

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Component Command
Headquarters Northwood**



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NATO COMMANDER REITERATES DANGER OF PIRACY IN GULF OF ADEN

London: NATO maritime commander, Admiral Sir Trevor Soar today warned seafarers sailing through the Gulf of Aden of the danger of complacency towards pirate attacks.

“Whilst NATO, her maritime partners and other navies are working hard conducting counter-piracy patrols, ships’ masters have to accept personal responsibility for the safety of their crew and should have in place the recommended self protection measures against pirate attacks” said Admiral Soar, who is based at NATO’s maritime HQ in Northwood, London.

Self Protection ‘Best Management Practices’ for maritime shipping have been in place for 12 months. They advise, amongst other things, that vessels who sail through the Gulf of Aden transit within the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) - a sea corridor which is patrolled by warships from NATO, the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and other maritime nations. Vessels are also advised not to travel at low speeds or give pirates easy access by leaving ropes or boarding ladders hanging over the side. Larger ships are advised to have water cannons rigged and razor sharp wire around their structure to prevent pirates climbing onboard.

All international vessels transiting the area are encouraged to register with the UK’s Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO), based in Dubai and the EU’s Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), London so that their transits can be monitored and any incidents quickly reported by the master of the vessel.

“Since the NATO mission started, there has been a 50% drop in piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden, but there is still a need for vigilance. The monsoon period is due to end and over the next few weeks we may well see a rise in pirate gangs attempting to hijack vulnerable ships”. Admiral Soar stated.

NATO’s counter-piracy mission is code-named *Operation Ocean Shield*. The aim of the mission is to deter and disrupt piracy, and last week NATO Danish warship Absalon successfully thwarted a pirate attack on a vessel, MV Ariella.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

1. The NATO ships currently conducting the counter piracy operation *OCEAN SHIELD* are from the Standing NATO Maritime Group One. They are:
 - HDMS Absalon (flagship, Danish 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. For more information about Best Management Practices visit the NATO Shipping Centre's website www.shipping.nato.int or the EU's Maritime Security Centre (Horn of Africa) website www.mschoa.eu

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