

The hospital ships USNS Mercy (right) and USNS Comfort (left) at Alabama Shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, marking a rare moment with both Navy hospital vessels alongside during scheduled maintenance in early 2026. Photo posted January 23, 2026 by Alabama Shipyard. Photo courtesy Alabama Shipyard via Facebook

Trump Announces Greenland Hospital Ship Mission as Mercy and Comfort Sit in Alabama Shipyard

Mike Schuler
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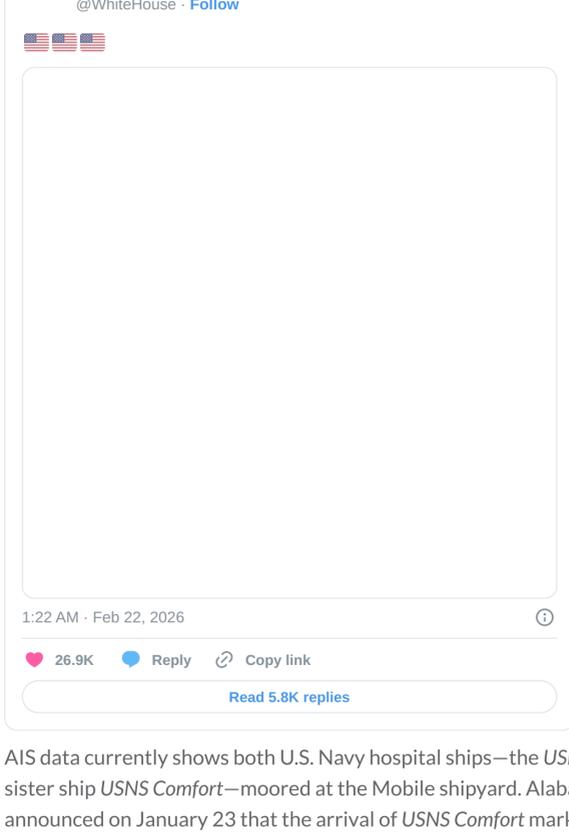
President Donald Trump announced on Saturday via social media that the United States will send a hospital ship to Greenland to provide medical care, posting alongside an illustration of the USNS Mercy that “we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland to take care of the many people who are sick, and not being taken care of there. It’s on the way!!!”

The specific medical emergency in Greenland requiring a hospital ship deployment was not immediately clear.

As of late January, the 1,000-bed hospital ship was firmly in drydock at Alabama Shipyard in Mobile, where it has been undergoing scheduled maintenance since July 2025.

The USNS Mercy, commissioned in 1986, departed San Diego last July for a one-year scheduled maintenance period at Alabama Shipyard under an \$18.7 million firm-fixed-price contract for a 153-calendar day mid-term availability, including drydocking. The contract, awarded in June 2025, marked the Mercy’s first visit to Mobile.

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AIS data currently shows both U.S. Navy hospital ships—the USNS Mercy and her sister ship USNS Comfort—moored at the Mobile shipyard. Alabama Shipyard announced on January 23 that the arrival of USNS Comfort marked “the first time in 30 years” that the two hospital ships have been alongside one another, calling it “a historic moment.”

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Trump’s post came hours after Denmark’s Joint Arctic Command evacuated a crew member needing urgent medical treatment from a U.S. submarine near Nuuk, Greenland. It was unclear if there was any connection.

Mercy and Comfort

The USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort are the U.S. Navy’s only two hospital ships, each measuring 894 feet in length with a displacement of 69,552 tons. The vessels can accommodate up to 1,200 military personnel in addition to 71 civilian mariners, and are designed to provide mobile, acute surgical medical facilities for U.S. military operations and disaster relief missions worldwide. The USNS Mercy’s home port is Naval Base San Diego, California.

When in Reduced Operating Status at its San Diego berth, the Mercy operates with a skeleton crew of approximately eight officers, 53 enlisted personnel, and 15 civilian mariners. The ship can be activated within five days when needed for mission support.

The USNS Mercy most recently participated in the Pacific Partnership 2024 humanitarian mission and was deployed to Los Angeles during the 2020 COVID-19 crisis, where it served as a referral hospital for non-COVID patients.

The timing and logistics of any potential deployment to Greenland remain unclear the vessel’s current maintenance status in Alabama.

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- Tags: greenland, military sealift command, president trump, trump administration, usns comfort, usns mercy

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