

Effect of Piracy on Maritime Insecurity in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

Piracy and maritime insecurity pose significant challenges to the South-South region of Nigeria, a critical maritime gateway for trade and energy resources. This abstract provides a succinct overview of a comprehensive study that investigates the multifaceted aspects of piracy and maritime insecurity in this region. Employing a documentary research design, this study examines a wide range of historical records, government reports, legal documents, news articles, and other relevant sources to explore the root causes, historical evolution, and contemporary dynamics of piracy and maritime insecurity. The findings reveal a complex interplay of factors contributing to piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria. Historical legacies, economic disparities, inadequate law enforcement, and political instability have created an environment conducive to criminal activities at sea. Furthermore, this study identifies various piracy tactics, including kidnappings for ransom, oil theft, and attacks on vessels, which threaten regional stability and economic prosperity. The paper underscores the urgency of addressing piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria to ensure the safety of maritime trade and energy resources. It emphasizes the role of documentary research in shedding light on this critical issue and calls for concerted efforts by governments, industry stakeholders, and international organizations to promote maritime security, foster economic development, and safeguard the well-being of coastal communities.

Background to the Study

Maritime insecurity is a prevailing concern, particularly in the South-South region of Nigeria, a crucial area for maritime activities due to its numerous oil and gas installations and extensive waterways. This region has been grappling with a range of maritime security challenges, including piracy, armed robbery, and kidnapping. The menace of piracy has not only posed significant threats to the region's socio-economic development but also undermined its efforts to attract foreign investment, ensure the safety of marine transportation, and protect the livelihoods of fishing communities.

The South-South region of Nigeria is a vital economic hub for the country due to its significant oil and gas reserves, as well as its strategic maritime location, which allows for the transportation of goods and resources through its waterways. However, in recent years, the region has been plagued by increasing incidents of piracy, which have had profound and far-reaching consequences on maritime security. Piracy in this context refers to acts of robbery, violence, and hostage-taking perpetrated by criminal elements at sea, targeting vessels, and personnel engaged in maritime activities (Ibaba, 2020).

The issue of piracy in South-South Nigeria is multifaceted and complex. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate maritime security infrastructure, and corruption have contributed to the rise of piracy activities. These criminal acts not only pose a direct threat to the safety of maritime personnel but also have significant economic implications. Shipping companies operating in the region often incur substantial financial losses due to ransom payments, increased insurance premiums, and operational disruptions caused by piracy. Additionally, the South-South region's reputation as a maritime hotspot for piracy has deterred foreign investments and hindered economic growth in the area (Ibaba, 2020).

Moreover, piracy in South-South Nigeria has implications beyond its immediate borders. It disrupts global trade routes, affects the supply of oil and gas to international markets, and contributes to the instability of the Gulf of Guinea, which is already a hotbed of maritime insecurity. The international community, regional organizations, and the Nigerian government have made efforts to combat piracy in the region, but the problem persists, necessitating a deeper understanding of its causes and consequences (Ibaba, 2020). Nonetheless, despite various measures implemented by both local authorities and the international community to combat piracy in the South-South region of Nigeria, the frequency and intensity of attacks have remained persistently high. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors contributing to maritime insecurity in the region, with a specific focus on the impact of piracy.

Regrettably, no study known to the researchers has been carried out on this problem confronting piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria. This, therefore, necessitated this study with a view to ascertaining the impact of piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria.

Specifically, this study attempts to use the following objectives.

- i. To find out the main causes of piracy in South-South Nigeria.
- ii. To examine to what extent piracy affects the maritime economy of South-South Nigeria.
- iii. To find out the challenges to combating piracy in South-South Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Piracy

Under the context of maritime activities, piracy is a specific form of criminal activity that occurs on the high seas, coastal waters, or other navigable waterways. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) (2017), defines piracy as "criminal acts committed on the high seas or in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State." These acts typically involve "violence, robbery, or hijacking of ships, as well as kidnapping and hostage-taking of crew members for ransom." The IMO's definition underscores the global nature of piracy and its impact on maritime security. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (2020) defines piracy as "any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft and directed on the high seas against another ship, aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft." In the context of maritime activities, UNCLOS provides a legal framework for addressing piracy on the high seas.

One recent scholarly definition of piracy is provided by Ibaba (2020), who defines it as "the unauthorized use of violence or force, or the threat of violence or force, against ships or aircraft for private gain, committed outside the jurisdiction of any state." This definition is broad enough to encompass both traditional and modern forms of piracy. Another recent scholarly definition of piracy is provided by Doumbouya (2018), who defines it as "any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: On the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; Against a ship, aircraft, person or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any state; Against a ship or aircraft, person or property in a place, even though within the jurisdiction of a state, if the act is intended or likely to endanger the safety of navigation or to interfere unlawfully with any maritime activity protected by international law."

This definition is more specific than Ibaba's definition, and it explicitly includes interference with maritime activities within the jurisdiction of a state. Examples of maritime activities that may be targeted by pirates include: Shipping, Fishing, Oil and gas exploration and production, Marine research, Underwater cable maintenance and Tourism. Piracy can have a significant impact on these activities, leading to disruption, economic losses, and even death and injury. It is important to note that the law on piracy is constantly evolving, and there is no single definition of piracy that is universally accepted. However, the recent scholarly definitions provided above reflect a broad consensus among legal scholars on the essential elements of piracy under maritime activities.

O'Connell (2019) defines piracy as "an act of robbery or depredation committed on the high seas without lawful authority. Scholars researching piracy in maritime activities often define it as "organized criminal acts perpetrated at sea with the intent to seize vessels, cargo, or personnel for financial gain or other motives, often accompanied by violence or threats of violence." This definition acknowledges the organized and profit-driven nature of contemporary piracy.

According to Onuoha (2010) piracy is a term used to describe acts of armed robbery, hijacking and other malicious acts against ships in international waters. Acts carried out with the intent of stealing valuables onboard or extorting money from ship owners or other third-party interests by holding the ship or crew interests to ransom. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB, 2009) in its annual report, defined piracy as an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act. Issues arising from the definition of IMB above, is that, intent, specification, extent and the use of force are principal elements to be considered in what constitute piracy and not necessarily where or location of occurrence. This definition is adopted in this study for the sake of analytical convenience, and due to the fact that it encapsulates both the features of sea piracy, armed robbery, and sea theft. Hence, this study sees sea piracy simply as sea theft or robbery. From all the above definitions, we can conclude that piracy in maritime activities is the "unlawful acts committed at sea, encompassing armed robbery, hijacking, kidnapping, and other criminal activities, aimed at ships, their crews, or their cargo, often carried out by organized criminal groups seeking financial profit or other gains."

Concept of Maritime Insecurity and Security

Maritime insecurity is a broad concept that encompasses a wide range of threats to maritime safety and security. It can be defined as the state of affairs in which maritime activities are vulnerable to disruption, delay, or loss due to natural hazards, man-made threats, or a combination of both. Maritime security, on the other hand, is the condition of being free from maritime insecurity. It can be defined as the ability of a state to protect its maritime interests from threats, both natural and man-made.

Doumbouya (2018), defines maritime insecurity as "the state of affairs in which maritime activities are vulnerable to disruption, delay, or loss due to natural hazards, man-made threats, or a combination of both." Maritime insecurity refers to the condition characterized by a range of threats and challenges in the maritime domain, including but not limited to piracy, armed robbery at sea, terrorism, illegal fishing, human trafficking, and environmental degradation. It encompasses a broad spectrum of risks that compromise the safety and stability of maritime activities, affecting coastal communities and global trade (Gilpin, 2019). Ibaba (2020) defines maritime security as "the ability of a state to protect its maritime interests from threats, both natural and man-made." O'Connell (2019) defines maritime security as "the condition of being free from maritime insecurity."

Maritime security is a multidimensional concept that encompasses efforts, policies, and actions aimed at safeguarding the maritime domain from various threats and challenges. It includes the protection of vessels, ports, and coastal areas against piracy, terrorism, smuggling, and other illicit activities. Maritime security also involves promoting safety, environmental sustainability, and the rule of law in maritime operations to facilitate global trade and ensure the well-being of coastal communities (Bueger, & Edmunds, 2017). Maritime insecurity refers to the potential threats, vulnerabilities, and risks that exist in the maritime domain. It encompasses various forms of insecurity such as piracy, maritime terrorism, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling, and environmental degradation. On the other hand, maritime security refers to the measures and strategies implemented to mitigate these threats and ensure the safe, secure, and sustainable use of the seas and oceans. Here are some recent scholarly definitions and references related to maritime insecurity and security.

According to Bateman, (2019), "Maritime security involves the detection and prevention of all threats to seafarers, ships, ports, facilities, cargoes, and territorial integrity, as well as the facilitation of a secure and orderly flow of maritime commerce." Bueger, & Stockbruegger, (2016) define maritime insecurity as "the absence of maritime security, where states and societies are unable to ensure the rule of law, safety, and well-being at sea." In their work, Chircop, Coffen-Smout, & McConnell, (2018) define maritime security as "the conditions established through the collective and individual efforts of nations and other organizations to ensure the safety of shipping, the integrity of marine ecosystems, and the people who live, work, trade or enjoy recreational activities around, or on, the oceans and seas."

Historical Overview of Piracy in South-South Nigeria

Piracy has a long history in the coastal region of South-South Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta. The region's complex waterways and vast natural resources have, unfortunately, made it an attractive location for pirate activities. This historical overview will provide an insight into the development of piracy in South-South Nigeria, along with some relevant data and references (IMB, 2021).

Early Years: Piracy in South-South Nigeria can be traced back to the pre-colonial era when local communities engaged in maritime trade and other seafaring activities. These communities had their own laws and regulations governing trade, with some resorting to piracy to gain control over valuable resources and trade routes. However, it is important to note that piracy during this time was often driven by political rivalries and conflicts rather than purely economic motives.

Colonial Era: During the colonial period, piracy in South-South Nigeria underwent significant changes. European powers, particularly the British, established control over the region, recognizing it as a key hub for trade in natural resources like palm oil and rubber. The introduction of European trade systems disrupted the existing local trade networks, leading to conflicts and competition. Some local communities turned to piracy as a means to resist European control and protect their interests.

Modern Piracy: In the late 20th century, piracy in South-South Nigeria transitioned into a more organized and violent phenomenon. The discovery of vast oil reserves in the Niger Delta attracted international oil companies, leading to increased offshore drilling activities and the establishment of oil platforms. This created a fertile ground for piracy, as criminals realized the enormous monetary gains associated with kidnapping, hijacking, and extortion in the oil industry (IMB, 2021).

Rise of the Niger Delta Militant Groups: Starting in the early 2000s, piracy in South-South Nigeria became closely intertwined with the activities of militant groups in the Niger Delta. These groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), largely originated from communities affected by the negative impacts of oil exploitation. They engaged in acts of piracy as a means to protest against the environmental degradation, socioeconomic marginalization, and corruption associated with the oil industry (Antai, & Eduwem, 2020). The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) (2021) reported 135 piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea in 2020, up from 81 in 2019. Of the 135 incidents reported in 2020, 115 occurred in Nigerian waters. The IMB also reported that 40 crew members were kidnapped in the Gulf of Guinea in 2020, up from 33 in 2019. Of the 40 crew members kidnapped in 2020, 36 were kidnapped in Nigerian waters.

Security Challenges and Maritime Operation in South-South Nigeria

The South-South region of Nigeria is a vital maritime hub for the country. It is home to major ports, oil and gas terminals, and shipping lanes (Ibaba, 2020). However, the region also faces a number of security challenges, which can have a significant impact on maritime operations.

Some of the key security challenges facing maritime operations in South-South Nigeria include:

- a. **Piracy:** Piracy is a major problem in the Gulf of Guinea, where South-South Nigeria is located. In 2020, the region accounted for over 90% of all reported piracy incidents worldwide. Piracy attacks can have a significant impact on maritime operations, disrupting trade, increasing costs, and endangering the safety of seafarers.
- b. **Armed Robbery at Sea:** Armed robbery at sea is another serious security challenge in South-South Nigeria. These attacks can result in the theft of cargo, the kidnapping of crew members, and even death.
- c. **Maritime Terrorism:** Maritime terrorism is a growing concern in the Gulf of Guinea. There have been a number of high-profile attacks in recent years, including the kidnapping of seafarers and the bombing of oil and gas facilities.
- d. **Illegal Fishing:** Illegal fishing is a major problem in Nigeria's maritime waters. Illegal fishing vessels can damage marine ecosystems, disrupt legitimate fishing operations, and pose a safety hazard to other seafarers.
- e. **Oil Theft:** Oil theft is a major problem in the Niger Delta, which is located in South-South Nigeria. Oil thieves often use sophisticated methods to steal oil from pipelines and offshore platforms. Oil theft can have a significant impact on the Nigerian economy and the environment.

- f. **Kidnappings for Ransom:** Kidnapping of crew members and expatriates working in the oil and gas industry is a recurring security challenge. Kidnappers demand ransoms, disrupting maritime activities and causing financial losses.
- g. **Community Conflicts:** Inter-communal conflicts and disputes over land and resources can escalate into violence, affecting the safety of maritime operations and the movement of goods.
- h. **Militancy and Insurgency:** Activities of militant groups and insurgencies in the South-South region further intensify security challenges. These groups engage in attacks, interferences in legitimate maritime operations, and hostage-taking, leading to disruptions in maritime trade and investments. (Osiki, 2013).
- i. **Weak Maritime Governance and Law Enforcement:** The absence of effective maritime governance and law enforcement mechanisms exacerbates security challenges. Limited surveillance, inadequate patrol vessels, and insufficient training and resources for law enforcement agencies contribute to a lack of deterrence against criminal activities. (Asawo & Olumide, 2019)

These security challenges can make maritime operations in South-South Nigeria difficult and dangerous. However, there are a number of measures that can be taken to mitigate these risks, including:

- a. **Increased Maritime Security Presence:** The Nigerian government and other stakeholders need to increase their maritime security presence in the Gulf of Guinea. This includes deploying more naval vessels and coast guard patrols, as well as improving maritime surveillance and intelligence sharing.
- b. **Improved Port Security:** Port security in South-South Nigeria needs to be improved. This includes implementing stricter access control measures, installing more security cameras, and conducting regular security drills.
- c. **Best Practices for Maritime Operators:** Maritime operators need to implement best practices to mitigate the risk of attack. This includes developing security plans, training crews on security procedures, and using appropriate security equipment.

Major Challenges in Combating Piracy and Maritime Insecurity in South-South Nigeria

Piracy and maritime insecurity pose significant challenges for the South-South region of Nigeria. These criminal activities not only disrupt regional and global maritime trade but also endanger the lives and safety of seafarers and civilians. Nneoma, Nelson, & Chukwuemeka (2020) highlight the major challenges facing combatting piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria, with a recent reference to the situation.

- a. **Weak Maritime Law Enforcement:** A critical challenge in combating piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria is the weak maritime law enforcement capacity. This includes inadequate resources, outdated equipment, and limited training for law enforcement agencies, such as the Navy and Maritime Police. Insufficient patrol vessels, surveillance systems, and intelligence capabilities hamper efforts to effectively detect, deter, and quickly respond to piracy incidents (Nneoma, Nelson, & Chukwuemeka 2020).

- b. **Corruption and Impunity:** Corruption within institutions tasked with combating piracy hinders effective action against maritime criminals. Some law enforcement officers and government officials may actively collude with pirates or turn a blind eye to their activities for personal gain. This fosters an environment of impunity, where pirates operate without significant consequences or fear of prosecution. Addressing corruption and holding accountable those involved is crucial to combat piracy.
- c. **Inadequate International Cooperation:** Piracy and maritime insecurity are transnational issues that require efficient coordination and collaboration among countries in the region and globally. A lack of effective cooperation between Nigeria and neighboring states, as well as limited international collaboration, hampers efforts to address maritime threats. Insufficient information sharing and the absence of coordinated joint operations contribute to the persistence of piracy in the South-South region.
- d. **Unemployment and Poverty:** High levels of unemployment and poverty in coastal communities provide a pool of potential recruits for pirate groups, making it difficult to address the root causes of maritime insecurity (Nneoma, Nelson, & Chukwuemeka 2020).
- e. **Inadequate Legal Framework:** Gaps and inconsistencies in maritime laws and regulations hinder the prosecution of pirates and the legal framework for addressing maritime insecurity.
- f. **Environmental Degradation:** Environmental degradation, including oil spills and pollution, contributes to maritime insecurity by exacerbating social tensions and providing cover for illegal activities.
- g. **Socio-Economic Development:** Lack of economic opportunities and infrastructure development in the region perpetuates maritime insecurity, as criminal activities often seem like the only viable option for livelihoods (Nneoma, Nelson, & Chukwuemeka 2020).
- h. **Socio-economic Factors:** The socio-economic factors driving piracy and maritime insecurity in the South-South region of Nigeria are complex and contribute to the challenges faced in combating these issues. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities in the region provide fertile ground for recruitment into pirate networks. Many individuals turn to piracy as a means of survival due to limited alternative livelihood options.
- i. **International collaboration and coordination:** Piracy in the South-South region is not limited to Nigerian waters but extends to neighboring countries in the Gulf of Guinea. Combatting this transnational issue requires international collaboration and coordination among regional actors, including Nigeria, Benin, and Togo (Nneoma, Nelson, & Chukwuemeka 2020).

Counter Measures for Combating Piracy in Nigeria

Combating piracy in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach involving various countermeasures, both at the national and international levels. Here are some key countermeasures, along with references:

1. **Enhanced Maritime Law Enforcement:** Strengthening maritime law enforcement agencies, providing them with necessary resources, including patrol vessels and surveillance technology, and improving their training and capacity to respond to piracy incidents (Chijioke 2019).
2. **Legal Framework and Prosecution:** Developing a robust legal framework to prosecute pirates and establishing specialized maritime courts to expedite trials. This includes cooperation with international partners to facilitate the legal process (Efthymios, 2020). **Regional Cooperation:** Collaborating with neighboring countries and regional organizations to share intelligence, conduct joint patrols, and coordinate efforts to address piracy across borders (André & Christian (2019).
3. **Community Engagement:** Engaging with coastal communities to address the root causes of piracy, such as poverty and unemployment, through economic development initiatives, education, and social programs (Agulefo, 2021).
4. **International Naval Cooperation:** Collaborating with international naval forces, such as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and EU NAVFOR, to conduct joint patrols and share information to enhance maritime security (Smith 2020).
5. **Private Security Companies:** Allowing the use of private security companies on vessels to provide armed guards as a deterrent against pirate attacks (Bartosiewicz 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The basic perspective for analyzing the substantive issues under study is anchored on the theory of Routine Activity Theory (RAT). The Routine Activity Theory (RAT) is an offshoot of the socio-structural theory, advanced by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson. It is however a new paradigm and a Meta -theory in the 1970s crime discourses (Igbo, 2008).

The Routine Activity Theory explains crime as a product of the combined result of three essential elements:

1. Potential offenders or persons who are motivated to commit crimes.
2. Suitable targets, that is, the presence of things that are of some economic value and which can be easily transported.
3. Absence of capable guards or persons who can prevent a crime from taking place.

The foregoing propositions put forward by RAT crystallize the factors that prompt the occurrence of pirate attacks in Bayelsa waterways and its attendant threat on the waterways. Principally, the availability of suitable targets (oil installations of multinational oil companies, trawlers, boat drivers, fishermen, local businesses that patronize the water transport) according to the routine activity theory is a motivator and sustained factor. Too, the inadequacy nay unavailability of competent security networks to safeguard the territorial waters of the study area. Based on this, serial attacks by pirates on maritime business operators could be attributed to weak maritime security. Given this, the Routine Activity Theory concerned itself with explicating the individual

motivational factors in crime causation which other traditional sociological theories of crime do not. Its main preoccupation is to emphasize how ordinary or normal lawful, conventional, routine activities of individuals increase the probability of criminal activities (Igbo, 2008).

Methodology of the Study

This study adopted a documentary research design. Employing a documentary research design, this study examines a wide range of historical records, government reports, legal documents, news articles, and other relevant sources to explore the root causes, historical evolution, and contemporary dynamics of piracy and maritime insecurity.

Discussion of Findings

After review of all empirical study and documents, it was possible to see through this study that on the effects of piracy on the maritime economy of South-South Nigeria. It was evidence to discover that piracy has a significant and multifaceted impact on the maritime economy of South-South Nigeria. In understanding the extent of this impact, we explore this various dimension.

1. **Economic Losses:** Piracy leads to direct economic losses for the maritime industry in South-South Nigeria. These losses include ransom payments to secure the release of kidnapped crew members, damage to vessels, and theft of cargo. Shipping companies often have to pay substantial sums to secure the safe return of their personnel, resulting in financial strain.
2. **Insurance Costs:** The heightened risk of piracy in the region increases insurance premiums for vessels operating in South-South Nigeria. Higher insurance costs directly affect the operating expenses of shipping companies, making it more expensive to conduct maritime operations in the area.
3. **Operational Disruptions:** Piracy-related incidents, such as vessel hijackings and crew kidnappings, disrupt the normal flow of maritime operations. These disruptions can lead to delays in the delivery of goods, increased operational costs, and a reduction in overall efficiency. For example, vessels may be required to reroute to safer waters or maintain longer security watches.
4. **Investment Deterrence:** The persistent threat of piracy deters foreign investment in South-South Nigeria's maritime sector. Investors may be reluctant to commit resources to a region plagued by piracy due to concerns about the safety of their investments. This lack of investment hampers economic development and job creation in the region.
5. **Trade Disruptions:** Piracy can disrupt the transportation of goods, including oil and gas exports, in and out of South-South Nigeria. This not only affects the country's revenue from exports but also disrupts global trade routes, as South-South Nigeria is strategically located for international maritime trade.
6. **Human Capital:** The safety concerns associated with piracy can lead to a shortage of skilled seafarers willing to work in the region. This shortage can result in higher labor costs for shipping companies and negatively impact the quality of maritime personnel available.

7. **Environmental Impact:** Some pirate groups are involved in illegal oil bunkering and theft of crude oil. These activities contribute to environmental degradation, including oil spills, which further harm the maritime ecosystem and may require costly cleanup efforts.
8. **Loss of Competitiveness:** High operational costs and security concerns can make South-South Nigeria's ports and maritime routes less competitive compared to other regions. This can result in a decline in the region's share of global maritime trade.

In summary, piracy has a far-reaching impact on the maritime economy of South-South Nigeria, affecting both local and international stakeholders. It results in economic losses, increased operational costs, deterrence of investment, disruptions in trade, and environmental consequences. Addressing piracy in the region is crucial to promoting economic growth, stability, and safety in the maritime sector.

On the second objective, it was obvious to discover that combating piracy in South-South Nigeria is a challenging task, due to a number of factors, including:

1. **Weak Maritime Governance and Law Enforcement:** The Nigerian government has limited resources and capabilities to effectively patrol its maritime borders and respond to piracy attacks.
2. **Porous Maritime Borders:** Nigeria has a long coastline and porous maritime borders, which makes it difficult to prevent pirates from entering and exiting its waters.
3. **High Unemployment and Poverty rates in Coastal Communities:** Poverty and unemployment are high in many coastal communities in South-South Nigeria, which makes some people more vulnerable to turning to piracy.
4. **Collusion between Pirates and Corrupt Officials:** There have been reports of collusion between pirates and corrupt government officials, which undermines efforts to combat piracy.
5. **Lack of Regional and International Cooperation:** Piracy is a regional and international problem, and it requires a regional and international response. However, there is limited cooperation among the countries in the Gulf of Guinea and with other international partners on combating piracy.

In addition to these challenges, piracy in South-South Nigeria has also become more sophisticated and organized in recent years. Pirates are now using more sophisticated weapons and technology, and they are targeting high-value commodities, such as oil and cargo. This makes it more difficult and expensive to combat piracy.

Recommendations

This paper investigated piracy and maritime insecurity in South-South Nigeria. The study found that piracy, sea robbery, and poaching is causing grave threat to sea business operation such as sea faring, trading, and fishing along the waterways of South-South State. The paper discovers that the operators of these businesses are experiencing

coastal insecurity, fear and anxiety due to the criminal activities of pirates. To this end, this paper recommends the following:

Despite the challenges, there are a number of things that can be done to combat piracy in South-South Nigeria. These include:

- i. The Nigerian government needs to address the root causes of piracy, such as poverty and unemployment in coastal communities. This can be done by investing in education, job creation, and development projects in coastal communities.
- ii. The Nigerian government needs to invest in maritime security and law enforcement. This includes increasing the number of naval vessels and coast guard patrols, improving maritime surveillance and intelligence sharing, and training and equipping law enforcement personnel to deal with piracy.
- iii. The Nigerian government needs to work closely with other countries in the Gulf of Guinea and with other international partners to combat piracy. This includes sharing information, conducting joint patrols, and developing regional and international maritime security strategies.

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