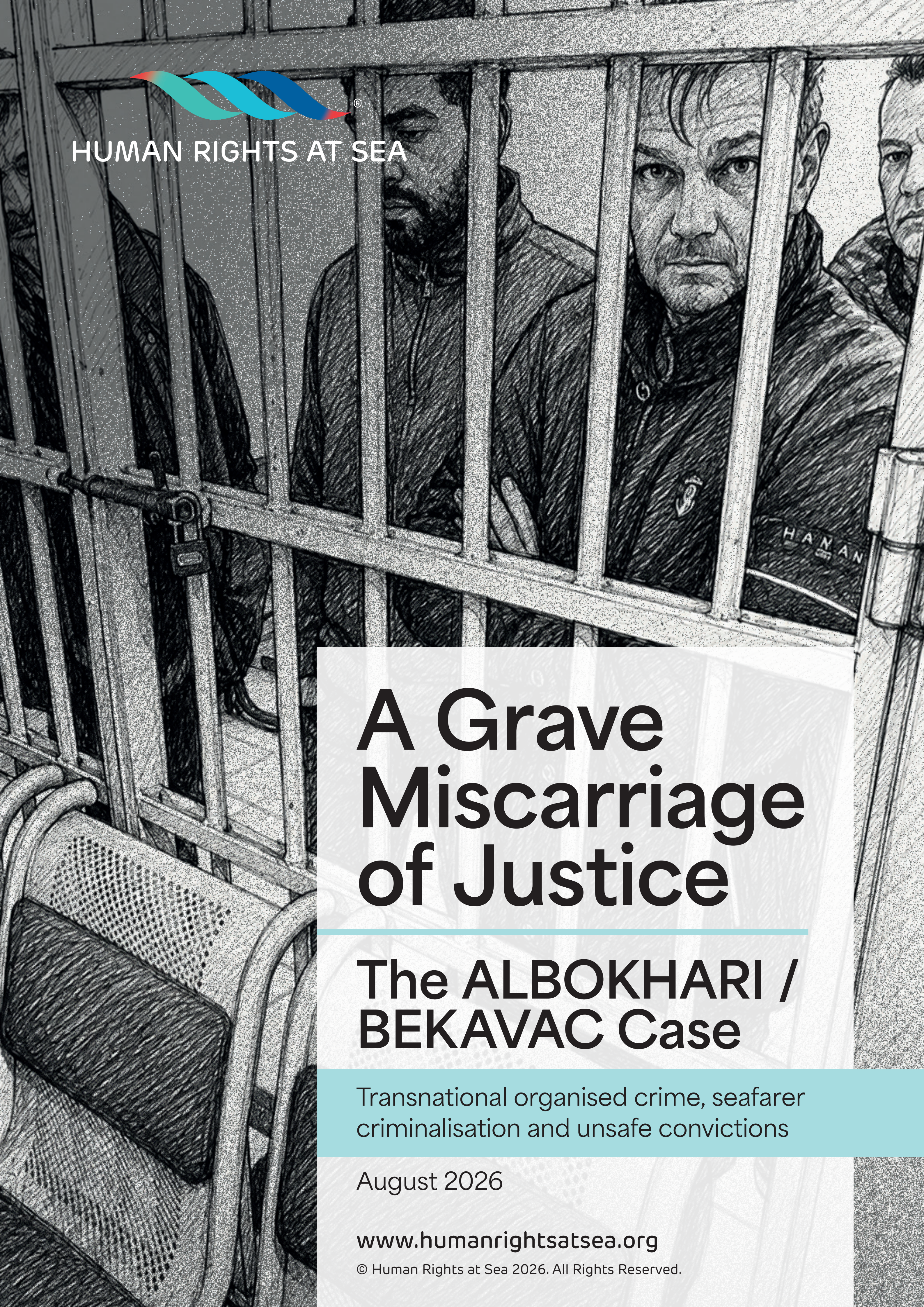

HUMAN RIGHTS AT SEA®

A Grave Miscarriage of Justice

The ALBOKHARI / BEKAVAC Case

Transnational organised crime, seafarer criminalisation and unsafe convictions

August 2026

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A GRAVE MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

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Transnational organised crime, seafarer criminalisation and unsafe convictions.

Independent Review and Report

August 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Human Rights at Sea has been advised that investigating this matter may place those involved at considerable personal risk. Advisory entities have referred to similar cases involving the arrest, detention and disappearance of human rights defenders and journalists covering similar issues. Individuals connected to this case have expressed concerns for their personal safety and security, while some crew members have reportedly stopped working at sea due to insufficient security protections in their employment. The priority of all persons working on this case, is the safeguarding of the convicted and detained persons and protection of their fundamental human rights. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 3:** "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person."

This report has been authorised for publication by Ali and Elena Albokhari.

Figure 1: Crew arrested and detained in Türkiye October 2023. Includes Ali ALBOKHARI (Second from left).

Disclaimer

This independent Human Rights at Sea report is produced pro bono and in good faith in support of victims and dependents without voice or agency with reference and access to legitimately disclosed open-source and client authorised data. The evidence adduced, submitted, analysed and reviewed may be incomplete and/or subject to emerging updates. At the time of writing, the contents of the report are as accurate as the data disclosed and have been checked by the authors to the extent able and as reasonably necessary. The contents, ownership, and Intellectual Property (IP) of this initial report, its associated work and related processes is that of Human Rights at Sea (HRAS). Copyright applies. No replication, copying, or other use of this work is permitted in any way whatsoever without express written permission, citation, and due consideration. HRAS reserves the right to pursue all relevant remedies for breach of IP and copyright. Reviewers, readers and users implicitly accept this warning by accepting, opening, downloading, or otherwise reviewing this document in either electronic or any other form. Updates, amendments, or issues-of-concern to be raised should be directed by email to enquiries@hrasi.org citing the title, ISBN number and date of issue.

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Scope and Methodology

This report reviews disclosed and open-source materials concerning the Colombian and Turkish drugs seizure incidents, the resulting Turkish criminal proceedings, and the treatment of the affected seafarers. It distinguishes documented facts from witness accounts, legal submissions, commentary, and the working hypothesis. Where primary records have not been seen by HRAS, that limitation is stated expressly.

AI Statement

Limited Office 365 Co-Pilot AI has been used in the report to check continuity, only.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations

CESMA	Confederation of European Ship Masters Associations
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg)
HRAS	Human Rights at Sea
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISPS	International Ship and Port Safety Code
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Finland)
MLC	Maritime Labour Convention 2006
OCG	Organised Crime Group
P&I	Protection and Indemnity (insurance)
PMA	Panama Maritime Authority
SG	Secretary General (IMO)
SSO	Ship Security Officer
SUC	Seafarers' Union of Croatia
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UWI	Underwater Inspection

Glossary

Criminalisation of Seafarers	Attribution of criminal liability to seafarers arising from incidents in multi-jurisdictional maritime environments.
Command responsibility	In this report, command responsibility refers to the master's overarching operational and legal responsibilities for the vessel, cargo, safety and personnel. It does not, without proof of the required elements, establish personal criminal liability for the acts of third parties.
Cross-border Proceedings	Judicial or investigative processes involving more than one national jurisdiction.
Domestic Remedies	Legal avenues available within a state's judicial system prior to international review.
Evidentiary Record	Collection of documents, statements, and materials forming the basis of judicial assessment.
Humanitarian Measures	Human rights protections available under domestic law for those persons detained and/or convicted and deprived of their liberty.
Judicial Review	Examination of procedural and evidentiary matters by competent courts.
Procedural Safeguards	Procedural standards, methodologies and processes ensuring equality before the law, transparency, accountability and due process in legal proceedings.
Seafarer Welfare	Monitoring and support mechanisms for seafarers' health, safety, and wellbeing.
Supply Chain Documentation	Records associated with, but not limited to, vessel operations, cargo handling, and port procedures.
Trial Record	Documentation forming the basis of judicial decision making in criminal proceedings.
Article 308 Turkish Criminal Procedure Code (CMK)	Article 308 establishes the extraordinary remedy known as the Objection of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation.

PART I - OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The convictions of Chief Officer Ali ALBOKHARI and Captain Marko BEKAVAC raise substantial concerns about whether criminal responsibility was established beyond reasonable doubt. The disclosed record indicates three central weaknesses: missing cross-border evidence, an unverified chain of custody for the alleged Turkish seizure, and reliance on command rank without clear proof of knowledge or participation. These issues warrant urgent disclosure, independent legal review and coordinated diplomatic action.

The case raises fundamental questions about 1) seafarers' personal safety and liberty, 2) port State security, 3) conduct of criminal investigations, and 4) the impact of local corruption, infiltration and exploitation of port workers, shipping agents and all elements of the supply chain involved in commercial maritime operations by organised crime networks.

The case requires the close attention of Interpol, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary detention, and the European Court of Human Rights.

Detail

This is not the first such case on the same trafficking route. There are many similarities to the SHANDONG DE RUI case of a Panama-flagged capesize bulk carrier carrying coal from Drummond Port, Colombia to a Turkish power plant on 22 August 2020 where 31 kg of cocaine was found in a magnetically attached "torpedo" container. Both the captain and the chief officer received 30-year convictions which were overturned in January 2025. The court held that the prosecution had not proven beyond reasonable doubt that they participated in importing the cocaine. The court ordered their release and emphasised the principle of "*şüpheden sanık yararlanır*" (benefit of the doubt).

The available material for the present case appears to highlight critical gaps in the chain of evidence placed before the Turkish courts, particularly concerning the Colombian seizure, the alleged Turkish seizure, and the attribution of criminal responsibility to command-level officers. Those gaps raise the question whether the prosecution case was sufficiently complete to proceed to trial and sustain the convictions.

Human Rights at Sea (HRAS) considers that the available material raises substantial concerns about a possible miscarriage of justice and the protection of basic human and labour rights, including safeguards under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

On review, it appears there have been failures in the conduct of what should have been a thorough trans-national criminal investigation involving organized crime groups smuggling narcotics between multiple jurisdictions by sea. This identifies existing maritime drug trafficking routes. It has resulted in what appears to be unsafe convictions with an initial 30 years' imprisonment for Finnish national and Syrian-born Ali ALBOKHARI, and the same for Croatian born and national, Marko BEKAVAC.

For Ali ALBOKHARI, at 42 years old, it has resulted in the long-term loss of his personal liberty and family life without expected safeguards of stringent due legal process reflecting the over-riding protection of established fundamental human rights.

For Marko BEKAVAC, at 63 years old, it has resulted in his effective open incarceration in Croatia with an inability to travel outside of national borders for his personal safety as he remains a convicted felon in Türkiye. He has limited employment options while the potential for extradition at any time cannot be ruled out.

In effect, both seafarers have had their lives shattered.

Figure 2: PHOENICIAN M Photo Credit Bjorn Thorvaldsson, Marine Traffic.

At the material time, ALBOKHARI was one of the four (4) officers on the PHOENICIAN M (IMO: 9450806), a bulk carrier sailing under the flag of Panama. He held the roles of Chief Officer and Ships Security Officer (SSO) having joined the ship on 14 June 2023. Both ALBOKHARI and BEKAVAC were onboard the vessel at the time of the seizure of drugs in Colombia, and alleged seizure of drugs while alongside unloading in Türkiye.

The Colombian Barranquilla port seizure, the handling and disclosure of evidence, and the resulting convictions form part of a defence petition asking the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation to exercise the extraordinary objection power under CMK Article 308. The petition argues that the convictions rest on an incomplete evidentiary record. The filing of that petition indicates that the defence is continuing to challenge the safety of the convictions; it does not itself establish that the Turkish prosecution authorities have accepted that challenge.

Well-packaged cocaine blocks bearing the stamp of the Turkish Kayserispor football team were reportedly located by Colombian authorities in the PHOENICIAN M aft peak tank in the vessel's steering-gear area on or about 6-7 September 2023. The packages, reported to weigh 137 kilograms were removed from the vessel by local authorities. The apparent specificity of the search may indicate an intelligence-led operation, but HRAS has not seen the underlying Colombian operational records to verify. Nonetheless, no crew member was arrested or detained for further investigation in Colombia.

CRUCIALLY, no further searches of the vessel were undertaken following the find, and the vessel was cleared by the Barranquilla port authorities for departure on the evening of 10 September 2023 following a meeting with the harbour authorities, and an underwater inspection.

On arrival in the Port of Ereğli,[1] Türkiye, separate bags and loose packets of cocaine were allegedly identified during coal-discharge operations. At the time of writing, HRAS is not aware of disclosed physical evidence, a statement of facts, exhibit records, or statements from the individuals or police officers involved in the seizure.

Of concern is the alleged advice given to the crew by the UK Protection & Indemnity local lawyer identified from crew testimony. [CREW TESTIMONY: "*We waited until late in the afternoon at the narco police station where we were later issued a Warrant of Arrest for cases they filed stating that we are using drugs and drug trafficking. I refused to sign without the presence of a lawyer.* ***Later in the day, when a lawyer from our P&I Club arrived, he explained that it would be better for us to just sign the warrant. So we did.*** *We were detained; it was October 6.*"]

Ten of the twenty crew members were arrested on 6-7 October 2023. 11 months and 9 days later following trial before the Karadeniz Ereğli High Criminal Court, by judgment dated 16 September 2024 (File No. 2024/117, Decision No. 2024/204), BEKAVAC and ALBOKHARI were each sentenced under Articles 188/1, 188/4-a, 62/1, 52/2 and 53 of the Turkish Penal Code to 30 years' imprisonment, a judicial fine of TRY 200,000, and deprivation of certain rights. The remaining eight (8) defendants were acquitted.

At the time of writing, Chief Officer ALBOKHARI remains incarcerated in prison since 7 October 2023 (2 years, 10 months+). Captain BEKAVAC resides at his home in Croatia following his unexpected removal from his cell in what remains publicly unexplained circumstances with a night-time repatriation to Croatia through diplomatic channels.[2] Both men have registered criminal convictions from the Turkish judicial system which for ALBOKHARI, has been separately registered in Finland identifying him as a convicted individual. At the time of writing, Capt BEKAVAC remains convicted in Türkiye.

Concerningly, both men's respective sentences have been extended to 33 years for failure to pay court fines in respect of the accused being linked to the alleged narcotics' seizure in Türkiye. This notes that any such payment by the convicted individuals could be tantamount to an admission of liability of their involvement in drug trafficking, which both men strenuously deny.

The details of this precursor incident of a successful Colombia ARMADA[3] Counter-narcotics operation, the conduct, detail and findings of the meeting with the Barranquilla Port authorities pre-sailing, and the disclosure of Colombian counter-narcotics intelligence material to the defence case was seemingly not considered nor adduced during the defendant's trial in Türkiye. **This indicates an inequality in arms in fairly defending the accused and preventing a failure of due process.**

By way of example, one of many investigation concerns includes that Captain BEKAVAC stated during HRAS inquiries that he was only informed 2-3 days before departure that the destination was Türkiye. In turn, this raises basic investigative questions, including, but not limited to:

1. Were layered security measures in accordance with the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS)[4] in place for cargo loading and unloading noting the known issue of drug trafficking in and

1 Officially the Port of Erdemir or Karadeniz Ereğli Port, a major industrial bulk-handling port on the western Black Sea coast of Türkiye in Zonguldak Province that serves as a vital gateway for Türkiye's steel, coal, and cement sectors.

2 Seatrade Maritime News, Freed Captain Bekavac Speaks Out on Imprisonment Trauma, 7 May 2026. https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/crewing/freed-captain-bekavac-speaks-out-on-imprisonment-trauma [Accessed 06/08/2026]

3 *Armada* Nacional (ARMADA) https://www.armada.mil.co/eng/content/general-description [Accessed 06/08/2026]

4 https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/security/pages/solas-xi-2%20isps%20code.aspx [Accessed 07/08/2026]

around the port area, as advised to BEKAVAC through the local Colombian agent and reported by BEKAVAC to the Turkish management company?

2. Did the management company undertake all reasonable and requested actions to provide necessary security measures alongside the Colombian agent's and UK-linked Protection and Indemnity (P&I) correspondent's advice?
   COMMENT: In a country and port with a known drug trafficking problem, it would be arguably negligent of the management, insurers and local operators to fail to take all reasonable and necessary steps to safeguard the vessel, crew and cargo from known criminal activity.
3. How long had the criminal network logistic planning been in-place for Turkish football club Kayserispor labelled packages of cocaine to be made ready and placed onboard a vessel with short-notice confirmation of a cargo offload in Türkiye?
   COMMENT: This would indicate an established, well-planned, port accessible, and logistically supported trans-national drugs operation.

4. Where is the disclosed physical, photographic and corroborative evidence of the seizure in Türkiye?
   COMMENT: Without the chain of custody of corroborating evidence being made available, checked for continuity, and disclosed to both the prosecution and defence counsel, the conviction is a best, unsafe due to the inability to test the evidence against the charges laid against the defendants.

5. Were the drugs allegedly located in Türkiye by local government and police officers loaded in Barranquilla Port during cargo loading operations into hold No.2 or, were they planted dockside in Türkiye during unloading as a distraction activity to frame the PHOENICIAN M crew to divert attention from the criminal networks due to the prior ARMADA find in Colombia?
   COMMENT: Criminalising seafarers provides a convenient wrapping-up and public-facing narrative that misdirects attention and shifts attention from trans-national criminal networks.

This report also considers the implications of the 2025 adoption by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) at the 112th Session (LEG 112) (March 2025) by the IMO's Legal Committee, of the 'Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes' ('Guidelines') had they been in place at the material time. This notes that the Guidelines are neither mandatory for coastal, port or flag State authorities, nor are yet commonly enforceable. At the material time in Türkiye, the Guidelines were not yet published. They are, however, an IMO Member State endorsed advisory issued by the UN agency and may be exampled as having failed to be followed in this case.

On a human level, and through determined advocacy by Elena Albokhari in defending her husband for almost three years and continuously keeping the story of her husband's detention in Türkiye alive, the wider issue of seafarer criminalisation remains on the agenda in the public domain. Nonetheless, it has been notable that Elena Albokhari has received inconsistent support with 1) alleged limited Finnish Government representative prison visits for an incarcerated Finnish national, 2) no support from the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) despite multiple written requests by Elena Albokhari and ICS separately issuing a letter of support to Capt BEKAVAC, and 3) limited seafarer welfare organisation support and advocacy.

In sum, the available disclosed evidence and related OSINT material raise substantial concerns about the safety of the convictions and the treatment of the affected seafarers. It illustrates the vulnerability of crews when narcotics trafficking intersects with incomplete cross-border investigation, disputed evidence handling and limited institutional support. Further, disclosure and independent examination are required before responsibility for the alleged Turkish seizure, or for any diversionary activity deflected towards crew, can be reliably attributed.

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

The working hypothesis, which remains subject to verification against primary evidence, is that the case may concurrently involve: 1) trans-national organised crime syndicates; 2) links between Colombian and Turkish criminal groups; 3) unlawful use of shipping supply chains, agents, port facilities and associated personnel to facilitate narcotics transport; 4) the targeting of crew as public scapegoats; and 5) possible knowledge within state authorities at some level. The report does not present these propositions as established facts at the time of writing.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The available evidence supports investigation of several possible explanations, including involvement by trans-national organised crime groups, exploitation of port and shipping supply chains, and unlawful access to the vessel by third parties. HRAS has not verified links between Colombian and Turkish criminal groups, deliberate targeting of crew, or knowledge within state authorities; these matters remain hypotheses requiring primary evidence and independent investigation.

A SIMILAR CASE? SHANDONG DE RUI

Figure 3 SHANDONG DE RUI Photo Credit: Marine Traffic.

The SHANDONG DE RUI (IMO 9872042)[5] was a Panama-flagged capesize bulk carrier carrying 165,552.84 metric tonnes of coal from Drummond Port, Colombia to a Turkish power plant. It arrived off Zonguldak, Türkiye on 21 August 2020 and berthed on 22 August 2020. With a crew of 20 Chinese nationals, the Master being Guangjian Xu; and chief officer Kaibo Wu, 31 kg of cocaine was found in a magnetically attached "torpedo" container mounted near the 15-16 m draft marks on the port quarter. Both the captain and the chief officer received 30-year convictions, with the remaining crew set free.

15 January 2025 Turkish Supreme Court (Ceza Genel Kurulu)

The decision of the Turkish Supreme Court's Criminal General Assembly (Yargıtay Ceza Genel Kurulu) is significant for the current case, because it overturned the 30-year convictions of the captain and chief officer and held that the prosecution had not proven beyond reasonable doubt that they participated in importing the cocaine. The Court ordered their release and emphasised the principle of "şüpheden sanık yararlanır" (benefit of the doubt) after 4 years, 4 months, and 24 days detained.

NB: The SHANDONG DE RUI decision is relevant as a comparative Turkish authority because it addresses whether rank, vessel presence and incomplete investigation are sufficient to prove knowing participation in maritime narcotics trafficking. The factual method differed from the present case, and the decision should therefore be used by analogy rather than treated as determinative.

5 https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:6257026 [Accessed 9 August 2026]

Key Legal Findings - SHANDONG DE RUI

1. Presence of drugs on a ship does not automatically prove crew involvement

The lower courts had effectively relied on the officers' positions of authority aboard the vessel to infer responsibility. The Supreme Court rejected this approach, noting that a crew of about 20 people was on board and that responsibility could not be imposed merely because the accused were the captain and chief officer.

COMMENT: The implication is that prosecutors must prove actual participation, knowledge, control, or coordination, not merely rank or command responsibility.

2. The Court accepted the plausibility of the "torpedo method"

The judgment identified extensive expert evidence showing that:

1. The cocaine was inside a specially designed waterproof metal container.
2. The container was attached externally by magnets.
3. It had characteristics consistent with professional underwater placement.
4. Two trained divers could attach such a device to the hull in approximately one minute.
5. The mounting location was effectively invisible from the vessel's deck.

The Court considered it realistic that professional third parties could attach the container underwater without the knowledge of the ship's officers.

COMMENT: The implication is that the ruling effectively recognises "torpedo"-style hull attachment as a credible smuggling method in Turkish jurisprudence.

3. Lack of forensic linkage was important

The Court noted that:

1. Fingerprints recovered from the drug packaging did not match the defendants.
2. Examinations of the officers' telephones failed to reveal evidence linking them to the trafficking operation.
3. No direct evidence demonstrated communication with traffickers.

COMMENT: The implication is that in complex maritime smuggling cases, Turkish courts may require stronger forensic and communications evidence before convicting ship crew.

4. Alternative explanations remained viable

The Court stressed that there were realistic alternative scenarios consistent with innocence:

1. The container may have been attached by external actors.
2. The vessel underwent incomplete underwater inspection in Colombia.
3. Similar incidents involving externally attached containers had occurred on other vessels from Colombia.
4. The vessel's operators had opportunities to remove the package before arrival if they had knowingly been involved.

COMMENT: Because those possibilities were never conclusively eliminated, the Court found that reasonable doubt remained.

ALBOKHARI CASE RECOMMENDATIONS

The immediate priority is to secure ALBOKHARI's safety and welfare, obtain and test the missing Colombian and Turkish evidence, and accelerate review of the convictions through available domestic remedies. Finnish, Croatian and Turkish authorities should assign named leads and reporting dates; legal representatives should maintain a single evidence schedule; and maritime bodies should coordinate advocacy against defined welfare, disclosure and case-progression outcomes.

The Recommendations are shaped by the following considerations, including but not limited to:

1. Disclosed data from assessed credible sources including previous translated court judgements.
2. The failure to seize physical evidence by Turkish authorities at the material time, corroborated by photographic and statement evidence which should be disclosed.
3. Review of domestic legal due process.
4. Review against the 'Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes' March 2025.
5. Consideration of trans-national data disclosure between interested state parties.
6. Consideration of involvement of trans-national organized crime syndicates.
7. Review and analysis of safety and security of dependents.
8. Impact on the convicted persons and their dependents.
9. Consideration of state-level interventions noting limited ability for state-level corroboration.

This initial review recommends:

1. **Assured personal protection:** ALBOKHARI must have assured personal protection as a Finnish national within the Turkish state prison system. This notes that the realistic possibility of ALBOKHARI being a designated victim covering the activities of trans-national organized crime group(s). Similar protections must be put in place for BEKAVAC, and those raising the issues in support of this report. **See Public Notice**.
2. **Urgent legal review and case progression:** Noting the finalised judicial convictions, there must be continuous oversight of access to extraordinary review, renewed discovery and disclosure of new material evidence, and close monitoring of any Article 308 process before the Court of Cassation. All relevant material relating to the Colombian authorities' inspection in Barranquilla Port, including their findings and any applicable intelligence-led information, should be disclosed to support a comprehensive review of the remaining domestic remedies. Available lawful mechanisms for transfer or repatriation to Finland should also be examined.
3. **Consular engagement and welfare monitoring:** Regular in-person consular contact must continue unabated including regular welfare checks, prison visits, and structured communication with ALKOHBARI. This remains the central mechanism for home-state monitoring of day-to-day wellbeing ensuring ALBOKHARI's treatment aligns with recognised international standards for those convicted in a foreign state. Consider repatriation to serve the remainder of his sentence in a Finnish prison pending appeal in the jurisdiction under domestic law.

4. **Engagement of Interpol:** Submission of this report to Interpol for consideration of investigation into trans-national organized crime networks between Colombia and Türkiye is to be made.
5. **Engagement of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.**[6] Submission of this report to the UN Working Group for review into the circumstances of the continued detention of ALBOKHARI and the case of BEKAVAC.
6. **Humanitarian measures within the Turkish prison system:** Where available under domestic law, access to humanitarian support and remedies should be enacted to mitigate the effects of long-term incarceration. These may include improved access to medical evaluation, regular outdoor activity, and increased family contact. Routine physical and psychological assessments will help ensure that ALBOKHARI's health needs are immediately identified and addressed without delay. [BEKAVAC requires similar mental and physical health support].
7. **Targeted high level diplomatic engagement:** A structured diplomatic approach must be maintained focusing on the importance of timely judicial review, disclosure of new evidence, and the humanitarian implications of prolonged detention of the individual. Continuously engaging Turkish counterparts through established bilateral channels, particularly during periods of high-level dialogue, can help ensure that ALBOKHARI's case receives the necessary attention within the broader framework of Finland-Türkiye state relations. [The same applies for Capt BEKAVAC in the context of Croatian – Türkiye state relations.]
8. **Family support, liaison and communication pathways:** Clear communication channels from Turkish and Finnish state authorities with ALBOKHARI's family must be maintained to ensure they receive timely updates and have a tracked pathway for raising welfare concerns. This is particularly important in long-term cross-border cases where families carry significant practical, resource and emotional burdens. Maritime industry support should be consistent, coordinated and regularly reviewed by independent bodies, without impediment.
9. **International coordination and sector engagement:** Ongoing engagement with maritime unions, international welfare organisations, and international maritime bodies such as, but not limited to, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) et al, should continue unabated to ensure that concerns relating to seafarer treatment and due process are communicated through established mechanisms. Strengthening international guidance on evidence sharing in seafarer criminalisation casework, associated consular access, and monitoring will support more consistent handling of similar cases in the future.
10. **Disclosure and transparency across jurisdictions:** Authorities in all relevant jurisdictions should ensure that all relevant inspection records, evidence collection, preservation and continuity, and procedural steps have been completed, are open to ongoing internal and external review, and are transparently accessible. Ongoing disclosure supports judicial case review, information flow between states and for family members, supports legal remedies and contributes to improvements in future cross-border maritime governance mechanisms.
11. **Consideration of access to international legal remedy:** Should domestic remedies be exhausted without resolution, the case may be eligible for submission to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). This pathway is well established for individuals seeking review of alleged violations of fair trial rights, detention conditions, or procedural safeguards. Any such application would need to be prepared in accordance with ECtHR admissibility requirements and supported by full disclosure of all applicable documentation of the ongoing domestic proceedings in Türkiye.

6 https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-arbitrary-detention [Accessed 9 August 2026]

PART II - THE EVIDENCE

Introduction[7]

Part II sets out the evidence presently available to HRAS, identifies material that has not been disclosed or independently verified, and explains how those gaps affect the assessment of the investigation, trial and continuing legal remedies.

1. Timeline of Key Events

Human Rights at Sea has complied the following timeline of key events combined from selected disclosed and open-source information obtained through Open-Source Intelligence gathering (OSINT). It is a precis, is non-exhaustive, and may be updated post publication. Text in **BOLD** highlights main events. **Read Disclaimer.**

2023

14 June 2023 - ALBOKHARI joins the MV PHOENICIAN M Panama flagged Bulk carrier under Turkish management and UK-linked marine insurance cover.

20 June 2023 - ALBOKHARI appointed Ship Security Officer (SSO).

29 August 2023 – Deep Blue Operations, Bogata, Colombia email Iskenderunship.com and Atlasship.com with six (6) addressees from dhshipagency.com in-copy sharing the Barranquilla Port security measures document.

29 August 2023 – Captain BEKAVAC requests Iskenderun Shipping Management Ltd provide additional security measures due to risk from drugs cartels of onboard drug smuggling.

30 August 2023 - Notice of Delivery issued in Barranquilla, Colombia for fertilizer cargo.

31 August – 10 September 2023 – Fertilizer [Cargo] discharge, hold cleaning at anchorage and return to port for subsequent coal loading operations in Barranquilla Port.

5 September 2023 - Stowage Plan issued for coal [cargo] loading operations.

6-7 September 2023 - Cargo Manifest and Bill of Lading issued. Narcotics (cocaine) seized by Colombian ARMADA officers in vessel's aft peak tank around the steering gear compartment.

8 September 2023 - Crew statements taken; crew allowed to leave and return onboard without detention.

9 September 2023 – 4 x Officers including Master and Chief Officer ALBOKHARI attend Barranquilla Harbour Master's office following location of 137 kg of cocaine bundles by ARMADA police for a meeting. No further action taken, and the vessel is allowed to depart for the outer area Caño Dulce for the underwater inspection (UWI).

7 See Disclaimer.

10 September 2023 - UWI completed with port clearance issued. No further action by Colombian authorities.

10 September 2023 - Vessel departs Barranquilla Port, Colombia for Port of Ereğli, Türkiye (1754Z pilot reported away from vessel).

11 September 2023 – Barranquilla Security measures email forwarded from Iskendurrunship.com account to Captain Bekavac (post departure and find by ARMADA).

2-3 October 2023 – Vessel arrives in Port of Ereğli, Türkiye.

5 October 2023- Iskendership management company representatives visit vessel. ALBOKHARI gives statement during search. No drugs located.

6-7 October – Drugs are allegedly found shoreside (no evidence to corroborate) during coal [cargo] unloading operations by crane operator. Port police informed and attended scene.

6 October 2023 - Captain BEKAVAC detained.

7 October 2023 - Chief Officer ALBOKHARI detained after supervision of cargo offload.

8 December 2023 – Finnish criminal record extract issued; no prior record for ALBOKHARI.

2024

2024 – ALBOKHARI and BEKAVAC convicted and serving sentences in prison.

16 September 2024 - The Karadeniz Ereğli High Criminal Court convicts BEKAVAC and ALBOKHARI, sentencing each to 30 years' imprisonment and a judicial fine of TRY 200,000; the remaining eight defendants are acquitted.

2025

18 June 2025 – Elena Albokhari writes to International Chamber of Shipping (ICS). No reply received.

8 August 2025 – Capt BEKAVAC taken from jail outside Ankara by Croatian diplomat accompanied by Turkish Foreign Affairs representative.

9 August 2025 – Capt BEKAVAC flies from Ankara – Istanbul – Croatia and returned home by Croatian Foreign Affairs representative.

25 September 2025 - Finnish Embassy London contacted. Urgent request sent to IMO.

26 September 2025 - IMO meeting acknowledged for Elena Albokhari in London.

28 September 2025 – Elena Albokhari attends IMO for meeting with Secretariat with Human Rights at Sea and Mission to Seafarers.

28 September 2025 - ITF contacted regarding interview with Elena Albokhari.

1 October 2025 - ITF letter sent to Government of the Republic of Türkiye.

9 October 2025 - Finnish Ministry of Justice contacted by Elena Albokhari.

16 October 2025 - ILO representative meets Turkish Vice Minister of Justice.

17 October 2025 - ILO representative speaks with Court of Cassation judge

11 December 2025 - IMO reports Secretary General (SG) meetings with Finnish and Turkish Ambassadors.

12 December 2025 - ICS confirms Captain BEKAVAC detained 22 months, now home in Croatia.

19 December 2025 - ECtHR submission discussed between David Hammond Esq and Elena Albokhari.

22 December 2025 - Requests for pro bono ECHR support sent. Nil replies received.

23 December 2025 - ITF contacted; human rights approach outlined. Finnish MFA reports embassy visits ALBOKHARI.

2026

13 February 2026 - Salary delay reported to ITF.

31 May 2026 - Email sent to IMO regarding Captain's interview and ALBOKHARI's health. Complaint sent to ITF regarding loss of support. Finnish MFA confirms continued visits.

22 June 2026 – Elena Albokhari writes to the International Chamber of Shipping. No reply received.

24 June 2026 - CESMA letter acknowledged by IMO. SUC responds, no influence over Turkish courts.

30 June 2026 - Humanitarian appeal sent to Finnish Speaker during Türkiye visit.

1 July 2026 - New Colombian inspection documents identified. Letter sent to Turkish Embassy in Finland. Deep Blue Ship Agents confirm lawyer did not contact them. WhatsApp messages show request for proof of contact with Colombia.

21 July 2026 - The report records that the sentences of ALBOKHARI and BEKAVAC were extended by three years following non-payment of the judicial fines imposed with their convictions. *HRAS has not cited the primary decision confirming the legal basis and present effect of that extension.

2. Background

(*To be read in conjunction with PART I - OVERVIEW)

This initial Human Rights at Sea independent review (the Review) is undertaken against the context of the global movement of goods by sea through commercial vessel transport spanning multiple jurisdictions where exploitation by international organised crime syndicates is ever present, and criminalisation of seafarers is on the increase.[8] It considers open-source data, legitimately disclosed evidence, and the IMO 'Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes'.[9]

The Panama flagged and certified by the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) MV PHOENICIAN M (IMO: 9450806) is a bulk carrier vessel engaged in international trade in and around South America, Europe and Russia. At the material time, it was crewed by multinational seafarers working under international maritime and applicable law using maritime contracts for employment, reflecting safety and professional standards for crew in the supply and transfer of goods by sea. The vessel was managed by a Turkish company, with marine insurance (P&I) provided through the UK P&I Club[10], a member of the International Group of P&I Clubs.[11]

In June 2023, Chief Officer Ali ALBOKHARI joined the vessel as part of its operational rotation and later assumed responsibilities as Ship Security Officer (SSO), a role central to routine compliance, safety, and security functions onboard.

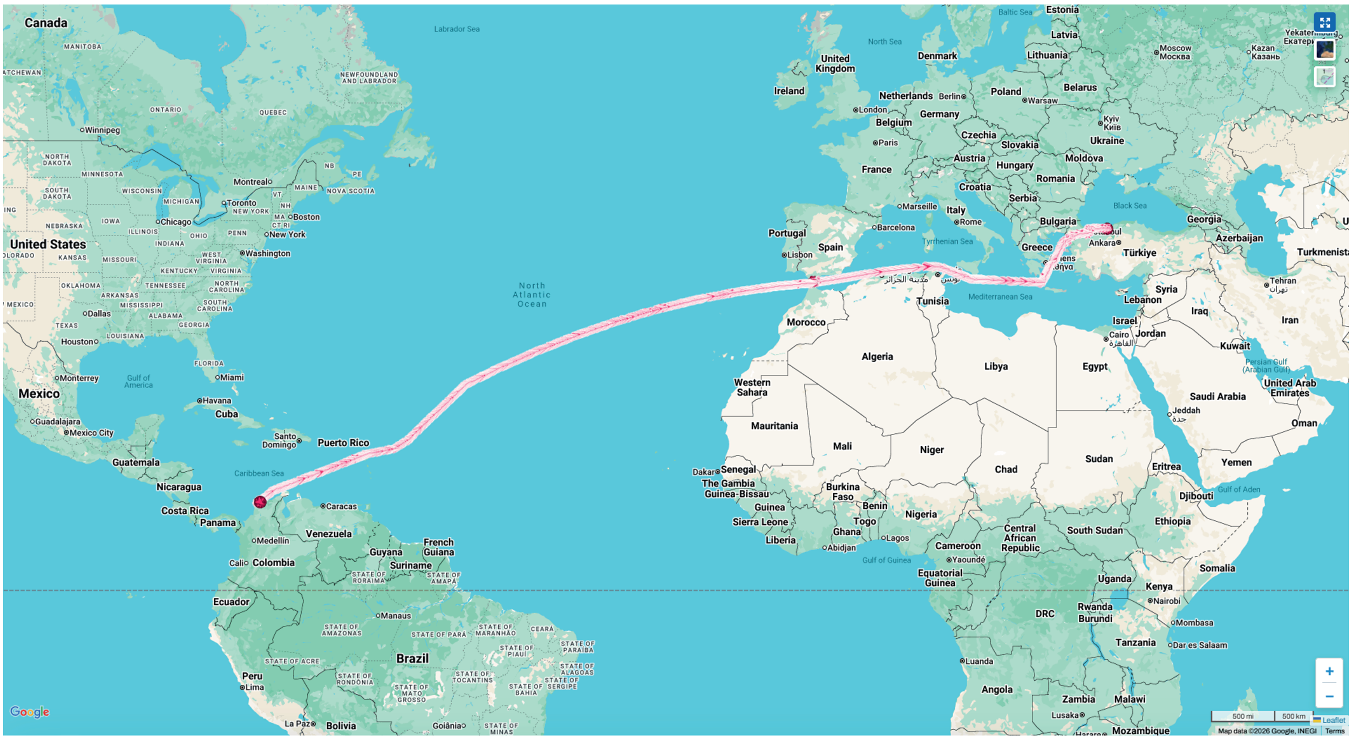

Figure 4 Transit for MV PHOENICIAN M from Colombia to Türkiye. Photo Credit: Lloyds List Intelligence, London, UK

<u>**COLOMBIA**</u>. The case became significant following the initial intelligence-led seizure on or around 6-7 September 2023 of bundles of prepared cocaine blocks totalling a reported 137 kg in the Barranquilla

8 SeaNews, Ali Albokhari's Case Must End Crew Criminalisation, 2026. https://seanews.co.uk/maritime/ali-albokhari-s-case-must-end-crew-criminalisation [Accessed 06/08/2026]

9 International Maritime Organization (IMO), Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes Adopted, 03 December 2024. https://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/pages/whatsnew-2192.aspx [Accessed 06/08/2026]

10 https://www.ukpandi.com/ [Accessed 06/08/2026]

11 https://www.igpandi.org/ [Accessed 06/08/2026]

Port, Colombia, an event that initiated inspections and official engagement by Colombian authorities before the vessel was permitted to depart. Notably, the vessel was not detained for further investigation or searches, and none of the crew were arrested in Colombia. The vessel was given port clearance and left for Türkiye.

Figure 5: Cola loading Barranquilla Port, Colombia 4 September 2023 two days before drugs seizure in aft peak tank.

TÜRKIYE. When the vessel arrived at the Karadeniz Ereğli Iron and Steel Works Inc. owned Port of Ereğli (Erdemir Port) in Türkiye, authorities boarded the vessel and conducted searches, though there were no initial finds. Information had been obtained because of intelligence activities conducted by the Turkish Kayseri Provincial Police Department Narcotics Branch under the coordination of the General Directorate of Security, Department for Combating Narcotics Crimes, indicating that narcotic substances would be brought into Türkiye by a Panama-flagged bulk cargo vessel departing from Colombia.

An alleged search following an alleged find allegedly identified narcotics associated with Cargo Hold No. 2 and the discharged coal. The account made available to HRAS describes four bags, three black and one green, with some items said to have been attached by rope near a ladder referred to by crew members as the “Australia ladder”. Other packages were reportedly recovered from coal or shore-side handling areas. A total of 119 packages, with a reported net cocaine weight of 101,486.6 grams, was attributed to the Turkish seizure. HRAS has not seen the forensic report, photographs, exhibit records or chain-of-custody documentation needed to verify the precise recovery locations or the existence and continuity of the exhibits.

Captain BEKAVAC, Chief Officer ALBOKHARI and eight additional crew members were arrested and detained on 6 and 7 October 2023, marking an escalation from the earlier onboard narcotics discovery in Colombia, to criminal proceedings in Türkiye. Criminal proceedings were initiated against the crew leading to trails, and the conviction and incarceration of two officers ALBOKHARI and BEKAVAC. This outcome brought increased scrutiny by legal parties and external observers to the investigative steps undertaken in both countries.

As the legal process unfolded, questions emerged regarding the collection, preservation and continuity of evidence, the consistency of investigative lines of enquiry, actions, and the accessibility of key documentation from Colombian authorities amongst those matters-in-issue identified at the time ofwriting.[12] These concerns sit within a broader pattern increasingly recognised by international maritime

12 Safety4Sea, Seafarer’s Wife Calls for Urgent Action After Husband’s 30-Year Sentence in Türkiye, 26 Sep 2025. https://safety4sea.com/seafarers-wife-calls-for-urgent-action-after-husbands-30-year-sentence-in-turkey [Accessed 06/08/2026]

bodies: the criminalisation of seafarers operating in complex, multi-jurisdictional environments. Cases involving poorly managed investigations, undocumented chains of custody, and limited procedural safeguards highlight the vulnerability of seafarers when allegations arise abroad.[13]

The ALBOKHARI / BEKAVAC case reflects these systemic pressures and underscores the need for clear, fair, and transparent processes when maritime incidents trigger cross-border legal consequences.

3. Two Separate Incidents: COLOMBIA and TÜRKIYE

The incidents unfolded in two distinct phases in two separate jurisdictions.

3.1 COLOMBIA

During loading operations on or around 6 September 2023 in Barranquilla Port, Colombia, 137 Kg of narcotics (packaged cocaine blocks) bearing the stamp of the Turkish Kayserispor football team were discovered on board the MV PHOENICIAN M by Colombian maritime authorities (ARMADA).[14]

Prior to loading, Captain Marco BEKAVAC, the vessel's master had explicitly requested additional security measures, and security support from the management company (Iskenderun Ship Management) and the time charter agent (Deep Blue Agency) as drug smuggling was highlighted by the agent as being a serious issue of concern in Barranquilla Port. BEKAVAC in turn highlighted this to the management company in email correspondence.

Under the circumstances, disclosed evidence suggests that the management company did not 1) respond to the request and 2) provide basic security such as additional locks for doors and hatches while alongside loading in Barranquilla. As such, the vessel would have been more likely than not to have been vulnerable from illegal interference by local criminal elements

In example correspondence seen by HRAS, Captain BEKAVAC stated: "*I requested from Time Charter Agent Deep Blue agency Barranquilla Columbia [sic] extra Security from terminal and he accepted. But after all se found as per visitor log book that extra security did not come on duty first few days, when was drug loaded on 5 metars [sic] height inside Cargo holds no. 2 who are fully controled [sic] by Columbian terminal cargo cranes drivers from cargo cranes cabins could see everything all around 360°, also Columbian stevedores around cargo holds, Columbian stevedores inside cargo holds for trimming cargo pushing cargo around installations, pipes, ventilations Australian ladders. Absolute Control of loading Cargo for Time Charter who was on hire [for] vessel MV PHOENICIAN M.*"

The initial drugs were reportedly discovered in the aft peak tank near the steering-gear compartment by ARMADA officials, who conducted an onboard search, took statements from crew members and seized the substances. HRAS has not been provided with the corresponding Colombian seizure, exhibit, inspection or departure records and therefore cannot independently verify the full official account.

The vessel was subsequently permitted to depart via the outer anchorage for an underwater inspection, and pre-departure documentation was issued by local port authorities in accordance with local port state procedures.

13 International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), ITF Welcomes Captain Bekavac's Return, Urges Release of Chief Officer Albokhari, 13 Aug 2025. https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/news/itf-welcomes-captain-bekavacs-return-urges-release-chief-mate-albokhari [Accessed 06/08/2026]

14 *Armada* Nacional (ARMADA) https://www.armada.mil.co/eng/content/general-description [Accessed 06/08/2026]

BEKAVAC reported the discovery to the company and relevant parties at the time, noting the presence of narcotics and the inspection carried out by the ARMADA authorities. Following a meeting on 9 September 2023 with the Barranquilla Harbour Master (of the Colombian Navy) with the four (4) officers, including BEKAVAC and ALBOKHARI, the PHOENICIAN M was permitted to depart. There has been no disclosure of any records of the meeting with the Harbour Master / port authorities at the time of writing.

HRAS has not seen records showing whether Colombian authorities searched other parts of the vessel after the aft peak tank discovery. The apparent focus on that location may indicate an intelligence-led operation, but the scope and basis of the search require confirmation from the Colombian records.

Figure 6: Drugs Located onboard PHOENICIAN M Image 1/4. Photo Credit from Video Captain BEKAVAC 2026.

Figure 7: Drugs Located onboard PHOENICIAN M Image 1/4. Photo Credit from Video Captain BEKAVAC 2026.

Figure 8: Drugs Located onboard PHOENICIAN M Image 2/4. Photo Credit from Video Captain BEKAVAC 2026.

Figure 9: Drugs Located onboard PHOENICIAN M Image 4/4. Photo Credit from Video Captain BEKAVAC 2026.

Following the meeting on 9 September 2023, the vessel proceeded to the outer anchorage for an underwater inspection. The inspection was completed and port clearance was issued on 10 September 2023, after which the vessel departed for Türkiye.

Packages of cocaine were initially discovered onboard the PHOENICIAN M in Barranquilla Port, Colombia pre-packaged and bearing the emblem of the Turkish football club Kayserispor.

Figure 10: ABOVE. Duffle bags containing cocaine seized in Barranquilla, Colombia. Photo Credits: Captain Marko BEKAVAC

Figures 11 & 12: Cocaine seized in Barranquilla, Colombia packaged with Turkish football team, Kayserispor, emblem. Photo Credits: Captain Marko BEKAVAC

3.2 TÜRKIYE

After the vessel arrived at the Port of Ereğli (Erdemir Port), Türkiye, Turkish officials boarded the vessel, carried out searches, and interviewed crew members. At that time, no drugs were located.

According to the account available to HRAS, packages were reportedly identified during overnight discharge operations in bags bearing FİLA, Excella, ADİDAS and TUTU markings, together with a torn green bag, packaging remnants and rope. Reported package weights included 23,750 grams, 17,850 grams, 19,400 grams and 36,800 grams. Some material was said to have been recovered from storage or a coal-crane hopper. HRAS has not seen the forensic report, photographs, exhibit register or chain-of-custody documentation required to verify these descriptions, weights and recovery locations.

NB: No imagery has been obtained for the vessel arrival, discharge operations or alleged drugs find.

Ten of the twenty crew members were arrested: Captain BEKAVAC was detained on 6 October 2023, and Chief Officer ALBOKHARI was detained on 7 October 2023 with eight other crew members detained during the same period. The crew were transferred to local police facilities, and criminal proceedings began thereafter.

COMMENT: At the time of writing, HRAS has not been provided with the Turkish port, police or counter-narcotics investigation records, including the chain-of-custody documentation relating to the alleged Turkish seizure. As such, the reported find and seizure can only be classed as 'alleged'.

COMMENT: The reported packaging in Türkiye differed from the well-wrapped, self-contained bundles shown in material relating to the Colombian seizure. That difference may warrant further investigation into origin, handling and recovery location, but HRAS cannot determine from packaging alone whether the substances formed part of the same consignment, or whether they came from the vessel.

COMMENT: The absence from the disclosed material of a chain of custody capable of legal testing prevents HRAS from verifying that the substances reportedly found shoreside came from Cargo Hold No. 2 or from the vessel. That evidential gap should be addressed through disclosure and judicial examination, and the incident therefore remains classified as 'alleged'.

4. Crew Evidence

A selection of crew has been interviewed in-person in foreign jurisdictions having been located by HRAS investigators. The following is a sample of testimonies covering both incidents in Colombia and Türkiye. Identities are protected.

NB: Any spelling errors are unamended as provided to HRAS from original interviews and written updates.

4.1 CREW 001 (Barranquilla Port, Colombia)

"There was only one of us guarding the loading operations; just the same person looking after seven stevedores, five cargo holds, and crane operators. This same crew also guards the ship accommodation and was assisting the boarding agents. When the agents had to do security rounds inside, the crew had to leave his posts downstairs to. Given this situation, it became easy for a perpetrator to breach their security.

"Based on my observation, the lack of security and port conditions caused this incident; whoever were the perpetrators managed to slip past us. I noticed that while the port was strict with the stevedores, they were lax with the trucks. The trucks carrying the coals would freely enter and exit the port without no one checking it. The trucks would simply dump the coals alongside the ship, and the area was not properly illuminated; you couldn't immediately see if there are other items with the coal because everything is dark."

4.2 CREW 002 (Barranquilla Port, Colombia)

"I was not on duty at that time, but I was doing a task at the aft under the instructions of C/M Ali. It was then that I noticed the commotion; apparently, they discovered drugs in our engine room. I saw the police carrying these drugs away and they transported it through their fast craft. That time when the drugs were discovered, I saw that there were still so many stevedores onboard our ship.

"It is true, our ship had poor security. While we were still in Russia enroute to Columbia, we were already discussing that we should have tight security, maybe double or triple the crew on watch because South America has that kind of reputation. From what I've heard, one of the junior officers suggested to Capt and Chief mate to request additional security personnel and surveillance camera from our company; however, there was no response. So we had to make do of what we had at the time - only three ABs were guarding the operations, when they were given an additional task, they had to leave their post, thus, exposing our ship to any wrongful acts."

4.3 CREW 003 (Barranquilla Port, Colombia)

"I was in the gangway when they discovered the cocaine. Capt. Bekevac called me to immediately proceed there to log the timeline of what happened. The aft peak tank was near the steering gear room. When they pulled out the bags, the Armada declared that the inspection is over. I was confused because if something was found in one cargo hold, isn't it procedure for them to re-inspect the entire ship again just in case there are other contrabands onboard? When it happened, they simply declared that the inspection's done. They seemed to be sure that there is nothing else to see.

"They then detained us for two days. The Port Captain in Barranquilla then requested the presence of the Management Level Officers, all four of them. When they returned, we were given permit to depart the port."

4.4 CREW 004 (Port of Ereğli (Erdemir Port), Türkiye)

"At the Port of Ereglu, a drug enforcement group (Narco Police) boarded our vessel. There were so many police. They read a statement to Capt Bekevac that should they discover anything onboard during search procedures, it will be the responsibility of the captain. Capt. Bekevac was rattled because of what just happened in Columbia. He was candid enough to immediately declare that drugs were indeed found onboard when we were in the Port of Baranquilla. Strangely, our local agent in Turkey was unaware of this. It seemed that our office did not report the incident to the agent."

4.5 CREW 005 (Port of Ereğli (Erdemir Port), Türkiye)

"As per the indictment, the bags were found tied to the stairs, 5 meters from the tank top. Our cargo hold was 20 meters deep, so it means that 15meters deep of coal was already on top of the bags. There was a narcotic-sniffing dog, it wasn't able to detect the drugs. Given the quantity of coal on top of the bag that was tied in the stairs, it means, most probably, that a stevedore from Columbia placed it there because they were also inside the cargo hold during loading operation for trimming."

"The police then confiscated our cellphones and passports and separated the officers who were brought to the conference room. When we were taken down the ship by 0500H, we were told that it was only for interview. We waited until late in the afternoon at the narco police station where we were later issued a Warrant of Arrest for cases they filed stating that we are using drugs and drug trafficking. I refused to sign without the presence of a lawyer. Later in the day, when a lawyer from our P&I Club arrived, he explained that it would be better for us to just sign the warrant. So we did. We were detained; it was October 6."

4.6 CREW 006 (Port of Ereğli (Erdemir Port), Türkiye)

"When the indictment was read to us, I started contemplating where things have gone wrong in Turkey. I recall after the inspection in Port of Ereglu, the authorities designated police guards on the ship. The stevedores, who, maybe, were supposed to receive the contrabands wouldn't be able to offload it because of the presence of the police. Now based on the Declaration of SEC, anything malicious or erroneous that is found in a port by any of the crew must be reported to the foreman or the port manager and if foreman or port personnel found anything malicious, erroneous or danger in the vessel they should report also first to the crew personnel; that day, the stevedores reported straight to the police, this automatically placed the blame on us since the police were already wary of us."

"While in jail, one of the local prisoners told us that if we will be released, we should not return to Turkey ever again. Chances are high that we will be arrested again because we already have a record. Our

chances for re-employment becomes less as we keep on asking our employers not to place us on flights or vessel that have routes that will pass through or land in Turkey. We're uneasy and scared of what might happen again," the crew concluded."

5. Procedural Gaps and Concerns

The disclosed documentation[15] highlights several procedural issues that shaped the handling of the case across Colombian and Turkish jurisdictions. These matters relate to undisclosed vessel inspection records, the condition and availability of digital materials, and the perspectives of the arrested and detained crew.

5.1 Absence of Colombian Inspection Documentation

Colombian authorities conducted an onboard inspection, recorded statements, and authorised the vessel's departure. However, the official inspection documents were not obtained during the proceedings in Türkiye. Their absence meant that events reported to have occurred in Colombia could not be independently verified through formal records, leaving a significant gap in the evidentiary file.

5.2 Release Pattern and Procedural Disparity

Following the arrests in Türkiye, both Captain BEKAVAC and Chief Officer ALBOKHARI were convicted and given 30-year sentences. Captain BEKAVAC was detained for nearly two years before being released, while Chief Officer ALBOKHARI remains imprisoned. This difference in outcomes is notable given the shared circumstances of arrest and the captain's senior position onboard. It represents a clear procedural divergence within the same case and forms part of the broader context in which evidentiary and judicial decisions were made.

5.3 Condition and Recovery of Digital Materials

A USB drive seized during the investigation was reportedly returned to Captain BEKAVAC after his release with its contents absent. BEKAVAC later stated that he recovered deleted files, including materials relating to the Colombian inspection. HRAS has not independently verified when or by whom any files were deleted. If authentic and material, the recovered records raise questions about the handling, preservation and disclosure of digital evidence.

5.4 Requests and Transmission of Evidence

The material reviewed by HRAS indicates that no formal request for the Colombian inspection documents had been made at the relevant stage of the Turkish proceedings. The source, date and scope of that confirmation should be identified because the finding is central to the argument that the evidentiary file was incomplete.

5.5 Chain of Custody Considerations

Differences in procedural standards between Colombia and Türkiye, combined with the deletion and late recovery of digital materials, raise questions about the chain of custody for both physical and digital evidence. The absence of documentation detailing the condition of the USB while held by authorities further complicates the evidentiary timeline.

15 Recognising that evidence and data disclosed to Human Rights at Sea must be assessed as incomplete, at first instance.

Conclusion

These matters indicate potential inconsistencies in investigative standards and procedures across a cross-border maritime investigation. They support the need for common protocols governing record keeping, evidence preservation, decision making, disclosure and timely communication between jurisdictions.

6. Outstanding Matters-in-Issue and Missing Evidence

The following *example* matters-in-issue reflect outstanding and incomplete access to, disclosure, or availability of pertinent evidence which could affect access to justice for those convicted.

6.1 Colombian Inspection Records

6.1.1 What inspection documents were produced in Colombia, and why were they not obtained during the Turkish court proceedings?

6.1.2 Why were no further searches of the vessel undertaken by ARMADA authorities following the initial find in the aft peak tank?

6.2 Digital Evidence Handling

6.2.1 What was the chain of custody for the Captain's USB drive, and at what point were its contents analysed and allegedly deleted / removed?

6.2.2 What data was successfully recovered, and what remains missing and is it material to the defence case for ALBOKHARI?

6.2.3 Is the missing data related to the drugs find and linked to correspondences with the management company?

6.3 Inter Jurisdictional Communication

6.3.1 What formal communication occurred between Colombian and Turkish authorities regarding the initial vessel inspection, findings by ARMADA and subsequent local proceedings for the release of the vessel by the Barranquilla port State authorities?

6.3.2 Were any further requests for evidence delayed, incomplete, or not made to/from Colombian ARMADA, police and port State authorities?

6.4 Consistency of Statements and Records

6.4.1 Have the crew statements taken by ARMADA and port State authorities been disclosed to the defence?

6.4.2 Are the crew statements taken in Colombia consistent with those later recorded in Türkiye, and how were any differences addressed?

7. Review against 'Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes'

Noting that the IMO Guidelines were not in force at the material time but have since been issued to all IMO Member States, including Colombia and Türkiye and comparison review against the Guidelines has been undertaken. This highlights potential failures and as applicable, potential breaches of the Guidelines in the present case.

See Annex A.

8. Legal Processes

Over the past 2 years 10+ months, this case has progressed through the Turkish legal system. Captain Marko BEKAVAC and Ali ALBOKHARI were convicted at trial in September 2024. More than 22 months later, BEKAVAC returned to Croatia through reported diplomatic intervention involving a suggested two-way prisoner swap, although the precise legal basis of his return require confirmation despite open-source speculation.[16] [17] ALBOKHARI remains imprisoned. The report records that both sentences were extended by three years on 21 July 2026 following non-payment of the judicial fines imposed with the convictions; the primary decision confirming the legal basis and present effect of that extension should be cited or appended. The Court of Cassation upheld the conviction by a 3-2 majority, with two dissenting opinions, after the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office had reportedly recommended reversal. ALBOKHARI's legal representatives have since petitioned the Chief Public Prosecutor to exercise the extraordinary objection power under CMK Article 308.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following details have been disclosed to HRAS with permission to review and report from Ali and Elena Albokhari.

8.1 July 2026 Petition of Objection (CMK Article 308)

At the time of writing, Ali ALBOKHARI's legal representatives have submitted a petition asking the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation to exercise the extraordinary objection power under CMK Article 308. The petition challenges the adequacy of the investigation and the completeness of the trial record. It argues that essential documentation was unavailable to the court and that the case was assessed on an incomplete evidentiary foundation. The petition also relies on material reportedly recovered from a USB drive returned to Captain BEKAVAC after his release.

8.2 Outline Details of Petition

The Petition for Objection (CMK Article 308) has been sent to the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation (Yargıtay Cumhuriyet Başsavcılığı) challenging the decision of the Court of Cassation (Yargıtay) 8th Criminal Chamber File No. 2025/XXXX, Decision No. 2026/XXXX (Related File: Sakarya Regional Court of Appeal (Bölge Adliye Mahkemesi) 3rd Criminal Chamber, File No. 2024/XXXX).

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16 https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/je-li-kapetan-bekavac-doista-razmijenjen-za-turskog-biznismena-uhicenog-u-hrvatskoj/2702707.aspx [Translated: "Was Captain Bekavac Really Exchanged for a Turkish Businessman Arrested in Croatia?] The article examines unconfirmed reports that Croatian captain Marko Bekavac's release from a Turkish prison may have been linked to the release of Turkish businessman Mustafa Yiğit Zeren from extradition restrictions in Croatia. Croatian officials have neither confirmed nor denied such an arrangement, instead crediting Bekavac's return to "quiet diplomacy. [Accessed 6 August 2026]

17 https://teleskop.hr/hrvatska/https-teleskop-hr-hrvatska-razmjena-kapetana-bekavca-i-erdoganovog-biznismena-plenkovic-i-milanovic-sute-a-hrvatska-je-ocito-izvukla-deblji-kraj/ [Translated: "The exchange of Captain Bekavac and Erdogan's businessman: Plenković and Milanović are silent, and Croatia has obviously made the short end"] [Accessed 6 August 2026]

ALBOKHARI is the applicant identified in the defence petition requesting that the Chief Public Prosecutor submit an objection under Article 308 of the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code against the judgment of the 8th Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation.

8.3 Grounds of Defence Objection

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following is a precis of the available court documentation disclosed to Human Rights at Sea. It may be subject to amendment and/or update following the issuing of this independent review.

The defence argues that the Court of Cassation's decision is contrary to law and procedure. The petition emphasizes that:

- The decision was rendered by a 3-2 majority.
- The Chief Public Prosecutor's Office had requested reversal (quashing) of the judgment.
- Two members of the Court of Cassation issued dissenting opinions.

The defence relies on the Chief Public Prosecutor's earlier recommendation for reversal and the two dissenting opinions as support for its submission that the judgment is legally flawed. Those materials demonstrate disagreement within the judicial process but do not, by themselves, determine the outcome of any Article 308 request.

The petition highlights that while 20 crew members, including Captain Marko BEKAVAC, passed through the Turkish judicial system and returned home, ALBOKHARI received a 30-year prison sentence despite being in a situation no different from the other crew members.

The petition characterizes this as: "A grave miscarriage of justice."

8.4 Dissenting Opinion of Two Members of the Court of Cassation

While there was a 3-2 majority crucially, the dissenting judges argued that the investigation was incomplete (COMMENT: HRASI would argue 'flawed') because:

8.4.1 The Colombian Investigation Not Examined

The defendants consistently stated that the Colombian police searched the vessel when alongside in Barranquilla:

- Cocaine was discovered in an aft peak tank by Colombian authorities.
- Statements were taken from the captain(s) and engineers by the Colombian authorities.
- Afterwards, the vessel was allowed to depart.

COMMENT: Turkish authorities should have requested full disclosure from Colombian judicial authorities concerning the operation.

8.4.2 Intelligence Not Investigated

The Turkish police report indicated that (narcotics) intelligence had been obtained before the seizure. The dissenting judges argued that authorities should have determined:

- Who supplied the intelligence.
- How it was obtained and chain of custody.
- Against whom it was obtained.

COMMENT: The scope of any investigation should include the extent to which organised crime groups may have engaged with, infiltrated, influenced or corrupted port personnel and associated supply-chain actors.

8.4.3 Witnesses Not Heard

It is suggested that key witnesses were not heard, nor their evidence adduced prior to judgement. This included, but is not limited, to:

- Police officers conducting the search of the vessel, and
- port personnel participating in the search of the vessel.

COMMENT: Turkish police should have been called as witnesses to determine whether the cocaine was openly visible or easily discoverable.

8.4.4 USB Evidence Not Examined

Captain BEKAVAC stated that:

- He had sent emails requesting additional security measures.
- Relevant records were stored on a USB drive.

COMMENT: If material records were stored on the USB drive, investigators should have documented its seizure, preservation, examination and disclosure. The absence of a verified handling record limits HRAS's ability to assess whether relevant digital evidence was available to the court.

8.4.5 First Instance Court's Reasoning

The trial court convicted Captain BEKAVAC and Chief Officer ALBOKHARI because:

1. They were the highest-ranking officers aboard the vessel.
2. They bore responsibility for cargo safety.
3. They were responsible for preventing contraband from being loaded onto the ship.
4. The court found no convincing proof that they had taken adequate preventive measures.

The court further reasoned that:

5. If 300 kg of cocaine had truly been seized in Colombia, official records should have existed.[18]
6. It was implausible that Colombian authorities would allow the ship to depart immediately after such a seizure.

The court concluded that the defendants' statements concerning Colombia were contradictory and not credible.

8.4.6 Sentences Imposed

The trial court imposed 30 years' imprisonment on each defendant and judicial fines amounting to 200,000 TL[19] each.

8.4.7 Defence of Ali Albokhari

Chief Officer ALBOKHARI variously stated that:

18 The defendants stated that cocaine had been seized in Colombia and that official records should therefore have existed. The trial court referred to an alleged quantity of 300 kg when assessing the credibility of that account; HRAS records the Colombian seizure elsewhere in this report as 137 kg. The difference may reflect the court record, a translation issue or inconsistent accounts and requires verification against the original judgment and Colombian records.

19 XE Currency Converter, 200,000 TRY to EUR - Turkish Lira to Euros Exchange Rate, 06 August 2026. https://www.xe.com/en-gb/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=200000&From=TRY&To=EUR 200,000 TL=3640.46 Euro; 200,000 TL= 3,119.96 GBP: 200,000 TL= 4,202.45 USD [Accessed 06/08/2026]

- He served onboard as the Chief Officer.
- His duty primarily involved maintaining the vessel's stability during loading.
- Cargo holds were cleaned by designated crew members.
- Colombian longshoremen conducted loading operations.
- Ship personnel were prohibited from physically handling cargo.
- Any concealment of narcotics among coal cargo could have been carried out by loading workers.

He further stated:

- Only one suspicious package was shown to them in Colombia by Colombian authorities.
- He did not actually see all the narcotics.
- Colombian authorities released them quickly despite allegedly finding drugs with no arrests.
- The release (allowing the vessel to sail) caused surprise among the crew (because of the severity of cocaine being located).

According to ALBOKHARI, the narcotics were likely placed during loading operations without the crew's knowledge.

8.4.8 Main Procedural Objections

8.4.8.1 Conflict of Interest Among Defence Counsel

The petition argues that:

- All ten defendants were represented by lawyers from the same law office.
- Several defendants blamed one another.
- The crew interests conflicted.

Under 1) Attorneyship Law (Avukatlık Kanunu) and 2) the Turkish Bar Association Professional Rules, it is asserted that lawyers may not represent parties whose interests are adverse. The defence argues that this created a serious conflict of interest.

8.4.8.2 Failure to Hear Other Crew Members

The vessel carried 20 crew members. However:

- Only ten were investigated.
- Only ten were arrested.
- The remaining ten were neither treated as suspects nor even interviewed as witnesses.

<u>COMMENT</u>: The defence argues that if 20 people shared the same environment aboard the ship, investigators had no rational basis for selecting only ten as suspects.

8.4.8.3 Failure to Investigate Colombian Proceedings

The petition states that:

- Videos existed showing Colombian police conducting searches aboard the vessel.
- Entries existed in the ship's Visitor Logbook.
- Mobile phones contained recordings of the Colombian search.

Despite this:

- No request was made to Colombia.
- No Colombian files were obtained.
- Port camera footage was not requested.

8.4.8.4 Failure to Investigate True Organizers

The petition repeatedly argues that:

- 137 kg of cocaine represents a million-dollar criminal enterprise.
- It is unrealistic to believe that two merchant mariners earning modest salaries organized such trafficking.
- The defence asserts investigators failed to examine:
  - Ship owners,
  - Shipping companies,
  - Cargo owners,
  - Agents,
  - Colombian connections,
  - Turkish recipients of the narcotics.

8.4.9 Objections on the Merits

The petition argues that there is no direct evidence that links Ali ALBOKHARI to the cocaine found onboard. It argues that there is:

- No fingerprint evidence.
- No communication evidence.
- No witness testimony.
- No surveillance evidence.

The conviction therefore rests solely upon his rank and responsibilities as Chief Officer and the Ships Security Officer (SSO).

8.4.9.1 Misapplication of Criminal Law

The defence argues that the court confused: Commercial Responsibility with Criminal Liability. Under Turkish criminal law: A conviction for narcotics importation requires proof of: *Kast* (Intent) *Kast* meaning: 1) Knowledge of the crime, and 2) a willing participation in it.The petition maintains that even if safety measures were imperfect, negligence alone does not establish intent to import narcotics with reliance on a Court of Cassation Criminal General Assembly Precedent where it cites Court of Cassation Criminal General Assembly 2022/349 E. 2025/19 K – the SHANDONG DE RUI case.

In that case 1) Cocaine was found attached magnetically to a ship, 2) Extensive expert evidence suggested professional divers could have attached it without the crew's knowledge, 3) Fingerprints did not match the crew, 4) Investigations were incomplete. The Criminal General Assembly ultimately ruled: The offence had not been proven and applied: "In dubio pro reo" (Şüpheden sanık yararlanır / Benefit of the doubt to the defendant) thereby ordering: 1) Reversal of convictions, 2) Suspension of execution, 3) Release of defendants.

The petition further requests that the decision of the 8th Criminal Chamber be challenged under CMK Article 308, and the judgment be reversed due to:

1. Incomplete investigation,
2. Insufficient evidence,
3. Violations of the presumption of innocence,
4. Failure to establish intent.

CONCLUSION: With all evidence to be reconsidered, the conviction of Ali ALBOKHARI should be set aside. [The same should apply to Captain BEKAVAC].

9. CMK Article 308 Explained

In Turkish criminal procedure, CMK Article 308 provides a special mechanism allowing the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation to object to a decision of a Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation. It is an extraordinary remedy within the Court of Cassation itself.

9.1 How the process works

1. A Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation issues a decision

For example, the 8th Criminal Chamber: upholds a conviction, reverses a conviction, rejects an appeal, for example. In the current appeal, the 8th Criminal Chamber upheld the conviction of Ali Albokhari.

2. The Chief Public Prosecutor disagrees.

If the Chief Public Prosecutor believes the Chamber's decision:

- misapplied the law,
- ignored evidence,
- contradicted established precedent,
- violated procedural rules,

The Prosecutor may file a CMK 308 Objection. Importantly, this objection is brought by the Chief Public Prosecutor, not directly by the defendant.

3. Defence lawyers submit a request.

A defendant's lawyer may submit a petition asking the Chief Public Prosecutor to exercise Article 308 powers. This is the situation in the present case. It is not itself the CMK 308 objection. It is a petition requesting the Chief Public Prosecutor to file a CMK 308 objection against the 8th Criminal Chamber's decision.

4. The Criminal Chamber reconsiders.

If the Prosecutor files the objection: First, the same Criminal Chamber that issued the decision reviews the objection. The Chamber may:

1. accept the objection and change its own decision; or
2. reject the objection.

5. If rejected: Send to the Criminal General Assembly

If the Chamber rejects the objection, the matter is sent to the: Yargıtay Ceza Genel Kurulu (Court of Cassation Criminal General Assembly). The General Assembly then makes the final determination.

9.2 Why the defence relies on CMK 308

The submitted petition argues that:

1. The original judicial decision was weighted only 3 votes to 2.
2. Two judges wrote dissenting opinions.
3. The Prosecutor's office had already recommended reversal of the finding in favour of ALBOKHARI.
4. Important investigative steps were omitted. These included, but are not limited to: Colombian investigation documents / data was never obtained,
5. Turkish evidence investigation documents / data was never obtained,
6. Crew members were not fully examined with detailed testimony taken and any matters duly investigated to confirm or exclude pertinent evidence in either instance,
7. An intelligence source was not investigated, and
8. security records and USB evidence was not analysed.

The defence is essentially saying: "The Chief Public Prosecutor already agreed the conviction was legally unsound. Therefore, the Prosecutor should now use Article 308 to challenge the Chamber's decision."

9.3 Possible outcomes

If a CMK 308 objection is accepted:

- The conviction may be overturned.
- The case may be sent back for retrial.
- A new evidentiary investigation may be ordered.
- In rare cases, the defendant may ultimately be acquitted.

If the objection is rejected: The Chamber's decision remains final.

9.4 Analysis: Strength of the Article 308 application

From a Turkish procedural perspective, the strongest points in the petition are:

- Reliance on the Prosecutor's earlier recommendation for reversal,
- Reliance on the reasoning of two dissenting judges,
- Citation of a Criminal General Assembly precedent involving a similar maritime cocaine-smuggling case,
- Arguments concerning incomplete investigation and insufficient proof of intent.

In short, the defence is asking the Chief Public Prosecutor to invoke the Court of Cassation's own internal correction mechanism under CMK Article 308, arguing that the 8th Criminal Chamber reached the wrong legal conclusion despite substantial contrary views within the Turkish judicial system itself.

10. Human Rights & Humanitarian Assessment

This section assesses the reported fair-trial, due-process, detention, health and family-impact concerns arising from the case. The assessment is based on the materials available to HRAS and should not be read as a final determination of any alleged breach.

Ali ALBOKHARI has spent an extended period in detention. Following his and BEKAVACs unsuccessful appeal against conviction, he was moved to the long-term prisoner wing of the prison. Family accounts to Human Rights at Sea describe a clear decline in his health and wellbeing, including sustained stress, fatigue, and limited access to outdoor activity, timely medical treatment and family contact. These holding conditions raise questions about compliance with recognised standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Ali ALBOKHARI is the only member of the PHOENICIAN M crew still imprisoned. Captain Marko BEKAVAC returned to Croatia after reported diplomatic intervention, but the precise legal and diplomatic basis of that return has not been publicly confirmed. The differing outcomes have added to the mental pressure placed on ALBOKHARI during long-term custody.

The impact of ALBOKHARI's detention extends beyond the prison environment. His family has carried the burden of prolonged uncertainty, limited communication, and the practical and emotional strain of supporting a relative held abroad. They report difficulty maintaining regular in-person contact, challenges in navigating complex legal processes, and managing the effects of Ali's deteriorating wellbeing from a distance. These pressures have created a sustained hardship for those closest to him.

Prolonged separation from family, restricted visitation, and continuing uncertainty about the progress of his case have affected his ability to cope with incarceration. Regular medical oversight, access to appropriate support services, and consideration of humanitarian measures within the Turkish system are critical to ensure that his rights and welfare are properly safeguarded.

Cases involving seafarers detained abroad often involve lengthy proceedings and challenges in securing timely review. Ali ALBOKHARI's situation reflects these wider issues and shows how extended detention in a foreign jurisdiction can affect both the individual and their family, particularly when legal outcomes remain unresolved.

Although no longer imprisoned, Captain Marko BEKAVAC reports that his continuing Turkish conviction restricts his freedom to travel and his employment prospects and causes concern about possible return to Türkiye through international legal processes. HRAS has not independently confirmed the precise legal restrictions applicable in Croatia or any active request for his surrender.

ANNEX A:
Example areas of IMO Guidelines on Fair treatment of seafarers Detained in Connection with Alleged Crimes (Adopted 3 December 2024).[20]

NB: Annex A identifies areas in which the 2024 Guidelines may provide a useful benchmark for assessing the continuing treatment of ALBOKHARI and BEKAVAC. Because the Guidelines were adopted after the arrests and are advisory, the entries below distinguish the wording of the Guidelines from the report's observations and do not purport to make binding findings of breach, rather they are illustrative.

A). General Principles Considered

1.1 Presumption of Innocence

Guideline: Introduction Para 4
Excerpt: "no seafarer is subject to arbitrary detention... no seafarer is deprived of their liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as established by law."
Potential Breach: Detention and conviction occurred despite incomplete, undisclosed, and contradictory evidence.

1.2 Detention No Longer Than Necessary

Guideline: Introduction Para 5
Excerpt: "detention is for no longer than necessary."
Potential Breach: ALBOKHARI has been detained for over 2 years and 10 months, with sentencing extended to 33 years.

1.3 Avoid Criminalisation Without Evidence

Guideline: Introduction Para9
Excerpt: "States should exercise due caution to avoid criminalization of seafarers, unless evidence to the contrary exists."
Potential Breach: Evidence was incomplete, missing, and not disclosed across jurisdictions.

B). Port and Coastal State Considerations: Türkiye

2.1 Failure to Ensure Consular Notification and Access

Guideline: Para 13(a)
Excerpt: "ensure that the State(s) of the nationality of all seafarers concerned are notified, without delay... and allow access to the seafarers by consular officers."
Potential Breach: Finnish consular access has reportedly been limited

2.2 Arbitrary Detention

Guideline: Para 4(a)
Excerpt: "ensure that no seafarer is subject to arbitrary detention."
Potential Breach: Detention occurred despite a broken chain of evidence and missing Colombian intelligence.

20 https://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/pages/whatsnew-2192.aspx [Accessed 06/08/2026]

2.3 Failure to Conduct a Fair and Expeditious Investigation

Guideline: Para 4(b)
Excerpt: "conduct any investigation… in a fair manner… and without coercion, intimidation or other forms of abuse."
Potential Breach: Investigation relied on undisclosed evidence; Colombian findings were not shared.

2.4 Failure to Assess Evidence Sufficiency Before Charging

Guideline: Para 4(c)
Excerpt: "due consideration is given to the sufficiency of all evidence… and whether there are reasonable and objective grounds to suspect that the seafarer has committed a crime."
Potential Breach: Charges proceeded despite contradictory evidence and missing Colombian records.

2.5 Failure to Provide Adequate Legal Assistance

Guideline: Para 4(e)(iii)–(iv)
Excerpt: "advised of their right to adequate and competent legal assistance… granted access to adequate and competent legal assistance."
Potential Breach: Defence lacked access to Colombian intelligence and full evidentiary disclosure.

2.6 Failure to Ensure Seafarers Understand Reasons for Detention

Guideline: Para 4(f)
Excerpt: "in a language that they understand."
Potential Breach: No evidence Albokhari received full disclosure in a language he understood.

2.7 Failure to Ensure Communication with Family and Welfare Organisations

Guideline: Para 4(h)
Excerpt: "provided with opportunities to communicate… with the seafarer's partner, next of kin… welfare organizations."
Potential Breach: Welfare support was limited; communication inconsistent.

2.8 Failure to Preserve Evidence

Guideline: Para 4(i)
Excerpt: "use all available means to preserve evidence."
Potential Breach: Colombian evidence was not preserved or disclosed; chain of custody broken.

2.9 Failure to Conduct Prompt Witness Interviews

Guideline: Para 4(j)
Excerpt: "promptly conduct witness interviews… in the presence of legal assistance."
Potential Breach: Interviews occurred without full disclosure of Colombian findings.

2.10 Failure to Permit Re-embarkation or Repatriation When Not Required

Guideline: Para 4(k)
Excerpt: "permitted, without undue delay, to be re-embarked or repatriated."

Potential Breach: ALBOKHARI remained detained despite unresolved evidence gaps.

2.11 Failure to Consider Non-Custodial Alternatives

Guideline: Para 4(l)
Excerpt: "consider non-custodial alternatives to pretrial detention."
Potential Breach: No alternatives considered despite weak evidence.

2.12 Failure to Conclude Investigation Without Undue Delay

Guideline: Para 4(m)
Excerpt: "conclude its investigation... without undue delay."
Potential Breach: Case extended across years with incomplete evidence.

2.13 Failure to Ensure a Fair and Prompt Trial

Guideline: Para 4(p)
Excerpt: "trial... is conducted fairly... and takes place promptly."
Potential Breach: Trial relied on missing evidence; prosecutor considered evidence incomplete, and convictions deemed unsafe even by prosecutors through CMK Art 308 petition.

2.14 Failure to Segregate Detained Seafarers from Convicted Persons

Guideline: Para 4(s)
Excerpt: "detained seafarers are segregated from convicted persons."
Potential Breach: ALBOKHARI was held as a convicted person before appeal and before evidence disclosure.

2.15 Failure to Ensure Physical and Mental Well-Being

Guideline: Para 4(u)
Excerpt: "access to services to ensure the physical and mental well-being."
Potential Breach: Concerns raised about ALBOKHARI's health; humanitarian measures required.

C). National-State considerations: Finland and Croatia

3.1 Failure to Provide Consular Access and Monitoring

Guideline: Para 16(a), Para 16(c)
Excerpts: "provide... access to seafarers... including consular officer access."
"monitor the physical and mental well-being and treatment of national seafarers."
Potential Breach: Finnish access reported as being limited.

ENDS.


Image Credit: Furknsaglam / Pexels

WHO WE ARE

Background

Human Rights at Sea was founded in 2013 and established in April 2014. It started as an initiative to explore issues of maritime human rights development, review and develop related policies and legislation, and undertake independent investigations of abuses at sea. It rapidly grew and for reasons of governance it became a registered charity under the UK Charity Commission in 2015. It achieved ECOSOC special consultative status in 2022 and evolved. In June 2025 to become a non-profit social enterprise Community Interest Company to assure long-term sustainability.

Today, Human Rights at Sea is an established and independent UK registered non-profit organisation based in the United Kingdom. It undertakes research and advocacy specifically for human rights issues in the maritime environment, including contributing to support for the human element that underpins the global maritime and fishing industries. We work internationally with all individuals, commercial and maritime community organisations that have similar missions and objectives as ourselves.

UN ECOSOC. We are an organisation in special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council 2022.

OUR MISSION & WHAT WE DO

We aim to detect and remedy human rights abuses at sea. We raise public awareness of abuses at sea through reliable, trusted and factual reporting. We support people working at sea to understand their rights. We address core issues around Human Security, Human Sustainability and human rights protections at sea.

Stay in Contact

We welcome any reasonable and pertinent questions, comments or suggestions.
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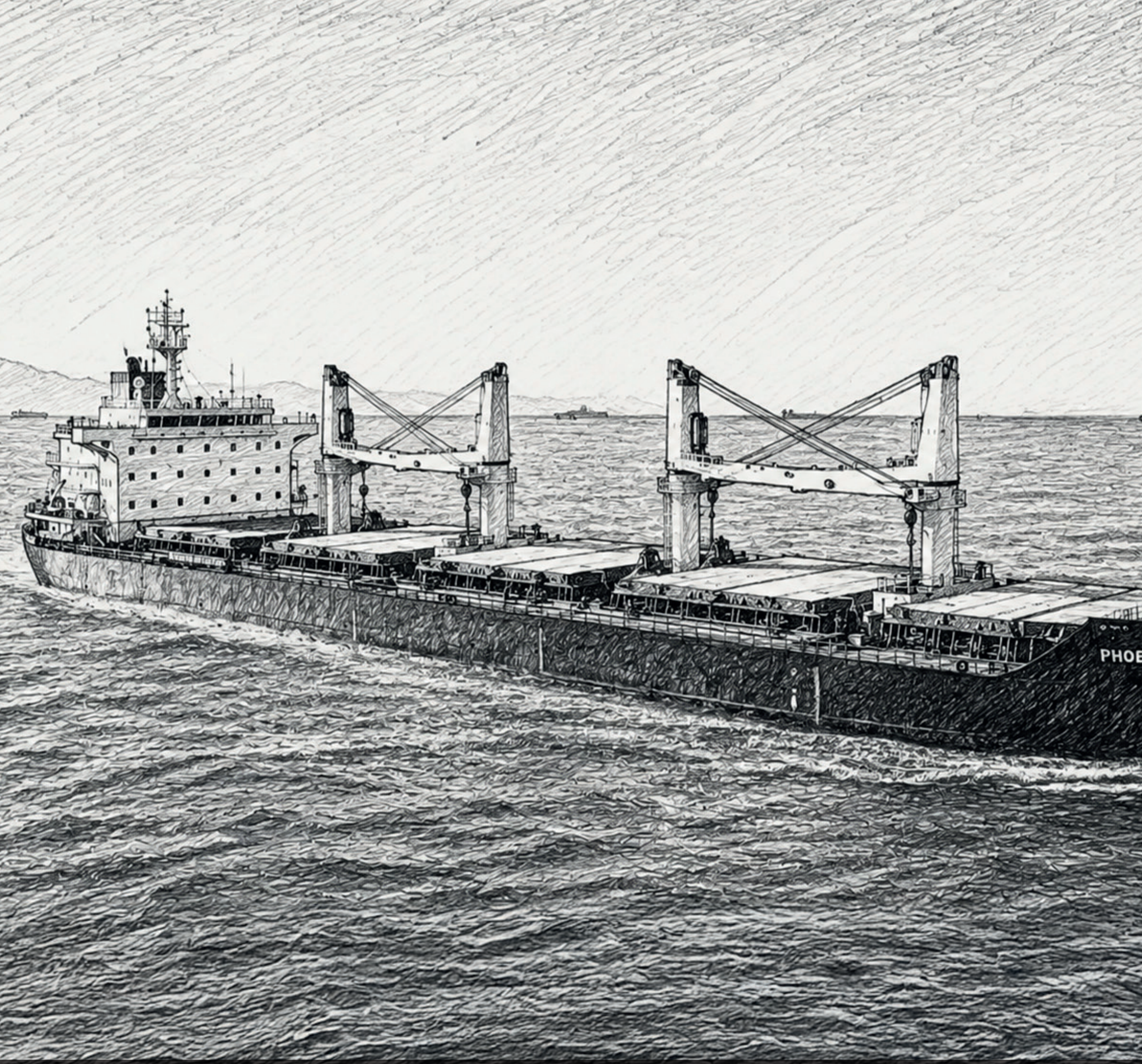

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