

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO WARSHIP ESBERN SNARE DISRUPTS PIRATES IN THE GULF OF ADEN

LONDON: In the early hours of 15 November while patrolling in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden, Danish warship HDMS ESBERN SNARE, detected a suspected pirate skiff loitering in the vicinity of merchant traffic lanes. Upon closer inspection, the crew established that 7 persons were on board the skiff and a pirate ladder was clearly visible.

ESBERN SNARE launched their boarding team in order to intercept and disrupt the suspected pirates. When the suspected pirates discovered that they had been detected, they initially tried to escape, but they soon realised that they could not outrun the boarding team, and they threw the ladder and other piracy related paraphernalia over board.

The suspected pirates were taken onboard ESBERN SNARE for questioning and evidence was collected. The skiff's powerful outboard engines were confiscated and the suspected pirates were instead issued a low-power outboard motor rendering the skiff useless for piracy.

"Today's disruption in the IRTC proves that the effort of the forces in the area is most definitely making a difference. We will never be able to guarantee that no attacks are successful, but we are without doubt keeping the shipping in the area much safer." Captain Steen Engelbrecht Pedersen, Commanding Officer of ESBERN SNARE said.

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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.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

In March 2010, NATO announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Task Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America
USS LABOON - United States of America
HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
RFA FORT VICTORIA (With a Royal Marines boarding team embarked) – United Kingdom
ITS BERSAGLIERE – Italy
HNLMS ZEELEEUW - Netherlands

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