

News Release



Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
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www.manw.nato.int



30 November 2010

NATO ship RFA Fort Victoria tracks and disrupts pirate vessel

London: Yesterday, the UK ship RFA Fort Victoria currently part of NATO's counter piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield successfully disrupted a skiff while patrolling off the coast of Somalia.

Late on Sunday afternoon, Fort Victoria's helicopter identified a whaler anchored offshore near Hobyo, fully loaded with fuel and with pirates on board ready to leave. As darkness fell RFA Fort Victoria, her helicopter and Royal Marines boarding teams from the Fleet Protection Group shadowed the pirate vessel as it transited due east from the shore.

As Fort Victoria's appeared out of the blackness, the Marines quickly surrounded the pirate whaler which was now towing two smaller vessels, supported by the helicopter's sniper team.

The pirates capitulated immediately, throwing their weapons into the sea, before being temporarily detained on RFA Fort Victoria. After 24 hours onboard, the pirates were let ashore off the Somali coastline.

Captain Rob Dorey, Commanding Officer of RFA Fort Victoria said "the pirates have changed their tactics in light of our patrols but we have been able to detect and destroy their equipment and have prevented further piracy attacks."

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Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

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 Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America
USS LABOON - United States of America
HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
RFA FORT VICTORIA (With a Royal Marines boarding team embarked) – United Kingdom
ITS BERSAGLIERE – Italy
HNLMS AMSTERDAM - Netherlands

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