

"Bolivia to Install Anti-Narcotics Base in Drug Trafficking Heartland", *InSight Crime*, Estados Unidos / Colombia, 04 de octubre de 2012.

Consultado en:

<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/bolivia-to-install-military-base-in-drug-trafficking-heartland>

Fecha de consulta: 23/05/2014.

Bolivia announced it will install a permanent base in the eastern department of Santa Cruz to counter drug trafficking in the area, underscoring the region's importance to drug producers and foreign traffickers operating in the country.

Bolivian Interior Minister Carlos Romero announced on October 3 that the base will be located in Yapacani, Santa Cruz, and will work to combat drug trafficking in the area, reported *El Diario*. The base will house agents from the country's anti-narcotics police unit (FELCN) and the Mobile Rural Patrol Unit (UMOPAR).

Romero added that Yapacani, along with the towns of San German and Nuevo Horizonte, had been designated a drug trafficking "red zone" by the government due to the high level of smuggling activity there, reported *Opinion.com*.

Within the past week alone, Bolivian authorities have uncovered 174 coca maceration pits and 350 kilos of cocaine in San German and Nuevo Horizonte. In Yapacani, anti-narcotics forces clashed with an armed drug trafficking group, killing one person and detaining 16 others, according to *El Diario*.

InSight Crime Analysis

Santa Cruz has become a drug-trafficking hotspot in recent years thanks largely to geography; it lies between Bolivia's coca-producing Cochabamba department and Brazil, Latin America's largest market for cocaine. Colombian intelligence estimated last year that up to 3,000 Colombian traffickers may operate in the region and there is evidence that Brazilian gangs the Red Command (Comando Vermelho) and the First Capital Command (PCC) run

networks from Santa Cruz into Brazil. In one operation earlier this year, 90 cocaine laboratories were dismantled in San German.

Santa Cruz's Attorney General's Office was asked by the government in August to investigate links between local officials and narcotics traffickers. Among those accused were FELCN agents, a former air force colonel and officers from the Santa Cruz police force.

The US criticized Bolivia last month for not doing enough to counter drug operations within its territory, something the government rejected. This latest move reveals its apparent desire to effectively tackle trafficking in one of the country's worst hit areas.