

News Release



**Allied Maritime
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NATO and CMF Commanders Meet At Sea

On 14th December Rear Admiral Sinan Azmi TOSUN Commander of NATO's Counter Piracy Force, hosted the Task Force Commander of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Rear Admiral (UH) Kaleem SHAUKAT SI (Pakistan Navy).

The two Commanders met on board the NATO flagship, TCG GİRESUN, in the Gulf of Aden to discuss matters of mutual concerns such as cooperation in the most effective deployment of ships and aircraft in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin.

Rear Admiral TOSUN emphasized the importance of meeting with other actors in the counter piracy missions: "Personal relations have proven one of the keys to success in maritime cooperation. I am very pleased to host Rear Admiral Kaleem SHAUKAT SI on my flagship. It was extremely useful to meet face-to-face and share our thoughts on how to tackle piracy in the most effective way through coordination of the assets we have. As the main actors in this vast area, these kinds of constructive meetings help us to enhance the level of coordination."

Both CMF and NATO are undertaking operations to deter and disrupt piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden and Somali Basin. Due to the huge size of the operating area, counter piracy is a joint and combined effort. Besides CMF, NATO works in partnership with the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and independent navies such as China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

As maritime forces and the commercial maritime community have worked together we have seen the pirates' success rate decrease significantly. In 2009, 45 ships were hijacked in the region; so far in 2011, only 21 ships have been hijacked effectively halving the number of ships taken.

This is a tangible result of the work that NATO and its partners have been involved in for the past three years in the region. Pirates should not be under the illusion that the Christmas season is a good time to launch pirate attacks – NATO ships will be patrolling just as they have done throughout the year.

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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 actors to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to respond quickly to crisis situations anywhere in the world. It is 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. These include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response and embargo operations. Its command rotates amongst the contributing nations and SNMG 2 is currently commanded by Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN, Turkish Navy.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

TCG GIRESUN (flagship)– Turkey
HDMS ABSALON – Denmark
ITS GRECALE – Italy
RFA FORT VICTORIA – United Kingdom
USS DEWERT - United States of America
USS CARNEY - United States of America
Challenger 604 Aircraft - Denmark

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