

Italian Navy and Messina Hold Exercise Practicing Boarding and Inspection



Italian Navy practices boarding another Messina vessel in a 2024 exercise (Linea Messina)

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The Italian Navy is highlighting one of its regular training exercises working with the merchant fleet. It is part of a long-term project also involving the trade association Assarmatori designed to build cooperation and familiarize the navy personnel and merchant sailors in the routine for vessel inspections.

The vessel selected for the latest exercise was the *Jolly Verde* of Ignazio Messina (Linea Messina). Built in 2007 and previously operating under charter to MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company, the containership became the largest vessel in the Messina fleet when she was acquired in April 2024. The vessel which is 80,000 dwt is 928 feet (283 meters) in length and has a capacity for 6,300 TEU. She operates with a crew of 22.

Jolly Verde was sailing in the Eastern Mediterranean yesterday, February 3, from Spain to the Suez Canal. Messina reported when they acquired the ship last year that it would be deployed on a route to the Middle East and India. The exercise involved the Italian frigate *Alpino*.

The trade association reports initially, radio contact was established between the Italian frigate and the merchant ship, with the Command of the military unit declaring its intentions and requesting the commander to proceed with the boarding of the inspection teams. The military reached the containership to inspect it, verifying the regularity of the ship and cargo documents before permitting it to resume regular navigation.

“Exercises of this kind are now taking place frequently and their success testifies to the high level of collaboration achieved between the Navy, our association, and the shipping companies,” said Stefano Messina, President of Assarmatori. “A particularly valuable relationship,” he noted is formed with a view

to guaranteeing crews high safety standards and protecting cargo and traffic even on potentially risky routes. He notes currently it is, “a difficult and highly challenging historical period.”

They note the exercise gives the navy team practice at boarding a vessel. For the merchant ship, it provides the opportunity to understand the procedure and how to interact with the navy during an inspection.

The Italian Navy has participated in the recent NATO efforts to ensure the safety of merchant ships sailing both in the Gulf of Guinea and off the Horn of Africa. The exercises which take place every few months focus on elements such as boarding, inspection, and intervention during incidents of piracy.