



Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC)

PRESS RELEASE

Victoria, Seychelles, 24 April 2026

Combating drug trafficking at sea

271kg of narcotics seized in the Western Indian Ocean

The Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) announces the successful completion of Operation “Baldor”, a multinational maritime security operation conducted from 09 to 16 April 2026 with a seizure of 271kg of drugs. This Regional Operation was carried out under the Regional Maritime Security Architecture (RMSA) supported by the EU-Funded Safe Sea Africa (SSA) programme implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission. The operation was led by France, in partnership with the Republic of Seychelles and the Republic of Mauritius, demonstrating the region’s unified commitment to safeguarding the Western Indian Ocean from transnational organized criminal networks.

On Wednesday 16 April 2026, a vessel of the French Navy’s Southern Indian Ocean Forces (FAZSOI), participating in a regional anti-drug trafficking operation, seized 271 kg of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine, heroine and cannabis, on board a cargo ship coming from the northern Indian Ocean. The substances were seized for destruction by the French authorities, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force.

The suspect vessel had been under heightened surveillance since the end of March, and more specifically from 9 April, the date on which it entered the Seychelles’ exclusive economic zone. During its transit near the Seychelles archipelago, the Seychelles Air Force (SAF) conducted several maritime patrol flights, enabling the vessel to be precisely located and information gathered with a view to its interception. As the vessel entered the Mauritian EEZ, responsibility for monitoring the vessel was handed over to the Mauritian Coast Guard, whose Maritime Air Squadron also carried out several sorties to track and assist during the interception.

The vessel, whose characteristics gave rise to suspicion that it was involved in drug trafficking, was intercepted in accordance with international law and the responsibilities of the French Navy. This seizure was carried out thanks to regional coordination led by the RMSA, established in 2018 under the aegis of the IOC. A close examination of maritime traffic patterns reveals a drug trade that is constantly adapting, with trends evolving to make way for new modus operandi and new illicit substances.



This regional operation, of unparalleled ambition given the type of vessel intercepted and the subsequent and simultaneous involvement of France, the Seychelles and Mauritius, demonstrates the relevance of the RSMA by capitalizing on the complementary nature of the resources made available for regional maritime security by the States under the coordination of the RCOC. As the Director of the regional Centre, Major Gérald Wong-Pool, emphasizes, *“the RCOC is there to facilitate relations between countries, but it is first and foremost the States that deserve the credit for this operational success, which calls for further such operations in the future”*. Last October, the RCOC was involved in coordinating Operation ‘Bahari Safi’, involving the Seychelles and Kenya, which led to the seizure of nearly a ton of drugs on board a dhow.

The RCOC and the RMIFC congratulate all participating countries on their professionalism, cooperation and unwavering determination to defend the region against transnational organized crime networks.

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