

Casualties

Pirate group off Somalia is held in check and presents no threat, EU says

Vessels previously advised to avoid the area are now told to just ‘maintain general awareness’



An EUNAVFOR marine monitors waters off Somalia in the Indian Ocean on 8 November, 2025. (Photo: EUNAVFOR Atalanta)



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A pirate group that caused four security incidents off Somalia last week, including the first boarding of a big commercial vessel since May 2024, is no longer an immediate threat to shipping, the naval force protecting the area says.

“The Pirate Action Group (PAG) linked to recent incidents is being monitored closely by the Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and there is currently no threat from this group to merchant vessels,” the European Union force said in an alert late on Saturday.



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Latsco tanker crew released from citadel after failed pirate boarding

Atalanta also apparently downgraded its “critical” threat assessment for the waters in which the pirates have been active.

“Vessels are advised to maintain general awareness and continue reporting to Maritime Security Center Indian Ocean and Maritime Trade Operations if any suspicious activity is observed,” the alert said.

Atalanta did not elaborate on the pirates’ status, how it was monitoring them or what measures it is taking to hold them in check.

In an update on Sunday, however, the force clarified that the pirate group remains in the area, “closely monitored” by Atalanta and the Indian Navy.

Atalanta has been trying to intercept the pirates since 28 October, when they hijacked a fishing dhow in Somali waters to use as a mother ship for further attacks.

On 8 November, the EU naval force made “an early show of force” that caused the pirates to abandon the 50,000-dwt Hellas Aphrodite (built 2016) — a laden product tanker they had boarded the day before about 550 nautical miles (1,000 kilometres) off the African coast.

None of the ship’s 24 seafarers came to harm, as all of them managed to barricade themselves in the citadel.

They left the enclosure a day later, when the Spanish frigate Victoria arrived to secure the tanker.

The Hellas Aphrodite has since resumed her voyage “in close cooperation” with Atalanta.

Try, try again

The Latsco Shipping-managed ship was one of four vessels the pirate group had targeted over the past seven days.



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Somali pirates target LNG carrier after Latsco tanker attack

On 2 November, they sent a skiff towards the 3,800-dwt Intertuna Tres (built 2000) but aborted the approach when seafarers on the Seychelles-flagged fishing boat fired two warning shots to prevent a boarding.

A similar scenario unfolded one day later, when armed security guards on Stolt Tankers’ 44,000-dwt Stolt Sagaland (built 2008) fired on the small pirate craft approaching them.

After abandoning their attack on the Hellas Aphrodite later in the week, the pirate group targeted the 216,200-cbm Al Thumama (built 2008) on 8 November.

That attempt failed as well, as the LNG carrier simply outran the approaching skiff.

Escalation

The gang's action represents the most serious resurgence of Somali piracy since May 2024, when armed pirates aborted their raid on the German-managed, 17,900-dwt multipurpose vessel Basilisk (built 2013) following its crew's flight to the citadel.

Somali pirates became active again in February and March this year, when they carried out armed robberies against three fishing boats.

Apart from kidnapping the fishing boats' crews for ransom, the pirates use the captured dhows as mother ships — blending in with usual traffic, often hundreds of miles east of the Somali coast, and then deploying skiffs to raid vessels singled out for attack.

The dhow used by the gang currently active in Somali waters goes under the name "Issamohamadi 2" or "IssaMohammadi".



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The dhow flew the Iranian flag when pirates captured it in late October near Garacad, Somalia.

Somali piracy had been dormant since its heyday between 2008 and 2012, but bounced back in 2023 after the Houthis in Yemen began attacking ships in the Red Sea in response to Israel's war in the Gaza Strip.

Atalanta registered about 50 security events in the area since November 2023, from suspicious approaches and armed robbery to actual piracy attacks and hijackings.

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