



NEWRALI INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

Escalation Dynamics and Market Shifts in the Bari Logistics Hub (May 2026)

July 14, 2026

Contents

- Executive Summary 3
- ICD 203 Analytical Standards: Confidence Levels & Intelligence Gaps 3
- 1. Economic (E): Market Share, Supply Chain Infiltration, and Transnational Logistics 3
- 2. Political (P): Institutional Disruption, Transnational Networks, and Judicial Intervention 4
- 3. Technological (T): Surveillance Evasion, Encrypted Command, and Generational Shifts 5
- Synthesis and Geopolitical Implications (The “So What?”) 5
- Alternative Analysis 6
- Consolidated References and Source Documentation 6

This report was produced by "Sarah A" - a member of Newrali's Intelligence Community as part of our monthly Special Operations

Executive Summary

The Port of Bari is a major logistics hub in Bari, Puglia. Strategically positioned as a key gateway for trade and passenger traffic between Italy, The Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean; it is of particular significance for criminal operations. This significance was highlighted by May 2025 cross-border operations between Italy and Albania, supported by Eurojust, which arrested 52 suspects and dismantled networks involved in large-scale drug trafficking and money laundering, with Italian gangs in Bari handling the cutting and packaging of narcotics before local distribution.

Simultaneously, the Bari conflict between the Capriati and Strisciuglio clans demonstrates the breakdown of a long-standing informal governance equilibrium ("Pax Mafiosa") and the emergence of a structured escalation cycle characterised by retaliatory violence, collateral civilian harm, and intensified judicial intervention.

Italy remains a key entry point for cocaine trafficking into Europe due to its geographic position and the influence of the 'Ndrangheta, which maintains established links with South American trafficking networks. The violence in Bari and the subsequent arrests of key members signal change and the emergence of a new unpredictable environment. Increasingly, younger clan members across Italy leverage social media to send messages of power and influence, in methods similar to the Mexican Cartels who also use social media as an influence and recruitment tool. The transnational nature of these networks requires a coordinated international response to place strategic state pressure on volatile regions.

ICD 203 Analytical Standards: Confidence Levels & Intelligence Gaps

- **Confidence Level:** Moderate to High. This assessment relies on corroborated multi-national law enforcement operations (DIA, SPAK, Interpol I-CAN), judicial warrants (the May 2026 850-page DDA custody warrant), and verified communication intercepts.
- **Intelligence Gaps:**
 1. The extent to which the expansionist Strisciuglio clan has successfully usurped the Capriati clan's infiltration of legitimate Port of Bari logistics firms following the recent arrests.
 2. The precise operational mechanics linking the Chinese fei qian network with Albanian money laundering syndicates operating in the Adriatic corridor.
 3. The long-term stability of the 'Ndrangheta's partnerships with Latin American cartels following the arrests of key international coordinators.

—

1. Economic (E): Market Share, Supply Chain Infiltration, and Transnational Logistics

Italian organised crime, particularly the 'Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra, has leveraged Chinese fei qian ("flying money") networks to launder drug proceeds, bypassing traditional financial systems and using established trade routes to move goods and transfer illicit money. This trust-based system, involving brokers in Italy, China, and globally, allows for rapid, untraceable transfers with minimal commissions (often <2%), making it a preferred method for settling debts with Latin American cartels, including close ties to Mexican Cartels, who have established ties to the 'Ndrangheta and reinvesting narco-capital. The Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA) 2025 annual report confirms these links are a primary concern for Italian authorities who have been working to disrupt the network.

A critical Adriatic entry point for cocaine, primarily originating from Ecuador (Guayaquil) and Colombia, the Port of Bari serves as a vital node in the supply chain and is a known transit point for illicit goods, including narcotics. Criminal networks exploit the high volume of legitimate banana imports and other fruits from Latin America to Europe, hiding narcotics in shipping containers, a method documented in major seizures at other Adriatic ports like Durres and Ploce. There are historic links between the movement of fruit and the Italian Mafia, beginning with the Sicilian lemon trade.

The Capriati clan has demonstrated influence on the logistics chain, evidenced by the November 2025 arrest of Giuseppe Morea, the fleet manager of Levante Logistica, alongside clan member Francesco Capriati ("Ceschetto"). They were charged with attempted extortion using mafia methods, highlighting the clan's capacity to compromise key personnel within legitimate port-adjacent transport firms.

Following arrests in May 2026 of key criminal figures in Bari, the Port of Bari remains a valuable asset for whoever seizes regional control next.

2. Political (P): Institutional Disruption, Transnational Networks, and Judicial Intervention

The initial disruption occurred in April 2024 following the killing of Lello Capriati, triggering a delayed retaliatory sequence culminating in the April 2026 Killing of Filippo Scavo. The escalation phase also included the mistaken-identity killing of civilian waiter Angelo Pizzi.

On 5 May 2026, the Bari Anti-Mafia Directorate (DDA), acting through the Judge for Preliminary Investigations (GIP), issued an 850-page custody warrant. The warrant revealed internal coordination of escalation decisions. Intercepted communications attributed to Strisciuglio associated actors described the conflict as comparable to "the third world war," indicating internal perception of high-intensity escalation.

'Prendetelo e andate al padre' "It was precisely that 'mamastone' [boss] who gave the order... he was the one who said 'take him and go to the father.'" - Erasmo Labarile, close associate of the Strisciuglio clan explaining that the boss Sigismondo "Gino la Luna" Strisciuglio gave the explicit command to escalate the conflict by taking out the patriarch, Lello Capriati.

The judicial response to the Bari escalation reflects a shift from episodic prosecution toward more structure mapping of organised criminal governance, indicating an intelligence-lead approach that treats clan communications as systemic evidence of decision-making, rather than isolated criminal acts.

In late May 2026, a joint operation was announced by the DDA and the Albanian Special Anti-Corruption and Organised Crime Prosecutor's Office (SPAK), supported by Eurojust. The operation, outlined during a public press conference, extended the investigation beyond Bari clan violence to a transnational cash laundering network between Italy and Albania and incorporated related homicide investigations, including the April 2025 killing of Francesco Diviesti in Canosa di Puglia.

To combat these transnational networks, Interpol is coordinating a multinational project (2025 - 2027) aimed at disrupting global 'Ndrangheta networks and strengthening international police cooperation against mafia-type organisations. The project supports intelligence sharing, operational coordination, and law enforcement collaboration among participating countries. This highlights the effectiveness of multinational law enforcement cooperation in targeting senior organised crime figures and disrupting transnational trafficking networks.

Key Outcomes of International Interventions:

- March 2025: Arrest of Emanuele Gregorini ("Dollario"), a key figure in the Senese Group of the Camorra, wanted for organised crime and international drug trafficking offences.
- July 2025: Arrest of Giuseppe Palermo ("Peppe"), assessed as the 'Ndrangheta's principal coordinator in Latin America, responsible for managing cocaine shipments from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to Europe.
- August 2025: Arrest of Federico Starnone ("Fedi"), a senior 'Ndrangheta member involved in coordinating cocaine trafficking and managing relationships with major Latin American criminal groups, including Clan del Golfo, PCC, and Los Choneros.
- August 2025: Arrest of three suspected 'Ndrangheta fugitives in Ibiza, Spain (Alessio Di Pietro, Marco Lenti, and Federico Mennuni), with cash, jewellery, and other assets seized.

These arrests demonstrate the continued importance of Latin American partnerships in facilitating cocaine flows into Europe, reinforcing assessments that the 'Ndrangheta maintains a significant role in coordinating and facilitating transnational cocaine trafficking networks. The organisation has historically demonstrated an ability to control multiple stages of the cocaine supply chain, including transportation, distribution, and money laundering, establishing networks and facilitators across Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica. Historical investigations, including Operation Tiburón Galloway and Project Reckoning/Project Solare, identified long-standing cocaine trafficking and money laundering networks linking Italy and Latin America.

3. Technological (T): Surveillance Evasion, Encrypted Command, and Generational Shifts

Next generation clan members such as Dylan Capriati, 22, have weaponised social media to control the narrative and send messages to rivals, such as posting an image to TikTok depicting a rifle in a refrigerator and the accompanying text (translated from Italian) 'the dish should be served cold... everyone will get what they deserve.'

Adoption of encrypted messaging apps such as Number 1bc and reliance on IT experts within the ranks, allow mafia bosses to by pass in-person communication, but, the apps are not impenetrable by law enforcement - as revealed by a large scale operation against the Cosa Nostra in 2025 which found Number 1bc was being used to facilitate a number of illicit activities between Italian and Albanian groups, including drug trafficking and money laundering. The FBI has also secretly operated an encrypted app, Anom, as part of a successful international operation.

For law enforcement, the adoption of new technology has allowed criminals to move faster in the shadows and control the messaging and influence, however it has also increased the digital footprint.

—

Synthesis and Geopolitical Implications (The "So What?")

The tactical violence in Bari, characterised by the breakdown of the "Pax Mafiosa," acts as a catalyst for broader geopolitical instability and structural market shifts. As the Capriati and Strisciuglio clans escalate into high-visibility conflict (described as a "third world war"), they create severe vulnerabilities in the management of the Port of Bari, a critical logistics node for Adriatic cocaine flows.

This localised instability presents an opening for Tier 1 hegemony, particularly the 'Ndrangheta, who are currently under intense pressure from coordinated multinational operations (like INTERPOL's I-CAN Phase 2). The decapitation of Bari's leadership and the transition to a younger, more public, and digitally exposed generation ("Gomorried" social media users) makes local clans unreliable partners for transnational smuggling. Consequently, the violence in Bari precipitates the corporatisation of the region's illicit economy: global syndicates are increasingly bypassing these volatile local street powers

to rely directly on transnational Albanian logistical networks and Chinese fei qian shadow banks for untraceable financial flow.

Ultimately, the tactical escalation in Bari signals the diminishing power of territory-bound traditional mafias, accelerating the shift of illicit market control into the hands of borderless, digitally-enabled global syndicates.

Alternative Analysis

While the current assessment suggests that Tier 1 groups will bypass Bari's local clans due to their volatility, an alternative scenario is that the Strisciuglio clan, should they successfully eliminate Capriati competition and withstand judicial decapitation, could rapidly consolidate power. In this scenario, they would establish a violently enforced monopoly over the Port of Bari, forcing global hegemony to negotiate with a more aggressive, monolithic local partner rather than bypassing them entirely.

—

Consolidated References and Source Documentation

Economic & Port Logistics:

- OCCRP (2025, May 21). Major Drug Bust in Italy, Albania Seizes Millions, 52 Arrested. <https://www.occrp.org/en/news/major-drug-bust-in-italy-albania-seizes-millions-52-arrested>
- Decode39. (2023, April 6). Italian Government Spotlight Chinese Underground Banks. <https://decode39.com/6402/italian-government-spotlight-chinese-underground-banks/>
- Direzione Investigativa Antimafia (DIA). (2025, November). Semestrale Marzo 2025 (English Language Version). https://direzioneinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/SEMESTRALE_mar2025_Lingua_Inglese.pdf
- Dimico, A., Isopi, A., & Olsson, O. (2017). Origins of the Sicilian Mafia: The Market for Lemons. The Journal of Economic History, 77(4), 1083–1115. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/52B18A611BD8AE26B4FDE3814A4239F1/S002205071700078Xa.pdf/origins-of-the-sicilian-mafia-the-market-for-lemons.pdf>
- Reuters. (2024, September 25). Drug gang using Chinese money brokers uncovered, Italian police say. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/drug-gang-using-chinese-money-brokers-uncovered-italian-police-say-2024-09-25/>
- Westmore, K. (2025, November). Flying Money, Hidden Threat: Understanding the Growth of Chinese Money Laundering Organisations. SOC ACE Research Paper 36. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63e4aef3ae07ad445eed03b5/t/6901d732787278321638e6da/1761728306567/36RP_Westmore_Flying+Money+Hidden+Threat_Nov+2025_FINAL.pdf
- Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. (2021, April). Cocaine goes 'bananas' on the Adriatic coast. Risk Bulletin #7. <https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/see-obs-007/02-cocaine-goes-bananas-on-adriatic-coast.html>
- SCMP (2025, May 28). Italy's mafia joining forces, turning to Chinese 'shadow banks', report says. <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/europe/article/3312041/italys-mafia-joining-forces-turning-chinese-shadow-banks-report-says>
- Foreign Policy. (2025, July 15). Chinese Bankers Are at the Center of Global Money Laundering. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/07/15/chinese-bankers-money-laundering-europe-world/>
- La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno. (2025, November 6). Worker refuses to work for free after company vehicle incident; employer calls Capriati clan member to convince him. <https://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/news/bari/1860358/bari-operaio-rifuta-di-lavorare-gratis-dopo-incidente-con-mezzo-aziendale-il-datore-chiama-esponente-clan-capriati-per-convincerlo-2-arresti.html>

- Quinto Potere. (2025, November 6). Bari, estorsione a dipendente dopo incidente con mezzo aziendale: ecco come Morea e Capriati sono stati arrestati. <https://www.quintopotere.it/tag/levante-logistica/>
- La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno. (2026, May 5). Bari, blitz against clans before San Nicola: 14 arrested between Strisciuglio and Capriati. <https://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/news/home/1981639/bari-scatta-il-blitz-contro-i-clan-14-arresti-per-gli-omicidi-scavo-e-capriati.html>
- Wikipedia / Judicial Records. (2025, December 3). Capriati clan. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capriati_clan
- Wikipedia. (2026, March 10). Maritime drug trafficking in Latin America. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_drug_trafficking_in_Latin_America

Political & International Law Enforcement:

- INTERPOL Cooperation against 'Ndrangheta (I-CAN) Phase 2. <https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Organized-crime/Projects/INTERPOL-Cooperation-against-Ndrangheta-I-CAN-Phase-2>
- DIA Bari 20260526 <https://youtu.be/B6uOUKW5Bho>
- DIA Press Conference <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it/>
- Murder and money laundering investigation (Italy and Albania) <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it/2026/indagini-della-dia-di-bari-sullomicidio-diviesti-15-misure-cautelari-metodo-mafioso-e-riciclaggio-internazionale/>
- Carabinieri Press Release 19/05/2026 <https://www.carabinieri.it/in-vostro-aiuto/informazioni/comunicati-stampa/traffico-di-stupefacenti-estorsioni-e-detenzione-illegale-di-armi.-13-arresti>
- Bari Corriere (7th May 2026). Bari and the mafia peace between the Capriati and Strisciuglio clans broken over a girl. https://bari.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/26_maggio_07/bari-e-la-pax-mafiosa-tra-i-capriati-e-gli-strisciuglio-rotta-per-una-ragazza-sara-come-la-terza-guerra-mondiale-dcf20670-fa04-44ce-b90d-574aa0449x1k.shtml?refresh_ce
- Bari Corriere (6th May 2026). Mafia war in Bari: the breakdown of the truce between Capriati and Strisciuglio amid fights and ambushes. And the prison toast for the murder of Filippo Scavo. https://bari.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/26_maggio_06/lotta-di-mafia-a-bari-la-rottura-della-tregua-tra-capriati-e-strisciuglio-tra-liti-e-agguati-e-il-brindisi-in-carcere-per-l-333e9117-39e7-4f84-81e1-c4b949703x1k.shtml

Technology:

- History of the term Gomorrah: Cavaliere, Flavia. (2010). Gomorrah. European Journal of English Studies. 14. 173-188. 10.1080/13825577.2010.481466. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232885998_Gomorrah
- OCCRP. Cosa Nostra Encrypted Platform of Choice, Number 1bc <https://www.occrp.org/en/news/cosa-nostras-encrypted-platform-of-choice-number-1bc>