

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood**



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## **ITALIAN WARSHIP ITS BERSAGLIERE SAILS HOME AFTER TAKING PART IN NATO'S COUNTER PIRACY MISSION**

Italian warship ITS BERSAGLIERE is on her way home after completing NATO counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa.

The ship and her crew have spent more than two months helping to ensure the safe passage of merchant ships transiting the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden. By patrolling this busy sea area, BERSAGLIERE has helped to prevent pirate attacks from taking place.

Whilst on operations, the crew conducted visits to merchant ships and dhows to remind the merchant community about the real danger of piracy in the region, as well as providing them with an understanding of measures that can help prevent them being hijacked by pirates.

"It has been a great pleasure to work with the crew of BERSAGLIERE over the past two months. Their contribution to the counter piracy effort off Somalia has been immense and instrumental to our mission. I wish the crew a safe journey back to Italy and their families" commented Commodore Christian Rune, Royal Danish Navy, the Commander of NATO's counter-piracy Task Force off Somalia.

----TEXT ENDS----

**Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)**

## **Background Information:**

NATO has contributed to the international counter piracy effort off the Horn of Africa since December 2008. The mission has expanded from escorting UN and World Food Programme Shipping under Operation Allied Provider and protecting merchant traffic in the Gulf of Aden under Operation Allied Protector. In addition to these activities and as part of the latest mission, Operation Ocean Shield, NATO is working with other international bodies to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 is permanently assigned to NATO. It 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 and 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.

NATO has announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark  
USS LABOON - United States of America  
HNLMS AMSTERDAM - Netherlands  
TCG GAZIANTEP – Turkey

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# Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)