

News Release



Allied Maritime
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NATO and Seychelles move forward to combat piracy

LONDON: The NATO flagship, HNLMS Tromp has just completed a second, successful port visit to the Seychelles. This visit focussed on direct support to the Seychelles Coast Guard and other key actors in counter piracy on the island.

Reflecting on the port visit, Cdre Michiel Hijmans stated, "This was another great opportunity to support a very important partner in our counter piracy effort. The Seychelles is one of the most active regional states and has proven to be a solid partner in this international endeavour. It is only if we work together with regional actors like the Seychelles we can come to a structural solution of this piracy problem. NATO remains fully committed to such a collaborative response. Our joint effort will enhance the maritime security and allow goods and people to freely travel the seas, which is very important for a nation like the Seychelles. The Seychellois are a very hospitable people who have made us feel very welcome."

In close coordination with the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG) a training programme was put together to suit their specific needs. Over a three day period the tailor-made exercises were conducted on different aspects of naval operations.

To improve the use of small boats a coxswain and boat handling training exercise was conducted using sea boats from both HNLMS Tromp and the SCG. In various manoeuvres the capabilities of the boats and their crews were assessed and improvements in working together were made. The SCG recruits visited the flag ship for a tour and explanation about the ship organisation and operations which enhanced their maritime awareness. At the same time the SCG boarding team

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conducted live fire exercises with the Netherlands Royal Marines and in a series of drills the procedures and weapons skills were demonstrated.

Separately, NATO staff liaised with the coast guard to work on a framework document which will allow future exercises to be arranged more quickly and effectively. The SCG was eager to adopt the document which will also make arranging activities with other counter piracy actors easier.

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

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS TROMP (Flagship) - Netherlands
USS BAINBRIDGE - United States of America
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark
TCG GIRESUN – Turkey
USS STEPHEN W GROVES – Unites States of America

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