

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Component Command
Headquarters Northwood**



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NATO PROMOTES BEST PRACTICE TO MARITIME SHIPPING IN FIGHT AGAINST PIRACY

London: NATO maritime commanders today reiterated the importance of the maritime community adopting the recommended self protection measures to help in the fight against piracy when they sail through the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin. The call comes after two motor vessels came under attack by pirates this week in the Gulf of Aden, with two very different outcomes – one who adopted the self protection measures was able to successfully repel the attack, whilst the other who did not was pirated, and is now being taken to a pirates' lair off the Somali coast.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin has become a growing concern to the international community in recent years; the sea area sees up to 95% of the world's trade passing through each year.

The Self Protection 'Best Management Practices' for maritime shipping have been in place for 18 months. They advise, amongst other things, that ships who sail through the Gulf of Aden transit within the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (ITRC) - 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. Ships are also advised not to travel at low speeds or give pirates easy access by leaving ropes or boarding ladders hanging over the side. They are also advised to have water cannons rigged and razor sharp wire around the ship's structure to prevent pirates climbing onboard.

All international shipping transiting the area are encouraged to check in with the UK's Maritime Trade Organisation (UKMTO), based in Dubai and the EU's Maritime Shipping Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), London, so that their transits can be monitored and any incidents quickly reported by the master of the vessel. The pirated ship had not registered with the UKMTO or MSCHOA.

NATO's counter-piracy mission is code-named *Operation Ocean Shield*. The aim of the mission is to deter and disrupt piracy, and this week NATO warship HMCS Fredericton successfully intercepted a pirate ship and so prevented a pirate attack. Commodore Rune (Royal Danish Navy) who is in charge of the NATO Task Force at sea in the Danish Flag ship Absalon, commented "NATO is making a significant contribution in the fight against piracy, but we recognise that there is still a lot of work to do". Since the NATO mission started, there has been a 50% drop in piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden.

ENDS

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

Notes to editors

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)
- 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.

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