Coast Guard offloads more than $23 million in illegal narcotics in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Release from U.S. Coast Guard 7th District

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier (WPC 1115) offloaded more than 2,024 pounds of cocaine worth more than $23 million in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Monday.

The offloaded drugs were interdicted by the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier and U.S. Customs and Border Protection multi-role enforcement aircraft June 18, 2023, in Caribbean Sea international waters south of Puerto Rico.

“This crew never ceases to amaze with their dedication and relentless work ethic, especially our pursuit team who swiftly interdicted and stopped another drug-smuggling vessel from making it to Puerto Rico,” said Lt. DeVonte Weems, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier commanding officer. “This was a smooth interdiction made possible by the great work of the Napier crew, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air & Marine Branch, and Sector San Juan Command Center personnel.”

“The commitment and resolve of the Coast Guard and our U.S. and local law enforcement partners in interdicting drug smuggling vessels at sea is unwavering,” said Capt. José E. Díaz, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander. “Our guardians risk their lives daily to safeguard the people of in Puerto

Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from this threat and prevent illegal narcotics from reaching U.S. shores.”

Along with the illicit narcotics, four suspected smugglers, one Colombian, one Dominican Republic and two Venezuelan nationals, were apprehended and face prosecution by the Department of Justice in the U.S. Federal District Court in Puerto Rico.

The Transnational Organized Crime Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case, while Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force are leading the investigation.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts involving the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF.For breaking news, follow us on Twitter. For additional information, find us on Facebook and Instagram.

Cutter Joseph Napier is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.