

# MCAT 205 Keeping Partnerships with Kenyans Alive

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GARSEN, Kenya (NNS) -- Maritime Civil Affairs Team (MCAT) 205, operating along the coast of Kenya and assigned to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), is developing capacity and security building partnerships with the Kenyans to enable solutions for ongoing regional concerns.

On July 12, the members of MCAT 205 took part in the dedication ceremony for the Gadeni Primary School in Tana Delta District. MCAT 205 worked side by side with the host nation government, Gadeni Primary School staff and students, as well as the members of the community throughout the planning and preparation phases.

"I wish you all...USA, the best for coming to the dedication...may God pour his blessings to you as you struggle to keep peace and to do developments in the Horn of Africa" said Malao Titus, head teacher of the Gadeni Primary School.

Several of the projects included replacement of a four-room classroom building, roof replacement and renovation of three classroom buildings, new construction of a 16 stall male and female dry-pit latrine, as well as kitchen and dining facility with food preparation area. The project enhances the relationship with the people of Gadeni and CJTF-HOA and demonstrates a direct interest in the education and community development of Gadeni.

Additionally, MCAT 205 has been working with the Kenyan Red Cross to facilitate basic life-saving training to 50 local fishermen, along with the coordination of much needed donation of wheelchairs. The training provided to the fishermen enabled them to respond to medical emergencies while fishing in the isolated areas off the Kenyan Coast.

Both the training and wheelchair donation were accomplished using local assets and citizen volunteers, proving to be vital in establishing and maintaining partnerships with the host nation.

Promoting security and capacity building, MCAT 205 has joined with local governments to promote their ideal of Community Watch on the Water, an anti-crime campaign designed to use assets of local law enforcement, government agencies and local citizens to collaborate efforts to reduce crime and violent extremism.

In an effort to increase the public's perception of the local police departments and promote cooperation with the community, MCAT 205 and the police have installed volleyball pitches at schools and police departments. This has allowed the formation of volleyball games between teachers, students, parents, and the officers.

MCAT 205 conducts regular meetings with local government, security committees, and the local fishermen. This has contributed to the synchronization of Kenya Wildlife Service, Administration Police, Kenyan Police, district government officials and local citizens in their efforts to secure the coast of Kenya. In these meetings, items such as the program's successes and failures are openly discussed, capitalizing on successes and finding solutions to the failures.

"Beginning with the well executed dedication ceremony at Gadeni Primary School to the various projects visited, I was impressed with the work that has been done by previous teams as well as the work being done now by MCAT 205," said Lee Brudvig, deputy chief of mission, U.S. Embassy Nairobi. "Seeing the positive impact that the MCAT has had on the communities was unmistakable. Thank you for your truly exemplary work. It was both a pleasure and tremendous education to witness that."

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