

News Release



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



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NATO WARSHIP FREES PIRATED FISHING VESSEL

London: Early on Friday morning, the Danish warship HDMS Esbern Snare, part of NATO's counter piracy mission, OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD, freed a hijacked fishing vessel in the Somali basin.

HDMS Esbern Snare came across a suspicious vessel with two skiffs on deck. She launched her helicopter in order to investigate and to stop the vessel. After firing warning shots the vessel did stop and the crew surrendered. HDMS Esbern Snare then sent a boarding party to investigate.

After boarding the vessel it became clear that those on the vessel were 16 suspected pirates and 2 Yemeni hostages. The original fishing crew of 9 people had been held for a year but most of them had been released.

During the search weapons, including AK-47's and rocket propelled grenade launchers and ammunition were found. The Yemeni hostages are currently on board HDMS Esbern Snare.

The weapons and ammunition will be taken from the pirates and the pirates will be dealt with in accordance with instructions from national authorities.

"I am very pleased that we have succeeded in capturing a pirate mothership. These ships provide the pirates with a floating base when they are operating far from the shore. They pose a great threat to the merchant shipping. We have now eliminated one of these threats" Commander Haumann, Commanding Officer of HDMS Esbern Snare stated.

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) 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

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

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 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:

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

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