

Coast Guard, International Partners Seize 1,700 Pounds of Cocaine



Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk crew members conduct a boarding of the Amanda M fishing vessel in the eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Central America on April 9. During the boarding, the crew discovered several false compartments where they were able to uncover 1,700 pounds of cocaine and transfer four suspected smugglers to Costa Rica for legal action. U.S. Coast Guard

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard and Costa Rican authorities seized about 1,700 pounds of cocaine on April 9 with an estimated value of more than \$29 million from a fishing boat in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, according to the Coast Guard's 11th District.

While on patrol, a Coast Guard cutter's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew identified a fishing boat suspected of smuggling narcotics and requested the assistance of a Costa Rican Air Surveillance Service (Servicio de Vigilancia Aérea) maritime patrol aircraft.

The Coast Guard cutter's small boat arrived on scene with the fishing vessel, Amanda M, homeported in Costa Rica, with four suspected smugglers and received authorization to board the vessel.

Coast Guard members discovered several false compartments throughout the fishing boat, where they were able to uncover 1,700 pounds of cocaine.

"This interdiction is a great example of what we can

accomplish with strong international partners,” said Rear Adm. Peter Gautier, the 11th District’s commander.

The Coast Guard transferred the four suspected smugglers to Costa Rican authorities for further legal actions.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs. 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, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.