

Abacus Clubs Correspondents, Fortaleza

An overview of the trafficking of illegal narcotics on ships in ports surrounding Fortaleza, Brazil

Case report- Port of Pecém

In March of 2024, it was revealed to the public that the authorities had been engaged for some time in an ongoing investigation regarding a discovery of drugs at the Port of Pecém. In this respect, a parcel of drugs was discovered and retained by authorities at Pecém but the container (without the parcel of drugs) was left to carry on to its intended destination, Australia. The container was then monitored and information was passed onto the Australian police, enabling the Australian authorities to catch the criminals involved at that end of the operation.

The media then reported the following:

‘Federal Police and Customs apprehended the equivalent of Brazilian Real \$1b (about USD \$200m) of cocaine at the Port of Pecém. Two men were arrested in Sydney, Australia, on Wednesday, 6th, in connection with the operation. Brazilian agents detected 600kg of cocaine in November of 2023, but devised a plan for the traffickers to be caught when they received empty containers where the drug was supposed to have been hidden. The authorities confirmed that the seizure of 600kg of cocaine, inside the Port of Pecém, made in November 2023 by the Federal Customs and Federal Police, was not released until March 7th 2024, so as to keep the arrest low profile and allow for a plan to be put in place to arrest drug traffickers in Australia.’

At the same port, the authorities investigated and caught a criminal gang specialized in sending cocaine to Europe. Investigations began after the seizure of 330 kg of cocaine, which was hidden in a cargo of honey in a container that would leave the Port of Pecém for Belgium. The package of drugs was valued at USD \$5M. The above were the larger amounts discovered but another case we had at Pecém occurred when, on request of the vessel's owners a diving search found what they reported as being 55kg of cocaine paste hidden welded at sea chest.

The local authorities remain alert and are currently dedicated to fighting the problem but cannot promise that the drug smuggling will come to an end in Brazilian ports.

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