EU NAVFOR warship frees 25 hostages of an Indian dhow

On 29 February, warship FGS Berlin operating as part of the EU's military counter-piracy operation EU NAVFOR Atalanta freed 25 hostages of an Indian dhow.

FGS Berlin had responded to a distress call from the master of a merchant vessel transiting the Gulf of Aden, who had been able to repel an armed pirate attack. Having raced to the scene, its helicopter was dispatched and it quickly located two attack skiffs and the Indian dhow which was being used as a mother ship.

After shadowing the Indian dhow overnight, FGS Berlin’s fire team destroyed the two unmanned skiffs, thus preventing the pirates onboard from mounting any further attacks. With sustained pressure from FGS Berlin, the pirates ordered the master of the Indian dhow to get closer to the Somali coast and, upon arrival, they abandoned the dhow. The relieved Indian crew received food, water and health care from the medical team onboard Berlin.

In recent months, EU NAVFOR warships have maintained constant pressure on armed pirate action groups who were attacking Indian dhows and merchant shipping. On 19 January, another EU NAVFOR warship, FGS Lübeck, had already forced armed pirates to release a dhow and its 15 Indian crew.