

Central America: Analysis of Environment and Threats



DRUGS TRAFFICKING

A transit zone for cocaine flowing from South America to the United States (2012 – over 80% of the US cocaine is trafficked via region)

TRAFFICKING IN FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

- The Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) - post-conflict societies with a high rate of circulation of arms and ammunition.
- The Southern Region (Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama) are known for their role as a bridge of arms shipments from Central America to Colombia.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

- Routes extend from Nicaragua to Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Belize.
- Mexico's southern border is the intersection of the immigration routes from Central America.

OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

- Money laundering, human trafficking, incidence of maras and cartels.

Central America: Vulnerabilities and Impact on Border Management

Vulnerabilities:

- Border control faces huge challenges.
- Limited law enforcement capabilities.
- Fragility of state institutions to address the threats.
- Mistrust, professional jealousy and lack of legal basis for smooth and efficient inter-agency and international cooperation and exchange of information.
- Corruption and political interference remain impediments to meaningful prosecution of narcotics trafficking.

Impact:

- High rate of crime , violence and increase in homicides
- Accelerated process of deteriorating security
- Migrants are exposed to crime networks, drugs and human trafficking, extortion and kidnapping

Central America: Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Central American Security Strategy provides a good basis for the development of the IBM concept.

The Security Strategy addresses specific elements to strengthen Central American Institutions to tackle organised crime and cross-border illegal activities, to prevent and fight illegal immigration and to protect victims of human trafficking.

Adoption of best practices in customs and border control to combat drugs and arms trafficking in the region; the strengthening of inter-agency systems for border security; the use of Interpol I-24/7 system, the improvement of controls at borders, ports and airports

Central America Security Strategy

4 main components identified in the strategy and constitute SICA integrity programme proposal:

- Fight against crime.
- Violence prevention.
- Rehabilitation, reinsertion and penitentiary security.
- Institutional strengthening.

In order to put into practice the Strategy Action Plan, 14 priorities of intervention and 22 project profiles have been identified.

The Caribbean: Analysis of Environment and Threats



DRUGS TRAFFICKING

- Primarily illicit drugs in the region are marijuana, cocaine and heroin and their derivatives such as crack.
- On the route of one of the most active international drugs trade (from Andean Region of South America to US / Europe).
- Only marijuana is produced in the region.

TRAFFICKING IN WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

- No production, but influx of guns and ammunition,
- High levels of gun crime persist in the region.
- Illegal guns play a key role in other criminal activities such as robberies, rape and other forms of sexual and not-sexual violence.

OTHER ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

Money laundering, THB for sexual or labour exploitation, local gangs, corruption, sophisticated fraud, smuggling of contraband cigarettes, petroleum, steel and other goods, cybercrime, counterfeit engine parts and medicines

The Caribbean: Vulnerabilities and Impact

Vulnerabilities:

Very large maritime frontiers and lack of adequate law enforcement capacities makes extremely challenging for each state to monitor its coastlines and territorial waters

Impact:

High homicide rates in the region, partly due to the effect of the drugs but mostly because the money derived from the trade is used to purchase weapons and finance other criminal activities.

The Caribbean: Legal and Regulatory Framework

The CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy provides a good basis for the development of the IBM concept.

CARICOM's Regional Crime and Security Strategy main goal is to improve citizen security by creating a safe, just and free Community, while simultaneously improving the economic viability of the region.

CARICOM: Crime and Security Strategy Priorities

Common security risks and threats have been identified and prioritised into four tiers:

Immediate Significant Threats

- **Transnational organised crime; trafficking of illicit drugs and illegal guns and ammunition**
- **Gangs and organised crime**
- **Cyber-crime**
- **Financial crime**
- **Corruption**

Substantial Threats

- **Human Trafficking and Smuggling**
- **Natural Disasters**
- **Public Order Crimes**

Significant Potential Risks

- **Attacks on Critical Infrastructure and Terrorism**

Future Risks

- **Climate change, Pandemics and Migratory Pressure**

Andean Community: Analysis of Environment and Threats



DRUGS TRAFFICKING

- Concentration of cocaine production, the main illicit markets are: North America, Western Europe, South America and, to a lesser extent, Oceania.
- Drugs trafficker use boats and, more recently, semi-submarines carrying cocaine (Colombia ->Mexico ->US). Recent increase of shipments via Central America

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

- Not perceived as a risk; even if initiatives are taking place to afford it, the main policy is to facilitate migration regularisation and the acquisition of legal residence.
- Not linked to illegal border crossing but to persons who have entered legally in the country for a short stay, with valid travel documents and then remained in the country when their authorised stay has expired.

OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

Money laundering, THB, at the Peru-Bolivia border, inhabitants of the border areas are involved in smuggling activities at small and large level

Andean Community: Vulnerabilities and Impact

Vulnerabilities:

- The porosity of the borders and the existence of non-formal border crossings places presents a high degree of vulnerability for the realisation of illegal activities.
- At the Peru-Bolivia border, the capacity of the police force to combat smuggling activities is limited.

Impact:

- Current lack of control is favoring the establishment of organised crime involved in drugs and human trafficking.
- Presence of Mexican cartels and the transit of irregular immigrants through Peruvian territory as platform to enter Brazil.
- Border areas are becoming dangerous places due to the presence of criminal organisations.

MERCOSUR: Analysis of Environment and Threats



- Venezuela is a major transit country for cocaine shipments via aerial, terrestrial, and maritime routes. Illicit drug flights arriving in Honduras are originated from Venezuelan states bordering Colombia.
- Colombian and Peruvian cocaine is smuggled into Brazil via the Amazon River; Bolivian cocaine enters Brazil across the 2127 miles land border on trucks, private vehicles, buses and via small aircrafts.
- Most of Andean cocaine transiting Argentina is smuggled across the Bolivian-Argentine border and is primarily destined to Europe.
- Paraguay produces one of the largest marijuana crops, largely to export to Brazil and Argentina.

The Northern Triangle formed by Foz do Iguazú (Brazil), Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) and Puerto Iguazú (Argentina) is a hub for trafficking of women, children and adolescents for sexual exploitation and other scourges violations of human rights. Victims, trafficked both regionally and internationally, mostly originate from Brazil, followed by Paraguay.

MERCOSUR: Vulnerabilities and Impact

Vulnerabilities:

Porous borders represent serious issues of concern due to large territories with difficult geography and weak border surveillance.

Impact:

- Labour migration; migrants workers are exposed to situations of high vulnerability social-labour favouring the exploitation.
- Growing domestic crack cocaine consumption in Brazil.
- Development of unlawful activities such as smuggling is considered a normal activity.

Agencies Involved in the Border Management

BORDER CHECKS

IMMIGRATION SERVICES

BORDER SURVEILLANCE

POLICE AND ARMED FORCES

**CONTROL OF GOODS,
COLLECTION OF DUTIES
AND OTHER REVENUES**

CUSTOMS

Latin America



PREVENTION OF SPREAD AND INTRODUCTION OF HARMFUL ORGANISM, ACCURACY AND VALIDITY OF PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

PHYTOSANITARY AND QUARANTINE SERVICE

ANTINARCOTICS, INTELLIGENCE UNITS

OTHER SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Overview of Main Commonalities: Strengths and Opportunities

- LAC countries are advancing in the integration process; regional structures have been established;
- Significant achievements on the facilitation of transit of people and goods through multilateral or bilateral agreements have been reached in the region; this has also led to a reduction of customs and migration controls;
- Regional Security Strategies have been developed, which also include priorities in the area of border security;
- The concept of IBM has started to be introduced;
- Inter-agency working groups have been established on border issues;
- Works are progressing to ensure an effective and harmonised implementation of the common rules and procedures on border control among countries in the region;
- Progress has been made in the establishment of information systems and connection to INTERPOL databases.