

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood**  
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## **NATO SHIP RETURNS PIRATED DHOW TO RIGHTFUL YEMENI OWNER**

Royal Navy and Royal Marine forces, embarked on RFA Fort Victoria, part of NATO's counter piracy mission Operation Ocean Shield have successfully rescued a dhow from the clutches of 14 suspected Somali pirates, and returned it to its rightful owner in Yemen.

The Yemeni fishing dhow, which was recovered from the suspected Somali pirates on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January, had been hijacked and held in a known pirate camp ashore. Awadh Barasheed, 27, the owner of the dhow said: "I am happy to receive my dhow back after being pirated since 18 May 2011. I would like to thank the coalition forces and specifically the British Navy (Royal Navy) for retrieving my dhow from the hands of the criminal pirates. This dhow is the only source of income for me, my brothers and our families."

Rear Admiral Hank Ort, Chief of Staff at NATO's Maritime Command in Northwood said: "We are pleased to be able to return the dhow to its rightful owner. Too often, we are forced to concentrate on pirates but it is important to remember that innocent seafarers and fishermen are suffering at the hands of pirates. We are not complacent about the scourge of piracy and are committed to patrolling the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean to make the sealanes safer for legitimate maritime traffic."

RFA Fort Victoria has been acting as part of a NATO task group in support of Operation Ocean Shield. In the past ten days, five pirate groups have been successfully disrupted in the Gulf of Aden and over fifty pirates are potentially facing the prospect of prosecution.

### **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.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

TCG Giresun (Flagship) - Turkey  
USS Carney - USA  
USS De Wert – USA

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

RFA Fort Victoria – UK  
HDMS Absalon – Denmark  
Challenger 640 Aircraft - Denmark

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