

# Chinese shipping container manufacturers, execs indicted in global antitrust conspiracy

May 2026

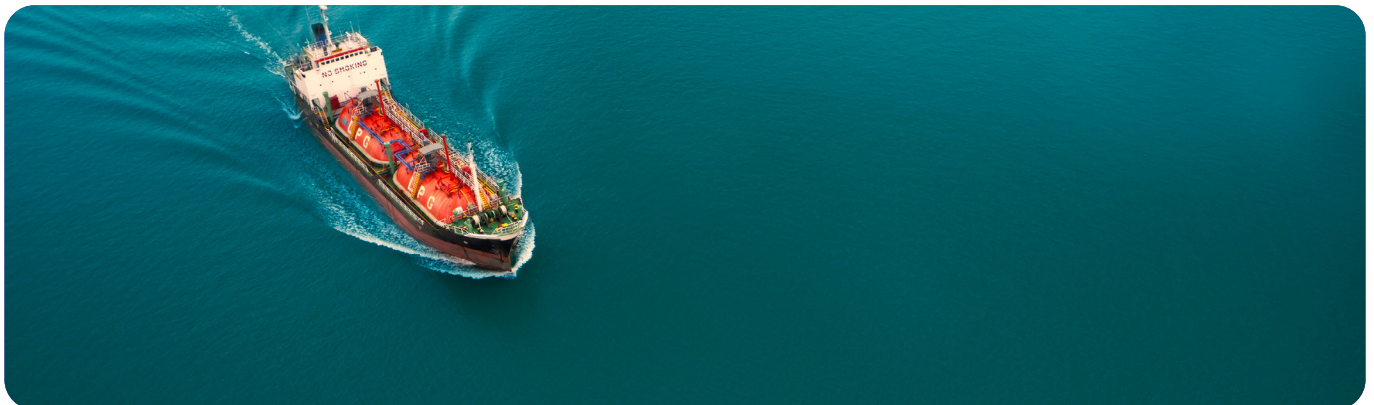
On May 19, 2026, the [Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#) revealed indictments against four of the largest Chinese container manufacturing companies and seven executives for allegedly conspiring to restrict the output of, and fix prices for, standard unrefrigerated shipping containers, in violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act (Section 1).<sup>1</sup> These claims are likely to have ongoing implications for other companies in the shipping industry, as well as any purchasers of shipping containers during the alleged conspiracy, such as logistics companies.

## About the alleged conspiracy

The [superseding indictment](#) identifies the four corporate defendants as: (1) Singamas Container Holdings Ltd. (Singamas); (2) China International Marine Containers (Group) Co., Ltd. (CIMC) (3) Shanghai Universal Logistics Equipment Co., Ltd. (Dong Fang) and (4) CXIC Group Containers Co. Ltd (CXIC). The superseding indictment also references two corporate co-conspirators that have not been indicted. The seven executives charged are all foreign nationals located abroad. Vick Ma, the marketing director of Singamas, was arrested at an airport in France in April, as a result of a joint effort with French law enforcement.

The DOJ alleges that four of the defendant companies met at CIMC's headquarters in China in November 2019, where they reached an illegal agreement to restrict production of standard dry shipping containers in order to drive up prices. Specifically, they allegedly agreed to limit the number of shifts each production line could run, install video cameras on production lines to monitor each other's compliance, not build any new containers and financially penalize any party not participating in the agreement. By March 2020, the remaining two companies allegedly joined the illegal agreement. The co-conspirators also allegedly attempted to expand the conspiracy to refrigerated shipping containers (reefers), but the reefer manufacturer solicited refused to participate in the scheme. Throughout the conspiracy, the co-conspirators allegedly tried to conceal the scheme by deleting documents.

The alleged conspiracy spanned from at least November 2019 to January 2024, during the height of the global supply chain crisis, and led to the nearly doubling of prices for standard shipping containers and a one hundredfold increase in profits for the co-conspirators. As a result, the DOJ alleges that approximately US\$35 billion in global commerce transported through these shipping containers was impacted.



<sup>1</sup> The Sherman Act criminalizes certain anticompetitive agreements among competitors, including agreements to fix price, restrict output, allocate markets and rig bids. Violations of the statute can result in hundreds of millions of dollars in fines for companies and up to 10 years in jail, and a US\$10 million fine for individuals.

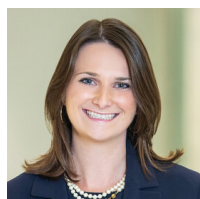


## Why this matters to companies and executives

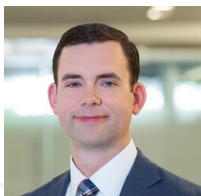
- **Shipping, logistics industries impacted** – Based on the superseding indictment, the scope of the alleged scheme was broad and impacted the dry shipping container and potentially refrigerated shipping container industry. Customers, and therefore alleged victims of the scheme, include container lessors, shipping lines and logistics companies based in the US, as well as China and Europe. Companies in these industries should consider whether they have suffered harm as a result of the alleged scheme. If so, they may have civil claims that they can pursue against the defendants and should consult outside counsel.
- **DOJ targets foreign companies, conduct overseas** – These indictments signal the Antitrust Division’s willingness to target foreign companies and antitrust conduct abroad. Section 1 has broad extraterritorial reach. Companies and individuals that engage in price-fixing, market allocation, bid-rigging or output restriction schemes outside the US can still face criminal prosecution if the conduct has a direct, substantial and reasonably foreseeable effect on US markets. Companies should ensure that their employees are sufficiently trained in US antitrust laws if their business has any impact on the US.
- **Executives abroad still face prosecution** – While US courts cannot hail indicted individuals located abroad into court, individuals can still be provisionally arrested and deported to the US to face charges. When the DOJ charges an individual known to be abroad, it routinely requests that the International Criminal Police Organization issue a so-called red notice, which is a request to law enforcement agencies across the world to provisionally arrest that individual so that the US can seek extradition. The arrest of the Singamas executive at a French airport and subsequent effort to extradite him show the lengths to which the DOJ will go to successfully prosecute indicted individuals.



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