

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command
Northwood**



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NATO Commander meets Russian Counterpart in Gulf of Aden

Yesterday, Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN, Commander of the NATO Counter Piracy Mission Operation Ocean Shield, visited the Commander of Russian Warship Detachment of Russian Pacific Fleet, Captain 1st Rank Ildar AHMEROV on board his flagship ADMIRAL TRIBUTS in the Gulf of Aden.

The Russian Federation warship, as part of its counter piracy operation, was escorting a merchant vessel convoy and passed the area where the NATO flagship TCG GIRESUN was patrolling.

In addition to an exchange of briefings and a ship tour, the visit programme also allowed for open discussion and that opportunity was eagerly used. During a constructive meeting both sides shared information on their counter piracy operations and discussed possible opportunities to conduct training which will enable interoperability between NATO and Russian ships. Commanders expressed their clear determination to improve coordination which allows different task forces to tackle the piracy problem together.

Following the meeting, Rear Admiral (LH) Sinan Azmi TOSUN said, "We had a fruitful meeting. Our meeting will certainly help us to work together to tackle piracy in the region. We are all actors in the same area and good cooperation between our forces will enhance the effectiveness in keeping the shipping lanes safe as well as mutual understanding of the NATO and Russian units."

-TEXT ENDS-

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 GIRESUN – Turkey
HDMS ABSALON – Denmark
ITS GRECALE – Italy
RFA FORT VICTORIA – United Kingdom
USS DEWERT - United States of America
Challenger 640 Aircraft - Denmark

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