

Yacht skipper jailed following Border Force sea interception

News story

A Dutch national who was caught in the process of sneaking 9 Albanian nationals into the UK in a sailing vessel has been jailed.



Marco Den Hollander, 32, was sentenced on Friday 8 October to 5 years and 7 months in prison at Ipswich Crown Court following an investigation by Border Force officers and Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigations team.

On 27 May 2021, Dutch authorities alerted Border Force as the sailing vessel MORGANA II left their waters without authority. The vessel was then tracked, intercepted and boarded by officers onboard HMC Searcher within UK territorial waters.

Marco Den Hollander was at the helm and informed Border Force officers that there were 4 people on board, and that they were friends of family, and friends who he was bringing to the UK. However, on inspection, officers found 9 Albanian nationals hidden in the cabin – 3 women (1 of whom was pregnant), 2 children (aged 4 – 6) and 4 men. The vessel, passengers and skipper were brought ashore when it was then established that the vessel had been hired in Holland – a subsequent search found only 6 life-jackets for those making the dangerous crossing.

Mr Den Hollander was subsequently charged with facilitating a breach of the UK's immigration law and remanded in custody. He pleaded guilty on 25 June 2021.

Tom Pursglove MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State said:

These sorts of evil criminals are motivated by money alone and this man clearly had no regard for the people on board who he put into grave danger, which could have had tragic consequences.

This case is an excellent example of the fantastic work of our frontline officers who are doing everything they can on land, sea and in the air to prevent illegal immigration and bring the criminals responsible to justice.

Our new plan for immigration will change the law so those who facilitate these dangerous crossings will face a maximum of life imprisonment. They should be in no doubt about the seriousness of these crimes and the punishment they will face.

David Fairclough, Criminal and Financial Investigations team said:

Today's sentencing sends a clear message to those that have a blatant disregard for the law and treat people like cargo, putting profits before lives.

You will be brought to justice and pay for your crimes.

The public should be in no doubt of our determination to crack down on these heinous criminals that facilitate people smuggling.

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