Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS *Melbourne* has disrupted a pirate attack on a tanker in the Arabian Sea, it was reported from Defence HQ in Canberra on 5th January.

HMAS *Melbourne* steamed to the aid of the UK-flagged chemical tanker *MV CPO China*, which had been boarded by pirates in the Arabian Sea at approximately 1345 local (Bahrain) time on 3rd January. When initially alerted to the incident HMAS *Melbourne* was approximately 267kms north of the MV *CPO China* but was able to cover that distance in just over six hours.

While steaming to the aid of the MV *CPO China*, Melbourne’s helicopter launched and on arrival in the vicinity of the tanker was able to deter the pirates from attempting to take control of the ship. As a result the pirates aborted the attack and left the vessel when the warship arrived on the scene. The crew of MV *CPO China* had successfully secured themselves in the ship’s citadel (an anti-pirate stronghold) from where they could maintain satellite communications and control the ship. Engine room controls and steering equipment for the tanker are located in the citadel.

“*This is a terrific example of how Australia’s maritime contribution to the Middle East Area of Operations provides another layer of security for the region and to the conduct of trade and suppression of criminal activities,*” said the Commander of Joint Task Force 633, Major-General John Cantwell. He added, “*One of our objectives for operations in the Middle East is to assist the efforts of the international community in reducing acts of piracy. Our men and women aboard HMAS Melbourne deserve recognition for their role in providing maritime security and countering piracy in the Arabian Sea. This is one of those occasions where their efforts have become highly visible.*”