



Office of
Deputy Commissioner
of Maritime Affairs

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

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Dear Shipowner/Operator/Master:

Subject: Ongoing problem of narcotics trafficking

17 March 2023

The purpose of this Advisory is to alert shipowners, operators and masters of the ongoing problem of narcotics trafficking.

In the first two months of 2023, there have been two separate incidents where large amounts of cocaine were found onboard Liberian flagged vessels. In both instances, the narcotics were found in the sea chest during underwater surveys. The discovery of the narcotics resulted in the detention of both vessels. One vessel was detained in Veracruz, Mexico with the last Port of Call in New Orleans, USA. The other vessel was detained in Lorient, France after leaving Paranaguá, Brazil.

Illegal narcotics trafficking is a global threat to the maritime industry. The vast majority of narcotics are produced in South America. The drugs pass through a seven million square-mile area called the Transit Zone. Roughly twice the size of the continental United States, the Transit Zone includes the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Eastern Pacific Ocean. We urge the crew members onboard all Liberian flagged vessel operating in Central and South America as well as the Caribbean to be on the alert for narcotics trafficking activities.

In the past, there have been a number of cases that have resulted in seafarers being convicted and sentenced to substantial prison terms of 8-9 years without any obvious link being established between the activities of the crew and the presence of the narcotics on board the vessel. Vessels and their cargo have also been confiscated by the courts. Please refer to [Marine Security Advisory 06/2011](#) for measures to prevent narcotics trafficking.

Please keep LISCR's Security Department informed of any security incidents at:

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