

# Vanguard

ood flight.  
ood connection.  
ood deal.

With daily flights  
out of Lagos, Abuja  
and Port-Harcourt,  
every door  
is open to you

lufthansa.com

BREAKING NEWS

TRANSLATE:::

Select Language ▼

## Day of reckoning for Calabar sea pirates

on September 08, 2013 / in [Metro](#) 12:01 am / [Comments](#)

By Emma Una

For several years, sea pirates turned sea travel along the Oron –Cameroon –Gabon water channel into a nightmare. Harrowing tales of armed attacks, vandalism and robbing of boats and ships along the channel were a constant feature of those who had cause to travel to Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea or Gabon for business or other activities by sea. Monsters or men of the underworld usually waylaid the water vessels by lurking inside ship wracks or hiding their speed boats in the crevices of the high sea weeds and creeks along the water channel at night and sometimes in the early hours of the morning.

As the vessels approached, the rouges would row their boats closely behind and close-in on them and, with a bout of fire from their automatic weapons, tear open the vessels outer doors to gain access to dispossess their victims of valuables.

The notoriety and frequency of these attacks along with the destruction of offshore pipelines to siphon petroleum products prompted government to act.

What other agency could be better positioned to achieve this responsibility than the navy whose primary sphere of operation is safeguarding the nation's territorial waters . To effectively position the navy to achieve this arduous task, additional speeds boats and other operational equipment were acquired for the Eastern Naval Command under whose jurisdiction the Calabar water channel falls but, significantly, the naval operational area which has a base contiguous to the water channel is the NNS Victory on whose shoulders the task of carrying out regular operations on the channel was placed.

“In the past nine months, we have been carrying out regular operations and surveillance on the high seas along the Calabar Water Channel and we have arrested several boats and barges used in siphoning oil from devastated pipes in the sea and alongside that is the arrest of pirates who have constituted a thorn in the flesh of sea travelers along the channel”, Commodore James Oluwole, the Commanding Officer, NNS Victory, told Sunday Vanguard.

On Tuesday, 27 August, in the early hours of the day, while a naval boat was escorting a large boat coming from

Cameroon, it was confronted by sea pirates who had been laying siege for boats bound for the Calabar Jetty at the Parrot Island near the Maritime Academy Oron and soon a gun duel ensued.

“This morning, as my men were escorting a boat coming from Cameroon to Calabar, they were confronted by pirates who were laying siege there. When they saw my patrol team, they opened fire with automatic weapons which was returned by my men and seven of them fell”, Oluwale said.

The Commanding Officer said the pirates, operating in two boats, were over powered by the superior fire power of his men on patrol and all the pirates in the first boat fell inside water while another in the second boat was captured. He said NNS Victory had been carrying out regular patrols along the channel to make the sea safe and secure for the movement of goods and people. “We will continue to carry out patrols on the water channel because we have a mandate to secure the water channel for free movement of our people and goods and so any one who thinks he can obstruct that would be always get what he deserves”, Oluwale stated.

The Commanding Officer said before the confrontation, his men had received reports from fishermen at the Parrot Island that pirates were waylaying boats and so his patrol team had to act fast. “At the Parrot Island near the Maritime Academy, they saw some fishermen who told them about the activities of the pirates and when my men got there they were confronted by the sea pirates with automatic weapons but our men over powered them.”

Richard Kola, the captain of the boat, said the timely intervention of the navy men saved his boat from being attacked. “I saw as the two boats were coming after us and behind us came the naval men and the two boats tried to escape but one of their boats had problems and the engine stopped; so they began to fire at the navy men and the navy men replied”. He said he saw all the seven pirates in the first boat fall inside water while the second boat escaped.