

News Release



Maritime
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THE BIG THREE COUNTER-PIRACY TASK FORCES URGE SHIP OWNERS TO KEEP UP THEIR GUARD

NATO's Operation Ocean Shield, European Union Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta and Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) - the big three - call upon the shipping industry to continue to take anti-piracy measures despite the current downward trend in piracy events.

In a recent report published by the International Maritime Bureau it was announced that there was a 54% drop in global piracy during the first half of 2012. One of the key contributors to this welcome development was the fall in both Somali hijackings and attacks. There are many factors which have led to this, two of which were the work of military forces in the region and self-protection measures taken by commercial shipping

Cdre Bruce Belliveau, NATO's Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations) at Northwood said "attacks have been minimal during the monsoon season but in the past the end of the monsoon generally heralds an increase in the number of attacks on merchant vessels. We have seen a steady downward trend in pirate successes which is due in part to the vigilance of naval forces. We call upon merchant vessels to do what they can to ensure they continue to make it as difficult as possible for pirates to board and take control of their ships."

By joining forces, counter piracy efforts are more effective and can achieve more than any one ship, navy, organisation or country working alone. Even with all this military presence, the efforts of our naval forces cannot guarantee safety in the region. It is for this reason that CTF 151, NATO and the EU remind all ship-owners, operators and managers to continue to educate and train their mariners in both the threat and how to mitigate it.

The booklet Best Management Practices version 4 (BMP4) provides useful updates for masters in implementing protection measures to deter piracy. It is based on lessons learned from ships' masters and can be downloaded from the NATO Shipping Centre and EU NAVOR/Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa websites (www.shipping.nato.int, www.mschoa.org) where you can find information about the latest pirate attacks and where they occurred.

Working together the military and the maritime industry is having a positive effect in frustrating the efforts of pirates. Despite the recent encouraging news now is not the time to lessen the efforts of all stakeholders in this area.

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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 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.

HNLMS Rotterdam, flagship of NATO task Force 508, continues her patrol within Operation Ocean Shield, the NATO-contribution to the international counter piracy effort in the waters around the Horn of Africa. The ship has 350 people embarked, from all services and from 8 NATO-countries.

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 Rotterdam (flagship) The Netherlands
USS Halyburton (Unites States of America)
Challenger Maritime Patrol Aircraft (Denmark)

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