Maritime Security Governance in the Gulf of Guinea: Opportunities and Challenges of States' Responses

Adam Mohammed

Structured Abstract

Article Type: General Review

Purpose—This article interrogates the various maritime security governance regimes in the Gulf of Guinea. The paper assessed the opportunities and challenges faced by States' regional and international architecture responses initiated to combat various maritime security threats such as piracy, oil theft, drug trafficking, smuggling, marine pollution and other forms of sea-borne organized crime in the region.

Findings—The study revealed that enormous opportunities and vulnerabilities accompany the geostrategic importance of this region. Security governance responses by all actors has been impeded by the proliferation and duplication of security regimes, lack of harmonization of initiatives, lack of State and regional personnel and assets' capability, gross distrust among the region's states, and inadequate funding, among other challenges.

Practical Implications—If these challenges are addressed appropriately, the Gulf of Guinea States will maximize the region's enormous maritime resources and ensure security and sustainable blue economy development for enhanced State and regional prosperity.

Originality, value—Building on extant literature on the ambition and processes of maritime security governance regimes in the Gulf of Guinea, the study's findings provide an original contribution for understanding the operational complexities involved in effective security response to the numerous maritime threats in the region and demonstrate that when these regimes are harmonized and effective, the prosperity of the region would be invaluable to international peace and development.

Keywords: governance, Gulf of Guinea, maritime security,
state responses, threats

Independent researcher: mmmutex2001@yahoo.co.uk

I. Introduction

The Gulf of Guinea is one vast, diverse, and highly important shipping route. It straddles an unbroken coastline of over 6,000 kilometers while cutting across about 18 countries of West, Central and Southern Africa. The States in the region can be described as an intricate assemblage of coastal and landlocked Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone, and Spanish-speaking countries, whose interpersonal postures are compounded by the divergence of language, domestic institutions and legal norms. The region's economic, geopolitical and geostrategic interests regarding maritime security collaborative initiatives have rather remained intriguing and complex.[1] This is in spite of the fact that the Gulf of Guinea States share immense potential, both in terms of its resource endowment and strategic importance as a major shipping route/hub, which has drawn significant domestic, continental and international attention occasioned by increased threats and vulnerabilities.[2]

Indeed, the States have witnessed a number of diverse threats to the West African regional security landscape. Apparently, the Gulf of Guinea, which occupies a significant geostrategic position within this geographical area, is not immune from these regional security challenges. This is because piracy has become one of the most prevalent maritime security crimes bedeviling the region with huge consequential human, economic, environmental and political costs. Therefore, the manifestation of piracy, for instance, constitutes a significant and direct threat to peace, security and economic development of the Gulf of Guinea region.[3] While, as increased global trade passes through this strategic maritime route, the consequences of ship hijacking and other illicit activities by organized criminal networks have no doubt attracted considerable regional and international community attention.[4] Thus, the Gulf of Guinea requires a strategic approach consistent with domestic aspirations and multi-stakeholders partnership initiatives, as well as coherent regional collaborative arrangements given the transnational character of most threats and vulnerabilities in the region.[5]

It is essential to note that the enduring security threats have mobilized responses from both within and beyond the region. For instance, in 2013, the West and Central African States formed a new regional maritime security framework dubbed the Yaoundé Accord. The framework is aimed at promoting information-sharing and resource-pooling along the African coast, from Cabo Verde in the north to Angola in the south. This is also reinforced by individual states' large-scale anti-piracy programs, such as the establishment of the Falcon Eye surveillance infrastructure and Deep Blue projects in Nigeria.[6] To this end, efforts at national, regional and international levels have been geared toward addressing the plethora of maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea. As a result, the region has witnessed the proliferation of national, regional and international-partnered institutions and several initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) and Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA). Other initiatives include the G7 Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group (G7++FOGG), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), and other non-state actors such as ship-owner's associations and national maritime domain security architecture are poised to secure this maritime corridor. However, these initiatives have overtime proven less effective as threats remain

seemingly unabated and are actually growing. The complexities surrounding these institutional coordination and operational frameworks have remained highly debatable, reaffirming the fact that the fundamental question as to the efficacy of the current arrangements in the region remain under-analyzed.[7] Therefore, this paper aims to interrogate various national, regional, and international institutions and initiatives geared toward sustainable maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea within the analytical paradigm of political, economic, and legal frameworks and security regimes developed to stem the cost of maritime insecurities along the Gulf of Guinea maritime domain.

II. Review of Extant Literature

The Gulf of Guinea region has become a focal point for international concerns regarding maritime security over the last decade. It is said that it represents a global hotspot for incidents of piracy and robbery at sea, among other complex challenges in the maritime domain, including trafficking, oil theft, pollution, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.[8] Against this backdrop, a range of initiatives focused on the region have been developed at international, regional and national levels to address these issues. However, measuring their level of success and/or failure has been an issue of scholarly debate. Broohm's work on maritime security governance, a new strategy management to avoid piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and its legal guarantee, argues that the most significant factors that would boost maritime security in the region include strong collaboration, strong law enforcement, national team spirit, synchronization of policies, and adoption of a maritime security strategy that would factor in the interest and responsibilities of all actors and stakeholders.[9] Garba argues that for effective ocean governance, modern management principles and an integrated governance framework will be needed to improve the enforcement and compliance within the ecological belt of the Gulf of Guinea.[10] As such, institutional frameworks built on a multi-layered approach are required.

Ebo'o succinctly argues that the Gulf of Guinea is not ungovernable, but the current institutional and regional focus is insufficient to improve security.[11] Ebo'o further argued that in spite of the diversity of crimes within this maritime space, responses to the complex security threats have been one-sided and often complex. Thus, there is need for a shift in strategy and attitudes toward a holistic approach that involves the strengthening of technical capacities and their sustainability. Similarly, Morcos posits that the confluence of threats mobilized the international community in the early 2010s.[12] This led to the 2013 Yaoundé Summit, which came up with new maritime security architecture that seeks to create shared maritime domain awareness among regional states through enhanced information sharing. In spite of this, Morcos argues that though the Yaoundé process has made considerable progress, the maritime security architecture remains incomplete due to the absence of an appropriate legislative and judicial framework, and the limited capacities of local navies or coast guards that are underequipped to provide credible deterrence.[13]

In a similar vein with Morcos, Norland aptly opines that social, political and economic challenges impede Gulf of Guinea regional navies and coast guards' enforcement capacities from maintaining sufficient security over their territorial waters.[14] Other scholars like Murphy and Ali contend that the ineffectiveness of maritime security governance architectures

in the Gulf of Guinea is largely because of the land-centric approach to security which has necessitated less priority and investment in equipment for the protection of the maritime space.[15] Accordingly, the maritime security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea is incapable of handling emerging maritime piracy and other crimes due to a lack of logistics and capacity building, and of course, owing to over-reliance of the land regarding national security in the region.[16] While there is considerable literature on security governance efforts in curbing spates of crime and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, there seems to be a dearth of research in assessing the diverse complexities of numerous security governance architectures in the region. This article aims to fill the gap.

III. Methodology

This paper adopts a hybrid method of combining exploratory, qualitative, and case-study research methodology in order to conduct an analysis of the opportunities and challenges of maritime security governance in the Gulf of Guinea. Since maritime security response mechanisms in the Gulf of Guinea over time have been multi-layered, the chosen method ensures an examination of national case studies (Nigeria and Senegal), and regional and international maritime security architectures geared toward effective security management of the Gulf of Guinea. This is done within the Copenhagen School's *regional security complex* analytical paradigm advanced by Barry Busan. This framework is plausible because Busan defines a regional security complex as a group of states whose primary national security concerns are so inextricably linked together that they cannot be removed or addressed independently of each other. Thus, the thrust of this theoretical scheme believes that security interdependence is core in the formation of regionally based clusters.[17] Consequently, the maritime security governance architecture in the Gulf of Guinea can be exhaustively located within this analytical paradigm.

While data for analysis are largely sourced from secondary sources, the author utilizes his enormous experiences and observation as a field commander with the Nigerian Navy. He has participated in a number of operations to secure the Gulf of Guinea maritime space over the last two decades, and as such, this paper proceeds by examining data using the qualitative content analysis approach. The method involved a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of data on various efforts adopted by maritime security stakeholders at both international, regional and national levels to stem the spate of maritime crimes and insecurities in the Gulf of Guinea. Thus, the degree of measurement of the opportunities and challenges of maritime security governance in the Gulf of Guinea hinges on the level and frequency of crime insecurity occurrences/reportage. This measurement analytics presents a chronological trend of the success and failure of existing security frameworks.

IV. National Case Studies: Perspectives from Nigeria and Senegal's Efforts

The Nigerian maritime domain inarguably plays host to a significant number of maritime security threats recorded in the Gulf of Guinea yearly. This brings to fore that the

responsibility to combat threats to Nigeria's maritime environment is essentially a law enforcement operation at sea, carried out by the Nigerian Navy. The principal defense against maritime threat throughout history has been military intervention, primarily undertaken through naval action.[18] The Nigerian Navy has, over the years, attempted to live up to its constitutional mandate of maritime security and defense of the country. However, the attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Guinea exposed the vulnerability of the region's maritime space and eventually led to the development of various military and non-military countermeasures. This has been done in collaboration with other maritime stakeholders within Nigeria's maritime corridor and by extension, the Gulf of Guinea. Consequently, the Nigerian Navy applies the principle of "Maritime Trinity of Action," such as surveillance capability, response initiatives and law enforcement, to effectively perform its maritime constabulary and coast guard duties. These comprise a number of activities and operations designed to improve the security of Nigeria's maritime domain in line with the Five Spectrum Layered Approach in the Nigerian Navy doctrinal instrument, known as Nigerian Navy Total Spectrum Maritime Strategy 2012. This has necessitated activities such as intelligence and information-based operations, active kinetic-based response (e.g., Op Calm Waters, Op Eagle Eye and Op Swift Response), choke point management, and collaboration with other maritime security stakeholders like the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigerian Port Authority (NPA), Nigerian Custom Service (NCS), Nigerian Air Force (NAF), et cetera.[19]

Plausibly, there have been significant improvements in active collaboration between the maritime law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, specifically the Nigerian Navy, NPA and NIMASA, which has resulted in substantial reductions of pirate attacks around Lagos Harbor. The partnership between the three agencies has significantly improved joint maritime patrols and maritime law enforcement within the territorial waters and harbor approaches.[20] This collaboration includes the provision of a number of interceptor boats, special mission vessels and helicopters manned by the Nigerian Navy for the provision of all-round security and the Satellite Surveillance Centre (SSC).[21] All these and more have provided stronger defense for vessels wishing to either anchor or steer ship-to-ship transfer operations offshore and thereby enhanced maritime security at a national level. All vessels in Nigerian waters are tracked by the Falcon Eye Alignment (FEA) and the SSC and can detect each ship's International Maritime Organization (IMO) number.[22] This has improved information sharing among maritime stakeholders.

Further to this, Nigeria as well as some member States of the Gulf of Guinea maritime corridor have, aside from its military deployments, also relied on Private Maritime Security Logistics Companies (PMSLC) as an additional response in the interim to cover the gaps of sufficient patrol boats. This regime, which is business-driven, further becomes a weakness of maritime security.[23] Notwithstanding, Nigeria has made conscious efforts toward building the capacity and capability of the maritime security forces through fleet renewal, acquisitions of new platforms and human capacity development, as well as increased naval policing actions at sea. Consequently, there have been tremendous success in the area of surveillance and monitoring through the acquisition and deployment of various Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) infrastructures to enhance basic maritime awareness and the inadequate capability to monitor maritime shipping and maritime space, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) on the security of the region.[24]

Therefore, the establishment and continuous acquisition of MDA infrastructure by the Nigerian Navy and other maritime stakeholders such as the Regional Maritime Capability (RMAC) Centres, the FEA and the Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centres (V-RMTC) is a step in the fulfilment of this aspiration.[25] Relatedly, the MDA infrastructure acquired by other maritime stakeholders, like the NPA Command Control Communication and Intelligence System (CCIS), NIMASA Integrated National Surveillance and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, known as the Deep Blue Project (DBP), which already has functional Command, Control, Computer Communication and Information (C4i) Centres with recently acquired platforms such as the special mission helicopters, unmanned aircraft systems, the ATR42 and special mission maritime patrol aircrafts, et cetera, are without doubt a significant bold steps by Nigeria to address maritime insecurities around its seascapes.[26] The MDA Centres are currently ensuring effective electronic monitoring of the nation's maritime environment through surveillance, response initiative and enforcement.

These technologically advanced MDA infrastructures acquired evidently reflect Nigeria's efforts at constantly expanding its maritime security strategy toward combatting piracy and other associated maritime crimes. With the advantage of these facilities, law enforcement and antipiracy patrols, backed by surveillance that can trail the IMO number for all vessels in Nigeria's waters, are being carried out.[27] Increased deployment of warships and air assets to checkmate the activities of violent pirates against oil tankers, merchant shipping and other seafaring communities, further attest to the level at which Nigeria is gradually improving her maritime security.

Perhaps the conduct and transformation of a series of operations by the Nigerian authorities such as Operation Calm Waters, which cover the brown waters of the Niger Delta, and Operation Tsare Teku, an anti-piracy operation designed to cover the territorial waters up to the extended limits of the Gulf of Guinea, are classic cases in evidence. These conduct of operations were corroborated by Rear Admiral Akpochi Suleiman (Retired), a former joint task force commander responsible for security in the Delta, who further observed that the conduct of the combined exercises and the new Nigerian Navy exercise code named "Eagle Eye" have significantly reduced the incidences of piracy and other maritime crimes in Nigeria.[28] Similarly, the conduct of Operation Accord, Operation Bekan Mmon and Operation Octopus in 2021 further enumerate these operational as well as kinetic efforts.

Most recently, in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the Nigerian Navy, in collaboration with other law enforcement authorities, in order to sustain the gains of effective maritime security, have activated Operation River Dominance and Operation Dakatar Da Barawo with the sole aim of addressing the challenges of crude oil theft, piracy and sea robbery, and other maritime related crimes. The operations were designed to focus on the inner corridor (creeks, estuaries and river entrances) andthe coastlines including the offshore loading export terminals.[29] Consequently, the successes recorded from enhanced maritime force capability and capacity projections through the help of MDA infrastructures show a significant improvement not only in naval actions, but reduced maritime criminalities within the maritime corridors of Nigeria. For instance, the Nigerian Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) stated that over 211 illegal refineries have been demobilized during these operations, with over 27 billion naira worth of crude seized and saved for the country.[30] Also part of ongoing efforts to curtail export theft, over five oil tankers, including *Mt Trinity Arrow*, *Very Large Crude Carrier*, *Heroic Idun*, and *Monte Urbasa*, were seized and under interrogation

for suspected oil theft from Nigerian offshore export terminals. These actions from maritime law enforcement authorities have likely saved the country export theft of millions of barrels of crude that would have been stolen by these very large tankers.[31] Thus, this highlights the allegations of complicity of international oil cartels and syndicates and the need for improved energy governance transparency and national prosperity.

Consistent with efforts toward capacity development of the Nigerian Navy and other stakeholders, as well as robust regional collaboration in maritime security governance, Nigeria hosted the 2019 Global Maritime Security Conference–Abuja and the 2022 International Maritime Conference–Port Harcourt. It is also worth mentioning the formulation and enactment of the Suppression of Piracy and Other Maritime Related Crime (SPOMO) Act 2019. Evidentially, the 2021 trial, conviction, and sentencing of ten pirates involved in the 2020 highjacking of a Chinese merchant vessel, MV *Hailufeng II*, to twelve years' imprisonment at the Federal High Court in Ikoyi, Lagos, marks a major milestone for Nigeria's new anti-piracy law.[32] It is, no doubt, a significant turning point that synchronizes non-kinetic naval policing actions at sea with prosecutorial efforts of the country. These efforts, among others, have seen the exit of Nigeria from the IMO world piracy list on March 5, 2022. Furthermore, the following data shows the successes in support of efforts to curb smuggling of crude oil and processed petroleum products in the first half of 2019 and second half of 2020.

Table 1: Summary of Nigerian Navy Successes in Support of Efforts to Curb Smuggling of Crude Oil and Processed Petroleum Products at Q1 2019 and Q1 2020

Product	Q1 2019	Q1 2020	Total Qty	Diff
Crude Oil (in barrels)	201,921	30,282	232,203	-171,639
AGO (in liters)	31,666,480	8,443,400	40,109,880	-23,223,080
PMS (in liters)	924,292	14,370	938,662	-909,922
DPK (in liters)	948,000	363,650	1,311,650	-584,350

Source: TOPS Branch, NHQ, adapted from Enoch, 2020.

Table 1 indicates how various kinetic operations of the Nigerian Navy targeted at reducing maritime criminality between first quarter (Q1) of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 were significantly successful. These actions have seen a constant decline of smuggling of crude oil and processed petroleum product, as indicated above. For instance, the amount of crude oil smuggled between the period under review shows the significant reduction of 74%, accounting for 171,639 less barrels than the 201,921 barrels smuggled in Q1 of 2019. The same account is reported in AGO with 58% reduction in products being smuggled. Whereas, there was a commendably significant reduction of PMS by 97%, which accounted for 909,922 less liters than the 924,292 liters in Q1 of 2019. Furthermore, DPK shows a 45% reduction of smuggling activities within this period, a significant difference.

These successes notwithstanding, the Nigeria maritime coastline has continued to be marked as troubled waters. It can be plausibly argued that the introduction of the Choke Point Regime and all the counter piracy initiatives in Nigeria show that there is the capacity to contain piracy within Nigeria, however, maritime law enforcement forces lack sufficient logistics

sustainability due to inadequate funding and budget. No doubt, Nigeria possesses the inherent capabilities to combat maritime insecurity in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea, but there are profound challenges of funding and sustainability of maritime forces at sea. This assertion has further corroborated the opinion of Hassan and Hasan, who posit that "Coastal states having maritime enforcement capability usually control piracy by naval action and hence the need for a stronger naval force.[33] However, the Gulf of Guinea countries have limited maritime capacity and little capability to counter the threat effectively through this means."[34] This weakness in capacity to exercise effective control over maritime state coastal and deep offshore territories remains a challenge for most Gulf of Guinea states.

Putting the issue in context, the main gap fundamentally lies in the area of availability of sophisticated assets for full coverage of territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in spite of the fact that Nigeria has the best, but limited, platforms to police its vast maritime area, as espoused by Osinowo, who suggested that the minimum Nigeria will require is about 90 offshore patrol vessels (OPV) to cover its vast coastline.[35] Furthermore, it is arguing that the inability of the political class in the past to prioritize maritime security investment manifested in the lack of adequate and sustainable funding for the Nigerian Navy and other Gulf of Guinea navies that would have facilitated the availability of requisite assets for the coverage of their vast maritime area and other areas of influence. This resulted in an increase of maritime insecurity incidences in areas outside national territorial waters and within the expanse of the Gulf of Guinea maritime areas, highlighting the need for sustainable funding for navies and coast guards for enhanced maritime security development in the region.[36] The long-range form of attacks provides pirates with time to achieve their objective due to absence of rapid responses and information sharing capability. This has, over time, exposed the limited capacity of available maritime surveillance equipment for extended patrol. Thus, there is need for the acquisition of long-range surveillance maritime patrol aircraft to provide quick, real-time maritime pictures to surface craft to coordinate speed enforcements and arrest.

Similarly, Senegal's geostrategic position makes her a favorable choice for maritime traffic, trade, and businesses and hence, a strategic shipping lane. The country is located at the far west of the African continent and enjoys a stretch of 570 kilometers of coastline, four maritime borders and an international sea lane into the Gulf of Guinea with huge maritime resources (particularly fisheries), and trade and commerce through a maritime façade extended by an EEZ of 200 nautical miles.[37] Its navy, just like that of Nigeria, has the constitutional mandate to provide maritime security and defense for the country with the primary mission of coastal surveillance, enforcement of navigational laws, monitoring of territorial waters and support for other components of the armed forces. Therefore, given the fact that this country is hugely rich in fishery resources and serves as one of the most strategic shipping routes, the Senegalese Navy's maritime security activities are aimed at fisheries monitoring, environment protection and pollution control, combating smuggling, illegal migration, and drug trafficking.

According to Ndiaye, while the country deals with the above threats, future threats such as piracy, armed robbery, high-scale pollution and terrorism are the most profound threats identified in the state maritime strategy.[38] Similar to the Nigerian Navy Total Spectrum Maritime Strategy discussed earlier, the main objectives of Senegal's Maritime Strategy are anchored on the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) and Emergency Operation Centre. Other objectives include maritime domain and situational awareness, coordination of incidents at sea, liaison with national and international structures, and

operational decision-making processes (if many administrations are involved). The country's MDA infrastructures are poised to provide the critical maritime picture for effective security of Senegal's maritime corridor at full deployment of the infrastructure coverage capability. The acquisition of platforms and other naval assets like OPVs and littoral surveillance vessels through national efforts and international stakeholders' collaboration have resulted in a slow and steady progress made in Senegal's maritime security of her seascape. The state has also enhanced its maritime security capability through building the capacity of special forces units for anti-piracy, offensive actions, and fast patrol boats. Recently a number of foreign navy vessels have jointly conducted exercises with the Senegalese Navy for the sole purpose of enhancing maritime security. Senegal also held a Naval Infantry Symposium in 2022, in collaboration with United States Marine Corps, Europe and Africa, aimed at galvanizing efforts of special operation forces in Africa.[39]

The successful suppression of maritime threats such as piracy can be accomplished with the collective vigilance of the maritime domain of regional countries.[40] This is important because, in spite of the commendable efforts put in place by Senegal, there are still fundamental gaps within their maritime security and defense, which are being exploited by organized criminal networks within their maritime corridor. Unlike Nigeria, Senegal has limited incidences of piracy at sea, while its major challenge (beyond force capacity and capability, as well as limited MDA infrastructure) lies in the fact that there is seemingly a lack of national coordination of efforts toward managing the proliferation of nongovernmental actors and their activities. There is also proliferation of diversity of actors at sea (fisheries, agriculture, gendarmerie, police, customs, maritime authority, port authority, et cetera). Hence there is a lack of commitment to a single coordinating body for maritime security. Similarly, there are issues surrounding harmonization of legal frameworks for effective coordination, and budgetary constraints occasioned by public officials' lack of prioritization of both land-based priorities and maritime interests, and a gross shortage of naval and air assets.[41]

V. Regional Response and Resilience Architectures

Given the complex nature and character of maritime security threats and the difficulties national governments in the Gulf of Guinea face in providing adequate maritime security operational capabilities, coordinated regional efforts are not only invaluable, but essential in sustaining a viable maritime security posture within their regional security complex. Hence, the creation of a regional cooperative maritime security approach is one possible option for a systemic solution to maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.[42] Though the possibility of instituting an international initiative to patrol the Gulf of Guinea seems impossible on account of its cost, it has become necessary to employ regional cooperation as an important factor in combatting this threat. Since the Gulf of Guinea waters have become a prominent site of maritime threats, countries within the zone have begun to mobilize themselves to ameliorate or avert the risks.[43] This is geared toward the establishment of regional common surveillance and development of joint coordination capabilities within the region.[44]

Consequently, the Yaoundé Summit of June 2013—under the auspices of the Gulf of Guinea countries as well as the ECOWAS, ECCAS and the GGC—agreed on a

memorandum on maritime safety and security in Central and West Africa, setting the code of conduct with regard to the fight against piracy, armed robbery against ships, and unlawful maritime activity in including the establishment of Interregional Coordination Centre (ICC) to execute a regional plan for maritime safety and security.[45] The follow-up of the Yaoundé Summit has led to the setting up of the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) in Pointe-Noire, Congo Brazzaville, and the ICC in Yaoundé, Cameroon. However, issues relating to funding are severely disrupting the operationalization of the zones.

Other protocols have followed suit for ECOWAS countries during the Yamoussoukro summit in Ivory Coast, known as Pilot Zone E, leading to the creation of a Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa (CRESMAO) and for ECCAS in Zone D; the development of cooperation in A and B zones; and CRESMAC strategies, which need viable fiscal commitment, to mention a few. Although, these programs look realistic on paper, the implementation remains a challenge. However, Glock doubts the practicability of this structure due lack of technical ability and funding problems in the Gulf of Guinea countries.[46] The biggest failure of the Summit was its inability to identify measures for reconciling other parallel initiatives.[47]

According to Egede, in spite of the complexities in the region, it is worth noting that significant progress has been made in the development of the Gulf of Guinea maritime security architecture.[48] These developments have been witnessed at both the regional and continental levels, including the development and adoption of 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), which was adopted in 2014, and the Lomé 2016 adoption of the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa. Other initiatives include the forums for stakeholders to discuss effective maritime security strategic options for the continent and region, such as the 2018 Nairobi Blue Economy Conference, the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network (GoGIN) as well the recent 2019 Global Maritime Security Conference hosted by Nigeria.[49]

Therefore, with these initiatives, improved interoperability of forces will strengthen maritime security in the region. In contrast, however, Ali identifies the lack of cooperation to be the bane of the summits coupled with the multiplicity between the various maritime security frameworks.[50] Though it is a known fact that cooperation and coordination among all states within the region would aid in the prevention and suppression of maritime insecurities, it has perhaps only worked effectively at high-profile meetings of regional governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and less in pragmatic terms.[51] Moreover, there is also the challenge of proliferation of regional maritime security architectures, which are now distracting each other, and that Nigeria being the hot enclave of piracy would require the focus on the Gulf of Guinea arrangement, as it comprises few countries and may have the potential to succeed because its major cardinal principle is anchored on security.[52]

The obstacles in combating piracy and other maritime security threats lie in the geopolitical structural division between two regional blocs resulting in regional distrust. There are other challenges on agreements on the financial burden, which has led to non-implementation of a particular tax regime such as the integrated tax system set. Another obstacle in enhancing joint regional security within the Gulf of Guinea region could be attributed to general mistrust between Nigeria and the French colonies, with the latter regarded as the hegemon in the region as well as in border disputes in states.[53]

Nonetheless, there are concerns of the complications that may result from the support by international actors, which could complicate coordination as a result of increased competition for scarce resources by nations.[54] While encouraging, certain recent measures related to the acquisition of naval assets across the Gulf of Guinea countries, international naval trainings, naval patrols, and a whole-up community approach is undoubtedly supporting regional collaborative efforts and intelligence sharing among nations and demonstrates successes for regional cooperation and collaborations with positive outcomes for the Yaoundé accord despite some challenges. The socioeconomic reality prevalent in the coastal communities remains most prevalent, hence their easy recruitment into piracy activities.[55]

The underlying challenges, including issues of special funding, will significantly affect the Yaoundé accord's implementation. This issue of maritime security funds brings to the fore the realization that until such a feat is achieved, as done in the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea countries may not be able to defend their interests, and the prevailing security situation will continue.[56] Although the 2016 Lomé Charter emphasized fishing and the blue economy, including issues of human security, it can be argued that it failed to harness the consensus of the region.[57] It further failed to initiate discussion on issues on human migration and smuggling, thereby neglecting other maritime crimes, but most importantly several countries failed to sign the charter.[58] Therefore, it is plausible to note that the lack of political action in Angola, in particular, led to the ineffective progress in Zone A, while the challenges of funding contributed to the slow progress affecting the center in Yaoundé Zone E, also leading to its closure.[59] Nevertheless, collaboration already exists between zones but needs to be complemented by regular combined sea patrols and exercises, while at the same time allowing the principle of hot pursuit across international maritime boundaries. Further to this, the region is witnessing an increase in naval cooperative engagements. In 2018, the CNS of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and the High Chief of Niger Gendarmerie signed a memorandum of understanding for joint patrols. This was operationalized through Operation Safe Maritime Domain 2021 with the funding support of UNODC, which expected to greatly address the threat of piracy and sea robbery, including other maritime related crimes, across the Nigerian maritime corridor.[60] The joint collaboration is being coordinated by the Multilateral Maritime Coordination Centre Zone E. It is plausible to say, conclusively, that the various regional maritime security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea have considerably made commendable gains. This is evident in the continuous drop in the cases of piracy particularly and other maritime crimes in general over the past few years. For instance, the International Maritime Bureau's latest global report for the second quarter of 2022 reveals that of the 58 piracy incidents, only 12 were reported in the Gulf of Guinea. This shows that there is a remarkable improvement on the maritime security governance in the region.[61]

VI. International Response
Efforts and Architecture

Multilateral bodies and external partners have also played, and are still playing, a very important role in response to the maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea because maritime security has become a new priority area of international policy. Beyond

the Gulf of Guinea, foreign governments have increasingly provided the needed training and expanded multinational exercises. While intergovernmental organizations such as the UNODC and IMO have assisted with capacity building and legislation that ensures alleged pirates can be tried for their crimes, the private sector has also contributed new tools for MDA, developed best management practices for vessels operating in the Gulf of Guinea, and improved the security of vessels operating in high-risk areas.[62]

Consequently, the G7 countries issued a declaration on maritime security in 2015 where they emphasized that a "sound and secure maritime domain" is invaluable in order to preserve peace, enhance international security and stability, feed billions of people, foster human development, generate economic growth and prosperity, secure the energy supply, and preserve ecological diversity and coastal livelihoods.[63] In the same light, the Security Council adopted resolutions on the need for an all-inclusive plan among states affected to effectively address the problem. Through the Council of the European Union (EU), in March 2015, there was adoption of the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015–2020, outlining the EU's strategy in assisting the region in combating maritime insecurity. Through this plan, there will be the provision of support at both regional and national levels toward the ongoing attempts of ECOWAS, ECCAS, the GGC and all signatories of the Yaoundé Declaration. The EU anticipates that the execution of this blueprint will bolster intra-regional synergy and increase the level of direction among the EU, its member states, and global allies. Thus, the status of the plan states that the Council "stands ready to assist West and Central African coastal states to achieve long lasting prosperity through an integrated and cross-sectorial approach, linking the importance of good governance, the rule of law, and the development of the maritime domain to enable greater trade cooperation, and job creation for the countries in the region."[64] It is important to note that the EU is already implementing activities such as:

1. CRIMGO (Critical Maritime Route for the Gulf of Guinea): This began in 2013 with the aim of enhancing information sharing, the provision of training and support cooperation at the regional level.
2. SEACOP: known as the Seaport Cooperation Project, aimed at building interagency intelligence and control units to control suspected shipments and boost unlawful trafficking through sea routes.
3. WAPIS: West Africa Police Information System, the purpose of which is to arrange national and regional databases to gather police information.
4. Support to the Maritime Transport Sector in Africa Program: three projects focusing on West and Central Africa on maritime safety, port effectiveness, and control, as well as diverse activities targeting IUU fishing to mention a few.[65] Whether this initiative has effectively achieved its set objectives after 2020, measured through the indicators of enhanced maritime security and sustainable blue economy development, remains debatable.

Maritime security capacity building is a growing field of international activity. It suffices to state succinctly that the Gulf of Guinea has also witnessed several international interventions geared toward building the capacity of its maritime forces.[66] For instance, the international response galvanizing naval forces from the United States, Europe, South America and Africa in a multinational maritime exercise known as Exercise Obangame Express aims to improve tactical expertise and cooperation among West and Central

African nations in order to enhance those maritime forces' ability to deter maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea.[67] Exercise Obangame and Saharan Express were marked specially for the first time, combining the forces in a particular geographical location to increase capacity building for more partners across West Africa and to improve interoperability.[68] Other international responses include G7++FOGG, which is made up of Portugal, Spain and the UK, and was created in 2012 to improve coordination between global cohorts on capacity building initiatives and to avoid repetition of actions in developing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. The French government, with a huge interest in the region, implemented a cooperation program in 2011 known as ASECMAR to support reforms in the region through state action at sea initiatives to help develop interagency and intergovernmental approaches to maritime policy and security.[69]

Furthermore, the United States' interests in the Gulf of Guinea, arguably, are seen to be majorly driven by oil reserves.[70] This calls into question the rationale for many of its numerous intervention programs in the region. For instance, the establishment of AFRICOM—that is, implementing initiatives such as African Partnership Station (building of national and regional initiatives), Obangame Express as mentioned earlier (conducted by naval forces of Africa and improving cooperation), Saharan Express (through U.S. naval forces at the coast of Dakar to enhance states' ability in monitoring their maritime domain) and the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP)—aimed at helping allies to build maritime security capabilities, the improvement of their maritime environment and support in their enforcement of laws and treaties are argued to best serve American strategic interests in the region. This argument can be further corroborated with the operationalization of these approaches and initiatives which are widely different from the physical commitments in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, where military ships are committed to the protection of the maritime corridor and has evidently reduced piracy to a minimum.

The combination of these initiatives includes non-governmental and private players and the prolonged gathering of capability, gains and resources from a national and regional perspective through smart maritime management, anchored in an understanding of the key role the players have, to be understood to avoid multiplicity and promote understanding.[71] It is therefore pertinent to state that beyond the skepticism of international actors and or capacity-building interventions serving naïve strategic interests of Gulf of Guinea states benefactors, the region's states must take effective measures to improve the security of its maritime domain through promoting coordination like information sharing, the provision of enhanced training and capacity building, harmonization of national legislation, and the creation of national maritime coordination agencies.[72] It is important to highlight increased naval diplomacy and cooperative visits and exercises. For instance, the conduct of Exercise Obangame Express 2022, African Grana Nemo, as well as the international flag visits of the Brazilian Navy Ship *Independencia*, Her Majesty Ship *Trent* and Her Majesty Canadian Ship *Goosebay/Moncton* in 2021 lay credence to this assertion.

VII. Conclusion

The Gulf of Guinea is inarguably one of the most strategic maritime zones of the world. It is conceivably so because of the vast maritime space, which covers over 6,000

kilometers of seascape laden with abundant reserves of hydrocarbon energy resources, making it a major global energy shipping route and future supplier of global energy. The region also plays host to some of the world's most treasured marine resources and lies, geo-strategically, as a simple important route for global shipping, trade and commerce. These enormous advantages, however, come with a litany of security challenges. In recent years, there has been a worrying surge in acts of piracy, attacks against ships and other nefarious forms of organized crime in the Gulf of Guinea.[73] In response to these heinous maritime security threats, States in the region, through national, regional, continental and international efforts, have developed several maritime security regimes poised to enhance maritime capabilities of naval forces and other maritime stakeholders for robust and effective maritime defense, security, and sustainable blue economy development. It is to be noted, however, that in spite of these laudable measures, the problems have shown limited signs of abatement. This aptly shows that maritime security in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea requires proactive measures that are potent and supported by a strong balanced naval fleet as well as an integral shore-based maritime air power. To achieve this there is need to fully integrate a supportive and effective Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) infrastructure, which would ensure the strengthening of the strategic and operational capabilities of the Nigerian Navy and other maritime law enforcement agencies.[74]

This paper identified the major gaps, such as regional distrust leading to lack of cooperation among members and seeming lack of coordination due to the multiplicity of actors, thereby making the work disjointed and incoherent from the perspective of different players. Also, the multiplicity of partners makes domestic ownership of the activities stressful and complex. Another issue of significant concern is the presence of programs and blueprints already being implemented or in a planning phase that would seem to suggest similar goals, with the corresponding risk of doubling overlap. To correct this, the Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, a G7 plan, was arranged to coordinate the different efforts.

Furthermore, the failure of some States in the region to take responsibility for its maritime security aptly explains the funding challenges confronted by both ECCAS and ECOWAS, and the regional coordination center CRESMAC is confronted with so many logistics challenges and thus is seldom operational, with a manifest lack of sustained patrol in zones A and B.[75] Nevertheless, there are inspiring traces of progress; like out of the 16 planned coordination centers, ten have been established and are currently operational.[76] On improving information sharing and coordination, there is still much to be done to achieve this strategic regional initiative fully, but so far credible milestones mark an important step forward. Pertinently, the greatest challenge confronting this region is the transformation of initiatives and strategies into concrete decisive actions at the operational and tactical level while synchronizing the duplication of processes and initiatives. There is no doubt that there is a significant gap between the proposals that are signed and adopted, and their implementations and actions as displayed in the Lomé Charter, which show a growing crack of regional distrust. For instance, the actions of some critical players such as Cameroon and Senegal, which were contrary to the decision of other members on the charter, is a case in evidence. Therefore, the inability of the region to achieve collective cooperation shows the fundamental regional gap of collaborative efforts and as such brings to fore that cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea could better be achieved at smaller regional levels rather than an expanded caucus, as was exploited by Nigeria and Benin during Operation

Prosperity and the recent Joint Maritime Border Patrols being finalized by a technical committee between Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, as well as the operationalization of the Memorandum of Understanding between the four countries of Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Niger through the activation of Operation Safe Maritime Domain with the funding support of the UNODC.

Conclusively, it is pertinent to state that for effective maritime security governance in the Gulf of Guinea, concerted efforts by all States and stakeholders must be robustly cooperative at both strategic, operational and tactical levels of security management. Because of the incapacities of some of the Gulf of Guinea States' navies, there is a profound need for joint maritime patrols as well as the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Task Force as recently advocated by the Nigerian chief of naval staff at the 2022 International Maritime Security Conference in South Africa. Further, as aptly opined by Morcos, to effectively combat maritime security threats, there is an absolute need for advanced technology acquisition by States in the Gulf of Guinea and relevant actors as well as capacity development of personnel.[77] However, though these infrastructures are very expensive, considering the paucity funds available to most Gulf of Guinea States, there is a need, therefore, to galvanize global and multilateral financial support to fund advance technology equipment. At the moment, the plethora of maritime security regimes are overlapping and parallel, making it complex for coordination and target-driven strategy. Hence, there is need for effective harmonization of the diverse security architecture at both individual state levels and the regional level that have over time become counterproductive rather than complementary. To this end, the Harmonised Standard Operating Procedure currently operated by Nigeria and the Maritime Strategy operated by Senegal to streamline maritime law enforcement agencies become veritable strategic tools that should be adopted by other Gulf of Guinea States. While countries like Nigeria can be commended for the formulation of maritime law, there is still the need for other states to enact and domesticate such laws within the framework of global maritime convention. There should also be robust commitment and political will by leaders of the region to drive the imperative of security at both diplomatic and strategic levels. These efforts among others will, no doubt, bring about viable and sustainable maritime security governance in the Gulf of Guinea.

Notes

1. C. Ukeje and W. M. Ela, *African Approaches to Maritime Security: The Gulf of Guinea* (Abuja, Nigeria: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2013); E. Egede, *Balancing Geopolitical Economic and Geostrategic Interests in Maritime Security Initiative in the Gulf of Guinea—Way forward: The 3 Cs.* Paper presented at the Global Maritime Security Conference, Abuja, Nigeria, 2019.

2. R. Gilpin, "Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea," *Strategic Insights* 6(1) (2007), pp. 1–14.

3. D. Hassan D. and S. Hasan, "Effectiveness of the Current Regimes to Combat Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: An Evaluation," *African Journal of Legal Studies* 10 (2017), pp. 35–65, https://doi.org/10.1163/17087384-12340014.

4. G.L. Denton and J.R. Harris, "Maritime Piracy, Military Capacity, and Institutions in the Gulf of Guinea," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2019), pp. 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1659783.

5. Gilpin 2007.

6. C. Bell, "Pirates of the Gulf of Guinea: A Cost Analysis for Coastal States," *Stable Seas Report*, 2021.

7. Egede, 2019; Hassan and Hasan 2017.

8. C. Katsouraikis and A. Sayne, "Nigeria's Criminal Crude International Options to Combat the Export of Stolen Oil," *Chatham House Report*. London, United Kingdom: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2013; N. Okai, "Security Consolidation in the Gulf of Guinea: The Need to Engage AFRICOM Better Through the SECLOMTS Model," *International Affairs and Global Strategy* 20 (2014), pp. 12–16; A. Osinowo, "Combating Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, April 2015, http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ASB30EN-Combating-Piracy-in-the-Gulf-of-Guinea.pdf, accessed May 10, 2023; Okafor Yarwoodi, "The Effects of Oil Pollution on the Marine Environment in the Gulf of Guinea—The Bonga Oil Field Example," *Transnational Legal Theory* 9(3–4) (2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/20414005.2018.1562287.

9. D. Broohm, "Maritime Security Governance: A New Strategy Management to Avoid Piracy in the GOG and Its Legal Guarantee," *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 8(10) (2021), pp. 405–437, https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.810.11138.

10. I. Garba, "Ocean Governance and Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea," *The Maritime Executive,* August 2, 2020, https://maritime-executive.com/editorials/ocean-governance-and-maritime-security-in-the-gulf-of-guinea, accessed May 10, 2023

11. A. Ebo'o, "The Challenges of Governance in the Gulf of Guinea," *ENACT*, February 6, 2019, https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/the-challenge-of-governance-in-the-gulf-of-guinea, accessed May 10, 2023.

12. P. Morcos, "A Transatlantic Approach to Address Growing Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, February 1, 2021, https://www.csis.org/analysis/transatlantic-approach-address-growing-maritime-insecurity-gulf-guinea, accessed May 10, 2023.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

14. Fru Norbert Suh I, "Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG): Reinventing the Past to Explain the Origin and Development of Maritime Insecurity," *The Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies* 4(2) (2017), p. 32.

15. M. Murphy, "Petro-Piracy: Oil and Troubled Waters," *Orbis* 57(3) (2013), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2013.05.011; K. Ali, "Maritime Security Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea: Prospects and Challenges," *Naval War College Review* 69(3) (2015), pp. 143–46, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004301047.

16. D.F. Mathew, "Securing the Gulf: Towards an Integrated Maritime Security Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea," World Maritime University Dissertations, 2012, p. 46, https://commons.wmu.se/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=all_dissertations, accessed June 20, 2023; F.N. Ajeagah, "Combating Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: Understanding the Challenges of the Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Security," *Technical Report*, Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2022, p. 63, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/trecms/pdf/AD1200351.pdf, accessed June 20, 2023; U.J. Orji, "Tackling Piracy and Other Illegal Activities in Nigerian Waters," *Journal of Defense Resources Managemen*t 4(2) (2013), OneFile, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A356354318/AONE?u=anon~ee41939&sid=googleScholar&xid=33780496, accessed August 27, 2022; M. Fiorelli, "Piracy in Africa: The Case of the Gulf of Guinea," *KAIPTC Occasional Paper* 37, 2014, https://www.kaiptc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/New%20folder/FiorelliM.2014-piracy-in-africa-the-case-of-the-gulf-of-guinea.pdf, accessed May 10, 2023.

17. B. Buzan and O. Weaver, *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 53, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491252.

18. Hassan and Hasan 2017; D. Guilfoyle, "The Laws of War and the Fight Against Somali Piracy: Combatants or Criminals," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 11(3) (2010), pp. 141–153.

19. S. Enoch, "Maritime Domain Awareness as Prerequisite for Curbing Smuggling Activities in Nigeria's Maritime Environment," Paper presented at the Nigerian Naval War College, Course Four Termed Lecture Series, Calabar, 2020, p. 8.

20. A. Osinowo, "Combating Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies,* April 2015, http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ASB30EN-Combating-Piracy-in-the-Gulf-of-Guinea.pdf, accessed May 10, 2023.

21. Godwin Oritse, "NIMASA Builds Satellite Surveillance Centre to Tackle Pirates," *Vanguard,* July 25, 2014, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/07/nimasa-builds-satellite-surveillance-centre-tackle-pirates-2/ accessed May 10, 2023.

22. Osinowo 2015, p. 2.

23. John J. Pitney and John-Clark Levin, *Private Anti-Piracy Navies: How Warships for Hire Are Changing Maritime Security* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014).

24. O. Dauda, "NIMASA Acquires Equipment to Fight Oil Theft and Piracy," *The Nation*, August

26, 2014, https://thenationonlineng.net/nimasa-acquires-equipment-to-fight-oil-theft-piracy/, accessed May 10, 2023; A. Bamidele, "An Overview of Nigerian Navy Maritime Domain Awareness Capability," Lecture delivered at Armed Forces Command and Staff College, Jaji-Kaduna, Nigeria, 2017; A.M. Idu, "Maritime Domain Awareness: The Nigerian Navy in Perspective," Paper presented at the 2018 Maritime Domain Awareness Training in Calabar, Nigeria, 2018.

25. Dauda 2014; Bamidele 2017; Idu 2018.

26. Enoch 2020, pp. 12–13.

27. F. Akpan, "Surveillance Technology and Maritime Security," Inaugural lecture at NNS QUORRA, Apapa, Lagos, 2015.

28. T. Dick, "Maritime Domain Awareness and National Security: Challenges and Prospects for the Nigerian Navy," Abuja: National Defence College, 2011; D.J. Ezeoba, "Opening Remarks at the First Regional Maritime Awareness Capability," Conference Tinapa Calabar, Nigeria, 2013.

29. Agada Solomon, Director of Training and Operations Branch, "TOPS Briefing," Naval Headquarters, Nigeria, 2022.

30. A.Z. Gambo, "Maritime Security and National Development: The Nigerian Navy Experience and Future Perspectives, " Lecture delivered to participants of National Defence College, Nigeria, 2022.

31. E. Egobiambu, "Oil Theft: Figures Being Bandied Are Impractical, Says Chief of Naval Staff," *Channel Television News*, 2022, CNS Interview, https://www.channelstv.com/2022/08/28/oil-theft-figures-being-bandied-are-impractical-says-chief-of-naval-staff/, accessed May 10, 2023.

32. S. Odita, "Nigerian Court Jails 10 Pirates for Highjack of Chinese Vessel," *The Guardian,* July 23, 2021, https://guardian.ng/news/nigerian-court-jails-10-pirates-for-hijack-of-chinese-vessel/, accessed May 10, 2023.

33. Hassan and Hasan 2017, p. 37.

34. Ukeje and Ela 2013, p. 23.

35. Osinowo 2015, p. 7.

36. W.O. Kayoda, "Nigeria's Maritime Resources Protection: Integrated Approach for the Armed Forces," National Defense College, Bangladesh, 2013, https://ndcjournal.ndc.gov.bd/ndcj/index.php/ndcj/article/download/97/87/175, accessed June 18, 2023.

37. M. Ndiaye, "Workshop: Fight Against Piracy in COMHAFAT Zone," Senegal Presentation, 2020.

38. *Ibid.*

39. J. Bourgeois, Naval Infantry Leader Symposium—Africa, *AFRICOM*, 2022.

40. K.H. Delano, "The Gulf of Guinea and Its Strategic Point: How Nigeria Will Bridge American and African Cooperation," Thesis, AIR University, 2009.

41. Ndiaye 2020.

42. Hassan and Hasan 2017, p. 38.

43. Ukeje and Ela 2013.

44. Hassan and Hasan 2017.

45. T. Vircoulon and V. Tournier, "Gulf of Guinea: A Regional Solution to Piracy?," *International Crisis Group*, September 4, 2014, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/gulf-guinea-regional-solution-piracy, accessed August 29, 2022.

46. C. Glock, "How to Fight Growing Piracy in West Africa," December 14, 2016, https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/20698/how-to-fight-growing-piracy-in-west-africa, accessed May 10, 2023.

47. K.D. Ali, *Maritime Security Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea* (Leiden, NV: Konninklijke Brill, 2015), p. 228.

48. Egede 2019.

49. *Ibid*., p. 3; C. Bueger and T. Edmund, "Beyond Sea Blindness: A New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies," *International Affairs* 93(6) (2017), pp. 1293–1311

50. Ali, *Maritime Security Cooperation* 2017, p. 229.

51. Hassan and Hasan 2017, p. 39.

52. Ali, *Maritime Security Cooperation* 2017, p. 229.

53. Egede 2019, p. 2.

54. Hassan and Hasan 2017.

55. K. Ifesinachi and C. Nwagwu, "Implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea," *Journal of Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 5(21), pp. 54–64.

56. T. Walker and B. Blede, "The Lomé Charter Can Boost Africa's Blue Economies, but States Must Implement Its Provisions," *Institute for Security Studies* (2016), p. 3, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/fulfilling-the-promise-of-the-lome-maritime-summit; Glock 2016.

57. A. Vines, "Trust and Maritime Crime in Africa," *Chatham House*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2017.

58. Walker and Blede, p. 5.

59. Vines 2017.

60. Gambo 2022.

61. ICC Commercial Crimes Service, "Global Piracy and Armed Robbery Incidents at Lowest Level in Decades," July 12, 2022, https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/1320-global-piracy-and-armed-robbery-incidents-at-lowest-level-in-decades, accessed May 10, 2023.

62. Bell 2021.

63. C. Bueger, T. Edmund and R. McCabe, "Into the Sea: Capacity-Building Innovations and the Maritime Security Challenge," *Third World Quarterly* 41(2) (2020), pp. 228–246, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1660632.

64. E. Lopez-Lucia "Fragility, Violence and Criminality in the Gulf of Guinea," *GSDRC* 2015, https://gsdrc.org/publications/fragility-violence-and-criminality-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/, accessed May 10, 2023.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Bueger, Edmund and McCabe 2020.

67. J.A. Osei-tutu, "The Wealth Within, the Wealth Unseen: Reflections on the Gulf of Guinea's Maritime Domain," *South African Institute of International Affairs, Occasional Paper 225*, January 2016, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep25895.pdf, accessed June 18, 2023.

68. "Exercise Obangame/Saharan Express 2016 Commences," *AfriCom*, March 20, 2016, https://www.africom.mil/article/28060/exercise-obangame-saharan-express-2016-commences, accessed May 10, 2023.

69. Blede and Diof 2016, pp. 1–21; Glock 2016.

70. Blede and Diof, 2016, pp. 1–2.

71. Ukeje and Ela 2013, pp. 21–26. F. Onuoha, "Piracy and Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Trends, Concerns, and Propositions," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4(3) (2013), pp. 267–293, https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2013.862767.

72. IUU Watch, "European Union's Long-Distance Advisory Council Publishes Opinion on Implementation of the EU Regulation to COMBAT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED and Unregulated," *(IUU) Fishing Coalition*, December 13, 2016, http://www.iuuwatch.eu/2016/12/european-unions-long-distance-advisory-council-publishes-opinion-implementation-eu-regulation-combat-illegal-unreported-unregulated-iuu-fishing/, accessed May 10, 2023.

73. Hassan and Hasan 2017, p. 64.

74. National Security Strategy, 2019, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

75. UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport* (New York: United Nations, 2014).

76. Pitney and Levin 2014.

77. Morcos 2021.

Biographical Statement

Adam Mohammed is the Squadron Commander of the Western Fleet Counter Piracy Squadron (Fast Patrol Craft) and Commanding Officer of Nigerian Navy Ship *Ekulu*. He was part of the Nigerian expert committee that formulated the National Security Strategy 2019 and the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2021. He is a member of the Centre for Leadership Engagement, Coventry University, United Kingdom, and is also an associate member of Corbett Centre of Maritime Security Policy, Kings College, as well as an alumni member of the African Centre for Strategic Studies, U.S., and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Switzerland. He has also served at the Office of the National Security Adviser, Nigeria, as a Principal Staff Officer. The opinions expressed in this paper are that of the author and do not represent the position of any office or institution in Nigeria.