67,9	840,4
<b>Congo</b>	0,512	142	52	82,8	1107,9
<b>Gabon</b>	0,635	123	54,5	71,0	4585,5
<b>Equatorial Guinea</b>	0,655	121	43,3	84,2	5773,5
<b>Chad</b>	0,341	173	43,6	25,5	352,0

Source : Tamba I., Tchatchouang J. C., Dou'a R. (dir), L'Afrique Centrale: le paradoxe de la richesse, op. cit. p.55.



destruction of an economic system occurs through excessive reliance on rent from natural resources, corruption and waste of revenue.

GoG states are also characterised by the tendency for governments to establish a system of centralised management of national wealth marked by the

Table IV: Timeline of acts of violence in ECCAS waters

Date	Incident	Observations
28 September 2008	Attack of several bank buildings in the city of Limbé	Attack by perpetrators from the sea. 01 dead
October 2008	Attack on Bakassi waters with hostages taken	Hostages taken: 07 French, 02 Cameroonian and 01 Tunisian
17 February 2009	Attack on Malabo (Bioko island)	Pirates from sea attacked the presidency and bank buildings
24 February 2010	03 Trawlers attacked	In Rio del Rey
29 March 2010	Attack on the Gendarmerie Brigade of Bamuso	
17 May 2010	Attack on 02 ships	Buoy A (Wouri channel) hostages taken
25 July 2010	Attack on 02 trawlers OLUKUN4 and KULAK7	Cap Debundscha
12 September 2010	Attack on 02 ships (SALMA, AMERIGO VESPUCCI)	Buoy Wouri channel base
16 November 2010	Attack on MOUNGO7	Moudi Site, 05 dead
01 February 2011	Attack on 21st BAFUMAR at Ekondo Titi	01 dead and 01 injured
07 February 2011	Attack on the Gendarmerie post in Bonjo Bakassi	02 dead, 01 wounded and 10 hostages
27 February 2011	Attack on KANGUE village	02 hostages
18 March 2011	Attack on ECOBANK, Bonaberi	05 dead and 07 wounded at sea, 02 attackers apprehended
19 March 2011	Confrontment at sea between RIB/DELTA patrol and the alleged attackers of ECOBANK	18 dead
23 July 2011	Attack on 02 MONGO MEYEN I and II trawlers in Equatorial Guinea waters	In the Bata zone
28 July 2011	Attack of two trawlers in Equatorial Guinea waters (to be confirmed)	Bata region
09 October 2011	Attack on a Gendarmerie unit from Isanglé on a recommended mission to the Bakassi peninsula.	02 gendarmes killed

confiscation of oil revenues by the central government and the national élite who, in turn, use them to dispense and lubricate extensive but informal political patronage systems. This notorious feature is best captured by an International Monetary Fund (IMF) study conducted in 2005 which showed that 5% of the population of Equatorial Guinea held 88% of the country's wealth while the other 95% of the population must content itself with the remaining 12% of the wealth. Invariably, such inequality triggers and exacerbates the decay or outright collapse of social infrastructure as well as perennial tension/violence.

Although the tables above only show a part of the ECCAS region, they are not any less representative of the paradox described earlier. The oil-profit economy does not stop at creating conflict and insecurity but also contributes to their sustenance. This is as a result of the corroding effects of a corrupt system borne out of an economy in which the bulk of the profit is channelled towards the state (regime) and its apparatus rather than to the welfare of the citizenry.

## 2.5. Negligence on the part of the postcolonial state

The state in Africa was established to serve as an instrument for the domination and exploitation of resources by the colonial powers in Europe. In virtually all cases, the post-colonial African state has not been able to refit that warped design. This has led to the states' incapacity or unwillingness to accomplish even the most basic sovereign duties and responsibilities, including establishing law, order, security and social cohesion.

Designed from a purely utilitarian perspective and in a global geo-economic context, the post-colonial African states which emerged from old colonial domains seem to have been starved ab initio of any real capacity to exercise sovereignty over their maritime territories. This situation continues to impact negatively on the ability of the states to maximise maritime resources. It also explains in part

the absence of a clear vision of maritime governance, sea culture and its potentialities, and constrains the states from having a holistic view of maritime security or making the necessary linkage between land and maritime security.

Pirates and other perpetrators of violence at sea act by taking profitable resources by force, and through resistance and symbolic actions. Failure of the state in the governance of its maritime zone, ironically the lifeline of some of the states in many ways, has become an opportunity for pirates and criminal groups to affirm themselves. Addressing the issue, in which she foresees the signs of a possible "Somalia syndrome" in the GoG, Gisèle Ndo'o emphasises that the majority of pirates operating at large off the Cameroonian coast score themselves on the same grade as those movements calling the shots in Niger Delta.

Table IV below traces incidences of violence in the waters of ECCAS states between 2007 and 2008, through their peak point in 2010-2011, and their decline and corresponding spill over into the ECOWAS region from 2012.

Due largely to concerted national, regional and global efforts to promote maritime security, there has been a promising reduction in the number of armed attacks along the Cameroonian coast; from 45 incidents in 2010 to 34 in 2012.

## 2.6. Private military contractors

The growing visibility and direct involvement of private military contractors (PMCs) has introduced a new but worrisome dimension to maritime security concerns in the GoG. With the dearth or outright lack of effective state presence on the seas, for-profit PMCs have made progress in terms of pushing for a greater share of protection services for oil infrastructure and policing of shipping lanes in the region. Due to the fact that their presence raises critical legitimacy and regulatory questions<sup>8</sup>, there is at the same time controversy on whether or not to engage PMCs in addressing maritime

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8. On this issue, also see the 'Montreux Document' on PMSCs as a way to promote good practices for GoG.

security challenges. Whereas they are routinely engaged for similar purposes in places like the Indian Ocean without much controversy, PMCs are widely viewed with caution and suspicion in the GoG. In addition to this problem are the security implications of the frequent- but still largely unauthorised- use of military or naval patrols either to safeguard oil facilities in deep waters or to escort ships in passage or those in distress, through the GoG waters.

### 2.7. Poor delimitation of maritime boundaries

Mostly due to their colonial legacies, African land borders have notoriously been poorly demarcated in a manner that allows for unfettered and undocumented movement of goods and people. The maritime boundaries are even more problematic because of the very nature of waters, especially the overlapping jurisdiction (or contested territories) associated with them. Examples of maritime disputes in the GoG include those between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula; Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon over an island at the mouth of the Ntem River; Gabon and Equatorial Guinea over the Mbane Island and Corisco Bay boundaries; and the festering one between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire over the segments of their oil-rich waters.

While the early decision to respect colonial borders by African states at independence based on the principle of *uti possidetis*<sup>8</sup> has minimized the risk of conflict, there has been a number of violent border confrontations in the last few decades. With advanced technology now aiding the discovery of hydrocarbon deposits along the GoG coastline and in the deep waters of the region, the potential for maritime border disputes has grown. If such disputes linger, there is the likelihood that they may trigger new conflicts, exacerbate existing ones and erode whatever little efforts have been made to promote effective regional response to maritime insecurity in the region.

### 2.8. Right and social justice issues in the context of perverse resource extraction

The GoG states also face significant security challenges which are derived from- but not necessarily limited to- the perverse ramifications of the political economy of resource extraction. For instance, there are important human rights and social justice concerns that are mostly neglected even when they provide the impetus for the display of the authoritarian excesses of the state. Going by the routine preference for blanket criminalisation of any activities construed as capable of undermining state security, policy makers in several GoG countries frequently lose sight of the ways that legitimate but socially anomalous activities deny communities and individuals of their livelihood. Such activities leave the communities vulnerable and with limited options other than to engage in illegal activities. A good example is how the large scale expropriation of land for a variety of reasons (for instance, to expand the oil industry, build massive ports or military bases along the coasts) has put pressure on coastal communities to find alternative means of getting by. In the absence of adequate infrastructure, education and state presence in terms of social amenities, getting by has often meant engaging in activities that directly or indirectly undermine security in the region.

It is important to take cognizance of social and environmental justice issues in contemplating alternative policies and measures for mitigating maritime security challenges in the GoG. In many cases, social and environmental issues tend to feed into broader questions about identity, inclusion and exclusion which have become recurrent in explaining the persistence of instability in the region. Although building state capacity to effectively respond within existing legal framework is crucial, it is equally important to address social justice, environmental and economic empowerment concerns which increasingly fuel insurgencies and criminal activities in the GoG.

9. *Uti possidetis* (Latin for "as you possess") is a principle in [international law](#) that territory and other property remains with its possessor at the end of a conflict, unless otherwise provided for by [treaty](#); if such a treaty does not include conditions regarding the possession of property and territory taken during the war, then the principle of *uti possidetis* will prevail.

A key element in the calculus of insecurity in the region has to do with the high rate of poverty and vociferous claims of economic marginalisation and political exclusion by some segments of the society. With poverty levels often higher than in hinterland communities, coastal communities along the GoG require structured and sustained state intervention to boost local entrepreneurship, local economies and to provide basic services. Another major problem is the deficit in state capacity to guarantee human rights, most especially property, environmental and cultural rights. Rather than act as guarantors of human, property, environmental and cultural rights, especially in the context of strained relations between coastal communities and big multinational companies, states have often sided with the latter to the detriment of local communities. By doing so, they simply facilitate the dispossession of local communities from their ancestral lands, culturally significant sites and private property. While social justice issues soon become one of the major triggers for deep-seated resentment by communities hosting major multinationals (and the 'distant' state), they create an environment that is hostile to investment and good governance. The dimensions of insecurity associated with social and environmental justice issues in the GoG are already immense and vicious as diminished state legitimacy on land easily translates to violence at sea, and vice versa.

### 2.9. Weak legal framework for effective maritime security management

Even when the need to operate within existing legal framework or to create new and stronger ones in response to new maritime security imperatives is self-evident, a major challenge often has to do with ineffective implementation. This problem is often related to capacity deficit which has been alluded to above. However, sometimes it is simply due to ineptitude and corruption at the high levels of government which allow convoluted neo-patrimonial networks to easily emerge and coalesce around criminals with little official disruption to their activities. In the event of detection and

arrest, such criminal groups are often let off the hook with minimal penalties.

This problem is perpetuated by the inability or unwillingness of individual states to domesticate treaties relating to international maritime security to which they freely signed. Even where the frameworks have been established, fundamental weaknesses in the criminal justice system, from corruption to lack of independence of the judiciary, often undermine the best efforts of stakeholders trying to enforce compliance with rules or to impose sanctions in the event of breaches. The poor implementation of legal provisions at the national level is in turn at the heart of the absence of an integrated regional framework to tackle maritime security challenges. Although there has been several meetings and conferences which reflect growing regional awareness of the threats posed by the maritime environment, there is still a preponderant focus on land-based security challenges and the tendency to apply methodologies originally conceived to tackle land-based threats to maritime insecurity. There remains an inadequate appreciation of the nexus between land and maritime security, or even of the way insecurity in maritime domains can easily fuel violence on land, and vice versa.

Given the obvious gap in legislation and policy on maritime security, it seems the first step for GoG countries is to update existing legal instruments or create new and integrated legal regimes in line with international best practices. In addition, country-level regulations and sanctions against piracy, which are currently poorly codified, need to be harmonised in ways that strengthen regional capacity to engage with piracy. This would require that countries in the region work towards consolidating their separate and shared maritime security strategies within the framework of a reference document similar to the "white paper on maritime security". Such legal instrument to promote effective state action at sea requires a high level of simultaneous action covering a whole range of issues: from the effective policing of

inland waterways and port security to forward naval bases, upgrading coastguard and brown water patrol capabilities, building the capacity of national navies through regular joint exercises and patrols, to mention a few.

In summary, the following are some of the key features of current maritime security challenges in the GoG:

- a. GoG countries have demonstrated poor preparedness to acknowledge and confront the maritime challenges and threats facing them at the same time that the region has assumed relevance and prominence in the global oil market.
- b. GoG countries without any exception are overly dependent on extractive industries that rely on the exploitation of natural and mineral resources, especially the oil and gas sector. This situation is made worse by the dominance of foreign companies who are often too powerful for weak GoG states to effectively regulate. Under such a climate, there is likely to be a disconnect between the people and those who govern them, in addition to widening the fault-lines of economic inequalities, social frustrations and the incubation of insurgencies.
- c. Like most post-colonial states which lack the capacity to assume and exercise sufficient writ in terms of the regulation, control and protection of maritime assets, GoG countries are incapacitated by deficits in governance, vision, culture and sound maritime policy.
- d. Due to official negligence or outright lack of capacity to exercise effective control, regulation and interdiction of crimes at sea, GoG countries have not been able to effectively combat menaces such as the trafficking of persons, drugs, toxic waste, fake pharmaceutical products and SALW which have been on the rise.

### 3. Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Diverse and complex manifestations

#### 3.1. Acts of violence at sea: complexities of piracy and robbery

Maritime insecurity is multidimensional, multifaceted and complex in nature. Contemporary international maritime law makes a distinction between two acts of violence at sea: (a) piracy (perpetrated on the high seas) and (b) armed theft at sea (depending on the maritime zone in which the act was perpetrated). To these could be added criminal acts against economic, military and security infrastructures at sea. Thus maritime insecurity poses a fundamental security dilemma not only for the governance of the region's vast maritime zone but also for governments across the GoG. All these acts are however closely connected because they involve the same kind of actors, use similar modes of operation and oftentimes lead to the same adverse results. Another challenge to implement an effective maritime security governance strategy is that institutions and governments in the GoG are generally ill equipped and poorly placed to recognise the distinctions and manage them.

Already, in some countries and to varying degrees, aspects of maritime security have been partly privatised or managed through public-private partnerships (P.P.P.). This is the case in Cameroon, for instance, where the government has established some partnerships with a private outfit, the Rapid Intervention Battalion (RIB-Delta), an armed force unit, for the protection of ships and oil platforms within the country's maritime domain. Although such an innovation might seem unsustainable in the long run, it definitely points in the direction of how recurrent problems associated with the lack of capacity by the state could be tackled. In the long run, an integrated and holistic regional approach to maritime security is required in the GoG in particular and across Africa in general.

#### 3.2. Trafficking in narcotics, fake and sub-standard pharmaceuticals

According to a recent study published by the United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)<sup>10</sup>, organised transnational crimes such as theft and oil bunkering, trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunitions, human trafficking and illegal migration, to name a few, have been on the rise along the coast of West (and Central) Africa since early 2000. While these crimes have been widely acknowledged in public debates, their far-reaching impacts are often overlooked and not adequately addressed. Today, the GoG has become one of the preferred transit hubs in the global trade in narcotics and psychotropic substances largely from South America, as well as destination for fake and sub-standard pharmaceuticals coming from Asia and the Far East.

According to the UNODC, cocaine transiting through West Africa originates from three main sources: Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. Similarly, Brazil has been a longstanding supply source for Lusophone West African countries especially Guinea Bissau which has become a conduit for re-exporting to several other countries in the region. The report also showed that Nigerian ports, as the leading regional hub for containerised shipments, have become strategic for large quantity transshipment of drugs from South America into Europe, North America and the Asian markets.

Thus, as the GoG region has become a major hub in the global drug trade and other illicit commercial activities, the region faces daunting challenges that are capable of undermining already slow, and sometimes painful, development efforts. This is evident, for instance, in how more people are becoming addictive users of narcotics such as cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. At the same time, many parts of West and Central Africa are experiencing the adverse health effects of the spread of fake and sub-standard pharmaceuticals including some 37 tons of illicit painkillers seized in West Africa, mostly in Benin and Togo, in 2012 alone.

#### 3.3. Illegal fishing and ecological risks

In the context of poorly policed maritime domain, weak legal and regulatory framework on fisheries management

10. 'Transnational organized crime in West Africa, a threat assessment', UNODC, Feb. 2013, 68 p

as well as poor national shipping capacity to engage in fishing for local consumption and export, the GoG waters have become a haven for foreign fishing trawlers. It is practically impossible to ascertain the real impact of illegal, unregulated and undeclared fishing (IUU fishing) although experts estimate that 11 to 26 million tons of sea products are extracted annually in that manner.

Over all, IUU fishing is at the root of unsustainable management of fishery resources, leading to poor intake of protein and other essential nutrients among coastal communities as well as accounting for a major loss of revenue for coastal states who previously earned a lot of foreign exchange by granting fishing rights on their water. Although evidence is still tentative, IUU fishing could potentially lead to the endangering of rare and vulnerable species, further undermining the coastal ecosystems and biodiversity. Finally, IUU fishing could constitute an environmental danger due to the frequent use of damaging procedures and toxic products.

## 4. Critical assessment of actions undertaken already

Given the complexity of national, regional, continental and global sources and ramifications of maritime insecurity facing the GoG today, lasting solutions will only be found by understanding, mobilising and harmonising actions at the different levels. The challenge is to implement interventions that are integrated and holistic, rather than those in which actors at the different levels pursue disconnected and divergent measures capable of undermining effective solutions in the short, medium and long term.

### 4.1. The domestic or national level

The point had been made earlier that GoG countries are generally weak in their capacity to exercise effective control over their coastal and deep offshore territories. This is particularly pronounced in the maritime domain given the sheer expanse of coastal waters to cover and the limitations of their mostly small and poorly equipped national navies that must combat sometimes better resourced and ruthless criminal groups. The situation is compounded by internal political instability which frequently provides a growing number of non-state groups with the basis to engage in criminal and violent actions. An obvious but by no means isolated example is the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria which as the International Crisis Group (ICG) recently notes, has been the initial epicentre of maritime crime where, for decades, oil production created a 'paradox of plenty' in which the abundance of wealth has woefully failed to translate into meaningful and sustainable development. Instead, oil extraction has left in its wake a reckless plundering of riches and the deepening of the country's developmental crisis. As social tensions and environmental pollution increased, oil incomes have mostly benefited the central government and oil companies, and greased the pocket of local political, business and traditional elite. Those excluded from the sleazy and largely opaque reward systems often take recourse to violence against the state either as a way for expressing their powerlessness or to gain a foothold in the network of corrupt distribution of oil wealth. Forced to bypass the state to gain access to

even a fraction of this wealth, the excluded have organised illegal activities, including the stealing of crude oil, establishment of clandestine cottage refineries as well as 'black market' trade in petroleum resources. The current increase in the value of the illegal segment of that industry, which is notoriously evident in official figures which state that more than 15% of oil production is lost to oil theft or bunkering, has allowed economic crime to blossom in Nigeria.

Furthermore, except perhaps in Angola where the Cabinda separatist group has been involved in a long-drawn fight against the central government in Luanda, no other GoG country faces such acute and persistent challenge to its authority by armed groups who make competing claims on national sovereignty. Other countries in the region also have major internal security (and stability) challenges which make it difficult for them to focus on 'distant' maritime security issues until the threats become costlier. In recent times, for example, Cote d'Ivoire has seen increased threats to maritime security along the country's water since the disputed 2010 elections. The threat is also growing in a relatively more stable country like Ghana while Togo and Benin witnessed occasional breaches in maritime security during periods of national uncertainty related to political transitions and deepening economic crisis. Without exception, these countries have at different times all had to come to terms with how ignorance and/or lack of quick-impact response to maritime security challenges could undermine fiscal survival and threaten domestic security and stability. The intractability of maritime security challenges in the region is magnified by what might be described as a long history of 'policy blindness' towards coastal waters; both as a focus of security as well as that of sustainable development planning. In the report about drugs and transnational crime in West Africa cited earlier, UNODC rightly noted that "state institutions and the rule of law are weak in most of these countries, and unless these organised crimes are tackled, instability is likely to persist and increase."

### 4.2. The regional level

Since the GoG waters became a prominent site of



maritime threats, countries within the zone have begun to mobilise themselves to ameliorate or avert the risks. However, there have been visible regional disparities between West and Central Africa in terms of the amount of attention and steps so far taken. For instance, initiatives by countries in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) have proceeded faster than those of their counterparts in the ECOWAS region, even if there is a bright prospect of inter-regional collaboration between the two in the near future. In comparative terms, ECCAS has a relatively more advanced and robust maritime security agenda and programme than its West African counterpart. Began more comprehensively in 2009, the ECCAS maritime initiative is institutionalised through the Regional Coordination Centre for the Maritime Security of Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, the Congo. The centre is responsible for aggregating the various military and civilian capacities of member states and leveraging on these to create an integrated maritime security strategy which would be capable of effectively responding to emerging challenges. ECCAS's strategy also fits into the broader continental view primarily because it promotes information sharing and management, joint patrol and surveillance of maritime space, the harmonization of actions at sea, the introduction of a regional maritime tax regime, the acquisition of equipment for joint use and the institutionalization of a periodic maritime conference.

For operational purposes, the ECCAS maritime security strategy divides the vast Central African segment of the GoG into three zones (A, B and D) stretching all the way from Angola to the maritime borders of Nigeria and Cameroon. The most vulnerable, and paradoxically most vibrant, is Zone D which covers Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe. One of the strong points for the ECCAS model is that it has created a coordinating centre in Douala, Cameroun, which also serves as regional hub for anti-piracy activities. In spite of this headway, a major constraint is that there is still very limited capacity within ECCAS to respond to growing maritime security challenges. This factor from time to time forces member countries of the organisation to solicit for and rely almost exclusively on foreign

military/naval assistance. Indeed, it was partly to remedy this gap that ECCAS created, in May 2009, an inventory of naval assets and joint patrols capable of assisting weaker navies within the region aimed at pooling their resources in increasingly effective and efficient ways.

ECOWAS, on the other hand, has only slowly started to grasp the realities and full implications of the maritime dimensions of its regional security architecture that had for long been dominated by an overwhelming fixation with security on land. Even though it is a more developed regional economic community compared with the other four on the continent, what now forms the kernel of its maritime strategy was only first discussed by the Committee of Chiefs of Defense Staff (CCDS) at a meeting in Cotonou, in April 2010. Perhaps one of the reasons for this lag was the initial widespread perception that the region's maritime challenges were largely a Nigerian problem, mostly stoked by long-drawn insurgency activities in the Niger Delta. The result of this narrow outlook is that maritime security issues have either been kept out of the regional agenda or, at best, discussed in general (and aspirational) terms.

Against the backdrop of rising incidences of piracy and other forms of violent attacks beyond the immediate vicinity of the Nigerian coastline into Togolese, Beninnoise and even Ghanaian waters, ECOWAS was left with no choice than to begin serious contemplation around the regional dimensions of maritime security threats. Apart from adopting much of the ECCAS model, in principle, ECOWAS has signified the urgency of the need for greater commitment towards information sharing, asset coordination and integration. In 2012, the Community created Zone E as its first operational zone, involving Nigeria, Niger, Benin and Togo. It is instructive that this new operational zone is directly adjacent to ECCAS' Zone D; together they constitute the choke point of piracy and other criminal activities along the GoG waters. Like the ECCAS model, ECOWAS envisages that member states in the designated zones will coordinate their maritime activities, share information and generally pool resources.

### 4.3. The global level

International concern about growing maritime insecurity in the GoG is best showcased by the adoption, within a space of four months, of two major United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions: 2018 (October 2011) and 2039 (February 2012) both calling for greater regional action in response to the growing menace of piracy. From the two resolutions, as well as several other international instruments and initiatives, it is easy to distil what the narrow priorities of the international community are vis-a-vis maritime security in the GoG. It is also apparent that such priorities might not sufficiently dovetail with those of the countries and local communities within the region. In no particular order, the priorities of the international community have been how to: effectively tackle threats to global energy security, allow unhindered maritime trade, pursue the global war on terror, and choke the flow of illicit trafficking of human beings, drugs and firearms. For these concerns, global powers that also drive the agenda on maritime security in the GoG and throughout Africa are keen to consider and rely on military action than to engage in soft intervention which targets human security and human development as sustainable solutions to maritime security challenges.

To them, also, the key elements of maritime safety and security differ qualitatively as they focus more on countering violent extremism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and piracy, promotion of energy security, and prompt responsiveness to deadly contagion. These priorities, important as they might seem, are not only overly top-down in approach but completely disconnected from the urgent priorities facing governments or even ordinary communities in the GoG relating to governance, livelihoods and security broadly defined to include state and human security. In other words, while the concerns of the international community are mainly on the safety of maritime shipping and, by extension, global energy supplies, they are mostly at variance with the goals of coastal communities who often see in their supposedly illegal activities, a legitimate means of coping with the burdens imposed by governance deficits.

The overall implication of the above trends is that responses to maritime security challenges in the GoG must take cognizance of the national, regional and global ramifications. Beyond this, responses should also factor in the multiplicity of external interests that shape the different- but overlapping- spaces. Thus, even when it is anchored on a strong regional framework, key countries and regional cooperation mechanisms within the GoG can contribute multiple capacities than are available either within or abroad. Unfortunately, it is difficult to aggregate and meet the competing interests of the plethora of state and non-state actors that a globalised international environment has allowed to emerge and converge within the GoG; interests and actors that, in themselves, represent key elements of the complex maritime security template in the region. In the final analysis, the global environment must be seen as both an asset and a liability in the design and implementation of appropriate policies and strategies to tackle maritime security in the GoG.

### 4.4. Implementing an appropriate normative framework

While they are mostly recent initiatives, existing international legal instruments relating to the management of maritime security challenges have privileged repressive and preventive measures.

#### 4.4.1. Legislations of a repressive nature

There are notable international legislations relating to maritime safety and security that are repressive in nature. The first, signed in December 1982, is the United Nations Montego Bay Convention on the Law of the Sea which came into force on 16 November 1994, almost one decade and a half later. In spite of its status as a document of reference on the classical definition of what constitutes an act of piracy (provided in article 101), its approach to and methods for addressing violence at sea are rather restrictive and too weak to grapple with new and changing developments. It was in response to some of these gaps that the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation

was signed in Rome on 10 March 1988. Otherwise known as the SUA Convention, it expanded the scope of the earlier convention by including a new Protocol for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of fixed platforms located on the continental shelf. Finally, the provisions of the SUA Convention were revised when additional protocols were adopted in London in 2005, with a view to modernising and easing procedures for control and suppression.

#### 4.4.2 General legislations aimed at prevention

To date, very little exists by way of documentation that explicitly addresses the fight against maritime piracy with premium placed on the prevention of environmental threats at sea. This is especially the case with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) which has taken a truly preventive approach to maritime security. Deriving its substance from chapter IX of the new SOLAS Convention (Safety of Life at Sea) of 1974, the ISPS Code is based on the principle of risk management which takes on board two fundamental principles: the vulnerability coefficient of targets and the consequences of such an attack.

#### 4.5. Other multilateral initiatives on maritime security in the GoG

These include efforts by various international organisation as well as multilateral and bilateral partners to spearhead and promote maritime security, on the one hand, and to protect vital geostrategic interests in the GoG, on the other.

##### 4.5.1 The United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

A core mandate of the UNSC is to respond to and manage threats to global peace and security. Over the past two years, the UNSC has taken a position on the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea along the GoG. The UNSC thus recognises this concern as one that is capable of undermining international security and prosperity. The pressure in this regard started following a proposal sponsored by President Yayi Boni of Benin, with the active

support of France and the United States, calling on the UNSC to unanimously adopt Resolution 2018 of October 2011. Essentially, the Resolution urged ECCAS, ECOWAS and member states of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) to fight against acts of piracy and armed theft at sea through concerted action, particularly by setting up bilateral or regional maritime patrols. Following this, the UNSC also unanimously adopted Resolution 2039 on 29 February 2012, urging GoG states to work through the same multilateral channels towards convening a Summit to draft a regional strategy in the fight against piracy in collaboration with the African Union.

These resolutions were closely in line with the key outcomes of a UN-sponsored meeting of experts drawn from Central and West Africa held in Cotonou, Benin, in March 2012. The meeting first adopted a draft Memorandum of Understanding between ECCAS, ECOWAS and the GGC on safety and security in the West and Central African maritime space; and second, proposed the consideration of a draft code of conduct on the suppression of acts of piracy, armed robbery on ships and illegal maritime activities in West and Central Africa. Finally, it recommended the drafting of a common declaration by ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC member states on the implementation of a regional framework for maritime security and safety in the GoG. These instruments were validated during the Summit of Heads of States and Governments of West and Central Africa recently held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 2013.

#### 4.5.2 The G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Experts Group

##### **Box I: G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Experts Group**

###### **Overview**

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea was discussed under the G8 peacekeeping/peace building experts group (G8PK/PB) in 2011 under the French Presidency. The aim of these discussions was to improve the coordination of maritime capacity building undertaken by international donors in West and Central Africa, thereby avoiding duplication and making such activity more effective.

At the April 2012 meeting of the G8PK/PB, the United Kingdom presented a paper suggesting the establishment of a larger, informal group that involved all countries conducting capacity building work in the Gulf of Guinea. The first initial meeting of this new grouping was held in July 2012, which was then followed by a more extensive discussion on maritime security at the November 2012 meeting of the G8PK/PB.

Under the UK Presidency of the G8 in 2013, this group was formalised further; it was separated from the G8PK/PB and became known as the G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (FOGG). The objective of this group is to improve coordination between international partners on capacity building initiatives to tackle maritime crime in the Gulf of Guinea. This includes avoiding duplication of effort, facilitating joint projects and bringing international partners together to collectively discuss political developments which contribute to work to tackle maritime crime. On 30 April 2013 the FOGG met at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, with a second meeting scheduled for November 2013.

To date, participants in FOGG initiatives have included: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union, Interpol, United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, United Nations Office for West Africa and the International Maritime Organization. The group also works closely with industry and Oceans Beyond Piracy (an NGO closely involved with maritime security work).

The next meeting, scheduled for November in Abuja will include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), African Union (AU) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC). In the style of African Clearing House, the meeting will focus on the implementation of the maritime safety and security agreements signed in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 24-25 June 2013.

###### **G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Coordination Platform**

Discussions on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea under the US and French G8 Presidencies led to the development of a text-based matrix that detailed all activities planned or undertaken by participating international partners. The motivation behind this was to create a single-source document of all donor activity to reduce duplication of effort within the international community and raise awareness of different initiatives. Using a similar approach to Working Group One of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, this matrix was developed into a web-based platform by Oceans Beyond Piracy, supported by France. Since the launch of this online platform at the FOGG's 30 April meeting, the number of contributors to the tool has increased and it is

expected that an up-to-date version will be presented to representatives from the Regional Economic Communities of Central and West Africa in November.

### **Political Messaging**

Aside from coordinated capacity building activity, the FOGG is also working to achieve a greater level of consistency in the political messages communicated by its members on maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea. To date there has been a tendency to solely focus on piracy as a threat to maritime security in the region, sidelining the armed robbery taking place within territorial waters and wider criminal activity, including unregulated, unreported and illegal fishing, as well as arms, people and narcotics trafficking. The FOGG aims to raise awareness of this tendency and the ease with which the situation in the Gulf of Guinea is compared to that in the Indian Ocean, without drawing on the substantial differences between the two.

### **Joint-demarche**

The FOGG has agreed to hold a joint-demarche with the organisations and countries that signed agreements on maritime security and safety at the Heads of State summit held on 24-25 June in Yaoundé. The demarche is intended to be a demonstration of international support for the implementation of the Yaoundé agreements. It will involve a series of meetings between representatives of the signatory states and organisations, and the Ambassadors of participating FOGG members. It is expected that these meetings will take place in autumn 2013, ahead of the FOGG's November meeting.

### **Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre for the Gulf of Guinea**

The G8++ FOGG has served as a valuable platform to deliver financial support from international partners for the industry led initiative to establish a Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre for the Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GoG). France, Norway, the Netherlands, Australia agreeing financial contributions and others are considering assistance.

### **Framework for a joint strategy for pursuing prosecutions**

A key element to addressing maritime crime in the Gulf of Guinea will be for regional States build capacity and political will to investigate and prosecute those responsible for maritime crime. This includes Flag States taking responsibility to pursue investigations into attacks against their ships. Under this group, the US is working to establish a joint strategy to facilitate this, which will be discussed at the November meeting.

#### **4.5.3. The European Union**

The European Union's assistance essentially involves providing financial and logistical supports within the framework of its Expert Support Facility to train and boost the operational capabilities of naval and coastguard personnel of countries in Central Africa. To date, three major workshops have been successively held in Pointe Noire (Congo), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and in Douala (Cameroon) to support the training of civilian and military personnel on State Action at Sea (SaS).

#### **4.5.4. INTERPOL**

The EVEXI (Evidence Exploitation Intelligence) Programme of the International Police Organisation, INTERPOL, is also a major initiative that is worthy of note. Funded by France and Norway, the programme aims at "providing a framework for the systematic and coordinated exploitation of piracy-related information" with the goal of creating "a multinational approach to interrogations related to international piracy as an organised crime."

#### 4.5.5. The Atlantic Initiative

The Atlantic Initiative was sponsored by Brazil as part of the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation zone (ZOPACAS) in 1986. Slightly more than two decades after, in 2008, the initiative has blossomed into a full-fledged "document for reflection" to re-launch trans-regional cooperation among countries within the South Atlantic (including all GoG countries) in four areas: mapping and exploration of marine sea beds, environmental cooperation (oceanography, fishing), maritime security, and transport (air, maritime and ports). Since 1993, biennial naval operations code-named "Atlas Sur" have been organised with the support of the navies of South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

#### 4.5.6 The African Union and 2050 AIM Strategy

At the continental level, the African Union has since 2002 been working with regional economic communities (RECs), to push for the successful implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This goal is based on five key components: the AU Peace and Security Council (AU/PSC); a continent-wide rapid early warning-early response system; Council of the Wise (acting as an organ for strengthened mediation); the African Standby Force (ASF); and finally, the implementation of a political framework for post-conflict reconstruction. The adoption of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) in 2009 therefore came as an attempt to remedy the gaps in APSA which did not specifically, or adequately, make provision for the effective management of maritime security issues as part of broader continental security priorities.

At a follow-up meeting of experts in Addis Ababa in December 2011, the draft 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM-Strategy) was adopted which seeks to articulate "an overarching, coherent, multi-layered African-driven long term common vision to address Africa's maritime challenges and opportunities." Also, the workshop set the template for the AU to cooperate with ECCAS, ECOWAS, the GGC and the United Nations regional offices for Central and West Africa (UNOCA and UNOWA) to prepare for the Yaoundé

summit of Heads of State and Government on maritime insecurity in the GoG in June 2013. The primary objective of these initiatives is to create a regional framework for cooperation in the maritime field with a view to fighting illegal maritime activities in West and Central Africa.

#### 4.6. Bilateral Initiatives

Over the past one decade, countries in the GoG have received a wide range of specific financial, logistical and material support to address the challenges of maritime insecurity in their respective domains. They have benefitted from countries such as France, the United States, the United Kingdom and China, to name a few.

##### 4.6.1. France

The contributions of France to maritime security issues in the GoG have come under two frameworks: (a) the African Peace Keeping Capacity Building Programme (RECAMP) and (b) the Maritime Security Support Programme (ASECMAR). Since 1990, the Corymbs mission, a French National Navy Military operation, has been in implementation to strengthen cooperation with a number of countries in the GoG. The objective, beyond providing support for maritime safety and security, is to ensure continued French presence on the West African coast and in doing so, to advance and protect French economic interests in the region.

Over the years, France has directed much of its assistance on maritime security in the GoG to her former colonies, particularly through the work of military advisers and the patrol of international waters adjacent to the territorial waters of those countries. In mid-2011, for example, Paris began a three-year project under its 'Priority Solidarity Fund' to help Benin, Togo and Ghana draw up national maritime security strategies, train civilians and armies and improve coordination among the three neighbours. Initially referred to as ASECMAR, the project was later enlarged to include Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. It also seeks to recognize and strengthen state sovereignty on waters by improving the capacities of their internal security administration and by promoting regional coordination on maritime issues.

#### 4.6.2. The United States

The United States continues to intensify its security initiatives and geo-strategic presence throughout Africa and within the GoG. Far above most other major powers, Washington has set up several initiatives to drive such agendas in Africa, namely the African Partnership Station Initiative (APSI), Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA), Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (CESA) and easily the most ambitious, the establishment of the US-Africa Command (AFRICOM). These initiatives have focused on defence and military cooperation agreements with key GoG (and African) countries as the preferred model for mutual cooperation on security with strategic partners.

It is often on the basis of such cooperation that the US Navy makes frequent port calls to countries in the GoG, and provides regular logistical and training support to their navies. The US has focused on improving Regional Maritime Awareness Capability (RMAC) by, among others, setting up radar, radio equipment and Automated Identification Systems (AIS) at several sites along the coast. Along with other partners, Washington launched the Africa Partnership Station (APS) in 2007 which brought 11 countries together from April to May 2012 in an integrated exercise code-named 'Saharan Express'. The focus of that exercise, and virtually all of its initiatives across the GoG, was on improving maritime security in West Africa through maritime interdiction operations including how to board a suspected ship, search and impound illicit cargo, seek out IUU and illegal migration. The US government has also donated naval military equipment including at least five boats to Nigeria. In February 2012, the former US Coast Guard Cutter Chase vessel was refurbished and re-commissioned as NNS Thunder for the use of the Nigerian Navy.

Although routinely couched in broad terms, the focus of US' growing naval assistance to Nigeria is connected with the need to douse the volatility and instability prevailing in oil-rich Niger Delta which is widely believed to threaten vital US interests in the wider Gulf. For the US, also, the calculation is that because Nigeria has the largest and

most capable navy in the region, it can play a pivotal role in advancing security and stability in the region. In all, it has been estimated that over the past five years, the US alone may have spent more than \$35 million on training regional coastguards and navies, upgrading radar and other facilities as well as refurbishing (and donating) refurbished equipment. Instructively, another estimate by the Atlantic Council puts the cost on the US and its allies of global response to piracy and maritime insecurity at about \$1.27 billion.

#### 4.6.3. The United Kingdom

If not in scale, British involvement in the GoG area has followed a strikingly similar pattern to the United States' in terms of providing bilateral support to national navies and strengthening the logistical capacities of several countries. One key difference, however, has been the growing focus by the British on encouraging greater coordination between, and assistance to, multinational oil companies to combat piracy, vandalism and to repair long broken community relations which are at the root of hostile disposition towards the companies. Specifically, the British government was instrumental in the establishment of a Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre (MTISC) in Ghana under the auspices of the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF). The main goals are to set up efficient and secure information sharing systems that helps coordinate counter-piracy measures and to reduce the dependence of the companies on weak national navies and state security infrastructures. It is also different in that it increasingly involves some private sector input and participation, based on a model that has proved to be relatively successful in the Horn of Africa.

#### 4.6.4. China

The advent of China and other emerging countries in Africa in general and the GoG in particular cannot be ignored. The region has also seen the participation of the Belgian naval warship "Godetia" involved in the multinational operation "Obangame" concluded on 28 February 2013 in Douala, Cameroun. The involvement of emerging powers such as China, Brazil and India is

expected to grow significantly as their economies hunger for more and more energy supplies. China in particular is growing its investments in the GoG area at an unprecedented pace, particularly in the oil and gas sector. This increased investment will surely drive greater desire to contribute to both bilateral and multilateral initiatives aimed at protecting oil infrastructure and guaranteeing stability on the high seas.





## 5. The risk of extraversion of maritime security mechanisms in the gulf of guinea

### 5.1. The risk of extraversion of maritime security mechanisms in the GoG

Because they are issues that bother on the sovereignty of states, external interference in the security and defence policies of other countries is often viewed with heightened apprehension. Even though they lack the capacity, either individually or collectively, to mobilise sufficient resources and capabilities to tackle festering maritime security challenges, GoG countries are becoming cautious about the growing intrusiveness of key foreign powers in that segment of their security and defence sector. Although there has been increasing but dissonant clamour within the GoG for some 'home-grown' prioritisation of maritime security issues and challenges, it is unlikely that the mechanisms and resources required to drive the process from within could be mustered in the foreseeable future. Besides there is a point where key aspects of the security and defence measures of GoG countries increasingly dovetails with the geo-strategic interests of the same key foreign governments which they may be reluctant to embrace.

### 5.2. Country level responses

At the peak of the notorious piracy conundrum off the coast of Somalia, vessels making the passage along the waters had to do so with heavily armed guards on board or be guided by multinational naval task forces, or risk attack. Neither of these two options has so far received the official endorsement of countries in the GoG, either individually or collectively, even though the threat of piracy attacks and other maritime crime has increased. The imperative that develops from this is the need to envision, prioritize and construct a holistic and sustainable policy response to maritime security in the medium and long term. Such policy response should be one that is not only inclusive of all possible areas of risk but one that also accommodates all the key actors.

Another important dimension is that such responses to maritime security challenges in the region must be

conceived and implemented using a bottom-up (rather than top-down) approach in which the interests of local communities along the vast coastline who bear the larger brunt of the daily threats from the waters are brought to the fore. One important entry point for policy in this regard is to resolve social justice issues that are often raised by the activities of the extractive industry, particularly oil and gas companies, operating in the region. It is also important that policy responses recognize the need to move beyond coercive military responses in favour of the exercise of 'soft' interventions which privilege development over the use of excessive military options. After all, evidence has shown that despite the recent re-militarization of the GoG, maritime security challenges have multiplied rather than abated.

On a national scale, the current trend in the GoG is towards the reform of existing normative frameworks for national security and defence to complement and boost state action at sea. However, national responses have been few, un-coordinated and mostly lacklustre. In terms of country-level initiatives, for instance, the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria set up an Inter-Agency Maritime Security Task Force chaired by Rear-Admiral Dele Ezeoba (who is currently the Chief of Naval Staff) in 2005 to investigate diverse maritime security threats and recommend strategies to checkmate them. In the same year, the administration initiated the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Strategy (GGESS) tasked with the design of a region-wide energy security architecture including a radar system to track ships on the waters. His successor, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, also called for accelerated action to establish a Gulf of Guinea Guard Force (GGGF) to close up the capability gaps amongst the navies and customs services in the region to carry out joint operations and exercises. In May 2009, the Minister of Defence of Cameroon announced that four countries (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe) would set up a joint force to fight crimes along their common coastlines, while Angola proposed a common regional security mechanism to tackle shared threats.

In Cameroun also, the doctrine of security and safety is currently being reviewed, and this seems to be the most illustrative of the mobilisation of the required political will to integrate maritime issues into national security policies and architecture. The proposed revision, in part, seeks to explain decree N°2007/290/CAB/PR of 1 November 2007 relating to the organisation and conduct of State action at Sea and in navigable areas. Similarly, with the advent of decree N°2009/080 of 20 February 2009 on the creation of Delta Rapid Intervention Battalion, marine partners of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (RIB), Cameroun has reaffirmed its commitment to making state action at sea one of the new priorities of public policy. State actions at sea and maritime security and safety have therefore become a national public good. This recent engagements seem to follow the trend in neighbouring Nigeria where piracy and armed robbery on the waters have intensified since 2007, forcing the government to expand and intensify naval patrols along the coastline. This has also been the path towed by Equatorial Guinea, which recently acquired the largest sea fleet in Central Africa. Such national responses to the acts of maritime violence perpetrated on coastal waters and maritime areas appear to explain the relative reduction of the phenomenon.

### 5.3. Regional and multilateral initiatives and responses

Certainly, implementing any regional approach to address such a complex phenomenon as maritime security must take into account the peculiarities arising from geographical history and the importance of collective security. According to Fredrik Söderbaum<sup>11</sup>, "one of the reasons why regional cooperation should be promoted is that no solutions exist at the comparatively more institutionalised global level." At that level, new challenges not directly impacting on major powers tend to be neglected. Regional cooperation has thus become an important method for addressing not only regional, but sometimes even global challenges such as financial stability, peace, security and health.

Apart from specific national efforts, there has also been several bilateral initiatives aimed at establishing joint security and patrol along the GoG waters. This is the thrust of the Cameroun-Equatorial Guinea Security

Agreement signed in Yaoundé on 30 August 2012 which primarily seeks to addresses consular issues, particularly questions of migration as they relate to border security. This agreement is similar to the one between Cameroon and Gabon on the Establishment of a Joint Bilateral Commission on Security signed in Yaoundé on 12 September 2012 to institutionalize already existing relations in the sector. A key aspect of the latter initiative is to ensure judicious police and legal arrangements to fight cross-border criminality, develop technical cooperation and security related training of military and civilian personnel, etc.

### 5.3.1. The Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA)

Long before the June 2013 summit of Heads of States whose highpoint was the recognition of the imperative for effective GoG-wide inter-regional effort on maritime security, there had been modest inter-regional coordination arrangements between West and Central African countries worthy of note, albeit they did not last long. As early as 1975, the two regions made a modest effort to coordinate maritime responses and policies by muting the idea of a Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) which incidentally only became active in an institutionalised form around 1999. Part of the goal of MOWCA is to create an integrated coast guard network that coordinates inter-regional maritime security policies and actions and also interfaces with external actors such as the UN and its specialised agency responsible for maritime affairs, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). This is part of a broader strategy that recognises the transnational nature of the maritime environment and the imperative to configure an effective multilateral policy framework. MOWCA has also tried, although with limited success, to move beyond traditional maritime security concerns such as armed robbery and piracy to interventions in the area of maritime finance so as to help build the capacity of local shippers and increase their competitiveness vis-à-vis their better endowed external counterparts. This of course falls within the broader context of maritime security as it aims

11. 'Theorising the rise of regionness' by Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum, Article Published online: 20 Aug 2006.

at providing financing for local stakeholders to engage in legitimate shipping activities, thereby reducing the criminal threats associated with maritime business in the region. This important initiative has however not been able to take off fully as a result of the reluctance of member states to provide initial start-up funding for the proposed Regional Maritime Development Bank.

There have been several other relatively more recent initiatives at the highest levels of government to discuss the potential of the GoG maritime sector to either undermine or contribute to the development of its constituent states. One of the earliest was the 2006 ministerial conference on maritime safety and security sponsored by a consortium of US institutions. Held in Cotonou, the meeting recognised and discussed the importance of urgently taking practical steps to improve surveillance and information sharing, create robust and appropriate laws and regulatory regimes, facilitate increased public awareness of the scope and effects of maritime insecurity, enhance regional cooperation and policy harmonisation, and encourage the participation of bilateral, multilateral, non-governmental and commercial partners. The meeting also touched on the important subject of political will and the way this has the potential of shaping the impact of any coordinated response.

There have also been meetings at the level of multilateral organizations with specific interest in maritime security issues, including the 13th annual Assembly of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) held in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2006. The recommendations were very similar in terms of the need to put in place measures that touched on regional policy coordination. Specifically, the IMO Assembly proposed the creation of a jointly managed regional coast guard infrastructure to enhance patrol and complement the lean capacity of national navies. During the summit of Heads of States and Governments of the GoG held in Libreville, Gabon, earlier in August 2006, a similar proposal was made to use multilateral diplomacy to shape policy responses to maritime security challenges in the region. This high level meeting did not achieve much in concrete terms as the

leaders merely reiterated their commitment to a coordinated response to the challenges being faced in the region. It was not a surprise that a subsequent follow-up meeting scheduled to take place in November 2006 did not materialize. The spate of multilateral meetings have only acquired greater urgency and become more frequent with the growing incidences of piracy and trafficking in arms and drugs in the region. The most significant to date, was the meeting organized by the newly established-- but highly controversial-- US Africa Command (AFRICOM) which, for the first time, proposed an enhanced collaboration between ECOWAS and ECCAS in the management of the maritime sector.

Significant as these varied proposals may seem, they have not really translated into concrete and actionable initiatives for a number of reasons. In the first instance, they reflect a somewhat frustrating gap between official rhetoric and the lack of political will to take concrete actions on what is obviously a nagging security concern. In other words, while they seemed to reflect an appreciation of various aspects of the broader concerns about maritime security in the different countries, they do not adequately demonstrate a broader appreciation of security-development nexus, or even how maritime security is linked with, rather than separated from, other 'inland' security imperatives. Second, the proposals and initiatives associated with them are rather too fragmented to recognise and appreciate the imperative of building synergy: at the level of the plethora of agencies with mandate over maritime issues, and between and among countries in the GoG. Thus, rather than pave the way for the streamlining (and harmonisation) of the activities of existing agencies to avoid duplication and waste, what seemed to have come out of them is the tendency to create new agencies with overlapping and questionable bureaucracies. Third, and perhaps the most challenging problem, is that they almost always become stillborn due to the dearth of human and material resources, a factor which continues to explain the reliance of GoG countries on foreign governments to meet even their most basic maritime security needs.

For the most part, the agenda and outcomes of these meetings have been decidedly influenced by and slanted towards advancing the strategic interests of their major sponsors, mostly foreign governments and the national or multilateral institutions they control. At the core of most of the meetings is the quest to introduce and promote new jurisprudential and security regimes to enable GoG countries to reconfigure their criminal justice and security systems and institutions for a more effective response to maritime security threats. Some of these legal instruments have even been negotiated at the continental level either to give them greater enforcement capacity or to scale up inter-regional coordination. One of such is the African Maritime Transport Charter which was agreed in Durban in 2010 specifically aimed at improving regional cooperation in the area of maritime transport and security.

Other instruments, declarations and agreements not directly related to high profile issues such as piracy and drugs have also been considered. In 2005, for example, the New Partnership for African Development, NEPAD, made a declaration on sustainable fisheries in Africa in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, while the World Conservation Union strongly lobbied for the establishment of protected marine conservation areas in the GoG. A consortium of the World Bank, African Union, World Wildlife Fund, and the Food and Agricultural Organisation created the Strategic Partnership for Fisheries in Africa while the Global Environmental Fund committed a \$60million grant to support related activities in July 2005. Very recently, in 2012, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) organised a major conference in Luanda, Angola, which came up with the Luanda Declaration on Peace and Security in the GoG. This Declaration drew attention, in part, to some of the coordination challenges already evident between two of the most important regional institutions with jurisdiction over the GoG; that is, ECOWAS and ECCAS.

### 5.3.2. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

While a detailed discussion of their specific activities is beyond the scope of this report, the evolving pattern is for

the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the specialised agency of the UN responsible for international maritime issues, to channel support aimed at addressing maritime challenges in West and Central Africa through the two leading regional organisations in the region: ECOWAS and ECCAS. Thus, as early as 2006, the IMO signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the two regional institutions to integrate the coastguard functions and capabilities of member countries over a two-year period. Under the auspices of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, it encourages a synergy between the GGC and ECOWAS. Steered by the GGC, this initiative is closely aligned with the recommendations of the UN relating to the need to develop an integrated regional strategy in the fight against piracy, and the implementation of an equivalent multinational, region-wide mechanism. In more recent times, the IMO has been at the forefront of promoting and assisting GoG countries to prepare and implement a new piracy code with focus on the prevention and repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activities. This code was adopted at the ministerial level meeting held in Cotonou, Benin. These IMO-backed initiatives in West and Central Africa seemed to have set the tone for the UN to dispatch an assessment mission on piracy to Nigeria, Angola and Gabon whose key recommendation was the call for a summit-level conference on maritime security that took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 2013.

### 5.3.3. Comparatives advantages of ECCAS and ECOWAS towards maritime security

As mentioned earlier in this report, when placed side-by-side, ECCAS obviously seems to have a relatively more advanced maritime security agenda and programme than ECOWAS. Commencing more comprehensively in 2009, the ECCAS initiative on maritime security rests on two critical elements. First is the creation of a Regional Coordination Centre for the Maritime Security of Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, the Congo. The second strand is the promotion of 'synergy' between the GGC and ECOWAS. This strategy is very much in line with the broader goals of the AU previously mentioned with

regard to building continental peace, security and stability through the coordination of the activities of RECs in such a way as to promote complementarity rather than competition.

ECCAS' strategy fits into this broader continental view primarily because it seeks to promote information sharing and management, joint surveillance of maritime space, the harmonization of actions at sea, the introduction of a regional maritime tax regime, the acquisition of equipment for joint use and the institutionalisation of a periodic maritime conference. This hybrid regional approach has allowed ECCAS to take the lead in terms of pursuing value-added activities that sometimes overshadows the actual logistical limitations that the community faces. For instance, when CRESMAC was established, it was envisaged that it will eventually be self-funded through a regional maritime tax system, the

modalities of which remain to be decided almost four years after. At the moment, unfortunately, this regional coordination centre survives mainly through donations from development partners and token contributions from member countries, neither of which is regular.

ECCAS has also shown a possible path to follow for ECOWAS and other regional institutions in Africa by dividing its huge Central African segment of the GoG stretching all the way from Angola to the maritime borders of Nigeria and Cameroon into three zones: A, B and D.

Because Zone D which covers Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe, is the most active of the three where the highest number of attacks and threats have occurred, it has witnessed a lot of activities during the past four years. From 2009 onwards,

Diagram I: Participation in ECCAS sub-regional collective security - the case of Gulf of Guinea



Source: Jamestown map data, available on [www.googlemap.fr](http://www.googlemap.fr)

extensive surveillance patrols have been launched in that zone that have produced positive result in terms of a significant reduction in the number of maritime-related incidences. Indeed, the benefits of patrols and other joint measures could be seen when data on piracy attacks and armed theft at sea perpetrated between 2007 and 2010 is compared with those that occurred between 2011 and 2012. Due to similar measures, illegal immigration and IUU fishing are equally on the decline in Zone D.

Ironically, even though it is the most advanced in terms of operationalisation, Zone D is still constrained by a number of related problems. The first and easily the most obvious problem has to do with paucity of well-trained naval and security personnel in the different member countries that could, in turn, be placed at the disposal of the Zone for joint activities. Second, the Zone faces the problem of inadequate naval infrastructure in terms of appropriate vessels, equipments, naval bases and dockyards that are crucial for effective surveillance and patrols over an extended period. Third is the inability of member states to mobilise adequate funding, even for the most routine joint maritime patrol operations. Together, the constraints of inadequate personnel, infrastructure and funding implies that countries in that zone are either not able to participate fully and effectively<sup>12</sup>, or they must look outward to meet priority needs. Finally, the non-activation of other zones means that Zone D is currently the only one that is operational under the ECCAS maritime security strategy.

The above operational challenges confronting Zone D interacts with several other broader constraints to limit the capacity of the wider ECCAS region to adequately manage maritime security challenges. For instance, the scope of action by ECCAS on maritime security is also severely constricted by the weak capacity of the institution to make decisions of a binding nature at the leadership level. There is also the challenge of perennial resistance to decisions and actions by ECCAS from other institutionalised regional frameworks such as CEMAC

with much stronger institutional presence on the ground. Furthermore, there is still an obvious gap in legislation on maritime security issues which is especially evident in the prevailing non-criminalisation of acts of violence at sea as well as the absence of any major national legal framework on State action at Sea (SaS) to draw up a robust regional response. Lastly, in addition to the dearth of research and local innovation on maritime security and safety issues, the ECCAS region is hamstrung by a lacklustre attitude on the part of some member states on matters relating to collective maritime security issues.

Regardless of the gaps in current initiatives, it is important to note that there is still considerable elbow room for improvement in terms of establishing and expanding the scope for collaborative trans-regional collective maritime security arrangements in West and Central Africa. This could begin, for instance, by recognising that the vast perimeter of contiguous waters within ECCAS' Zone D overlaps with the boundaries proximate to the West African states of Nigeria and Benin where maritime security threats are also very pronounced. This underscores the need for cooperation with ECOWAS and with a key player like Nigeria. It was not a coincidence therefore that ECOWAS has adopted key aspects of the ECCAS model, for instance by signifying greater commitment to encourage information sharing, asset coordination and integration. In 2012, ECOWAS created its first operational zone, named 'Zone E' involving Nigeria, Niger, Benin and Togo. Furthermore, an agreement on maritime surveillance in the contiguous waters was signed in May 2009 followed by the creation of an inventory of naval assets and joint patrols capable of assisting weaker navies within the zone to pool their resources together in effective and efficient ways. One of the strong points for the ECCAS model is that it has created a coordinating centre in Douala, Cameroun which now serves as a regional hub for anti-piracy activities. It was also partly in response to the awareness that the maritime security challenges facing West and Central Africa are strikingly similar that ECOWAS has

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12. Presently, Gabonese patrol is absent from Zone D while Sao Tome and Principe has no representation at all.

lately made a lot of effort to bring itself up to speed with ECCAS in terms of grasping the maritime dimensions of its regional security dilemmas. Before now, the focus of ECOWAS was mainly on security on land. Even though it is a far more developed REC, its maritime strategy which was only first discussed by the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff (CCDS) at a meeting held in Cotonou in April 2010 is still in infancy.

As noted earlier, this delay is partly the result of the general perception across West Africa that the region's maritime challenges were largely a Nigerian problem, mostly stoked by long-drawn insurgency activities in the oil-rich but mostly impoverished Niger Delta. Inversely related to this is the disposition by Nigeria to resist any attempt within ECOWAS to discuss her domestic security challenges, especially those related to the sensitive oil industry and the Niger Delta region<sup>13</sup>. The implication is that maritime security issues have either been kept out of the regional agenda or at best discussed in broad, aspirational and futuristic terms. It has thus taken the spread of piracy beyond the immediate vicinity of the Nigerian coastline and into the waters of Benin, Togo, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire for ECOWAS to appreciate the enormity of the regional security challenges and the imperative for greater cooperation.

#### 5.3.4. The Gulf of Guinea Commission (GCC)

Another possible platform for Intergovernmental cooperation that is already being discussed at various official and unofficial meetings is at the level of the GGC. Being the only organisation with a coherent mandate covering the whole of the GoG, the expectation is that it should naturally have assumed a central role in inter-regional coordination efforts on maritime issues, including the security aspects. This has however been a rather difficult task due to the small size of its secretariat,

personnel and budget but also the dearth of the necessary political will at the level of heads of government to agree upon and kick-start important initiatives. Thus, whereas the huge logistical challenges that the region faces should provide enough impetus for the GGC to act in decisive manner, it is precisely the reason why the Commission finds it difficult to gain traction in setting the agenda and implementing measures.

With growing regional commitment to collectively tackle common threats, states are beginning to see the need for greater collective action and coordination under the aegis of the GGC. Also, while boundary disputes will remain a perennial irritation into the foreseeable future, and may in fact multiply with the discovery of new hydrocarbon deposits in poorly demarcated deepwater areas, the incentive to cooperate has intensified. In the near future, the GGC may likely become the focal institution to leverage on the comparative advantages of the two regional organisations in West and Central Africa in ways that might contribute meaningfully to the development of appropriate and effective regional maritime security frameworks.

Although stakeholders recognise the prospects of amplifying the role of the GGC in terms of mobilising inter-regional cooperation on maritime security in West and Central Africa, the process is likely to be hamstrung by the broader consequence of overlapping geopolitical differences which go far into the history of the two regions. The first factor is the sometimes justifiable- but mostly unfounded- fear of the 'true' intentions of the regional power, Nigeria. Due to its sheer size in economic, population, resource and military terms, Nigeria is viewed rather suspiciously as a regional bully or, at best, a benign one. Indeed, several West African countries- especially Nigeria's immediate neighbours that are all francophone

13. Notwithstanding, member states of the Community might not be decisive or deal adequately with such matters even if they were called upon to rise to the occasion.

14. Note that the membership of GGC does not include all GoG states. The full list of GoG countries includes: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Togo. GGC includes only: Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Sao Tomé and Príncipe. ECCAS is made up of Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Chad. ECOWAS on the other hand, comprises Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.



countries- are often reluctant to allow the regionalisation of security decision making for fear that Nigeria will simply dominate and steer regional policy and action to satisfy her own national interests. Although it has never openly acknowledged this, Nigeria also seems to recognise that a discussion or decision on the regional dimensions of maritime security in the GoG may put it on the spot regarding lingering domestic security problems, especially the Niger Delta issue. This partly explains why the Nigerian government has so far succeeded in dissuading ECOWAS from placing the security situation in the Niger Delta region on its agenda.

### 5.3.5. The political dynamics in West Africa and correlation to maritime security

In several instances also, Nigeria may also be holding back from advancing several regional security issues widely considered to be timely precisely for the fear of being perceived to be a bully. Instead, preference has been for bilateral engagement on a smaller scale with countries such as Sao Tome and Principe (in a joint commission to manage the resources along their common maritime boundary) and with Benin (in a six month-long joint patrol on the waters between themselves code-named Operation Prosperity). In February 2012, the Nigerian Navy hosted Exercise Obangame Express, an annual naval exercise involving a number of African countries, Europe, and the United States. With the often unfounded fear of a 'regional hegemon' that has been consciously benign in much of its dealings with her neighbours, ECOWAS sometimes loses the full advantage it should otherwise derive from Nigeria's immense economic, political and diplomatic capabilities.

Another key cause for concern in ECOWAS (and this may likely increase when the prospective collaboration with ECCAS on maritime security issues is factored in) is how the different colonial histories of member states have produced different bureaucratic cultures, systems and official languages. Often overlooked or considered to be insignificant, these disparities have been accentuated by the efforts of France in continuing to exert influence

within its former colonies thus discouraging their full integration with their Anglophone neighbours. Although sometimes overstated, French competition with Nigeria in this regard may be partly responsible for the slow pace of broader integration in ECOWAS and may, by extension, impact on regional maritime security policymaking and implementation. Notwithstanding these problems, ECOWAS has taken important initial steps towards integrating the maritime security framework of its member states. Working within broader regional governance and security frameworks including the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (2008) and the ECOWAS Vision 2020, the region has indirectly situated maritime security within the broader questions of governance. By the time it eventually takes off, the nascent maritime security agenda currently in contemplation in West Africa would likely benefit from the Community's many years of experience in developing regional approaches to democracy, peace-building, peace enforcement and economic integration.

Unfortunately, there appears to be a decidedly military texture to current regional and international responses to maritime security challenges in the GoG similar to the pattern that evolved in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. The controversial decision by the US government to move the command headquarters of AFRICOM into West Africa is partly evident of this trend. With growing cooperation between the US and the various armed forces in the GoG through the transfer of military resources and capacity building, the militarisation of the waters of West and Central Africa may just be a foregone conclusion. In earlier references on the interventions by foreign governments including the US, France and the UK, the military components have been very pronounced for precisely the same reason that the conceptualisation of insecurity is narrowed down to military responses.

In addition to the foregoing are concerns regarding how the corresponding increase in military spending by countries in the GoG could have grave consequences for human rights, social justice and the much needed

investment in the welfare of citizens. With the international appetite for military solutions rising rapidly in the post 9/11 era, there is palpable fear that some GoG countries may use counter-piracy and counter-insurgency measures as pretext to clamp down on domestic opposition in their conflict-prone coastal areas. It is not a coincidence that the oil producing regions in countries such as Gabon, Nigeria and Angola have been some of the most impoverished and under-developed where the limited gains from the so called 'third wave' of democratisation in Africa has witnessed significant setbacks.

Furthermore, one of the unintended consequences of the militarisation of the region has been a deepening of socio-economic crisis along the coastal belt of the GoG. This is largely because as scarce resources are diverted to fund military programmes and the purchase of military hardware, the neglect of social services such as education and health become inevitable. The long term effects are perhaps not yet evident, but any peace bought at the price of economic and social decline would inevitably be fragile and unsustainable. Invariably, this pattern produces a vicious cycle of poverty, failing infrastructure and violence which ultimately raises the stake for insecurity. To quote Sandoz further: "continued population growth in the coastal regions, or littorals, strains the maritime infrastructure and the capacity to govern, resulting in unmet security challenges from competing countries... transnational criminal organisations and insurgent terrorist groups that exploit instability in the maritime domain."

For now, it may seem that growing awareness of the plethora of problems linked to maritime security might pave the way for progress to be made in terms of developing appropriate legal and policy responses to tackle them. Besides these, a complementary next step would be to prioritise maritime security as a key component of broader governance concerns which governments have the responsibility to address. It is in this

respect that Sandoz proposed a maritime security sector reform (SSR) as a key point of departure with focus on maritime governance, maritime civil and criminal authority, maritime defence, maritime safety, maritime response and rescue, and maritime economy. According to him, maritime SSR aimed at transforming the institutions that deal directly with security threats to the state and its citizens, as well as to improve governance and increase the wealth accessible to citizens in developing countries, are sorely needed in the GoG region. Despite this felt need, there are important gaps that might make the achievement of these goals at least in the medium term or any expression of optimism too hasty and naïve. Apart from critical weaknesses in infrastructure and capacity which make sustainable reforms very difficult to bet on, there are also the problems associated with endemic corruption and thriving neo-patrimonial networks which blunt the effectiveness of even the most creative policies.

The current trend in Central Africa is to focus on the reformation of normative and instrumental frameworks for national security and defence, on the one hand, and an attempt to scale up SaS, on the other. This new focus seems to have reversed decades of continental tropism which had constricted the disposition of the coastal states of the GoG to act in a proactive and decisive manner on maritime security issues<sup>15</sup>. Despite the upswing in national level actions against crime at sea, the continued prevalence of maritime insecurity seems to indicate that existing measures are still inadequate. Three key factors explain the inefficiency of national actions: (1) the lack of maritime consciousness and absence of comprehensive policy framework in the GoG; (2) state action at sea is still largely at its formative stage; and (3) national capacities for robust operational projection is still very limited.

Since 2009 when the Nigerian government extended amnesty to militant youth in the Niger Delta, violence associated with the activities of insurgent movements in the region has reduced drastically. This allowed the oil

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15. As pointed out earlier, in Cameroun the doctrine of security and safety is currently being reviewed against the backdrop of a renewed political will to integrate maritime security issues into broader national security policies and strategy.

industry to resume full-scale production to an average of about 2.4 million barrels of crude per day, from a low point of about 70 percent or less at the peak of insurgency in 2007-8. This development has, in turn, had positive impact on global energy supplies by stabilising the oil markets and encouraging greater foreign direct investment in the oil industry in Nigeria (and throughout the GoG). Nonetheless, there seems to be a shift from politically-inspired violence leading to the disruptions of oil supplies to the upsurge of a variety of criminal activities such as oil bunkering, hostage taking, and narcotic trade. There is a growing body of evidence which indicates that top officials of security agencies, politicians and highly placed government personnel are themselves implicated in the criminal activities, making even the best efforts to address the trend so far ineffective. In Nigeria alone, it is estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 barrels of oil are being stolen daily. It is impossible to be exact or make even a close approximation, but the current official estimates as at [please insert period] puts the figure at 150,000 barrels, or 7 percent of Nigeria's total output. Some of the oil is refined in pockets of small-scale artisanal refineries deep inside the creeks of the Niger Delta where culprits can easily evade security agencies, before they are transported in barges and boats either to bigger tankers on the high seas or sold in neighbouring countries.

While much of the illegal activities going on in the region may appear indiscriminate and unorganized, official complicity in allowing and encouraging them to thrive is indisputable. For instance, in 2005, two admirals of the Nigerian Navy were court marshalled and dismissed for their role in the disappearance of a vessel, MT Africa Pride, previously arrested by the Navy with 11,000 tons of stolen crude oil. A parallel example of the involvement of prominent state officials in high-stake criminality is the role of top military officials, serving or retired, in the drug trafficking cartel in Guinea Bissau. In April 2003, a former navy Chief Admiral Buba Na Tchuto and others were reported by Associated Press as having been arrested by US authorities aboard a yacht in international waters near Cape Verde on drugs related rendezvous. The Admiral,

along with the Air force Chief of Staff, Ibraima Papa Camara, had been previously linked to an aircraft suspected of flying several hundred kilograms of cocaine from Venezuela to Guinea Bissau in July 2008. It is clear from the discourse so far that the different sources from which threats and responses are generated in the GoG interact in complex ways. However, it is still mostly unclear what salient dynamics underscore them. Thus, while threats to global shipping as well as to the supply of crude oil and gas to the global market have dominated the attention of most GoG countries interested in maritime safety and security issues, their lack of capacity to quickly deal with them is impacting negatively on other less regarded but critical issues such as the environment, human rights and social justice. In the case of the environment for instance, the dire consequences of piracy, oil theft and bunkering, and other criminal activities have either compounded the ongoing degradation of the fragile coastal ecosystem caused by the rise and surge of the ocean level due to global warming.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1. Recommendations

There are a number of key recommendations following from the above insights on and challenges to effective maritime safety and security in the GoG. These are enumerated below.

- a. Maritime security can no longer be fragmented from or made to play second fiddle to broader national, regional and continental security issues given the growing link between them. As the linkage is deep and inescapable, it is no longer plausible to treat each concern separate from the other; for instance whereas maritime crimes occur on waters, there is the need to prosecute them on land.
- b. It is clearly no longer possible to divorce the reasons why maritime security continues to fester from wider governance concerns associated with the inability of many governments in the GoG to adequately meet the developmental aspirations of their citizens, especially the teeming youth population. Therefore, in the development of a regional strategy that is alive to the transnational nature of maritime security problem, a clear commitment to sustainable economic growth and development for the citizenry is required as a means of expanding opportunity for self-actualization for the teeming population as well as disincentive against criminality.
- c. Greater awareness and presence by GoG countries represent one of the most visible deterrents against the increasing threats to maritime safety and security. There is no doubt that where there is a festering governance deficit, crime will thrive and spread. Thus, without addressing crime and impunity, maritime security would continue to fester. A necessary first step in this regard would be to put in place a robust mechanism for asset mapping, gathering and sharing of information and data, coordination of regional efforts on law enforcement, joint patrol by national navies, to name a few.
- d. It is imperative to sensitise and incorporate civil society in the ongoing discourse and agenda on maritime security. In the manner in which the current debate is going, a credible civil society voice is palpably missing; the type that is not encumbered by the bureaucracy in regional institutions such as ECOWAS and ECCAS. From experience, civil society actors can bring on board new, bottom-up issues and perspectives than those currently on the agenda of national governments, regional institutions and international actors.
- e. As it has currently been pursued, maritime security is mostly addressed as a military enterprise; one that only tangentially involves local coastal communities which bear the larger brunt of threats from the waters. Strictly, maritime security is not necessarily a military or policing issue but touches on a whole range of social, environmental, political, and economic concerns in a comprehensive manner. Looking beyond military and policing matters would open up a whole new discourse that explores the ways that coastal communities could benefit from (or pose a threat to) maritime safety and security.
- f. There is the need for GoG countries, at the national and regional levels, to take the initiative in setting new national agenda and priorities on maritime security issues in response to recent challenges, instead of deploying old methodologies that have proved ineffective. The implication of not acting promptly and decisively is that they risk external actors hijacking and setting the agenda. It is therefore important to insist on an African agency and voice in setting priorities. Of course, the international community will continue to play a key role, but one that is sensitive to national and regional priorities.
- g. There is also the need to strengthen existing national laws and create new ones, as well as to design regional codes on maritime security and development issues. Even where they exist, such laws tend to be too weak to serve as deterrence or punishment. The definition of what constitutes piracy, for instance, is either too weak or outdated especially when it is treated like armed robbery, murder or conspiracy. It is also important to domesticate international laws and codes on safety and security at sea.
- h. Finally, progressive actions to address maritime insecurity at the national, regional and continental

levels raise concerns about how best to ensure the sustainability of incremental steps and actions already taken. What is not in doubt is that such actions must be situated within an integrated regional approach that takes cognisance of governance and security, not merely the prevailing focus on building efficient state action at sea.

the constant quest by countries of the GoG to assert their state sovereignty would be a stumbling block towards achieving effective maritime security and safety. For as long as state sovereignty routinely rears its ugly head- at a time when what is required is giving up some aspects of it- the quest for sustainable maritime security and safety might just remain a forlorn ambition.

## 6.2. The Yaoundé Summit on Maritime Safety and Security: A post-script

The Yaoundé Summit was held against the backdrop of the upsurge in piracy and armed robbery in the GoG, particularly off the coast of Nigeria, during the first half of 2013. The Summit, which was held on 24-25 June 2013, was attended by 25 countries of West and Central Africa and three sub-regional organisations. Apart from the fact that it marked the first time an effort was made to evolve a concerted trans-regional anti-piracy strategy, the Summit also adopted three outcomes: (i) Declaration of the Heads of States and Governments of Central and West African States on Maritime Safety and Security in Their Common Maritime Domain; (ii) Memorandum of Understanding among the ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission on Maritime Safety and Security in West and Central Africa; and (iii) Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa.

For the most part, however, the three documents were essentially declaratory rather than formed any concrete step to evolve mechanisms to effectively tackle the complex menaces associated with maritime security and safety in the GoG. Along with the endorsement of the proposal to create an anti-piracy coordination centre in Cameroon, it was very clear that the Summit was overly focused on how to put in place international, regional and national anti-piracy mechanisms, thereby giving the impression that other threats to maritime security and safety are secondary. In the aftermath of the Summit, the herculean task is how to implement what was agreed upon, no matter how limited. It was already evident that

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The lack of security is one of the key impediments to development and democracy in Africa. The existence of protracted violent conflicts as well as a lack of accountability of the security sector in many countries are challenging cooperation in the field of security policy. The emerging African Peace and Security Architecture provides the institutional framework to promote peace and security.

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### About this study

This publication seeks to examine the increasing problem of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and its impact on peace and security in West Africa. The authors take stock of recent findings on the scale of maritime insecurity and its political dimensions. They also assess the impact of old and emerging instruments, initiatives,

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