



Combined Maritime Forces

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Coalition Ships Rescue Crew of Sunken Vessel

From Commander, Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs

OFF KUWAITI COAST – Late Friday night, a civilian Kuwaiti vessel with four people on board sank 15 miles off the Kuwaiti coast.

The Kuwaiti Navy Operations Center contacted the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) headquarters and requested Search and Rescue (SAR) support. Kuwaiti officials coordinated all diplomatic clearance arrangements for the operation.

Combined Task Force (CTF) 158 took the lead of the mission and quickly commenced SAR operations, dispatching the U.S. Coast Guard coastal patrol boat USCGC Wrangell (WPB 1332) and a helicopter from the Australian guided missile frigate HMAS Stuart (FFH 153). The helicopter from Stuart launched in less than one hour from initial notification and began difficult nighttime search efforts.

The aircrew of the SH-70B-2 Seahawk located the four survivors and kept them in sight until Wrangell arrived on the scene to recover the four. All were reported in good condition, suffering only from minor exposure.

Coalition forces have a long standing tradition of helping mariners in distress by providing assistance, such as food, water and rescues at sea. This marks the fourth time during the past month Coalition ships have rendered assistance in the CMF area of operations.

CTF 158, currently commanded by Rear Adm. Kendall Card, U.S. Navy, operates in the North Arabian Gulf (NAG) and oversees U.S. and coalition ships involved in Maritime Security Operations (MSO). CTF 158's primary mission in the NAG is maintaining security in and around both the Al Basrah (ABOT) and Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminals (KAAOT), in support of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790.

MSO help develop security in the maritime environment. From security arises stability that results in global economic prosperity. MSO complements the counterterrorism and security efforts of regional nations and seek to disrupt violent extremists' use of the maritime environment as a venue for attack or to transport personnel, weapons or other material.

Vice Adm. Bill Gortney, Commander, Combined Maritime Forces, praised the rescue team's efforts saying "Your actions to protect the safety of life at sea demonstrated tremendous teamwork and represented the outstanding dedication of all coalition partners to ensure maritime security. Four people are alive today because of your efforts. I thank all of you who participated in this rescue."

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