



## **Largest drug bust in Aruba history, ship crew arrested**

**Montenegrin Crew of Cocaine Ship Arrested in Caribbean  
'Aressa' General Cargo Vessel Red Risk Rated  
by International Maritime Risk Rating Agency (IMRRA)**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020 IMRRA risk assessed general cargo vessel Arresa (IMO 7612498) giving it a RED (high) risk rating, with a specific vessel risk rating of 74%. The risk rating was 35.3% over the fleet type average of 38.7%.

The vessel is over 40-years-old and has had multiple detentions due to the poor living conditions on board, e.g. no heat or supplies and the crew members not paid for months, all supported by negative feedback from the crew on social networks. The vessel faced prohibited access to European ports and during 2019 the vessel was re-flagged to Cameroon, having previously been Russian-flagged under Russian ship manager.

Four-days after IMRRA's Red vessel risk rating, Venezuelan news outlet El Pitazo reported that the entire Arresa crew of 10-Europeans was detained, and over 200 cocaine packages each containing 25 kilos was discovered.

Aressa was intercepted near Venezuela's shores and carried about five tons of cocaine with a street value of 160 million euro (US\$175 million), the Montenegrin Government announced on Twitter.

Arresa was reportedly docked at the Guaranao International Port for almost two-weeks before it left on Feb. 23 for, allegedly, the Greek port of Thessaloniki.

*"The arrested Montenegrin nationals were the crew members. It is suspected that the ship carrying cocaine was to have smuggled it to a port in Western Europe,"* police said.

Presumably, the authorities had taken IMRRA's high-risk vessel rating into account as one of the criteria when conducting this operation, resulting the largest drugs bust in Aruba's history.

To find out more about IMRRA's vessel risk ratings visit [www.marinerating.com](http://www.marinerating.com)

Read More: Samir Kajosevic, Balkin Insight.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/26/montenegrin-crew-of-cocaine-ship-arrested-in-caribbean/>

Other sources:

<https://www.fleetmon.com/maritime-news/2020/28921/largest-drug-bust-aruba-history-ship-crew-arrested/>

<https://www.occrp.org/ru/daily/11704-aruba-detains-montenegrins-in-cocaine-bust>