Nigeria's Role in the Promotion of Peace and Security in the Gulf of Guinea through Multilateral Cooperation 2001-2022

EDGAR AGUBAMAH (Ph.D.)

Department of Political Science and International Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

G.s.m: 08067141842

Email adds: agubamah12@gmail.com

Abstract

This work examines Nigeria's role in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea region. The regional security theory (RST), which highlights the link of interdependent relationships among states within a region, serves as the theoretical framework of the study. The objective of the research is to evaluate Nigeria's contributions to peace and security through multilateral cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea region. The study utilizes secondary data from credible sources such as official reports, policy documents, books, diplomatic records, magazines, Newspapers, internet sources, and academic literature. Documentary evidence was used to analyze the data obtained. The data collection process follows specific criteria for relevance, reliability, and credibility. The findings reveal that Nigeria to promote peace and security in the Gulf Region, actively engages in multilateral initiatives and collaborations, such as those within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since its establishment in 1975, the Yaoundé Architecture since 2013, and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) since 2001. In addition, to promote peace and security Nigeria participates in joint patrols, intelligence sharing, capacity building, and collaborative efforts to address maritime security challenges. The study highlights the importance of international cooperation and partnerships in supporting Nigeria's efforts. Consequently, the work emphasizes the significance of fostering closer collaboration among the Gulf of Guinea countries to enhance maritime security in the area. Collaboration with shipping companies, naval industry stakeholders, and port authorities is essential for sharing information, implementing best practices, and developing joint initiatives to improve security measures and promote a safe operating environment. While progress has been made, the work underscores challenges related to limited resources, capacity gaps, and member-states coordination. It emphasizes the need for sustained commitment, cooperation, and investment in capacity building and technology to address peace and security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea. The work suggests further research to explore the effectiveness of multilateral initiatives, Nigeria's domestic factors, non-traditional security threats, regional dynamics and cooperation, and gender and inclusivity considerations in Nigeria's promotion of peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Keywords: Role, promotion, peace, security, cooperation

Email: agubamah12@gmail.com

1 Introduction

The Gulf of Guinea, situated on the west coast of Africa, is a region of immense and significant strategic importance due to its abundant natural resources, particularly oil and gas reserves. It stretches from Cape Lopez to Cape Palmas. It consists of nineteen countries: Nigeria, Guinea, Gabon, Angola, Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo, and Republic of Congo (World Atlas, 2021). The Region's vast reserves of hydrocarbons make it a crucial player in the global energy market, attracting international investment and trade.

The Gulf of Guinea region is known for its immense natural resources, yet most of it remains untapped. It boasts approximately 35% of the world's total petroleum reserves. It is abundant in various minerals such as diamonds, tin, bitumen, uranium, copper, manganese, gold, phosphates, granite, gas, marble, quartz, lead, zinc, wolfram, fluorite, sulfur, feldspar, silver, kaolin, mica, asphalt, gypsum, oil, and talc (Babagana, 2016). Furthermore, the Region encompasses vast rainforests which account for 20% of the world's total rainforest coverage, thus playing an important role in generating oxygen for the entire planet (Babagana, 2016). Notably, the Gulf of Guinea is a significant habitat for diverse biodiversity, providing a home and protection to numerous species of animals, and micro-organisms. Its ecological importance extends beyond its borders, contributing to the overall preservation of global biodiversity.

The Gulf of Guinea holds significant global importance due to various factors. Firstly, it is a central hub for oil and gas production, contributing to global energy supply and impacting oil prices. Secondly, it serves as a vital trade route, facilitating the transportation of goods between continents, which is crucial for the global economy. The extraction and export of oil and gas from the region have significant economic implications, both locally and globally, fostering economic development and partnerships. Additionally, maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, such as piracy and illegal fishing, have broader implications for global security. The region's rich maritime ecosystem which supports local livelihoods in addressing environmental concerns, such as oil spills, is crucial for sustainable practices. Finally, regional stability is essential for promoting peace, stability, and development in West Africa and beyond, requiring cooperation and multilateral efforts to address challenges and maintain stability Anthony, 2009).

The challenges faced by the Gulf of Guinea in terms of peace, security, and stability are significant and have implications for global trade and security. These challenges include piracy, maritime crime, illegal fishing, political instability, and transnational organized crime. Piracy is a significant concern in the region, with incidents of attacks, hijackings, and crew kidnappings disrupting maritime trade and posing risks to seafarers and vessels. Naval crime, including armed robbery, illegal oil bunkering, smuggling, and illegal fishing, further undermines the rule of law, disrupts local economies, and fosters instability (Acharya, 2017).

Illegal fishing practices contribute to overfishing, depletion of fish stocks, and negative impacts on local communities that rely on fishing for livelihoods. This exacerbates tensions among countries and also compromises the region; food security (Baumeister,1995). Political instability, internal conflicts, governance challenges, and social unrest in some Gulf of Guinea countries create fertile ground for criminal activities and exacerbate security concerns. Weak governance structures and corruption further contribute to these challenges. Transnational organized crime, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and arms smuggling utilizes the

Gulf of Guinea as a transit route, posing security risks within the region; and beyond (Bernard, 2011).

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from countries within the region; regional organizations, and international partners. Multilateral cooperation is crucial in fostering collaboration, sharing information, and coordinating initiatives to combat piracy, maritime crime, and other security threats (Brecher, 1997). Nigeria, being a key player in the region; has a role to play in promoting cooperation and taking proactive measures to enhance peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea (Buzan, 1983). To evaluate Nigeria's contribution to peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea through multilateral cooperation is the main focus of this work. By examining Nigeria's initiatives, policies, and partnerships in addressing the region; security challenges, the study seeks to determine the effectiveness of Nigeria's actions and their impact on peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea. For clarity and easy comprehension; this work is divided into seven sections: - introduction; methodology; theoretical framework; Gulf of Guinea; Nigeria's multilateral cooperation role in peace and security in the region; conclusion; and recommendations.

2 Methods and Materials

This is a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative study. The data for the work was obtained through secondary sources like books, journals, theses, magazines, newspapers, and internet materials. The data collected was analyzed through documentary evidence and; the regional security theory was used as a tool of analysis.

2.1 *Theoretical Framework*

The theory adopted by this work to explain Nigeria's role in the promotion of peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea region through multilateral cooperation is the regional security theory. This theory posits that for regional stability, peace, and, security, countries within such regions should engage in multilateral cooperation strongly backed by established institutions. This is precisely what Nigeria is doing in the Gulf of Guinea to ensure peace and security. The main propounders of this theory are Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver. They introduced it in 2003 through their work "Regions and Powers" (Buzan, 1997).

The regional security theory is a framework or perspective that explains the changes in security within a specific geographic region. This theory helps analyze the causes of conflicts, the drivers of cooperation, and mechanisms for maintaining stability within regional contexts. This theory believes that security challenges can vary across regions due to factors such as historical context, geographical conditions, shared borders, and common regional interests. Instead of solely relying on global or national perspectives, regional security highlights the unique characteristics and dynamics that shape security within a particular area.

One key aspect of regional security theory is the emphasis on regional cooperation. The theory acknowledges that addressing security challenges requires collaborative efforts among states within the Region. Regional cooperation can take various forms, including the collaboration of regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral agreements, joint military exercises, information-sharing mechanisms, and the development of common security frameworks. Regional security approaches also emphasize the importance of regional institutions in managing and mitigating security challenges. These institutions serve as

platforms for dialogue, negotiation, and the coordination of policies and actions among member states. They provide mechanisms for conflict prevention, crisis management, and confidence-building measures. Examples of regional security institutions include the Economic Community of West African States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the African Union (AU) (Charles, 2013).

One prominent regional security theory aspect is the regional security complex which highlights the intricate web of interdependent relationships among states within a region. It emphasizes the role of shared identity, norms, and institutions in shaping security dynamics. This aspect suggests that states within a region; form a security complex characterized by a shared set of security concerns and interactions.

According to this theory, security complexes are shaped by two key factors: the principle of mutual security dependence and the presence of shared regional identity. Mutual security dependence refers to the interdependence among states regarding their security concerns. States within a security complex similarly perceive threats and vulnerabilities, leading to cooperative or conflictual relationships. The presence of a shared regional identity contributes to the formation of a security complex. This shared identity can be based on cultural, historical, linguistic, or religious factors, which create a sense of collective identity and common interests among regional States (Cortright, 2008).

The theory suggests that security dynamics within a region can vary based on the level of integration and power distribution among states. It recognizes that security issues within a complex are not isolated but interconnected, and conflicts or cooperation in one area can have spill-over effects on neighboring states. This theory is built on several key assumptions:

1. Geographic: The regional security theory assumes that states within a specific geographic region are more likely to interact and share security concerns. Proximity facilitates the flow of information, trade, and migration, leading to interconnected security dynamics.

2. Security dependence: The theory assumes that states within a security complex are dependent on each other's security. They perceive common threats and vulnerabilities that require cooperation or competition to address. States' security is influenced by the actions and behavior of other states in the complex.

3. Regional identity: It posits that states within a security complex share a sense of regional identity. This identity is based on cultural, historical, linguistic, or religious factors. Shared identity enhances the likelihood of cooperation and reduces the possibility of conflict among states in the complex.

4. Spillover effects: It also assumes that security dynamics within a complex are interconnected. Conflicts, alliances, and cooperation in one part of the region; can have spillover effects on neighboring states. The actions of one state can impact the security perceptions and behaviors of others in the complex.

5. The international system: The theory operates within the framework of an anarchic global system. It acknowledges no centralized authority to enforce security or resolve conflicts among

states. Instead, states must navigate their security concerns within the context of power relations and regional dynamics.

These assumptions form the foundation of the theory and provide the basis for analyzing and understanding regional security dynamics. The theoretical assumptions help explain the patterns of interaction, cooperation, and conflict among states within a specific geographic region. However, it is essential to recognize that these assumptions may not hold universally in all regional contexts, and their applicability should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis (Curtis, 2021). The theory has been applied to various regional contexts, such as Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, to analyze security dynamics and understand regional conflicts, alliances, and cooperation (Dahi, 2007). The theory provides a framework for studying regional security challenges and providing opportunities for regional cooperation and integration.

The theory provides a framework to examine Nigeria's engagement in fostering peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea region through multilateral cooperation. Geographically situated within the Gulf of Guineas, Nigeria shares a proximity with other coastal states that shapes their interactions and security dynamics. Within the theoretical framework, Nigeria and neighboring states in the region; are mutually depend on each other's security. Challenges such as piracy, maritime security threats, illegal fishing, and oil theft affect multiple countries in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's security concerns are affected by the actions and behavior of other states in the region; and vice versa. Furthermore, the shared regional identity among countries in the Gulf of Guinea plays a significant role in shaping security dynamics. Nigeria shares cultural, historical, and economic ties with other regional states. This shared identity can serve as a foundation for collaborative efforts to promote peace and security.

The theory also highlights the potential for security spillover effects. Security issues originating from one part of the Gulf of Guinea region can affect neighboring states. For example, maritime piracy or illegal activities can undermine the stability and security of multiple countries. Therefore, Nigeria's actions to address these challenges can have broader implications for regional peace and security.

In this context, multilateral cooperation becomes crucial. Nigeria has actively participated in initiatives such as the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Yaoundé Architecture for Maritime Security. These multilateral frameworks provide platforms for collaboration, information sharing, joint patrols, and capacity building to address security threats collectively (Galtung, 1964). By employing this theory, we can analyze Nigeria's role within the Gulf of Guinea region in promoting peace and security through multilateral cooperation. This theory allows for an understanding of the interconnectedness of Nigeria's security concerns and its relationships with neighboring states. It emphasizes the significance of shared security challenges and collaborative efforts in addressing common threats including maintaining stability in the Gulf of Guinea.

2.2 *Gulf of Guinea*

The Gulf of Guinea is a region in Africa located along the West and Central African coastlines, encompassing the maritime area in the western part of the continent and the north-

eastern part of the Atlantic Ocean, east of the Greenwich meridian line (The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), 2008). The southwest extent of the Gulf of Guinea is a line running southeastward from Cape Three Points in Ghana to Cape Lopez in Gabon. However, in contemporary usage, the Gulf of Guinea has acquired more of a political dimension, expanding its borders beyond Ghana in West Africa to include Gabon in Central Africa.

The United Nations Permanent Advisory Committee on Security Issues in Central Africa (UNSAC) recognizes several coastal countries as member states of the Gulf of Guinea, including Angola, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo. These countries share common security concerns and engage in regional cooperation within the Gulf of Guinea. Moreover, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), through its ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS), extends the concept of the Gulf of Guinea to include not only the coastal countries but also three landlocked countries namely, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. ECOWAS recognizes the importance of maritime access for landlocked countries to facilitate the import and export of goods, significantly, since the Gulf of Guinea's resources, such as oil and gas exploration, contribute significantly to the foreign earnings of several ECOWAS countries (IMO, 2019). Therefore, the Gulf of Guinea region has both a geographical outline and a political dimension that extends its borders to include multiple countries in West and Central Africa, reflecting the economic, security, and maritime connectivity considerations of the Region.

2.3 *Nigeria's Multilateral Cooperation Role in Peace and Security in the Region*

Nigeria is one of the major stakeholders playing a crucial function in the success of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's coastal area is roughly 853km which, harbors a large quantity of oil and gas. Nigeria is actively engaged in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea region through various multilateral cooperation initiatives. The Gulf of Guinea region, located in West Africa, faces numerous challenges related to maritime security, including piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling, and other forms of criminal activities (IMO, 2021). Nigeria, as one of the prominent countries in the region, has taken several steps to address these issues and foster regional stability. Nigeria is involved in the peace and security of the Gulf of Guinea through some multilateral institutions like the Economic Community of West African States.

Nigeria, as the most populous and economically influential country in West Africa, has assumed a significant role within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since its establishment in 1975, in promoting regional integration, peace, and security, with a particular emphasis on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria actively participates in various ECOWAS initiatives to foster peace and security in the Region.

One of the key contributions of Nigeria is its involvement in the ECOWAS Maritime Zone E (EMZ-Z), which includes the coastal waters of the member states in the Gulf of Guinea. Within this maritime zone, Nigeria collaborates with ECOWAS to undertake joint patrols, share intelligence, and exchange information to enhance maritime security. By actively engaging in these activities, Nigeria contributes to the collective efforts of preventing and countering naval security threats such as piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling, and other criminal activities (Keohane, 1984).

Furthermore, Nigeria plays a role in the development and implementation of regional maritime security initiatives within the ECOWAS framework. This includes establishing maritime centers that serve as operational hubs for information exchange, coordination, and joint activities. Through the collaboration of member states, these centers facilitate the sharing of maritime domain awareness, conduct joint patrols, and coordinate response efforts to incidents in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria'sexpertise and experience in addressing maritime security challenges in the region are valuable contributions to the development and success of these initiatives (NIMAS, 2022).

In addition, Nigeria actively engages in multinational naval exercises organized by ECOWAS. These exercises enhance interoperability and cooperation among regional navies, providing opportunities for joint training, information sharing, and coordination among maritime security forces. Nigeria's participation in these exercises not only strengthens its naval capabilities but also fosters collaboration and cooperation with neighboring countries to tackle shared naval security challenges (Michael,1997).

Moreover, Nigeria contributes to the policy development and harmonization efforts within ECOWAS to address maritime security issues. This involves active participation in the formulation of legal frameworks that are essential for effectively addressing naval threats. By actively engaging in these policy development processes, Nigeria ensures that the perspectives and interests of the Gulf of Guinea region are adequately represented, promoting regional naval security (Sulaimon, 2021).

Furthermore, Nigeria plays a crucial role in capacity-building initiatives within ECOWAS to enhance the capabilities of regional maritime security forces. This includes providing training programs, technical assistance, and resources to strengthen the capacity of coastal states in the Gulf of Guinea to combat maritime crimes effectively. Nigeria's experience in maritime security operations and its well-established naval infrastructure contribute significantly to the success of these capacity-building initiatives (Thomas, 2022).

Nigeria's active participation in ECOWAS showcases its commitment to promoting regional integration, peace, and security in the Gulf of Guinea. Through its engagement in the EMZ-E, collaboration in regional maritime security initiatives, involvement in multinational naval exercises, contribution to policy development, and participation in capacity-building efforts. Nigeria strengthens regional cooperation, fosters stability, and combats maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea within the framework of ECOWAS.

Yaoundé Architecture is another institution through which Nigeria plays its multinational role in ensuring peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea. This architecture was established through the Yaoundé Declaration, signed by member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Its primary objectives are to enhance cooperation among countries in the region; combat maritime crimes and promote security in the Gulf of Guinea (Adejuyigbe, 2021).

The Yaoundé Architecture operates through a cooperative framework, encouraging information sharing, joint operations, and coordinated responses to maritime crimes such as piracy, illegal fishing, and trafficking (Adejuyigbe, 2021). It establishes Maritime Security Centres (MSCs) as operational hubs for information exchange, coordination, and joint activities. These centers serve as focal points for sharing maritime domain awareness, conducting joint patrols, and coordinating response efforts on incidents in the Gulf of Guinea.

Regional Maritime Coordination Centers (RMCCs) have also been established in the Yaoundé Architecture. These centers act as regional coordination hubs, facilitating cooperation and collaboration among participating countries. They enhance maritime situational awareness, coordinate responses to security incidents, and support capacity-building efforts in the region.

Joint operations, such as coordinated patrols, naval exercises, and joint law enforcement actions, are encouraged under the Yaoundé Architecture. These operations aim to deter and disrupt criminal activities in the maritime domain. Capacity building is a crucial component of the initiative. The Yaoundé Architecture seeks to enhance the capabilities of countries in the region to effectively address maritime security challenges. This includes providing training programs, technical assistance, and sharing best practices in maritime security operations (UNO, 2019).

Nigeria's involvement in the Yaoundé Architecture demonstrates its commitment to collaborative efforts in the Gulf of Guinea. Through its participation, including the establishment of maritime security centers and engagement in joint operations, Nigeria contributes to combating maritime crimes and promoting security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria's multilateral role in ensuring peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea includes her part in the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), established in 2001 as an intergovernmental organization that brings together countries in the Gulf of Guinea region; including Nigeria, to promote cooperation and development. The GGC recognizes the importance of addressing various challenges faced by the area including economic development, environmental conservation, and maritime security (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020).

While the GGC's primary focus is on economic development, it acknowledges that peace and security are vital for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Gulf of Guinea countries. Without a secure and stable environment, economic activities such as trade, investment, and resource exploitation will be severely hindered. Therefore, the GGC understands the need to prioritize peace and security as a foundation for achieving the region; development goals.

Within the GGC framework, Nigeria actively engages in discussions and initiatives on peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria recognizes that ensuring a peaceful and secure maritime environment is crucial for the safety of its coastal areas and the prosperity of the entire region. By participating in the GGC, Nigeria demonstrates its commitment to regional cooperation and collective efforts in addressing shared security challenges (World Bank, 2011).

Through the GGC, member countries exchange information, share best practices, and coordinate efforts to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. This may involve collaborative initiatives such as joint patrols, information-sharing mechanisms, capacity-building programs, and the development of regional strategies to combat maritime crimes. Nigeria's involvement in the GGC allows it to contribute its expertise and resources to regional peace and security efforts. Given Nigeria's significant maritime presence and experience in dealing with naval security challenges, its participation in the GGC adds value to the collective initiatives undertaken by member countries.

By recognizing the interdependence between peace, security, and economic development, the GGC creates a platform for countries in the Gulf of Guinea to work together toward a more secure and prosperous region. Nigeria's membership in the GGC reinforces its

commitment to regional cooperation and its understanding of the role that peace and security play in promoting sustainable development in the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria equally recognizes the importance of international cooperation in addressing maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea. She actively engages with various international partners, including the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and United States (US), to seek support and cooperation in tackling these challenges. Through these international collaborations, Nigeria aims to enhance the capabilities of regional navies and security forces by engaging in capacity-building initiatives. This involves training programs, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices to strengthen the capacity of Gulf of Guinea countries in addressing maritime security threats. Nigeria acknowledges that building a solid and capable naval security apparatus requires support and expertise from international partners.

The United Nations (UN) plays a significant role in facilitating international cooperation on maritime security. Nigeria actively engages with the UN, mainly through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to access technical assistance, training programs, and expertise in combating maritime crimes. The UNODC provides support in areas such as legal frameworks, information-sharing mechanisms, and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the maritime security capabilities of Gulf of Guinea countries including, Nigeria.

In addition, Nigeria seeks cooperation with the European Union (EU) in addressing maritime security challenges. The EU provides support through various initiatives, including the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operational Atalanta. This operation aims to deter, prevent, and combat piracy off the coast of Somalia, still, it also contributes to maritime security efforts in the wider region; including the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria collaborates with the EU in sharing information, conducting joint operations, and benefiting from capacity-building programs to enhance the maritime security capabilities of the Gulf of Guinea countries.

Furthermore, Nigeria engages with the United States (US) through initiatives such as the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). AFRICOM works in partnership with African nations to enhance security, stability, and cooperation in the Region. Nigeria seeks support and cooperation from the US in intelligence sharing, training programs, and technical assistance to strengthen its naval security capabilities and effectively address maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria also recognizes the significance of joint maritime operations in enhancing security in the Gulf of Guinea. The country has actively participated in collaborative efforts with other countries in the region; to address maritime crimes and ensure the safety and security of the marine domain. One of the critical aspects of these joint maritime operations is the coordination of naval patrols. Nigeria has collaborated with countries such as Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Cameroon to conduct coordinated patrols in the Gulf of Guinea. These patrols involve the development of naval vessels and maritime security forces to deter and respond to maritime threats, including piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling, and other criminal activities. By coordinating their efforts, these countries can effectively monitor and secure their shared maritime boundaries, ensuring the safety of marine activities and trade in the Region.

Moreover, intelligence sharing is a crucial component of these joint operations. Nigeria engages in the exchange of information and intelligence with its neighboring countries in the Gulf of Guinea. This collaborative approach allows for the timely detection and response to maritime security threats. By sharing intelligence, countries can gain a better understanding of

criminal networks, their modus operandi, and their locations. Thus, enabling more effective and targeted responses to marine crimes. By pooling their resources and expertise, these countries strengthen their marine security capabilities. They also improve law enforcement and deter and disrupt criminal activities.

Participating in joint marine operations reinforces Nigeria's commitment to regional cooperation and its determination to tackle marine security challenges collectively. By working closely with neighboring countries in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria enhances the overall security landscape, fosters stability, and ensures the safety of naval activities in the Region. Through these collaborative efforts, Nigeria and its partner countries contribute to promoting peace, security, and economic prosperity in the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria plays an active role in developing legal and legislative frameworks on marine security at both regional and international levels. Recognizing the importance of effective legal mechanisms in addressing marine threats and crimes in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria actively contributes to formulating laws, regulations, and guidelines. Within regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), Nigeria actively participates in discussions and negotiations to develop comprehensive legal frameworks. These frameworks address various maritime security challenges, including piracy, illegal fishing, smuggling, and trafficking.

Nigeria's involvement ensures that the legal and legislative frameworks developed are to the specific needs and realities of the Gulf of Guinea region. This includes taking into account the unique geographical features, socio-economic factors, and security dynamics of the Region.

Furthermore, Nigeria engages with international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to contribute to global legal frameworks for maritime security. By actively participating in these international forums, Nigeria ensures that the Gulf of Guinea's perspectives and interests are represented in the decision-making processes. Through her contributions to the development of legal and legislative frameworks, Nigeria established a robust and comprehensive legal framework that addresses marine security challenges effectively. These frameworks provide a solid basis for cooperation, coordination, and enforcement actions among regional and international stakeholders in the Gulf of Guinea.

By actively participating in the formulation of laws, regulations, and guidelines, Nigeria contributes to the establishment of appropriate legal mechanisms that enhance the region; capacity to combat marine security challenges. These legal frameworks not only serve as a deterrent but also provide a basis for effective law enforcement and prosecution of maritime criminals, thereby promoting peace, security, and stability in the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria places significant importance on information and intelligence sharing as a crucial aspect of combating maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea. Recognizing that effective information exchange is vital; for enhancing situational awareness and coordinating responses to security incidents, Nigeria actively participates in regional and international efforts in this regard. At the regional level, Nigeria collaborates with neighboring countries within frameworks such as ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), and the Yaoundé Architecture to facilitate the sharing of relevant data and intelligence related to marine security threats. Through these platforms, Nigeria engages in regular information exchanges, discussions, and joint initiatives to enhance situational awareness and response capabilities in the Gulf of Guinea Region.

By actively participating in information and intelligence sharing, Nigeria contributes to comprehensive marine security in the Gulf of Guinea. Sharing relevant data and intelligence enables all stakeholders, including regional navies, law enforcement agencies, and international partners, to have a clearer picture of the marine domain and respond effectively to security incidents.

Through these collaborative efforts, Nigeria enhances its situational awareness and gains valuable insights into maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea. Simultaneously, it also contributes to the collective efforts of regional and international partners in combating maritime crimes and promoting peace and security.

Nigeria demonstrates active support and participation in counter-piracy initiatives to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Recognizing the detrimental impact of piracy on marine security, trade, and economic activities in the region; Nigeria collaborates with regional and international partners to develop and implement effective strategies to combat this threat. Nigeria engages in anti-piracy operations and law enforcement activities to deter and disrupt piracy activities in the Gulf of Guinea. This includes conducting patrols, surveillance, and interdiction operations to detect and apprehend pirate groups. Through coordinated efforts with other countries in the region; Nigeria aims to strengthen maritime law enforcement and ensure that piracy incidents are responded to swiftly and decisively.

Furthermore, Nigeria actively contributes to capacity-building programs to enhance the effectiveness of counter-piracy measures. This involves providing training, technical assistance, and resources to regional; navies, coast guards, and law enforcement agencies to improve their capabilities in combating piracy. By sharing its expertise and knowledge, Nigeria contributes to building a more robust and capable maritime security framework in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's active involvement in counter-piracy initiatives demonstrates her commitment to safeguarding the maritime domain and promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea, by collaborating with regional and international partners. Nigeria seeks to effectively address the challenges posed by piracy, protect maritime trade routes, and ensure the safety of seafarers and vessels operating in the Region. Through these collective efforts, Nigeria contributes to checkmate pirates, promoting stability, and fostering economic development in the Gulf of Guinea (Michael, 1997).

Nigeria recognizes the significance of maritime domain awareness in addressing maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea region. Nigeria employs various strategies, technologies, and surveillance equipment to monitor and track maritime activities within its territorial waters and exclusive economic zones (NIMAS, 2023). Through advanced technological systems, such as radar systems, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), and satellite imagery, Nigeria has improved its ability to detect and monitor vessels operating in the maritime domain. These systems provide real-time information on vessel movements, positions, and identities, allowing Nigerian authorities to identify potential security threats in the Guinea region. Through active cooperation with maritime industry stakeholders, such as shipping companies, marine organizations, and port authorities, Nigeria aims to enhance security measures and promote a safe operating environment in the marine domain (Dahi, 2007).

Nigeria understands that maritime security is a shared responsibility that requires the involvement and cooperation of multiple stakeholders. By engaging with shipping companies, Nigeria seeks to raise awareness about the importance of adhering to best practices in society,

including implementing measures to prevent piracy, armed robbery, and other maritime crimes. This collaboration can involve sharing information on security incidents, guiding risk assessment and mitigation, and promoting the use of recommended security measures.

Furthermore, Nigeria works closely with maritime organizations, such as regional and international marine security bodies, to foster partnerships and collective action in addressing maritime security challenges. This can include participation in joint initiatives, sharing expertise and resources, and coordinating efforts to strengthen the overall security framework in the Gulf of Guinea region. Nigeria's engagement with these organizations helps to align strategies, harmonize approaches, and ensure a coordinated response to maritime security threats (Charles, 2013).

Nigeria actively engages with port authorities to strengthen security measures, improve infrastructure resilience, and enhance the screening and inspection processes for vessels, cargoes, and personnel. By collaborating with port authorities, Nigeria aims to prevent illicit activities, such as smuggling, illegal fishing, and the transporting of illicit goods, thereby promoting a safe and secure maritime environment.

Nigeria demonstrates its commitment to inclusive and cooperative approaches to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea by working closely with shipping companies, maritime organizations, and port authorities. Nigeria fosters partnerships, shares knowledge and expertise, and promotes collective action in addressing maritime security challenges. This collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of maritime security measures, strengthens the overall security framework, and contributes to a safer and more secure maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea (Anthony, 2009).

Nigeria has been involved in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea region through multilateral cooperation. As a member of ECOWAS since 1975, Nigeria has consistently addressed regional security challenges. In 2001, Nigeria played a crucial role in establishing the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) to foster cooperation among Gulf of Guinea countries, focusing on issues such as piracy and maritime security. The adoption of the Yaoundé Architecture in 2013 further strengthened Nigeria's engagement. Nigeria hosts one of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centres (MMCCs) established under this framework, facilitating information sharing and joint patrols to combat maritime crimes. Signing the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in 2013 demonstrated Nigeria's commitment to maritime security. These ongoing Nigerian efforts, which encompass enhanced patrols, information sharing, capacity building, regional cooperation, and strengthened legal frameworks, aim to combat piracy, illegal fishing, and maritime crimes while creating a secure environment for naval activities in the Gulf of Guinea (Babagana, 2016).

3 Conclusion

As an ECOWAS member since 1975, Nigeria has addressed regional security challenges. She played a crucial role in establishing the Gulf of Guinea Commission in 2001 and actively participated in the Yaoundé Architecture. Nigeria hosts a Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre, enabling joint patrols and information sharing. Signing the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in 2013 showcased Nigeria's commitment. Her ongoing engagement in naval patrols, intelligence sharing, and capacity building to combat piracy and illegal fishing are Nigeria's efforts to create a secure environment for maritime activities in the Gulf of Guinea.

However, challenges such as limited resources, capacity gaps, inadequate coordination, and the transnational nature of maritime crimes persist. Addressing these challenges ultimately

requires sustained commitment, cooperation, and investment in capacity building and technological capabilities. By overcoming these challenges, Nigeria and other stakeholders can enhance their effectiveness in promoting peace, security, and stability in the Gulf of Guinea, which ultimately benefits global trade, energy security, and the well-being of the international community.

4 Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations can be made to enhance Nigeria's role in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea through multilateral cooperation.

1. Strengthen Multilateral Partnership: Nigeria should further strengthen its partnerships with regional and international organizations involved in maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, such as ECOWAS, ECCAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN). This can be achieved, through increased collaboration, information sharing, and, joint initiatives to address common challenges.

2. Capacity Building: Nigeria should continue to invest in capacity-building efforts for its maritime security forces and those of other countries in the region. This includes providing training programs, technical assistance, and resources to enhance the capabilities of naval and law enforcement agencies. Additionally, Nigeria can support the establishment of training centers and facilitate knowledge sharing to build expertise in combating maritime crimes.

3. Information Sharing and Intelligence Cooperation: Nigeria should prioritize the establishment of robust information sharing and intelligence cooperation mechanisms with regional and international partners. This involves enhancing maritime domain awareness, sharing real-time information on maritime security threats, and coordinating incident responses. Regular intelligence exchanges, joint patrols, and technology and surveillance systems can strengthen information sharing and cooperation.

4. Legal and Legislative Frameworks: Nigeria should participate in the development and implementation of legal and legislative frameworks related to marine security within regional and international bodies. This includes contributing to forming laws, regulations, and guidelines that address marine threats and crimes. Nigeria's engagement will ensure the region has effective legal mechanisms to combat marine security challenges.

5. Public-Private Corporation: Nigeria should foster closer cooperation between the public and private sectors to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Collaboration with shipping companies, naval industry stakeholders, and port authorities is essential for sharing information, implementing best practices, and developing joint initiatives to improve security measures and promote a safe operating environment.

6. Resource Allocation: Nigeria should allocate adequate resources and funding to support its maritime security initiatives. This includes investing in naval infrastructure, surveillance systems, training programs, and research and development to enhance the country's capabilities in addressing maritime security challenges. Ensuring sustained financial commitment will contribute to the effectiveness of Nigeria's efforts in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

7. Awareness and Outreach; Nigeria should prioritize public awareness campaigns to educate coastal communities, seafarers, and other stakeholders about maritime security

threats and the importance of their involvement in promoting peace and security. These campaigns can help foster a sense of responsibility and encourage reporting of suspicious activities. It will also promote a culture of marine safety and security.

8. Regional Coordination: Nigeria should actively engage in regional coordination mechanisms, such as the Yaoundé Architecture and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), to harmonize efforts and strategies among countries in the Region. This coordination will enable a more comprehensive and unified approach to addressing maritime security challenges.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can further enhance its contribution and effectiveness in promoting peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea through multilateral cooperation. These efforts will not only benefit Nigeria but also contribute to regional stability and economic development. It will also broaden global interest in trade, energy, security, and stability in the Gulf of Guinea.

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