How US Special Forces Seized MARINERA in the North Atlantic - VIDEO

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After a chase lasting over two weeks and an initial boarding attempt that failed in the Caribbean at the end of December, the United States announced the seizure of the tanker **M/V *Bella 1*** (subsequently renamed *Marinera*), a ship already under American sanctions and suspected of being part of maritime networks used to evade controls on crude oil trade between Venezuela, Iran, and other sanctioned actors.

From the failed attempt in the Caribbean to the seizure "on the high seas"

According to consistent reconstructions by multiple international outlets, the story begins **on December 20, 2025**, when the US Coast Guard attempts to stop the *Bella 1* in the Caribbean area while the ship is heading towards Venezuela. The boarding fails: the ship evades controls

and heads towards the Atlantic, with US units keeping track of it.

On **January 7, 2026**, the turning point arrives: the tanker is **seized in the North Atlantic**, executing **a seizure warrant issued by a US federal court**, and after being monitored by Coast Guard assets and – according to some reconstructions – with the operational support of military components. Reuters reports that **US special forces** helped “secure” the ship in the initial phases, before management passed to the Coast Guard.

Changing identity: from *Bella 1* to *Marinera*, flags and fresh paint

During the escape, the ship changes its “profile” multiple times: various sources report that the tanker operated with **flags considered false or contested** and that, during the chase, it was **renamed *Marinera*** and registered **under the Russian flag**. ANSA highlights the move to Moscow after the Caribbean phase; Reuters confirms that after the first attempt to stop it, the ship “registered under the Russian flag and was renamed.”

The Russian side, however, claims the legitimacy of the registration and denounces an illegal action on the high seas, referring to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). ANSA also reports the version of the Russian Ministry of Transport, which claims to have lost contact with the ship after the boarding.

One of the most delicate elements is the **presence of Russian assets** in the area. Reuters writes that during the final phase of the operation, the tanker was **“shadowed” by a Russian submarine**, and that Moscow's military units were “nearby,” although without indications of a direct clash between US and Russian forces. ANSA openly talks about ships and submarines sent “in support” of the tanker, while London reportedly provided surveillance support, according to the agency citing the British Defense Minister.

The boarding: images from the deck and “special” shadow of the *Night Stalkers*

The seizure also attracted attention for **the boarding methods**. Various media outlets have circulated images released by Russian channels (including RT) that allegedly show a light

helicopter **MH-6 “Little Bird”** approaching, with operators positioned on the typical side benches. Specialist (unofficial) analyses link this profile to the **160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR)**, a unit known as the *Night Stalkers*, often associated with supporting special forces missions.

On this point, however, it is useful to distinguish between **what is confirmed** and what is **deduced**: Reuters talks about special forces support but does not publicly detail the platforms and units employed. Some industry outlets claim that helicopters from the 160th SOAR transported assault personnel (also citing US TV reports), but the complete official confirmation of tactical details is not always public in such operations.

What the ship was carrying (and why Washington targeted it)

According to Reuters and other sources, the *Bella 1 / Marinera* was considered a piece of a broader network of “opaque” tankers (*dark* or *shadow fleet*) accused of **evading sanctions** and controls on the origin of crude oil. At the time of the seizure, multiple reconstructions indicate that the ship **was not carrying cargo** (or at least not Venezuelan crude), while the accusations of past violations and attempts to circumvent US measures remain central.

At the same time, the **Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)** announced the interdiction of a second ship, the **M/T *Sophia***, described as a “**stateless, sanctioned dark fleet motor tanker**” and indicated as operating in illicit activities in the Caribbean Sea. Reuters reports that the Coast Guard was **escorting the *Sophia* to the United States** “for final disposition.”

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The broader picture: Venezuelan oil blockade and “war” on ghost tankers

The seizure of the *Bella 1 / Marinera* is part of a campaign that Washington describes as a **global blockade** against exports considered illegal or sanctioned: a line publicly reiterated by US administration officials, cited by Reuters and echoed by ANSA.

In the short term, however, the operation raises more questions than it answers: **where the ship will be taken**, what the **legal basis** contested or defended in courts will be, and especially what the **political response from Moscow** will be after an episode that Russian sources and commentators have already called “piracy.”

If you want, I can adapt the article to a specific style (general newspaper, defense magazine, more “maritime” or more geopolitical angle) and add a final box with a **timeline** of events and glossary (*dark fleet*, AIS, flag of convenience, federal warrant, etc.).

News link: https://www.hartpunkt.de/us-spezialkraefte-bringen-oeltanker-m-v-bella-1-auf/