



# Homeland Security

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## Fact Sheet: Combating Crime in Puerto Rico

### Overview

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working with stakeholders to establish and maintain a unified and coordinated approach to support the execution of the investigation, intelligence collection, interdiction, and other law enforcement activities directed at:

- Disrupting the flow of illegal weapons/drugs/money/migrants into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with a focus on Transnational Criminal Organizations
- Disrupting of the illicit flow of drugs/weapons/money from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to the contiguous United States and Europe
- Targeting violent gang members for federal prosecution
- Developing local law enforcement and social service capacity to:
  - Address current and emerging crime problems;
  - Improve island addiction treatment capabilities and enhance existing education programs, as part of a reconstitution effort, and;
  - Establish outreach programs, i.e. community based policing, to educate the general public and involve citizens in supporting law enforcement efforts.
  - Identify and prosecute members of violent local gangs, criminal organizations, and transnational organized crime elements.

### Current Law Enforcement Efforts in Puerto Rico

DHS has initiated a series of operational activities that build on existing law enforcement capabilities to deter, detect and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking in the region, targeting the flow of drugs, weapons, money, and migrants.

- The Caribbean Air and Marine Branch (CAMB) —
  - A combination of six aviation assets and 10 midnight express interceptors (law enforcement fast boats) used to combat drug smuggling in the field.
  - In Fiscal Year 2011, CAMB seized 10,250 pounds of narcotics and \$2.1 million in currency.
- Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) —
  - A union of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Caribbean Air and Marine Branch, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico, and the Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action (FURA) to disrupt the flow of illegal aliens and contraband into the Caribbean.
  - This effort effectively cut illegal immigration in Puerto Rico by 80 percent
- Operation Sea Wall—
  - A joint USCG, CBP, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Dominican Republic Navy counter drug operation targeting primary flow into South Hispaniola arrival zones and secondary flow from Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico
  - Together, these agencies provide air surveillance, offshore patrol, interdiction forces and coastal surface interdiction.
  - Since May 2012, Operation Sea Wall has resulted in the interdiction of more than 7000 kilograms of cocaine and the arrest of 29 suspected smugglers; a 300% increase over the previous 12-month period.
- In September 2012, the DHS Operation Caribbean Guard (OCG) was implemented to intercept illegal weapons, drugs and money, flowing to and from Puerto Rico. There are six separate efforts underway to support OCG, which focus on the inspection of cargo, mail, vessels and persons both traveling to and from Puerto Rico.
  - CBP is currently reviewing flight operations, including unmanned aircraft systems deployments from stations in Florida to the Puerto Rico region, to determine the most effective use of flight hours to support OCG efforts.
- Operation Unified Resolve—U.S. Coast Guard's District 7 is allocating additional resources and capabilities needed to deter, detect and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking in the region, targeting the flow of drugs, weapons, money, and migrants.

- High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) —
  - This Office of National Drug Control classification is a union of DHS components (CBP, ICE, USCG, and USSS) that focuses on disrupting drug trafficking on and around Puerto Rico.
  - When combined with the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Security Taskforce (OCDETF), this makes the Caribbean Corridor Strike force, an initiative aimed at stopping South American based drug trafficking organizations that move multi-kilogram loads in the Caribbean.
- Operation Community Shield —An ICE HSI initiative that counters organized violent street gangs, which are responsible for most violent crime in Puerto Rico.
- Border Enforcement Security Taskforce (BEST) — Collaboration between CBP, USCG, ATF, Puerto Rico Police Department, San Juan Police Department, Colombian national police, Puerto Rico Ports Authority, and Puerto Rican treasury focused on securing the Puerto Rican border.
- The Caribbean Air and Marine Operations Center (CAMOC) — A state-of-the-art law enforcement radar surveillance used to counter airborne drug smuggling.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has 40 agreements with partner nations to help stop potential criminals before they reach the U.S. border.
- The President’s Task Force on Puerto Rico’s Status —An interagency investigative group that produced a report giving suggestions on how to stimulate Puerto Rico’s economic, social, political, and security situations.

**Information and Intelligence Gathering**

- DHS is utilizing the HIDTA Office of National Drug Control Policy 2013 Threat Assessment as a framework to enhance situational analysis of the Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands area. DHS is also leveraging the intelligence and criminal investigative capabilities of the DHS components to identify and target criminal enterprises involved in weapons, drugs and money smuggling/laundrying to and from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- DHS components in Puerto Rico have an existing, robust relationship with other partners through the island chain to collaborate and promote information sharing.
- Additionally, DHS is expanding on international partnerships, agreements, and information sharing to facilitate joint operations and/or response to illicit smuggling into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- DHS is working through the U.S. Coast Guard identify and target through intelligence collection, undercover operations, and smuggling activities to support maritime interdiction operations in the region.

**Supporting Efforts to Build a Great Local Capacity**

- DHS is working with the Department of Justice and other federal and local island partners to establish a “Take Back our Neighborhood” strategy for high crime housing projects in the region by:
  - Coordinating local law enforcement efforts
  - Maximizing visible law enforcement deployment/enforcement for a sustained period
  - Maintaining a strong presence of vetted officers to enhance community policing opportunities
  - Evaluating Puerto Rico’s ability to expand the use/flexibility of OPSG and other DHS grants
  - Working through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center with the Puerto Rico Police Department to establish enhanced training and professionalism standards

**Continued Efforts**

DHS is working to establish a multi-agency task force under DHS leadership responsible for gathering, storing, and analyzing all-source weapons, drugs and related financial investigative information and intelligence. This task force, in coordination partner agencies, would carry out multijurisdictional investigations focused on the disruption of drugs, money, weapons and migrants following to and from Puerto Rico.



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