

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command  
Northwood**



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## **NATO'S RAPID RESPONSE FREES HOSTAGES AND DEFEATS PIRATES**

Late on Friday May 11<sup>th</sup> a fully equipped Somali pirate action group hunting for vulnerable merchant traffic in the Arabian Sea was disrupted by the Turkish warship TCG GIRESUN, NATO's counter piracy Task Force flagship. On board the Yemeni type dhow were 14 suspected pirates and 7 Yemeni hostages of the original crew.

The successful disruption was the culmination of a sequence of events that started on the afternoon of May 10<sup>th</sup> following reports that a chemical tanker had been attacked by a skiff launched from a suspected pirate mother ship.

NATO's counter piracy task force commander despatched the Turkish warship TCG GIRESUN to investigate the report and while en route to the attack area GIRESUN received an updated report from a coalition maritime patrol aircraft of a suspicious dhow very close to the position where the attack occurred.

Once at the position TCG GIRESUN'S helicopter positively identified a known suspect Yemeni style dhow and directed it to stop. The GIRESUN despatched her boarding team who conducted a compliant boarding and discovered on board the mother ship 14 Somalis suspected of piracy as well as the 7 original crew from Yemen who had been held as hostages.

Amongst other items known to be used by pirates the search by the boarding team resulted in the detention of 9 AK-47 assault rifles and hundreds of bullets as well as 1 RPG launcher and 3 rounds. When confronted with the weapons and associated equipment the Somalis confessed that they deployed from the east coast of Somalia the previous week in order to conduct piracy operations. Subsequently all of the pirate weapons were disposed of by the boarding team and the Yemeni crew were given back their vessel and allowed to carry on their voyage.

NATO'S Task Force Commander Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN commented "This co-ordinated disruption by international counter piracy forces sends a strong message that piracy will not be allowed to prevail and I am very happy that another group of pirates has been denied the possibility to threaten merchant traffic. NATO, alongside the other international forces will continue our resolute and dynamic operations to discourage the pirates."

Accompanying pictures show the boarding team of TCG GIRESUN alongside the dhow mother ship and the haul of weapons seized by the boarding team.

-TEXT ENDS-

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