

News Release



Maritime
Command
Northwood
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Ref: OOS 2012 / 22

29 June 2010

HNLMS Evertsen disrupts pirate action group

After a two day hunt in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea, NATO's flagship HNLMS Evertsen boarded a pirated dhow early this morning and released seven hijacked Indian and Bangladeshi crew members. The Omani flagged dhow *Nebarkad* had been hijacked on 20th June off the coast of Oman, and was used by the pirates to attack merchant vessels in the Arabian Sea.

The two day operation was the conclusion of a longer period in which a group of suspected pirates used dhows to conduct attacks on merchant vessels throughout the Arabian Sea. On 27th June an alarm call came in from the MV Namrun a Maltese flagged bulk carrier. The captain stated that an unknown dhow had attempted to attack it and shots were fired.

After swift consultation with the other maritime forces, including the EU, in the operating area the commander of NATO's Task Force, Commodore Ben Bekkering, dispatched the Evertsen.

The warship covered almost 300 nautical miles in 10 hours to the area north-east of Socotra. Although known positions seemed to indicate the dhow was heading south toward for Somalia, the bad weather caused by strong monsoon winds and a very rough sea, forced her back.

After an intensive search, aided by a Japanese Maritime Patrol Aircraft, the Lynx helicopter of Evertsen detected the dhow on Thursday afternoon, as it entered the Yemeni territorial waters. At first light this morning as the dhow headed south towards Somalia HNLMS Evertsen approached the dhow for a boarding. The dhow initially attempted to evade at speed. As the boarding team approached, the hijacked crew jumped overboard. While they were brought to safety, the dhow was secured by Dutch marines who detained seven suspected pirates.

Confronted by HNLMS Evertsen, the suspected pirates gave up any attempt at further resistance. "This action proves again that pirates in this region have not yet given up, but multinational and coordinated

efforts by all counter-piracy forces works”, states Commander Boots, commanding officer of HNLMS Evertsen.

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.

NATO Allies agreed on 19 March 2012 to extend Operation Ocean Shield for a further two years until the end of 2014.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS Evertsen flagship (the Netherlands)
USS Taylor (United States of America)

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