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AFRICA/LIBERIA - Anti-drug operation between Liberia and USA leads to confiscation of 4 tons of cocaine; Liberian government says no to drugs

Monrovia (Agenzia Fides) – A major drug operation conducted jointly by the United States and Liberian demonstrates, once again, how West Africa has become a strategic hub in the trafficking of South American cocaine to Western markets.
The operation led to the dismantling of an organization that was preparing to send four tons of cocaine (worth more than $100 million) to the United States. The drugs had arrived in Liberia from Colombia.
The arrest of drug 8 traffickers (5 of which were already extradited from the U.S.) has been facilitated by the collaboration of Fumbah Sirleaf, son of the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
Fumbah Sirleaf is Director of the Republic of Liberia National Security Agency (RLNSA), the local secret service, that drug traffickers had tried to bribe, along with his Assistant Director, in order to ship the cocaine into the African country. The two Liberian officials pretended to accept the bribe, allowing them to infiltrate the criminal organization and arrest the drug traffickers.
“During the last decade, drug trafficking organizations based in South America have increasingly used countries along or near the West African coast as trans-shipment hubs for importing massive quantities of cocaine to be later distributed in Europe or elsewhere within Africa. Through a combination of privately owned aircraft and maritime vessels, these organizations, predominantly based in Colombia and Venezuela, have transported hundreds of tons of cocaine, worth billions of dollars, to places such as Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Togo, Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia. In so doing, representatives of these drug trafficking organizations have often sought to bribe high-level public officials with large cash payments and narcotics in order to ensure the safe passage, storage, and distribution of their cocaine shipments,” says a statement issued by the Department of Justice, on the operation conducted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), in collaboration with the Liberian authorities. The Liberian government stated its intention to fund the fight against drug trafficking. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 4/6/2010)

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