

Coast Guard, Partners Interdict 7 Suspected Drug- Smuggling Vessels in the Caribbean over 10 days



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloads 430 kilograms of cocaine at Sector San Juan in this photo from August. In more recent activities, the Napier took part in interdictions that netted more than 3,700 pounds of cocaine and 19 suspected drug smugglers over 10 days. U.S. Coast Guard / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations and the Dutch Caribbean coast guard interdicted seven suspected drug smuggling vessels over 10 days near Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico in the Eastern Caribbean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 18 release.

The collaboration between the federal agencies resulted in more than 3,700 pounds of cocaine, worth more than \$64 million and 19 suspected drug smugglers being apprehended. These individuals may now face criminal charges by prosecution partners in the Department of Justice.

The assets involved in these disruptions include:

[Coast Guard Cutter Reliance](#)

[Coast Guard Cutter William Trump](#)

[Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier](#)

[Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle](#)

[Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley](#)

[Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter](#)

[The dock landing ship USS Comstock](#)

[Customs and Border Protection Air Marine Operations aircraft](#)

[A Dutch Caribbean coast guard DH-8 aircraft](#)

"Seven successful drug smuggling ventures disrupted in 10 days is a clear example of the mission ready team we have here in the Seventh District's area of responsibility," said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, Seventh Coast Guard District commander. "I am proud of the diverse Coast Guard teams that enable us to deliver mission excellence anytime, anywhere. However, these cases represent the collective work of a larger interagency and international team whose unified efforts counter the nefarious activities of transnational criminal organizations that seek to disrupt and destabilize everywhere they operate. Thanks to our enduring partnerships and daily cooperation between numerous agencies, notably the US Navy, CBP Air and Marine Operations, and our fellow Dutch Caribbean coast guard teammates, we were able to disrupt drug smuggling efforts where they were most vulnerable; the maritime domain."

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of presidential national security objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 7th District, headquartered in Miami, Florida. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S.

Coast Guard.

The Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF) is a multi-agency Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force group operating in the District of Puerto Rico focusing on Caribbean and South American-based Transnational Criminal Organizations involved in the maritime and air smuggling shipments of narcotics from Puerto Rico to the Continental U.S. and in the laundering of drug proceeds using bulk cash smuggling and sophisticated laundering activities. CCSF signatory agencies include the DEA, HSI, FBI, CGIS, USMS, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.