

Another 'impressive' drug seizure by HMS Montrose

HMS MONTROSE's total seizure of hashish stood at 1045kg

TDT | Manama

Starting on Valentine's Day, ships working in direct support of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) had a busy weekend, the result of which was a major drug bust by Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) MONTROSE, a United Kingdom Royal Navy (RN) frigate.

In the late afternoon of 15 February, MONTROSE's 'WILDCAT' shipborne helicopter spotted a suspicious dhow in an area of the Gulf of Oman known to be popular with drug smugglers.

As the sun rose over the Arabian Sea on the morning of 16 February, several packages could be seen floating in the water near the dhow. The packages were recovered and determined to be hashish.

Royal Marine Commandos then boarded the dhow, securing it for search by a Royal Navy boarding team. The master of the dhow admitted that the packages in the water came from his vessel, and after a thorough search of the dhow, the team found another cache of hashish.

Add that to the drugs recovered from the water, and MONTROSE's total seizure of hashish was 1045kg worth an estimated regional wholesale value of \$538,860 US dollars.

This is the first seizure for HMS



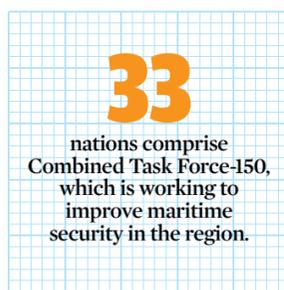
CTF 150 team members with seized drugs.

MONTROSE while working in direct support of the Australian lead CTF 150.

The Royal Australian Navy, with support staff from the Royal Canadian, and Royal New Zealand navies assumed command of CTF 150 in early December 2019.

"Fantastic work by the crew of HMS MONTROSE in tracking this smuggler, stopping them from ditching their cargo, and keeping these drugs from reaching their destination," said Commodore Ray Leggatt, Royal Australian Navy, Commander of CTF 150.

"With the support of ships like COURBET and MONTROSE, CTF



150 continues to apply pressure and disrupt the operations of terrorist and criminal organisations in the region that seek to use the maritime domain for their illegitimate trade."

Denying the use of the maritime domain to illegitimate traffic in the region is CTF 150's mission.

The co-operation and support of CMF participating nations like France and the United Kingdom are the key mission enablers that CTF 150 relies on to carry out the mission.

The 33 nations of CMF, working together, improves maritime security, helps strengthen regional nations' maritime capabilities, and upholds international norms and today's bust is just the latest example of that co-operation in action.

Bahrain's housing success praised

Manama

A US Congress delegation, currently on a visit to the Kingdom, has paid a visit to the East Hidd Town housing project.

The Ministry of Housing informed the delegation about its experience in building new towns in Bahrain to implement His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's order to build 40,000 housing units, as well as the government's social housing plans stemming from the royal order.

The US delegation was also informed about the facilities of the East Hidd Town, which is an example of the modern towns being constructed by the Ministry of Housing.

During the visit, the delegation was updated about the Kingdom's experience in providing housing services to low-income citizens, including the establishment of three towns, namely Isa Town, Hamad Town and Zayed Town, in 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the establishment of the Housing Ministry, the Eskan Bank, the new towns and the partnership initiatives with the private sector.

The Ministry of Housing stressed the government's keenness to strengthen its relations with international and regional organisations to benefit from their expertise in various fields.

It also highlighted the efforts of the government, through its action plan, to achieve Sustainable Development Goals

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(SDGs), especially SDG 11 aimed at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The ministry said that its efforts are currently focused on building five new towns at the same time, chosen according to the density of housing demands, in addition to implementing other residential projects to ensure that the housing services cover the Kingdom's governorates and regions.

The visit featured a presentation about the Housing Ministry's new towns projects, as well as its strategy to provide housing units for the citizens through partnership initiatives with the private sector.

It also featured a documentary on the government's efforts to provide housing services to the citizens.

Members of the delegation expressed their admiration for the kingdom's experience in delivering affordable social housing services to the citizens, as well as for the Housing Ministry's plans to provide social housing for low-income citizens.

Kingdom's efforts to promote child rights hailed

Manama

The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al Doseri, met the Assistant Undersecretary of Community Development at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and Deputy Chairman of the National Commission for Childhood, Khalid Abdulrahman Eshaq, and a number of the commission's members to discuss preparing reports of the Kingdom to the United Nations to accede the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Assistant Foreign Minister hailed efforts of the Labour and Social Development Minister and Chairman of the Commission, Jameel Humaidan, and the members of the commission, in monitoring all aspects of child affairs, including holding and encouraging all activities and programs related to raising awareness and childhood development.

He cited the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Bahrain's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, within its celebrations of the International Day of the Child.

He praised the National Commission for Childhood was praised for its great efforts by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, during the successful participation of the Kingdom in the meetings of the (80th) session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Ge-

Bahrain attaches great importance to human rights and made its principles a key element in development plans and strategies.

MR AL DOSERI

neva, in which the Kingdom discussed its combined fourth to sixth periodic reports, and reviewed its efforts in the areas of implementation of this convention, including its implementation of the National Childhood Strategy 2013-2017, which was extended for another five years.

Mr Al Doseri discussed with the members of the National Commission the draft reports on children's rights, the first regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the second regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Bahrain attaches great importance to human rights and made its principles a key element in development plans and strategies, and strengthened its progress and success by approving multiple human rights laws.

Committee set up to study unaccredited medical degrees

Manama

The Supreme Council for Education and Training (SCET) has set up a committee to study the situation of 77 degrees whose holders had graduated from unaccredited Chinese universities.

Deputy Prime Minister and SCET President His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa said that the graduates would sit for a unified exam to assess the level of their degrees and determine the requirements for accrediting their academic qualifications.

The Deputy Premier said that the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) would set a placement test as well as a programme to ensure the graduates would complete the requirements from their original degrees to be accredited.

The move is based on the rec-

ommendations of the Executive Committee, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, to find solutions for students who have received un-attested degrees from various un-approved universities.

The Cabinet decided to accredit 10 medical degrees issued from Chinese universities which were approved before 2015, stressing the need for clinical training for the students in question to complete their internship requirements and sit their licensure exams.

The Ministry of Education has been tasked to communicate with medical students enrolled at unaccredited Chinese university and urged them to enrol at other accredited academic institutions.

The Foreign Ministry has also

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been instructed to coordinate with relevant authorities within China to ensure a visa mechanism is put in place to issue study visas for Bahraini students who wish to continue their studies in China with recommended and approved universities only.

The Deputy Premier said that Minister of Finance and National Economy to co-ordinate with the National Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Qual-

ifications in updating the list of recommended degrees from various universities in China, and approved a recommendation submitted by the Council of Representatives in this regard.

He pointed out that the Cabinet had directed the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy to provide the necessary budget needed to complete the requirements to attest medical degrees from universities in China.

The council has provided a thorough study to address the situation of Bahraini students in Chinese universities, and determine their causes, as the total number of students currently studying in Chinese universities is at least 153 students, which requires finding urgent solutions for them to ensure the accreditation of their qualifications after graduation.

Support vow to Sickle Cell Society



Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan received Bahrain Sickle Cell Society Chairman Zakariya Al Kadhem and other board members. The discussed the role of he association in supporting and caring for this social segment and reviewed the programmes it implements in cooperation with relevant authorities. The minister commended the achievements and contributions of the association as well as its positive participation in partnership with government's establishments to enhance services provided to sickle cell patients.