

**Written submission**  
**Peacebuilding Commission advice to the Security Council on Piracy and armed robbery**  
**in the Gulf of Guinea**

**New York, 18 November 2022**

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has been increasingly concerned about piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly its detrimental impact on peace and security in the coastal and littoral states. The Commission has had a lengthy engagement in the region, including in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and the coastal countries of Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. On 30 June 2021, the Commission convened a meeting on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea to advance the implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, including the harmonization of coordination and response mechanisms to maritime insecurity and the mobilization of resources to address the drivers and root causes of piracy.

Based on the continuous engagement in this regard, the Commission would like to share the following points:

1. The Commission welcomes the decrease in the incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea, including kidnapping for ransom, in the Gulf of Guinea in past year due to increased regional cooperation, naval patrols, and piracy convictions. However, the Commission recognizes with concern the shift in geographical location of piracy incidents from West Africa to Central Africa, which presents a challenge to the proliferation of piracy activities beyond their nodal point in West Africa.
2. The Commission also notes with concern the continuous high human, societal and economic costs that piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea inflicts in the region, and underscores the importance of holistic and development-centered approaches, drawing on the linkages between piracy and the inadequacy of economic opportunities for coastal communities. The Commission urges remedial and tangible initiatives that effectively address the root causes and drivers of piracy and armed robbery at sea and provide sufficient livelihoods to the affected communities in the region, particularly women and youth, to foster inclusive socioeconomic development, social cohesion, and stability. The Commission welcomes ongoing efforts from the governments of the coastal countries, the United Nations, international and regional financing institutions, and other key partners in this regard.
3. The Commission underlines the adverse effects of piracy and other manifestations of maritime insecurity on the livelihoods and economic opportunities of local populations. As an example, in some areas of the region, fishing activity has been reduced, as large and productive fishing areas have been closed due to security concerns. This central element of sustenance and economic activity for numerous coastal communities in the region has also been heavily impacted by illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Commission urges preventive and mitigating measures and activities to protect fishing areas and support affected communities, i.e through the strengthening of national frameworks and targeted peacebuilding programming.

4. The Commission wishes to underline the importance of investing in climate mitigation, adaptation, and environmental protection measures within coastal communities to reduce the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. The rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and environmental threats are detrimental to coastal communities, significantly reducing fishing stocks and agricultural activities and decimating the livelihoods and social fabric of coastal communities,. The Commission encourages substantial investment in innovative climate-smart adaptation, including sustainable economic empowerment and alternative livelihood programs, and mitigation options, including increasing awareness of climatic change.
5. With the duality of the security threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea to States along the Gulf of Guinea and the increasing risk of spillover of the terrorist contagion from the central Sahel, the Commission urges coordinated efforts to forestall any potential interlinkages of maritime insecurity between extremist, terrorist and pirate groups by addressing the challenges and common root causes, including poverty, access to natural resources, absence of basic social services, and insecurity in the region.
6. The Commission further underlines the importance of community-based crime prevention strategies to address the root causes of piracy and criminal activities, including transnational organized crime, in the Gulf of Guinea. In this regard, the Commission calls for adopting a context-specific, preventive, community-based, and whole-of-society approach to ensure an effective and sustainable response to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The Commission also urges the private sector, including oil and mining companies, to enhance their Corporate Social Responsibility and environmental protection measures, continued technical assistance, and community-based support to vulnerable communities.
7. The Commission recognizes the effects of the economic downside of piracy and armed robbery at sea on coastal communities, particularly women who are reportedly disproportionately affected by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing due to their increased role in artisanal fishing in the region. The Commission, in line with its Gender Strategy, encourages the adoption of a gender perspective to interventions to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, including collecting sex-disaggregated data and promoting women's roles in maritime initiatives and economic development within coastal communities, noting the catalytic role and contributions of women entrepreneurs. The Commission calls for further measures to strengthen women's economic capacity, including through institutional, operational and policy reforms and expand their access to the financial system and modern technology, including implementing COVID-19 recovery plans, which align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063.
8. The Commission underlines the need to urgently address youth unemployment and underemployment and other social factors that leave at-risk-youth in the region more susceptible to piracy recruitment, riverine and other maritime crime, drug use, and gang violence. In line with its Youth Strategic Action Plan, the Commission calls for the prioritization of youth inclusion and meaningful participation in the peacebuilding

process in national strategies and plans, development programs, and youth-led community-based activities.

9. The Commission recognizes the importance of national and regional ownership and enhanced capacities to investigate, interdict, intercept, arrest, prosecute, convict and extradite suspected pirates. In this regard, the Commission welcomes the positive impact of recent piracy convictions in the region, as well as the deterrent effects of increased naval patrols, coupled with improved cooperation with regional counterparts, on reducing piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea and urges support to the Regional Coordination Centers to improve their capacity to collect evidence to aid in the interception, arrest, and prosecution as well as conviction of suspected pirates. The Commission encourages the ratification of the 2016 African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter).
10. The Commission reinforces the recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General urging countries of the Gulf of Guinea Commission to translate the Yaoundé Code of Conduct provisions into their respective national frameworks, strengthen their maritime security enforcement capabilities, and implement their respective national maritime security strategies, including addressing the root causes and drivers of piracy. In this regard, the Commission commends ECCAS for preparing its first Maritime Conference to be held in Kinshasa, DRC, later this year to discuss maritime governance in the ECCAS space, maritime security, and the development of a sustainable Blue Economy, which could provide a best practice for economic empowerment. The Commission also welcomes efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to enhance maritime law enforcement and prosecution capabilities of States to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and commend the adoption by member States of ECOWAS of the Supplementary Act on the Conditions of Transfer of Persons Suspected of having Committed Acts of Piracy and their Associated Property and/or Evidence. In this respect, the Commission welcomes the first convictions of piracy in West Africa in 2021 following the strengthening of national legal frameworks by some States in the region in criminalizing piracy and establishing universal jurisdiction consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Commission also notes the Communiqué of the 1090th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council held on 28 June 2022, on Maritime Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea which highlighted the need to ensure the full operationalization of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050) and its Plan of Action.
11. Acknowledging that piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is multifaceted, the Commission urges continued multinational support, including sustained, and predictable funding, closely coordinated, utilizing the comparative advantages of the various stakeholders and partners, and avoiding duplication to enhance efficiencies and impact. In this regard, ahead of the 10th anniversary of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in 2023, the Commission acknowledges the efforts of the Gulf of Guinea States towards the implementation of the Yaoundé Architecture, including the establishment of the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum and Shared Awareness and De-confliction (GoG-MCF/SHADE) to enhance the exchange of information, cooperation at sea and deconflicting of operations between the ships of the navies of the Gulf of Guinea, those of international

partners, the marine industry, and the centers of the Yaoundé maritime security architecture. The Commission calls on Gulf of Guinea States to further revitalize regional cooperation on maritime security and strive for the full operationalization of the maritime architecture set out by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. The development of a clear roadmap and milestones help galvanize further support from partners, permits progress on monitoring and evaluation, and holds stakeholders mutually accountable.

12. The Commission welcomes efforts by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWAS), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to enhance political advocacy and coordination efforts among regional stakeholders as well as cooperation between regional and international partners in addressing piracy and maritime security in the region. The Commission also recognizes the catalytic investments for peacebuilding and prevention initiatives in countries along the Gulf of Guinea by the PBF and encourages more support to strengthen community resilience and socio-economic conditions in coastal communities. The Commission further emphasizes the importance of extending support to the inland communities as well with a view to maintaining harmony and cohesion between the communities.
13. The Commission recognizes the importance of broad consultation and engagements with all relevant stakeholders on the design and implementation of counterpiracy measures. In this regard, the Commission calls for broadening existing initiatives, maritime institutions, and networks, including the Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7 ++ FoGG), to include civil society representatives from vulnerable groups, especially women, affected coastal communities, and sub-regional fishery commissions to amplify knowledge and activities and more inclusive approaches in the fight against maritime insecurity.
14. The Commission encourages using common platforms to share information, experiences, lessons learned and best practices on counterpiracy measures and armed robbery at sea such as countermeasures against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia to guide interventions on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, including harmonization of national and regional legal frameworks with international frameworks and the facilitating role of socioeconomic interventions in the coastal communities.