



CASE STUDY

PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY

With Pole Star, Panama Maritime Authority took a zero-tolerance approach, rapidly removing 100+ sanctioned vessels to restore compliance and reputation.

PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY THE CHALLENGE

In early 2025, the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) faced mounting pressure to address a growing number of vessels linked to sanctioned entities. Many ships were suspected of sanctions circumvention, attracting negative international attention and unfavourable media coverage that had already damaged Panama's reputation as a responsible flag state.

With the global shipping industry facing heightened geopolitical and compliance pressures, and the traditional de-flagging process proving too slow, PMA introduced a new fast-track mechanism to remove vessels appearing on official sanctions lists.

Given the potential implications for compliance and national standing, PMA engaged **Pole Star Global** to provide independent analysis and verification of vessel activity, enabling swift, transparent, and internationally aligned enforcement action.



BACKGROUND

The Panama Maritime Authority (AMP) is an autonomous government agency responsible for governing Panama's extensive maritime sector, including its world-leading ship registry, port operations, and seafarer services. It works to promote safe and sustainable maritime activities, enforce international regulations, and provide services like ship registration, vessel inspections, and crew certification through a global network of offices.

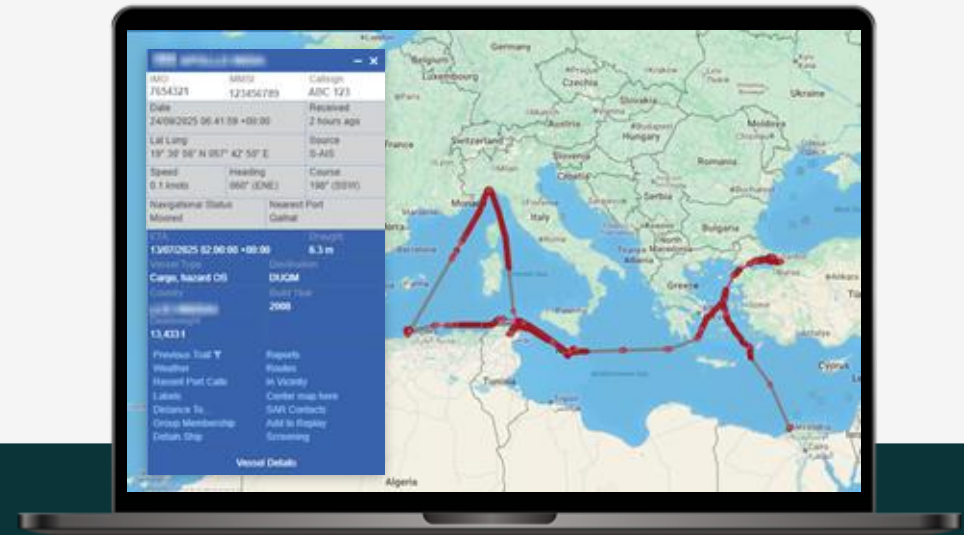
"Panama as a responsible flag state decided to create a mechanism to recognize official sanctions lists to de-flag those ships listed through an expedited process."

Rina Berrocal

Deputy General Director
Merchant Marine of the Panama Maritime Authority

PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY THE SOLUTION

Pole Star analysts worked with PMA to conduct a detailed review of flagged vessels using integrated maritime intelligence tools.



The investigation combined:

- ✔ **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)** to detect deceptive practices including dark activity GPS spoofing, and unusual routing patterns.
- ✔ **PurpleTRAC** for automated sanctions screening and vessel risk assessment: real-time cross-checks against multiple official sanctions lists, analysis of flag history, ownership changes and suspicious activity, and identification of high-risk ownership structures.
- ✔ **Cross-referencing AIS, LRIT, sanctions lists, and ownership databases** to validate evidence, reduce false positives, and support enforcement actions.
- ✔ **Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT)** for secure, satellite-based positional data: cross-verification with AIS to detect location spoofing, outages and routing anomalies, and independent confirmation of vessel positions during suspected high-risk activity.

With Pole Star's intelligence, PMA was able to:

✓ **Rapidly delist over 100 vessels** from its registry, ensuring immediate sanctions compliance

✓ **Strengthen governance and oversight** by aligning processes with international standards and best practices

✓ **Confirm cases involving:**

- Links to sanctioned jurisdictions or entities
- Identity manipulation
- Prolonged AIS signal loss and deliberate spoofing in embargoed zones
- Frequent flag hopping

✓ **Enhance compliance operations:**

- Faster, evidence-based decision-making
- Risk-based prioritisation of enforcement cases
- Reduced delays in vessel assessments
- Fewer false positives and unnecessary alerts

CONCLUSION

Through proactive oversight and the advanced investigative capabilities of Pole Star, the Panama Maritime Authority identified, documented, and removed high-risk vessels with unprecedented speed.

This decisive clean-up reinforced Panama's role as a responsible flag state, demonstrated a zero-tolerance approach to sanctions evasion, and restored confidence in its registry.

By tuning intelligence into enforcement, PMA safeguarded its international reputation and set a clear precedent for protecting the integrity of its flag.

GOVERNMENT & FLAG REGISTRY SOLUTIONS

ENSURE FLEET VISIBILITY & PROTECT YOUR COASTLINE

Rapidly delist high-risk ships, detect deceptive practices, and align oversight with international standards with our integrated sanctions data and vessel tracking intelligence.

GET STARTED NOW

Find out more at <https://www.polestarglobal.com/governments-and-flag-registries/>

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