

Defense: Thaon di Revel boards Russian Shadow Fleet tanker off Pantelleria

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ROME – The Italian Navy returns to the forefront in the Mediterranean. The ship *Thaon di Revel*, flagship of the European operation *EunavFor Med-Irini*, conducted a raid and inspection aboard the tanker *Toa Payoh*, a unit listed under European Union sanctions and linked to the so-called Russian "shadow fleet". The intervention took place in international waters, west of Pantelleria.

The operation aimed to verify the nationality of the ship, a detail that for merchant vessels is officially established by the flag they are authorized to fly (in this case, the *Toa Payoh* was found to be sailing under the flag of Cameroon). The tanker had departed on July 16 from the port of Cotonou, in Benin, en route to Istanbul.

The raid and initial resistance

According to the statement released by the Ministry of Defense, in the early stages of the interception, the tanker’s captain did not provide the requested cooperation. Faced with resistance, the operational procedure was triggered: a specialized team of Italian military personnel took off aboard a helicopter from the ship *Thaon di Revel*, reaching the merchant vessel's deck to conduct the planned checks.

The operation, which lasted approximately two hours, concluded regularly and safely, thanks also to international support provided by a Greek ship and a Polish patrol aircraft. Everything was carried out in full compliance with international law, particularly Article 110 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), which authorizes military ships to inspect the merchant flag under specific conditions.



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Praise from Minister Crosetto

“I wish to congratulate the personnel of the ship *Thaon di Revel* and all the military involved in the operation for their professionalism, preparation, and determination demonstrated”, stated the Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto. “This activity also concretely demonstrates Italy's contribution to the security of the Mediterranean and the European Union's action”.

Technical and legal investigations are currently underway on the information and documentation acquired by the inspection team on board.

A high-profile operation that fits into the framework of countering irregular trade routes already reported in the past, as described in the article of the previous activity available on

News link: https://www.difesa.it/primopiano/operazione-irini-nave-thaon-di-revel-abborda-petroliera-sanzionata-dallue-e-appartenente-alla-flotta-ombra-russa-per-verificarne-la-bandiera/108191.html