

# Operation IRINI: Statement by the Spokesperson on the recent inspection of a Turkish vessel

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On 22 November, the Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI inspected a Turkish-flagged merchant vessel in the Mediterranean. Given the pattern of navigation of this vessel, Operation IRINI had reasonable grounds to suspect that it could be acting in violation of the UN arms embargo.

Prior to this action, as foreseen by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016), Operation IRINI had made good faith efforts to seek the consent of the flag State by giving the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs a 4 hour notice in line with the international maritime practice. Operation IRINI even agreed to extend this notice by an additional hour at the request of the Turkish Embassy in Rome, where Operation IRINI's Headquarters are located. Having received no answer from Turkey after the elapsed time, Operation IRINI boarded the vessel and inspected it in accordance with internationally agreed procedures including NATO procedures. Operation IRINI's boarding team acted with the highest degree of professionalism and no incident was registered throughout the action.

The inspection was suspended later on, when Turkey formally and with delay notified Operation IRINI of its refusal to grant the permission to inspect the vessel. Until then, the inspection had found no evidence of illicit material on board and the vessel was cleared to pursue its route.

Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI is mandated by the European Union to contribute to the implementation of the arms embargo on Libya in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions 2292 (2016) and 2526 (2020).

These resolutions are binding for all UN Member States, including the Republic of Turkey. Furthermore, UN Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016) calls upon all flag States to cooperate with inspections.

Operation IRINI is a concrete contribution to international efforts to help to end the conflict in Libya. It has demonstrated its ability to monitor arms embargo violations on both sides of the conflict in Libya, and it reports accordingly to the UN Sanctions Committee.

We are currently at a crucial juncture for Libya's future and the implementation of the Berlin Process. Operation IRINI's mandate is more important today than ever to ensure the viability of the 23 October ceasefire

agreement and the return to peace and stability in Libya.

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