



Origin, nature and extent of maritime piracy in West Africa





Introduction

The development of Africa is threatened not only by:

- **armed crises**
- **terrorism**
- **recurring health problems issues**

But also by the increase of problems related to **ecology and maritime piracy**

- **Maritime piracy** is an ever growing concern for **present day seafarers** and is proving to be a **nightmare for maritime operators**
- The resurgence of pirate attacks in African waters is now a subject of serious concern to African states and indeed the international community.

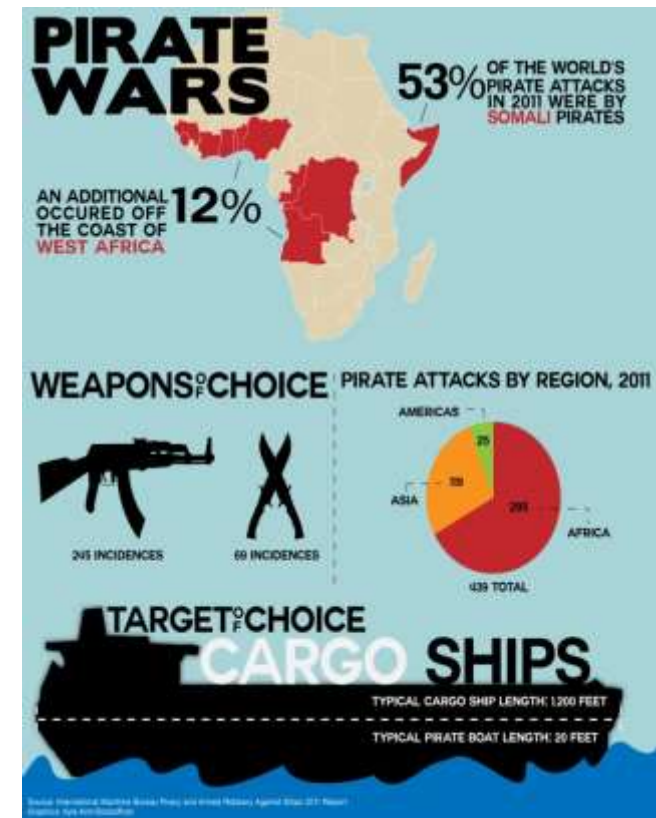




Maritime piracy in Africa



- **Maritime piracy is an age-old phenomenon** and has posed challenges for mariners as long as ships have gone to sea
- in the historical past, peaks in piracy include the Barbary pirates, who operated from **North Africa**, in the **17th and 19th centuries**
- The resurgence of pirate attacks in African waters is now a subject of serious concern to African states and indeed the international community
- For the last decade, piracy in African waters is concentrated in three main regions, namely
 - **the Somali coast/the Gulf of Aden along the East African Coast**
 - **Nigeria's territorial waters in West Africa**
 - **the Mozambique Channel/Cape sea route in Southern Africa**
- **Since 2011**, the **Gulf of Guinea** has fallen victim to frequent incidents of piracy:
 - **threatens the safety of navigation**
 - **inflicts billions of dollars of economic losses on the countries along the Gulf of Guinea every year**





Origin of maritime piracy in West Africa (Gulf of Guinea)



- The Gulf of Guinea, which borders **some 17 countries of West and Central Africa**, is known as the most dangerous area in Africa after the Somali coast, particularly in Nigerian waters.
- The Gulf of Guinea is a perfect incubator for piracy, **providing both resources and safe haven**
- Surrounded by some of Africa's most **proficient oil producers**, including **Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, Ghana, and Equatorial Guinea**
- The Gulf is a **major transit route** for oil tankers on **their way to international markets**
- These tankers have proven **valuable prey for pirates**
- Piracy in West Africa, notably the Gulf of Guinea, has become the **third major recognized area** under threat **since 2011** especially in **Nigerian waters**





Origin of maritime piracy in West Africa



- The underlying problems and root causes cannot simply be pinned **on Nigeria**
- Maritime security is a **regional** rather than a **purely Nigerian** issue
- **Pirates cross international boundaries**
- Attack foreign ships, and as many are located in **different countries**





Origin of maritime piracy in West Africa



- **Poor socioeconomic conditions** of the countries
- **Lack of foresight concerning piracy**

encourages **individuals with limited economic opportunities** to turn toward:

- **Maritime crime**, feeding in to the self-propagating relationship between **maritime piracy** and **regional instability**
- **Regional instability** is not simply a **security issue at sea**, but is a by-product of state failure and **poor governance**
- **State failure** quickly leads to **insecurity**
- **Insecurity** on land can easily extend to maritime security



Pirates attack ship and kidnap crew off the Niger Delta



Origin of maritime piracy in West Africa



- Bad governance,
- Violent criminality,
- SALWs proliferation,
- poorly equipped and underfunded navies
- Absence of a maritime strategy coexisting with affluence

It is not surprising that piracy is **brewing in the region**



The interrelated manifestation of these factors has contributed greatly to the prevalence of **maritime disorder in the region**





Nature of maritime piracy in West Africa



- In West Africa, the situation is **complicated** because of **the increase** of the activity of sea pirates:
 - who seek not only to **seize control over all natural resources of the Gulf**
 - **interfere with the normal operation of trade and maritime transport, itineraries which pass through the sub region**
- The threat of maritime piracy entails:
 - not only an increase in **the cost of the safety of people and goods carried**
 - but also the potential to bring the **case to an environmental catastrophe if sea pirates capture ships with chemicals, oil or nuclear waste**





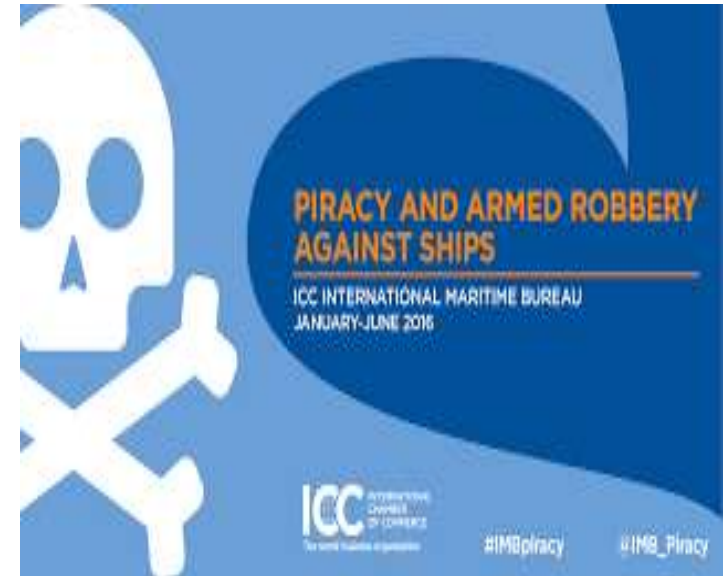
Nature of maritime piracy in West Africa



Maritime piracy occurring in the region spreading from **the inland waters of Nigeria** to the waters off the coasts of **Benin and Togo**

- Characterized by **greater incidents of violence**, with **the highest number killings** compared to other regions.
- Attacks center on **armed robbery** and **theft of cargo**, particularly oil
- There is evidence that the tanker oil thefts are being facilitated by corrupt officials
- The pirates often claim to be redistributing the wealth generated by the oil trade

Which adds a political dimension to the attacks

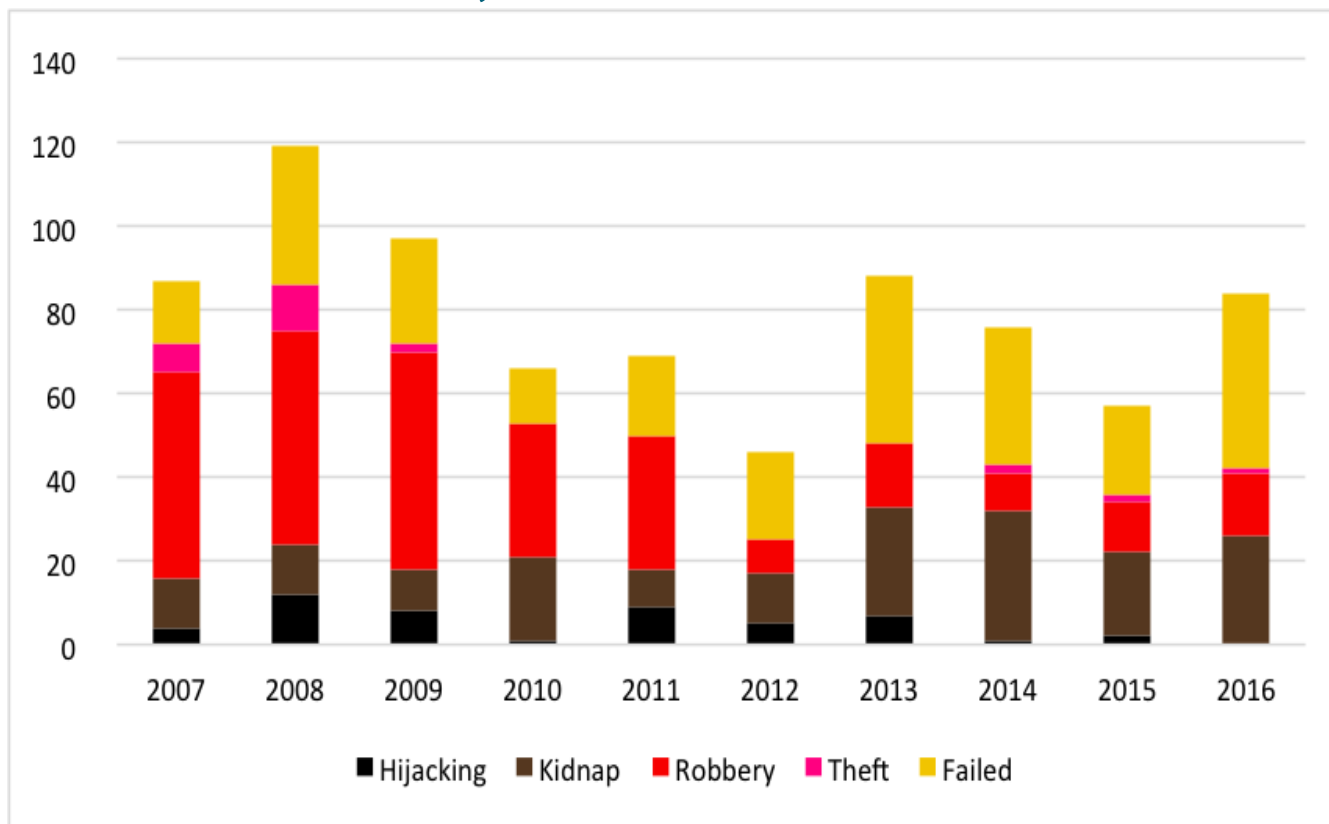




Nature of maritime piracy in West Africa



Annual pirate and piracy-related attacks against shipping in West Africa 2007-2016.





Nature of maritime piracy in West Africa



- Armed pirates, **traveling on board ultra-fast zodiacs**, carry out 50 attacks each year against the ships transiting in the area
- They steal the cargoes and take some **sailors as hostages** to demand payment of **ransoms** for their release.
- But sometimes, the kidnappings have a sad ending when the **hostages are killed**.





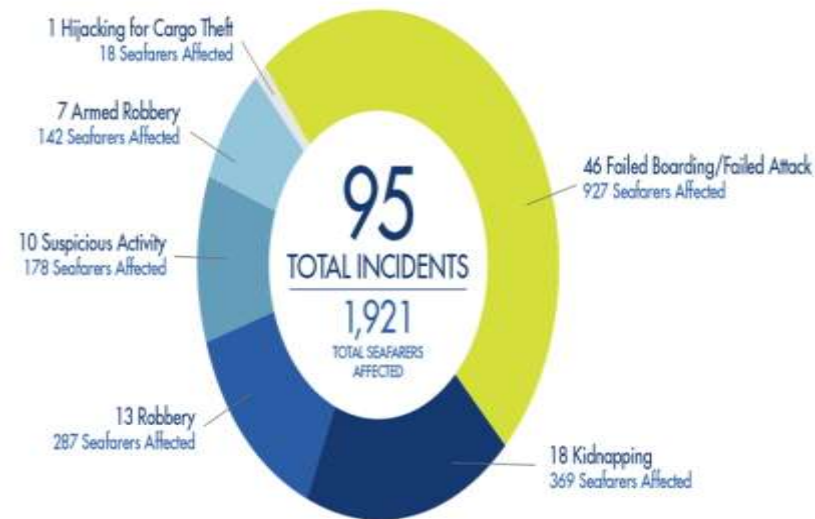
Extent of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



Maritime Piracy off the coast of West Africa **increased** from:

- **8.8 %** of the global total in **2010**
- To **11.6 %** in **2011**,
- Surged to **20.2 %** in **2012**,
- Has declined slightly to **19.7 %** in **2013** and **15.5 %** in **2014**.
- Unexpectedly in the first half of **2016** has reached to the peak of **32.7 %** of attacks globally

Nigeria's territorial waters represent the majority by **75%** of total attack in that region

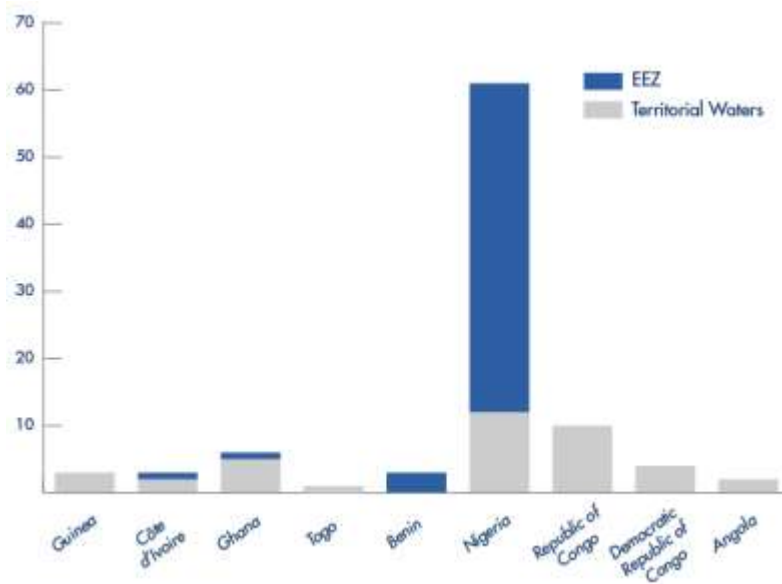




Extent of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



Incidents by Location



- Attacks in the gulf typically occur in territorial waters
- legally making them armed robberies and thus the responsibility of **individual states** according to **international law**



Extent of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



Impact

Economic impact

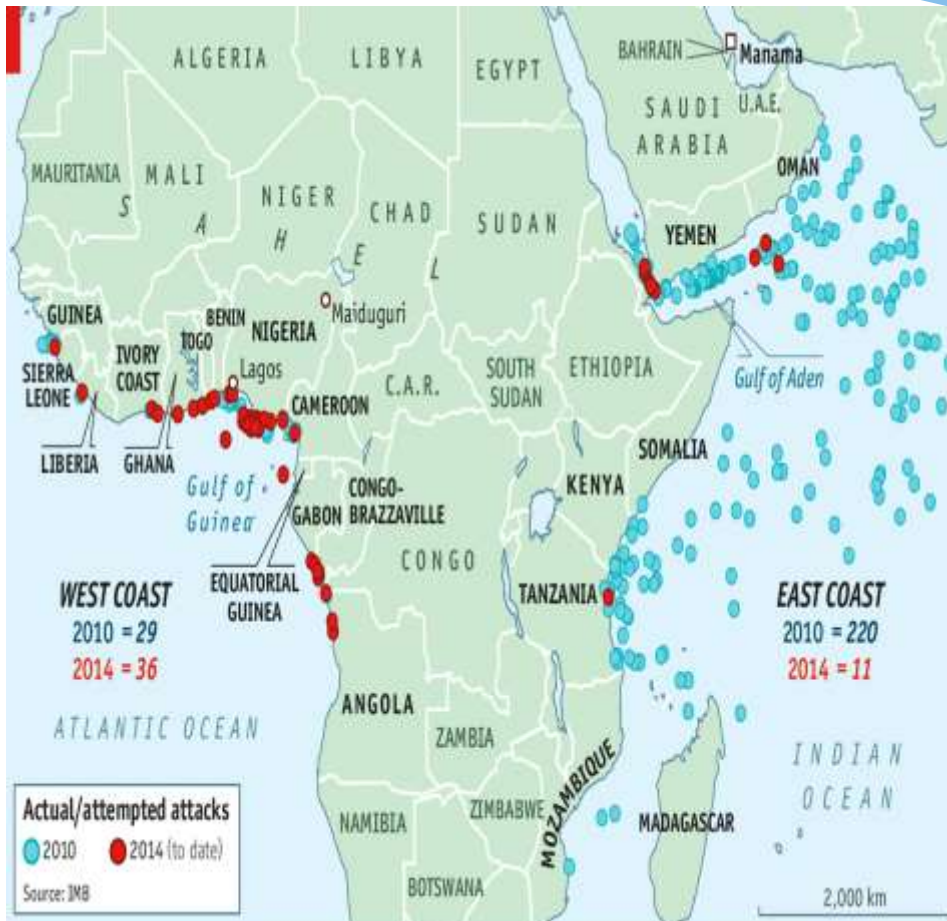


Human impact





Extent of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



- Countries, **supported** by the international community, have **focused on high-level meetings to foster regional cooperation**
- The **Head of State Summit** in Yaoundé Cameroon, where **the Code of Conduct for the Gulf of Guinea** was signed
- The **AU extraordinary Summit** held in Lomé , Togo in October 2016, where the **African Union Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development** were signed for the adoption

These efforts have not yet resulted in firm implementation, as illustrated by the growing number of attack



Factors contributing to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



There are many **factors contributing** to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. These factors include:

- legal and jurisdictional weakness
- favorable geography
- conflict and disorder
- underfunded law enforcement
- inadequate security
- permissive political environments
- cultural acceptability
- promise of reward





Factors contributing to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea



Assessments of some **MS** questionnaire and fact-finding missions by **UNODC** in the region determined that currently no State bordering the **Gulf of Guinea** possesses:

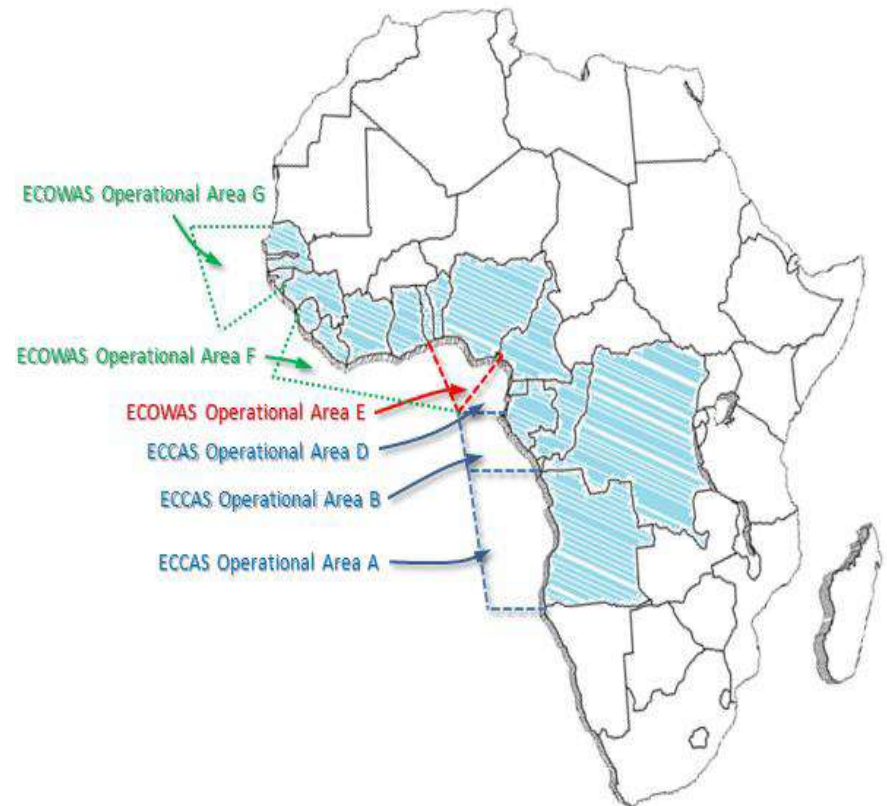
- the necessary combination of jurisdictional provisions
- offence-creating legislation
- judicial capacity needed to undertake prosecutions against piracy





CONCLUSION

- The solution to the fundamental causes lies in **better African management of maritime security**
- The solution to **piracy** lies in the creation of **sustainable economic alternatives and global maritime security**





Together for a safe region



Thank you for your attention