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Release of "Wolf Pack" behind Pamplona sexual assault sparks outcry in Spain

SPAIN'S government expressed sympathy with a public outcry over the scheduled release on bail yesterday of five men convicted of sexual assault, but said it fully respected the judges' decision. Government spokeswoman Isabel Celaya said the 2016 assault in Pamplona, for which the five were cleared of gang



rape but convicted of sexual abuse, was "very serious". "The government echoes

people's alarm in Spain and that of women in particular," she said.

Spain offers to help Malta with latest migrant rescue ship

Madrid.—Spain has been in contact with Malta to offer humanitarian help with a ship carrying more than 200 rescued immigrants which Italy asked the island state to take in, the government spokeswoman said on.

Italy urged Malta to take the Dutch-flagged ship run by German charity Mission Life-line a day after anti-immigrant Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said the vessel should take the migrants to the Netherlands.

"We have been in contact with Malta to offer support if humanitarian help is needed by the boat in the next few hours," government spokeswoman Isabel Celaya said during a news conference following the weekly cabinet meeting



Spain to take over UK-led EU mission after Brexit, say diplomats

SPAIN is set to take over Britain's command of an EU maritime mission that combats Somali pirates next year as Madrid seeks a bigger military role after Brexit, EU diplomats and officials said.

Under the deal, Spain has also offered to help Italy in dealing with migrants crossing the Mediterranean, they said.

European Union foreign and defence ministers are expected to back the decision on Monday to hand command of the Atalanta mission off the Horn of Africa to Spain, with support from France, when Britain leaves the bloc in March.

As Europe's biggest military power along with France, Britain is central to European security efforts but London cannot continue to lead EU missions post-Brexit, EU and British negotiators agreed in March.

Madrid plans to run Atalanta from the Rota naval base in southern Spain, replacing the Northwood site outside London.

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