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Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Lessons Learned from the Indian Ocean

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INTRODUCTION

Piracy emanating from Somalia has dominated maritime security concerns of policy-makers worldwide for the past five years. Sporadic attacks on commercial vessels have occurred close to the coast of Somalia for more than a decade, but in 2008 concerns for the security of the busy shipping routes running across the Indian Ocean and through the Gulf of Aden grew, as the number of successful hijackings, the scope of the pirates' area of operation and the amount demanded in ransom payments rose dramatically.

The year 2008 also marked the start of concerted and wide-ranging international efforts to counter Somali piracy, and the effects of these initiatives are now evident: in May 2013 UN officials noted that there had been no successful hijacking in the Indian Ocean for a year.¹

International attention is now shifting to the insecurity of waters off Africa's west coast.² The Gulf of Guinea – the coastal zone stretching from Senegal to Angola – provides an economic lifeline to coastal and landlocked West African countries, and is of strategic importance to the rest of the world. Safe passage to ports in the region and security within its waters are vital for global energy production, as Nigeria and Angola are among the world's 10 biggest crude oil exporters; for West Africa's fishing industry, which provides sustenance and employment for a large swathe of the West African population; and for the prevention of the trafficking of narcotics, people and weapons into Europe and into fragile regions that are vulnerable to destabilization. In June 2013 the annual Human Cost of Maritime Piracy report noted that more seafarers were attacked in West African waters than off Somalia's coast in 2012.³

Although maritime organizations, most notably the International Maritime Organization (IMO), have followed the situation in the Gulf of Guinea for years, the UN placed a central focus on the issue following appeals from the president of Benin for assistance in combating maritime crime and drug-trafficking. In response to the UN Security Council's adoption, in February 2012,⁴ of Resolution 2039, which urged states of the region to counter piracy at regional and national levels, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) have convened joint meetings to draft a regional strategy. Documents drafted at these meetings were endorsed at a summit of heads of state and government of Central and West Africa in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June 2013.

UN Security Council Resolution 2039 also calls on international partners to provide support for regional efforts. Countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, France and Spain have contributed to bilateral partnerships. The EU is soon to release its strategy for the Gulf of Guinea, and INTERPOL and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have included Gulf of Guinea piracy in their analyses of organized crime in West Africa. This international attention acknowledges that, like Somali piracy, maritime threats in West Africa exist as a component of transnational crime and have an impact far beyond the immediate region.

There are a number of critical differences between maritime insecurity off Africa's east and west coasts, but the Gulf of Guinea's littoral states and stakeholders further afield can draw valuable lessons from the experience of combating Somali piracy to help shape their responses to West Africa's maritime threats.

1 However, on 5 June 2013 Somali pirates did successfully hijack an Indian-flagged dhow and its 14 crew members near Somalia's northern coast. The dhow was abandoned by the pirates following intervention by EU naval forces. See 'Indian Sailors Safe After EU NAVFOR Warship HSwMS Carlskrona Forces Pirates To Abandon Attack on Cargo Vessel', EU NAVFOR, 6 June 2013, <http://eunavfor.eu/indian-sailors-safe-after-eu-navfor-warship-hswms-carlskrona-forces-pirates-to-abandon-attack-on-cargo-vessel/>.

2 Chatham House has conducted research on West African maritime security in Angola, Nigeria and Ghana since 2012. For more information see *Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea*, Chatham House Conference Report, March 2013 and *Angola and the Gulf of Guinea: Towards an Integrated Maritime Strategy*, Conference Report, November 2012, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/0312confreport_maritimesecurity.pdf.

3 Kaija Hurlburt et al, 'The Human Cost of Maritime Piracy 2012', Oceans Beyond Piracy, June 2013, <http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/sites/default/files/hcop2012forweb.pdf>

4 'Report of the United Nations assessment mission on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (7 to 24 November 2011)', United Nations, 19 January 2012, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/AUUN%20S%202012%2045.pdf>.

Figure 2. Actual and attempted incidents of piracy/armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, 2012



Source: www.ics-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-map

MARITIME THREATS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

While maritime insecurity in the Indian Ocean is dominated by piracy, threats in the Gulf of Guinea manifest in a variety of ways. The territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Nigeria, Benin and Togo are considered areas at greatest risk of the following types of criminality.⁵

- **Piracy and armed robbery at sea**⁶ – Pirate activity in the Gulf of Guinea differs to that in the Indian Ocean. Somali pirates focus on kidnap for ransom, capturing vessels and holding their cargo and crew in order to extract money from a ship-owner. In the Gulf of Guinea pirates launch attacks primarily from Nigeria, with the aim of stealing cargo, equipment or valuables from a vessel and its crew. Kidnapping of crew-members happens, but is rarer than in the Indian Ocean, and so levels of violence are high as Gulf of Guinea pirates are less concerned with maintaining the wellbeing of hostages. Of the 58 incidents of attempted and successful piracy/armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea that were reported to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in 2012, 37 involved the use of firearms.⁷ In the first three months of 2013 15 incidents (including three successful hijackings) were recorded.⁸
- **Theft of oil and other cargo** – Attacks on chemical tankers and vessels carrying refined petroleum are well choreographed, and demonstrate that hijackers have good knowledge of how to operate these specialized vessels, as well as accurate intelligence on ships' locations and the type of cargo they carry. Tankers that are attacked are usually moored or carrying out ship-to-ship transfers at sea, and so are vulnerable to being detected and boarded. Their crew is held while the cargo is transferred to smaller vessels by the hijackers to be resold onshore. It is estimated that 40 per cent of Europe's oil imports, and close to 30 per cent of the United States' imports of petroleum products, must travel through the Gulf of Guinea each year, and security concerns could affect Nigeria's and Angola's exports of crude oil.
- **Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing** – West Africa is one of the world's main locations for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Almost 40 per cent of the fish caught in West African waters is taken illegally.⁹ This fact rarely features heavily in discussions of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, but it is of critical economic significance for West African governments, who collectively lose as much as \$1.5 billion annually because of IUU fishing.¹⁰ It is also of importance to international actors, as illegally caught fish is often destined for EU and Asian markets,¹¹ and there are links between vessels involved in IUU fishing and other forms of organized crime at sea – including drug-smuggling.
- **Trafficking of counterfeit items, people, narcotics and arms** – Many of the busy seaports in the Gulf of Guinea lack sufficient oversight. The apparent capacity can be undermined by corruption, allowing smuggling routes to become established. According to UNODC estimates, 50 tonnes of cocaine, destined for Europe and worth

5 Although less frequent, attacks against commercial vessels have also been recorded in the waters off Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Angola, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congo-Brazzaville in the past three years.

6 In this paper the term 'piracy' refers to the definition as specified by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). 'Armed robbery at sea' refers to acts of violence, hostage-taking and theft that occur within a country's territorial waters, i.e. within 12 nautical miles of its coastline.

7 'Piracy falls in 2012, but seas off East and West Africa remain dangerous, says IMB', International Maritime Bureau, 16 January 2013, <http://www.icc-ccs.org.uk/news/836-piracy-falls-in-2012-but-seas-off-east-and-west-africa-remain-dangerous-says-imb>.

8 'IMB advises continued vigilance as maritime piracy attacks decline', International Maritime Bureau, 15 April 2013, <http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/841-imb-advises-continued-vigilance-as-maritime-piracy-attacks-decline>.

9 *Pirate Fishing Exposed: The Fight Against Illegal Fishing in West Africa and the EU*, Environmental Justice Foundation, 2012, <http://ejfoundation.org/sites/default/files/public/Pirate%20Fishing%20Exposed.pdf>.

10 Copeland, D. 'The Impacts of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in West Africa'. West African Maritime Security and Development conference, Chatham House, Lagos, 20 April 2013.

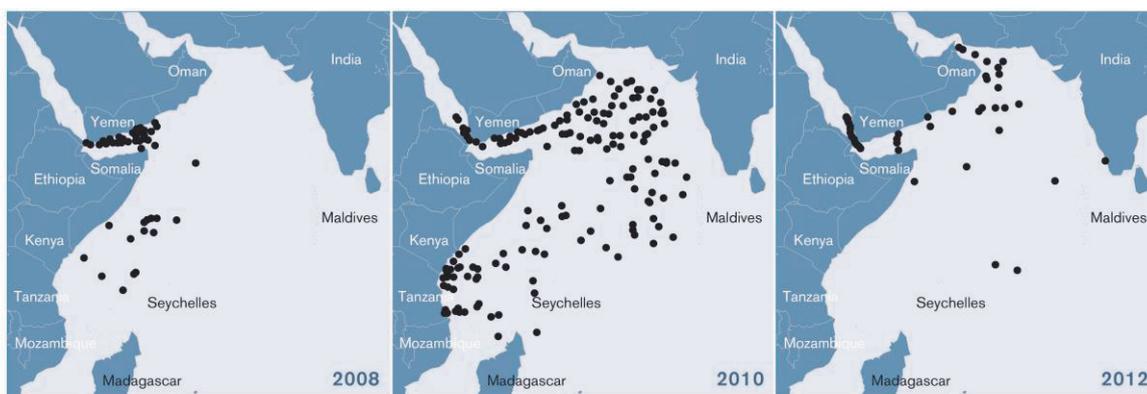
11 'Detective work uncovers under-reported overfishing', *Nature*, 2 April 2013, <http://www.nature.com/news/detective-work-uncovers-under-reported-overfishing-1.12708#b1>.

\$2 billion, transits West Africa annually.¹² The potential destabilizing effect that the transit of illegal goods could have on West African states where incomes are low and law enforcement is not stringent is illustrated by Guinea-Bissau. Often referred to as a 'narco-state', the value of drug flows in this West African country rivals that of its official economy.¹³ In April 2013 a former chief of the Guinea-Bissau navy was arrested by the US authorities for his alleged role as a kingpin of the drugs trade.

REASONS BEHIND THE DECLINE IN SOMALI PIRACY

Recent IMB figures demonstrate that over the past year the amount of pirate activity originating from Somalia has fallen dramatically. There has been a reduction not only in successful hijackings, but also in the number of attempts that pirates are making, indicating that piracy has become a less attractive means of income. In 2011 there were 199 incidents, but by the end of 2012 the number had fallen by almost two-thirds, to 70.¹⁴

Figure 1. Actual and attempted pirate attacks in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, 2008–12.



Source: IMB data.

Four broad factors are responsible for this reduction:

- **The presence of international naval patrols in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, with the remit to disrupt and deter pirate activity.** The EU Naval Force's (EU NAVFOR) Operation Atalanta, NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the US-led Combined Task Force 151 are at the forefront of this naval action, and have been instrumental in increasing collaboration and information-sharing between maritime stakeholders. Successful patrols are also carried out unilaterally – including by the Russian, Chinese and Indian naval forces – particularly within the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (ITRC), to ensure that the busy shipping route through the Gulf of Aden operates securely.
- **The implementation of best management practices (BMP) by the majority of commercial ship-owners with vessels passing through the high-risk area of the Indian Ocean.** These guidelines were formulated by international shipping organizations and navies, and are designed to provide shipping companies and seafarers with advice on how to avoid hijack. It is estimated that ships that use the self-

¹² West Africa Coast Initiative, UN Office of Drugs and Crime, 2013, <http://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/west-africa-coast-initiative.html>.

¹³ O'Regan, D., and Thompson, P. *Advancing Stability and Reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau: Lessons from Africa's First Narco-State*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 2013, <http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/SpecialReport-Guinea-Bissau-JUN2013-EN.pdf>.

¹⁴ 'IMB reports drop in Somali piracy, but warns against complacency', International Maritime Bureau, 22 October 2012, <http://www.icc-ccs.org.uk/news/811-imb-reports-drop-in-somali-piracy-but-warns-against-complacency>.

protection measures outlined in BMP guidelines are four times less likely to be hijacked.¹⁵

- **The presence of private armed security personnel aboard commercial ships.** Although many states were initially reluctant to allow private armed guards on board commercial vessels travelling under their flag, the general attitude to their deployment has shifted, as they are increasingly regarded by the shipping industry and many policy-makers as an effective deterrent.
- **Regional capacity-building**, particularly international support for improvements to the legal systems and prison capacities in east and southern Africa's littoral states, allowing for increased prosecution and imprisonment of convicted pirates.

Combating Somali piracy: the role of international navies

The EU, NATO and US-led naval missions were introduced in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean in 2008–09. The broad aim of these operations is to detect, disrupt and suppress pirate activity launched from Somalia.¹⁶ International naval action has evolved to stay relevant to the changing nature of piracy. Although initial efforts were concentrated in the Gulf of Aden, as attacks began to take place further away from the coast of Somalia and into the Indian Ocean warships with helicopter capacity began to patrol an area of approximately 2.5 million square nautical miles, encompassing the Gulf of Aden, the Somali Basin, the Arabian Sea and the stretch of Indian Ocean from East Africa to the Indian coast and as far south as Madagascar.

The international missions cooperate with each other, with relatively open information-sharing between nations. Navies are also increasingly working with other stakeholders to ensure that the process of deterrence does not stop at sea. The key centres for vessels to report suspicious activity or pirate attack are operated by navies, including the UK Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) in Dubai, and the NATO Shipping Centre and EU NAVFOR's Maritime Security Centre of the Horn of Africa (MSCHoA) at Northwood, United Kingdom. These centres are regarded as neutral conduits for the sharing of information – allowing commercial ships to gain information to protect themselves, and navies to see further success in their counter-piracy work as they are able to follow up on reports of suspicious activity.

The mandates of NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU's Operation Atalanta have been extended to 2014, but it is not yet clear what, if any, international presence will be maintained in the Indian Ocean after this time. There are concerns that national contributions to the international missions could be cut even before 2014 if the fall in rates of piracy leads policy-makers to believe that an international presence in the Indian Ocean is no longer needed. Lieutenant Commander Andres Loevik, currently the acting deputy head of the NATO Shipping Centre, stated in October 2012 that he feared 'some nations will decide their money is better spent elsewhere and won't contribute resources'.¹⁷

International naval activity to counter Somali piracy is rooted in the particularities of Somalia's situation. The majority of attacks occur on the high seas, far beyond Somalia's coast and outside any state's territorial waters. The flexibility in naval action has also been justified by Somalia's unique status as a country lacking in effective formal state institutions, and which has suffered chronic under-governance for more than two decades. The state of Somalia collapsed in 1991 and, with the exception of the six-month period of rule by the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006, successive Somali administrations have been unable to establish any semblance of maritime security. Somalia still lacks an EEZ, and so the fishing rights of Somalis are not protected. No up-to-date legislation criminalizing piracy in its modern form has been introduced in the country, and there is no effective coastguard presence.

¹⁵ Author interview with members of shipping industry, London, 2012.

¹⁶ Ships that are part of EU NAVFOR's Operation Atalanta also provide convoy protection for World Food Programme shipments into Somalia.

¹⁷ Drum Cussac report, 26 October 2012.

This is changing, through efforts led by Somalia's year-old government to design a new maritime strategy¹⁸, but Somalia's unique situation has made it easier for navies in the region to capture or disrupt suspected pirates within what are nominally Somali territorial waters, as EU NAVFOR's Operation Atalanta, most notably, has been mandated to do since March 2012.

Lessons for the Gulf of Guinea

The political and governance situations in most states in the Gulf of Guinea contrast heavily with that of Somalia. Most West African countries have established rule of law, functioning state institutions and relatively good governance. West Africa is experiencing strong rates of economic growth: in 2012 it outstripped the average GDP growth of Africa as a whole, reaching a regional high of 6.9 per cent.¹⁹ However, while the regional bodies of ECOWAS and ECCAS have highlighted the detrimental effect of maritime insecurity, West African governments still suffer from 'sea-blindness', and have not prioritized the national action necessary to combat this insecurity. States seeking to maintain these high growth rates must pay greater attention to maritime crime, which costs West Africa \$2 billion every year.²⁰

While international interests are affected by insecurity in Gulf of Guinea waters, policy-makers outside the region have expressed concerns regarding the financial cost of becoming directly involved in attempting to suppress West African piracy, and the complications of corruption and alleged involvement of some local officials. Long-standing naval traditions in West African coastal states – including Nigeria, Ghana and Angola – mean that, with assistance, the region is capable of containing insecurity to some extent, and so international operations of a similar type or scale to those in the Indian Ocean are highly unlikely to occur in the Gulf of Guinea. West African nations are most likely to increase international funding for their maritime security if it is sought in order to support local capacity.

The naval effort to combat Somali piracy has seen collaboration between countries that may not readily share information in a political context. This highlights the understanding of the detrimental effect that Somali piracy has on global interests, and of the cross-border nature of maritime crime. Operation Prosperity, a joint naval patrol launched by the Beninois and Nigerian navies in October 2011, and Obangame Express, an exercise in 2012 led by US Naval Forces Africa to improve cooperation between naval trainers from Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, São Tomé and Príncipe and Spain, are examples which demonstrate an acknowledgment of the need for international coordination.

However, the lesson of ensuring that suspected pirates are subject to appropriate justice remains a key challenge in West Africa. The lack of a clear system of passing suspected criminals apprehended at sea to law enforcement agencies on land means that the process of deterrence usually stops in the Gulf of Guinea's waters. Very few prosecutions of suspected pirates or other criminals in this sphere have taken place in the region. This situation is comparable to early naval efforts to combat Somali piracy, which were undermined by concerns regarding the practice of 'catch and release'²¹ operated by some navies, and worries that others might be using excessive or even illegal force. Neither approach is sufficient to ensure that maritime insecurity is ended conclusively, and underlines the fact that the solution to piracy will not be found at sea.

18 A new maritime strategy for Somalia was drafted in March 2013 by the Kampala Process (also known as the Somali Contact Group on Counter-Piracy), a group representing Somalia's central and regional governments, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and a number of UN agencies. This strategy includes plans to refine Somalia's existing maritime legislation, strengthen the management of fisheries and enhance domestic law enforcement capabilities in order best to organize coastguards. See 'Kampala Process. A Draft Somali Maritime Strategy – Communiqué No 1', March 2013, <http://unpos.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=MLbR1KovAkA%3D&tabid=11461&language=en-US>.

19 ECOWAS, 'West Africa records impressive economic growth in 2012', 1 March 2013, <http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=055&lang=en&annee=2013>.

20 'U.S. Welcomes U.N. Assessment of Maritime Piracy in West Africa', US Africa Command, 21 October 2011, <http://www.aficom.mil/Newsroom/Article/8662/us-welcomes-u-n-assessment-of-maritime-piracy-in-w>

21 'Catch and release' refers to a situation whereby pirates captured by naval patrols are released because no jurisdiction is prepared to prosecute them. According to evidence given at the UK Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, in 2011 approximately 'nine out of ten piracy suspects detained by forces engaged in multinational operations are released without trial', <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmfa/1318/131802.htm>.

Concerns regarding 'catch and release' have been eased by the introduction of pirate transfer agreements with eastern African countries. The EU, NATO and a number of national naval forces have established agreements with Seychelles, Mauritius, Kenya and Tanzania. These states accept suspects captured by navies, and receive international support to ensure that their justice sector is capable of providing fair trials and sufficient imprisonment. Similarly, in the Gulf of Guinea it is necessary to ensure that national legislatures are capable and willing to follow through on the apprehension of suspected criminals by navies.

Lessons could also be taken from the need for flexibility in the mandates given to naval operations in the Indian Ocean. There have been cases in which naval staff taking part in international missions in the Indian Ocean have observed poorly maintained and overcrowded boats travelling between Somalia and Yemen that bear the hallmarks of people-trafficking. Members of these navies were unable to act beyond providing provisions and maps to the suspicious vessels because their remit was limited to dealing exclusively with piracy.²² West African naval forces operating in the Gulf of Guinea must be able to take action that is comprehensive, and which encompasses the myriad types of criminal activity taking place at sea.

A complicating factor for the Gulf of Guinea is that much illegal maritime activity happens within 12 nautical miles of countries' coasts. If crimes take place within territorial waters, they may be a police matter, but in most of West Africa's coastal states the coastguard is not as well equipped as the navy. The division of labour between the naval force and coastguard should feature in national discussions about tackling maritime crime. If coastguards are not up to scratch, then taking the time and finding the resources to bring them up is an issue. However, international partnerships could help in this regard. The recent establishment of Ghana's Marine Police Unit, where training is being supported by the United States, provides a good example.²³ The Ghanaian minister of the interior has made a point of encouraging this new unit to work closely in coordination with the Ghanaian navy.²⁴

International naval partnerships are evident, and initiatives such as the US Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Africa Partnership Station²⁵ will play a part in developing the type of comprehensive and coordinated action needed across the Gulf of Guinea. Naval partners also provide training during official visits to the region: by the end of 2013 the UK Royal Navy frigate *HMS Argyll*, the Brazilian Navy Ocean Patrol Vessel *APA* and the Royal Netherlands Navy carrier *HNLMS Rotterdam* will have visited West Africa. This partnering of navies has great potential to have good effect, particularly if training efforts are geared at the right level. Equipment used by external partners during exercises should be similar to that available to West African navies.

Combating Somali piracy: self-protection measures

A consortium of international shipping organizations and navies created BMP, a set of guidelines providing recommendations for ship operators and masters seeking to protect themselves from hijack in the high-risk area off Somalia's coast. As the nature of piracy has changed, the rules have been updated – acknowledging that those aiming to hijack are rapidly adapt tactics in order to try to maximize the outcome of their criminality. BMP is currently in its fourth version.

BMP guidelines include recommendations such as:

- avoiding detection by staying up to date with information on pirate locations from the various reporting centres;

²² Author interview, November 2012.

²³ 'Remarks by Deputy Chief of Mission Pat Alsup Ground Breaking Event for Ghana Marine Police Unit', 22 March 2013, Embassy of the US in Ghana, http://ghana.usembassy.gov/pr_032213a.html.

²⁴ 'Minister urges Police, Navy to fight maritime crime', *Ghana Business News*, 24 March 2013, <http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2013/03/24/minister-urges-police-navy-to-fight-maritime-crime/>.

²⁵ The Africa Partnership Station is an initiative of US AFRICOM and US Naval Forces Africa to encourage engagement between international partners, NGOs and partners from a range of African coastal states, in the broad areas of maritime domain awareness, improved maritime infrastructure and professionalism, and better regional integration to enhance response capabilities.

- increasing speed and manoeuvring to avoid being intercepted;
- and ‘hardening’ by means of the use of physical barriers and deterrents, including the installation of razor wire and deployment of foam or high pressure water sprays to reduce a vessel’s vulnerability to illegal boarding.

The fact that BMP is not a legal requirement for ship-owners may have been part of its success. Making the guidelines mandatory could have prolonged their process of introduction, and the length of time that it would take to update mandatory guidelines could undermine their effectiveness. Additionally, BMP has been implemented widely because the guidelines are focused on changes of behaviour, not on measures that would involve increased cost. This provides a good lesson for avoiding attack in the Gulf of Guinea, as owners of smaller vessels with lesser financial means can do more to strengthen their defences without undue additional cost.

Lessons for the Gulf of Guinea

Interim guidance for vessels travelling in the Gulf of Guinea was issued in late 2012 by shipping organizations, supported by the NATO Shipping Centre. This guidance is intended to sit alongside the BMP guidelines, many of which are of relevance to the Gulf of Guinea. However, the nature of commercial maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea limits the extent to which self-protection measures can be effective. Commercial vessels travelling within the high-risk area near the coast of Somalia tend to be transiting the region, taking goods between Asia, the Middle East and Europe. By contrast, trading vessels predominate in the Gulf of Guinea, as commercial ships make port calls at countries along the coast.

Efforts taken by ship-owners to protect vessels can be undermined if West African administrations do not also ensure the safety and efficiency of operations at ports. Recent reports note that the IMO’s International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) code has not been properly implemented in Nigeria, leading the US authorities to issue a warning that shipping lines doing business in the United States may be banned from entering any Nigerian port.²⁶ The vulnerability of vessels at port is acknowledged in the interim guidelines for shipping in the Gulf of Guinea, which state: ‘The risk of falling victim of a pirate attack is particularly high when the ship is at anchor or is drifting off a port’.²⁷ While vessel-hardening can foil an attack by pirates, preventing a vessel from being detected by hijackers in the first place will require focus on tackling criminals’ access to information about vessel locations and cargoes. Hijackers may even have information on the type of security measures being implemented on board a vessel. Stringent anti-corruption measures on land will be the only method to counter this. Particular effort should be focused on ensuring the security and capability of local reporting centres, which are not universally trusted and are suspected by some in the shipping and fishing industries to be a source of information for criminals.

The BMP document for Somalia recommends that attacks are reported to UKMTO and MSCHoA, aiding information-sharing between maritime stakeholders. In the Gulf of Guinea context, encouraging information-sharing is also critically important, particularly as the sophistication of illegal activity increases. Attacks in the waters between Togo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be reported to the Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre operated by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) in Lagos, which has the remit to alert available navies. However NIMASA’s current capacity is limited,²⁸ and the awarding of a \$103 million maritime security contract to a company allegedly owned by Government Ekpemupolo, a former leader of the militant Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND),²⁹ has exacerbated concerns.

26 ‘NIMASA forecloses closure of non – ISPS compliant terminals’, *National Mirror*, 17 June 2013, <http://nationalmirroronline.net/new/nimasa-forecloses-closure-of-non-isps-compliant-terminals/>.

27 Interim Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region, http://www.londonpandi.com/_common/updateable/downloads/documents/2012-12-20_rt_agreed_gog_anti-piracy_guidance%282%29.pdf.

28 ‘NIMASA: Filling Manpower Gaps in the Maritime Sector’, *Leadership Newspapers*, 10 May 2013, <http://leadership.ng/news/100513/nimasa-filling-manpower-gaps-maritime-sector>.

29 See ‘Tompolo qualified to get N16b maritime contract’, *The Nation*, 26 March 2012, <http://www.thenationonline.net/2011/index.php/news/41039-%E2%80%98tompolo-qualified-to-get-n16b-maritime->

Attacks in West African waters can be reported to international centres such as the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre, or to a vessel's flag state if it has the capacity to accept reports, but the Gulf of Guinea still lacks a region-specific centre with the responsibility to act as a single point for information to be shared between naval forces, commercial ship-owners and policy-makers. It remains unclear whether the Yaoundé-based Inter-Regional Coordination Centre, announced following the 2013 summit of West and Central African Heads of state and government, will include reporting facilities. Although a successful trial run was completed in February 2013, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) plan to establish a Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre (MTISC) in Ghana has been delayed – reportedly because, despite regional and IMO support for the location of the Centre, its establishment has not been prioritized nationally. The MTISC featured in discussions between the British prime minister and the president of Ghana during the latter's visit to London in June 2013, which may provide an impetus to accelerate the process of the centre's establishment.

One of the key challenges that the MTISC will face is the under-reporting of incidents. The IMB estimates that only one-third of attempted attacks is reported to its Piracy Reporting Centre.³⁰ Incidents are not reported for a number of reasons – including a lack of trust in local authorities, and the belief that investigations can be time-consuming, may hold up the continued business of those who have been attacked and are likely to come to nothing. Thorough messaging by national maritime agencies, navies and policy-makers about the importance of reporting, together with prosecution and imprisonment of those guilty of maritime crimes, could go some way to overcoming this hesitance to report attacks. National trust-building initiatives targeted at artisanal fishermen could be particularly effective, as attacks on fishing vessels are rarely reported.

Combating Somali piracy: private maritime security

The number of companies offering private armed security personnel for commercial vessels in the Indian Ocean increased rapidly from 2008. The attitude of policy-makers towards their use has relaxed significantly as piracy has continued to affect commercial shipping near the coast of Somalia – with the often-repeated assertion that no vessel with armed guards has been successfully hijacked³¹ offering a concise justification for the use of force. While armed guards are regarded as a necessary and effective deterrent to combat Somali piracy at its current level, voices from the commercial shipping industry express concerns that the success of private security may set a precedent for policy-makers, who might increasingly expect the shipping industry to combat maritime crime and pay for its own protection at sea. There are also concerns that commercial ship-owners could face reprimand if they choose to stop using private armed guards as the threat in the Indian Ocean falls. Estimates place the cost of engaging a four-man team for a journey from Asia to Europe through the Gulf of Aden at \$50,000.

Despite the rapid expansion of the private maritime security sector since 2008, there is still no universal set of standards for the companies operating in this arena. International guidance does exist, but guidelines such as those of the International Organization for Standardization's ISO/PAS 28007, the Montreux Document on private military and security companies (drafted by the Swiss government and the International Red Cross), the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (also a Swiss initiative) and interim guidance provided by the Maritime Security Committee of the IMO are not legally binding.

The private maritime security sector has made some effort at self-regulation, including the establishment of maritime security accreditation bodies such as the Security Association for the

contract%E2%80%99.html and 'Tompolo tackles the security of Nigerian waters', *The Vanguard*, 4 September 2012, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/09/tompolo-tackles-security-of-nigerian-waters/>.

³⁰ Barrios, C., 'Fighting Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: Onshore and Offshore', EUISS, 2013: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_20.pdf.

³¹ The case of the Tiba Folk, a tug with an armed security team on board that was attacked by pirates in January 2011, illustrates that the record of privately contracted security teams may have been oversimplified. The vessel was towing an unmanned barge, which was released in a bid to escape the attack. The barge was then taken by pirates back to the Somali coast. See 'Fate of crew on a hijacked UAE-owned vessel is unclear', *Malta Maritime Directory*, 13 January 2011, <http://www.maritimedirectory.com.mt/newsread.asp?l=e&ID=1160>.

Maritime Industry (SAMI), but such efforts have not eliminated concerns about the standard of training, legality of weapons and rules of engagement for armed security personnel.

Lacking regulation by policy-makers has also allowed for the rapid development of new areas in the private maritime security industry. For example, the differing positions of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean as to whether private weaponry is allowed ashore or within territorial waters has led to the deployment of a number of floating armouries. Some of these have encountered difficulties because of the lack of policy oversight.³² The private maritime security sector as a whole has also suffered cost-cutting pressures in order to remain competitive as rates of piracy fall, which could reduce their effectiveness.

The forthcoming trial of two Italian marines, who are alleged to have shot and killed two Indian fishermen while deployed aboard an Italian-flagged oil tanker in February 2012, demonstrates the lack of firm legal footing surrounding privately contracted armed guards.³³ A legal tussle between India and Italy arose as the Italian government maintained that the shooting took place in international waters, meaning that the marines could be tried in Italy. India's government has argued that the unarmed fishermen were close to territorial waters, and so the case should be tried in India. Establishing which jurisdiction private security personnel should fall under should be an international priority as the industry continues to contribute to the drop in Somali pirate attacks.

Lessons for the Gulf of Guinea

Currently, privately contracted armed guards are not permitted to operate within the territorial waters of Gulf of Guinea countries. Ship-owners seeking armed presence in Nigerian, Beninois or Togolese waters can pay for national armed police or military personnel to provide escort vessels or to travel on board commercial vessels. While maritime security companies are not permitted to deploy armed guards in coastal waters, privately contracted security personnel do act in the region in a non-armed capacity. Companies offer services including the provision of ship security officers to lend advice on board the commercial vessel or to act in a supervisory role on escort vessels, surveys of port facilities, checking of commercial vessels for sabotage, intelligence-gathering and hardening vessels against piracy. The licensing required for these companies is stringent – particularly in Nigeria, where licence acquisition takes time because of the cost and number of ministries involved.

The case of the *MV Myre Seadiver*, a vessel owned by a Russian security firm, is illustrative of the measures that Gulf of Guinea states may take against private maritime security companies that are felt to have broken these rules. The *Myre Seadiver* and its crew were seized by the Nigerian navy in October 2012, accused of illegally entering Nigerian waters carrying weapons. The ship's owner insisted that the vessel had secured licences from the Nigerian authorities to carry this weaponry, but this claim was rejected and the crew was charged with illegally possessing and importing arms and ammunition.

It is not clear that armed guards will have the same effect in the Gulf of Guinea as they have off Somalia's coast. The current policy environment in Gulf of Guinea states is unlikely to change, as governments in the region are concerned about unregistered weaponry entering their country, and also because the licensing regimes currently in place are lucrative. As Gulf of Guinea pirates tend not to regard crew life as valuable, increasing violence may only be met with more violence. Nigerian hijackers are known to have more sophisticated weaponry than do most pirates from Somalia; and there is a case where armed Nigerian navy personnel accompanying a commercial vessel were killed by pirates, and the crew taken hostage.

Whether or not Gulf of Guinea governments move in the same direction as some governments in East Africa and the Gulf Arab states, and become more amenable to allowing armed guards to operate within their territorial waters, it would be useful for the region if it were to adopt a united stance on the issue of armed guards. If the littoral states maintain differing positions as to whether

³² See for example 'UAE coastguard detains floating weapons arsenal off Fujairah', *The National*, 17 October 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/uae-coastguard-detains-floating-weapons-arsenal-off-fujairah>.

³³ 'Italy-India row: Rome to send marines back for trial', BBC News, 21 March 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21938084>.

private weaponry is allowed on shore or within territorial waters, this could increase the complexity and the cost of the use of armed guards, and lead to growth in more risky and untested elements of the private maritime security sector.

Combating Somali piracy: regional capacity-building

The Horn of Africa is a region characterized by deep and long-standing economic and social interconnections, meaning that piracy originating from Somalia has significant repercussions for the country's neighbours. For example, the rerouting of commercial vessels to avoid the areas of greatest risk has had a regional economic impact, affecting income from tourism for Tanzania, Kenya and Seychelles. Between 2008 and 2012 the number of cruise ships docking at Kenyan ports fell from 35 to zero.³⁴ Internationally, the need to balance naval counter-piracy efforts and the avoidance tactics employed by the shipping industry with long-term on-land initiatives to combat piracy is commonly accepted. Attempts to tackle piracy from a regional perspective, as well as on land within Somalia, have been born of necessity, because of Somalia's lacking justice and prison capacities.

Initiatives aimed at increasing deterrence, strengthening local judicial capacity and offering opportunities for gainful employment to youth at risk of being drawn into piracy also receive international support. Projects such as Norwegian Church Aid's Alternative Livelihoods to Piracy project and the Youth at Risk Initiative³⁵ operate in Somalia with the goal of rehabilitating those who have been low-level pirates or who are in danger of becoming involved in criminality.

Such efforts are critically important in ensuring that Somalia's coastal communities feel they have a stake in efforts to resolve the issue of piracy. However, concerns that funds might be misused, or that the results will be negligible, have resulted in an overcautious approach on the part of the international community in supporting diaspora-led efforts to provide alternative livelihoods for young men in Somalia's coastal areas. The work by EU NAVFOR and NATO naval missions in engaging with local leaders in Puntland does, however, indicate that this attitude may be changing. Enabling those who live with the day-to-day damage – economic and reputational – that piracy does to Somalia to see themselves as stakeholders in efforts to remove the scourge of piracy could prove invaluable in achieving long-lasting solutions.

Building up Somalia's law enforcement capacity will aid the Somali government in its attempts to reinforce security and political stability on land and at sea. For example, initiatives such as the EU's EUCAP NESTOR capacity-building mission, which aims to strengthen regional maritime capabilities through the development of a coastal police force and support for judicial institutions, could provide needed support for home-grown efforts to combat piracy – a crucial factor in establishing a sense of responsibility within Somalia for both the problem and the likely solutions to maritime insecurity in its waters. The EU has also developed a Critical Maritime Routes Programme (MARSIC), which has begun to train maritime administration staff, officials and coastguards in Puntland and Somaliland, as well as in Seychelles and Kenya, in order to protect the economic lifeline that safe access to the sea provides to East Africa.

International support for improving the legal systems and increasing prison capacity of regional neighbours has helped to establish a chain of deterrence, ensuring that anti-piracy efforts do not end at sea. Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius, Tanzania and the Maldives receive support from the UNODC Counter Piracy Programme, which prioritizes the need for suspected pirates to receive fair trials and for convicts to be imprisoned humanely.

International support is also provided for Somalia's judiciaries, but these are progressing slowly in their ability to cope with prosecution and imprisonment of suspected and convicted pirates. Somalia's limited domestic justice capacity has had a negative impact on the wider region's

33 Anyimadu, A. *Potential Consequences of Re-Routing, Coordinating an International Approach to the Payment of Ransoms: Avoidance of and Alternatives to Ransom Payments*, Chatham House, 2012.

35 Run by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

willingness to cooperate. For a period in late 2012 Seychelles stopped accepting pirate prisoners, as, of the 107 convicted pirates being held in Seychellois prisons at that time, transfers to Somali prisons had only been secured for 19. Of these, 17 went to UNODC-administered prisons in Somaliland, as part of a deal signed at the London Conference on Somalia. Some Seychellois officials expressed concern that international donors were not facilitating transfers quickly enough, and that Somalia was not being held to account for the amount of money that had been spent in bolstering its justice sector.³⁶ The region's supportive role needs to be balanced with testing of Somalia's law enforcement institutions.

Case study: Seychelles

Seychelles is a useful example of the benefits that a country can gain from cooperating early in international efforts to increase the effectiveness of deterrents against piracy. Despite its small size and its geographical distance from Somalia, the country has been proactive in securing its position as a prominent anti-piracy partner. Its willingness to prosecute and imprison pirates has attracted greater donor attention, and it is seen as a pragmatic and reliable partner in the region.

Seychelles has established military surveillance partnerships with a range of countries with an interest in Indian Ocean security, including Russia, India and China as well as EU countries and the United States. The country has also agreed to accept pirates captured through EU NAVFOR's Operation Atalanta, and has made agreements with Somalia's central government and regional administrations in Somaliland and Puntland to transfer convicted pirates to prisons in Somalia. It is one of six countries in the Somali Basin to be a partner in the UNODC Counter Piracy Programme, receiving support through judicial, prosecutorial and police capacity-building programmes, and also receiving administrative supplies, law books and specialist coastguard equipment.

Seychelles' proactive engagement in anti-piracy work has lent it greater weight among Indian Ocean states. The country advocated the importance of maritime security to regional organizations, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), thus helping to attract EU funding to build maritime capacity in the Indian Ocean region.

There have been some difficulties, including pressures on the country's prison capacity – at its height, one-fifth of Seychelles' prison population was made up of convicted Somali pirates; some domestic dissatisfaction arising from the perception that pirate cases were being fast-tracked, to the disadvantage of local legal cases; and concerns that the country's economically vital reputation as a holiday destination was being damaged by its increasing association with Somali piracy.

However, Seychelles has now partnered with the United Kingdom to host the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecutions Intelligence Coordination Centre (RAPPICC), which will complement the work of intelligence-gathering centres operating in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. RAPPICC recently played a part in coordinating intelligence to seize a large shipment of cannabis en route to Italy from Morocco,³⁷ demonstrating the potential that it has to focus on transnational crime beyond Somali piracy, and ensuring its relevance for the future.

Lessons for the Gulf of Guinea

Most of East Africa's littoral states were slow to acknowledge that Somalia's piracy problem had implications for the economy, stability and reputation of the region as a whole. A shift in this stance was accelerated by the discovery of offshore oil and gas fields in eastern Africa. This spurred regional action, such as the signing of a trilateral memorandum of understanding between South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania agreeing to joint naval operations.

³⁶ Author interview, Seychelles, 2012.

³⁷ Seychelles People's Defence Forces,

http://www.spdf.co/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=18.

Although there remains within many West African states a lack of understanding at the policy level of the importance of the maritime domain, the region has the advantage of being one of sub-Saharan Africa's more politically coherent blocs, encompassing regional communities that do acknowledge the economic impact that maritime insecurity has on the region. West Africa's overlapping architectures – including the GGC, ECOWAS, ECCAS and the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) – have all been active on maritime security issues, but it is ECOWAS and ECCAS that predominate. In fact, of the regional economic communities that have championed the importance of maritime security, it is ECCAS that led calls for increased military patrolling of Gulf of Guinea waters, demonstrating the concerns of landlocked West African countries that depend on safe sea passage for trade. ECOWAS has pushed for an integrated maritime strategy to be implemented by January 2014, which will mirror the African Union's efforts to establish a comprehensive maritime strategy by 2050, and the bodies cooperated to bring maritime security to the table at the June 2013 Yaoundé summit of West and Central African heads of state and government.

In order for law enforcement to work effectively, navy and coastguard, police, judiciary and private industry must work together. Increased cooperation across domestic agencies could help combat the issue of corruption, preventing any one entity from having full control over resources to deal with maritime insecurity. The interconnected nature of maritime crime conducted in the Gulf of Guinea means that the most effective methods of countering insecurity could be through identifying and pursuing the financiers of oil theft, piracy, trafficking and IUU fishing.

The IMO is contributing to capacity-building efforts through an initiative to encourage in-country coordination in African coastal states, including the countries from Mauritania to Angola. These tabletop exercises promote joined-up government by bringing together national authorities responsible for environmental protection, oil, aviation, finance and the justice sector, among others, and they could play an important role in ensuring that cooperation within countries reflects the interconnectedness of maritime crime occurring in the Gulf of Guinea.

The EU is also well placed to partner in capacity-building, as its member states have particular interests in West African energy, fishing and security. It does not have to contend with the baggage of colonial legacy, but is in a good position to partner with both ECOWAS and ECCAS, acting as a bridge between the Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone entities. Furthermore, neither ECOWAS nor ECCAS suffers the same degree of internal political conflict that has undermined the ability of East African regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to contribute to maritime security.

Over the past year in the Gulf of Guinea region, discussions of piracy and maritime insecurity have tended to take place through ECOWAS and ECCAS. While the importance of issues of insecurity has been championed on a regional level, it is not widely promoted at the national level. It remains critically important to ensure that local coastal communities feel they have a stake in efforts to resolve the problem of piracy, and that they understand that insecurity affects them as well as the large multinational oil and shipping companies. This can be achieved by more effective dissemination of the message about the local effects of insecurity at sea. International initiatives – such as INTERPOL's Project Scale, which aims to conduct commodity-specific operations tailored to the needs of vulnerable areas including the West African coastal region – can be of help.

Since 2008 naval forces combating Somali piracy have increasingly improved their methods of gathering intelligence – the use of unmanned aerial vehicles able to track pirate activity, and helicopters mounted with powerful cameras capable of taking highly detailed pictures of Somalia's coastline and of pirates' movements has become the norm. The establishment of pirate transfer agreements has meant that navies responsible for bringing suspected pirates to shore for prosecution have had to develop their skills in collating the information they have about suspects. The success of cases once they come to court often hinges on evidence given by the naval personnel involved in action to disrupt pirate activity.

However, a lesson from efforts against Somali piracy is that naval forces cannot be solely relied on for intelligence-gathering, as they are not law enforcement agencies and do not necessarily have the institutional knowledge to provide evidence. In West Africa police and coastguards could work far more closely with international law enforcement agencies. For example, INTERPOL's anti-

piracy task force has regional bureaux in Abidjan and Yaoundé, but both suffer from under-reporting. Of all the urgent international requests issued for cooperation or for sharing of critical piracy-related information, INTERPOL has received none from West Africa. Similarly, all of the hundreds of suspects recorded in INTERPOL's Global Database on Maritime Piracy are related to Somali piracy.³⁸

A valuable lesson for both the Gulf of Guinea and Somalia can be drawn from the efforts by Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia to reduce rates of piracy in the Straits of Malacca. The launch of the Malacca Straits Patrol in 2004 resulted from the ambition of Malaysia and Singapore to reverse their reputation for declining security and counter the association of their waters with criminal activity. Efforts to police the waters were combined with the strengthening of onshore institutions and the willingness to prosecute and punish those involved in piracy. The development of a Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCCAP) has been successful particularly because it has prioritized information-sharing between the 18 partners to the Agreement. This understanding of the impact that piracy was having on domestic concerns encouraged Singapore to galvanize other littoral states in the region to contribute to counter-piracy efforts. Although the scale of piracy in each region differs, efforts to contain insecurity in the Straits of Malacca have seen longer-lasting and more conclusive success than have those in the Indian Ocean. There are parallels between countries affected by maritime insecurity in the Straits of Malacca and those in the Gulf of Guinea – including shared languages across borders, which makes collaboration easier, and improving rates of economic growth which provides an impetus for action – and so West African states would do well to draw on the experiences of Malaysia and Singapore.

Finally, avoiding duplication of international capacity-building efforts is a key lesson to be drawn from counter-piracy in the Indian Ocean. Coordination between international partners is being encouraged through the G8++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea group, which includes representatives of international law enforcement agencies and governments and has been prioritized by the United Kingdom during its presidency of the G8.

³⁸ *Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea*, Chatham House Conference Report, March 2013, *ibid.*

LESSONS FOR REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY-MAKERS

The successful conclusion of the June 2013 heads of state and government summit offers some hope that maritime security will become integrated with general considerations of crime in West and Central Africa. All three documents presented for consideration at the meeting: a memorandum of understanding between heads of ECOWAS, ECCAS and GGC, a declaration by heads of state and government of their intention to cooperate to promote maritime safety and security, and a code of conduct detailing how states will pursue the prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery, and other illicit maritime activities were all signed by participants without alterations. However, to make greatest use of the current international momentum to counter maritime crime in West Africa, swift action on the part of the region's national governments to prioritize the issue is key. Timing is especially important, as in 2015 a number of West African states will go to the polls. Presidential and parliamentary elections in the coastal states of Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Togo and Guinea, and in the ECCAS member states of Gabon and Chad, will present an unprecedented test of the region's ability to maintain security and stability. Ensuring that maritime security is not allowed to slip down the agenda as West African countries focus increasingly on internal political concerns will be critically important to ensure that criminals – who have proved themselves to be highly adaptable – do not take advantage of any lack of oversight.

ECOWAS and ECCAS already recognize the policy lessons that can be drawn from counter-piracy efforts in eastern Africa. The Djibouti Code of Conduct³⁹ is an influence behind the new West Africa-focused code adopted by 22 states at the June 2013 Yaoundé summit.⁴⁰ Like the Djibouti one, this new agreement will seek to encourage the sharing and reporting of information between states, the pursuit and prosecution of people suspected of engaging in illegal activities at sea, and the harmonized treatment and repatriation of seafarers who have fallen victim to criminality and violence at sea.

However, the proposed code for West Africa also takes into account some of the limitations of the Djibouti code. The latter's heavy emphasis on piracy has meant that signatories have not placed equal focus on other issues affecting their waters, such as illegal waste-dumping and IUU fishing. In East and West Africa, these maritime crimes are often carried out by criminals from outside the region. At a May 2013 speech to the UN Contact Group for Piracy off the coast of Somalia, Somalia's president called on the international community to take greater 'legal and moral responsibility'⁴¹ to also combat these manifestations of maritime insecurity.

The West Africa agreement emphasizes action against illicit maritime activity more generally. It also focuses on the importance of forming national maritime strategies, and draws on a 2008 memorandum of understanding agreed between the IMO and the now defunct Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa to establish an integrated regional network of capable coastguards. The West African code could have significant impact, particularly as it has strong support from the region's key intergovernmental bodies.

International policy-makers must recognize the impact that insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea has on their own interests. There also needs to be greater recognition of the culpability of international elements in some aspects of this insecurity. The EU's Gulf of Guinea Strategy will provide the right comprehensive approach, but the nature of the region and the interconnection between varying types of maritime crime mean that this is an issue that could benefit from the introduction of an EU special representative, who could play a useful coordinating role between the many various agencies and states with a stake in the security of West African waters.

39 A 2009 agreement between 20 coastal states in eastern Africa, the Gulf states and Yemen to repress piracy and armed robbery in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

40 The signatories are Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe and Togo.

41 President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, Speech To The Contact Group For Piracy Off The Coast Of Somalia, 1 May 2013, <http://www.slideshare.net/somalitalk/sheikh-hassan-speech>

CONCLUSION

The successful reduction of piracy in the Indian Ocean is not simply attributable to any one of the factors outlined, but is a result of the mix of methods – including naval patrols, the self-protection measures of BMP and the presence of armed guards on vessels, and capacity-building efforts on shore. Any tipping of the balance of these four could negate the successes. For the Gulf of Guinea, interconnected crimes of trafficking, piracy and theft similarly require a combination of efforts, and an understanding that suppression is not the same as a long-lasting solution. Early action by policy-makers – regionally and further afield – could do much to ensure that criminality does not evolve and increase to an unmanageable extent. Those who commit illegal acts at sea are highly adaptable, increasingly sophisticated in their methods and often well informed, and so local, regional and global efforts must be flexible and proactive.

Maritime security is important for considerations of food security, economic growth and reduction in international crime. In a region where a nation's army is traditionally prioritized over its naval force, and where ministers responsible for fishing and aquaculture generally do not hold much political clout, the challenge for those already working in the maritime domain is to ensure that international partners and regional policy-makers recognize that greater security at sea in West Africa would bring increased prosperity to the region.

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