



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.

Spanish Special Forces free the Greek tanker attacked by pirates off Somalia

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>