



Russian Federation Port Authorities and Port State Control working together using latest detection technology for drugs law enforcement

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With up to one-third of global drug movements conducted via shipping, Russian Port Authorities and Port State Control are coordinating and integrating their seizures and approach operations.

On Jun 12 last year, \$70M (400 kilograms), worth of cocaine was seized at Saint Petersburg port. The seizure was a response to a trend to global shipping companies being increasingly targeted by organisations to take advantage of global connected trade. Law enforcement agencies and shipping companies consider up to one-third of global drug movements are made via vessel movements and port callings.

The biggest container ships have doubled in the past 10-years, with shipping companies under global time constraints to both deliver containers, and exit the port in the minimum time possible.

It is well known shipping containers are the cheapest and most cost-effective way to ship cargo. Only one-in-10 containers are actively checked before quickly entering a complicated and extensive logistics system. Legitimate business on large container ships make an enticing opportunity for criminals to move illegal shipments quickly and cheaply!

But, international seizures are increasing due to international advances in illegal substances trace detection technology. The discovery and identification of microscopic particles (and vapours), discharged by narcotics by new innovative technology makes it now possible to detect a significant wide range of substances with greater accuracy. Now with reliability and speed that was not previously available. Recent developments also allow for sophisticated sample testing, historically only available in laboratories, that can now be quickly deployed and routinely performed during the vessel inspection.

What other tried methods are available to profile high-risk vessels for ports & terminals? Is there a desk-based option?

International Maritime Risk Rating Agency's (IMRRA) Vessel Risk Rating Reports can assist modern technology and port with active vessel profiling. IMRRA is able to supplement technical testing developments via a vessel risk rating profiling approach. Potential vessel risk profiles that could indicate potential illegal activities are alerted to clients in the intelligence section of the risk rating reports. The vessel intelligence section gives organisations an opportunity to concentrate resources by identifying and quantifying potential vessel risks.

It is generally accepted by most shipping and law-enforcement agencies, that around one-third of cocaine cargoes alone originate from South America and are moved by commercial shipping.

IMRRA's analysts when examining vessels with regular port callings in South America, the vessel's movements are accurately entered and verified. The advantage of human analysis, compared to a pure vessel algorithm, is that gaps in data can give as much information as completed data fields. A simple 'yes' or 'no' will not suffice.

For example, if the subject vessel was in the region visiting ports renowned for high-intensity drugs trafficking, e.g. called at Guayaquil in Ecuador, the vessels ship voyage history will alert analysts to delve further into the following data:

- Recent Port Calls
- Trading Areas
- Operator Risk Profile
- Repairs – scheduled/unscheduled?
- Vessel certificates and general safety management

The data is then aggregated, analysed and computed via an algorithm to create a vessel risk analysis. If the vessel has a high-risk rating compared to the fleet type average, and the Vessel Intelligence section has information pertaining to a higher risk of drugs trafficking, National Ports Authorities are able to take appropriate action.

Port Authorities & Port State Control across the globe are working closely together that is both sophisticated via Detection Technology and effective non-intrusive inspections to insure legitimate cargoes are quickly processed.

IMRRA is able to support the risk profiling of vessels via its vessel risk rating screening programme to assist all stakeholders in port communities

If you would like more details on how IMRRA researches it high-risk vessels, or if you have a unique vessel risk challenge you require assistance on, contact me immediately.

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