

Banjul, Gambia, January 16 (Infosplusgabon) - Pateh Jallow, a former deputy director I of the Gambian national drug law enforcement agency, has revealed that former president Yahya Jammeh was involved in illegal drug trade.

Jallow, a veteran Gambian security agent who served as deputy director of the Agency after the dismissal of the director general Bun Sanneh and others, said Jammeh's portrayal of himself as Africa's leading fighter of drugs was a fraud.

"I can tell you Jammeh was involved in drug trafficking and I am very sure. And they knew also that if the trafficking in Gambia was effectively investigated, we were all going to be in trouble," he told in an interview on Tuesday.

Gambia and Guinea Bissau have been some of the leading transit points for South American cocaine moving to Europe and America.

According to experts and records from Gambia, the country was the second leading transit point in the region behind Nigeria, with Bissau trailing.

And according to UN, Cocaine transiting West Africa is worth an estimated US\$ 1 billion.

Mr Jallow said Jammeh was aware of all the drug activities in the country and was often involved.

Following the Cocaine worth US\$ 1 billion seized in The Gambia Bonto, West Coast region in 2010, Mr Jallow said he was instructed as the deputy director of the drug squad not to talk to journalists because of the apparent knowledge that it did surprise the world how Gambian authorities could have claimed they were not aware of the drug presence in the country.

He said after their Bonto incident where they seized over 2 tons of cocaine, he was dismissed together with one commissioner, Mawlud Faal.

Jallow said it was Faal, later dismissed and jailed, whose investigation led a team to the arrest of Machael Fraur and Maimuna Ceesay, among others.

“When these people were arrested with 3 kilos of cocaine, we launched a full investigation into the matter... At that time, the Colombians and Jamaicans were also helping us with some information...,” he said.

He said he would later receive a call from former interior minister Ousman Sonko and Jammeh himself insulting his mother.

“They would not tell me why but I knew it was the arrest we have made... but they claimed I was talking to the American officials which was not true,” he said.

Jallow admitted he had a friend he visited at the American embassy who later put him in touch with the regional security officer there at the time.

“At the scale in which drug was coming into the country, we needed support. We do not have the capacity,” he said.

Jallow said he was also instructed through directives to release Sillah Ba Samateh for alleged involvement in drug trade.

“Samateh was later released by the National Intelligence Agency and I did not know what transpired between him and them,” Jallow said.

Samateh is a Salikenni native who kept fighting his innocence in the trade but he did accuse Jammeh of involvement with Bubo.

Even before the fall of the autocratic ruler, Samateh made several accusations that Jammeh was a drug kingpin despite his repeated rhetoric against the trade.

A former police chief who was also battling drug charges among others, Jesus Badgie, also reportedly said he was involved in the trade with “The Big Man”, reportedly referring to Jammeh.

Drug trade in Bissau, infamously dubbed Africa’s first narco-state, has for a long time been a concern to Europe and American authorities.

The small country of 1.7 million people has not had a stable 5 years since independence, witnessing 9 different coups or attempted coups.

One of its drug kingpins who was arrested and jailed by U.S. authorities for 4 years, former Rear Admiral Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, was Jammeh’s old buddy who has spent a year in Gambia while in hiding.

Jallow confirmed that Bubo was given two bodyguards by Gambia police force under former IGP Yankuba Sonko and was given sanctuary by Jammeh.

Jallow started as a Gendarmerie and then switched to the police from where he was transferred to the army before he eventually became a drug squad officer.

Jallow left the army in 1995 after several accusations of being disloyal before rejoining the police and eventually becoming a drug squad officer.

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