Spanish Special Forces Free Greek Tanker from Pirates off Somalia

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An act of piracy off the coast of Somalia concluded with a swift operation by the **Spanish special forces** involved in the **EUNAVFOR Atalanta** mission. The Greek-managed tanker **Hellas Aphrodite** was targeted by an armed group, but the intervention coordinated by the European naval component led to the **release of the crew** and the restoration of control over the ship **without casualties**.

The Facts

On **November 6, 2025**, the **Hellas Aphrodite** was **boarded** by pirates in open sea, far from the Somali coast. During the attack, **light weapons** were reportedly used; the crew followed the prescribed procedures, taking refuge in the **citadel** and maintaining contact with maritime security organizations.

The alarm was promptly answered by the naval assets of **EUNAVFOR Atalanta**, with the Spanish frigate **ESPS Victoria** at the forefront, supported by a **helicopter**, **ISR/UAV sensors**, and a **special forces unit**. After a **show of force** and interdiction maneuvers, the pirates abandoned the tanker, allowing the **re-boarding of teams** and securing the vital areas of the unit.

Inspections conducted on board confirmed **no injuries** among the seafarers and no critical damage to navigation. The ship was able to **resume its course** under escort and with **technical assessments** to ascertain any impacts on the onboard apparatus.

The Hellas Aphrodite off the coast of Somalia, in the Arabian Sea, Friday, November 7, 2025 - Copyright EUNAVFOR Atalanta

The Return of the "Piracy Scare"

After years of relative calm, the attack brings attention back to **piracy in the western Indian Ocean**, highlighting a threat that once again looms over energy routes. In this context, **deterrence** worked: the **operational readiness** and **interoperability** of the Atalanta mission prevented a prolonged hijacking, confirming the importance of being able to intervene in the shortest possible time.

Also crucial were the **life-saving procedures** on board: the use of the **citadel**, **timely reporting**, and the **discipline of the crew** increased the chances of success for the operation.

The Hellas Aphrodite case reminds us that **Pirate Action Groups** can operate well beyond the coastal strip thanks to **mother ships** capable of venturing **hundreds of miles** offshore. For

shipowners, this means maintaining high attention to **Best Management Practices (BMP)**: from **physical reinforcement of access points** to **emergency procedures**, and **constant tracking**.

The difference, as demonstrated, is made by **public-private cooperation**: the dialogue between **shipowners**, **reporting centers**, and **naval forces** allows for **shortening response times** and **reducing risks for seafarers**.

The Operational Significance

The joint action that led to the release of the **Hellas Aphrodite** demonstrates that the **international maritime security architecture** in the Horn of Africa is still **capable of preventing** long-term hijackings. At the same time, the episode is a **warning**: piracy in that area **is not defeated** and requires **constant vigilance**, **registration with monitoring circuits**, and **strict adherence** to self-protection procedures.

Conclusion

A **swift, clean, and successful operation**: **crew safe**, **ship recovered**, **pirates on the run**. The combination of **crew professionalism**, **BMP protocols**, and **European capabilities** made the difference. For those navigating the routes of the western Indian Ocean, it remains essential to **not let their guard down**.

News link: https://eunavfor.eu/news/operation-atalanta-liberates-merchant-tanker-hellas-aphrodite