

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**
www.manw.nato.int



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NATO Warns Of Clear and Present Danger From Pirate Attacks

NATO Maritime HQ based at Northwood, London has published updated guidelines on the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) website to highlight the very real threat from pirate attacks to all vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin and Indian Ocean – a sea area the size of Western Europe.

In January 2011, armed pirates attacked a total of 23 ships in the Arabian Sea, with 5 of the attacks resulting in the ships being taken over and held by the pirates.

NATO, the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and Combined Maritime Force (CMF), together with warships from other nations, continue to have success in preventing some of the pirate hijacks, however, due to the sheer size of the sea area, it cannot be guaranteed that a warship will be nearby to intervene.

It is estimated that more than 22,000 ships transit the Gulf of Aden each year and many of these now use Best Management Practices (BMP), such as travelling at high speed through the area, placing barbed wire around the ship and the use of water cannons to ward off an imminent attack. With a low freeboard and slow speed, small vessels, such as yachts, are particularly vulnerable to pirate attack.

For more information on pirate attacks, Best Management Practices and general advice for vessels, please visit the NATO Shipping Centre website www.shipping.nato.int

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

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 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. Its command rotates amongst the contributing countries and is currently commanded by Commodore Michiel B. Hijmans, Royal Netherlands Navy

NATO has announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS DE RUYTER (Flagship) - Netherlands
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark
USS LABOON - United States of America
USS BAINBRIDGE – United States of America
TCG GIRESUN – Turkey

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Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)