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**BRAZIL P&I**  
BY THE INDUSTRY FOR THE INDUSTRY

# circular



**DRUG SMUGGLING IN THE BRAZILIAN PORTS 2025**



CIRCULAR 009/26

## **SANTOS AND PARANAGUÁ AT THE EPICENTER OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING**

SEIZURES AT THE TWO PORTS TOTAL MORE THAN 9 TONS OF COCAINE IN 2025, EXPOSING NARCOTRAFFICKING ROUTES TO OVERSEAS MARKETS AND CHALLENGING AUTHORITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME

The ports of Santos, in São Paulo, and Paranaguá, in Paraná, have emerged as the main routes for exporting drugs abroad. In 2025, more than 7 tons of cocaine were seized at the Port of Santos complex, while at the Paranaguá port the volume intercepted by authorities exceeded 2 tons. The data are part of surveys by the Federal Revenue Service and the Federal Police, which are responsible for intelligence actions aimed at preventing international drug trafficking from Brazilian ports.

Brazil has been consolidating its position as an important route for international drug trafficking, especially for drugs produced in Latin American countries, such as cocaine originating from the Andean region. Taking advantage of the extensive coastline and the high volume of cargo movement, criminal organizations use Brazilian ports as strategic points to conceal drugs in containers, often without the knowledge of exporters.

## MAIN DEPARTURE OR TRANSIT COUNTRIES OF COCAINE SHIPMENTS AS DESCRIBED IN REPORTED SEIZURES, 2020-2023 FROM UNODC REPORT



The source of shipments does not necessarily mean the cocaine was produced there, only that the shipment departed from that country.

The Data shown is based on the Member State reporting, individual seizure records and other official documents.



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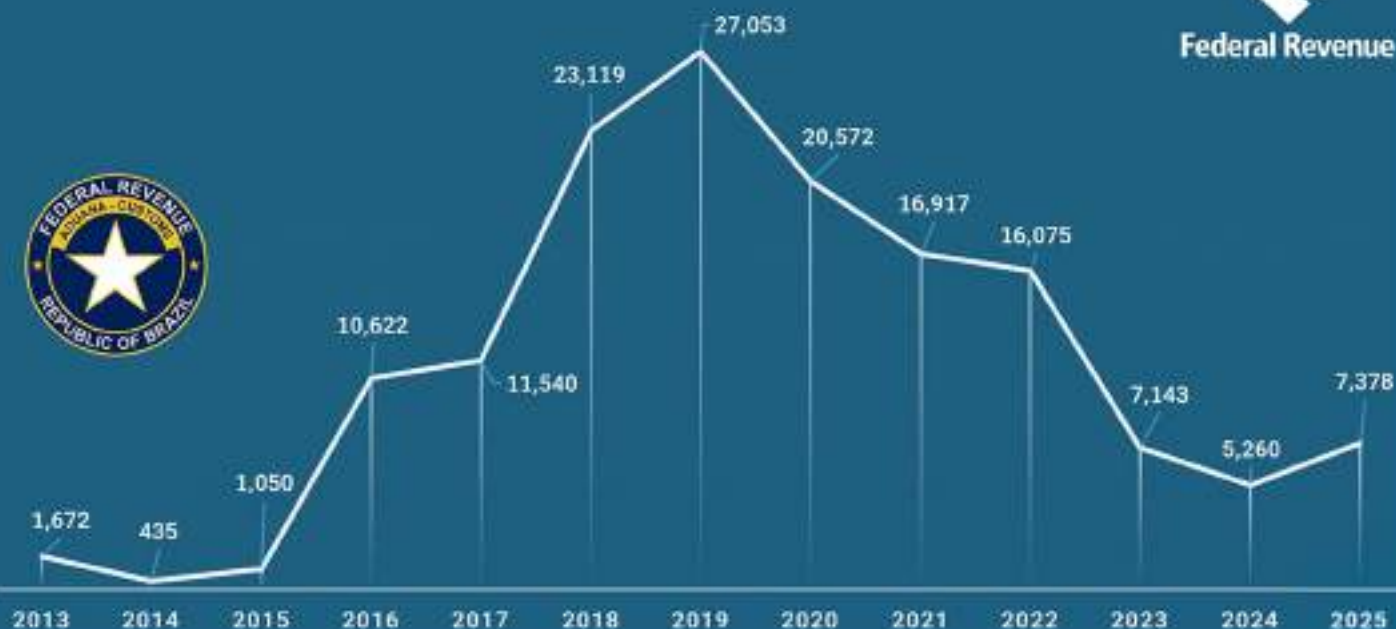
The drugs are mainly shipped on commercial vessels bound for European countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal, where there is high demand and significant profits in the illegal market. This scenario represents an ongoing challenge for Brazilian port authorities and security forces, which are seeking to improve inspection and control mechanisms.

*"Currently, the Port of Santos is considered the largest in Latin America, handling nearly 30% of the country's maritime trade. The large volume of cargo handled daily; regular routes to Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania; and the scale of the port complex are factors that attract international drug traffickers. Therefore, despite a certain stability in incidents within the Port of Santos, it continues to be the main Brazilian port used for international drug trafficking, which highlights the importance of maintaining the work processes developed in recent years,"* said Richard Neubarth, Federal Revenue delegate in Santos.

## FEDERAL REVENUE COCAINE SEIZURES PERFORMED BY THE CUSTOMS OF SANTOS (KG)



Federal Revenue



The port of Santos embraces 16 kilometers of channels that dissect a region of São Paulo known as Baixada Santista. Authorities teamed up and cracked down, joining forces to increase surveillance and ramp up the scanning of containers. They also started to analyze new intelligence and data to figure out how traffickers were sliding by undetected and to catch them in the act.

The complexity of the interweaving channels and docks at Santos means that coordination between different security branches is essential to making law enforcement there effective. While the Federal Police is in charge of arrests and seizures, the Federal Revenue Service deals with intelligence and prevention, and the Port Authority focuses on monitoring, according to InSight Crime.

*"Traffickers started using Africa, the neighboring continent (to Europe), because there was an open window there, wide open. So they used Africa as a destination, but the drugs, at least the vast majority of them, did not remain in Africa.*

*They were put back into containers, ships, etc. And they went on to Europe,"* said Edson Patricio, the Federal Police's head of security in Santos, during a visit to the port by InSight Crime.

The latest data from the Federal Revenue Service indicate fluctuations in the volume of cocaine seized over recent years at the Port of Santos. In 2023, 7,142.75 kg of the drug were intercepted, a figure that declined in 2024 to 5,259.70 kg. In 2025, however, there was a new increase, totaling 7,378.03 kg, reinforcing the persistence and dynamic nature of drug trafficking in the country.

All of this cocaine was seized during cargo control, surveillance, and enforcement activities, across a total of 18 operations. According to the Federal Revenue Service, these figures include drugs intercepted by the Santos Customs Office as well as those seized by other public security agencies, such as the Federal Police, Brazilian Navy, Port Authority Police, Special Operations Center, and the 5th Shock Battalion of the Military Police, among others.



## CONCEALMENT

Most of the drugs, totaling 7,019 kg, were hidden within legitimate cargo, with notable cases involving shipments of coffee (2,858 kg), paper (1,505 kg), resin (664 kg), peanuts (598 kg), polypropylene (482 kg), collagen (405 kg), auto parts (289 kg), and bovine leather (218 kg). Additionally, 328.69 kg were seized hidden within container structures, and another 30.34 kg were concealed in an import shipment, specifically inside an antique vehicle.

*"The figures show a stability in the interception of drug shipments carried out by the Federal Revenue Service at the Port of Santos. The same pattern is observed in the participation of the customs unit in the Santos port complex in seizures carried out nationwide,"* the Federal Revenue delegate in Santos stated.

The official also highlighted the computerized systems implemented to combat drug trafficking, which allow the monitoring of more than 12,000 containers handled daily, including import, export, and transshipment operations.

These include risk management procedures; access control and camera monitoring; container scanning; the use of sniffer dogs; patrol boats to monitor the port channel; and integration with terminals and other institutions operating at the Port of Santos.

*"This forces traffickers to conceal drugs more carefully within cargo to hinder inspection efforts, as well as to use new routes and new methods for shipping cocaine. Examples include the use of ports in other Brazilian states, ports in other South American countries, semi-submersible vessels or 'narco-subs,' sailboats, fishing vessels, and concealment in sea chests of ships operating on targeted routes, among others,"* Neubarth added.

To address this, the Federal Revenue delegate recommends the adoption of procedures and the hiring of stakeholders across the entire logistics chain aimed at enhancing the security of international cargo transport. He also cites internationally recognized supply chain security programs, such as the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program of the Federal Revenue Service, which certifies companies that meet strict security and customs compliance standards.



## NOTABLE CASES

The largest seizure recorded in 2025 occurred in June and was the biggest in the past four years. On that occasion, the Federal Revenue Service thwarted an attempt to ship 1,505 kg of cocaine abroad through the Port of Santos. The drugs, hidden in a shipment of 184 tons of paper, were intercepted during routine customs surveillance and enforcement operations carried out by Santos Customs teams.

The cargo was stored in nine containers, totaling 394 wooden pallets. Contamination occurred in one of the containers, where A4 paper packages were replaced with cocaine bricks. According to export documents, the containers were scheduled for transshipment at the port of Bremerhaven, Germany, but the final destination of the cargo was the United Kingdom.

In May, the Federal Revenue Service thwarted another attempt to export 832 kg of cocaine through the Port of Santos. The drugs, hidden in a shipment of 19 tons of coffee, were intercepted among the sacks, which were destined for the port of Antwerp, Belgium.

Earlier, in February, authorities seized 815 kg of cocaine at the Port of Santos. In this case, the drugs were hidden in a shipment of 100 tons of coffee. The cargo was stored in five containers and was bound for the port of Antwerp, Belgium. During physical inspection, three big bags were found in which part of the coffee beans had been replaced with cocaine bricks.



## TECHNOLOGY AND CARGO SELECTION

Inspection at the Port of Santos represents a significant challenge for authorities, both due to its vast size, over 13 kilometers of quay, and the intense daily cargo movement. This scenario is further complicated by the presence of organized criminal groups operating in the Baixada Santista region, particularly in areas close to the port and with access to the sea, facilitating trafficking logistics.

Moreover, these organizations maintain branches throughout the state of São Paulo, increasing their capacity for coordination and infiltration into logistics chains. Given this complexity, control agencies face the constant need to enhance intelligence strategies, integration among security forces, and the use of technology to monitor and curb illicit activities.

The Port of Santos currently has 17 scanners used for containers, which are undergoing replacement with more modern equipment featuring artificial intelligence software. *"Scanning alone does not explain the results achieved by the Federal Revenue Service at the Port of Santos in recent years, but rather the entire effort based on the implementation of systems and risk management tools, which ensures greater transparency, less interference in cargo flow, and greater agility and security in cargo handling within the port complex,"* Neubarth emphasized.

There is also camera monitoring, access control, partnerships with terminals, and integration with other agencies. For cargo selection and blocking, Santos Customs uses a strategic risk management and analysis tool.

According to the Federal Revenue Service, objective decision-making criteria, cross-referencing data entered into systems under its control, and the analysis of scanner images generated during container screening ensure greater transparency and efficiency in selecting cargo units for inspection. Another important tool is the use of sniffer dogs.

These techniques aim to ensure the efficiency of foreign trade operations while curbing customs-related crimes within the Port of Santos complex. They are applied to both export cargo (main illicit activity: drug trafficking) and import cargo (main illicit activity: counterfeit goods).

*"In 2026, our focus is on continuing the work developed, studying cases of drug seizures carried out during inspections or in other countries to identify possible weaknesses in the logistics chain, adopting new strategies to mitigate the risks of cargo contamination, and strengthening integration with other agencies so that the Port of Santos continues to be internationally recognized for its efforts in combating international drug trafficking,"* Neubarth stated.



## PORT OF SANTOS STATE OF SÃO PAULO

The total amount of seized figures may differ from the reported numbers because not all operations conducted by the various authorities, such as the Federal Police, Federal Revenue Service, Navy, and others, are publicly disclosed.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediare Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
04/02/25	Container on the pier	Not Available	Not Available	China	24
11/02/25	Containers (05) on the pier	Coffee Beans in Bags	Not Available	Antwerp	815
24/02/25	Container on the pier	Instant coffee	Not Available	Antwerp	554
08/05/25	Container on the pier	Coffee Beans in Bags	Not Available	Antwerp	832
22/05/25	Container on the pier	polyethylene	Not Available	Antwerp	664
10/06/25	Containers on the pier	Paper	Germany	United Kingdom	1505
16/06/25	Containers (02) on the pier	Coffee Beans in Bags	Hamburg	Poland	657
18/06/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	dewormer	Not Available	Sidney	43,69
14/07/25	Ceiling of a Ship's bathroom	Not Available	Not Available	Asia	4,7
28/07/25	Container on the pier	facial gel	Singapore	Sidney	140
19/08/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Empty (coming from Barcelona)	Not Available	Not Available	62
13/10/25	Container on the pier	Leather	Not Available	Hamburg	218
29/10/25	Containers (15) on the pier	polypropylene	Not Available	Antwerp	270
17/11/25	Container on the pier	hydrolyzed collagen of bovine origin.	Not Available	Hamburg	405
16/12/25	Container on the pier	Bananas	Not Available	United Kingdom	17
17/12/25	Container on the pier	Peanuts	Antwerp	Lithuania	598
26/12/25	Vessel-Seachest	Not Available	Not Available	Port Elizabeth	100,4
29/12/25	Container on the pier	Engine parts	Not Available	Hamburg	289

**Total: 7.199**



## PORT OF PARANAGUÁ STATE OF PARANÁ

In addition to the Port of Santos, the Port of Paranaguá, in the state of Paraná, has also been a frequent target of organizations linked to drug trafficking. Located in southern Brazil, in a strategic position close to major production areas and with easy access to countries

in the Southern Cone, Paranaguá stands out as an important logistics corridor for exports. Its infrastructure and intense cargo movement make it attractive for criminal activity, which takes advantage of the large flow of containers to attempt to insert drugs into shipments bound for overseas markets, especially Europe.

The Port of Paranaguá recorded a significant volume of seizures throughout 2025, totaling 2,025 kg of materials intercepted in various operations. The enforcement activity report reveals constant monitoring of cargo moving through the complex, with emphasis on large volumes hidden in export goods and sophisticated concealment methods in containers.

The most significant event of the year occurred on October 9, when authorities carried out the largest single seizure of the period: 1,094.50 kg. The cargo was strategically hidden in a shipment of "Woden" plywood inside a container positioned on the quay and had as its final destination the city of Barcelona, Spain. This amount alone accounts for more than 50% of the total weight seized during the year.

In addition to the record October operation, other large-scale interceptions marked the enforcement calendar. In May, 156.5 kg were seized hidden in sawn timber destined for Adelaide, Australia. Months earlier, in March, an inspection of paper rolls bound for Saudi Arabia resulted in the discovery of 146.5 kg of illicit material. At the end of the year, on December 18, authorities found 104 kg hidden in bags of beans that were to be shipped to Lisbon, Portugal.

The operations report points to a clear logistical pattern: while larger shipments are invariably found in containers located on the quay, smaller-scale seizures typically involve concealment within the structure of refrigerated containers. In these cases, the volumes intercepted generally range between 13 kg and 71 kg and are often associated with shipments of frozen chicken meat or even empty containers originating from the United States. The routes for these smaller volumes are diverse, including destinations such as Antwerp, Durban, Morocco, and the United Kingdom.

The Southern Port of Paranaguá recorded multiple cases of cocaine shipments bound for Europe between 2019 and 2025. In 2025, authorities registered 17 drug-seizure incidents, compared with 21 cases in 2023 and 20 cases in 2024. The total volume intercepted in 2025 reached 2,025 tons of cocaine, slightly above the 1,81 tons seized in 2023, though below the 2,301 tons recorded in 2024.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
29/01/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Empty(coming from United States)	Not Available	Not Available	38
14/02/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Frozen Chicken Meat	Not Available	Antwerp	45
20/02/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Empty(coming from United States)	Not Available	Not Available	71,5
14/03/25	Container on the pier	Paper Coils	Spain	Saudi Arabia	146,5
02/04/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Not Available	Not Available	Antwerp	18,5
05/05/25	Container on the pier	sawn wood	Not Available	Adelaide	156,5
17/06/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container) coming from Belgium	Frozen Chicken Meat	Not Available	Durban	13,5
25/06/25	Container on the pier	Not Available	Not Available	South Africa	70
18/07/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Not Available	Spain	United Arab Emirates	50
19/08/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Frozen Chicken Meat	Not Available	Morocos	48,5
28/08/25	Container on the pier	Dellulose	Not Available	Durban	49,5
29/09/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Frozen Chicken Meat	Rotterdam	United kingdom	38,5
09/10/25	Container on the pier	Woden plywood	Not Available	Barcelona	1.094,50
09/11/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Not Available	Not Available	Netherlands	22
20/11/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	frozen protein	Not Available	Durban	23
22/11/25	Refrigerated Containers(Hull Structure of Container)	Not Available	Not Available	Europe	37,84
18/12/25	Container on the pier	Beans(bags)	Not Available	Lisbon	104

**Total: 2.025**

Other locations that recorded significant enforcement activity against international trafficking included the region of Tabatinga, in Amazonas, with 381.6 kg, and the port of Florianópolis, in Santa Catarina, with 277.2 kg intercepted in September. These figures, provided by the Federal Police's General Coordination for Drug and Criminal Organization Enforcement, reinforce the strategic concentration of security efforts at the country's main logistics terminals.

## CHALLENGE

Enhancing security through the adoption of new technologies and continuous surveillance represents a significant step in combating drug trafficking. However, this strengthened security framework requires a careful balance. While increased inspections and stricter controls are essential, they may also slow down port operations, creating challenges for logistics and trade. The Port of Singapore stands out as a strong example of how advanced technology can coexist with high operational performance, demonstrating that efficiency and security are not mutually exclusive.



## OTHER BRAZILIAN PORTS

### PORT OF RIO GRANDE STATE OF RIO GRANDE DO SUL

There are no records of drug seizures in 2024 or 2025.



## PORTS OF ITAJAÍ, NAVEGANTES, ITAPOÁ AND IMBITUBA STATE OF SANTA CATARINA

The main ports in the State of Santa Catarina, southern Brazil, include the Itajaí-Navegantes Port Complex, the Port of Itapoá, and the Port of Imbituba. Within the Southern region, in addition to Paranaguá, the port complex of Itapoá/Joinville recorded seizures totaling 558 kg of cocaine in 2025. The Port of Itajaí registered 81.8 kg, while the Port of Imbituba reported 277.2 kg.

### PORT OF ITAPOÁ

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediare Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
26/02/25	False bottom of container	Orange	Not Available	Portugal	480
10/07/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Empty (coming from United States)	Not Available	Not available	17
13/08/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Empty (coming from Morocco)	Not Available	Not available	61

In 2025, the Port of Itapoá recorded three drug seizure cases involving containers, totaling 558 kg of cocaine. By comparison, two cases were recorded in 2023 (0.098 tons) and three cases in 2024 (1.656 tons).

**Total: 558**

### PORT COMPLEX OF ITAJAÍ AND NAVEGANTES

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediare Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
22/10/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Frozen Meat	Not Available	Las Palmas	28.8
28/11/25	Container on the pier	Cocaine Diluted in Soft Drink Bottles (300 soft-drinks bottles)	Not Available	Slovenia	NA
12/12/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Empty	Not Available	Luanda	53

In 2025, the Itajaí-Navegantes Port Complex recorded three drug seizure cases totaling 81.8 kg of cocaine. An additional case involved cocaine diluted in soft drink bottles, for which the quantity was not determined. In comparison, four cases were recorded in 2023 (1.56 tons), while one case was reported in 2024 (0.438 tons).

**Total: 81,80**

### PORT OF IMBITUBA

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediare Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
31/08/25	Vessel-Sea chest	Not Available	Not Available	Portugal	277.20

The Port of Imbituba recorded one drug seizure case in 2025, consistent with previous years. The drugs were concealed in the vessel's sea chest, totaling 0.277 tons. In comparison, seizures reached 0.300 tons in 2023 and 0.124 tons in 2024.

**Total: 277,20**





## PORT OF RIO DE JANEIRO STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO

According to data from the Federal Police, which compile information on seizures carried out through November, the Port of Rio de Janeiro also recorded significant figures, totaling 1,577.8 kg of cocaine seized by the Regional Superintendence. The highlight in Rio de Janeiro was the month of June, which alone accounted for a seizure of 1,126.5 kg, demonstrating continuous vigilance in the Southeast region.

The two cases recorded in 2025 amounted to 1,626.50 tons. When compared with previous years (1,747 tons in 2023 and 2,669 tons in 2024) both the number of events and the total quantity seized show a clear reduction.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
13/06/25	Container on the pier	Coffee in Bags	Not Available	Germany	1,126,50
25/09/25	Container on the pier	Coffee in Bags	Not Available	Europe	500,00

**Total: 1,626,50**



## PORT OF VITÓRIA STATE OF ESPÍRITO SANTO

The Port of Vitória recorded one drug seizure case in 2025, involving concealment in the vessel's sea chest.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
31/08/25	Vessel-Sea chest	Not Available	Not Available	Portugal	277,20

**Total: 277,20**

## NORTHEAST REGION

The main highlights in the Northeast were the Port of Salvador, in Bahia, with 613.7 kg seized, and the Port of Fortaleza, in Ceará, which recorded a single major seizure of 560.4 kg in February.





## PORT OF SALVADOR STATE OF BAHIA

In 2025, the Port of Salvador recorded two drug seizure cases totaling 624 kg of cocaine. In comparison, three cases were reported in 2024, involving seizures on a vessel, in a container, and in a truck, totaling 3.469 tons. This represents a significant reduction in volume.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
20/05/25	Refrigerated Containers (Full Structure of Container)	Sicilian lemons	Not Available	United Kingdom	63,5
10/06/25	Container	Gre	Antwerp	Sweden	560,5

**Total: 624**



## PORT OF FORTALEZA STATE OF CEARÁ

In 2025, two drug seizure cases were recorded in containers, totaling 549.5 kg, with destinations including Japan and Portugal. In 2024, one case was recorded. In 2023, three cases were identified (0.339 tons), including cocaine concealed in a vessel's sea chest bound for Barcelona (0.029 tons).

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
06/02/25	Container on the pier	carnauba wax	Le Havre	Japan	416
11/02/25	Container on the pier	frozen mango pulp	Not Available	Portugal	133,50

**Total: 549,50**



## PORT OF SÃO LUIS STATE OF MARANHÃO

No drug seizures were recorded within port facilities in 2025. However, on 12 March 2025, the Federal Police seized one ton of cocaine in Greater São Luís. The shipment was intended for export via the Port of Itaqui and was discovered during the execution of a search warrant. In 2024, the Port of São Luís recorded one drug seizure case. Cocaine was found in the vessel's boatswain's store, destined for Cartagena (Spain), totaling 0.5 tons.





## PORT OF BELÉM AND BARCARENA STATE OF PARÁ

In 2025, three drug seizure cases were recorded, totaling 1,454 tons. These included one case in a container structure, one vessel intercepted near Barcarena, and one case involving concealment in a vessel's sea chest. In 2024, three cases were also recorded. One involved a vessel's sea chest, while the others occurred on a fishing vessel and an oil barge, totaling 3,778 tons.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
31/08/25	Refrigerated Containers (Hull Structure of Container)	Açaí	Not Available	Australia	30,00
04/04/25	Barge (Hull Structure) coming from Amazon State	Not available	Not Available	Belém	1,332,00
12/08/25	Vessel's sea chest (livestock carrier)	Livestock	Not Available	Middle East	82,00

**Total: 1,454**



## PORT OF MANAUS STATE OF AMAZONAS

In 2025, authorities recorded five drug seizure cases, including a major operation on 1 June 2025, during which 6.5 tons of cocaine and skunk were intercepted. However, the exact breakdown by substance was not disclosed in initial reports. In 2024, seven cases were recorded, totaling nearly 5 tons.

Date of seizure	Place	Cargo	Intermediate Destination	Final Destination	Weight (Kg)
22/01/25	Boat	Not Available	Not Available	Manaus	75
14/05/25	Boat	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	44
27/05/25	Boat (Brazilian Navy Operation Agata Amazon 2025)	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	117
01/06/25	Armored vessel	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	NA
12/08/25	Truck at Ceasa Port	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	700

**Total: 936**





Source: CDESC report 2024.



## COMMON STRATEGIES USED BY CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Drugs are often concealed in hidden compartments within containers or the vessel itself. These compartments may be located in the hull, rudders, anchors, propellers, and ventilation ducts. Divers may attach bags of drugs to sea chests or other submerged parts of the vessel while it is docked or anchored.

Drugs are also hidden inside sealed containers prior to loading. In some cases, traffickers break container seals, conceal the drugs inside, and then replace the seals ("rip-on/rip-off" method). Packages of drugs may be buried within bulk cargo, allowing large quantities of illicit substances to be transported discreetly.

Smaller vessels, such as fishing boats and private yachts, are used to blend in with regular maritime traffic and to operate in areas subject to less scrutiny by authorities, such as Brazil's northern region. Semi-submersible or fully submersible vessels are specifically built for drug trafficking. They are designed to evade radar and sonar detection and can carry several tons of narcotics.

Traffickers frequently adapt and test new methods for transporting drugs. For example, a shipment seized last year involved drugs concealed in soft drink bottles.

# HIDE AND SEEK: DRUG TRAFFICKERS GET CREATIVE AT SEA

## 1. Anchor

Drugs have been stored in the compartment where the anchor is kept, but this maritime tool has also been used to throw them overboard.

## 2. Containers

Traditionally, drug traffickers have smuggled illicit substances in among supplies onboard, often in the ship's principal hold or hull.

## 4. Funnel

A far less common method used by smugglers has been to conceal drugs close to a ship's funnel.

## 3. Captain's Cabin

Drugs have previously been found among the personal belongings of captains.

## 5. Vents

Traffickers have been known to weld packages of drugs to vents below deck, which can affect a ship's operating systems in some cases.

## 6. Water Inlets

Divers working for drug traffickers have used water inlets to subtly conceal drugs.

## 7. The Hull

Smugglers have been searching for a watertight method to evade authorities, increasingly concealing drugs within or attached to ship hulls.

## 8. Fuel Tank

Drugs have been commonly smuggled in car fuel tanks, but what about ships?

## 9. Torpedoes

Traffickers have been attaching so-called 'torpedoes' to ship hulls, allowing them to cut away illicit loads at high sea, if necessary.

## 10. Engine Room

Illicit substances have been seized from ship engine rooms occasionally, to which a select few have access.

## 11. Propellor

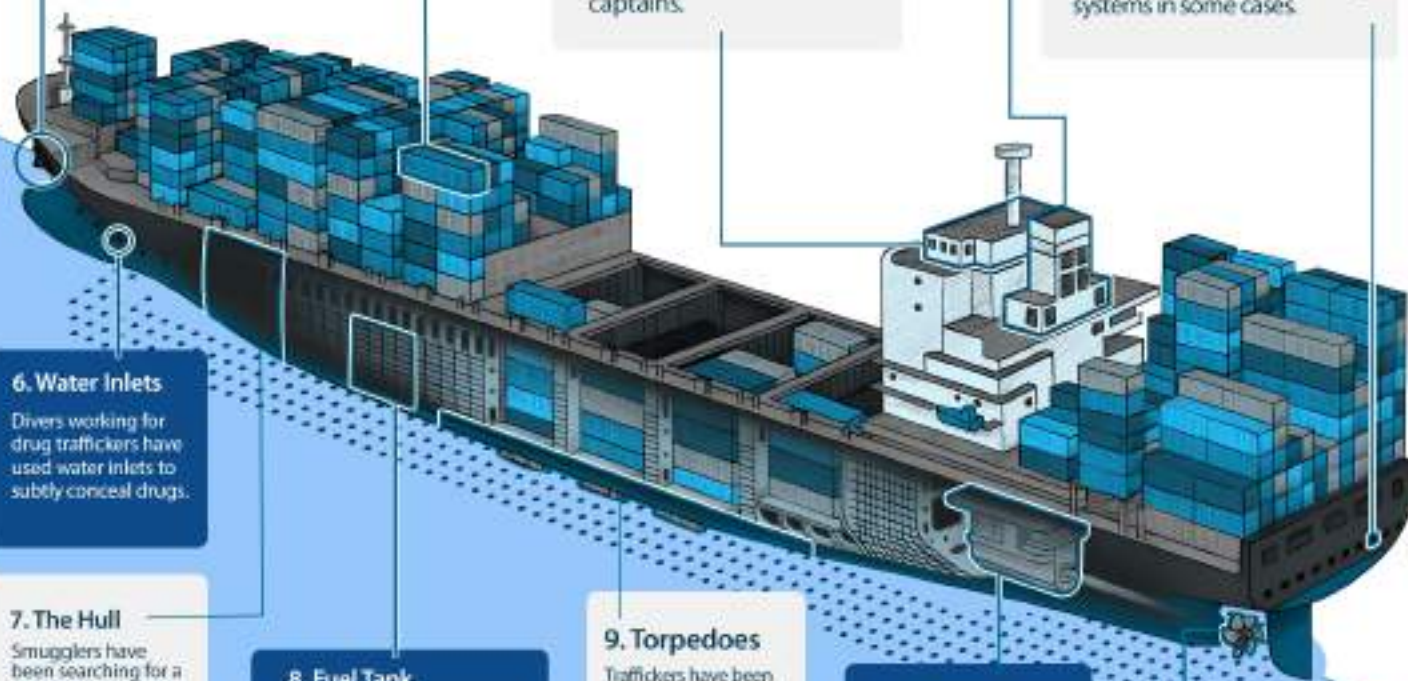
Smugglers have been known to use a vessel's propellers to conceal drugs in a rather unexpected place.

## 12. Store Room

A ship's sail store room is out of bounds for most, but traffickers have found a way to use it to their advantage.

## 13. Fishing Nets

Fishing Nets have been used to bring drugs aboard ahead of departure.





## PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Vessels can implement several measures to prevent drug smuggling, such as:

- Conducting thorough inspections of the vessel before arriving at ports known for drug smuggling activities. This includes checking hidden compartments, cargo holds, and other areas where drugs may be concealed.
- Implementing strict access controls to prevent unauthorized personnel from boarding the vessel. This includes the use of security cameras, alarms, and regular patrols.
- Training the crew on the latest smuggling tactics and how to identify suspicious activities, emphasizing the importance of reporting any unusual behavior.
- Consulting with the Club and the local P&I Correspondent regarding the background of the intended port of arrival. Working closely with local authorities and port officials to share information and receive updates on potential threats can help identify high-risk areas and implement appropriate measures
- Utilizing advanced technology, such as underwater drones, sonar, and X-ray equipment, to detect hidden compartments and contraband.
- Planning and carrying out regular audits and inspections of the vessel's security measures to ensure they remain up to date and effective.
- Ensuring that all containers are properly sealed and monitored throughout the voyage. Any broken or tampered seals should be reported immediately.
- Ensuring that all cargo holds are monitored during loading operations. Any package or material other than the intended cargo must be inspected and prevented from being loaded.
- Performing random searches of the vessel, including crew cabins and cargo areas, to deter smuggling attempts.
- Monitoring unfamiliar or unauthorized individuals around the vessel, especially near cargo areas.

## CONCLUSION

According to intelligence from the Federal Revenue Service, most of the cocaine shipped through Brazilian ports is destined for Europe. As controls have tightened, traffickers have sought alternative routes, increasingly using Africa as a transit point due to its proximity to the European continent.

By implementing preventive measures, vessels can significantly reduce the risk of drug smuggling and enhance the safety and security of their operations. However, if these measures prove ineffective or if any suspicious activity is detected, the crew should immediately contact their P&I Club and the local P&I Correspondent for assistance. Brazil P&I operates 24/7 across all Brazilian ports to provide prompt support whenever needed.