

News Release



Maritime
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Danish Ship Disrupts Pirate Vessel

During the early morning of 27th February, off the coast of Somalia, Her Danish Majesty's Ship (HDMS) Absalon, acting as part of NATO's counter-piracy operation (Operation OCEAN SHIELD), approached a vessel that had been previously captured by pirates and was being used as a mother-ship (from which pirates normally launch attacks on other merchant vessels). HDMS Absalon successfully disrupted the pirate vessel however, two members of the original crew were found wounded and subsequently died.

In accordance with accepted procedures, when warning shots were unsuccessful, small arms fire from HDMS Absalon disabled and stopped the vessel. Shortly after, the vessel stopped and the suspected pirates were seen dropping their weapons overboard.

The vessel was then boarded by a team from HDMS Absalon, 17 pirates were detained, and 16 crew members released. Two crew members were found seriously wounded but, even after immediate medical assistance from HDMS Absalon's embarked doctor, subsequently died.

A review is now underway to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident.

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

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to respond quickly to crisis situations anywhere in the world. It is 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. These include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response and embargo operations. Its command rotates amongst the contributing nations and SNMG 2 is currently commanded by Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN, Turkish Navy.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

TCG GIRE SUN – Turkey
HDMS ABSALON – Denmark
ITS GRECALE – Italy

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