

# Babel Street Strengthens Denied Party Screening for Global Shipper

This decades-old, world-leading logistics company ships over a billion parcels annually to over 200 countries and territories. Like every multinational shipping or courier company, it is required to perform denied party screening to comply with laws that combat human trafficking, forced labor, conflict mining, and more. Economic sanctions that affect people, companies, and countries are particularly complex. For example, the European Union's "50% rule" applies sanctions to companies in which a sanctioned entity has a 50% or greater ownership interest.<sup>1</sup>

## The challenge

The company screens every package recipient against the destination country's denied party list and an internal denied shipment list. In countries that use non-Latin scripts, such as Singapore, Thailand, Korea, Japan, or Arabic-speaking nations, the names must be transliterated from their native scripts to the Latin alphabet in a consistent way to facilitate searching and screening recipient names.

Transliteration spellings can vary greatly between these languages and English because human clerks don't use standard transliteration systems. For example, the Arabic male name **عبد الرشيد** can be transliterated into over 100 different spellings such as Abd-al-Rashid, Abdul Rasheed, Adil Rashid, Abdal

Rashed, and Abdel Rasheed. However, even selecting which transliteration standard to use is fraught as there are so many. For Arabic alone, Wikipedia lists 10 transliteration standards.<sup>2</sup>

The company was using a third-party due diligence service to manage the complex denied party lists and perform the screening, but the numerous ad hoc name transliterations by customers and clerks resulted in unacceptably low matching accuracy. This situation exposed the company to risks of missing matches and being fined up to \$1 million per violation or potential jail time.<sup>3</sup> The company needed transliterations that were more likely to accurately match the watchlist entries.

## The solution

The company chose Babel Street Name Translator, which supports multiple transliteration standards for non-Latin languages. The company defined their desired level of accuracy as transliterations which correctly matched against denied party list entries with a match score of 75% or greater.

Name Translator's transliterations from Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Chinese proved to be more than 90% accurate when matching against denied party lists. For Arabic and Chinese, which were the most challenging languages for this company, Name Translator was 97.2% accurate in Arabic and 97.3% in Chinese.

Furthermore, because of the solution's flexibility, the company can select the standard that delivers the most accurate transliteration for each region. For example, for packages to Hong Kong, the company can select the Hong Kong transliteration standard for Chinese for higher screening accuracy instead of the standards used in other Chinese-speaking nations.

## The impact

Consistent name transliteration means the company can stay compliant with local import/export rules and greatly reduce the risk of violations. With significantly greater accuracy in Arabic, the company can expand its business operations to Arabic-speaking countries, where they previously could not.

Babel Street is empowering this shipping company to reduce risk while also removing obstacles to operating in every corner of the globe.

### Endnotes

1 Leahy, George, Lewis Brisbois, "EU FAQ Clarifies 50% Rule for Russia-Related Sanctions," Nov 1, 2023 <https://lewisbrisbois.com/newsroom/legal-alerts/eu-faq-clarifies-50-rule-for-russia-related-sanctions>

2 Wikipedia, "Romanization of Arabic," Accessed Aug 4, 2025 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization\\_of\\_Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic)

3 Noah, David, Shipping Solutions, "What is Denied Party Screening?" Jun 19, 2024, <https://www.shippingsolutions.com/blog/denied-party-screening-basics>

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