

U.S. Navy Ships Interdict Heroin Worth \$4 Million in Arabian Sea



Two U.S. Navy ships seized 385 kilograms of heroin worth approximately \$4 million from a stateless fishing vessel transiting the Arabian Sea, Dec. 27. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – Two U.S. Navy ships seized 385 kilograms of heroin worth approximately \$4 million from a stateless fishing vessel transiting the Arabian Sea, Dec. 27, Naval Forces Central Command said Dec. 30.

U.S. Coast Guard personnel embarked aboard USS Tempest (PC 2) and USS Typhoon (PC 5) discovered the illegal shipment while conducting a flag verification boarding in accordance with customary international law. The confiscated drugs were destroyed at sea by U.S. forces.

The coastal patrol ships were operating as part of an international task force called Combined Task Force 150, which has increased regional patrols to locate and disrupt unlawful maritime activity. CTF 150 is one of three task forces under Combined Maritime Forces.

“This latest seizure is a demonstration that CTF 150 and assigned surface and air assets are ready to conduct interdiction operations 365 days a year,” said Royal New Zealand Navy Capt. Brendon Clark, commander of CTF 150.

In 2021, CTF 150 has seized illegal drugs worth more than \$193 million (at regional wholesale prices) during counter-narcotics operations at sea. This is a higher total value than the amount of drugs the task force interdicted in the previous four years combined.

“This interdiction highlights the incredible work of our ships and Sailors and serves as a reminder of the value in having forward-deployed naval forces on scene and ready,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jordan Bradford, Typhoon’s commanding officer, who is from Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

International naval forces operating in support CTF 150 regularly conduct maritime security and counter-terrorism operations at sea outside the Arabian Gulf to disrupt criminal and terrorist organizations and their related illicit activities, including the movement of personnel, weapons, narcotics and charcoal. These efforts help ensure legitimate commercial shipping transits the region free from non-state threats.

“We were able to execute this interdiction safely and with precision due to the tireless efforts of all involved,” said Lt. Cmdr. Matt Intoccia, a native of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, and the commanding officer of Tempest. “I am proud of our collective contribution to regional stability and look forward to more opportunities for operational success.”

The U.S. Navy released the stateless fishing vessel and its nine crew members, who identified themselves as Iranian nationals, after seizing the drugs.

Combined Maritime Forces is the largest multinational naval partnership in the world. The organization includes 34 nations and is headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.