

‘We are not a shelter for sanction evasion’: Panama flag

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Panama Maritime Authority

Facing pressure from Washington, the Panama Maritime Authority, which looks after the world's second largest ship registry, has defended its position, insisting it is deflagging many sanctioned vessels.

US officials have accused Panama of not taking action to help enforce sanctions on vessels and shipowners from countries including Russia, Iran and Venezuela. US president Donald Trump has used these arguments to threaten the Panama Canal with a takeover.

In a release issued yesterday, Panama said it has achieved a 96.5% compliance rate with international maritime safety and environmental protection standards.

“In its ongoing efforts to enhance fleet quality, the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA), through the General Directorate of Merchant Marine (DGMM), has intensified its oversight, removing vessels from the registry that fail to meet stringent safety and compliance standards,” the PMA claimed.

“We maintain a zero-tolerance policy against any misuse of the Panama Ship Registry. We are not a shelter for sanction evasion. Our priority is to attract modern, newly built vessels that fully comply with international regulations,” stated Ramón Franco, director general of the DGMM.