

Italian Navy Practices Pirate Attack Response with MSC Boxship



MSC participated in the recent training exercise (Marina Militare photos)

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Marina Militare, the Italian navy, recently practices its piracy response as part of an ongoing mission to protect merchant vessels in the Gulf of Guinea. In the operation known as Gabinia, the Italian navy maintains a presence operating patrols in the region and has assisted several merchant vessels recently.

The Corvette class patrol boat *Borsini* participated in a recent training exercise. Seven months earlier the same vessel had been involved in [assisting](#) the South Korean product tanker *B. Ocean* that was robbed and left disabled by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea. In the latest training exercise, the *MSC Marta*, a Panama-registered boxship with a carrying capacity of 5,600 TEU participated as the target of a pirate attack. Sailing approximately 100 miles off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, the containership issued an alert that it was being confronted by pirates that were attempting to board the vessel and take control. The alert was sent to the Multidomain Operations Center of the Navy located in Santa Rosa - Rome at the Chief Command of the Naval Squadron.



Patrol ship Borsini met up with the MSC containership during the training exercise (Marina Militare)

The *Borsini*, employed nearby for the Gabinia operation, was alerted and ordered to close its distance with the containership. Having arrived near the containership, a team of specialists from the Marina San Marco Brigade was sent to board the 901-foot vessel by helicopter.

According to the report from Marina Militare, the action was carried out with extreme realism to test the skills to thwart an attack by the pirates. The team was ordered to secure the merchant vessel by taking control of it, allowing normal commercial operations to resume.



Marina San Marco Brigade boarded the containership by helicopter during the exercise (Marina Militare)

"This type of exercise is certainly nothing new, the collaborative relationship between CINCPAC (Command in Chief of the Naval Squadron based in Rome), Assarmatori (Italian shipowners association), and the shipping companies operating in the area is now at a truly high level," the Italian navy said in its report. "Fundamental in these activities is the training of the crews and the role played by the Italian Navy, precious and irreplaceable above all for the protection of human lives. The Gulf of Guinea is one of the areas considered the hottest from this point of view, but also thanks to this type of activity and the constant presence and surveillance of these waters, the number of attacks has dropped."

In addition to providing assistance to the South Korean product tanker, the Italian navy maintains regular patrols in the region. The Italian frigate *Luigi Rizzo* [responded](#) in April 2022 to a call from the *Arch Gabriel*, a bulker approximately 300 nautical miles south of Lagos, Nigeria. The frigate and the San Marco Brigade assisted the vessel determining the crew had locked down and ensuring that the vessel was safe.