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14 tonnes of ISIS drugs seized in Salerno

Italian police on Wednesday seized 14 tonnes of drugs produced by ISIS in Syria to fund terror, in the port of Salerno south of Naples. The drugs were amphetamines and a synthetic drug called captagon, which is used across the Middle East to ease fear, fatigue and pain among fighters, and which was found in the lair of the 2015 Bataclan terrorists in Paris. Captagon has been dubbed "the ISIS drug" or "the Jihad drug".

The 84 million pills, the biggest such haul ever, had a street value of over one billion euros, they said.

The drugs were hidden in paper cylinders for industrial use, and machinery built in such a way as to elude scanners, police said. ISIS uses captagon and other amphetamines for all its fighters, and controls its distribution across the Middle East.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte was among those who congratulated the police on their operation. "Compliments to our Guardia di Finanza (tax police) for the maxi-operation in the port of Salerno which led to the seizure of a huge quantity of drugs destined to finance ISIS," the premier said. "This has dealt a tough blow to international terrorism, and is the demonstration that Italy always keeps its guard high".

Economy Minister Roberto Gualtieri said "thank you to the women and men of the Guardia di Finanza and the customs agency for the efficacious operation completed today which saw the biggest seizure of amphetamines at a global level, drugs destined to finance ISIS. "In this way, too, Italy is playing an active role in the fight against terrorism".

The director general of the customs agency, Marcello Minenna, said "I thank the men of the customs agency for the important operation conducted in synergy with the Guardia di Finanza. "Over the last few months we have intensified the agency's intelligence activity and this has enabled us to identify the containers containing the drugs which would otherwise have left Salerno in a few days' time.

"I can say with pride that we have blocked one of the most important traffics in drugs financed by ISI, and this is a victory for Italian institutions.

"We will continue to keep our guard high implementing, in the coming months, our analyses on the territory and border points, with new technologies".