

Maritime Intelligence Operations Center

Intelligence Analysis

MARCH 20, 2026



Prepared by:

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EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF: DEYNA APPREHENSION ANALYSIS

Date: 20 March 2026

Subject: French Navy Interdiction of M/T DEYNA (IMO: 9299903) – Implications for European Maritime Security

1. WHY DEYNA WAS APPREHENDED

Primary Grounds: False Flag Operation & Sanctions Evasion

French Navy forces interdicted DEYNA on 20 March 2026 in the Western Mediterranean under UNCLOS Article 110 (right of visit) based on reasonable suspicion of false flag operation. The vessel was flying the Mozambican flag (MMSI 650000121, callsign C9NA67), which onboard inspection revealed to be invalid and fraudulent. According to President Macron's statement, DEYNA is part of Russia's "shadow fleet" that "evades international sanctions and violates the law of the sea" to finance Russia's war effort.

Compliance Profile:

The screenshot shows the 'VESSEL DETAILS' for M/T DEYNA. Key information includes: IMO 9299903, MMSI 650000121, Flag Mozambique, Call sign C9NA67, Class Tanker, Length 250 m, Year of build 2005, and Registered owner Helios Co. Ltd (CY). It also lists AIS transponder Class A & Class B and Beneficial owner N/A.

The screenshot shows the 'RISK OVERVIEW' for DEYNA. The overall compliance score is 'Sanctioned 9' due to compliance score. Key indicators include: Compliance Score - Sanctioned (since 11 Jun 2025), Sanctions & Screening Indicators (List & Registry, Compliance Behavioral Indicators), and Risk Factors (Behavioral, Port call, Ship-to-ship activity, Dark vessels, Lateral, Suspicious cargo). The risk level is categorized as 'LOW RISK'.

DEYNA carries Windward Compliance Risk Level 3 (Sanctioned) with designations across six jurisdictions:

- United States (OFAC): Designated 10 January 2025 under OFAC-RUSSIA-EO and OFAC-UKR13662
- European Union: Designated 20 May 2025 (effective 21 May) for Russian crude oil transport using irregular high-risk shipping practices
- United Kingdom: Designated 21 July 2025 under Russia sanctions program
- Switzerland: Designated 3 June 2025
- Canada: Designated November 2025



- Ukraine: Designated 13 December 2025 (vessel); 21 February 2026 (vessel master)

BLACKLISTS & WATCHLISTS Powered by LSEG

Country	List Name	Program	Added On	Removed On	Notes
UNITED KINGDOM	SANCTION	N/A	20/07/2025	Current	UK - UKSANC - UK Sanctions List
EU	SANCTION	RUSSIA_GENERAL	21/05/2025	Current	EU - EUPSR RUS YES - European Union - Vessel Restrictions: EU 833/2014
OFAC	SANCTION	RUSSIA_GENERAL	11/01/2025	Current	USA - OFAC-RUSSIA-EO - OFAC SDN 164 - Harmful Foreign Activities of the Government of the Russian Federation
OFAC	SANCTION	RUSSIA_GENERAL	11/01/2025	Current	USA - OFAC-UKR13662 - OFAC SDN 164 - 0313662 (Rheinh)

The vessel is affiliated with the sanctioned management company Sino Ship Management Co. Limited (Hong Kong), designated by OFAC on 10 January 2025 for activities in the Russian energy sector. Current registered owner Hedyna Co. Ltd. (Hong Kong) carries Windward Compliance Risk High (Level 2) under RUSSIA_GENERAL program.

OWNERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Role	Company Name	Since	End Date	Address	Email	Phone
Beneficial owner	No data received					
Registered owner	Hedyna Co. Ltd (U)	05/02/2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Commercial manager	Sino Ship Management Co. Limited (H)	16/01/2025	N/A	Room 1902, Esary Commercial Building, 253-261, Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China.	N/A	N/A
Technical manager	Sino Ship Management Co. Limited (H)	15/04/2025	N/A	Room 1902, Esary Commercial Building, 253-261, Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China.	N/A	N/A
Operator	Sino Ship Management Co. Limited (H)	11/02/2024	N/A	Room 1902, Esary Commercial Building, 253-261, Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China.	N/A	N/A

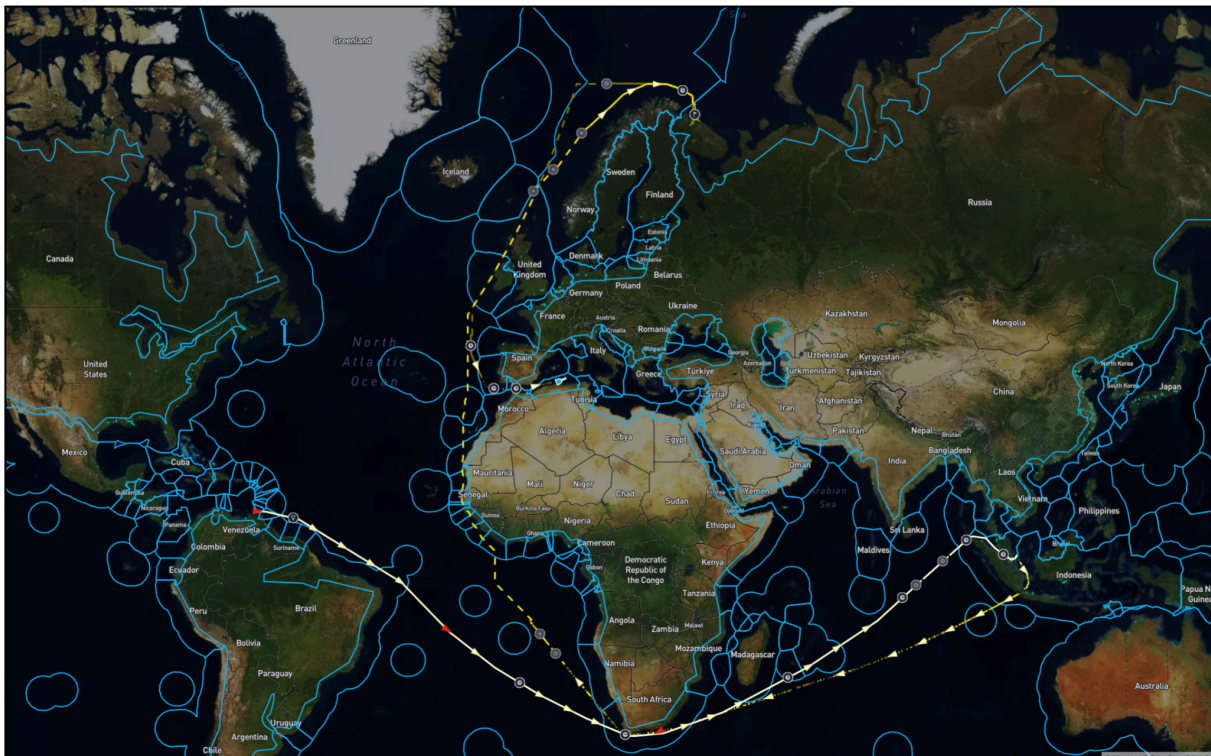
Evasion Behaviors:

DEYNA exhibits systematic sanctions evasion patterns:

1. Identity Manipulation (13 changes since 2020):
 - o 8 flag changes in 13 months: Greece → Vanuatu → Indonesia → Panama → Curaçao → St. Kitts & Nevis → Maldives → Mozambique (25 Feb 2026) during active voyage
 - o 3 name changes: M.T DEEP BLUE → DEYNA → garbled identifier "239 ><C29" → DEYNA
 - o 6 callsign changes to obscure identity tracking
 - o Critical timing: Adopted false Mozambican flag on 25 February 2026 immediately before departing Murmansk with Russian crude cargo
2. AIS Dark Activity:
 - o 103 hours (4.3 days) of AIS blackout during Murmansk departure phase (23 February - 1 March 2026)
 - o Two separate dark periods: 59 hours near Murmansk, then 44 hours post-flag change in Barents Sea
 - o No AIS transmissions recorded between 1 March and 20 March apprehension date (potential 19-day blackout)
3. Active Windward Building Blocks:
 - o DARK_ACTIVITY (27 Feb - 1 Mar 2026, Barents Sea, Risk 1)
 - o IDENTITY_TAMPERING (3 incidents: Dec 2025, Aug-Sep 2025, Apr 2025, totaling 858 hours)

4. Russian Oil Transport:

- o Departed Murmansk, Russia on 1 March 2026 carrying crude oil
- o Stated destination: Port Said, Egypt (likely transshipment point for obscured final buyers)
- o Vessel operates as crude oil tanker (111,808 DWT) purpose-built for Russian Arctic export routes



Legal Basis for French Action:

France invoked UNCLOS Article 110 permitting warships to board vessels on the high seas with "reasonable suspicion" of false flags or statelessness. Once boarding confirmed invalid Mozambican documentation, the vessel lost flag state immunity, enabling French jurisdiction. DEYNA is being escorted to Marseille anchorage for further investigation; case referred to Marseille prosecutors. UK Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron provided monitoring support prior to French interdiction, demonstrating bilateral intelligence fusion.

2. RECENT COMPARABLE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Assessment: Sustained Enforcement Campaign, Not Isolated Incident

DEYNA interdiction represents the sixth confirmed shadow fleet boarding by European forces in three months (January-March 2026), marking a decisive shift from administrative sanctions to kinetic maritime enforcement. Key timeline:

Date	Vessel	Flag	Authority	Location	Outcome



22 Jan 2026	Grinch	Comoros/Mozambique	France (UK support)	Mediterranean (Alboran Sea)	Detained 3 weeks at Fos-sur-Mer; released 18 Feb after owner paid "several million euros" in fines
Mid- Jan 2026	Tavian	False flag	Germany	North Sea approaches	Denied entry; turned back after forged IMO detected
28 Jan 2026	Joint Letter	Multiple vessels	14 states (BE, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, LV, LT, NL, NO, PL, SE, UK + 1)	Baltic & North Sea	Warning of boarding/seizure under UNCLOS stateless vessel provisions
1 Mar 2026	ETHERA	False Guinea flag	Belgium (Operation Blue Intruder, FR helicopter support)	Belgian EEZ, North Sea	Escorted to Zeebrugge; €10M bail imposed; crew detained and banned from Belgium
12 Mar 2026	REYFA	Unknown	Sweden	Baltic Sea	Boarded for inspection



20 Mar 2026	DEYNA	Mozambique	France (UK support)	Western Mediterranean	Boarded; escorted to Marseille
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Additional activity: Estonia pursued tanker Jaguar (ex-Argent, UK-sanctioned May 2025) for invalid flag; Finland detained shadow fleet tanker using OPV Turva; Denmark reported 292 EU-sanctioned tanker transits in Danish waters during 2025 (nearly daily encounters).

Common Target Profile:

- False flag operations: All interdicted vessels cited for invalid/fraudulent flags (Comoros, Mozambique, Guinea flags of convenience)
- Russian oil cargo: Vessels departed Russian ports (Murmansk, Primorsk) carrying crude under sanctions
- Ownership opacity: 60% of shadow fleet beneficial owners unknown per sanctions intelligence firm Kharon
- AIS manipulation: Systematic AIS disabling, location spoofing, dark STS transfers
- Aging fleet: Average 40 years old vs. 14 years global average

Enforcement Coordination:

Operations demonstrate unprecedented European coalition coordination:

- 14-nation joint letter (28 January 2026) warning shadow fleet vessels of UNCLOS enforcement
- France-UK operational partnerships (Grinch, DEYNA interdictions with Royal Navy surveillance)
- Belgium-France combined operation (Ethera/Blue Intruder with French helicopter support)
- Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) defense ministers meeting mid-March 2026 to align intelligence sharing and naval asset coordination
- NATO Shadow Fleet Symposium at NATO HQ (17 March 2026)
- Shadow Fleet Task Force (Canada-Denmark convened, October 2025)

Russia Response Trajectory:

Russia escalating countermeasures:

1. Diplomatic protests: Putin condemned September 2025 French Atlantic boarding as "piracy"; Moscow labeled DEYNA interdiction "piracy" and claims "war profiteering" accusations
2. Naval escorts: Russian warship deployments in Gulf of Finland (May 2025); reports of armed escorts for shadow fleet
3. Reflagging to Russian registry: ~80 shadow fleet tankers reflagging to Russia to gain formal flag state protection and eliminate UNCLOS Article 110 vulnerability
4. Airspace violations: Following Estonia's Jaguar pursuit, Russia conducted retaliatory airspace violations



5. Potential arming of vessels: Russian government considering armed security (possibly Wagner-affiliated personnel) and naval patrols per defense sources

Strategic Scale:

Enforcement remains tactically successful but strategically limited:

- Shadow fleet size: 1,100-1,200 vessels globally (500-650 active tankers), up from <400 in 2022 (tripled since Ukraine invasion)
- EU sanctions designations: ~600 vessels designated
- Physical interdictions: 6+ confirmed in 3 months = <2% interdiction rate
- Economic impact: Russian Baltic crude exports reached record levels in early 2026, with nearly 50% carried by sanctioned vessels
- Adaptation: Shadow fleet didn't collapse but "reorganised" to 3,300 vessels (including support vessels) by December 2025; over 300 vessels shifted to fraudulent flags in 2025

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU

Key Implications:

Legal & Operational Framework

- Proven model exists: France-Belgium operations demonstrate feasible execution within existing UNCLOS authorities (Article 110 false flag verification)
- Coalition capacity required: Successful interdictions require bilateral/multilateral intelligence fusion to identify high-probability false-flag vessels before boarding
- Resource demands: Naval/coast guard assets capable of mid-ocean interception (frigates, patrol vessels, helicopters); domestic legal infrastructure to process detained vessels, crews, and cargo; executive political commitment to sustain operations despite Russian protests
- Legal constraints remain severe: UNCLOS restricts enforcement in EEZ and high seas absent flag state consent or confirmed statelessness; Russia's reflagging strategy (80 vessels to Russian registry) systematically closing this legal pathway

Escalation & Retaliation Risks

- Russia escalation trajectory clear: diplomatic protests → naval escorts → airspace violations → potential arming of vessels
- Commercial exposure: Denmark's Maersk concerns illustrate retaliation vulnerabilities; Russian harassment, cyber operations, or sanctions against national-flagged operators represent plausible retaliation vectors
- Military incidents: Armed Russian security forces on shadow fleet vessels increase risk of confrontation during boarding operations; Sweden proceeded with boarding despite Wagner-linked personnel presence (precedent exists but risk is real)
- Hybrid warfare: Undersea infrastructure sabotage (cables, pipelines), cyber attacks on European shipping firms, or disinformation campaigns likely Russian response options

Deterrence Limitations

- Limited strategic effectiveness: 6 interdictions in 3 months did not prevent Russian Baltic exports reaching record levels; 99% of sanctioned vessels remain operationally active



- Economic model remains viable: Even with fines (\$10M for Ethera), delays, and insurance premiums, profits from sanctions-evading oil sales (~\$12/barrel premium above \$60 price cap) justify operational risks
- Adaptation speed: Russia expanding shadow fleet (350 vessels by 2026, adding 7/month), rapidly reflagging to close legal vulnerabilities, deploying countermeasures faster than European enforcement scales

Coalition Dynamics

- Fragmented enforcement willingness: France/Belgium activist posture vs. Nordic/Danish caution creates operational gaps Russia exploits
- JEF, not NATO: Operations coordinate through Joint Expeditionary Force rather than NATO structures (political constraints on NATO offensive operations)
- Bilateral partnerships critical: France-UK model enables smaller states to participate with lower individual exposure
- Greek facilitation ongoing: EU-owned/controlled tankers still 19% of Russian liftings (February 2026), vast majority Greek entities—coalition unity incomplete

Policy Decision Space

1. Observer Status – Intelligence sharing only (minimal resources, low exposure, no deterrent effect)
2. Selective Operational Support – Episodic naval deployments under bilateral frameworks (demonstrates commitment, tests political viability, requires full legal infrastructure)
3. Active Enforcement Posture – Independent interdiction capacity (maximizes deterrence and coalition leadership, attracts maximum Russian retaliation, significant resource commitment €50-100M annually)
4. Port State Control Intensification – Territorial waters focus only (uncontested legal authority, lower escalation risk, limited strategic impact)
5. Diplomatic Leadership – EU regulatory expansion advocacy (addresses structural gaps, long-term positioning, no near-term operational effects)

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Enforcement Pattern, Not Isolated Incident: France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Estonia, and Finland conducted 6+ confirmed interdictions January-March 2026, with unprecedented 14-nation coordination (joint letter 28 January warning shadow fleet vessels of UNCLOS enforcement). Operations demonstrate proven model: bilateral intelligence fusion (France-UK partnerships), naval boarding under UNCLOS Article 110 false flag authority, detention with multimillion-euro fines. Vessels interdicted for invalid flags (Comoros, Mozambique, Guinea), Russian cargo, ownership opacity, and AIS manipulation.
2. Scale & Limitations: Russia operates 1,100-1,200 shadow fleet vessels globally (500-650 active tankers), with ~600 EU-designated but only 6+ physically interdicted in 3 months (<2% rate). Russian Baltic crude exports reached record levels in early 2026 despite enforcement. Russia rapidly adapting: reflagging 80 tankers to Russian registry to eliminate legal vulnerabilities, deploying naval escorts, considering armed vessel security.



Interdictions tactically successful (imposing costs, disrupting shipments) but strategically limited in degrading Russian export capacity.

3. Russia Escalation Trajectory: Putin labeled French operations "piracy"; Russia responding with airspace violations post-Estonia pursuit, naval escort deployments in Gulf of Finland, and preparation to arm shadow fleet vessels. Commercial retaliation risks include harassment of European-flagged operators, cyber operations, and sanctions. Hybrid warfare vectors (undersea infrastructure sabotage, disinformation) represent plausible response options. Escalation dynamics not yet stabilized.
4. High-Risk Vessel Watchlist: Intelligence identifies 15 vessels matching DEYNA profile for priority monitoring:
 - o Tier 1 (Highest Priority): SILVERA (IMO 9248849), SOFIA (IMO 9211999), COATLICUE (IMO 9235000), VICTORIA (IMO 9212008), PERSEY (IMO 9544281) – All Sanctioned (Level 3) with active identity manipulation or extensive dark activity in past 6 months, Russian port operations, false flags
 - o Tier 2: MA JIN (9346744), RHEIN (9306562), ORVI (9321718), ZAMBRA (9175078), OCEAN II (9233777)
 - o Tier 3: CAROLINE BEZENGI (9224439), PAXMARIS (9495832), MAVERICK (9321562), SPIRIT 2 (9409259), CARUZO (9137648)
 - o All vessels carry OFAC/EU/UK sanctions, exhibit flag hopping to flags of convenience, and operate Russian crude oil routes

5. HIGH-RISK VESSEL WATCHLIST (IMO NUMBERS)

TIER 1: HIGHEST INTERDICTION PRIORITY

1. SILVERA – IMO 9248849 (Sanctioned, identity tampering Feb 2026, Russian port calls, Sierra Leone false flag)
2. SOFIA – IMO 9211999 (Sanctioned, 1,040+ hours dark activity, Russian flag/operations, sister ship to VICTORIA)
3. COATLICUE – IMO 9235000 (Sanctioned, 36 dark activity incidents Sep-Dec 2025, Djibouti false flag)
4. VICTORIA – IMO 9212008 (Sanctioned, recent dark activity Mar 2026, Russian flag/operations)
5. PERSEY – IMO 9544281 (Sanctioned, 65-day continuous dark activity Nov-Feb 2026, Russian flag)

TIER 2: HIGH PRIORITY

6. MA JIN – IMO 9346744 (Sanctioned, dual Russia/DPRK programs, Sierra Leone false flag)
7. RHEIN – IMO 9306562 (Sanctioned, dual Russia/DPRK programs, Cameroon false flag)
8. ORVI – IMO 9321718 (Sanctioned, dual Iran/Russia programs, Comoros false flag, 158,920 DWT)
9. ZAMBRA – IMO 9175078 (Sanctioned, Cameroon false flag, Hong Kong owner)
10. OCEAN II – IMO 9233777 (Sanctioned, Cameroon false flag)

Targeting Rationale: All vessels carry Windward Compliance Risk Level 3 (Sanctioned) with OFAC/EU/UK Russia sanctions designations, exhibit false flag operations (Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti), and operate crude oil tanker profiles matching DEYNA. Tier 1 vessels show active evasion behaviors in past 6 months (identity manipulation, extensive dark



activity, recent Russian port operations). Several vessels (MA JIN, RHEIN, ORVI) carry dual sanctions exposure (Russia + DPRK/Iran), elevating threat profile.

Maintaining a persistent tactical advantage requires the transition from static monitoring to active orchestration. The Windward Maritime Intelligence Operations Center (MIOC) provides this bridge, functioning as an operational center that integrates multi-sensor intelligence - including EO, SAR, RF, HUMINT, and ADINT - with Agentic AI to Detect → Collect → Analyze threats and pre-operational indicators in real time. To move beyond data visualization and into proactive mission support, please reach out to your Windward point of contact. We are prepared to discuss aligning our Ongoing Intelligence Analysis or Ad-Hoc Forensic Deep Dives with your specific theater requirements.

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