

# An Appraisal of Sea Robbery Control in Nigeria's Waterways: Lessons from Niger Delta Region

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**Abstract:** This study examined strategies adopted by relevant security agencies to curb sea robbery in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents'. A Sample of 400 was derived using Taro Yamane sample size determination technique. Questionnaires and oral interview were the methods used for data collection, while data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Results revealed that the joint task force (JTF) is selective in carrying out its constitutional mandate as their presence is felt only in critical facilities, which implies that security is porous and much is needed to guarantee safety of lives and properties on Nigeria territorial waters. Consequent upon this finding, crime-mapping as indicated on GIS map of sample states is recommended.

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Sea Robbery, Lessons, Niger Delta Waterways.

## INTRODUCTION

Maritime insecurity is one of the many social problems confronting residents of Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Sea robbers frequently assault residents whose livelihood depends on the waterways. Acorn Media Services Ltd (2007); Ehwareme (2009); and Oyetunji (2012) Leverink (2013) observed that the activities of sea robbers has resulted to major threat to all forms of maritime businesses as well as activities in the Oil and Gas sector. Similarly, the costs of sea robbery in the Niger Delta are incalculable. Apart from its adverse consequence on the livelihood of residents in the study area, sea robbery activities have also undermined revenue generation in the affected states. The extent of sea traffic has reduced considerably, as persons who would have travelled by water for trading or job related purposes are afraid of attacks by sea robbers who often target expatriate and Nigerian workers in the Oil and Gas industry. This has led to a reduction in capital and investment ventures in the region since most investors are afraid to invest in the region on account of insecurity to life and business enterprises. Though the International Maritime Bureau (IMB, 2014) ranked Nigeria on the top list of sea robbery hotspots, the activities of sea robbers are by no means a new incidence in Nigeria, as sea robbery has continually troubled Nigeria's coast and waterways since the early 1970s. By the 1970s, the increase in

Nigeria's oil export and the succeeding imports of various goods, such as processed food, liquor, cigarettes, cars and electronics, witnessed a speedy rise in the number of foreign commercial vessels visiting Lagos, Port Harcourt and other major Nigerian ports. These ports, however, lacked the ability to handle the rapid stream in maritime trade, which caused long delays in and around most harbour areas. These delays combined with negligence in security in port areas and on-board ships created abundant opportunity for theft and robbery perpetrated by gangs of local folks against foreign-vessels. The attacks in most cases were more suitably described as opportunistic, rather than carefully planned piracy (Perouse de Montclos, 2012). Hence, there was no sign that the attacks were 'organized' beyond the gangs that perpetrated the crime, which did not entail careful planning and highly developed weapons.

In a public lecture on the fundamental causes of maritime insecurity by Amaechi (2008), it was observed that the creeks, rivers and oceans that make up Nigeria's territorial waters play an essential role especially in the lives of the people who live in littoral states. These waterways assisted in income generation through activities such as oil and gas exploration, fishing, tourism, among others. Amaechi (2008) noted that the incessant violence and high levels of insecurity and sea robbery in the coastal areas and the territorial waters have affected the Nigerian economy both in the short and long term. This observation typically highlights the problem of sea robbery that has characterised the everyday experience of Nigeria coastal dwellers, who reside in locations where water

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transportation plays a major part in the mobility of most people.

Sea robbery has impacted negatively on the economy of the Niger Delta region. This is because the actions of sea robbers have adversely affected commercial activities and the likes in the region. There is a reduction in the fleet of Nigerian fishing trawlers on these waters leading to a huge loss of revenue to the affected fishermen and traders. Both the Federal and the State Governments have instituted policies to tackle the menace of sea robbery in the region, but these measures such as “Operation Restore Hope, Operation Pulo Shield, Operation Delta Safe and, recently, Operation Crocodile Smile”, have not achieved the expected results. Measures by security agents such as the Navy, Maritime Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp, the Joint Task Force (JTF) all in a bid to curb sea robbery in the region have not succeeded in eliminating the problem. The maritime insecurity experienced in Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers States represent the current challenges confronting the waterways in the Niger Delta. It is against this backdrop, that this study was conducted to proffer an effective strategy that will assist in controlling the prevalent maritime insecurity in the region.

## PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY

The ICC International Maritime Bureau (2017), defines piracy in Article 101 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in its 26<sup>th</sup> Assembly session define armed robbery as is seen in Resolution A.1025 (26).

Article 101 of UNCLOS defines Piracy as:

- (a) any illegal acts of violence or detention , or any act of devastation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed -
  - (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;
  - (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
- (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;

- (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b)

The IMO on the other hand defines Armed Robbery in Resolution A.1025 (26) “Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships” as any of the following acts:

1. any illegal act of hostility or detention or any act of depredation or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy; committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State’s internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea;
2. any act of inciting or intentionally facilitating an act described above.

This study therefore adopts IMO Resolution A.1025 (26) and defines any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy; committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within Nigeria’s territorial waters as Sea Robbery.

## Theoretical Framework

The Routine Activity Theory propounded in 1979 by Cohen and Felson in their work entitled “Social Change and Crime Rate Trends” is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. In the “Routine Activity Approach”, Cohen and Felson proposed that crime is the aftermath of combined result of three indispensable elements: First there must be a motivated offender who is competent of committing felony. Second it is not sufficient for the possible offender to be motivated; he must also be capable to execute his criminal intention.

According to Cullen and Agnew (2006), the routine activity approach is based on two rather simple ideas. First, for crime to occur, motivated offenders must meet with suitable targets in the absence of qualified guardians. Secondly, they noted that the likelihood of this situation occurring is influenced by their routine activities including the work, family, leisure, and consumption activities. For example, if we spend more time in public places such as bars and on the street, we increase the tendency that we will come into contact with motivated offenders in the absence of competent guardians. However, routine activity theory does not explain why an offender is motivated to commit a crime, but instead assumes that motivation is constant

(Cohen and Felson, 1979; Morrow, 2015; Wikstromolof, 2009; United States Legal Incorporation, 2015).

Igbo (2008) noted that for a crime to occur, a motivated offender must also identify and engage a suitable target. Suitable targets can take a number of forms depending on the nature of the crime (i.e. the particular intent of the offender) and the situational context (i.e. the available opportunities). A suitable target might be an object, such as a piece of valuable property to steal or a home to burglarise.

The final element of routine activities theory consists of proficient guardianship, which bears the potential to dissuade or avert crime even in the presence of a motivated offender with a selected suitable target. Capable guardianship is an expansive concept that researchers interpret and study in a variety of ways. Formal types of guardianship such as police officers and other types of law enforcement agents, symbolise a well-recognised form of protection from crime and victimisation. Routine activities theory suggests that the existence of these agents might avert a crime from happening. Many potential offenders, despite being motivated to commit a crime, would be hesitant to engage in criminal behaviour with a police officer's presence.

Jeffery (1993) in his study titled "obstacles to the development of research in crime and delinquency criticized the routine activity theory. According to him, Routine Activity Theory presents only three elementary crime causative factors and ignored the social factors which are equally contributory factors to committing crime, these includes but not limited to: educational qualification and economic. Jeffrey (1993) further noted that the theory is descriptive rather than an explanatory approach to crime causation. However, he pointed out that there is no doubt that the Routine Activity Theory is essential when used to explain why crime is more prevalent for certain groups, as well as why certain types of crime occur more often.

The routine activity theory is relevant to this study of appraisal of sea robbery control in Nigeria waterways: lessons from Niger Delta Region, because it assists to explain the existence of the crime in the littoral states of Niger Delta Region. First, unemployed youths in the region are a pool of persons who are ready and capable of committing crime of the nature of sea robbery. Vulnerable targets are in the form of international and domestic tourists, oil tankers, fishing crafts, trawlers, speedboat operators, passengers, and

local businessmen and women that ply the waterways. Most of these targets are not always well guarded. The numerous mazes of creeks in the littoral states of the Niger Delta provide hiding places for suspects or offenders who usually lay ambush for their targets in waterways that are not well protected. The absence of protection for these targets exposes the latter to incessant attacks by these motivated offenders. Besides, when faced with threat to life, such target usually panic enough to promise their assailants instant wealth reward. Such offers are quite appealing to sea robbers and fuel their appetite for maritime criminality. Therefore, the routine activity theory is very useful for concisely explicating the inadequate strategies put in place by relevant security agencies to curb sea robbery in Nigeria territorial waters.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers employed the survey design. A survey is a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members (Avedian, 2014). Its choice for this study was informed by the fact that, the survey is concerned with collection of information from a specified target population in whom interest is expressed. The information is collected from a relatively small subset (sample) of the population and the researcher generalises the results obtained from the sample to the whole population (Taylor, Sinha, and Ghoshal, 2009). Survey design was chosen to enable the researchers gather informed opinion and experiences of sea robbery attack from maritime business operators without any attempt to manipulate or control them

The population of the study comprised maritime business operators in the region. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select a representative sample for this study. This method involved successive stages of selection (Osuala, 2005); which is useful when the researcher recognises that the population is distributed in pockets of settlements or clusters with interest in using the clusters as a basis for selection (Asika, 2009). In the first stage, the study area (Niger Delta Region) was divided into three clusters namely: Western, Central, and Eastern Zones. The Western zone comprises Delta State, Edo State, and Ondo State. The Central zone consists of Bayelsa State, Imo State and Rivers State. The Eastern zone comprised Abia State, Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State (See Figure 1 for details).



**Figure 1:** Map of the study Area.

Source: Field Survey (2016).

A Sample size of 400 respondents comprising maritime business operators in the region was derived using the Taro Yamane sample size determination technique. The methods used for data collection in this study were structured questionnaire and interview schedule. A Likert scale type questionnaire consisting 30 closed-ended questions was designed and administered to the respondents in proportion to the size of each stratum.

Likert scale measures the intensity or degree of agreement by respondent to a statement that describes

a situation or phenomenon (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker 2014). Likert scale is useful when measuring the characteristics of people such as feelings and opinions. Four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered (through the help of 3 research assistants comprising one assistant from each of the sampled state). Section A of the questionnaire assessed the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B assessed the substantive issues based on the study variables. It is noteworthy that out of the 400 copies of questionnaire that were administered to the

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=389)**

Demographic Profile	Variable	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	225	57.8
	Female	164	42.2
Age of Respondents	18-25yrs	82	21.1
	26-32yrs	130	33.4
	33-50yrs	148	38.0
Educational Status	No Formal Education	44	11.3
	Primary Education	120	30.8
	Secondary Education	155	39.8
	National Diploma	64	16.5
	Bachelor Degree	4	1.0
	Master Degree	2	0.5
Occupation	Speedboat operator	75	19.3
	Fisherman/woman	155	39.8
	Trader	103	26.5
	Maritime Union worker	56	14.4
Years of Maritime Business Experience	Below 5yrs	154	39.6
	5-10yrs	123	31.6
	Above 10yrs	112	28.8

Source: Field Survey (2016).

respondents, 389 copies were found useable for data analysis as 11 copies were not useful. Thus, the study achieved 97.3% questionnaire response rate. Additionally, since it would have been impracticable to conduct interviews in the three states selected for the study, key stakeholders including the head of maritime police from each of the states selected were interviewed.

### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To establish validity of the instrument, experts in maritime safety and security, as well as experts in tests and measurements validated the questionnaire and interview schedule. A pilot study of ten speedboat

operators, members of Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria and market women in Ogbia Jetty, Bayelsa State, was conducted to test the reliability of the instrument. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis and yield a reliability coefficient of 0.80. This confirmed the reliability of the instrument. See Table 2 for details

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as: simple percentages (%), pie chart and tables were adopted for the study, while inferential statistics specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation

**Table 2: Reliability Analysis**

S/N	Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach Coefficient ( $\alpha$ )
1	Existence of sea robbers in Niger Delta waterways	5	0.81
2	Perception of sea robbery as security risk	5	0.83
3	Use of dangerous weapons during attack	5	0.79
4	Maritime business operators are sometimes forced to pay illegal dues	5	0.82
5	Recent incidence of sea robbers attack	5	0.76
6	Security surveillance	5	0.80
	Total		4.81
	Average		0.80

(PPMC) was used to test the research hypothesis, in order to make a sound statistical decision. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 ( $r$ ) level of significance was used to determine the effectiveness of strategies adopted by relevant security operatives to curb sea robbery in Nigeria's territorial waters.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents results of data analyses measuring effective strategies adopted by security agencies to curb sea robbery in Niger Delta waterways. The respondents interviewed generally provided information that corroborated the data gathered through the use of questionnaire on the activities of sea robbers in the study area. According to one respondent in an interview conducted on 3/6/16:

"The activities of sea robbers along our waterways are really high. It occurs almost on a daily basis particularly along Ogbia/Nembe routes. In the month of March 2016, many of us were attacked and all our goods carted away. The most disheartening occurred in January 2016, on our way from Yenagoa to Brass where two female NYSC Corp members in the boat were abducted and taken to an unknown destination".

He further noted that, the activity of sea robbers within the study area is well known. The robbers who attack at will neither hide their identity nor have a specific time of operation. Another respondent observed that:

"Sea robbery has become so alarming to the extent that it has almost crippled the general use of the waterways. People are afraid of using the waterways these days. This is because these robbers do not only steal money, but just anything including foodstuff, fuel, cell phones and even clothes".

In a similar view, another respondents stated that during sea robbery operations, the robbers sometimes kidnap people, mostly when the amount of money they demand or expect to get is not available. She recalled that last year, between November and December 2015, sea robbers attacked the local boat she boarded to the market, seized their mobile phones and even collected 'garri' (cassava flakes) which they found in the boat

and kidnapped the manager of the boat because the amount of money they demanded was not available. A telephone number was given to the driver of the boat to call whenever the money was available. Still on the level of awareness, the researchers observed that almost all the riverine dwellers are aware of the activities of sea robbers along the waterways. One of the respondents observed:

"Sea robbers usually attack on the eve of market and market days when traders are going to and from their destinations. In Bayelsa, traders usually arrive the Ogbia market on the Tuesday evenings and depart on Wednesdays at the close of business in the market, while at Swali market, traders usually arrive on Sundays, to transact business on Mondays and depart to their destinations after their trading. They repeat same on Wednesday evenings and return on Thursdays to their destination. Trading activities are done at Swali market in Bayelsa on the same day with Ogbe-Ijoh market in Delta State and Oron Beach Market in Akwa-Ibom State with the same experiences".

From the views of the respondents stated during the interview session, sea robbers are often well coordinated and prepared for each operation. One of the respondents said that they use high horsepower engine boats to get at their targets when they gather information on their targets, and they are always armed with sophisticated weapons through which they can crush resistance even from the security operatives, if any. One of the respondents who is a speedboat operator in Delta State at Escravos Jetty Warri stated that:

"The boys usually operate in fast moving double Yamaha outboard 250 and 200 horsepower engine boats. They have informants at various jetties in Warri, who usually call and give the robbers information of the boat departing the waterfront. They will in turn pursue, manoeuvre and subsequently rob the boat at gunpoint. Sea robbers have different targets, which largely depends on the type of water in which they operate. In territorial waters their first target is usually the speedboat driver. Once they succeed, the driver of the boat will be brought to a halt

which in turn enables the robbers to operate easily. In international waters, vessels, tankers and trawlers are usually their major targets".

Similarly, security operatives' views do not differ from the information supplied by the other respondents on the existence and modus operandi of sea robbers in the Niger Delta. A security operative in Bayelsa State commented:

"Sea robbers have killed most of our personnel and seized their rifles to fortify their armoury, which they in turn use to launch attack on the waterways. Precisely on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, sea robbers attacked my men in Nembe and killed about 3 officers including a civilian. They see security personnel as their greatest enemy, so whenever they are at advantage, they ambush and kill any such personnel. The geographical nature of Bayelsa makes effective waterway policing a serious challenge. The shallow nature of the creeks makes police patrol and navigation difficult. There is geographic difference in the mode of operation of sea robbers. For instance, the mode of operation in Ogbia, Nembe and Brass waterways is different from Southern Ijaw due to the presence of many rivers and network of creeks in the area".

Another security operative from Delta state who confided in the researchers noted that the most challenging dimension that the security forces are trying to contain with is that of kidnapping. These days, he said, sea robbers have added a new dimension to their operation which is kidnapping for ransom. This trend is becoming quite worrisome and alarming. They build camps in the creeks and perpetrate their nefarious activities from there. There have been cases where security operatives lose their lives usually after being ambushed in the course of their routine patrol. Sea robbers' mode of operation in straight and open rivers is usually different from that employed in creeks. In the former, they disguise as fishermen, military personnel, and oil workers or ferry operators whose engine has developed fault and most times open fire on upcoming boats in order to bring the boat to a halt. In networks of shallow creeks, however, such robbers usually ambush and attack any oncoming craft not well protected.

From the respondents' description so far analysed, it is clear that the awareness of sea robbery is high amongst business operators in the Niger Delta region.

In the views of the respondents, the activity of sea robbers has not only crumbled their businesses, but has robbed them of their means of livelihood. One of the respondents submitted that:

"Owing to the frequent seizure of our engines, lack of money to replace our stolen engines and the risk associated with doing fishing business these days, many of us have abandoned fishing altogether. Right now, some of my friends whose engines were forcefully collected at gunpoint and who cannot replace the engine are out of business. For example, a brand new 75 horsepower Yamaha outboard engine is sold at about 1.3million in the market, while fairly used one cost #700, 000 thousand naira. So, where is the money to replace the ones stolen by sea robbers?"

A respondent who confided in the researchers said that, it is risky to do business on the waterways these days because of the activities of sea criminals in Ijaw-kiri waterway. Apart from outright robbery, fishermen are sometimes forced to pay illegal levies to sea robbers and one dare not raise their voice. The so-called monthly dues depend largely on the size of one's boat. The charges range from ₦7, 000 for small boats, while big boats are forced to pay ₦15, 000. It is compulsory to renew one's dues on the last day of every month as any failure attracts attack.

This situation was confirmed by one of the respondents during an interview session in Oron on 25/4/2016. He said:

"In recent times we are forced to pay dues to sea robbers to guarantee our safety at sea. It is compulsory for every boat to pay ₦10,000 monthly to sea robbers along Oron/Calabar waterways. The robbers have a record of all the boats that ply the waterways. Sea robbers seized my engine on 20/4/16 along Oron waterways in a broad day light and asked me to put a call across to my people to bring the sum of ₦50,000. Fortunately, my family was able to raise the money and my engine was release immediately after the payment".

During the interview conducted on 26/6/2016 in Bayelsa state, one of the respondents lamented that:

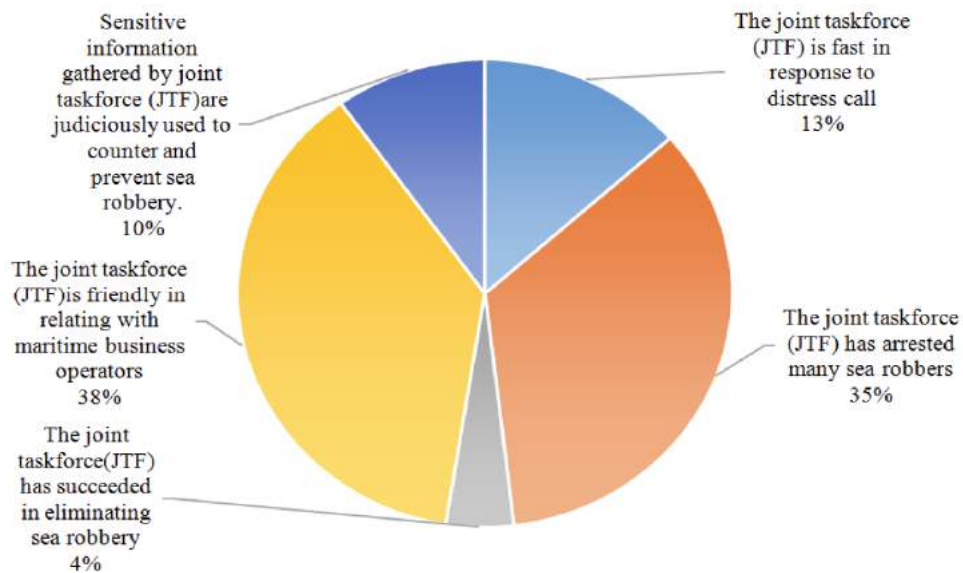
"The continuous attacks on business operator in the waterways is life threatening. As such, we limit our activities to shallow waters with very poor catch that is not enough to feed ourselves and our family members. If you happen to fish with fibre boat, the robbers will seize the engine and fibre and abandon you in the nearest mangrove forest. If you are using a local boat, the robbers will steal only the engine and allow the water to carry you to any direction of the tide. Most times, the robbers come to our camps and demand for money. If it coincides with when you just returned from the market and have spent all the money on you, they will seize all your foodstuffs including fuel and then take with them either or destroy any fish they find on the alter or the ones reserved for use".

**Effectiveness of Strategies to Curb Sea Robbery in the Niger Delta Region**

Various intervention programmes have been instituted to curb the growing threat of sea robbers and other criminal activities prevalent in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Joint Task Force (Originally called "Operation Restore Hope"- 'Operation - Pulo Shield' - 'Operation Delta Safe' and recently Operation

Crocodile Smile") set up by the Federal government is very prominent in this regard. How effective the JTF is in executing their obligation is evaluated and presented in Figure 2.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) comprising the Army, the Navy, and the Maritime Police, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) was set up by the federal government as an intervention strategy to tackle the emerging security challenges in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria such as illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism, sea robbery and other criminal activities prevalent in the region. Over the years, the task force has been in operation with considerable success as well as failures. Five parameters were adopted in measuring security surveillance (effective policing) by the JTF. These include: fast response to distress call, number of arrest made, intelligence gathering, successful elimination of the crime, and the mode of relating with maritime business operators. These parameters were used to measure the level of effectiveness of the Joint Task Force. As represented in Figure 2, four percent (4%) of the entire respondents agreed that JTF has eliminated sea robbery in Niger Delta waters. This implies that sea robbery is still rife in the region. Some respondents (10%) were of the view that the continuous perpetration of sea robbery may be because the JTF appears not to be judiciously utilising any sensitive information gathered from the people. Others (13%) conclude that they are not fast in responding to distress calls. Nevertheless, going by the opinion of 35% of the subjects, the JTF has made



**Figure 2:** Effectiveness of joint task force in Niger Delta region.

Source: Field Survey (2016).



successful arrest of some sea-related criminals. It should be noted that reliable statistical data on the actual number of arrest was not made public by the JTF for security reasons. However, scholars such as (Rinkel, 2015) noted that there is low rate of prosecution of apprehended offenders of the crime.

As to the JTF effectiveness, 38% of respondents indicated that the JTF in their daily operations are friendly with maritime business operators, but devote more attention to protection of critical assets (Oil and Gas installations) and staff of Multinational Corporations especially the expatriates, while maritime business operators are left vulnerable to sea robbers' attack especially at hotspots. This corroborates the responses of the subjects during the interview of maritime business operators.

According to a speedboat operator:

"Members of JTF are only interested in extorting money from us; it is a law to slow down all ferry boat at JTF checkpoints. If one mistakenly passes with speed at checkpoint without making payments they will pursue you with gunboat, reverse your boat and beat the hell out of you. On many occasions, when we are attacked by sea robbers and we report the matter to them, they will categorically reply that they are in the waterways to protect oil facilities and not human beings. Some will ask funny questions like: what kind of gun are they carrying? How many horsepower engine boat do they drive?"

A speedboat operator who confided in the researcher lamented that the security operatives along the waterways tend to value the kickback they collect than the lives of speedboat operators and passengers. For example, a journey from Oron to Calabar attracts as much as ₦9, 000, which must be spent on security operatives. Yet during any attack, not as much as one security operative can be found for help. According to the boat operator, the breakdown of ₦9, 000 fees for security operatives is as follows: Oron Police ₦2, 000; Army ₦1, 000; Ibaka Navy ₦2, 000; Calabar Navy ₦2, 000 and Marine Police ₦2, 000.

Corroborating this view, one respondent said:

"The maritime police who are supposed to patrol the waterways to guarantee the security and safety of lives and property

have themselves become black marketers of fuel to maritime business operators. They sell to us the fuel meant to sustain them during their routine patrols".

It is worthy of note that the interview conducted with maritime business operators in the selected states indicates that the problem of maritime insecurity distribution in the study area is not geographically at random; rather it occurs mostly at hotspots.

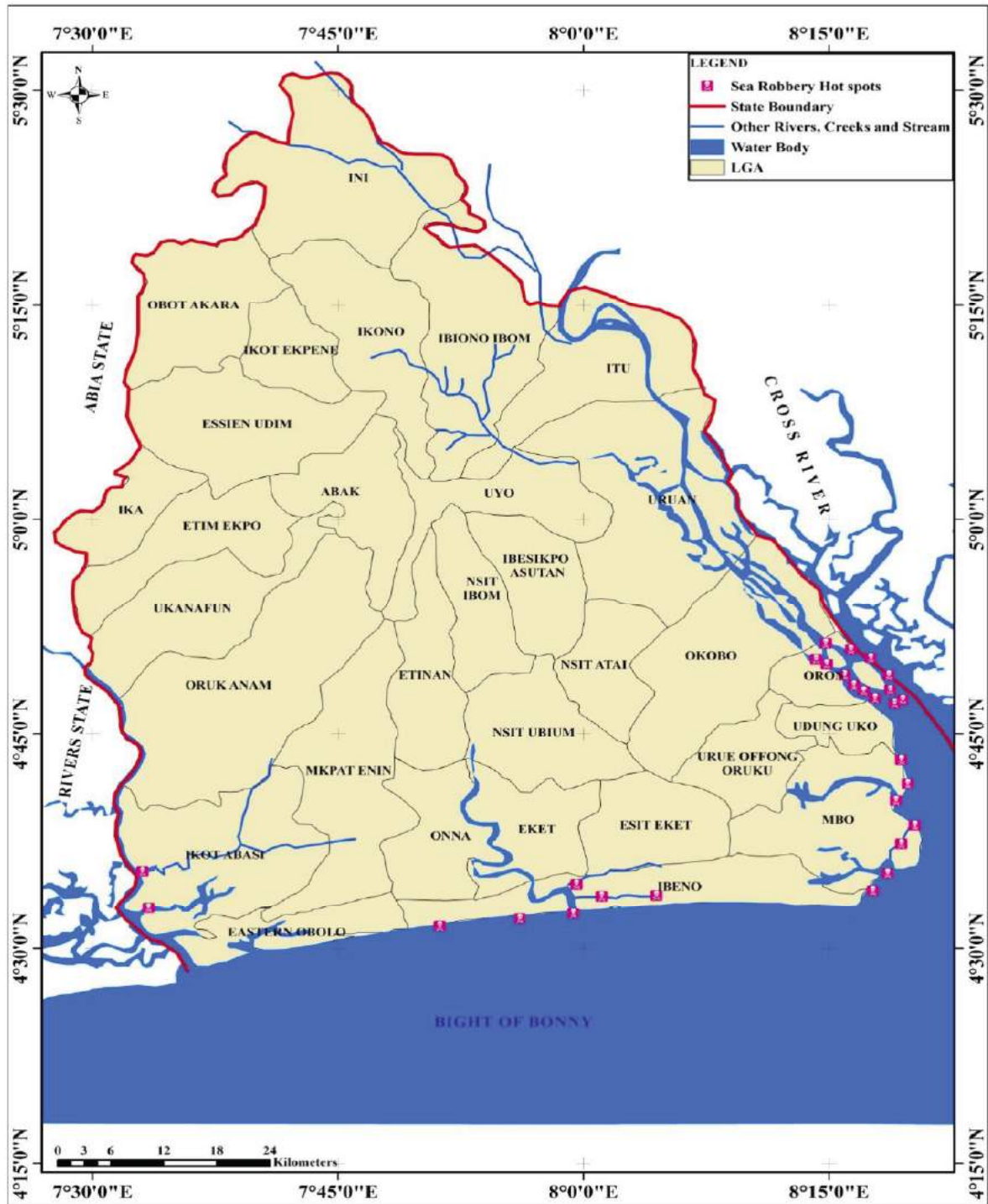
### **Hotspots**

These are locations where most crimes occur. It is an area that has more than average number of criminal or disorder events, or an area where people have a higher than average risk of victimization (Eck, 2005). According to this source, people use this knowledge in their daily routine activities; they avoid some places and seek out others. Their choice of neighbourhood, stores, streets, and recreation are governed partially by the understanding that their chances of being victims are greater in some places than in others.

According to Eck (2005), crime is human phenomena. Therefore, their occurrence across the landscape is not geographically unsystematic. For crime to take place, offenders and their targets – the victims and or property must for an interval of time, be present at the same locality. Several factors, from the enticement of potential targets to simple geographic expediency for an offender, influence where people choose to break the law. Therefore, an understanding of where and why crime occurs can enhance efforts to fight crime. Maps provide crime analyst explicit description of such crime related issues. Crime mapping can help law enforcement agents to protect citizens more effectively in the areas they serve. Simple maps that display the locations where crime frequently occur can be used to help direct patrols to places they are most needed. The Routine Activity Theory hold some interesting opportunity for crime mapping and analysis and can help guide strategies for crime control and resources deployment.

Therefore, sea robbery hotspots in the study area are presented on the map of the respective states as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5. Respectively as models for security operatives' effective surveillance of the Niger Delta region waterways.

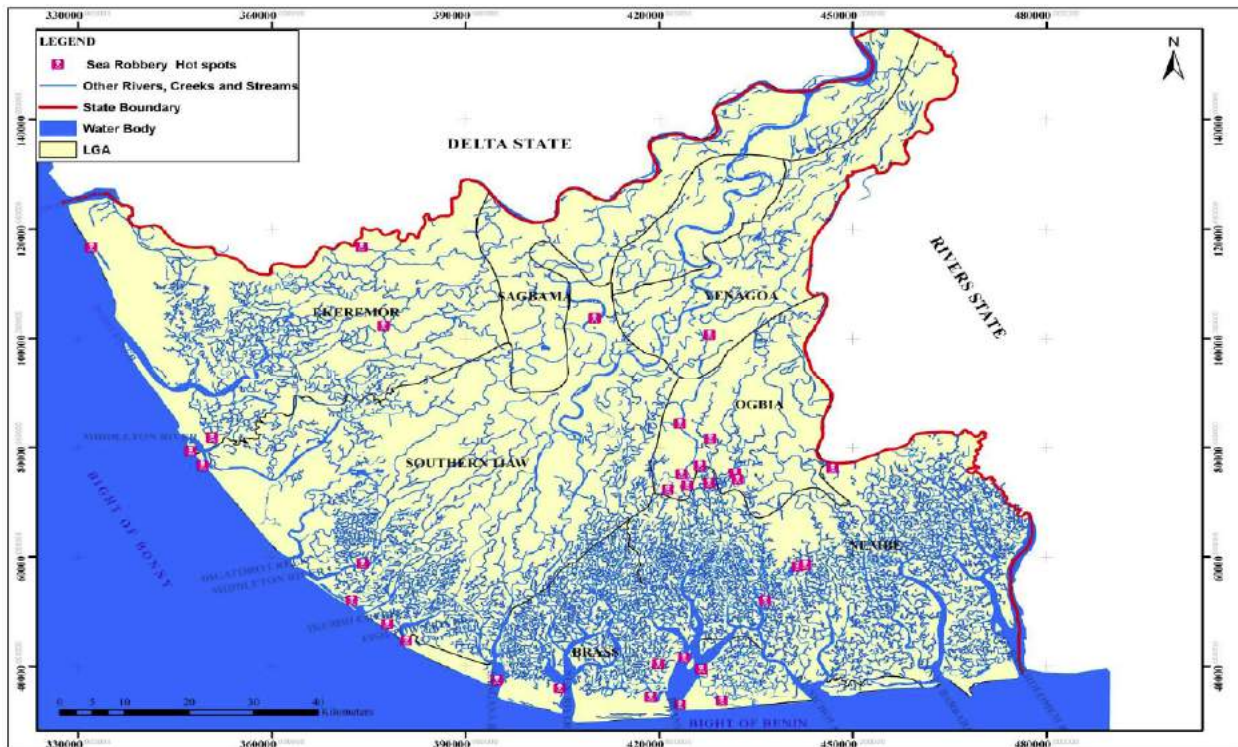
Skull with crossed bones as shown on the legend in Figure 3 indicates the hotspots or locations where sea robbers usually launch attack in Akwa Ibom State



**Figure 3:** Sea robbery hotspots along waterways and creeks on map of Akwa Ibom State. Source: Field survey (2016).

waterways and creeks. A cursory glance at the map reveals that sea robbery incidences are pronounced in Oron, Mbo, Ibenu with pocket of attacks in Ikot-Abasi and Eastern Obolo Local Government waterways. This suggests that the criminal activities are not spread evenly across the state waterways. Speedboat operators, fishermen and market women who use the waterways for their routine businesses identify the

following rivers and creeks as dangerous waterways in Oron LGA: Kuru Creek, Kufere Creek, Akpa-Ikang Creek, Aka-Edok Creek, Signboard Creek, Kawaka Creek, Akpa-Esok Creek, Pilot Island, Etiso Creek and Ureako Creek. For Ibenu waterways, they include: Agbutuwa Creek, Okposo Creek, Okorita Creek and New town Creek were mentioned. Those in Mbo include: Effiat River, Ebughu fishing terminal,



**Figure 4:** Sea robbery hotspots along waterways and creeks in Bayelsa State.

Source: Field survey (2016).

EsuEwang River and Unyenge River were identified as danger zones in Akwa-Ibom waterways.

Skull with crossed bones as shown on the legend in Figure 4 indicates the hotspots or locations where the sea robbers in Bayelsa State waterways and creeks activities are prevalent. The symbol is more in Ogbia, Nembe, Brass, Yenagoa, Southern Ijaw and Ekeremor Local Government waterways and creeks. This implies that these local government waterways and creeks are the deadly waters in the state. The number of hotspots in the various locations suggests that sea robbery is also not spread evenly across the state waterways. The following are some of the hotspots identified by market women, fishermen and speedboat operators: Lobia River, Furupa River, Diobu Creek, Silver Creek, Peremabiri River, Pulobugu River and Mysonkiri River (SILGA); Sangana River, Akassa River, Obu-ama River, Eguama River, and Okpoma River (Brass); Obioo Creek, Okodi River, Epebu River, Anyama River, Okiki River and Oloibiri Court Beach River (Ogbia); Okoroama-tereke River, Oluasiri Creek, and Kampala River (Nembe); Egbema- angalabiri River, Ekeni River, Eletu-gbene River and Peretoro River (Ekeremor) and Swali and Agbura River in Yenagoa Local Government.

The Bayelsa State Police Command report, captioned 'Piracy report', buttresses the fact that sea

robbers operate in waterways and creeks where they can easily find their target.

On 06/05/2013 at about 1100hrs, the State Intelligence Bureau, Yenagoa reported that one Sunny Marine N0.3 speedboat plying Kolama route was attacked by sea pirates, who stole the said speed boat. The gang is suspected to be the same militant group who ambushed and killed eleven policemen at Lobia recently. One Sunday Fleghumo, 'm', an ex- militant and the owner of the speed boat, mobilized armed men in army uniforms with sophisticated weapons and confronted the sea pirates at fish town where they exchanged fire, consequently. The said Sunday Fleghumo was shot in the leg and was taken to an undisclosed hospital for treatment, while five of the sea pirates who had bullet wounds were taken to Sangana in Brass L.G.A, for treatment. They were arrested on tip off and the State C.I.D has concluded investigation .

01/08/2012 at about 1410hrs, while on routine patrol along the river by Swali market Yenagoa, intercepted a speed boat

mounted with 75HP Yamaha engine with inscription "Calaboy". One Kinsley Inatimi 'm', of Nembe was on board but when the particulars of the boat were demanded from him, he could not produce them. The man was arrested and on interrogation, he confessed being a member of six-sea piracy gang operating in Delta State. The boat, the engine and six various handsets were recovered from him which is said to have been robbed from their owners at gunpoint at Escravous River, Delta State. On 31/7/12, Marine Police, Warri confirmed that the incident was reported. State C.I.D has concluded investigation.

On 01/04/2011, a locally made boat with the inscription "M.V Prosper" plying Brass waterways, fully loaded with passenger and goods, was attacked by about fifteen hoodlums, suspected to be sea pirates. During the attack, the manager of the boat, one Sola, Okoriye, 'm', was shot dead, while passenger's properties and money were carted away. The corpse was deposited at Brass Mortuary for Autopsy. Marine Police, Yenagoa has concluded investigation

On 18/01/2010 at about 0935hrs, information gathered revealed that sea pirates armed with dangerous weapons attacked a vessel on board that was coming from Lagos to Port-Harcourt along Brass Ocean to carry goods and shot at members of the crew. Information had it that one Lt. Commander Onalo attached to naval base Ewoama in company of one captain Alagwa, Adekunle from Ondo State who is in charge of the vessel had reported the matter to Brass Police Division. Further information revealed that its Commander Onalo later went to the scene with his men to rescue the three members. However they did not meet the sea pirates but met one Daniel ,Osson, 'm,' from Akwa Ibom State shot on the right arm, Sunday, Rotimi, 'm', shot on the right arm and Abiona , Michael , 'm', shot on the right leg both from Lagos. The victims were rushed to General Hospital for treatment. In the process of receiving treatment, Daniel Ossom 'm', aged 45yrs

died as a result of loss of blood. The corpse was deposited at General Hospital for autopsy. State C.I.D has concluded investigation.

On 18/09/09 at about 1300hrs at Sangana Community in Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, information gathered revealed that Con Oil servicing company based in Sangana paid the sum of Eighteen Million Naira, three million was disbursed accordingly to representatives of each compound and group in the area. Information further had in that after the disbursement, the Youth President in company of one Felix O. Fred 'm' Charles Church 'm', Danlanor Wolo 'm' and twelve others left with the remaining fifteen million naira (₦15m). On their way, along Agbura River in Yenagoa Local Government Area, they were accosted by six sea pirates armed with guns and other dangerous weapons in a speed boat, who immediately fired rapidly in the air, sank their boat and stole the said fifteen million naira with their personal properties. The bandits escaped by swimming across the river. No casualty was recorded. However efforts are on to arrest the culprits. The State CID has concluded investigation.

On 12/11/08 at about 0830hrs, one Ayi Daukoru 'm,' a member of Ijaw Youth Council ( IYC), Nembe Bassambiri reported that at about 0700hrs same date, sea pirates numbering about eight (8) fully armed with sophisticated rifles accosted some boat drivers along the Nembe waterways and robbed them of their money. In the process, one Dagibo Biokiri aged 35yrs, driver of one of the speed boats from southern Ijaw was shot dead. The sea pirates later carried two 75 horse power engine boats to an unknown destination. Corpse of the deceased was deposited at Nembe General Hospital Mortuary for autopsy. Efforts are being made to curtail the notorious activities of the pirates on the waterways. State C.I.D has concluded investigation.

On 6/7/06 at about 1100hrs, F/NO. 205837 SGT Asuquo, James, was



attached to Bompol (EOD) Port- Harcourt, on escort of explosives from I.D.S.L Company. After discharging the said explosives, on their way back to I.D.S.L camp at Kaiama, they were attacked by sea pirates in three boats travelling in the opposite direction who opened fire on them; the NCO jumped into the river with his AK 47 Rifle NO.BE-35-2743 with thirty rounds of ammunition, He was immediately engaged by two of the pirates who also jumped into river and snatched the said rifle from him. Efforts are on to arrest the pirates and also recover the rifle. State C.I.D has concluded investigation.

Source: Bayelsa State Police Command–Piracy Report (2013).

Skull with crossed bones as shown on the legend in Figure 5 indicates hotspots of Sea robbers' activities in Delta State waterways and creeks. As shown on the map the symbol occurred more in Warri South and Burutu Local Government waterways of the state. This signifies that the aforementioned Local Government

Areas are the epic centres of sea robbery activities in Delta state. Speedboat operators, Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria mentioned that the following waterways and creeks as one of the numerous high risk creeks and rivers Burutu River, Forcados River, Escravos River, Okerenkoko River Ayakoromo River, Ogulaha River, others are Okpoko Creek and Oginigben River.

**LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study of Appraisal of sea robbery control in Nigeria's waterways : lessons from Niger Delta region is a sensitive one as some of the respondents were initially skeptical about the study. But later, the respondents cooperated when they were convinced that the information sought for was strictly for academic purposes and would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Larger data would have been gathered by the researcher if security operatives had allowed the use of tape recorder by the researcher during the fieldwork for this research.

**CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

It may not be out of place to conclude that the findings of this study suggest that the Joint Task Force

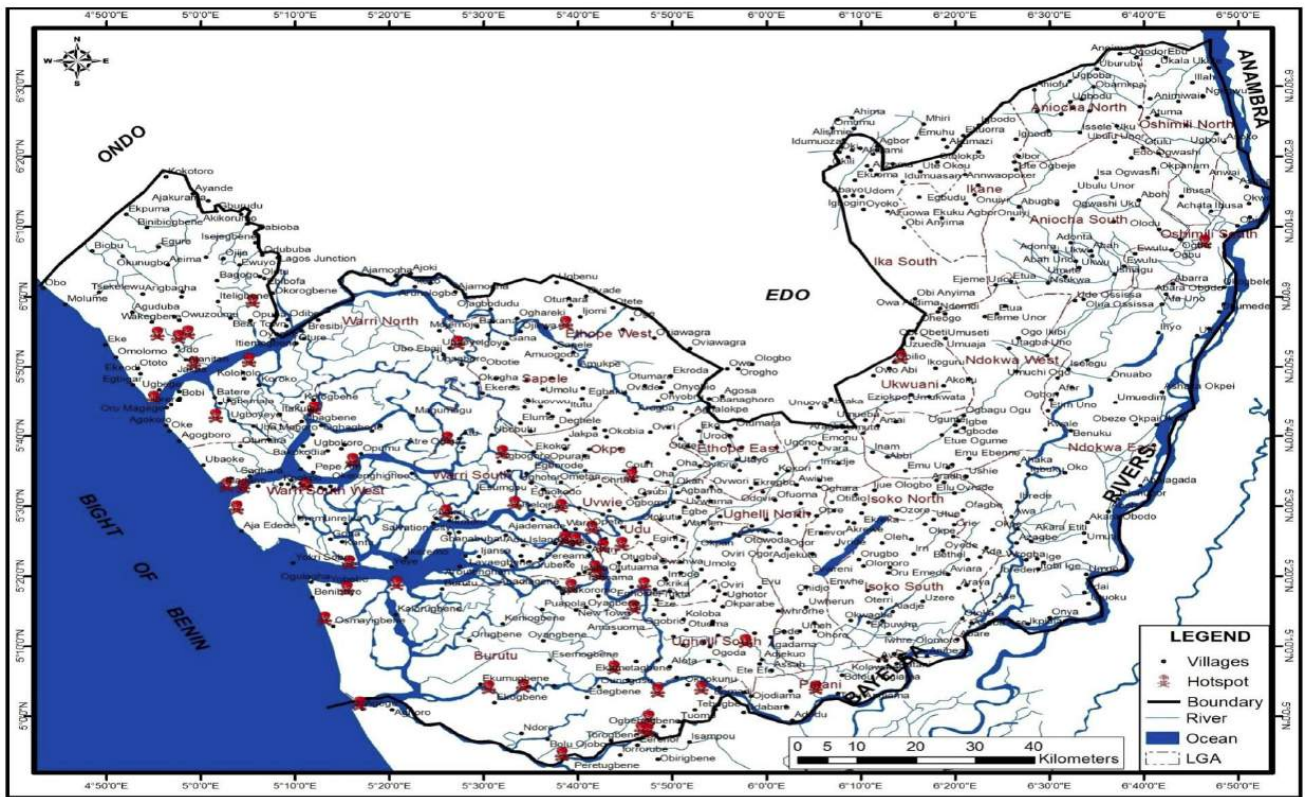


Figure 5: Sea robbery hotspots along waterways and creek on map of Delta State. Source: Field survey (2016).

(JTF) is selective in its responsibility of provision of security in the region as their presence is felt only in critical oil facilities. This therefore calls for urgent attention of the Governors of Niger Delta States in particular, and the Federal Government in general, to provide adequate security that will guarantee the safety of our waterways for maritime business operation and as well as tourism development in the region.

Consequently, the study suggests the following recommendations:

First, crime mapping is recommended for this study. Geographic Information System (GIS maps) as displayed in Figures 3, 4 and 5 which indicate sea robbery hotspots in the sample states will aid security

## APPENDIX I

### Police Report

#### SEA PIRACY



On 06/05/2013 at about 1100hrs, the State Intelligence Bureau, Yenagoa reported that one Sunny Marine NO.3 speed boat, plying kolama Route was attacked by sea pirates, who stole the said speed boat. The gang is suspected to be the same militant group who ambushed and killed eleven Policemen at Lobia recently. One Sunday Fleghumo 'm' an ex- militant and the owner of the speed boat, mobilized armed men in army uniforms with sophisticated weapons and confronted the sea pirates at fish town where they exchanged firing, consequently. The said Sunday Fleghumo was shot on his leg and was taken to an undisclosed hospital for treatment, five of the sea pirates who had bullet wounds were taken to Sangana in Brass L.G.A, for treatment. They were arrested on tip off. State C.I.D is investigating.

operatives for effective and efficient surveillance of Niger Delta waterways. This method of policing is result oriented compared to the traditional random policing.

As a second measure, the Commandant of Marine Component Command (MCC) of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the sample states should organize seminars and workshops on community relation and safety for officers. This will change their orientation as regards to security of lives of maritime business operators and other waterways users.

Lastly, there is need to provide logistics and monitor the release of fuel to gunboats. This hopefully will reduce the quantity of fuel diverted from surveillance operations to the black market.

On 03/08/2012 at about 1620hrs, marine Police reported that on 01/08/2012 at about 1410hrs, while on routine patrol along the river by Swali market Yenagoa, intercepted one Wig speed boat mounted with 75HP Yamaha engine with inscription "Calaboy". One Kinsley Inatimi 'm; of Nembe was on board but when the particulars of the boat was demanded from him, he could not

## APPENDIX II

There is existence of sea robbery in your waterways					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	342	87.9	87.9	87.9
	Agreed	44	11.3	11.3	99.2
	Disagree	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

Sea robbery is a security risk to the people of Niger Delta					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	176	45.2	45.2	45.2
	Agreed	201	51.7	51.7	96.9
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	98.5
	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

There are incidence of sea robbers attacks in your waterways in recent times					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	276	71.0	71.0	71.0
	Agreed	107	27.5	27.5	98.5
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

Sea robbers use dangerous weapons during attack.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	262	67.4	67.4	67.4
	Agreed	118	30.3	30.3	97.7
	Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	99.2
	Strongly Disagree	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

Sea robbery has introduced the payment of "security due" in our waterways.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	86	22.1	22.1	22.1
	Agreed	186	47.8	47.8	69.9
	Disagree	67	17.2	17.2	87.1
	Strongly Disagree	50	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

Sea robbery has made the maritime environment unsafe for trading and other economic activities.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	191	49.1	49.1	49.1
	Agreed	187	48.1	48.1	97.2
	Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	389	100.0	100.0	

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