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Research report

Forum: Security Council

Issue: Combating maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea:
        enhancing maritime security and cooperation

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Introduction

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Maritime piracy within the Gulf of Guinea is an ongoing threat to international shipping routes, regional security, and coastal economies. The Gulf of Guinea is known as the world's most hazardous maritime region and since the 2000s, it has witnessed an alarming escalation in piracy incidents. These are characterised by hostage-taking, robbery and violence. Not only does this jeopardise the safety of maritime personnel but also disrupts the global supply and trade chains.

In recognition of this alarming escalation, the Security Council is called upon to increase international efforts to enhance maritime security and encourage cooperation among the states in the Gulf of Guinea. This research report aims to examine the issue and events leading up to it and to assist in synthesising comprehensive strategies to mitigate the threats faced.

As the president guiding this session, the objective is to facilitate a comprehensive debate that leads to well-developed solutions and actionable resolutions. Delegates are encouraged to work collaboratively towards sustainable solutions that solve the issue while simultaneously prioritising the safety and well-being of affected communities and considering broader international communities indirectly affected.

This session presents a pivotal opportunity for the Security Council to declare its commitment to international peace and security by addressing and hopefully solving one of the most important maritime challenges of our time.

Key Terms

1. **Maritime Piracy**: Any illegal acts of violence, robbery, vandalisation, or detention committed for private reasons by the crew or passengers of a private ship or aircraft.
2. **Gulf of Guinea**: Part of the Atlantic Ocean reaching the West African coast, defined as the intersection of the Equator and the Prime Meridian.
3. **Maritime Security**: Refers to the protection of any vessels internally and externally.
4. **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**: An area of sea where a sovereign state has special rules regarding exploration and the use of marine resources.
5. **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**: An agency of the United Nations that regulates global shipping.
6. **Regional Cooperation**: When countries within a geographical range work together to strengthen common interests yet promote their national interests.

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7. **Naval Patrols**: Agencies or troops monitoring certain areas of water and keeping them secure.

8. **Legal Frameworks**: A comprehensive legal system that sets rules and regulations within a certain jurisdiction.

9. **Transnational Crime**: Crimes that cross national borders or involve groups that operate within one or more areas/countries.

General Overview

Overview

The Gulf of Guinea, a vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean on the border of multiple West and Central African nations, has been labelled as one of the world's most critical hotspots for maritime piracy. This region has a pivotal role in international trade routes, is rich in oil and gas, and is a popular ground for fishing. This makes the region important to the wider community, making piracy a global issue.

Current Challenges

Maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a complex arrangement of criminal activity. This includes kidnapping of crew for ransom, hijacking ships, theft of cargo and armed robbery. Not only does this threaten the safety of maritime personnel, but it also leads to significant losses of resources, economic hardships for involved countries, and disruptions to shipping routes. Piracy in these areas is conducted by well-coordinated and heavily armed people, exploiting the region's vast coastline and jurisdictional complexities between countries to evade capture.

Debate Surrounding the Issue

The issue of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea involves a variety of debates. One of the key discussions focuses on the differences between regional and international solutions and their effectiveness on the balance between military and developmental approaches to solve root causes such as poverty. Legal challenges express the need for

efficient legal frameworks to prosecute pirates effectively. Yet, most importantly, the safety of sailors is the biggest concern.

Global Implications of the Issue

Maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is globally significant due to its impact on international shipping and trade, more specifically oil and gas. Piracy disturbs international trade routes, leading to increasing shipping costs and potential unpredictability in global energy markets. Piracy threatens the safety of sailors, highlighting challenges in maritime governance and security. Piracy destabilises the regions surrounding the gulf, hindering economic growth and contributing to political instability. Addressing this issue requires international cooperation between nations to enhance maritime security and promote sustainable development within the Gulf of Guinea and beyond.

Major Parties Involved

1. **Nigeria**: Nigeria is a significant portion of the Gulf of Guinea coastline. Nigeria is one of the largest oil exporters, primarily through the ocean making it the epicenter of many piracy incidents.
2. **Ghana**: Ghana has become more at risk of maritime piracy recently. The water on the shore of Ghana used to be considered low risk until recently.
3. **Guinea**: Last year, the highest amount of hostage situations involved in piracy crimes happened in Guinea, being 23/43.

Regional and International Organizations Involved:

- **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** and **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**: Both organisations are regional, with the mission of stopping terrorism in the area. Both organisations have focused on the piracy threats in the Gulf of Guinea.
- **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**: The IMO is a specialised UN agency that works to protect marine vessels yet also enforcing policies to prevent any law breaks.

- **European Union (EU)** and **United States**: The European Union owns and controls multiple organisations focused on solving the issue at hand such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL, and the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC).

Timeline of Key Events:

Before researching piracy, it is important to note that it has been going on for a while. Yet, piracy has made the most impact in the Gulf of Guinea since the 2010s when piracy shifted its attention off Somalia.

Yaoundé Code of Conduct (June 2013):

> Agreement signed by 25 West and Central African countries to establish a framework for cooperation to combat piracy.

Establishment of the Interregional Coordination Center (ICC):

> An organisation aiming to coordinate efforts of multiple organisations such as ECOWAS and ECCAS to fight piracy.

Gulf of Guinea Declaration on Suppression of Piracy (June 2021):

> A declaration urging governments to prioritise the suppression of piracy and to commit to sustainable solutions.

UN Involvement and Other Involvement

- · United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982)
- · International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- · Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) (1988)
- · Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa (Yaoundé Code of Conduct, 2013)
- · United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- · United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Resolutions:
- · Resolution 2018 (2011)
- · Resolution 2039 (2012)

· Resolution 2071 (2012)
· Resolution 2125 (2013)
· Resolution 2349 (2017)

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

Resolution 2018 (2011):
This resolution is one of the first to primarily focus on the issues within the Gulf of Guinea, specifically piracy. The resolution encourages states in the area to work together to develop a strong anti-piracy strategy. It also specifically mentions the organisations ECOWAS and ECCAS using their strategies and findings as legal framework states should work within.

Resolution 2039 (2012):
Building on Resolution 2018, Resolution 2039 calls for the legal framework and counter-piracy strategy to be developed within the involved states. What makes this resolution different from the former one, is its focus on wider support from international member states of the UN. The resolution encourages support from both neighbouring countries surrounding the Gulf of Guinea and further member states all over the world.

Resolution 2071 (2012):
Just like resolution 2018, this resolution touches upon the organisations ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, urging them to enhance their cooperation and operational efforts to combat piracy. It highlights the necessity of appropriate prosecution of those engaged in piracy.

International Organisations

· **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**:
The IMO is a specialised agency of the United Nations that is responsible for the security and safety of shipping and the prevention of pollution both of the air and the ocean by ships. The IMO is there to provide technical assistance, guidance and a legal framework to combat maritime piracy and enhance security globally, specifically in the Gulf of Guinea.

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· **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**:

The UNODC is a UN organisation that provides various types of support to Member States in order to create solutions. Therefore, this organisation is currently providing legal and technical assistance to ensure the prosecution and imprisonment of maritime criminals.

· **Interpol**:

Run by the Secretary-General, Interpol supports its member countries by offering investigative and expert support to keep all countries safe. Interpol tackles piracy through intelligence sharing, capacity building, and coordination of operations. Interpol works to track and apprehend pirates, facilitating the flow of information among neighbouring countries affected by piracy.

· **Gulf of Guinea Commission**:

Established by the countries in the region, this commission aims to foster cooperation between countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea to defend their common interest and promote peace. The commission is devoted to making the area surrounding the Gulf of Guinea a zone of peace and security.

· **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

ECOWAS is a commission created to promote economic integration across the region. Due to the high amounts of trade in the region, the commission aims to bring the unions together to form one strong trading bloc. Piracy is a major setback to this plan, affecting the organisation. ECOWAS works hard together with its 15 member states to fight piracy to the best of its ability.

· **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**:

The Community of Central African States aims to promote cooperation between the neighbouring states. It aims to collaborate on security, economic, political, financial, social, cultural, scientific and technical issues to make the region a safer place. Through many joint strategies, the Community plays a significant role in combating piracy.

· **Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA)**:

The mission of the organisation, formerly known as the Ministerial Conference of West and Central African States on Maritime Transport (MINCONMAR), is to provide information and support to prevent the loss of human lives at sea and create a safe environment for the African states in the area. Focused on maritime safety, MOWCA promotes cooperation and hopes to bring peace.

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Possible Solutions

· **Enhancing Maritime Security**:

Maritime security is a pivotal solution to piracy, decreasing how many opportunities pirates receive to board ships and steal resources. Using advanced surveillance technology can deter piracy and improve not just criminal activity but also the level of monitoring. This approach can help detect suspicious activity from both land and sea in turn increasing reaction time.

· **Regional Cooperation and Coordination**:

Such as ECOWAS and ECCAS aim to facilitate, nations in the region must cooperate to solve the issue. Coordinating motives and sharing intelligence and resources could unify the region, increase response time and fight piracy.

· **International Support and Funding**:

Encouraging the rest of the world to aid countries along the Gulf of Guinea supports external motives due to piracy affecting international countries and helps combat it. Aid can include a share of resources, information, technology and security to make the region safer. International support would influence countries to become allies with each other and nurture bonds for future strong relationships.

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Appendix

[Live Piracy Map (icc-ccs.org)](icc-ccs.org)