

Should the eu be  
involved in a battle  
against the piracy  
problem in somalia



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Should the E. U. be involved in a battle against the piracy problem in Somalia? Piracy off the Somali coast is increasing at an alarming rate, posing a threat to international trade (Middleton 3). Within the last few years, the ransoms demanded by Somali pirates have risen from tens of thousands of dollars to the range of between half-a-million and two million dollars, thus funding the war in Somalia and making piracy a potential weapon of international terrorism (Middleton 3-5). Furthermore, an attack on an oil tanker could cause a major oil spill and, consequently, the devastation of the marine and bird life in the Gulf of Aden. Given these threats posed by piracy, the European Union should take action against piracy problem. Even though only a political settlement in Somalia can bring a long-term resolution to this issue, the measures taken by the international community can significantly improve the situation (Middleton 10).

The European Union Naval Force Somalia-Operation ATALANTA, launched by the European Council on the 8 of December 2008, aims to deter, prevent and repress acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast, and is a part of the global action conducted by the EU to deal with the Somali crisis ("Mission" 1). This operation has several benefits both for Somalia and for international entities affected by the issue of piracy.

To start with, operation ATALANTA helps to protect vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP), which deliver food aid to displaced people in Somalia. Since the EU naval escorts for WFP ships began in November 2007, not a single pirate attack on a ship carrying WFP food has been reported. Under the operation ATALANTA, WFP has managed to deliver over 267. 000 metric tons of food to ports in Somalia. Given the increasing need for humanitarian assistance in Somalia, the EU operation contributes significantly to support <https://assignbuster.com/should-the-eu-be-involved-in-a-battle-against-the-piracy-problem-in-somalia/>

for numerous victims of the Somali crisis (“ Mission” 3).

Moreover, operation ATALANTA protects vulnerable vessels in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast. All shipping companies and operators that transit in this region have to register in advance on the website of the Maritime Security Center-Horn of Africa (MSC-HOA). This website facilitates the coordination of maritime traffic as it enables all vessels that observe EU NAVFOR recommendations to be aware of the arrangements taken. MSC-HOA also identifies particularly vulnerable vessels and provides them with close military protection, either from EU NAVFOR, or other forces in the region (“ Mschoa” 1). These arrangements significantly reduce the risks of pirate attacks or capture. Thus, this initiative is beneficial for the whole community of shipowners and merchant navies (“ Mission” 3-4), contributing to the safety of international marine trade. Given that 95 percent of EU member state’s trade is transported by sea and 20% of Global Trade is transmitted through the Gulf of Aden, operation ATALANTA plays a very important role in the protection of European and worldwide trade (“ Mschoa” 1).

Baseline operations of the EU NAVFOR warship involve arresting, detaining and transferring individuals who have committed, or are suspected of committing acts of piracy and robbery. The military personnel working on the operations can take over all vessels belonging to or held by pirates as well as all the goods on board (“ Mission” 2). The persons suspected of piracy are prosecuted by an EU member state or by Kenyan authorities, which are entitled to prosecute under the agreement signed with the EU on 6 March 2009. These efforts have a great impact on safety in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast.

To sum up, the European interventions against piracy have numerous  
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benefits for all individuals and institutions affected by this problem. Under the operation ATALANTA, WFP ships protected by the EU naval escorts can deliver food aid to millions of displaced people in Somalia. The protection of vulnerable vessels in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast contributes significantly to the safety of international marine trade. Finally, arrests and prosecutions of pirates can gradually diminish the problem of piracy off the Somali coast.

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