

BRIEFING



## Energy hegemony and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea: rethinking the regional trans-border cooperation approach

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### SUMMARY

This Briefing argues that Nigeria's hegemony over energy trade in the Gulf of Guinea maritime domain makes other states' political commitment to regional trans-border frameworks difficult. It finds that the contradictions of rentier oil governance in Nigeria have implications for the rise in maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.

### Introduction

The Gulf of Guinea (GOG) is large, diverse and an important economic region because it serves as a strategic gateway to the global market. Its geo-strategic importance has been accentuated due to the high dependence of the global political economy on its sea route for the export and import of goods, particularly energy, from different major markets in the world. It constitutes about 16 countries<sup>1</sup> that are strung along roughly 6000 kilometres of unbroken coastline. Within the past decade, the GOG has become one of the most dangerous maritime areas in the world and there has been a surge in international concerns over maritime safety and security in the region with particular attention to the danger that insecurity on the seas poses to global commerce, peace and stability. Maritime security is an emerging issue in the GOG owing to its importance in promoting international trade in the region. Energy trade depends to a large extent on sea-based transport, and the region is currently the source of about 5.4 million barrels of oil per day. This is equivalent to more than the total amount imported by the European Union's 27 member states in 2008 and over half of the United States' crude oil imports in 2008 (Ukongu 2013).

The GOG has become one of the world's most dangerous maritime zones in recent times. This is as a result of the astronomical rise in cases of pirate attacks which have correspondingly undermined the region's security and development. Besides piracy, other common transnational crimes in the maritime domain are illegal oil bunkering, armed robbery at sea, illegal trafficking of firearms, drugs and human beings, as well as illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the area. However, piracy in the GOG accounted for nearly 30% of attacks in African waters between 2003 and 2011 (ICC International Maritime Bureau 2012).

As noted by Riols (2011), the Gulf's raw materials and hydrocarbons make the region an increasingly coveted zone that attracts the attention of many actors such as local

communities, states and private companies. While the local communities are claiming rights of use and a share of the wealth generated by these resources, the GOG states are anxious to ensure greater sovereign control of these resources. At the same time, the interests of the private companies that have been operating in the maritime domain do not usually cohere with those of the two other actors. Maritime security, according to Ukonga (2013), is not only essential for the sustenance of revenue flow from oil and gas, which have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of the region, but it is also important for exploiting maritime resources, securing livelihood and development. Maritime resources such as fish, agriculture and intact ecosystems directly contribute to the livelihoods of many Africans. Fish stocks are an important source of protein in the GOG, as evident in Angola's annual per capita food supply from fish and fishery products between 2002 and 2007, which was 14 kilogrammes per person. This is held to be above the sub-Saharan average of 8 kilogrammes (Adibe 2016; Ukonga 2013). In fact, the poorest 40% of the region's population depend on fish as a crucial component of their diet.

Until 2012, countries in the GOG belt focused mainly on land-based threats to security while the maritime dimensions were hardly considered in the design and implementation of security strategies and defence options. As corroborated by Ifesinachi and Nwangwu (2015), the focus of regional security cooperation has often been primarily land-centric because regime security has seldom had a maritime dimension. According to Ukeje and Mvomo Ela (2013), the development is attributed to capacity deficit faced by almost all the countries in the region. Such deficits are found in the acquisition, maintenance and deployment of necessary resources required to establish and exercise a credible presence on the territorial waters. An international legal framework for helping the region to tackle maritime insecurity is evident in the United Nations Resolutions 2018 and 2039, adopted in 2011 and 2012 respectively. The Resolutions criminalised armed robbery and piracy and provided a legal framework for prosecuting these offences. This was as a result of the legal difficulties experienced by states in the GOG in their attempt to prosecute illegal acts that occur outside their territorial waters. The energy trade dominates in the GOG as oil remains the region's most valuable export. It accounts for 80% of the total worth of goods traded in the region and constitutes over 70% of total foreign exchange earnings with Nigeria as its leading regional producer. In fact, Nigeria's market accounts for over 60% of the region's volume of trade; and in terms of population it accounts for more than half of the region's estimated 300 million people with a population estimated to be over 180 million (Adibe 2016). As noted by Ricardo (2007), the GOG is a major source of energy imported by Europe, the US, China, India and Brazil, with Nigeria as the regional hegemon.

Renewed international interests in combating maritime insecurity in the GOG have all emphasised the need for cooperation not just between GOG countries and international partners, but also among the various states in the region. Most regional and international bodies established to tackle maritime insecurity in the GOG, as well as treaties and/or memorandums of understanding signed by GOG countries, have adopted or emphasised the strategy of regional trans-border cooperation. The rationale for this approach lies in the argument that while maritime insecurity in the GOG affects economic activities and development in the short term, no country in the region is immune from the long-term effect of undermining the national security of their respective state. Thus, various

international treaties, conventions and bodies that emphasise commitment to regional trans-border cooperation have been signed, held and formed respectively within the past two decades.

Despite the rise in international concerns and efforts, as well as the formation of regional bodies devoted to addressing security challenges in the region, the GOG remains a volatile region in the world, with reports of rising maritime insecurity. Organised criminal trade in oil, illicit arms, human trafficking and IUU fishing is reported as growing at an alarming rate. This has prompted the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) to label the GOG one of the most dangerous maritime zones in the world (Adibe 2016). Thus, this study re-examines the regional trans-border cooperation approach to maritime security management in the GOG. It contends that economic imbalance among states in the region fundamentally impairs the regional trans-border cooperation approach. What follows is a discussion of energy trade dominance and the challenge of effective regional trans-border cooperation in the GOG; next, the authors discuss rentier oil governance and maritime insecurity in the GOG; and finally, concluding remarks are presented.

### **Energy trade dominance and the challenge of effective regional trans-border cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea**

Acts of piracy and armed robbery in the GOG represent more than a quarter of reported attacks worldwide. Steadily increasing since 2007, maritime insecurity in this region affects trade. With Africa's total shipment of nine million barrels per day, maritime insecurity affects the shipment of five million barrels of oil per day (Vircoulon and Tournier 2014). As argued by Ifesinachi and Nwangwu (2015, 54), 'the transnational character of maritime insecurity has made trans-border cooperation a *sine qua non* in the mitigation of illicit maritime activities the world over.' The justification presented by scholars and specialised bodies for a collective security strategy through regional cooperation in the GOG is anchored predominantly on the argument that individual GOG countries lack institutional capability and a strong legal framework for tackling maritime insecurity in the region. According to a 2012 report published by Crisis Group (2012), the institutional capacity of most states' security agencies to respond to distress calls off their coastlines is weak and has allowed armed robbery at sea and acts of piracy to grow steadily in tandem with economic activities at sea. With regard to Nigeria, the report noted that the country's navy and maritime administration agencies are faced with serious problems of capacity and are mostly under-staffed and under-equipped. Ukeje and Mvomo Ela (2013) argued that even in the GOG states where a framework for the domestication of treaties relating to international maritime security has been established, the fundamental weakness in the criminal justice system often undermines the best efforts of stakeholders trying to enforce compliance with rules or to impose sanctions in the event of breaches. The growing visibility and direct involvement of private military contractors (PMCs) in maritime security is a product of the weak institutional capacity of state-owned or regulated maritime security agencies in curtailing maritime crimes in the GOG, particularly oil-related ones. More fundamentally, this is a continuation of the neoliberal ideology which prescribes privatisation as a panacea for the weak institutional capacity of states in Africa. Thus, state institutions are deliberately undermined and

weakened in order to justify the privatisation option. The 2001 Constitutive Act of the African Union (2001) notes that regionalisation of piracy and other maritime crimes in the GOG highlights the need for a collective response. The vulnerability of the countries concerned is a consequence of weak national institutions, a lack of cooperation and the absence of serious involvement by the regional institutions responsible for peace and security. The need to promote regional trans-border cooperation in the GOG has led to the development of certain strategies and agreements. Most notable is the regional initiative launched at the Yaoundé Summit in June 2013 that brought together the Gulf countries. The Summit approved a memorandum on maritime safety and security in Central and West Africa that set objectives and areas of cooperation; a code of conduct concerning the fight against piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in West and Central Africa; and the creation of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC) to implement a regional strategy for maritime safety and security (Vircoulon and Tournier 2014). Also, there has been a rise in the number of regional bodies charged with the responsibilities of coordinating regional trans-border cooperation. These include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC). While these regional bodies are responsible for coordination of strategies, member states are concerned with their implementation.

Maritime insecurity affects states in the region disproportionately. It threatens the national security of some states more than others. In some cases, certain criminal activities in the region's high seas can result in massive economic loss to one state while they are beneficial to others. GOG states with larger economies are the most affected by maritime insecurity in the region. Nigeria has been the leading regional producer of oil for several decades and arguably the worst affected by maritime insecurity in the region. As observed in the report by the European Union Council of Foreign Affairs (2014), more than half of the 551 attacks and attempted attacks by pirates and armed robbers in the GOG international waters and national jurisdictions occurred off the coast of Nigeria. The report also noted that Nigeria's coast accounted for more than half of total reported cases of attacks on oil vessels and hijackings in the GOG. The political will of GOG countries to commit to effective regional trans-border cooperation is poor. This can be attributed to

**Table 1.** Crucial maritime security architecture agreements reached at the Yaoundé Summit but not implemented by regional bodies.

ECOWAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the maritime security strategy adopted on 25 March 2014 at the Yamoussoukro Summit in Côte d'Ivoire for the maritime cooperation zone ('Pilot zone E') involving Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Togo, and for the F and G zones.</li> <li>• The creation of a Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa (CRESMAO).</li> </ul>
ECCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the surveillance and intervention capacities, as well as improving coordination between the countries of maritime cooperation zone D (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe).</li> <li>• The development of cooperation in A and B zones.</li> <li>• Operationalisation of Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC), which requires sustainable financial commitment.</li> </ul>
ICC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operationalisation of the ICC centre with adequate funding and personnel.</li> </ul>

Source: Vircoulon and Tournier (2014).

the imbalance in the effect of maritime insecurity on their various domestic economies, thereby undermining the capacity of the regional bodies to effectively coordinate strategies aimed at promoting maritime security.

Table 1 shows that much remains to be done to implement the maritime security architecture as agreed at the Yaoundé Summit. The adoption of national legal tools to investigate, prosecute and punish acts of piracy, in compliance with international law and the development of judicial cooperation mechanisms between the regional countries, is non-existent in many of the GOG states despite their ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Even the GGC is nothing more than an unnecessary duplication of responsibility already covered by both ECOWAS and ECCAS. Although it seeks to promote peace and socio-economic development on the basis of dialogue, consensus, ties of friendship, solidarity and fraternity, the GGC has not made material progress towards any of these objectives since its creation in 2001 (Vircoulon and Tournier 2014).

Trans-border cooperation by states is mostly based on the desire to achieve mutual strategic objectives. GOG states are predominantly agro-based economies and mostly produce the same agricultural raw materials for export. Thus, they compete for the same market, rather than cooperate (World Bank 2006). Trade in energy is the major exception as it is dominated by Nigeria and Angola. It constitutes over 80% of the total value of goods traded in the region, and criminal activities that affect energy trade sometimes benefit some states in the region in such a way that commitment to effective regional trans-border cooperation is difficult to achieve. For example, illegal diversion of oil vessels carrying refined crude oil on the high seas for which subsidies have been paid by the Nigerian government often find their way to neighbouring GOG states where they are sold at higher prices. From January to April 2012, the Nigerian parliament conducted a series of investigations that exposed the involvement of Nigerian oil marketers in the illegal diversion of fuel bound for the Nigerian market to other neighbouring GOG countries. The findings of the committee showed possible criminal collaboration of some state and non-state actors in these GOG states (Nigerian House of Representatives 2012).

Although renewed international interest in combating maritime insecurity in the GOG emphasised the need for cooperation between GOG states and international partners, as well as effective maritime security coordination among GOG states, the available evidence has shown that the rise in organised criminal trade such as illegal oil trade, illicit arms trafficking and IUU fishing in the GOG is associated with the rise in oil production in the GOG states. In fact, the maritime domain of oil-producing states, particularly Nigeria, accounts for most of the illegal maritime activities in the GOG. For instance, Nigeria accounted for more than 70% of oil-related crimes in the GOG in the last decade (ICC International Maritime Bureau 2015). Adibe (2016) further notes that 80% of illicit arms circulating among criminal and non-state actors in the GOG are located in Nigeria.

The above suggests that while there has been a proliferation of regional agencies charged with the responsibilities of coordinating trans-border cooperation in the GOG to promote maritime security, most of the incidents that threaten the region's security emanate from Nigeria. Nigeria accounts for over 70% of incidents that undermine regional stability, ranging from piracy and oil theft at sea to illicit arms trade and IUU fishing. This suggests that insecurity along the coast of Nigeria is implicated in maritime insecurity in the entire GOG. It follows that analyses of maritime insecurity in the GOG require an

understanding of the contradictions of rentier oil governance in Nigeria and their implications for the rise in maritime insecurity in the region.

### **Rentier oil governance and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea: reshaping the focus away from regional trans-border cooperation**

The link between oil governance and maritime security in the GOG is explained using Rentier State Theory (RST) as the framework of analysis. RST is a complex of associated ideas concerning the patterns of development and the nature of states in economies dominated by external rent, particularly oil rent (Yates 1996). According to Beblawi and Luciani (1987), four characteristics must be present in order for a state to be classified as rentier. First, the rentier economy of which the state is a subset must be one where rent situations predominate. Second, the origin of the rent must be external to the economy. In other words, the rent must come predominantly from foreign sources. This means that domestic rent, even if it were substantial enough to predominate, cannot be sufficient to characterise such an economy as rentier. Third, in a rentier state, only a few are engaged in the generation of rents, while the majority are involved in the distribution and consumption. Finally, the government must be the principal recipient of the external rent in the economy. The implication of the third feature is that an open economy with high levels of foreign trade is not rentier even if it depends predominantly on rent, because the majority of the society are actively involved in the creation of the wealth, as was the case with Nigeria before the 1970s when rent from agriculture dominated the economy (Ukwaba and Adibe 2014).

Oil wealth in the GOG's largest economy, Nigeria, is characterised by rentier management. One of the implications of this rentier management is the tendency of the Nigerian state to limit its direct involvement in oil-extractive activities, as well as to shift the burden of ensuring oil production safety away from the state to non-state actors such as international oil companies and PMCs. The legitimisation by the Nigerian state of private security management in the oil sector results in poor regulation of the activities of state security agencies in the oil industry, since the burden of generating oil rent is not on the state. The implication of the rentier management of oil resources in Nigeria is that less than 2% of the country's population are involved in the production of oil wealth. The rentier elites' orientation of privatising security governance in the energy industry accounts for the increasing use of PMCs to guarantee the maritime safety of oil vessels and installations in the GOG. This limited involvement of the Nigerian government in guaranteeing the security of oil installations, as well as oil production and distribution activities, makes oil-related activities vulnerable to security sabotage.

Table 2 shows oil marketing companies who were aided by Nigerian maritime and security officials in diverting subsidised petroleum products bound for the Nigerian market to neighbouring GOG countries. According to the findings of the investigation by Nigeria's House of Representatives in 2012, the Federal Government tripled its subsidy payments between 2009 and 2011 from US\$5 billion to more than US\$15 billion (Nigerian House of Representatives 2012). However, official reports from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that legitimate consumption did not increase at this pace during the same period (CBN 2015; NBS 2014). The findings of the House of Representatives' Ad-hoc Committee on



**Table 2.** Oil marketing companies that diverted Nigeria-bound petroleum products between 2009 and 2011 to neighbouring GOG countries after illegal security clearance.

S/N	Name of marketers	Amount received (US\$)
1	Business Ventures Nig. Ltd	22,927,339.96
2	East Horizon Gas Co. Ltd	20,735,910.81
3	Emadeb Energy	6,606,094.30
4	Pokat Nig. Ltd	3,147,956.19
5	Synopsis Enterprises Ltd	51,449,977.47
6	Zenon Pet and Gas Ltd	232,975,385.13
7	Carnival Energy Oil Ltd	51,089.57
8	Crown Lines	4,756,274.94
9	Ice Energy Pet Trading Ltd	2,131,166.32
10	Index Petroleum Africa	6,438,849.64
11	Ronad Oil and Gas W/A	4,813,272.00
12	Serene Greenfield Ltd	4,813,360.75
13	Supreme and Mitchells	16,947,000.00
14	Tridaz Energy Ltd	15,900,000.00
15	Zamson Global Res.	8,916,750.00
	Total	402,610,427.08

Source: Nigerian House of Representatives (2012).

Petroleum Subsidy Probe indicate that the subsidy regime between 2009 and 2012 was fraught with endemic corruption and entrenched inefficiency. Mismanagement and theft by fuel marketers in collaboration with government security officials cost US\$6.8 billion over the three years, which represents about a quarter of Nigeria's budget (Brock 2012). Black-market sales of oil products in the GOG have largely been sustained by Nigerian oil marketers and state security officials, with state actors in other GOG states showing no committed interest in stopping the illegal diversion of Nigerian crude products to their territories because of the 'profitability' associated with the illegal business. The available evidence shows a strong link between illegal diversion of Nigeria-bound petroleum products and the black-market sale of petroleum products in the GOG. For instance, Katsouris and Sayne (2013) show that the GOG and Russia were the leading sources of global black-market oil supply between 2011 and 2013. In corroboration, Adibe (2016) reveals that the Nigerian energy industry accounts for almost all known black-market oil in circulation in the GOG.

The alienation of citizens from the huge revenue derived from oil exports associated with rentier management of the nation's wealth has increased popular agitations against the Nigerian government, leading to oil-related violent conflicts and crimes that have spilled over the nation's borders to affect the high seas and neighbouring GOG states. The enclave nature of the Nigerian economy makes its energy industry the only 'lucrative' sector, as most foreign investments in Nigeria are located in this sector. The minimal involvement of the government in generating the oil rent means that there is a lack of urgency on the part of the rentier government to democratise its management (Ezirim 2011). This has further alienated citizens' participation in the industry. Thus, there has been an increase in oil-related crimes in the form of attacks on oil pipelines and installations; sea piracy; and outright theft/diversion of oil products for personal financial gains. Security leakages in the form of inadequate government involvement in guaranteeing oil production and distribution safety, and the complicity of state and private security agencies in Nigeria, are implicated in the persistence of these crimes.

The energy industry in Nigeria lacks transparency and it is the source of oil-related violence in the GOG's largest economy. Political instability owing to oil patronage conflict

**Table 3.** Estimates of licit and illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) in circulation by the end of 2014.

Estimate of SALW in circulation globally	Estimate of SALW in circulation in Africa	Estimate of SALW in circulation in sub-Saharan Africa	Estimate of SALW in circulation in GOG	Estimate of SALW in circulation in Nigeria
640 million	100 million	30 million	10 million	7 million

Source: Compiled by the authors from Small Arms Survey (2015) report.

among the ruling class affects citizens' legitimate access to the nation's oil wealth. The proliferation of oil-linked conflict in Nigeria has implication for maritime security in the entire GOG. The rise in the illicit sale and use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) orchestrated by oil conflict in Nigeria undermines the region's security and stability.

Table 3 shows the worrying situation of maritime insecurity in the GOG. One-third of the SALW circulating in sub-Saharan Africa is located in the GOG. Also, Nigeria's contribution is quite noticeable as it accounts for 70% of all SALW found in the region. This situation, according to the Small Arms Survey (2015), is concerning because most of these arms end up in the 'wrong' hands. Adibe (2016) also observes that global trade in SALW is estimated to be worth about US\$4 billion annually with a quarter of the trade unauthorised. Sadly, the GOG accounts for about 22% of the unauthorised transactions worldwide. Table 4 shows that there has been a proliferation of militant groups in Nigeria that are operational in the maritime domain of the GOG since the return to civilian rule in 1999. Most of these groups are large in numbers so they possess the capability to engage any GOG state's military in open combat. They are also known to enjoy popular support from citizens residing in the region as their activities are seen as not only heroic but just. The situation is more worrying since Table 4 shows only the five dominant organised militant groups in the region and not all known groups.

**Table 4.** Notable organised militant groups in Nigeria operating in the Gulf of Guinea.

Group	Years active	Strength
Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)	2004–present	15,000
Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)	2004–present	4000
Niger Delta Liberation Front (NDLF)	2005–present	2500
Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV)	2005–present	4000
Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)	2016–present	unknown

Source: Authors' compilation. Available at: <http://www.wikipedia.com/conflict-in-the-niger-delta>.

**Table 5.** Share of active separatist movements in the Gulf of Guinea by country.

Countries	Number	Percentage of total
Angola	1	5.9
Cameroon	1	5.9
Central African Republic	1	5.9
Congo DR	3	17.7
Congo Republic	2	11.8
Equatorial Guinea	1	5.9
Nigeria	7	41.2
Senegal	1	5.9
Others	0	0

Source: Authors' compilation. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_active\\_separatist\\_movements\\_in\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_active_separatist_movements_in_Africa).



**Table 6.** Location of attempted and actual piracy attacks in Gulf of Guinea states, 2011–15.

Year	Number of attempted and actual attacks in GOG states	Number of attempted and actual attacks in Nigeria	Nigeria's percentage of total attacks in GOG states
2012	59	27	45.8
2013	50	31	62
2014	40	18	45
2015	28	14	50

Source: ICC International Maritime Bureau (2015).

The spread of oil-related violence by citizens in Nigeria has severe implications for maritime security in the GOG as it not only leads to the proliferation of illicit weapons, but also increases the number of non-state actors who possess these illicit weapons. Table 5 further strengthens our argument that insecurity in Nigeria orchestrated by oil-engendered violence intensifies maritime insecurity in the GOG. The ability of these anti-state organisations to secure 'political protection' from high-ranking politicians gives them access to sophisticated weapons. They are also known to extend their criminal activities beyond the borders of Nigeria to neighbouring GOG states for economic gains since financial sustainability is crucial to the realisation of the groups' agendas.

Table 6 shows that Nigerian waterways remain unsafe for energy trade as more cases of pirate attacks are observed and reported. From 27 reported cases in 2012, the figure rose to 31 in 2013. Also, the 18 reported cases in 2014 and 14 in 2015 accounted for 45% and 50% of all reported cases in the GOG in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The IMB report of 2015 (ICC International Maritime Bureau 2015) also shows that more than 80% of attempted and actual attacks in GOG states were on vessels carrying crude oil, while almost 98% of such attacks in Nigerian waterways were on oil-laden vessels. This scenario is concerning when we consider the fact that an estimated 85% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings come from crude oil, and the waterways in the GOG are its major source of transnational oil transportation.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the interface between energy hegemony and maritime security in the GOG. Specifically, it focused on how Nigeria's dominance of the energy trade in the region undermines other states' commitment to trans-border cooperation. The study observed that the GOG maritime domain remains unsafe despite growing emphasis on trans-border cooperation by GOG states and international partners who provide technical and financial support to the region. It, however, differed from existing arguments in the academic literature that hold that poor coordination of regional cooperation efforts, evident in the duplication of responsibilities by related regional bodies, and poor and sometimes inexistent funding of sub-regional organisations, as well as weak institutional capacity of GOG states to domesticate and enforce most of the agreements reached, are responsible for the continuous rise in criminal activities that undermine maritime security in the GOG. Rather, the study argued that Nigeria's hegemony in the energy trade in the region makes other states' political will or commitment to achieve effective regional trans-border cooperation difficult. This is largely because more than 80% of maritime crimes in the GOG, particularly on the high seas, are targeted against the energy trade. The study found that the contradictions of

rentier oil governance in Nigeria, as manifested in patronage conflicts over oil wealth accumulation, problems of official security leakages or complicities in oil crimes, and oil-engendered violence caused by citizens' exclusion from the nation's oil wealth, have implications for the rise in maritime insecurity in the GOG.

In the light of these findings, the study recommends that the regional cooperation approach directed at managing maritime insecurity in the GOG should shift focus from militarisation of maritime zones and borders to promotion of regional human security. Nigeria should play an active role both in promoting a more democratic management of its oil wealth and in mobilising smaller economies in the GOG to promote a regional initiative that emphasises human security over border security.

## Note

1. From the northwestern coast of Africa, these countries include Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola on the southernmost fringes.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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