

News Release



Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood
www.manw.nato.int



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NATO disrupts pirate mother ship responsible for the attack on MV Montecristo

Following NATO's successful release of the pirated Italian merchant vessel, MV Montecristo earlier last week, the naval units contributing to NATO's counter piracy operation succeeded in locating and disrupting the suspected pirate mother ship responsible for the attack.

Successful coordination of military assets and information sharing amongst naval units operating in the region made it possible to locate the pirate dhow which was stopped whilst heading towards the Somali coast. Under the watchful eye of HMS SOMERSET a boarding team from the RFA FORT VICTORIA boarded the dhow to carry out an inspection. During the inspection clear evidence was found of involvement in piracy with numerous weapons and piracy equipment secreted within the dhows compartments. The investigation also revealed that Somali pirates had forced the Pakistani crew to use their dhow as a pirate mother ship. On completion of the investigation, the dhow and its crew were set free and four Somali pirates were taken into custody by the Italian authorities to join the other eleven suspected pirates involved in the attack on MV Montecristo.

Describing the events, NATO's Task Force Commander Rear Admiral Gualtiero Mattesi said that "our determination to disrupt and deter piracy has been clearly demonstrated in these two actions and our actions co-ordinated with our naval partners multiplies the effect of the NATO force to really challenge the pirates operations".

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 presently 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

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

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:

ITS Andrea Doria (Flagship) – Italy
RFA Fort Victoria - UK
USS Carney - USA
USS De Wert – USA
NRP D. Francisco De Almeida – Portugal
One Norwegian Navy Maritime Patrol Aircraft

Media Inquiries only to:

Public Affairs Officer
+44 (0) 7867 524371
+44 (0) 7747 008508

<mailto:pio@manw.nato.int>

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