

Spanish Police Arrest 84 In Doping Crackdown

The Spanish interior ministry has announced that police have arrested 84 people and dismantled two criminal gangs accused of importing and distributing sports doping substances across Spain.

It was further disclosed by the ministry that the raids were conducted over a period of ten months in ten regions of the country, with half the arrests in the country's three largest cities: Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. In all, the authorities seized about 707,000 doses of anabolic steroids, blood boosters, and growth hormones and these substances were distributed through Spanish private homes and sports centers, according to the ministry statement. The ministry also revealed that one of the involved gangs imported the illegal products from Portugal, and the other imported their substances from Greece and China however the ministry desisted from disclosing the identities of those arrested but said they included a pharmacist.

The Ministry said in a statement that officers have dismantled two organizations importing the products, which can cause severe damage to health. The security forces, in their first operation, arrested 75 people accused of using the postal service to introduce [doping drugs](#) from Portugal to then sell on in gyms and private homes in Madrid, Valencia, the Basque Country and Asturias. Forty-seven homes were searched by police seizing more than 24,000 doses. According to estimates by the Spanish police, the organization could have introduced doping substances valued at more than 11,000 euros per day during the first trimester of 2013. The second ring made use of social networks for advertising and luring potential clients and introduced the drugs from China and Greece in postal packs. The Spanish police was able to seize 683,000 doses of steroids, EPO, and growth hormone and arrested nine people.

Spanish lawmakers this month approved a new measure that is intended to counter the doping concerns that have damaged the reputation of different sports in the country. The new measure will expand the range of doping tests and imposes larger fines for those dealing in illegal substances along with creating a more autonomous national anti-doping agency to fight the use of performance enhancing drugs. Many believe that this is a desperate attempt by the country because of Madrid's bid to host the 2020 Olympics where it is competing with Istanbul and Tokyo, with the host city expected to be chosen in September. This measure is also expected to bring the country in line with the international norms and dispel the impression that Spain is soft on doping.

The country also wants the world to forget the controversial decision of a Spanish judge after she ordered the destruction of seized blood samples in the Operation Puerto doping scandal, a move that was criticized by the World Anti-Doping Agency and eminent sports personalities like [Rafael Nadal](#). The verdict was even criticized by Alejandro Blanco, the president of Spain's Olympic committee, who remarked the judge's verdict had been "a mistake and a disaster" for Spanish sports but insisted that the outcome of the investigation should not undermine Madrid's bid for the 2020 Summer Games.