Maritime Lawyer Port of Skhira services require experience in tanker operations, petroleum cargoes, terminal contracts and emergency maritime procedures. Dr. Brahim Latrech advises and represents shipowners, charterers, P&I Clubs, oil companies, cargo interests, insurers, terminal users, suppliers and seafarers in matters connected with the Port of Skhira and Tunisian jurisdiction.

Skhira is a specialised deep-water petroleum port with major infrastructure for storing and handling crude oil and refined products. Official Tunisian sources identify the TRAPSA terminal as an important point for receiving, storing, loading and discharging petroleum products. This specialised activity creates legal and technical risks different from those encountered at general-cargo ports.

Maritime legal services at Skhira

- urgent ship arrest and vessel release;
- tanker charterparty and contract-of-affreightment disputes;
- oil shortage, contamination, quality and quantity claims;
- laytime, demurrage, pumping and terminal-delay disputes;
- bunker, supply, agency, towage and port-service claims;
- pollution, spill response and environmental liability;
- P&I, hull and cargo insurance instructions;
- marine casualties, personal injury and crew claims;
- survey, sampling and preservation of electronic and documentary evidence;
- foreign arbitration, enforcement and Tunisian court proceedings.

Ship arrest at the Port of Skhira

A tanker’s operational schedule can leave only a short period in which to obtain security. Tunisian conservatory arrest is principally governed by Articles 100 to 106 of the Maritime Commerce Code, supplemented by the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure and rules concerning maritime privileges, mortgages and enforcement.

The applicant must establish a qualifying maritime claim, identify the debtor and registered owner, prove the connection between the claim and the vessel and apply to the territorially competent court. Sister-ship arrest requires evidence of the statutory ownership conditions. Common management, a shared operator or group affiliation is not sufficient by itself.

The application should be prepared with the vessel’s name and IMO number, live location,

expected sailing time, ownership documents, charterparty or contract, invoices, account statements, notices and correspondence. Foreign-language documents may require Arabic translation and originals or authenticated copies.

A foreign claimant without domicile or attachable property in Tunisia may be requested to provide security under Article 104, unless an applicable bilateral treaty or equal-treatment rule removes that requirement.

Read our detailed guide to ship arrest in Tunisia.

Release and security

An arrested vessel may be released after settlement, cancellation of the order, a successful procedural challenge or the provision of adequate security. Grounds for challenge may include absence of a maritime claim, arrest of the wrong ship, failure of ownership requirements, lack of jurisdiction, prescription or existing sufficient security.

In Tunisian practice, an acceptable Tunisian bank guarantee or a deposit with the Tunisian General Treasury for the claimant's benefit is generally the most secure solution. A foreign bank instrument or P&I Club letter is not automatically accepted by the court, although it may be agreed with the claimant.

The security should cover the claim, interest and reasonably foreseeable recoverable costs while preserving all defences regarding jurisdiction, applicable law, limitation and liability.

Oil cargo shortage, quality and contamination

Petroleum claims depend on disciplined technical evidence. Differences between shore and ship figures do not automatically establish cargo loss. The parties must examine the contractual measurement point, applicable tolerance, vessel-experience factor, temperature and density corrections, calibration tables, water content, sampling and the condition of tanks and lines.

Evidence may include bills of lading, certificates of quantity and quality, ullage reports, tank-cleanliness records, meter and calibration certificates, pumping logs, statements of facts, letters of protest, sealed samples and laboratory analysis.

Sampling integrity is crucial. Records should identify who attended, the point and time of sampling, method, seals, sample custody and laboratory instructions. A report based on an

unrepresentative or poorly documented sample may be challenged on causation as well as quantum.

Laytime, demurrage and pumping disputes

Tanker disputes frequently concern notice of readiness, berth availability, terminal acceptance, pumping rate, shore restrictions, line displacement, stoppages, weather and documentation. Liability depends on the charterparty and terminal terms rather than on delay alone.

The statement of facts should be checked against logs, pumping records, terminal messages, letters of protest and instructions. Time-bar and notification clauses in tanker charterparties can be strict; supporting documents must be submitted within the contractual period.

Pollution and environmental response

An oil spill or threatened pollution event requires immediate protection of life and the environment, notification of insurers and authorities, preservation of evidence and appointment of qualified experts. Ship interests should cooperate with lawful response measures while avoiding premature admissions before the source, cause and allocation of liability are established.

Relevant evidence includes deck and engine logs, oil-record books, transfer plans, hose and manifold records, communications, photographs, VDR or electronic data, samples and clean-up invoices. Responsibility may involve the owner, charterer, cargo interests, terminal, contractor or equipment supplier, depending on the facts.

P&I and casualty representation

Prompt local representation helps coordinate the master, owner, P&I Club, agent, surveyors, authorities and potential claimants. Counsel may attend evidence-preservation measures, protect privilege, monitor interviews, issue reservations, negotiate security and manage subsequent proceedings.

Casualty and personal-injury matters may also involve flag-State requirements, crew welfare, medical treatment, immigration, repatriation and criminal or administrative inquiries in Tunisia.

Foreign arbitration and enforcement

A foreign jurisdiction or arbitration clause does not necessarily prevent provisional measures against a vessel located at Skhira. Arrest secures the claim but does not determine the merits. Proceedings must be commenced in the agreed or competent forum within the applicable period.

A foreign judgment or arbitral award may require recognition before compulsory execution in Tunisia. See our guide on enforcement of foreign arbitral awards in Tunisia.

Why appoint maritime counsel for Skhira?

Skhira matters combine maritime procedure with petroleum operations and technical evidence. Effective intervention may require immediate coordination with the competent court, enforcement officer, port and terminal authorities, agents, surveyors, laboratories, insurers and P&I representatives.

Dr. Brahim Latrech has practised law in Tunisia since 2004 and has extensive experience in ship arrest, release and maritime litigation. His office acts throughout the principal Tunisian ports, including Skhira, Sfax, Gabes, Zarzis, Sousse, Rades, La Goulette and Bizerte.

Information required for urgent assistance

- vessel name, IMO number, flag and current position;
- arrival, berthing and sailing schedule at Skhira;
- registered owner, charterer, operator and contractual debtor;
- cargo description, quantity, alleged loss and claim value;
- charterparty, bill of lading, terminal terms and invoices;
- statements of facts, ullage reports, samples and survey records;
- governing-law, jurisdiction, arbitration and security clauses.

Contact a Maritime Lawyer for the Port of Skhira

For tanker arrest or release, petroleum cargo, demurrage, contamination, pollution, P&I or enforcement matters at Skhira, contact Dr. Brahim Latrech’s office before the vessel sails or evidence changes.

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