

News Release



Allied Maritime Component Command Headquarters Northwood



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NATO WARSHIP, HMS CHATHAM, DESTROYS PIRATE BOAT

NATO's counter piracy flagship, HMS CHATHAM destroyed 2 boats after intercepting a group of suspected pirates in the Somali Basin.

Commander Simon Huntington, the Commanding Officer of HMS CHATHAM said "I am extremely pleased that we have again successfully disrupted a suspected Pirate Attack Group operating in the Somali Basin and prevented them from mounting attacks against merchant shipping. This clearly demonstrates NATO's determination and commitment to continue the fight against piracy in the region."

On Friday 14 May, in a coordinated search with a EU Naval Force Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), operating out of the Seychelles, HMS CHATHAM's Lynx helicopter spotted a larger vessel towing the 2 attack boats, approximately 150 miles off the coast of Tanzania.

After monitoring the vessel through the night, at dawn, in a well planned operation, the pirates were forced to surrender by the overwhelming force posed by HMS CHATHAM, her Lynx helicopter and fast boats containing the Ship's Royal Marine (RM) detachment.

The Royal Marine team boarded the larger craft and found 10 Somalis and a large amount of fuel on board; the suspected pirates had been observed throwing items, including their weapons and other piracy related equipment, into the sea. The 2 smaller attack boats were fitted with powerful outboard engines and again contained a considerable amount of fuel. These were separated from the larger craft by the Royal Marines team and the warship and her Lynx helicopter used their combined firepower to destroy the smaller craft, ensuring that the suspected pirates could not continue with their mission. Disarmed and without the means

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to commit an act of piracy, the 10 Somalis were left with only enough fuel in the larger vessel to return to Somalia.

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Notes to editors

1. 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 to 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.
2. NATO has recently announced its commitment to Operation Ocean Shield has been extended to December 2012.
3. The NATO Task Force consists of 5 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:
 - a. HMS CHATHAM (Flagship) – UK
 - b. USS COLE – US
 - c. TCG GELIBOLU – Turkey
 - d. HS LIMNOS - Greece
 - e. ITS SCIROCCO – Italy
4. At sea NATO is working closely with other partners including EU Maritime Force, Combined Maritime Force as well as other navies, including China, Japan, India and Russia.

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