



THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

Reverend John D Harrower
Bishop of Tasmania
Anglican Diocese of Tasmania
1st Floor, Church House
125 Macquarie Street
HOBART TAS 7001

5 OCT 2011

Dear Reverend 

I refer to your letter of 7 July 2011 regarding the Federal Government's role in combating international piracy.

Australia remains concerned by acts of piracy, kidnapping and armed robbery in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean region. I commend your organisation for the invaluable work it carries out in dealing with this very difficult issue.

The Government is committed to supporting international anti-piracy efforts, including through contributing to the US-led Combined Maritime Forces. Our presence promotes broader regional security by denying freedom of movement to pirates and deterring the illicit trafficking of people, drugs, weapons and money that support international criminal networks.

Australia is engaged in the UN and other international fora to coordinate and develop counter-piracy initiatives, including the Contact Group on Piracy off the... Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), which has working groups on coordinating operations, legal issues and industry self-protection; and the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction group, which coordinates military responses to piracy in the Gulf of Aden at the working level.

Australia is increasing our engagement in the CGPCS and also in the Financial Action Task Force to better understand and combat the financing of piracy operations and expenditure of piracy revenues.

Australia strongly supports continued international consideration of the importance of detention and prosecution in the counter-piracy effort. We welcome the UN Security Council's measures to encourage development of domestic and international measures for detention and prosecution of pirates.

Australia supports the development of a regional approach to prosecution. We welcomed the conviction of nine Somali nationals (December 2010) in the first case of piracy to be tried by the Supreme Court of the Seychelles.

Australia recognises that regional States require support and assistance to successfully prosecute and punish alleged pirates. To this end, Australia has contributed funding of \$500,000 to the joint European Commission/United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) anti-piracy court in Kenya, under the UNODC Counter-Piracy Program.

Australia has also provided a seconded AFP officer in 2009-10 and in 2011 to the UNODC program, working closely with the police in Kenya and the Seychelles on the apprehension of piracy suspects.

Thank you for bringing your views and concerns to my attention. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kevin Rudd', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Rudd