

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Component Command
Headquarters Northwood**



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NATO Warship HMCS *Fredericton* intercepts suspected pirates in the Gulf of Aden

GULF OF ADEN – Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Fredericton* intercepted a suspected pirate skiff today while conducting counter piracy patrols as part of NATO Operation OCEAN SHIELD in the Gulf of Aden.

At 07:44 a.m. local time (10:44 p.m. EST), HMCS *Fredericton* received reports from her helicopter during aerial patrols in the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) that they had spotted a small skiff loitering beside the shipping corridor approximately 45 nautical miles away from the ship. The helicopter, call sign “*Stalker*” closed the position of the vessel. Upon detection, the skiff attempted to flee from the location but was stopped when *Stalker* continued to hover in front of the skiff to block the escape. After several attempts to try and flee the area, the skiff’s occupants stopped their engines and waited.

Fredericton proceeded to the location at maximum speed to intercept and board the skiff.

With extra surveillance assistance provided by a helicopter from the United States Ship (USS) *Farragut*, a warship attached to Combined Task Force 151, *Fredericton* dispatched her Naval Boarding Party (NBP) to board the vessel and conduct a detailed search. Their mission was to ensure that no pirate material was onboard and, if there was, to confiscate it to prevent them from mounting any attacks.

There were no weapons or ammunition found, though *Farragut*’s helicopter did see what looked like boxes being tossed into the sea prior to the Naval Boarding Party’s arrival at the skiff.

“As we approached the skiff, the group of six men onboard immediately raised their hands and followed our directions,” cited the Naval Boarding Party Officer. “They were all of Somali descent and they did not have any equipment onboard that would identify them as legitimate merchants or fishermen.”

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“This event demonstrates that pirates remain active in this area and the difficult mission it is to locate these small skiffs, whether from air or sea” said Commander Steve Waddell, Commanding Officer of HMCS *Fredericton*. “In this particular case, though there was not enough evidence to detain the individuals, I do believe that we were able to prevent them from carrying out an attack on another vessel”.

Building on previous counter-piracy missions conducted by NATO (Operation Allied Provider and Operation Allied Protector), Operation Ocean Shield is NATO’s enhanced contribution to the international efforts to counter piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.

The mission of Operation Ocean Shield is to deter and disrupt piracy in the Gulf of Aden, the Horn of Africa and the Somali Basin.

Notes to editors

1. The four ships comprising SNMG1 are:

- HDMS Absalon (flagship, Danish Navy)
- HMCS Fredericton (Canadian Navy)
- USS Boone (USA Navy)
- HMS Chatham (UK Navy)

2. Permanently assigned to NATO, SNMG1 is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to quickly respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world. A capable, stand-alone task group, SNMG1 is one of four standing maritime elements that form a flexible core around which NATO can build a larger force to meet a wide range of missions that will include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response, embargo operations, etc.

3. HMCS Fredericton is deployed on operations on a six-month mission to the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa. HMCS Fredericton’s participation in Operation OCEAN SHIELD represents Canada’s ongoing contribution and commitment to counter piracy operations. The Canadian Navy remains relevant, responsive and effective in the new security environment.

4. Photographs are available at www.manw.nato.int.

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