

News Release



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NATO WARSHIP DISRUPTS PIRATE GANG

In what was another successful example of international cooperation in the fight against piracy off Somalia, the Greek warship HS Limnos, operating with NATO's counter-piracy operation *Ocean Shield*, has intercepted and disrupted a pirate gang in the Indian Ocean.

The HS Limnos was cued onto a pirate group deep in the Indian Ocean by an EU Naval Force Swedish maritime patrol aircraft operating out of the Seychelles. After a brief attempt to escape, HS Limnos' helicopter quickly pin pointed the pirates and rounded up the mother skiff and 2 'attack' skiffs. In a desperate attempt to disguise their true purpose the 10 suspected pirates were seen to throw their piracy equipment, including ladders and grappling hooks overboard; they would latter claim to be fisherman.

HS Limnos' Boarding Team then quickly established control over the suspected pirates and their craft. Following a thorough search for evidence, all remaining pirate equipment was disposed of and the attack skiffs destroyed. After ensuring the suspected pirates had sufficient food, water and fuel they were released to return to Somalia in the mother skiff.

HS Limnos' Commanding Officer, Commander Ioannis Partsalidis Hellenic Navy said:

'Searching for pirate groups in the vastness of the Indian Ocean is a real challenge, even for a capable NATO warship like HS Limnos. The fact

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

that we were able to disrupt these pirates and safeguard innocent shipping is a great success and is one that my Ship's Company are determined to repeat'.

NATO warships patrol the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean as part of the international effort to counter the piracy that has plagued the region. Despite the vastness of the ocean, counter piracy forces are continuing to successfully disrupt pirate activity and safeguard merchant traffic.

Background Information:

HS LIMNOS is part of the NATO Task Force deployed to the region to contribute to the international effort to eradicate piracy off the coast of Somalia. The task force consists of 5 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:

HMS CHATHAM (Flagship) – UK
USS COLE – US
TCG GELIBOLU – Turkey
HS LIMNSO - Greece
ITS SCIROCCO – Italy

NATO is working closely with other partners including EU Maritime Force, Combined Maritime Force as well as other navies, including China, Japan, India and Russia.

Pictures:

- A. HS LIMNOS disrupts a Pirate Attack Group in the Indian Ocean.**
- B. Pirate attack skiffs are destroyed.**

Media Inquiries only to:

Public Affairs Officer
+44 (0)1923 956763
+44 (0) 7747 008508
<mailto:pio@manw.nato.int>